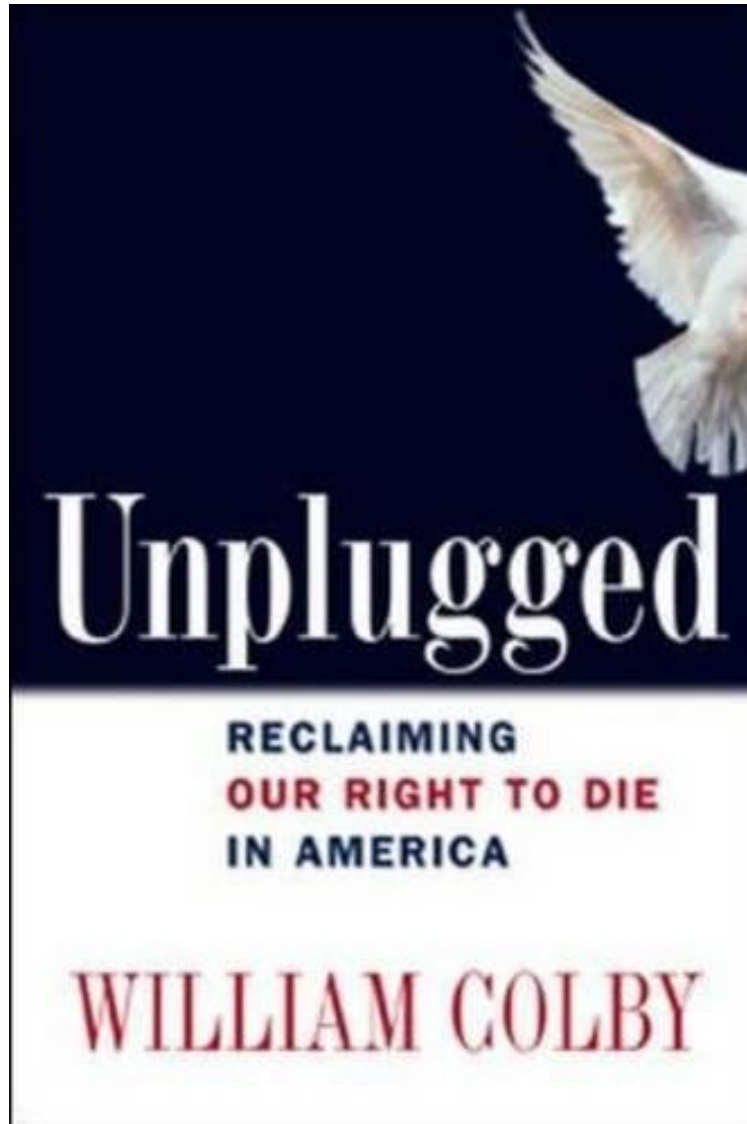


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## Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America

*William H. Colby*

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**William H. Colby : Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good summary of topicBy Bronx Book GuyI was impressed by the author's account of the Cruzan case -- he was the family lawyer who "lost" in front of the Supreme Court but not quite -- and was led to purchase this broader study of the "right to die." As he notes in the conclusion, this 200 or so page work does not cover everything, but it does a very good job, in down to earth prose, to cover most of the bases.

And, do so in a balanced fashion that states his views while not trying to provide all the answers. He starts with an extended look at the tragic Schiavo case. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. preparing for death By EHTuner William Colby has provided a volume of information needed by people dying and by those caring for them. There are many choices for both and this book provides them. Read in your leisure or when you need to make difficult decisions. It will help you. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good By Eleanor Casson It was a good book for its need, and though it is a bit dry, it isn't nearly as bad as I had expected.

It often seems that medical technology is a never-ending string of miracles. But it is also a double-edged sword. More often than not, death today happens because of a decision to stop doing something, or to not do it at all. As the tragic life and death of Terri Schiavo so poignantly illustrated, universal definitions of life, death, nature, and many other concepts are elusive at best. Unplugged addresses the fundamental questions of the right-to-die debate, and discusses how the medical advances that bring so much hope and healing have also helped to create today's dilemma. Now in paperback, this compelling book illuminates the complex legal, ethical, medical, and deeply personal issues of a debate that ultimately affects us all. Compassionate and beautifully written, the book helps readers understand the implications of current laws and proposed legislation, various medical options (including hospice), and the typical end-of-life decisions we all must face in order to make informed decisions for ourselves and our loved ones. The hardcover edition was chosen by "The Library Journal" as one of the Best Consumer Health Books of 2006.

From Publishers Weekly In 2005, the Terri Schiavo case galvanized millions to think about end-of-life decision making and question when life ends and how to define a good death. Colby, the lawyer for Nancy Cruzan, whose 1988 case was one of the first to raise such questions, writes elegantly about these issues. He reminds us that the right to die is a new subject because the technology that allows us to keep patients alive is recent. Cardiac defibrillators, as he points out, were first used to resuscitate patients in 1959. The term "persistent vegetative state" was defined only in 1972, as a result of the Cruzan case. Colby discusses briefly the major issues in three high-profile right-to-die cases—Cruzan, Schiavo and the first, that of Karen Ann Quinlan in 1976—to highlight the difficult medical and legal questions surrounding the end of life, including the advantages and disadvantages of a living will, appointing a legal guardian and "do not resuscitate" orders. He takes no ethical position regarding the removal of feeding tubes or respirators but urges us to talk to our families about our wishes in this regard. Although many other books have covered these topics, few possess Colby's engaging style and judicious insights. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Lancet: "William Colby...has written a timely, comprehensive book exploring the legal, medical and ethical questions surrounding this complex issue...In a surprisingly personal narrative voice." [Colby] conveys a sensitivity and compassion about a subject that many find extremely difficult to discuss...a fascinating and well-written book. —Health Progress, November 2007 "Unplugged is an insightful and unsentimental examination of the Terri Schiavo case. Bill Colby, who represented Nancy Cruzan's family, explains why it is so hard for our physicians and families to stop using medical technology (especially feeding tubes) when we are near the end of our lives, and tells us what we can do to improve our lives and the lives of our family members." -- George J. Annas, Chair of the Department of Health Law, Bioethics Human Rights at Boston University School of Public Health, and author of The Rights of Patients