

Philosophical point of view on right to die

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



Many large topics that affect people on a global scale are usually found plastered across social media and many major news outlets resulting in enormous debates and arguments all over the world. Euthanasia, the Greek word for “ Good death” is one of the most controversial topics in the medical industry today and has been debated on for years by human rights advocates, doctors and families. Also known as assisted suicide, euthanasia has many forms from voluntary and involuntary but the reasoning and morality of each are highly disputable. Due to the fact that there are other alternatives to euthanasia and because it violates the value of human life and it is clearly unethical to have a medically-assisted death regardless of the scenario.

Aristotle, a well known philosopher who studied under Plato indirectly deals with euthanasia stating that, people seeking death are weak and corrupt. He states, “ the base among mankind, by toil o’ercome conceive a love of death” he later on writes, “ but to seek death in order to escape poverty, or the pangs of love or from pain or sorrow is not the act of courageous man, but rather of a coward”. Aristotle is basically saying that when one seeks out death because of certain circumstances in their life, it’s unjustified or as he calls it “ cowardly”. The death of Socrates had major impact on Aristotle⁴ leading him to state in his book that “ one who kills himself commits a crime against the state and not towards himself”. No one ever chooses to suffer a criminal offense or injustice out of free will, going through with assisted suicide is deliberately choosing to inflict bodily harm on oneself and not in an act of revenge or payback. Even if a moral citizen is suffering from a terminal illness, they would be a coward to consider assisted suicide because their

decision would ignore reasoning and rational desire which makes it an immoral choice.

One of Aristotle's core maxim was the Pursuit of Happiness, meaning the main goal of life is happiness. When one is dead, they cannot experience happiness, so therefore if death is avoidable that initial purpose or goal of happiness is still achieved. To go through with assisted suicide would mean that happiness, the main goal of life, is not felt. Although some would say that euthanasia should be prohibited because it has ignored the value of life, many would disagree. Philosopher and utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, argued that the whole purpose of life is not God or to follow certain rules but to "promote the greatest possible happiness for creatures on earth" When it comes to euthanasia, many people who want to go through it are in a position in their lives where they are unhappy and in some type of pain. Looking at it from Jeremy Bentham's perspective of promoting happiness, it would be morally right to increase someone's happiness and provide a quick, painless death all while decreasing the amount of hardship in the world.

The quote, "one has complete sovereign over their body and any decisions to be made about one's body are up to them and no other authority" is believed by many utilitarians. If one decides and chooses that they would like to die, whether it's by medically assisted suicide or not, no one has the right to interfere⁶. Another way to look at it from a utilitarian perspective is by keeping a terminally ill patient alive the money going towards their life is being wasted. That money could go into finding a cure which will overall lead to overall happiness for society because future patients no longer have to be in

that position the disease puts them in. By allowing euthanasia, money could be saved and be invested elsewhere.

Euthanasia should be allowed and justified under specific conditions.

Immanuel Kant believes that human action is morally good when done for the sake of duty. To justify euthanasia, one must feel that it is the right thing to do out of rational duty as opposed to other reasons or passions. The Categorical Imperative says that every moral act must be universally acceptable. If euthanasia was to be permitted for one patient, it should automatically be allowed for it to become a universal law so that everyone can do it. If one looks at it from the sense where the maxim is “one should be allowed to go through with euthanasia if under unbearable suffering that cannot be cured,” then there is less negative effects of universalizing this law. However, if the maxim was phrased as, “one should be allowed to take their own life” this would be unacceptable if it was applied to everyone.