

SUBMISSION TO THE DISCUSSION OF END OF LIFE OR EUTHANASIA DECISIONS.

I am a 78 year old widow, living in a Retirement Village. It is surprising how often this subject comes into our conversations. We had no choice in being born, surely we should be able to have a say how we would like to end our lives.

Subjects I would like to come under discussion.

When the quality of life is so diminished - physically, mentally or medically - a decision should be able to be made to ease the burden of life of the suffering person, in conjunction with two or three other independent professional people. The patients' own doctor, who would know the persons' wishes, from a period of many intimate consultations over time, a Palliative Medical person who would understand the issues of the body and its' likely future, maybe a lawyer with training in the implications of such a decision, could be involved.

I believe people should have the right to sign a "Care Plan for End of Life" to be witnessed by an independent legal witness, in case they should be unable to express their wishes by becoming physically or mentally unable, when life has become totally intolerable.

I believe a family member should not be on the deciding committee, as the issue could be too difficult or emotional, but they should be understanding and support a decision about what is best for the patient.

It is often noticed that the family member who has put their life on hold, to care for the patient ends up being "victimised" by a strong family member, (or one who has done "nothing" for the patient) so that the dedicated carer receives little consideration for their commitment.

A modern family can be a many faceted entity, - divorce, re-marriage, de-facto arrangements, step-children, fostered children. It could become almost impossible to find a truly independent, rational family member, who could make a judgement, on behalf of everybody. Their judgement should be honestly made for the benefit of the patient.

There are many modern diseases that can leave a person comatosed , on life-support machines, or have a physically totally inept body, but tragically, a fully aware, active and intelligent brain. Surely that person should be allowed to say “ enough is enough” ! There are gentle, painless means of letting a patient be released from a life without quality.

I believe religious beliefs should not be involved in the decision making, or interfere with the patients’ wishes or their “End of Life Wishes” or be imposed on the patient by a non- involved ‘other party’.

I believe if a person has many medical and mental issues that keep them living in a totally impossible situation, of constant physical or mental pain, they should be allowed to have means to end their life, without any repercussions to anyone else.

I hope you have a vibrant discussion at THE INQUIRY into the subject and conclude with a modern, considerate and compassionate change of Law.

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