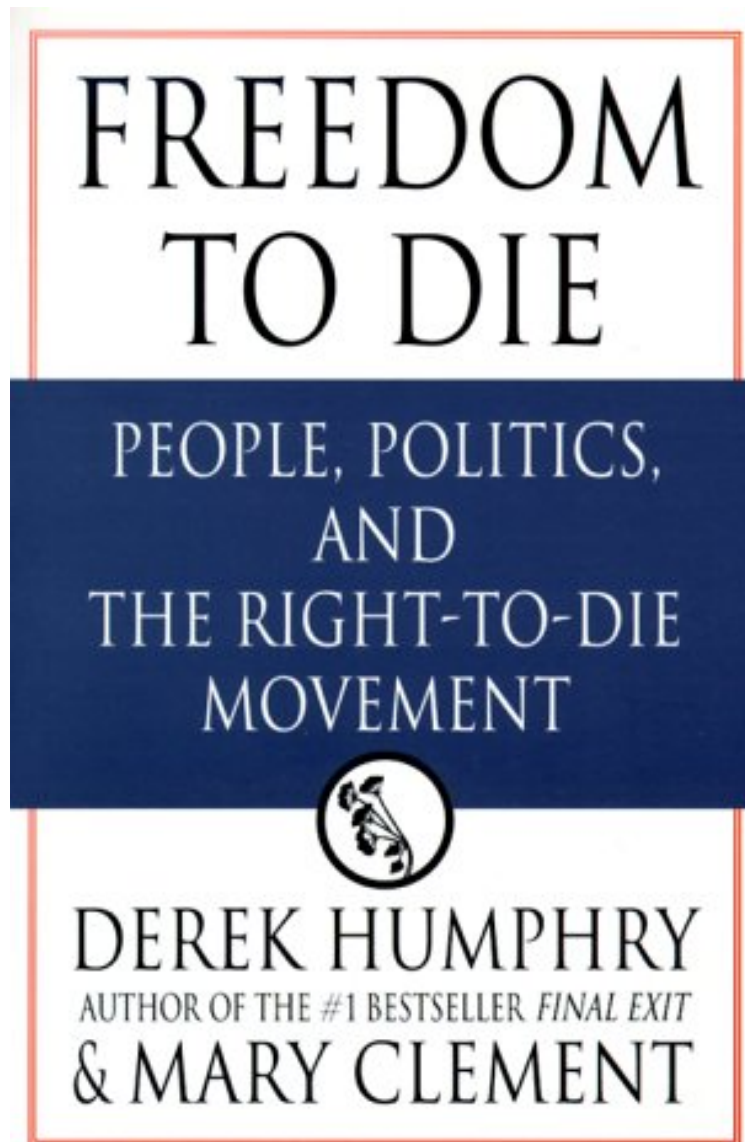


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Freedom to Die: People, Politics, and the Right-to-Die Movement

Derek Humphrey, Mary Clement

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Derek Humphrey, Mary Clement : Freedom to Die: People, Politics, and the Right-to-Die Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Freedom to Die: People, Politics, and the Right-to-Die Movement:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Freedom to dieBy Jackbo2This book has assisted me in some research regarding the Death and Dignity Act. The sections I have read have been helpful. I look forward in using the

book for continued information regarding any other research or my work. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. EARLY DAYS OF THE RIGHT-TO-DIE MOVEMENT By James L. Park, Derek Humphry, Mary Clement. Freedom to Die: People, Politics, and the Right to Die Movement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 388 pages (ISBN: 0-312-19415-3; hardback) (Library of Congress call number: R726.H844 1998) No single individual is more central to the right-to-die movement than Derek Humphry, who founded the Hemlock Society in 1980 and who has written several books on the subject. (In 2003 the Hemlock Society renamed itself End-of-Life Choices. And in 2004 it merged with Compassion in Dying, taking the new name Compassion Choices.) This book is a summary of the history of the right-to-die movement up to 1998. The right-to-die emerged in response to modern medical technology, which can keep bodies 'alive' longer than ever before imagined. Humphry and Clement summarize the most famous right-to-die cases: Quinlan, Cruzan, Kevorkian, Quill. They summarize the then-current policies in the Netherlands, which allow a physician to assist a patient to die when specified safeguards are fulfilled. Detailed accounts are given to the efforts to win the right-to-die on the West coast of the United States: California, Washington, Oregon. These states have referendum laws, allowing the people to create laws directly by a popular vote--when the elected lawmakers are too timid to enact a particular law. One drawback of this means of changing the laws is that the debates tend to be reduced to 30-second television ads. Oregon was the first state to allow physicians to aid a voluntary death--by prescribing lethal drugs after careful safeguards were fulfilled. (The complete text of the Oregon law is included as an appendix. The Oregon law with annual reports is also available on the Internet: Search for: "Oregon Death with Dignity Act". The US Supreme Court found no right-to-die in the Constitution, but the justices left the door open for states to write new laws. Humphry and Clement even include a chapter on the high cost of medical care at the end of life,--an argument for the right-to-die that is open to easy attack by opponents, who will suggest that some people will be put to death to save money. Voluntarily-created 'living wills' or Advance Directives for Medical Care can accomplish the same goal, but few people have written them. And sometimes doctors do not know about 'living wills' or ignore them. This book is an excellent place to begin reading about the right-to-die movement. It is based on Derek Humphry's personal experiences and all published sources. If you would like to see reviews of several other books on the right-to-die, search the Internet for this expression: "Books on the Right-to-Die". James Leonard Park, advocate of the right-to-die with careful safeguards 3 of 14 people found the following review helpful. "Right-to-die": killing disabled people for economic reasons By Michael Muehe Chapter 21 of this book, titled "The Unspoken Argument," advocates the economic benefits of euthanasia, as follows: "Similar to other social issues, the right-to-die movement has not arisen separate and distinct from other concurrent developments of our time. In attempting to answer the question Why Now?, one must look at the realities of the increasing cost of health care in an aging society, because in the final analysis, economics, not the quest for broadened individual liberties or increased autonomy, will drive assisted suicide to the plateau of acceptable practice." Derek Humphry and other right-to-die leaders, time after time, have demonstrated the same willingness to promote this final "solution" to the problems of people with disabilities. Taken together, these words and deeds mark a clear and consistent pattern - one that includes promotion of euthanasia and extermination of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, leaders of the pro-euthanasia movement still often falsely claim that their concerns are only for those with terminal illness. Their messages are tailored to specific audiences and vary greatly depending on the immediate political climate. The Hemlock Society, its leaders and its allies, need to come forward, to clearly state their complete agenda and open it to honest debate. Credit: Not Dead Yet! -- Disability activists opposed to the legalization of assisted suicide

Over the last decade, America has served as the battleground for a major political, social, cultural and religious war over one of the most fundamental questions we face: the right to die. Much like abortion in the 1970s, the right to die has emerged as one of the most urgent social issues for the coming years. The strength of the right-to-die movement was underscored as early as 1991, when Derek Humphry published *Final Exit*, the movement's call to arms that inspired literally hundreds of thousands of Americans who wished to understand the concepts of assisted suicide and the right to die with dignity. In 2011 *Final Exit* was in its 3rd edition. Now Humphry has joined forces with attorney Mary Clement to write *Freedom to Die*, which places this civil rights story within the framework of American social history. More than a chronology of the movement, this book explores the inner motivations of an entire society. Reaching back to the years just after World War II, *Freedom to Die* explores the roots of the movements and answers the question: Why now, at the end of the twentieth century, has the right-to-die movement become part of the mainstream debate?

.com Over 20 million people tuned in to watch Dr. Jack Kevorkian help a terminally ill man die on 60 Minutes during television-sweeps week in November 1998. The right to choose when to die is a deeply divisive issue around the world, and is especially so in the United States, thanks in part to Kevorkian and other activists. In *Freedom to Die*, Derek Humphry and Mary Clement describe the history of the right-to-die movement and explain all sides of the debate. Humphry has been an advocate of physician-assisted suicide ever since his wife died slowly and painfully of cancer in the mid-1970s. Humphry founded the Hemlock Society, one of the first advocacy organizations on this issue,

and has written several other books on the subject. The authors describe how technological advances, changes in the doctor-patient relationship, poor end-of-life care, and the civil-rights movement prompted the development of the right-to-die movement. Humphry and Clement are very critical of doctors' determination to keep a patient alive even after the patient's quality of life has become unbearably low: To rely so heavily on technology and biological functions to define the states of life and death is to deny the very social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life that give it meaning. In their zeal to fashion new and improved technologies, many doctors have promoted measures that are inappropriate and whose applications often have horrendous consequences. After outlining the history of the movement and the arguments of those on all sides of the issue, Humphry and Clement explain the 1997 Oregon Death with Dignity Act and other recent legislation. Even those who do not agree with the authors that choosing when to die is "the ultimate civil right" will find this book a useful tool in understanding this turbulent debate. --Jill Marquis
From Library Journal
In 1991, Humphry, founder of the Hemlock Society, published his best-selling *Final Exit* (Hemlock Society), fueling the national debate over physician-assisted suicide. Now, he and lawyer Clement provide a history of the right-to-die debate. As reasons for increased public sympathy for assisted suicide, they cite advances in medical technology coupled with increases in costs, the failure to address chronic pain control, AIDS, and the rights culture that first appeared in the 1960s. The authors then trace the issue's history from Karen Ann Quinlan in 1979 through the appearance of Dr. Jack Kevorkian in 1990 to the Oregon initiative from 1994 through 1997. Discussion of the religious, medical, and political opposition also appears, along with coverage of Dutch assisted-suicide laws, the status of state-assisted suicide laws, and a chronology. Though obviously favoring the right to die, the authors present their opinions in a clear, low-key manner. All individuals interested in this question should read this work; highly recommended for public and academic libraries. --Stephen L. Hupp, Swedenborg Memorial Lib., Urbana Univ., OH
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From Kirkus s
Effective advocacy journalism offered in defense of physician-assisted suicide (PAS). The authors maintain that PAS is an idea whose time has come. Humphry, founder of the Hemlock Society, has written numerous works, including *Final Exit*, 1991; Clements an attorney for right-to-die cases. They define PAS as the consequence of a dying patients request for self-administered lethal drugs obtained from a doctor. As their book argues, social and technological changes have made the public relatively receptive to the practice. Technology, after all, can postpone death perhaps indefinitely but often at the cost of leaving a patient in extreme mental and physical pain, or even in a "vegetable" state. Emerging from the rights culture of the 1960s, patients have increasingly demanded the freedom to choose the nature of their death in the face of this dehumanizing technological alternative. Poor end-of-life care, such as pain management, by physicians has also given impetus to the PAS movement. The authors discuss these issues with great care. They offer a history of the movement, particularly the recent legal and legislative struggles over PAS. They also discuss the powerful organized social forces opposed to PAS. This is, in short, an exhaustive study, useful regardless of whether one supports or loathes PAS. Flaws, however, do weaken the authors case. They insist that 70 percent of Americans support PAS, yet base this number on a single (!) poll. They dismiss hostility to PAS as due merely to a benighted establishment; this conclusion is unlikely to win sympathy from anyone with genuine moral qualms concerning PAS. Finally, while their critique of end-of-life care is devastating, they dodge the idea that perhaps we should put more of our energies into reform of such care, rather than into the effort to legalize PAS. A troubling, informative work of potential significance to everyone. (Author tour) --
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