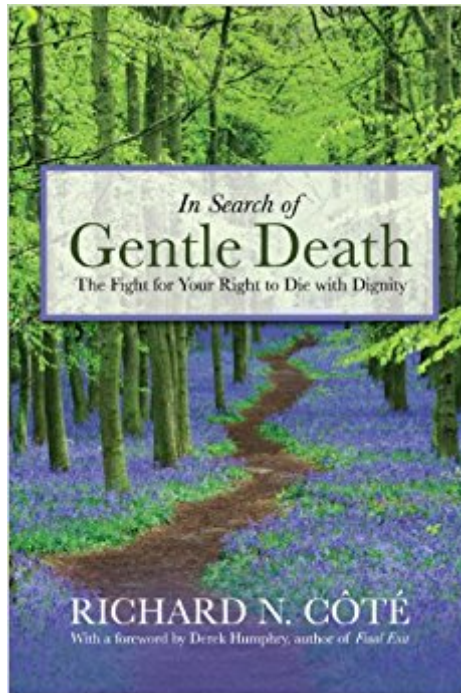


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In Search Of Gentle Death: The Fight For Your Right To Die With Dignity



Synopsis

Death is inevitable. But bad deaths those accompanied by unnecessarily prolonged pain and suffering, often aggravated by immensely costly and frequently futile medical treatments, can be avoided. This book explores the pioneering, highly pragmatic and practical work carried out by the international death-with-dignity movement over the last forty years to eliminate the last bad death. It offers clear and valuable examples of how, through frank communication with caregivers and loved ones and the use of Advance Medical Directives such as living wills, those who are facing the possibility of death in the foreseeable future, and those who help them cope, can greatly minimize or eliminate end-of-life turmoil, family dissention, and pain. It also proposes a comprehensive rethinking of end-of-life-care assumptions and a realignment of strategies to create a caring continuum to meet the rapidly expanding demands for death with dignity in the coming years.

Richard Cote' based this unique book on five years of intensive primary source research and more than one hundred in-depth interviews with death-with-dignity pioneers, activists, physicians, nurses, hospice workers, and their patients on four continents. It is written in narrative style for a general audience and intensely documented for the scholar. It illuminates the subject using 92 images and twelve hyperlinks to exclusive YouTube video interviews with death-with-dignity leaders worldwide. It explores the modern history of the death-with-dignity movement through the lives of its founders, leaders, and activists. Using personal case histories from around the world, it also portrays the often heart-breaking conflict between the final wishes of those who are living or dying in pain and the religious, medical, and laws which force them to spend their last days, months, or even years in avoidable pain and suffering against their clearly-stated will. Drawing on the most recent scientific and medical information, it also describes the rapid evolution of legal, dignified, readily available, painless methods which the tortured and the dying can use to hasten their own death without assistance, in the company, if they choose, of their friends and loved ones. PLEASE NOTE: this 379-page book replaces and updates Cote's 42-page 2008 technical booklet (now obsolete and out of print) titled *In Search of Gentle Death: A Brief History of the NuTech Group* an end-of-life technology development organization. All of NuTech's work is now described fully in Chapter 6 of this new 2012 book.

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Customer Reviews

Richard N. Cote' is the author of three acclaimed biographies, a social history, a contemporary novel, and co-wrote or edited over thirty other books. In 2004, he was awarded the Bobby Gilmer Moss Award in History by the Daughters of the American Revolution for his outstanding historical writing. After college, six years service in the U.S. Air Force, and four years on the staff of the South Carolina Historical Society, he turned to writing full-time. He has conducted extensive research into American biography, social history, and the international right-to-die movement. Dick has been chosen as a featured author and lecturer by numerous book festivals and his books have been featured on Dateline NBC, The Weather Channel, and Book TV. He has presented papers at the World Federation of Right to Die Societies' biennial congresses in Paris (2008), Melbourne (2010), and Zurich (2012). He lives near historic Charleston, South Carolina.

I discovered this book while googling frantically on the internet in the middle of the night as my dear love and spouse was dying in the living room of our home...i was desperately in search of a gentle death for her at her request.We had done all the right things: she had a health directive, i was the person responsible to see that that directive was observed, she was signed up for hospice so that she could die peacefully at home...and something was going horribly askew. She did not die peacefully. During tortured hours, hospice was unable to provide the necessary support and direction we both so desperately needed. But why?During the agonizing process of my beloved's death, i did not have the faintest idea why the system was failing. Gathering my courage, i met with the director of nursing for hospice the week of my spouses death. In our open-hearted meeting of two people just trying to work out what had failed and how it could be prevented for others in the future, i learned about the terrible dilemma hospice has been placed in and why they are unable to provide people with a dignified and gentle death."In Search of Gentle Death" by Richard Cote

clearly details this dilemma with extraordinarily well documented and painfully sincere personal stories. From local to national to international law, he documents the forces that continue to obstruct something as simple and humane as a dignified and gentle death for all of us. By contrast, almost a year to the day, I was in my livingroom with my spouse, our vet and my cherished friend of 12 years, Zoe. While handing him his favorite treats, we all made the loving decision to let him die a dignified and tender death. He died in seconds relieved of the pain and suffering his life had become. He had lived a full and joyful life. There are no regrets; only the grief of loss for such a dear companion. How could I ever imagine that my sweet love and spouse -- despite her own directives and her desire to die -- would never be afforded this much dignity? Richard Cote's book gave me the insight I needed to place my enormous grief into perspective and to dispell my ignorance enough to know that I will have to take affirmative action if I want to have a gentle death. His book is both a solice and a call to action in a decision that is and always should be very, very personal for each of us -- our right to die with dignity. If you want that right to be yours, I strongly advise you to read this book. Thank you, Richard, for your bravery and preseverence in this deeply relevant concern. You lightened my load considerably. Thank you.

Over the last 32 years -- after completing my internship in clinical psychology at the University of Pennsylvania -- I have been interested in end-of-life issues, especially the work of Derek Humphrey, the founder of the Hemlock Society. My interest was stimulated by my service as the staff psychologist to the Clark Unit in Gyn Oncology at UPenn, where for two grueling years I provided therapy, support and guidance to the many cancer patients, their families and the medical and nursing staff. In 1982, I moved to Switzerland and began my training in analytical psychology at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich. Along the way, I have joined the Hemlock Society and more recently the Final Exit Network and Dignitas, among others. In my clinical and analytical practice, I have had a lot of experience with death and dying over the years. Imagine my surprise in finding and reading this gem of a book. It is well written, well researched, and fair and balanced, if I can be so bold. Moreover I have learned a lot by reading it, such as: 1. The history of the Dutch experience with euthanasia and assisted suicide. The Dutch have proven yet again that their culture is the epitome of enlightenment and humaneness as it has been over the last several hundred years, especially during the awful years of the Nazi occupation; 2. The demise of the Hemlock Society and the schism in the movement in the USA leading to Compassion and Choices and the Final Exit Network. One group advocates for physician assisted suicide, the other self-delivery. The author is willing to try to reconcile the two; 3. The brief flowering of the NuTech experiments leading to the

helium final exit method; and 4. A treasure trove of well documented information about euthanasia and assisted suicide around the world. Japan's experiences piqued my interest. Just before reading this under publicized book, I saw the Frontline program The Suicide Plan on the internet instead of KQED, the PBS station in the San Francisco Bay area. Synchronistic! The program provides the dramatic punch, the book a very thorough and deep and reflective context. Both deserve the highest accolades.

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