

Director Statement

What is the reason we are here on earth? Unfortunately many of us do not seriously ponder the meaning of life until there is a crisis in our lives: when our plans go awry, unexpected changes stop us in our tracks and we lose control because of external forces. We then have a choice, we can resist reality and give in to anger, bitterness, fear or resentment, but it makes us feel stuck. The alternative is to meet what is happening with curiosity and move through it regardless of how hard it may feel. Could there be something valuable in this disappointment? If we can discipline ourselves to seek the hidden gift in each set back, our open minded search will shine more and more light on the meaning of life and the role each one of us plays in it.

I have always wondered if I would choose to change anything about the way I live should I be faced with the threat of early death. So, in late 2004 as I heard of a parent at my daughter's school who had been given 9 months to live, I approached her with the idea of making a documentary about the meaning of life. It has been a true honor and a tremendous experience of love to be invited to film this very private journey of Anne, her family and close friends.

As a result of directing **Stage IV**, I was completely emotionally broken and pulled into my own set of crises. I questioned every aspect of my life, and out of this depression, several life-changing turning points were born. This kind of transformation is what I am hoping **Stage IV** will do for the audience. It has been my goal to produce a story through which we can be inspired, without the threat of imminent death, to muse the meaning of life.

It is my hope that the audience will be entertained, inspired and comforted by **Stage IV**. Entertained by the genuine and often humorous presence of the characters. Inspired to live fully and with gratitude embrace whatever the moment brings. Comforted by the understanding that there is love, joy and peace available to all of us when we learn how to choose it.

Have I managed to learn this myself? No. But I keep trying. On the fourth year of filming Stage IV, I've seen and felt enough to be absolutely convinced that the key to joy and peace for the world lies in the work we do with ourselves, and the challenges we are given. This work is the reason we are born into our bodies. Once we have built a conscious foundation of joy in our own little world, we inspire healing in the bigger world around us directly as well as indirectly.