

# Delve Deeper into "The Self-Made Man"

A film by Susan Stern

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Penny Talbert of the Ephrata Public Library in partnership with the American Library Association, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming P.O.V. documentary "The Self-Made Man" that premieres on July 26, 2005 at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings [www.pbs.org/pov/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/)).

*Is it ever rational to choose death? On Independence Day at Stern Ranch in central California, 77-year-old solar energy pioneer Bob Stern finds out he is seriously ill – possibly dying. Meanwhile, an elderly in-law is slowly declining on artificial life support in a hospital. Bob decides to cheat that fate and take his own life. His family tries to stop him. But first, Bob sets up a video camera. Daughter Susan Stern (Barbie Nation) tells the story of her father's quirky, inspiring life and the difficult end-of-life choices faced by an aging population. Part King Lear, part Western, **The Self-Made Man** is a true-life family drama about a controversial issue: Should we control how we die? A co-presentation with the Independent Television Service (ITVS).*

---

## ADULT NONFICTION

### SELF-HELP: LOSS, SUICIDE, ILLNESS AND DYING

**McWilliams, Peter. *How to Survive the Loss of a Love*. West Hollywood: Mary Book/Prelude Press, 1991.** Offers practical advice for anyone suffering from the loss of a loved one.

**Fine, Carla. *No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One*. New York: Main Street Books, 1999.** Firsthand advice on how to survive the loss of a loved one to suicide.

**Hepler, Katherine. *Why Me? Why Not? Living with Terminal Illness*. Bellflower, CA: Hepler Designs, 1999.** A handbook for patients with terminal illness, which encourages hope and faith instead of retreat.

**Humphry, Derek. *Final Exit* [3<sup>rd</sup> edition]: *The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying*. New York: Delta Books, 2003.** A book for mature adults only, it describes the methods, which a dying person can use to hasten the end of their life if their suffering is unbearable. It discusses legal and financial considerations, and alternatives to "self-deliverance."

**Lynn, Joanne M.D. et al. *Handbook for Mortals: Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.** A resource for those suffering from a terminal illness, caring for the dying, or a person who has a family member who is dying.

**Byock, Ira M.D. *Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of Life*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.** A guide for patients and caregivers on having a peaceful, meaningful death.

### PUBLIC POLICY: AGING, SUICIDE, RATIONAL SUICIDE, ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA

**Battin, Margaret Pabst. *The Least Worst Death: Essays on Bioethics on the End of Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.** Explores practices in a number of countries and will be of special interest to health care professionals pondering end-of-life issues as they relate to patient care.

**Filene, Peter G. *In the Arms of Others: A Cultural History of the Right to Die in America*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998.** A look at the 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of a "good death" through the benchmark Karen Ann Quinlan case and current challenges posed by medical interventions.

**Quill, Timothy E, M.D. *Death and Dignity: Making Choices and Taking Charge*. New York: WW Norton & Co., 1994.** Quill, a former hospice director, discusses how both the medical establishment and the American legal system have limited the options of the terminally ill.

**Peck, Scott M. *Denial of the Soul: Spiritual and Medical Perspectives on Euthanasia and Mortality*. New York: Harmony Books, 1997.** Peck, a Christian theologian, explores the spiritual aspects of dying and takes a critical position on the hastening death.

**Shavelson, Lonny. *A Chosen Death: The Dying Confront Assisted Suicide*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.** Shavelson, an emergency room doctor, writer and photojournalist, tells the stories of five terminally ill people who grapple with whether or not to end their own lives.

**Werth, James L. Jr. *Contemporary Perspectives on Rational Suicide*. Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis, 1999.** A compilation of arguments for and against rational suicide by philosophers, religious leaders, sociologists, attorneys, and a host of other groups.

**Dworkin, Gerald et al. *Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: For and Against*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.** An in-depth look at both sides of the euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide debate.

**Nuland, Sherwin B. *How We Die*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.** A discussion of what death is actually like from its leading causes in the developed world.

**Alvarez, A. *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. (Reprint edition), 1990.** Written by a British poet who attempted suicide and was a friend to Sylvia Plath, this book traces the history of the West's changing attitudes towards suicide.

**Hillier, Susan and Georgia Barrow. *Aging, the Individual and Society*. [7<sup>th</sup> edition]. Florence: Wadsworth Publishing, 1998.** An academic approach to the question of gerontology, combining research with stories from elderly people.

# Delve Deeper into "The Self-Made Man"

A film by Susan Stern

---

## NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Grollman, Earl A. *Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.**

This book answers many of the questions teens may have when dealing with the loss of a loved one.

**Rofes, Eric. *The Kids' Book about Death and Dying: By and For Kids*. New York: Little Brown & Co., 1985.** A book written by kids about dealing with death, covering everything from the cost of funerals to assisted suicide to death in various cultures.

---

## FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Trueman, Terry. *Stuck in Neutral*. New York: Harper Tempest, 2001.** The story of Shawn McDaniel, a fourteen-year-old boy with severe cerebral palsy, which explores the boundaries between assisted suicide and euthanasia.

---

## VIDEOS/DOCUMENTARIES

**"On Our Own Terms: Moyers on Dying." Public Affairs Television, Inc. 2000. (360 min.)** Bill Moyers covers several aspects of death and dying, including topics such as the cutting edge of palliative care, the debate over physician-assisted suicide and the battle to improve end-of-life care in this four-part, PBS series.

[www.pbs.org/wnet/onourown/terms/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/onourown/terms/)

**"Live and Let Go." Live and Let Go Productions, LLC. 2002. (56 min.)** Tells the story of Sam Niver, a WWII veteran and newspaperman who took his own life in the face of terminal cancer.

[www.liveandletgo.com](http://www.liveandletgo.com)

**"Daughter of Suicide." Women Make Movies. 1999. (71 min.)** Suicide survivor Dempsey Rice tells the story of her mother's mental illness and suicide and its effect on her and her family.

[www.daughterone.net](http://www.daughterone.net)

**"Who Owns My life? The Sue Rodriguez Story." Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. 1995.**

**(47 min.)** This is the story of the Canadian woman, dying from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) who took her case for assisted suicide to the Canadian Supreme Court.

**"Dax's Case." Unicorn Media Inc. 1985. (58 min.)** The story of Dax Cowart, a man who was severely burned in his 20s, becoming blind, helpless, disfigured and in constant pain. Dax fought unsuccessfully for the right to refuse treatment and die.

---

## FEATURE FILMS

**"It's My Party." Directed by Randal Kleiser. MGM. 1996. (109 min.)** Eric Roberts stars as a man who, upon being diagnosed with an aggressive, soon-to-be incapacitating disease, decides to voluntarily end his life and make all his friends and loved ones a part of the process.

[www.mgm.com/title\\_title.do?title\\_s tar=ITSMYPAR](http://www.mgm.com/title_title.do?title_s tar=ITSMYPAR)

**"Wit." Directed by Mike Nichols. HBO Studios. 2004. (99 min.)** Emma Thompson stars as a dying John Donne scholar in this adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play about hospitalized dying.

[www.hbo.com/films/wit/](http://www.hbo.com/films/wit/)

---

## WEB SITES

### BEREAVEMENT

**[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)**

A non-profit Internet community helping people, including children, deal with grief.

**[www.widownet.org](http://www.widownet.org)**

An information and self-help resource for, and by, widows and widowers.

### AGING

**[www.elderweb.com](http://www.elderweb.com)**

A research site for both professionals and family members looking for information on eldercare and long-term care which includes links to information on legal, financial, medical, and housing issues, as well as policy, research, and statistics.

**[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)**

The web site of the American Association of Retired People. A compendium of resources for people over 50.

**[www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org)**

The website of the American Society on Aging, uniting professionals in the field of aging.

### SUICIDE

**[www.save.org](http://www.save.org)**

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education. A suicide prevention site.

**[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)**

American Association of Suicidology is an education and resource organization, which links professionals in suicidology with suicide survivors and direct service professionals.

### DEATH AND DYING

**[www.soros.org/initiatives/pdia/links/assistedsuicide](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/pdia/links/assistedsuicide)**

Open Society Institute's Project on Death in America: features links to sites devoted to all aspects of death and dying.

**[www.nhpco.org/templates/1/homepage.cfm](http://www.nhpco.org/templates/1/homepage.cfm)**

National Hospice and Palliative Care web site.

**[terminallyill.org](http://terminallyill.org)**

National Association for the Terminally Ill. An organization that helps the families of the terminally ill with financial problems.

### RIGHT-TO-DIE

**[www.dwd.org](http://www.dwd.org)**

Death with Dignity National Center: exists to provide information, education, research, and support for the preservation and implementation of the Death with Dignity law in Oregon.

**[www.euthanasia.com](http://www.euthanasia.com)**

Anti-euthanasia, anti-hastened death site with links to articles on euthanasia, medical and legal issues, religious stances, personal stories, etc.

# Delve Deeper into "The Self-Made Man"

*A film by Susan Stern*

[www.compassionandchoices.org](http://www.compassionandchoices.org)

The major national organization supporting physician-hastened death.

CAREGIVING

[www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)

The website for "Today's Caregiver" magazine, a leading provider of information, support and guidance for family and professional caregivers.