

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE: REMEMBERING TERRI

Remember Terri? In February, 1990, at age 26, she collapsed at home, and suffered permanent brain damage. While she underwent therapy, her husband Michael moved into an apartment with his new girlfriend. He won a malpractice suit, of which \$700,000 was placed in a trust fund for Terri's care. Terri received none of this sum for any further therapy. Terri's parents applied for her guardianship but were denied. She languished in a nursing home until 1998. Then she was moved to hospice, even though she was not terminal. Her body functions were working, but she needed help at mealtime. She couldn't swallow, or speak, yet she was very much alive.

Meanwhile, Michael had begun his attempts to have Terri's feeding tube removed, arguing that Terri had told him that she would not want to live in such a manner. After several court orders to have feeding tubes removed, then reinserted, the tube was pulled for the last time on March 18, 2005. Eight days later, Terri's mother, and David Gibbs visited a gasping, dehydrated, emaciated Terri. Gibbs records:

".....there was no written evidence that Terri wanted to die...just contradictory hearsay given by a husband who had fallen in love with another woman, contrasted with a family who wanted their daughter to live...Terri had been fully alive. She wasn't dying. She wasn't terminal. She wasn't comatose. She wasn't hooked up to a battery of machines...she wasn't even sick. And yet she died in the most barbaric fashion."

Terri Schiavo died March 30, 2005. The state of Florida prohibits 'mercy' killing, assisted suicide, euthanasia, and starvation of pets. Yet a human being was brutally starved to death by court order, while we all looked on.

How can this happen? We are the most educated generation ever, but is this civilized, to eliminate the most helpless, be they young, old, or just inconvenient? If we look back in history, we find societies who extended generous and edifying care to people 'least able to look after themselves'. We also find that they based their convictions about the value of human life, on a Standard. Following this Standard is the only means to keep human life valued and sanctified. It is not a human Standard; it is the holy, inspired Bible.

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FIGHTING FOR DEAR LIFE

By David Gibbs with Bob de Moss, Bethany House, Minnesota, August 2006, cloth, 243 pages, \$19.99 Am.

As I was reading this book on our holidays up north this summer, I watched a family of loons swimming some distance from our boat. As we came nearer, the closest loon, (I rather presume he was the male), called out and immediately the two little floating fuzzballs behind him ducked under the waves only to pop up a moment later by the mother. Placidly the parents watched us pass, content in the knowledge that they had done all to protect their chicks. God has obviously endowed these sixth day creatures with an amazing instinctive capacity to care for their young. It is indeed a facility at which to marvel.

David Gibbs, the author of this book, is a lawyer. He takes his job very seriously and defends both churches and individual Christians through his law firm and the Christian Law Association. Fighting

for Dear Life is the story of such a defense. In October 2003, Bob and Mary Schindler asked David to become the lead attorney in their fight to save their disabled daughter Terri, whose life was being threatened by euthanasia through starvation. He took the case pro bono because he, like the father loon on the water, discerned danger rapidly approaching those who are helpless – those who are disabled. As such, he calls out a loud warning to all who will listen. We do well to read his words and to take heed. David begins his book by pointing to a lack of moral fiber in the medical community today. It is a community which "... argues that because Terri... and people like her, are unable to work and unable to be productive, they're a 'burden to society', rather like Hitler's 'useless eaters' – a label he used to justify the deaths of the disabled as well as the Jews. The Associated Press cited a news report which found that more than 200,000 'physically-deficient' people were eliminated in Nazi Germany simply because of their disabilities... You might not know this, but a number of leading 'ethics' professors at America's leading universities are already teaching students that infanticide – the killing of an already born infant – is morally acceptable, especially when the infant is debilitated. Take, for example, professor, ethicist, and self-proclaimed atheist Peter Singer at Princeton University's Center for Human Values."

Peter Singer, despite his name, is morally way off-key. Regardless, the academic community allows him to say and teach that "If you have a being that is not sentient, that is not even aware, then the killing of that being is not something that is wrong in and of itself. I think that a chimpanzee certainly has greater self-awareness than a newborn." Now even though not every one is happy about Singer's ethics, he is permitted to remain at Princeton and to say other outrageously devilish things – things such as, "If we compare a severely defective human infant with a nonhuman animal, a dog, a pig, for example, we will often find the nonhuman to have superior capacities, both actual and potential, for rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and anything else that can plausibly be considered morally significant. Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species homo sapiens, leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig."

If you find it difficult to believe that this way of thinking is acceptable in today's advanced world, think again. Think again and pray.

Back to the story. Committed to the law, David Gibbs was an eyewitness to the murder of Terri Schiavo. At this point perhaps it is worthwhile to recount some of Terri's background. Born Terri Schindler, she married Michael Schiavo in 1984 when she was twenty years old. According to a girlfriend, Michael was a very controlling husband who did not allow Terri to go anywhere after work. She had to come straight home and he would monitor the miles on her car. In February of 1990, when Terri was 26, she collapsed at home and the oxygen flow to her brain was interrupted for several minutes, causing permanent brain damage. The cause of this collapse was never determined. Michael was with her at the time. A few months later, the medical director of the Rehabilitation Center in Florida where Terri was staying, declared Terri had improved from her initial acute coma state and recommended that she begin a rehabilitation program. The next month Terri's medical coverage was terminated and Michael began an unsuccessful lawsuit against the insurance company. In February of 1991, a year after her collapse, Terri began therapy. She could still say words like 'yes' and 'no' and she went outside in a wheelchair, enjoying things like small trips to the mall. Doctors indicated that Terri's condition was improving and recommended more advanced therapy. Husband Michael was, at this point, dating again and began a relationship with another woman. As a matter of fact, he quarreled with his in-laws (with whom he was staying), and moved out of their house into an apartment with the new girlfriend. His relationship with this woman did not last long. His relationship with lawsuits did. In August of 1992, he reached an out-of-court settlement with Terri's personal doctor for \$250,000. (This doctor was later cleared by the Florida medical board.) In November of the same year, he launched a malpractice suit against her gynecologist. After attorney's fees, the lump sum of \$1.2 million, was awarded, 700,000 of which was placed in a trust fund to pay for Terri's medical care. The remainder went to Michael for loss of companionship.

Although there was a rather large amount of money now available for therapy, Terri did not receive any and Michael repeatedly ignored recommendations from doctors that she receive help. Her parents were, understandably, upset about this. In February of 1993 they stopped speaking to each other and Bob and Mary Schindler applied for the guardianship of their daughter. Their petition was dismissed by court even though Michael had begun another affair.

Terri lived in a nursing home up to 1998. She received minimal medical care and no therapy. At this time Michael secured the services of George Felos, a pro-euthanasia lawyer, in order to find a way to have Terri's feeding tube removed. His line of reasoning was that Terri had told him she would not want to live in such a manner. A Dr. Young, ordered by the court, personally observed Terri. He stated, *"I was there to determine several things, including if she could track moving objects, could she respond to verbal or physical stimuli, how did she respond, did she drool, and did she have any facial expressions. My findings were that she was not drooling, so she was handling secretions ... She did follow especially her mother across the room and focus on her. The behaviors I observed from Terri Schiavo are not consistent with someone in Persistent Vegetative State... she can be taught to swallow and if she was worked with she could handle oral feedings, which is what I testified in court."*

The truth of the matter was, however, that Terri received absolutely no rehabilitative services, swallowing tests, or therapy of any kind between 1992 and her death in 2005. She was moved from the nursing home to a hospice by Michael in 1998 even though she was not terminal; not dying; and not comatose. She was not allowed out of her room to socialize even though she was able to breathe on her own. She could have taken trips to and with family members or friends, but this was forbidden by Michael. It cannot be stressed enough that all of Terri's bodily functions were working with one exception – she needed help at mealtime.

In 2001 Michael was finally successful in having Terri's feeding tube removed. It was, however, ordered reinserted by a Florida Circuit Court judge when Michael's ex-girlfriend phoned in to a radio talk-program to say that Michael had confided that he actually had no idea what Terri would have wanted. But the joy over the reinserted feeding tube was rather short-lived. By the end of 2002 the court ruled again that Terri's tube be removed and the new removal date was set for October 15, 2003. At this point, Bob and Mary Schindler retained the services of David Gibbs.

David was not motivated to take the case on the basis of mere human emotions. He firmly believed God called him to defend Terri. "As my father taught me, having a servant heart doesn't always mean you do what's easy; rather, you do what's right. I also couldn't escape the fact that Terri was in a hospice just six or seven miles from our office. You might say that Terri was a neighbor in need in our own backyard. Talk about divine appointment."

Nevertheless, two days after the Gibbs Law Firm took the case, Terri's feeding tube was removed for the second time. A legislative approach was taken by the Gibbs Law Firm and attorneys in David's office worked with people in the Florida Legislature to draft a bill into what became known as 'Terri's Law' – a law that would protect the disabled from having their feeding tube removed when there was a family disagreement regarding the disabled person's end of life wishes. The bill, that is to say, Terri's Law, was narrowed down by the Florida Senate who inserted a provision requiring action by the Florida governor. The Gibbs Law firm were almost forced to agree to this option because Terri had been, at this point, without food and water for five days and they did not know how much longer she could survive. On the sixth day the bill was passed by the Florida House Legislature and signed into law by Governor Jeb Bush. Terri's feeding tube was reinserted. She was re-hydrated and her life was preserved a second time.

In October 2004, David Gibbs drafted a letter to Michael for the Schindlers in which they would have agreed to anything that would somehow allow Terri to keep on living so they could take care of her and get her the help and rehabilitation she needed. The letter, addressed to Michael's lawyer, read:

"As the new lead counsel to the cases surrounding Terri Schiavo, we are not aware of any recent attempt to resolve this matter among the family members without continued court intervention. In

order to make certain that this avenue of potential resolution is not overlooked, we are providing you with the following proposal from the Schindler family... The Schindlers' sole desire in making this proposal is that they be permitted to take their daughter and sister home to care for her within their family. The Schindler family members would take on this responsibility at their own expense. In consideration of your client permitting them to take Terri home with them, they would be willing to provide him with any legal guarantees he would desire, including the following:

1. The Schindlers would never seek any money from Michael. He could retain any monies or other assets that might remain to him, either from their married life together, from the malpractice awards for himself or for Terri, or any other assets he might have received in the past. They would not seek any financial help from him for any care, therapy, or rehabilitation for Terri.

2. *The Schindlers fully understand and appreciate that Michael now has a new life with Jodi and their two children. If he would desire to divorce Terri, the family would sign any necessary legal documents to assure Michael that, upon Terri's natural death, he would receive any of Terri's estate that he would inherit were he to remain her husband. Whether or not Michael would choose to pursue a divorce from Terri, the Schindlers would guarantee that he could retain whatever visiting rights he might desire with Terri for the rest of her life.*

3. *The Schindlers would agree to forego any and all future legal claims or actions against Michael or against any of his agents in this matter for any reason.*

4. *The Schindlers would permit Michael's attorneys to draft any agreement regarding this matter that Michael would desire, including the above referenced terms and any other terms he and his attorneys would find appropriate, excluding payment of Michael's previous legal fees or costs.*

Now that Michael is a father himself, the Schindlers are pleading with him to consider their love for their daughter and sister and to permit them to take over Terri's care, with their blessings on Michael as he continues to live his own life with his new family.

Please provide a copy of this letter to Michael and respond to us within five days."

The offer was rejected.

In December of 2004, David applied for and was granted permission to be added to Terri's visitors list. He recounted the first time he saw Terri at Woodside Hospice when he went to visit her with her parents on Christmas Eve 2004.

"When we entered her room, I found Terri sitting in a recliner with a holiday blanket draped across her lap. She was dressed, washed and her hair had been brushed... Absolutely nothing was hooked up to her. No IV-drip. No monitors. No ventilator. There was no indication whatsoever of any form of artificial life support in use.... At the sound of her mother's voice, Terri squealed with delight, filling the air with a host of happy sounds. She had this excited animation about her that was part giggle and part sheer joy. In fact, she almost jumped out of the chair. She was clearly animated and responsive, and very much alive."

Early in 2005, David Gibb's firm received sworn affidavits from more than forty professionals who signed under oath that they did not believe Terri was in a persistent vegetative state. David recounted that "... these neurologists had to rely upon the available video clips, court files and public documents. Without exception, these doctors, many at the top of their field, unanimously believed the evidence in the video tapes and reports of visits with her family contradicted the persistent vegetative state assertion." These neurologists were well-known in their field. By court order, a Dr. W. Cheshire was the only one permitted to observe Terri during the last year of her life. He testified the following words: *"I came into this case with the belief that it can be ethically permissible to discontinue artificially provided nutrition and hydration for persons in a persistent vegetative state. Having now reviewed the relevant facts, having met and observed Ms. Schiavo in person, and having reflected deeply on the moral and ethical issues, I would like to explain why I have changed my mind in regard to this particular case... Terri Schiavo demonstrates behaviors in a variety of cognitive domains that call into question the previous neurological diagnosis of a persistent vegetative state. Specifically, she has*

demonstrated behaviors that are context-specific, sustained, and indicative of cerebral cortical processing that, upon careful neurological consideration, would not be expected in a persistent vegetative state. Based on this evidence, I believe that, within a reasonable degree of medical certainty, there is a greater likelihood that Terri is in a minimally conscious state than a persistent vegetative state. This distinction makes an enormous difference in making ethical decisions on Terri's behalf. As I looked at Terri, and as she gazed directly back at me, I asked myself whether, if I were her attending physician, I could in good conscience withdraw her feeding and hydration. No, I could not. I could not withdraw life support if I were asked. I could not withhold life-sustaining nutrition and hydration from this beautiful lady whose face brightens in the presence of others."

Another doctor, through studying video tapes and related articles about Terri's condition, said:
"It is my opinion that Ms. Schiavo would be able to learn how to swallow if given the proper therapy. I have personally treated stroke patients, and other patients with severe brain damage similar to Ms. Schiavo's that have regained their ability to swallow after being given the proper therapy... it is my opinion that Ms. Schiavo ... would improve with aggressive swallowing therapy."

In spite of this evidence by various doctors, Terri's feeding tube was removed for the third time. The slope towards a death culture has, since her death, become more and more slippery. For example, in January 2006 "The United States Supreme Court, in *Gonzales v. Oregon*, upheld a 1994 Oregon "Death with Dignity Act" that will potentially permit doctors all across America to dispense or prescribe a lethal dose of drugs upon the request of a terminally ill patient. While Oregon is currently the only state to have such a law,(as of this writing), barring a federal law to the contrary, this new Supreme Court decision opens the door for other states to follow. The main difference between the two piece of legislation is that, in Florida, death is passive – the patient dies 'naturally' over time, as any healthy person would do without food and water. In Oregon, on the other hand, death is actively induced instantaneously by the administration of a lethal dose of drugs."

Throughout the entire twelve years of the struggle for her life, Terri never had any legal representation of her own. David Gibbs and his firm represented her parents. A probate court judge, Judge Greer, without the benefit of a jury, ignored her rights, overruled the will of the Florida Governor, the Florida legislature, the Congress and the President, by ordering Terri to die.

When Terri's tube was removed for the third time, a California business man deposited one million dollars into a trust. The money was Michael's for the taking if he would agree to release Terri to her parents. The businessman, a Mr. Herring, said:

"After viewing a video of Terri on television, I came to the belief that there was hope for her... I believe very strongly that there are medical advances happening around the globe that very shortly could have a positive impact on Terri's condition."

But his offer was refused and the feeding tube remained out. Bob Schindler, Terri's father, hinting at a darker side to Michael's character, said:

"After Michael has denied Terri therapy for so many years and denied our family any opportunity to help her, we can only come to the conclusion that he is not comfortable with the prospects of her regaining her abilities to speak and communicate to us the reasons for her condition."

At this point in Terri's life, many people were protesting Terri's virtual imprisonment and impending death sentence. Consequently, during the last few months of her life, at the request of Michael, an armed guard was posted outside Terri's room. There was an around the clock police presence at the hospice and the no-trespassing perimeter was being strictly enforced. Often large crowds surrounded the place and police sharpshooters were even stationed on the hospice rooftop to look at the crowd for any sign of trouble. Why all this police intervention? Possibly, David Gibbs guessed, Michael and his attorneys had not anticipated that their decision to end Terri's life would draw the attention of the world. Members of the press constantly paced the sidewalks, TV news helicopters were seen, and everyone was wondering whether or not Terri's life would be saved.

On one of the last visits David paid Terri before the tube was removed, she was in good spirits. She

held onto a favorite stuffed cat and was enjoying some interaction with her sister Suzanne and with Barbara Weller, David's associate. In David's words "She laughed at all the right times and was paying close attention to what was going on in her room. I could see that this was one of Terri's 'good' days, as the family often rated them. After a number of minutes of encouraging Terri not to lose hope, that we were doing everything in our power to prevent the feeding tube from being removed, and that millions of people around the world were praying for her, her spiritual advisor of many years arrived for what I sincerely hoped would not be his last visit...."

When David got back to his office, the phone rang. He recorded "... It was Barbara Weller at the hospice. To say she was excited would be an understatement. Her words ran together as if she couldn't spit them out fast enough. She said, 'David, you've got to hear this – you won't believe what just happened!'

'Sure, Barbara. What's up?'

'Not long after you left, I went over to Terri's chair and –'

Noticing the time, I interrupted her. 'Is she being fed right now?'

'Yes, they started feeding her around 11:00. But listen, David,' she said. 'I leaned over and took Terri's arms in both of my hands and said to her, 'Terri, if you could only say *I want to live*, this whole thing would be over today.'

Barbara continued. 'I pleaded with Terri to just try and say those words. You'll never believe what happened. Terri's eyes opened real wide. She looked me square in the face. She had this look of concentration... David, Terri actually said, 'Ahhhhh.' And then, seeming to summon up all of the strength that she had, she virtually screamed, 'Waaaaa' ... she yelled so loudly that we all heard her – even Suzanne's husband and the police officer standing outside of Terri's door heard her....'

'Barbara, did she finish the sentence?'

'All I can say, David, is that she had this terrible look of anguish on her face. I can say I've never seen her appear so troubled. She seemed to be struggling to form the next word, but the word wouldn't come out. It was a consonant. You know, Terri can't say consonants.'

'What happened next?'

'Terri became very frustrated and started to cry. I didn't mean to cause her such anxiety – I just thought...'

Barbara's voice trailed off.

Even though this evidence also was presented to Judge Greer in one final hearing, it did no good. As well the pleas from attorneys from the House of Representatives who had flown down from Washington, D.C. to conduct last minute filings on Terri's behalf, were not heeded. Terri's feeding tube was removed on Friday, March 18, 2005 at 1:45 p.m.

That same day, the US Senate began to work on legislation that would empower her parents to take the case to a federal judge for a fresh review. The most troubling matter that prompted Congress members to act was that the State of Florida prohibits mercy killing, assisted suicide and euthanasia. Florida, as well, has strict penalties for starving pets. How then, could a Florida judge permit, or order, Terri to be starved to death? In any case, Senate passed the desired bill which immediately moved to the House of Representatives for a vote where it was overwhelmingly passed. Within an hour President George W. Bush had signed it into a law. The Schindlers were elated and Michael Schiavo was furious. A new judge by the name of Whittemore was assigned to the case, a judge who now literally had the power to decide whether Terri would live or die. She had been off the feeding tube for three days at this point. Judge Whittemore, however, was not happy about being told what to do by the US Congress and decided that Judge Greer's death sentence would stand. The Schindlers filed ten petitions in ten days in every possible jurisdiction between March 18 and March 28. During that time nearly a dozen people were arrested in the hospice area attempting to bring water to Terri, including three children.

Michael Schiavo and his attorney George Felos tried to convince the public that death by starvation was painless. This was a lie. Eight days into the removal of the tube, David Gibbs went with Mary,

Terri's mother, to visit. He recorded:

"... Mary and I passed through the ... security checkpoints and then walked down the hallway to Terri's room. Standing just outside her door while the guard double-checked our names on his approved visitor's list, I was startled to hear Terri before I could see her. When a healthy person breathes, they take in air and exhale air naturally. But when a person starts to die, they move into what is called the death pant. It's a rapid, short gasp for air similar to an animal panting after running around on a hot day..."

"Terri's breathing was severely labored. We assumed she didn't have a lot of time left. Frankly, standing at the threshold of her life and death struggle was more than a little unsettling. With an armed guard never more than several feet from us, we walked in. Mary immediately went to Terri's bedside and, as was her habit, she cradled Terri's head and started to kiss her face.

"This time, however, Mary started to sob. As Mary cried, her words tumbled out in a half-prayer, halfconfession

plea: 'Oh, God, help Terri ... Terri, don't fight it... oh, sweet Terri ... Jesus, please help my girl ... Terri, it's too late, there's nothing we can do ... don't fight it, you'll be at peace soon ... I love you, honey.

"Not wanting to get in the way, I remained at the foot of the bed... There are no words to describe what it's like to witness a mother weeping over her dying daughter.

"Keep in mind, there was no written evidence that Terri wanted to die under these circumstances – just contradictory, hearsay testimony given by a husband who had fallen in love with another woman, contrasted with a family who wanted their daughter to live. Just before her feeding tube was ordered to be removed by a probate court judge, Terri had been fully alive. She wasn't dying. She wasn't terminal. She wasn't comatose. She wasn't hooked up to a battery of machines. As I've noted before, she wasn't even sick. And yet she died in the most barbaric fashion. Make no mistake about this. She did not die naturally, she was purposely killed.

"Join me for a moment, if you will, at Terri's bedside. The most disturbing aspect of seeing Terri was her face. Dehydration has a way of taking all the flesh and fat out of the body... The best way to describe Terri's countenance is to picture a photo from a concentration camp. Incredible dark circles from extreme fatigue radiated from the skin around her eyes down to her nose. Her teeth protruded outward against cracked, shriveled lips. Terri's formerly soft silky peaches and cream skin, was stretched thin and to the breaking point across her skeletal features from lack of water... Her flesh was red, peeling and splotchy as if sunburned. And, probably due to her dry sinuses, Terri breathed with her mouth open. She had a completely dry mouth – the roof and gums lacked any natural glistening that would indicate moisture... I still have difficulty processing the horrifically sad image of a lady, who, just a few days earlier, was completely healthy, sitting unaided in a reclining chair, fully awake, alert and happy."

Terri died on March 30, 2005.

Terri's family gave a message to the media shortly after her death. Part of it read:

"Please continue to pray that God gives grace to our family as we go through this very difficult time. We know that many of you never had the privilege to personally know our wonderful sister, Terri, but we assure you that you can be proud of this remarkable woman who has captured the attention of the world. Following the example of the Lord Jesus, our family abhors any violence or any threats of violence. Threatening words dishonor our faith, our family, and our sister Terri. We would ask that those who support our family be completely kind in their words and deeds toward others... Throughout this ordeal, we are reminded of the words of Jesus on the cross: 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Our family seeks forgiveness for anything that we have done in standing for Terri's life that has not demonstrated the love and compassion required of us by our faith... We must accept the untimely death as God's will ... We will do all that we can to change the law so that others won't face the same fate that has befallen Terri."

According to David Gibbs, Michael Schiavo, upon Terri's death, immediately contacted one of his attorneys to rush a letter of administration to Judge Greer for his signature. The letter gave him full power to administer the estate of his barely deceased wife – including all of her remaining personal and financial assets.

Towards the end of the book, Chronicles 7:14 is quoted. "*If my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal the land.*" Remarking on this verse, David says: "God doesn't say, 'If the judges ... if the politicians .. If the police...' No, I don't think we're going to change the courts until we change the hearts and minds of the American people. I don't think we're going to change the leadership in Washington, D.C., or in your state capital until we first change the convictions and values of Americans. Put another way, the best way to influence the laws of the land is to pursue a change of heart among the people of the land."

In an afterword it is noted that Bob and Mary Schindler requested permission to bury their daughter. However, on April 2, 2005, Michael had Terri's body cremated. He buried her ashes in a memorial park in Clearwater, Florida and put a bronze marker on her grave with the date February 25, 1990 (the day Terri collapsed) on it. The site is in full view of a pond with a fountain spraying water.

An excellent and sobering eye-opener on a present-day, watershed moment in North American judicial history, this book is highly recommended for home, church and school libraries. A good source of discussion for Young People groups, Bible study groups, as well as a prime educational tool for older grades and home-schooling families on the value of human life as created in the image of God.

As a small PS to this review/article – it might be of interest to families to know that this book contains a sample form of a "Designation of Health Care Surrogate". This is a form people can easily draft and carry about in their wallets to signify what they want done in the event they are incapacitated with regard to medical treatment and procedures, and also whom (preferably more than one person) they want to be in charge of decisions regarding these matters.