

A helping hand

[Life](#), [Death](#)



A Helping Hand Ramon Sampedro born January 5th 1943 in North Spain fought for his right to kill himself. At age 25 Ramon unknowingly dove into the shallows of the Atlantic Ocean and became a quadriplegic. That's where this story begins. The Sea Inside follows Ramon in his few decades long battle with Spanish courts to legally have someone help him kill himself. In the opening scene of the movie, Ramon played by Javier Bardem, is listening to Gene, his caregiver, lead him into meditation, having him imagine his favorite place, the ocean is pictured on the screen, she tells him to, "allow your whole body to relax". A woman is introduced Julia, a lawyer in support of Ramon. Her first encounter with Ramon is moving, "I want to die because, I feel that a life in this condition, has no dignity." Ramon admits, along with the fact that some other quadriplegics do not agree with him but begs that, "I'm not trying to judge anyone. Who am I to judge those who choose life, so why judge me or anyone who wants to help me die." The next line struck me, and will always stick with me. He reminds us that, "Death has always been with us and always will. It catches up to all of us. Everyone." Many more moving lines are proclaimed in the movie and help picture the debates cruelty in the viewers mind. Julia explores Ramon's life, in search of support to present to the courts. She finds out how Ramon accidentally thrust this lonesome life onto himself. A new woman is introduced, Rosa, a hardworking mother of two who sees a story about Ramon on T. V. seeks him out to try and give him hope about life. Their relationship blooms and Ramon has found a friend. Julia too begins to show interest in Ramon. Julia, while living in the Sampedro house fell one day, that is when the audience finds out she has CADASIL (cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with

subcortical infarcts and leukoencephalopathy, a hereditary stroke syndrome). While in the hospital Ramon and Julia decide to write a book of his poetry and feelings entitled; Letters from Hell. Ramon reluctantly goes to the court hearing where his lawyer mentions, “.. people who attempt suicide and fail are never subsequently prosecuted. However, when the help of another person is needed to die with dignity, the government intervenes and tramples a mans right to decide for himself. " The courts eventually deny his claim. The story continues with Julia leaving Ramon after publishing his book and a hesitant Rosa offers her help in his suicide. Ramon divided the tasks leading to his suicide into quaint actions, for example, picking up the potassium cyanide from the drugstore, mixing the substance in a glass of water, and placing a the glass next to him in bed with a straw. These actions in themselves are not wrong, all Ramon had to do was willingly drink the fatal mixture to peacefully end his life, which he did, on camera, to prove no one forced him to do it. In 1998 at age 56 Ramon committed suicide. Weeks after his death in real life, a woman named Ramona Maneiro was arrested and charged, but let go just two days later. Our text, Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases, explains, “ Killing is not always wrong", based on the metaphysics: that God exists, the scriptures do not specifically say unjustified killing is wrong. This movie presents several justifiable reasons. Ramon says, “ It [death] catches up to all of us", and our book reads, “ dying for each of us is His Will". Another scene in the movie shows Julia’s increasing interest in taking her own life, I believe this did not happen in real life but instead was added to show the possibility of others following Sampedro in his endeavor showing the slippery slope the book explains

about. However, Julia ended up changing her mind. This brings up yet another idea to think about, if suicide is allowed and someone decided to go through with it, what if one more week could have changed their mind? This is yet another argument that is mirrored in the book. The " Mistakes and Abuses" section of Chapter 3: Physician-Assisted Dying talked about Ana Pou and her decision to peacefully kill her patients in New Orleans. Maybe if she had waited one more day, relief would have come. Killing versus letting die, my final argument. Chapter 3 asks us if the patient is allowed to die, they are killed by their disease but if someone helps kill them, " isn't that human agent the cause of death? ". In the movie, Ramon tried making himself the sole " cause" by drinking, willfully, the lethal concoction put in front of him. Ramon, a quadriplegic, had no way to kill himself besides maybe drowning in a tub, but even then someone had to put him there. The number 5 reason people commit suicide is terminal illness. Chapter 1 of the book provides these staggering statistics, " one in 50 attempts succeeded". No matter how it is done, it will always still happen, I believe letting a person die on their own terms is more just than making them suffer till death.