

Euthanasia: morally right or ethically wrong

[Health & Medicine](#), [Euthanasia](#)



Euthanasia has gained a bad reputation within the public eye due to negative media encircling assisted suicide; euthanasia has a purpose and a goal, it should be seen as humanely releasing the soul of a human being from an emptiness created occasionally by our merciless society. This paper will delineate whether Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide are morally right or ethically wrong. Euthanasia is often confused with and linked to assisted suicide, definitions of the two are vital. Two viewpoints are located within the body of this paper.

The first viewpoint will support euthanasia or the "right to die," the second viewpoint will support anti-euthanasia or the "right to live". Each perspective shall attempt to clarify the legal, moral and ethical ramifications of euthanasia and assisted suicide as well as include a personal example of each to detail the ending results.

The term euthanasia has many definitions. The Pro-Life Alliance defines euthanasia as 'Any action or omission intended to end the life of a patient on the grounds that his or her life is not worth living. The Voluntary Euthanasia Society refers to the word's Greek origins - 'eu' and 'thanatos', which together mean 'a good death. An updated and loosely modern definition is 'A good death brought on by a doctor providing methods or an injection to bring a peaceful end to the ultimate process of passing on. There are three different sub-classifications of euthanasia passive euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide and active euthanasia although not all groups would acknowledge them as valid terms (BBC News, 1999).

There are two main types of patients that euthanasia may aid specifically, (1) patients that are in a persistent vegetative state, that are awake but are not aware of one's self or of their surroundings. Such patients have no higher brain activity and are maintained by artificial life support: respirators, heart-lung machine, and intra-venous nutrition.

These types of methods do nothing more than prolong the inevitable and sustain a person in a never-ending life that will never go anywhere beyond these machines. 2) Patients in which are bound by a terminal illness that causes them a lot of pain, psychological suffering and loss of their dignity. This patient may or may not be on life-support depending on the severity of their illness. However, there are many different types of Euthanasia that can be examined when it comes to helping someone rid him or herself of a life of unnecessary pain. Here are the different types and their definitions among society: Euthanasia generally refers to an easy or painless death, in other words merciful.

Voluntary Euthanasia includes a request by the dying patient or that person's legal representative, proving their approval to continue. Passive or Negative Euthanasia involves not doing something to prevent the patient's requested death, which is, allowing someone to die. Assisted suicide, a distant cousin of euthanasia, is when a person wishes to commit suicide but feels unable to execute the act alone because of a physical disability or lack of knowledge on what would be the most effective means in doing so.

An individual, who assists in an assisted suicide and helps the suicide victim in accomplishing their goal, may or may not be an accessory or be held

responsible for the death, depending on local laws. Without a doubt, today's dying methods has become fearsome. Physicians are now in possession of the technologies and the skills needed to avert natural death almost indefinitely. More often than not, the terminally ill suffer unnecessary pain and are kept alive without any ell hope or expectations of surviving, as families stand watch waiting for the inevitable while still holding hope at the same time.

U. S. District Judge Barbara Rottenest wrote is no more profoundly personal decision, nor one which is closer to the heart of personal liberty, than the choice which a terminally ill person makes to end his or her own suffering Shilling, '94). The pro-euthanasia or " right to die" movement has received extensive support with the passage of laws in 40 states by 1990; this has allowed competent patience the legal privilege of making a " living will. These living wills give doctors the authority to withhold life-support, should the patient request it if the individual becomes terminally ill.

Having choices, including having the legal right for help to die is a pinnacle of hope within itself. This allows people to take control Of their lives and accomplish things on their terms; this is a very important part of being human and of living. The issue of euthanasia is, by its very nature, a very difficult and private choice. Therefore, euthanasia should remain exactly that, a choice and a private one at that. It is a choice that should not be legislated or restricted by opposing forces or opinions.

Euthanasia is a matter that should stay between the patient, thefamily, the doctor and God. Life is a precious gift received from the Creator with

gratefulness and appreciation; individuals should cherish, preserve, and enhance life in every way possible. However, when the possibility for a meaningful, joyful, desirable life has been thoroughly depleted and every effort has been made to avoid the inevitable, then the United States should make it legal for the merciful to show mercy to the dying who request help and understanding to end their torment.

My father on my husband's side, who had cancer, received euthanasia 6 years ago. He had chemotherapy radiation; the side effects that he endured were loss of appetite, becoming lethargic, fatigue, loss of color in skin, fever, chills, weight loss, night sweats and extreme pain. They told him that it was not going into remission and that it had spread throughout his body. According to the doctors, my father in law had maybe a year at most and even then, he would have to be hospitalized due to the pain and having chemotherapy done.

After achieving this information, my father opted for euthanasia instead of having to endure a year of pain and suffering with his family watching him deteriorate. So he said his goodbyes, took care of necessary business and arranged things financially for his family before the process was performed. He then had his wife and children in with him during the procedure as he received a huge dose of painkillers and then a drug, that I am not familiar with, that led him to his death painlessly.

Having the opportunity to have this type of say and control over his death, think, made the process a little more and easier to endure. He got to accomplish what many do not get the chance to accomplish, he was able to

set his finances straight, make sure his loved ones were taken care of and say his goodbyes to the ones he loved. To me this was a huge relief in knowing that he was allowed to have this type of help and closure before he left this world.

I also believe that this method not only helped my father in-law but it also helped his immediate and non immediate family except the inevitable and have time to process it, so as to handle the grieving process. To some, Euthanasia is nothing less than cold- blooded killing; others would consider it premeditated murder and consider those assisting in it an accessory to murder. In addition, they believe Euthanasia steals away the one thing that gives us a reason for existence, a life in which we choose to live. It also depreciates life, much like the enormous issue of abortion.

People against Euthanasia, deem it as morally and ethically wrong and think the government should outlaw it in these United States. It is true that modern medicine has evolved excessively throughout the enervation, so much so that abolitionists' believe that euthanasia in itself resets these medical advances back by years. Our Surgical Physicians alone are known as Administrators of Death; this is a side effect of the outcome of euthanasia. Some believe that euthanasia is unacceptable within our society because of a multitude of reasons.

Many who are against euthanasia being legalized are apprehensive because they dread that if it is then there will be many who die for needless reasons and they believe that there will be a rampage of " mercy killings" going on as an excuse for murder. Others believe that it is and always will be an immoral

thing to take one's life from them when we were not the ones to give it to them. Also many medical physicians also oppose euthanasia because they say that in assisting one in suicide is violating our dignity and 'litotes one's will to survive.

When it comes to doctors, there is also The Hippocratic Oath in which they need to take into consideration. The Oath of Hippocrates is believed to have originated in approximately the fifth century B. C. And, even then, it incorporated a specific ledge against physician-assisted suicide when it said, " I will give no deadly medicine to anyone, even if asked. " It is recommended that a person suffering from an incurable or terminal illness is not completely in command of their mental capabilities and thereby incapable of such an extraordinary decision.

In addition, a degraded mental capacity within a patient rules out any realistic thinking concerning survivors. Euthanasia is a very contentious topic. People dispute whether a person who is terminally ill, or handicap, should have the right or not to ask their doctor, or relatives to die by euthanasia. People say that dying by euthanasia is to die with self-respect, instead of living an artificial life by prolonging death on respirators and other life support machines. My personal outlook on this matter is one of minority.

I believe that if a person is diagnosed terminally ill, and finds that there is nothing anyone can do for them, then why they should have to suffer and endure days, weeks, months or maybe even years in pain and agony is beyond me. Not only do they suffer but their family suffers alongside them also. They watch as their condition gets worse and continues to deteriorate,

ND then they have to live with the vision of a person lying there helpless, not able to feed themselves, get out of bed, or talk to them for the rest of their lives.

When instead they could have lived remembering their loved one as they were before they were diagnosed as terminally ill and began to die slowly. Recently, my grandmother, who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease (AD), died in my Aunts guest bedroom where she had been staying and taken care of by my aunt and uncle for the last four years of her life. My grandmother lived in England, where she was born, raised and died, she did not have the option of euthanasia nor did my aunt or uncle who struggled with her through the end.

My aunt and uncle went through the pain emotionally before it ever affects my grandmother physically. They took care of a shell for four years that used to house their mother; we lost my grandmother in 2007 spiritually however her physical body was still active and with us but empty. My grandmother could not remember any of her children or her grandchildren, nor could she remember family and friends in general. She would fight my aunt and uncle all the time thinking that they had detained her because she had no idea who they were or where she was.

She had caused harm to herself as well as family members that tried to help her or care for her. She eventually forgot how to do simple things that are second nature to us all, such as showering, brushing her teeth, combing her hair and dressing herself. She continued to deteriorate more and more over the years, to the point where she had forgotten how to do vital things such

as walk, eat, drink, go to the bathroom and even communicate. She was not physically in pain until the point of forgetting the vital actions, then she began to dehydrate and starve, her body began to shut down due to this.

She was then attached to a feeding tube and life support, as by that point she had also just stop breathing occasionally and needed help in doing so. She stayed on life support for 6 months, until the decision was made to take her off and then she lasted for a week as her body withered away due to lack of water and food. We were reassured that she died with no pain but the look on her face showed differently and I could only imagine what she might have gone through and what we could have possibly spared her had we had the option of euthanasia.

With every example given of euthanasia, there are some people who agree, and some who are dead set against it. There are comprehensible and logical reasons why some people are against euthanasia. Most people want their loved ones with them until their day has actually come for them to die. It might give people an understanding that it is all right to kill oneself. While the patient is lying in bed, some clinic, or scientist, might find a cure for the very disease that said patient is dying from and be able to cure them.

For medical reasons they may be able to find out more about a retain disease to be able to further the search for the cure while someone has it. As many times, as you consider the idea of euthanasia you will find just as many pros as cons. Maybe we have to start thinking like the people in the hospital beds, who are unable to walk, talk, feed themselves, think for themselves, or even breathe for themselves. On the other hand, even from

the perspective of the family members who have to watch their own flesh and blood suffer and dwindle into nothing right before their eyes?