

# 60 REASONS TO SUPPORT NEW YORK'S MEDICAL AID IN DYING ACT

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Reason #45

***So that a daughter's promise to her mother that she won't have to suffer can be honored.***

**T**here comes a moment when all you hope for is peace. When you begin to focus on ending the pain and letting them rest. A moment when you realize they are ready to leave but are staying for you. Staying because they don't want to cause you pain, staying because they have no choice but to wait.

So much of the process is out of their control at least that is how it felt when my mom was diagnosed with bone cancer.

For months we did what we could, we went for all the tests, tried all the treatments but finally realized that there was nothing left to do. We had to just enjoy the time we had left, we had to have hard conversations about what she wanted, where she wanted to spend her last days and who she wanted to see.

My mom had only a couple of wishes. She insisted that she not die in my home. She didn't want her grandchildren to see her dying; it was very important to her that my home be a place of happy memories. And she also didn't want to be in pain.

I'll never forget one of our last conversations, when she began to suffer.

Me: "Mom, I'm not sure what is going on but I'm going to figure it out."

And she replied, "I know you will."

You see, nothing was working. None of the meds hospice had given us were working. She would wake up screaming, literally screaming "I can't breathe."

Her lungs had filled up with fluid and she felt like she was drowning. After hours of dealing with this, I decided it was enough and we needed to go back to the hospital.

It was a struggle to get them to admit her, and even some of our family tried to talk me out of it. But I insisted because I simply couldn't manage her pain and anxiety. And I had made a promise: to make sure she was not in pain.

The minute they put the IV in her arm she had immediate peace, she was calm for the first time in almost 24 hours. I told her stories about places we'd been together and funny stories of my children. I know she heard me because she would smile or squeeze my hand.

But it didn't have to be like this.

With medical aid in dying, we could have had a proper goodbye, we could have been at home, the control over the process could have relieved her anxiety and she would not have experienced pain and distress during her last days.

In the end, despite my best efforts, I wasn't able to give her what she wanted, even with hospice. I am still trying to come to terms with that.

**We owe it to those who are dying to give them some control over their last days. . It is hard enough to grieve the passing of a loved one, that grief doesn't have to be shroud in guilt and regret about end of life choices.**

To join our mission, email Amanda Cavanaugh at [acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org).

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