

Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.

Nothing had changed to demark that moment: the fine line between life and death—an experience that altered my own self. It governed how I perceived and understood the world around me. It was to be my first experience of participating in a burial ceremony.

The imagery is still vivid as clear water in an untouched, unpolluted sea. As I entered the chamber my eyes struck the body laid in sheets of white cotton—signifying purity—a precursor to the departed soul's final journey. Although he lay lifeless his colour still seemed unchanged, his skin still warm—just a slight purple tinge to his lips.

I panicked. How can a stranger trust me—a person incapable of understanding differences between life and death—to perform his final spiritual ceremony. In our faith, caring for the dead is considered one of the highest honours imaginable. A multitude of questions jarred my mind. I stood perplexed in the tiled room; a candle flickered alternating between hope and sparks of despair.

I was told about our belief in the immense struggle before death. Now his eyes were closed; his facial expression was serene. My sincere interest was to honour the man by caring for him after death. My two

senior supervisors gently touched my shoulder and directed me to follow. We gently poured lukewarm water and thoroughly rinsed his body as we heard chants of religious prayer. I was led into a contemplative psalm.

Time had seemed to stop. I blindly followed the spiritual experience as we finally dressed him in raw cotton cloth. He seemed to dignify startling beauty. I smelt the gentle tenderness of the scent we had rinsed him with. I stood back and admired how angelic he looked. It seemed as though he was ready to enter Gods realm with ritual purity. I felt accomplished.

I was exposed to a whole new reality: volunteering as a member of this religious spiritual society was truly revitalizing. In a small community it was always difficult to arrange volunteers, but I was always willing. Each ceremony proved to me as an opportunity to make amends for that which can never be forgiven or forgotten.

As an active volunteer, I have found comfort in acknowledging the suffering and pain experienced on the eve of death. From now on, every ceremony brings an important feeling, an important meaning to life. It reminds me to search for a purpose, to keep exploring every realm of life without being afraid of even death. In the words of William Penn lies my true inspiration, "For death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity"