

The Assignment

The podcast interview, “On Mortality and Meaning,” with Atul Gawande (conducted by Krista Tippett from the *On Being Project*) focuses on how physicians treat patients, particularly at the end of life. More broadly, Gawande is speaking to listeners of the podcast; thus, Gawande invites us to consider how we can think more holistically about the quality of our daily lives. After listening to “On Mortality and Meaning,” responding on our Discussion Board, and participating our class discussion, you will write a reflection that synthesizes ideas from this podcast with your own experiences.

1) Identify the audience you are writing for in this assignment.

You will choose a specific, narrow audience for this essay that will empower you to explore these topics with vulnerability and honesty. Choose an audience that will allow you to engage with the metacognitive process of thinking about how your thinking has changed after listening to and discussing this podcast.

2) Write your reflection.

The goal of this reflection is for you to think about how your perspective has changed by considering concepts introduced in the podcast. Consider if and/or how your thinking has changed over the past several years, especially considering the collective grief and loss we experienced through the pandemic. You may also want to consider feelings you may have experienced as you have moved from one phase of life to another with your college experience. How have these factors changed how you now think about well-being, end of life, grief, and/or loss?

Consider the following prompts and observations from the podcast. *You do not need to respond to all prompts specifically and/or answer all of them.* These are potential jumping off points.

- Your definition of well-being
- An exploration of what a good day looks like for you
- Contemplating the idea of “how we spend our days is how we spend our lives”
- Exploring the idea, “To be human is to be limited”

FORMAT:

- 700-800 words
- Use APA format for title page, running header & page #s
- Use APA-formatted in-text citations for all textual evidence
- Include an APA-formatted References list

[This file is supplemental material to Gronewold, Norris, and Persin, *To Be Human is To Be Limited: Student Perspectives on Self Through Meaningful Reflective Writing*, prompt 10.2 (2026), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v10i2.282]