How I Found The Subtle Line In The Assisted Suicide Debate

Description

The late Dr. Donald Low made some news headlines when he requested in his last days the right to end his own life in a fashion that is legal.

Whenever this issue gets raised, there are always two sides that gets formed to argue their position. And in typical fashion, the media establishment loves to embellish the issue to attract interest so it can sell its advertising.

On the one side, we see people who are faced with their own death, arguing that they should have the right to request a doctor to prescribe a lethal dose of medications to suppress their breathing and thus end their life in a manner that is considered to be more peaceful.

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On the other side, we see people who believe that life is sacred and any action that brings about death more quickly is unethical or immoral. In addition, there is a group of young disabled people who believe that this could lead us down a slippery slope of towards the euthanasia of people with disabilities. After all, if a person does not want to experience the chronic disability that is found in the final stages of oneâ??s terminal illness, it can also be reasoned why would somebody want to experience this chronic disability as a part of routine living. Life is thought not worth living.

We see this being argued by Susan Griffiths who articulatory and rationally states her position in an interview she conducted. The interview is a very powerful piece of journalism.

So who is right?

The problem that I see is that the two sides are arguing with each other and are missing a subtle, yet distinct line that actually unifies them.

We need to accept the sad truth that people of all situations can be driven to despair and suicide for reasons besides having a terminal diagnosis. But we have to remember that not all who despair commit suicide. If you watch Susanâ??s video, you see no emotional despair. There is just resolution and a logic that is impossible to argue with. How can we condemn such resolution and poise? Surely, she has a right to end her own life.

Yet, I have also seen the same resolution and poise with some people with chronic disabilities. They choose to carry on despite their inability to walk, talk, move themselves around their home, and go to the bathroom without assistance. Despite these challenges, they still find meaning in living while Susan Griffiths and Dr. Low does not.

Who is right?

Maybe we need to as why does somebody have to be wrong?

There is a line that unifies the two. Both Susan Griffith and a person who is living with a chronic illness can both be right by *choosing*. The expression of free will is what unifies these two sides. A person like Susan who chooses to end their own life impacts only herself and her immediate family. She is not choosing for somebody else.

And in the same way a person with chronic illness and disability can *choose* to live. That person is not choosing for somebody else. They can continue to find meaning in continuing their life where somebody else facing a terminal illness does not.

It is the *right to choose* that unifies these two sides. And because the choice has an affect that is local, there is no reason for sides to be picked.

Live and let live, to oneâ??s limit. That is the subtle line.

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