

Nagui's Choice: Your heartfelt comments

Peggy Stairs, Calgary:

Thank you for this program, and I am glad you had this opportunity to experience first hand the need for a timely peaceful death for those with nothing but years of living only a shell of a life and a lonely and difficult painful existence. Please, please if your heart allows, become an advocate for those who need this.

name withheld:

Dear Dr. Brian, I listen to your program most Saturdays unfortunately I missed the first episode on Mr. Marcos. Thankfully, I caught today's program and listened with complete understanding of Mr. Marcos' need. I have Primary Lateral Sclerosis and have had for the past 13 years with progressively diminishing mobility. I am now in a power chair for outside use although still able to use a walker in the home. After a full life of hard work, travel, and adventure to have had this hit me at the age of 63 was a bolt out of the blue after having not ever being "sick" in my life and just when I was truly enjoying my "semi-retirement". I am now 76 and with my speech now affected for the past four or five years, life is getting harder to deal with. I have contemplated ending my own life for many years (when the time was right) now as I have no family at all. I have many dear friends for which I have been truly blessed; however ultimately I will be alone and facing being in a home where I will not be able to communicate or even move at will and will have to wait until someone notices if I am in discomfort. That prospect fills me with dread. I have been trying to figure out how I can take care of ending my own life before the nightmare of losing control of myself happens. I, like Mr. Marcos, know the timing is very important, if I wait too long I will not be able to do it and although I have been trying to plan by storing medication but knowing how much would do the job or just make me a vegetable is the problem. Although I have not spoken with my doctor yet, I'm pretty sure that he would not help me in this endeavor. A few of my friends know of my wishes but really do not think I am serious. I truly would just like to go to bed to sleep and not wake up in the morning but then I think of my caregiver coming in, in the morning, and finding me and what a shock that would be for her. I am so grateful for your program and the information that it provided as far as where I might get some helpful support in this very serious undertaking and now realize how I must be organized. I, like the lady in B.C., am not ready to do this right now but want to be able to in peace and dignity when the time is right which I believe will probably be within another year.

Judy Chrastina, Vancouver:

What a beautiful story. I was in tears today...death with dignity. Thank you to all for sharing this poignant story.

Gail Hutchin, Upper Coverdale:

A beautiful story, beautifully told. Thank you.

Anne Morgan Ph.D:

Dear Dr. Goldman, I listened to both programs about the man with Huntington's disease ending his life. You and the couple did a fantastic job of bringing the issue to the public. It was done with sincerity, kindness and consideration. I found it very sad and I am not sure I would be as brave as they were, but I am fortunate not to be faced with those circumstances. I certainly hope that our Government will take up this issue instead of fighting against it. Dying with Dignity definitely has my support. Well done and keep up the excellent programs.

Dean Willich, Niagara Falls:

I have been in Canada for 10 years. I loved the CBC for years before. This is the most powerful and motivating series I have ever heard. You have introduced the next step in Canada's pursuit to be a moral and humanitarian nation. I say this as a member of the Christian Clergy. Thank you for your work.

Maria Kelleher, Toronto:

I have just listened to part two of Nagui's story, and then went on the web to listen to part one. I was in floods of tears hearing the pain in man's voice, and marveling at the strength and love it took to let Nagui do what he clearly wanted to do. I cannot imagine what strength it took to stay the course on Nagui's tough decision. I remember Jan and Nagui from years ago, before they met each other, after they got together for the second time and when they got engaged. They were an incredibly upbeat couple, full of fun and laughter, always fun to be with. I have always been a strong supporter of the right for people with terminal or debilitating illnesses to choose the time when they no longer want to be a burden to their family and loved ones. People on the other side of this opinion always say but this is the thin edge of the wedge, what next? However, other countries have figured it out why can't Canada? As Nagui said in his final letter, Canada is a leader in social policy on many issues, but his one has lagged behind. Even if allowing assisted suicide is the thin edge of the wedge, you can always stop the wedge from getting wider with the right policies and controls in place. I was recently at a lecture on business ethics at U of T. The lecturer spoke of changing social attitudes over time and asked for a show of hands on who supported the right to die. Most (but not all) people - about 70 per cent to 80 percent - in the room put their hands up. They were mostly in the 40-60 demographic. I commented that support was high in this group because we had all experienced the reality of people suffering with horrible terminal diseases. I thought younger people would support the right to die at a lower level. The lecturer commented that he had asked the question in 10 classes recently, across Canada, mostly with young people, and the young audiences supported the right to die almost 100 percent. The lecturer commented that the issue has moved significantly in the last 20 years and the last people to catch up are the government. Given that we will all live longer than the previous generation, and may have to endure years with wasting illnesses, and be a burden to our families and the health system, we should at least be given options on how we want to spend the later years of our lives, or the years of diminishing health and independence. As I understand it, knowing you have a choice is sufficient for most people. In Holland, very few prescriptions for the drugs to allow assisted suicide are actually filled. People only need to have the prescription -- it is the feeling that you have the choice is what is important to most people. Nagui asked us to pick up the fight where he left off. We should at least try to get the government to initiate an open discussion across the country on current attitudes to assisted suicide, and measure public opinion and the level of public support to change the laws to reflect current attitudes. The policy and legislation can then be designed to reflect how Canadians feel today, not 20 or 30 years ago. Governments need to change laws to reflect the fact that the world has changed significantly, and adapt to changing social attitudes.

Iraj Behnood, Mississauga:

I wish there was a better way to thank you for "Nagui's Choice" your September 15th program. It reflects on a harsh reality that a part of our society battles with every day; and yet our politicians prefer to keep their head in the sand, ignoring the fact that laws are evolving in more advanced countries! My congratulations to Dr. Goldman for his courage and thoughtfulness to touch on such a sensitive aspect of life.

Martiner Carver, Pointe Claire, Quebec:

Many thanks for September 15 edition. "I have a dream" that SOON Canadians will at last have the choice on how to die on their own terms, I for one would live the remaining of my life with peace of mind knowing that when I FEEL my time has come, I could go with dignity and die peacefully. Please have more discussion on this subject and make Canadians aware of their rights... we are not asking for a favor. With gratitude.

Rhonda Anderson, Brantford, ON:

I've just finished listening to your last installment of Nagui's choice and I was deeply moved. The decision Nagui made must have been the bravest of his life, and I commend him. Listening to Jan's words after Nagui passed brought tears to my eyes, bringing to the surface the sorrow I feel since my mom's death in May of this year. Although my mother did not assist in her own death I do believe on some level she did decide it was time to go. Her last year was spent living in a nursing home. The decision to move to the nursing home was mom's own as she realized that dad could not keep her safely at home anymore. I watched as she declined in ability and motivation. She did however keep her sharp wit and sense of humour. The death certificate read heart failure as the cause of death, and I believe that her heart did fail, but not in the physical way but in the emotional way. This may have been mom's way of telling us that there was little quality of life for her at this time and she was just tired. She was making her choice. We are left to grieve but have the promise of being together again in heaven I hope that Nagui's message is heard loud and clear.

Sarah Faerman:

Thank you for the last 2 episodes of Nagui's choice. Very relevant and hopefully it will prod our decision makers.

Pamela Courtot, Stouffville, ON:

I was profoundly touched by both episodes and impressed with the very tasteful and sensitive approach of the program's construction. I have supported the right of people to make a choice to die with dignity, for a long time. This show reinforced my belief that this right should be available. I hope that the show serves to convince others, so that we will soon see a time when death with dignity is a recognized right in Canada. I expect that the program will win international awards for radio documentary. These will be well-deserved.

Anne Fenn:

Your story about the assisted suicide of Nagui today was extraordinary. I don't know if I've ever heard anything so honest, profound and moving on the radio in my life (and I've been listening to CBC for all of my 50 years). THANK YOU - not just for this episode, but for an excellent show that never fails to interest, enlighten, inform, affect and entertain. Warmest regards

David Gardner, Ottawa:

I just want to congratulate you for one of the most moving programs I have ever heard on the radio I listened to both segments with tears flowing, but it is essential that the Canadian public come to grips with this subject of assisted suicide as some European nations have done). I had a friend who died from Huntington's Disease several decades ago. It is an appalling way to die at the end, and I, too, will insist on the ability to end my own life should I be confronted with a diagnosis that has such an unpleasant ending, such as dementia.

Catherine Morgan, Toronto:

Thank you for this amazingly well-told radio documentary telling Nagui's story both from his side and his partner's in such a tasteful and supportive way. I lost a son to suicide and a husband to cancer so I can identify with this story on many levels. Congratulations to the CBC on bringing this story so wonderfully to us but most of all to Nagui and Jan who agreed to open their lives to people they will never meet.

Lynn Brophy, Toronto:

I completely and absolutely agree with assisted suicide It's humane and humanitarian. It's time for Canada to look at this issue anew with compassion and reason. I admire Nagui very much.

Ann Wilson, Toronto:

I was so touched by your program about Nagui's right to die. What a sad but beautiful story of life and death Thank you for this.

Margaret Jackson, Westmount:

Very moving story. I support having the right to die. Please add my name to any petition to the Federal Government asking that they approve assisted suicide for those with a terminal illness who wish to end their life.

Peter Bunnett:

Hello, this was the best extended piece on this topic that the CBC has done. Direct and sensitive. I have written many letters to the CBC trying to get the organization to cease and desist the overuse of "special" which is used with abandon. This program was special. Thanks for a class act.

Rachel Ingram:

I pulled over to the side of the road so I could listen to this program as my tears were impeding my vision. What a heroic story. Nagui was a brave, courageous man and his wife is no less courageous Let's hope his life and death will change the way society, the medical community and our politicians view assisted suicide.

Liz Rykert and John Sewell:

We thought your two shows on Nagui's decision to end his life were terrific. Thank-you for putting together so well. It is helpful to understand so well all the many issues related to supporting someone to make this choice. Hopefully this show will help move the conversation forward. Yours Sincerely,

Andre Lachance, Thorndale, ON:

The 2-episode account of Nagui's death was surely the most touching, most enlightened radio show I have ever heard. Thank you for putting it together!

Jean Cameron, Halifax:

I've had many well-beloved dogs euthanized when their lives were no longer bearable. Sat on the floor at the vet's office and held my dear doggies as their lives slipped quietly away. On the other hand, my late husband had an operation which went wrong, took eight and a half hours, the anesthetic wrecked his lungs so that he never spoke or could breathe or move himself afterwards, was on a respirator and tubes

in and out for 30 days, in great misery. There was no possible treatment. He could write at first, and begged me to "intervene with the doctors" - what could I do? Except tell them that he didn't want "heroic measures" taken. As his organs closed down he lingered and eventually did die. Nobody wants to end like that. How in so-called civilized states must people at the close of life be treated so abominably?

(Rev) Eldon Hay, C.M., PhD:

Dear Dr. Goldman, I have just listened to the (second) program, I did not hear the first. It is a powerful broadcast I admire Nagui, his wife Jan. I thank, you, doctor. This is a gutsy courageous program to put on the air. Not all listeners will be affirming. Some will. I do. The subject needs to be opened up and discussed. Thanks

John Yorke, New Glasgow, NS:

I am a regular listener but was particularly interested by the shows featuring Nagui Morcos. I am in a very similar position and mindset as Mr. Morcos. My health situation is extremely advanced primary progressive MS The impact it has had on my life has been very profound, with the level of physical disability I must cope with daily as severe as any ALS patient I have read about. What really caught my attention was your classification of Mr. Morcos as "extraordinary" and your apparent unawareness of the extent of the number of people across Canada in a similar situation and of a similar mindset. I suppose this comes from the fact that this is an issue that is a very private matter for most. However, I am very willing to be public about this important issue and my own situation.

Michael O'Malley, Quebec City:

Thank you for your moving story about Nagui Morcos. Undoubtedly like many listeners, I was brought to silent tears as I listened to Nagui and his wife share their story and their journey of letting go of life and love I am deeply touched by their love for each other and their courage, and I'm grateful that in Canada we have Dying With Dignity to help us with our feelings and options around this controversial but oh so important subject.

P.S. Brook, Charlottetown:

Thank you for the wonderful programs about Nagui Morcos and his wife Jan Crowley. I hope you are being flooded with notes of gratitude - and I hope you forward those on to Jan Crowley. Thanks to both of them, and all of you.

Doug Thomson, Kitimat:

I listened to Nagui's story today and was very moved by his circumstance and conviction. That said, I cannot agree with his position and views. Mores change with time, but without our care those changes have often proven the proverbial slippery slope. Many years ago I heard Malcolm Muggeridge in debate at the University of Victoria suggest that "some of the worst crimes of mankind have been committed for the best of reasons". No reasonable human being wants to witness or suffer pain, yet pain is essential both to our physical and psychological well being. It often seems that we live in a social structure that wants to sanitize our existence; to eliminate all risk and to cleanse our fragile lives of all pain.

Carol Bruni, Thunder Bay:

Dr. Goldman, thank you for discussing/airing/tackling this issue. I was truly moved by Nagui's interview. I listen to CBC everyday. I have heard on CBC on various programs that over 60 per cent of the Canadian population would like to be able to have assisted suicide if their condition worsens to the point that life is not worth living. I live in Thunder Bay and was driving and listening to this interview and tears were streaming down my cheeks. I belong to Dying with Dignity. I have made my decision to do the same as Nagui should certain situations arise in my life -dementia, terminal illness, and any condition that would warrant me to be a burden on my family, as well cause terminal pain. I believe that no politician, medical physician, nor legal person should have the right to decide how I deal with my life/body. It is my decision to make. Thank you.

John Brennand, Langley, BC:

I can imagine your inbox is overflowing with response to this week's show. I have listened to last year's program three times and have now heard this one twice. The two shows are profoundly moving pieces of radio documentaries, thank you and your team. Please pass along my thanks and best wishes to Jan Crowley, her participation showed the cost and the nobility of Nagui's act along with her strength and dignity. She can rest assured that the circle of people who will never forget her partner is (probably) larger than she will ever know. Too bad the politicians who could do something positive here probably will never listen to your show.

Marilyn Bodnarchuk, White Rock BC:

I was very moved by this broadcast this morning. My younger sister was born 09/11/56 she would have been 56 tomorrow. About a week after her birthday last year she was found unconscious in her room in an independent living facility. For the next two weeks my older sister and I made 4-6 hour each way trips to the hospital in the BC interior and multiple phone calls every day to check on her condition. There were many complications and finally the last time we went to see her they informed us that she would never be able to come off of life support. They gently addressed our concerns and offered the opinion that 'everyone has their own time and if it is not her time, even though they are taken off life support they could rally. I am a Buddhist and am certain of the life and death choices we make lifetime after lifetime. On October 4th at 6:40 pm she chose to leave us. She had had a very difficult life and did an amazing job of overcoming all of the obstacles she had encountered. It was a very peaceful and joyful passing. I felt so honoured to have been there with her. In the last few weeks of her life my brother and sister and I had all come together to support her and old wounds had been healed. In July I woke up dreaming of her and in spite of the fact that I was in the process of packing and moving I caught a brief newscast on CBC about a man who was trapped in his home in Vancouver who needs a wheelchair. My sister had left us with a top-of-the-line electric wheelchair and after a couple of weeks of researching I was able to contact the gentleman and give him her chair. I just felt she had come to me in my dream to tell me to give the chair to him. "Each one of us can make a difference" (Wangari Maathai) Hats off to Nagui Morcos and my sister Margaret who ever in their death made a difference. Thank for your broadcast.

Dorothy Field, Victoria:

Just a note to thank you for today's program on the right to die, your interview made it clear why we must make physician-assisted suicide legal in Canada. I understand the arguments against but surely we can craft laws that would prevent abuse of such a law. The assistance of a sympathetic physician would take much of the apprehension/anxiety out of such tragic decisions -- decisions which adults of sound mind and open hearts, adults who have thought and felt deeply, have the right to make. Thank you for your courage and the openness of your heart.

Peter Bursztyn, Barrie, Ontario:

Hi Brian, I listened to your interview with Nagui and his wife, now widow. I lived through the problem of a relative who wished to die a decade ago - my elderly father. I have listened to the tired & well worn arguments that a prohibition of assisted suicide protects the disabled and elderly infirm folk. I have dismissed the religious arguments out of hand. My father was 94 when he died (a decade ago), and actually in reasonable (for his age) health. He was mentally alert and humorous when he wished to be. However, when my mother died (of a hospital superbug) he felt very lonely. In fact, almost all of his friends had predeceased him, and the few who had not were to wobble to visit. Dad expressed his desire that I help him die. I protested that if I did, I would be arrested and charged with murder. Of course, his doctor also refused. Eventually, he committed suicide by the simple expedient of stopping his medication. His diuretics were prescribed to prevent pulmonary oedema - and that is what he died of. He had not been in any pain or even discomfort, but as fluid accumulated in his lungs he fought to get enough oxygen. His doctor prescribed morphine to "make him more comfortable." This basically put him to sleep most of the day. This is the reverse of the usual scenario where a patient dying of cancer is in pain and asks to die to be relieved of the pain. My father was pain-free, but his only way out was sufficiently "painful" to require medication. I also have a good friend in Holland whose mother was able to request doctor assisted suicide. She died at a time of her choosing with her family around her. The Dutch created an elaborate protective system around this in which the decision cannot be taken suddenly, not does it go unchallenged. Not only the family doctor is involved, but also another doctor who does not know the patient, and family input is also considered. Maybe the Dutch scheme is not for us, but it should be consulted as a possible template. And our "righteous right" government should stop trying to play god.

Carole Walker, Toronto:

Thank you CBC for this thoughtful, touching and very important program.... I shed many tears while listening to this brave couple take us into their confidence about the terrible decision they were being forced to make. But I'm so thankful we live in a country that gives them the freedom to act as they did. I hope that very soon now physician assisted suicide will be legalized in Canada. I am already a member of Dying With Dignity as I believe very strongly in what this organization stands for. Thanks again.

Rob Eley:

Today for the first time, I continued listening to CBC through my earphones after arriving at work (usually music). I have often listened to Whitecoat with interest in the past. Today I was compelled. And I would like to thank Dr. Goldman and Nagui and Jan for a compelling and compassionate - hour? (I have no idea how long I was listening). What a wonderful, important and timely discussion! I am looking forward to the follow up broadcasts. Again, thanks to all involved.

William Fee, Bracebridge, ON:

Very impressive show. The strength of character of all involved colours the topic and I found the words said very evocative and thought provoking.

name withheld:

Hi Brian and crew, I've been listening to your stories on suicide due to terminal illness. After 6 years of fighting an unknown blood disorder, chronic pain and weighing only 105 pounds my husband woke me one night and told me he had the car rigged and he was ready to go. We had talked about this for nearly a year. When he asked if I would help him to die so he could live longer and spend more time with our 2 sons I had to decline his request. So feeling this was the end we cried and hugged, spoke of the boys and I let him go. An hour later I went out to the garage and turned off the car. My Alan was gone. I called the police and told them of his suicide. We had 20 loving years together and the last years were too much for our boys as they grow up watching their father slowly die. After Alan left the house I sat on the sofa praying for his peace, for my peace, for the peace of our boys. I prayed that he had no more pain, I prayed to let him go. Now 14 years later I am in the process of being diagnosed with Bulbar ALS. For 3 years now my symptoms have been slowly getting worse and I will now be looking at getting a tracheostomy or going into hospice. I've decided for now, I would like another two productive years so I will proceed with the various procedures. But when the time comes I'm ready. I have talked to my family and they are very relieved of the decisions I have made. They have asked that I let them know when I am ready to go but they don't want to the exact date.

Brenda Lee, Victoria:

Thank you for doing the interviews with Nagui. I have been very touched by them for many reasons. You did such a nice job of interviewing both him and his wife and they were able to communicate so honestly how this difficult experience was happening for them. I was also very moved by your piece because as a nurse I have been involved with two patients who had Huntington's Disease and now I have a chronic progressive disease. Up until I developed this condition, I have always thought taking one's own life was wrong. Your interviews with Nagui have helped me to begin working through this difficult issue for myself. I always enjoy listening to your program and this one was exceptional.

Ross Couchman:

Thank you! That was as good as radio can be. Nagui and Jan are extraordinary people. Brian's interviews were extremely eloquent, important and sensitive. I really hope that this story kick starts the debate and subsequent action to bring about legal physician assisted suicide in Canada. The right to die with dignity has to be integral to our human rights. Very powerful, Thanks again.

name withheld:

I very much appreciated your two interviews with Nagui, and the discussion of the euthanasia problem in Canada. I was very touched. Euthanasia does not only touch those who suffer from a terminal disease, it touches anyone who wants to end life for whatever reason. People then refer to it as suicide. As a sociologist, I know that the reason why these are such taboo questions is that it is very frightening for people in this culture in particular. It is not only that we will all die, and do our best to avoid thinking about it, BUT, that we all supposedly want to postpone that as long as we can, no matter what. Thus, euthanasia, choice of death before it takes us or even suicide are very demoralizing to our fellow human beings. We are all supposed to find life wonderful or supposed to keep hoping that it will eventually be wonderful - since my late teens. When I was immensely poor and lonely, I have known that I would one day commit suicide. Somehow it has been a source of strength for me. As an adult, I have had a wonderful life, thanks to a wonderful husband. Now, we are both over 70, and both very healthy and active. I want to go first. If I don't, I do not want to survive my husband. I do not want to re-adjust to life without him.. and go through so much pain, and so much tediousness so late in life, just so I can four years of cancer, or whatever else on my own, in a few years! For, no matter what the medical profession says including you, if I remember well, there seems to be no cure for end of life suffering. Or rather, I think that there is, but the medical profession does not want to use it! My mother died some ten years ago in horrible suffering, - two years of it, and two months of the unbearable kind. Our G.P. declared that we had killed her with morphine; she had enough to kill a horse! She might have done very well with marijuana, for instance. And, as Nagui has pointed out, I have to do this myself! You might address this sometime! I will be listening to Nagui's last interview next week. Strange to think though that your thinking in general appears so forward and enlightened; yet, that it is so conservative and backward looking compared to many non-medical, but intelligent person- (My brother-in-law is a physician; he definitely cannot think outside the medical box.) In his case, the problem is religion. Nonetheless, thank you for your effort.

Tom Kramer, Surrey BC:

I wanted to thank you for transcending radio as we know it, and providing your audience with the most compelling work of audio art I have experienced. I have never written anyone regarding anything I have listened to, viewed or read, but find myself driven to communicate my appreciation for what you have done to humanize radio in a way I could never have imagined. I will be spending my day listening to all of the Nagui related pieces, and look forward with great anticipation to part 2. I was driving to a football game with my 5 and 7 year old and as brought to tears several times while listening. Most surprisingly, they were listening intently trying to understand what the radio conversation meant (Jan's voice was especially captivating in it's raw emotion), and the ensuing discussion after your piece was unlike anything we have ever talked about, and I would guess may have made a permanent imprint on their lives. I can't thank you, Jan and Nagui enough for sharing their life's journey with us in a way that has brought a far greater understanding of this polarizing issue to us all. Bravo!

Dennis Jones, Toronto:

Thank you for the wonderful and moving interviews with Nagui Morcos and his wife about how they coped with the terrible, but necessary, decisions they had to make about Nagui's death. The intelligence and rationality of Nagui came across very clearly and he did more than anyone else could have done to convince me that all Canadians should have the right to die with dignity, on their own terms, when the time is right for them. This is a theme that I hope CBC in general and White Coat, Black Art in particular will explore in future programs. It deserves a broader hearing and discussion.

John Krauser, Mississauga:

Well presented by all. Thanks. When I was working on the issue of assisted suicide, the OMA Palliative Care Section was adamant in its belief that Palliative Care Medicine had more capacity than was being credited to the ability of these Specialists to mitigate the symptoms and distress that are part of the dying process and were very opposed to the concept of physician assisted suicide. The question I have is around the palliative care of the dying process for patients specifically with Huntington's Disease. What is the state of this art today around this disease and does it offer an alternative that should also be explored on your show. Thanks.

Andrea Pilati, Toronto:

I heard your episode this morning, and was moved by Nagui and Jan's story. Then, I realized he was my boss at The Cheese Dairy, in 1989-90. He was such a beautiful passionate man. He would regularly introduce a new cheese and conduct a tasting so that all of us would know it and be able to talk confidently about said new cheese (or any cheese in the store!). It was like going to cheese school - something that I hold with me even now. I am sad that Nagui is not in our world anymore. But I am happy that there are resources for a family like Nagui and Jan to be able to conduct their lives and his death with the gravity, compassion and support that we should extend to everyone. My husband and I have had these discussions because of health problems he's had and will have again - and we know how difficult it will be to let go; however when it comes it will be the right thing to do. Thank you.

Avril Dell, Blue Mountains, ON:

Brian, I have a plan to be "the Rosa Parks of death". I described this plan in an intentionally droll essay on my site about six years ago. I have neurological degeneration that after 20+ years is starting to be visible to others and require some explanations from me. Pain is now constant. Cognition is going. The future is not friendly -- but my passing will be. And I will be open about it; about the planning, the production values, the deliberateness of it, and the advocacy and activism of it. I will stay in touch, as you have done a great thing with this series on humane passage. Kudos. Your soul is audible over the broadcast signal. Kindest regards.

Brenda Rose, Cape George, Antigonish County, NS:

I'm fairly certain you will receive thousands of responses to today's broadcast so I'll try to keep my own comments brief. However, it's hard to condense my thoughts on a subject as far-reaching as this one. I'm remembering the hell of trying to help my father to remain in his own home through the early stages of his dementia - the exact type was never identified. I was a single mother with a full-time job and two preschooler's and I was exhausted all of the time, so much so that I began to resent the hours spent cleaning his house, caring for the yard and trying to contain my frustration through the endless repetitive and circular conversations and the dozens of nightly phone calls.... I tried to be a good daughter but the effort was simply too great. I never want to put my own children through that particular torment, but every time I forget to pick something up at the store or I misplace my keys I wonder if I, too, am succumbing to my father's fate, and if my children will end up having the same feelings for me as I began to have as my father's condition made greater and greater demands on my own non-existent time. I strongly believe that should dementia claim my autonomy, I should be entitled to end my own life, and I strongly resent that our government feels that it's a better choice to allow me to languish for years in a costly institution than to allow me to end my life at a time of my own choosing, leaving my tiny estate intact for my children and grandchildren rather than spending it on chronic care that will never reverse the ravages of dementia. Nagui's choice is one that I feel many other people would also make, if they were given the opportunity. Outdated moral judgments should not be the deciding criteria for decisions as intensely personal as the one he and his partner made, and no one should be able to force another person to endure a slow and often painful death because mercy and suicide cannot coexist. Thank you for airing Nagui's story. The dialogue it will inspire will be difficult, but necessary.

Al Wolfe, Winnipeg:

The segment on the right to choose when and how to die was very tastefully handled. Yes, for persons in such a position as this fellow, he alone should be allowed to make up his, or her, mind as to what stage that they finally say no to a horrible suffering. Years ago, when I was still working, a young lady of about 35 mentioned, upon coming back to work after a lunch break, very derogatorily about some seniors that she had just encountered. I turned to her and said "May you live so long!" In this case regarding the detractors of a planned termination of one's life, may I say the opposite to them: "May your termination be such that you do not long suffer in the way that you want others to!"

Ingrid Rumstay, Kelowna, BC:

Thank you for the interview and for broadcasting the story about this wonderful brave man and his amazing wife; I listened to it with a sad heart but glad that this subject is dealt with again. There are so many old people - and maybe not so old - who would like to have the choice to end their life instead of suffering a debilitating illness. And while it is humane to put your dog down, it is a murder if you assist a person you love. I hope that our government will wake up and change the laws, if more people speak up.

Eleanor Orr, Kingston:

As a long time member of DWD, I am so appreciative of the conversation this morning re the premature death of the terminally ill gentleman due to our federal laws concerning doctor-assisted suicide. I prefer to use the term 'end of life' rather than suicide. Thank you so much!

Amy Dodic, Lethbridge, AB:

Minutes before the show aired, I was reading about Gloria Taylor in my United Church Observer. I was thinking that it was sad that people still have to fight to die with dignity. I guess we all know that morphine is often by medical practitioners used to hasten death, but it is done 'secretively.' How brave of these people (Morcos and Taylor) to use their deaths to enhance all our lives. Your show was a beautiful (I cried) exposition of the issue and done with great tact and feeling. I have always thought that Dr. Goldman is a true humanist, but this show really hi-lighted that fact. I always enjoy the show, and hope that everyone in the medical industry listens to the practical discussions and ideas. Thanks.

Aruna Handa, Toronto:

Thank you for Nagui's Choice. I found this episode riveting but also heart-breaking, inspiring and moving but also maddening. Thank you for telling this couple's story. Excellent work.

Allan Oman, Beaver Lake:

Thank for for allowing us to hear this powerful story of what should be, in these modern times, a human right. I agree with Nagui that people are certainly allowed to have their own personal opinions over whether we should have the right to die with dignity (assisted suicide), but one's personal opinion should not limit another's rights over their own body. Since it is clear that his disease could not have been cured now, or in the foreseeable future, by the best of our modern medicine, what right does society have to make him suffer. With our aging population this is a topic that needs to be brought out into the light. Criminalizing assisted suicide only causes one to take one's life at a premature time (when they can carryout the act themselves). A very powerful story. Thanks to Nagui and Jan for allowing us to share in their life.

Linda Murphy:

Dear Dr. Goldman, I have often listened to your program with great interest in the many glimpses behind the white coats of the medical profession. I never anticipated though, that the day would come that I would be listening to you interview someone personally known to me, as I am second cousin to Jan Crowley, and happened to have sat directly behind you at Nagui's memorial. Although we have lived relatively nearby to one another over the past few decades, Jan and my immediate family had not really been in touch - nothing to do with any kind of falling out, just distance due to circumstances, I suppose. We were both involved in our careers, and both of us being very family-centred people, were engrossed in our own personal lives. I knew of Nagui's diagnosis, but not of his progression towards hastening his own passing, so when the call came from my mother, I was suitably shocked and saddened for Jan's great loss. I would like to thank you for your airing the interviews with Nagui and Jan, on this important and controversial topic. The perspective is an entirely new one, and is very much needed. I think most people are quite ignorant about Huntington's in general, and definitely in the dark about Dying with Dignity. I will share with you that although I don't take a public stand on the issue, with my faith as my inspiration, I honor all life, and do consider myself to be "pro-life". This opinion came about as a result of my own personal circumstances, with experience surrounding the birth of a child, and I honestly never REALLY was faced with the question of my position on the matter at the other end of life. On the way to Nagui's memorial, I was filled with questions, and...a tremendous amount of guilt for not having reached out to my cousin earlier. On the way home from Mt. Pleasant though, I swear - the sun was shining more brightly, the colours seemed more vivid - something had changed! I realized that I had not only had pretty well all of my questions answered, but had had the privilege of just catching the last this-world connection to a wonderful man, who was so much more than honored and loved, and he, his resolve, and his actions had touched me - what a gift! My mind and heart were opened in a new way - how refreshing! (not a sentiment one usually feels following a funeral!)..... I am so proud of my cousin. I look up to her as a woman of strength, and a role model to me as a wife. Her devotion and unceasing support for her husband's decision exemplifies the commitment we make to one another when becoming a life partner. For this I am incredibly grateful.

Gail Simmons, Seeley's Bay ON:

I have walked the cancer road with my loved ones too many times in the past, and have witnessed such suffering and helplessness, which resulted in incredible discomfort and loss of dignity. Just this week, yet another loved one has stepped onto this road with brave determination to beat the odds; my hope is that he will do so. But should he not, and should he arrive at the same place where Nagui and Jan ended up, I feel so much better knowing that I have some information about Dying with Dignity Canada, that might help him out. Additionally, I have anguished over how I might manage my own demise given the likelihood of having inherited cancer genes, and how I do not want my children to watch me suffer and die. Thanks to your program and the honest account of Nagui's and Jan's situation, I feel an enormous sense of relief. Dying with Dignity Canada is permanently on my bookmark page - an incredible comfort to me. It's all about having the controls in our own hands. Thank you.

Elaine Petermann, Ottawa:

I attended an excellent panel discussion moderated by Maureen McTeer, presented by Dying with Dignity, last night. I read the account of Nagui's suicide on their website. Your program was mentioned so I was able to tune in. It was a very moving program, extending the discussion to how his spouse and he dealt with the process of letting go. I was with my mother during 9 months of palliative care after two strokes, and with her in her final moments. My 92 year old father has been very active and relatively healthy but he is beginning to lose energy so end of life is a very pertinent topic.

Cathy Crawley, Parry Sound:

Thank you for this episode. It is absolutely wonderful to listen to a show where the interviewer is not telling me how I should feel or asking those beinginterviewed how they feel. It drives me nuts when an interviewer asks someone who is obviously going through a hard time if they feel badly. (of course they feel badly.) I prefer people like yourselves who leave it to me to decide how I should feel or what I should think. Great show. Thank you.

name withheld:

I can't thank you enough for re-broadcasting Nagui's Choice today. Two days ago, my terminally ill mother decided that she wanted to end her life. While I completely understand her decision, it has certainly left me winded. After she made her decision, I felt powerless to help her. I was completely at a loss to support her and it left me feeling stranded. When I turned on the radio today and heard Jan's voice, I immediately stopped working as I recognized the story she was telling. Hearing someone else's experience with supporting a loved one who is ending their life was more important for me than I can aptly express. But more than that, I want to thank you for mentioning Dying with Dignity on your website. Having looked through their site, I feel less panicked about what is about to transpire for my mother and I. This is such a huge comfort for me, and I am extremely grateful to WCBA for this information. Thank you.

Paula Copela, Toronto:

This interview overflows with pain and love and love wins hands down

Isabel Archer, Toronto:

Thank you for a very moving and informative show.

Mike Cumming, Frenchvale, NS:

Courage comes to us in many forms. Perhaps it was because I wrote a paper on Huntington's disease that I was so deeply and emotionally impacted by Nagui's journey. Most have very little understanding of what it is like to wake each morning with the knowledge that you have a life ending disease slowly robbing you of everyday life skills. We have been taught to think that suicide is the weak persons way out. If there was even a sliver of empathy in the ear you lent to the listening of Nagui and his wife you will come to realize the courage it took for these two people to face each day knowing the time was too soon in coming. None of us can ever know Nagui's anguish as he contemplated when the time would be right. I've always thought as life being like a vacation. No matter how good or bad, you always wish you had just one more day. For one's life it would be agonizing to decide when that last day had come.

Garth Moore, Hubbards:

Congratulations on a program whose contents are realistic, human and something that the majority of society today, when faced with this certain reality; chooses to plant their heads deep in the sand. Let's face it we are not so special that we should not die and the extraordinary measures taken by western medical institutions are no answer, extending life, at what cost and what quality? Good program folks.