

Life and death

Look at these phrases from the texts:

He is no longer able to live *a normal life*.
The doctor is surprised at Mike's *sudden death*.

Add *life* or *death* to the following words. Five can use both.

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|----------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. a busy | | 10. a varied | |
| 2. an exciting | | 11. a sudden | |
| 3. a horrible | | 12. a tragic | |
| 4. instant | | 13. a long | |
| 5. a natural | ..... | 14. a hard | ..... |
| 6. a peaceful | ..... | 15. an unexpected | ..... |
| 7. a premature | ..... | 16. a rewarding | ..... |
| 8. a full | ..... | 17. a slow | ..... |
| 9. a lonely | ..... | 18. a violent | ..... |

Look again at the 5 expressions which take both *life* and *death*. Discuss the difference in meaning between them. For example, *a horrible life* and *a horrible death*.

Discussion

Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups:

1. A man has been in prison for murder for 30 years and will remain there for the rest of his life. He refuses to eat and says that he wants to die. Should he be allowed to die?
2. The wife of a close friend has died recently. Your friend has been terribly upset since her death. In a conversation with him you begin to suspect that he is thinking of taking his own life. What would you do?
3. A close friend is in hospital suffering from an incurable disease and in a lot of pain. He asks you to bring him in some pills from his home so that he can end his life with dignity. What would you do?
4. A woman terrorist was found guilty of planting a bomb which killed 20 people. She has been sent to prison for 20 years. She now refuses to eat and says that she is not guilty. Should she be allowed to die or should she be kept alive?
5. You are staying in a hotel with a rooftop swimming pool. You go up to the pool one morning and find a woman standing on top of the wall around the outside of the building, about to jump off. What would you do?
6. You are 85. You are starting to suffer from senile dementia. You watched your father die a horrible death from the same thing. Are you going to suffer in the same way or ... ?

Discussion

Work in pairs or small groups. Read the text and discuss the questions below:

In British law, a person has the right to refuse treatment, provided he or she is fully competent to make that decision. If a patient is not able to ask for or refuse treatment (because, for example, they are unconscious) then a doctor can decide not to give treatment. If a doctor decides to do this, it is good medical practice to consult the patient's relatives.

1. Do you feel these laws are reasonable?
2. Are they the same in your country?

Four types of euthanasia

Suicide: killing yourself. In the UK it is illegal to help someone commit suicide.
Voluntary euthanasia: when someone asks to die. They may not be able to commit suicide so they need help or they may not be able to ask to die, but they have left instructions.
Involuntary euthanasia: This is when someone has not actually asked to die. However, they are killed so that they do not have to suffer any more.
Non-voluntary euthanasia: killing someone who is not able to ask to live or die. For example, they might be in a long-term coma.