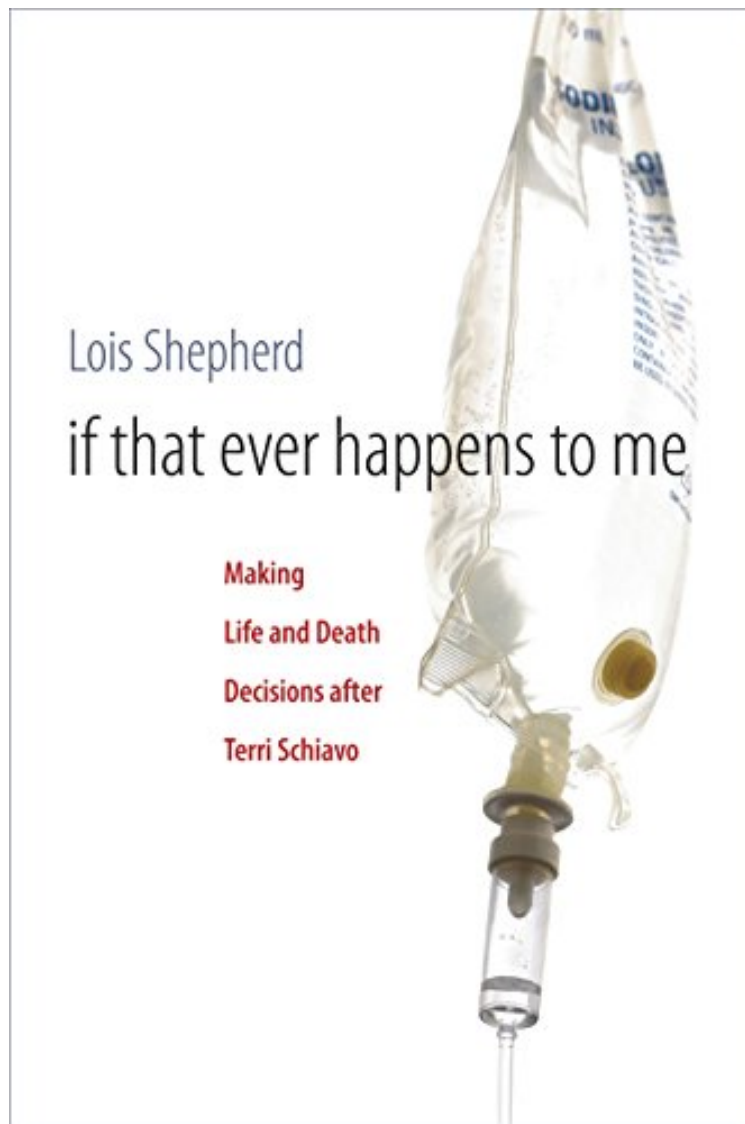


[Mobile ebook] If That Ever Happens to Me: Making Life and Death Decisions after Terri Schiavo (Studies in Social Medicine)

## If That Ever Happens to Me: Making Life and Death Decisions after Terri Schiavo (Studies in Social Medicine)

*Lois Shepherd*

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**Lois Shepherd : If That Ever Happens to Me: Making Life and Death Decisions after Terri Schiavo (Studies in Social Medicine)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised If That Ever Happens to Me: Making Life and Death Decisions after Terri Schiavo (Studies in Social Medicine):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good InformationBy Karen ThornburgExcellent book, however reads "like a lawyer" talks. Fortunately I have some legal experience so it's easier to understand, but if you are confused about legal terms and processes, it may be a more difficult read. Definitely provides good information and insight into a highly publicized case.8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Balanced, Thoughtful, Thought-ProvokingBy Mark T. MustianShepherd's book is a readable, thoughtful, balanced look at the strange, sad case of Terri Schiavo, peeling back the media attention and hysteria to look at the fundamental aspects of how should we treat such cases from the viewpoint of patients, loved ones and society as a whole. The author strikes the right balance of legal and bio-ethical expertise and just plain common sense, offering suggestions that differentiate between those patients in permanent vegetative states (as Terri was) and those terminally ill, profoundly disabled or in states of minimal consciousness. One of the book's great attributes is Shepherd's willingness (rare in my experience) to second-guess even her own suggestions, while at the same time recognizing that everyone comes to this issue with differing viewpoints, insights, fears and beliefs. Her approach of thoughtful, factual, almost individualized assessment of such difficult cases seems clear-headed, reasonable and a guiding light for our policy-makers. Highly, highly recommended.8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Highly Readable, Highly RecommendedBy The Card Playing SquirrelI am surprised to be among the first reviewers of this fine, thought-provoking book. Perhaps I shouldn't be -- it is, after all, a university press publication but it deserves a much wider audience.The author focuses on the tragic (and highly publicized) case of Terri Schiavo as a springboard for a broader, in-depth examination of the complex issues surrounding the treatment of patients in a "permanent vegetative state" (not the ideal term but one which has entered the medical lexicon). As a law professor, Shepherd is able to explain the reasoning behind various courts' decisions in this area and the significance of relevant legislation, legal concepts and documents (such as "living wills"). Unlike the typical lawyer, however, she does so in a way which is clearly understandable to the layperson (but without dumbing it down). And the law, though important, is not the heart of the book. Instead, the author takes a multidisciplinary approach (she is also an associate professor of public health sciences) and draws upon numerous sources and perspectives in considering the medical, ethical, philosophical and cultural aspects of end-of-life care.From time to time, Shepherd adopts the first person point of view, using examples from her own life to illustrate a particular point. Normally I cringe when authors do this but perhaps due to the intimate nature of the subject matter, she pulls it off -- the device is especially effective when she discusses the changes in her own thinking over the years as she went through the process of drafting a living will for herself. And the book as a whole resonated with me because it comes across so clearly that the author has struggled with these issues on a very personal level (not necessarily because it has happened to someone she knows but simply because, as the book's title suggests, it could happen to any one of us). Shepherd writes not only as a specialist in the field of bioethics but as a daughter, mother, spouse and member of society -- her passion and compassion shine through (and in elegant prose to boot).After a balanced, animated discussion of each chapter's topic, Shepherd leaves you in no doubt what her own position is -- but with a refreshing sense of humility and no claim to being certain that she is right. Indeed, ultimately what she offers are not final answers to specific questions (which in any case would rapidly be overtaken by events in an ever-changing world) but an approach which urges each of us to recognize our own particular responsibilities and to focus on care and respect for the patient and the patient's family (and what those terms might mean for someone in a permanent vegetative state). She doesn't shy away from criticizing various participants in the Schiavo case for their actions and for neglecting their responsibilities, whether they be family members, doctors and other healthcare professionals, lawyers, politicians, religious leaders, special interest groups or members of the media. My perhaps overly optimistic hope is that others similarly situated in the future will act differently if they've read "If That Ever Happens to Me". (And, having read the book, I now know that I need to revisit the terms of my old living will, think about executing a health care power of attorney, and have a long talk with my family.)A final note -- if presentation is important to you, you won't be disappointed. The volume is beautifully designed and a delight to hold and read. (Sorry, I haven't succumbed to Kindle yet!)

Every day, thousands of people quietly face decisions as agonizing as those made famous in the Terri Schiavo case. Throughout that controversy, all kinds of people--politicians, religious leaders, legal and medical experts--made emphatic statements about the facts and offered even more certain opinions about what should be done. To many, courts were either ordering Terri's death by starvation or vindicating her constitutional rights. Both sides called for simple answers. *If That Ever Happens to Me* details why these simple answers were not right for Terri Schiavo and why they are not right for end-of-life decisions today.Lois Shepherd looks behind labels like "starvation," "care," or "medical treatment" to consider what care and feeding really mean, when feeding tubes might be removed, and why disability groups, the faithful, and even the dying themselves often suggest end-of-life solutions that they might later regret. For example, Shepherd cautions against living wills as a pat answer. She provides evidence that demanding letter-perfect documents can actually weaken, rather than bolster, patient choice. The actions taken and decisions made during Terri Schiavo's final years will continue to have repercussions for thousands of others--those nearing death, their families, health-care professionals, attorneys, lawmakers, clergy, media, researchers, and ethicists. *If That Ever*

Happens to Me is an excellent choice for anyone interested in end-of-life law, policy, and ethics--particularly readers seeking a deeper understanding of the issues raised by Terri Schiavo's case.

The sensitive presentation of facts and narrative . . . makes this book a beacon on the convoluted path to better living and dying.--Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of Compassion and ChoicesA thought-provoking, balanced personal and professional reflection on what has come to be known as the 'Schiavo case.' . . . Recommended.--ChoiceA detailed ethical examination that is balanced and insightful. . . . A model of depth in ethical deliberation on difficult issues . . . highly recommended.--Nursing EthicsThe sensitive presentation of facts and narrative with values of responsibility and fairness makes this book a beacon on the convoluted path to better living and dying.--Metapsychology OnlineA thoughtful, frank, and balanced look at the [Schiavo] case itself and the larger issue of end-of-life decision making.--Doody's ServiceDetailed analysis. . . . A relentlessly honest examination.--Hastings Center Report In this masterful account of the interminable legal, political, and familial wranglings over the use of a feeding tube for Terri Schiavo, Lois Shepherd calmly explains why Americans continue to be perplexed when forced to make treatment decisions for relatives who are in a permanent vegetative state.--George J. Annas, author of American BioethicsLois Shepherd is uniquely situated among authors who have written about the Schiavo case: a law professor from Florida with a background in end-of-life decision-making law, she did not have a vested interest in the case as it progressed. This book provides insights and offers viewpoints that, if heeded, could help heal some of the bitterness that developed during the case.--Kathy L. Cerminara, Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law CenterIf That Ever Happens to Me is a wise and sober analysis written with the desire to draw constructive lessons from a national tragedy. Shepherd is to be congratulated for ratcheting down the red state-blue state polemics of Schiavo and for her careful parsing of the medical, legal, and bioethical dimensions of the case. To her credit, she conceives of a sensible alternative philosophy of care which will help define our collective obligations to those in liminal states of consciousness. This important formulation will lead to more proportionate care for this vulnerable population, balancing both their right to die with the right to receive care.--Joseph J. Fins, M.D., F.A.C.P., chief, Division of Medical Ethics, Weill Cornell Medical CollegeLois Shepherd has given us a thoughtful, nuanced and overarchingly accessible guide to one of the most difficult decisions any of us will ever have to make--the termination of life-prolonging medical treatment. She has taken the Schiavo case, too often a source of anger and heat, and created a resource of understanding and light.--Kenneth W. Goodman, director and professor, University of Miami Bioethics Program; editor of The Strange, Sad Case of Terri Schiavo: Ethics, Politics and Death in the Twenty-first CenturyAbout the AuthorLois Shepherd is associate professor of public health sciences and professor of law at the University of Virginia. She is coauthor of Bioethics and the Law.