Episode 7: "A Good Life"

Explore how beliefs help us face the fear of death and the mystery of what happens after we die. In this episode, we witness how death can also be a powerful call to action, compelling us to embrace life and those we love. In the shadows of Mount Everest, Lekshey Choedhar, a young Buddhist monk at the Pema Ts'al Sakya Monastic Institute, learns a valuable lesson about the fleeting nature of life. There, Buddhist monks make devotional works of art called sand mandalas, which they then destroy in a ritual that symbolizes the impermanence of existence. Next, atheist Alex Honnold walks the edge between life and death as a world-renowned free solo climber. He faces his mortality and finds meaning in his life as he climbs—with no ropes or harnesses—up a towering cliff in the desert outside Moab, Utah. Then Donna Winzenreid, a military wife and mother of three in Colorado Springs, Colorado, who has been diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, fights for her life by holding on to her Methodist faith. Next, India is home to more than a billion people and one of the world's largest religions, Hinduism. Once a year, on the first day of spring, Hindus from all walks of life unite to celebrate Holi, also known as the Festival of Colors. Gopesh Goswami, a Hindu priest, celebrates Holi as an opportunity to set aside daily responsibilities and experience joy, togetherness and the essence of a good life. Finally, from a space shuttle orbiting Earth, astronaut Jeff Hoffman stares out at a pale blue dot suspended in the vast expanse of the universe. He describes it as a transcendent experience, an overwhelming feeling that human beings are all truly connected.

Questions to consider:

- What resonated with you most in this episode?
- What new insight did you gain from "A Good Life"?
- What do you believe about death? Do you believe in an afterlife?

Special thanks to BELIEF partner Sister Jenna, founder/director of the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Museum, for inspiration and contribution to the e-journal.