

Example of essay on reasons for the justification of a legal suicide

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Tony Nicklinson suffers from locked in syndrome as a result of a stroke, he is unable to communicate verbally or physically, and he is completely paralyzed from the neck down—a prisoner in his own body. The fifty-eight year old was denied the right to die by the high court. His life, as it was, as he loved it is essentially gone, only his body, his pain and his sense of loss survives. Cases like Nicklinson's illustrate why governments should not prevent people from choosing the terms in which their lives end. There is a very private personal matter, and it should be legal so that it can be done in a safe, supportive environment, should a free citizen choose to end their lives. Suicide should be safe, legal and rare.

Nicklinson finds it unjust that the current laws lock him in his pain. "It is astonishing," he says, "that in 1969 we could put a man on the Moon yet in 2012 we still cannot devise adequate rules governing assisted dying." Tony Nicklinson (2012)

The reason for a suicide ban has religious roots. In religious cultures suffering is seen as a sort of trial by god, you suffer and then are better for it, so you're supposed to stick it out, because you deserve it. When we talk about quality of life philosophically we're talking about measuring pleasure over suffering i. e. Divorced from religion, which a government that separates the institution of Church and State, there is no logical basis for a suicide ban. Individuals have the right to ask, "Am I experiencing more pleasure than pain in my life as a justification for staying alive?"

On the other hand religion sees suffering as part of quality of life, suffering in the religious community is supposed to make you a better person, it's something to overcome. Someone like Tony Nicklinson has no medical chance

of ever recovering. The question of whether or not a suicide ban should exist is really a question of “ How can others define your quality of life? How can you say ‘ I want to die’ and someone else basically say ‘ well you can’t because it’s a sin’?

This leads to a second reason for suicide to be legal, a point that Nicklinson also argued. From a freedom perspective, an individual is owner of his own self. The right to self-determination necessitates a human right to die. Self-determination allows for a determination even to end one life so long as that death does not harm others. I am unable to decide that I don’t want to wear a seat belt as a form of euthanasia, as there are penalties attached to it and because it could cause harm to others.

As with all matters relating to the loss of a life, the issue of whether or not there should be a legal suicide is one fuelled with emotion. But looking at the issue from an economic standpoint, there is another reason outside of the individual, which makes it a good thing for the society. People like Nicklinson who want to end their life, who can no longer work and require medical care are a drain on the medical system. Resources that could have otherwise been applied to individuals with a hope of recovery, medical resources are spent on terminal patients like Nicklinson who will never recover. Many such patients resort to government funding of their medical bills as the cost of such care can be staggering.

In Switzerland, a country often lauded as progressive it is legally permissible for a patient to end their own life. One such example, Michele Causse ingested 15g of powdered Nembutal, dissolved in 60ml of normal tap water, ending her life. It is legal to assist someone in ending their life there so long

as it is not done for egotistical reasons. Michele wonders why people say life is sacred, when we should be able to do with our own lives as we wish, you don't need to tell people to cherish life because they do that anyway. Ludwig A. Minelli, Secretary General Dignitas stated, " Even a teenager has a right to die when his girlfriend leaves him' On the other hand he wouldn't help him until he explained that things can get better; there are plenty of fish in the sea but this is not the case for someone that is terminally ill."

Lynn Gilderdale a young woman who was very ill and who wanted to die, enlisted her mother in assisting her suicide, her mother now is on trial for murder. Baroness Campbell of Surbiton states that sanctioning assisted suicide is too dangerous and could lead to opening the flood gates for disabled people to be killed, what they're worried about is that someone can be coerced or feel bullied into it by the standards society sets people. Campbell thinks it's as wrong to kill someone with their permission, as it is to kill them without. Basically what she's saying is by trying to prosecute Lynn's mother Kay for murder they are setting an example as a deterrent to others that assisting in someone's suicide is wrong but how can it be wrong in England and legitimate in Switzerland and Belgium? Obviously the idea that it is wrong is just an opinion, so how can you try someone for attempted murder on a difference of opinion? Lynn was acquitted and the crown prosecution was heavily criticised for seeking attempted murder. Opponents of legal suicide argue that is selfish, as it affects the community because you have a right to die but it doesn't just affect you, it affects your family and the nation and the law and possibly society as a whole. But as we

have seen, outside of arguing from a pathetic fallacy, it actual benefits the community.

As already discussed, religion may have their moral standing against it, but that is between a religion and its followers.

One of the most compelling arguments made against legal suicide is that it is a system that is ripe for abuse. They envision scenarios in which children, eager to get their inheritance will convince their parents to end their lives. This is a real concern, and certainly one to consider when passing legislation. The question is, should people be prevented freedom because allowing them to have it could lead to theoretical abuses. The answer is no. Legal suicide need not be a free for all. It should be governed by intelligent laws with thorough oversight.

Assisted suicide, carefully enacted, is justified right in a democratic society. The idea of democracy is that you can decide what happens in your life, i. e. changing government and policy. Other progressive societies have legalized suicide and not seen a systemic problem of abuses as those against suggest would happen. It's implementation will restore people their dignity and allow them to end their lives on their own terms.