

I'd like to submit a personal experience as to why there should be better end of life choices. I don't wish to use names, but my family has good family friends that we have known for nearly fifty years. They are a mother and father, married for that length of time, three sons and several grandchildren.

Mum and dad were having a cup of tea, sitting on their verandah, mid-afternoon, warm day, enjoying each other's company and the view.

Mum dozed off and when she awoke dad was no longer by her side. She went looking for him and found him, hanging by a rope in their garage! Absolutely devastating!!

We can only surmise as to what state of mind he was in as he strung up the rope, put it around his neck, stood on a chair, kicked it out from underneath himself and squeezed the last breath of life out of himself, for he left no note behind.

We do know that he was in the early stages of dementia. We do know that he had spent the last two years watching helplessly as a good friend of his was diagnosed with dementia and slowly deteriorated until he passed away. He rode the ups and downs of his friend's trials and tribulations and was very upset at what his friend and their family went through.

We choose to believe that he didn't want to go through the same trials and tribulations and, more importantly, that he didn't want to put his wife and family through the same heartbreaking and emotional journey.

Things could have been so very different if there were proper processes in place for end of life choices. He could have lived for a while longer. He could have enjoyed life, family and friends for a while longer. He could have said proper good-byes to his family and friends. He could have consulted with his Doctor as to when and how would be the best time to go. He would not have had to face and carry out the decision that he did, alone. His wife wouldn't have had to find him, hanging in the garage, the image forever imprinted on her mind.

I have also had other friends that have died slow, very painful deaths from the ravages of cancer. They, also, should have been able to plan for the end of their life. People should be able to get the proper advice and attention, and be able to decide when and how their life ends, in a way that is reliable, peaceful, and dignified.

...thanks, David Scanlon.

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Mr David Scanlon

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