

Pscy111 Aging in America – Professor Joann Montepare (Lasell College)

Issues of Life, and Death, for all Ages

My Sister's Keeper

My Sister's Keeper (2009) is an American film directed by Nick Cassavetes and based on a novel by Jodi Picoult.

Characters

Kate Fitzgerald – Daughter, suffering from acute promyelocytic leukemia
Sara Fitzgerald - Mother
Anna Fitzgerald - Sister
Brian Fitzgerald - Father
Jesse Fitzgerald - Brother
Campbell Alexander – Lawyer

Questions for Discussion

- Which character did you connect with the most? Why?
- Imagine you are the mother. While your child Kate is dying you discover that Anna refuses to give Kate the last possible life-saving treatment. How would you react?
- Do you think it is ethical to design and conceive a child who meets specific genetic requirements?
 - ~ If so, is it ethical in all cases (e.g., prevent miscarriages, prevent inheritable genetic diseases, sex selection for social reasons)?
 - ~ If not, are there exceptions - such as saving another person's life – or, is it a "slippery slope"?
- Did Kate's parents go too far in their concern by making Anna a "savior" for Kate? When is it too far to save one child through another child? Taking umbilical cord blood? Bone marrow transplants? Kidney donation? When the child refuses to participate?
- How did the physician's recommendation about pre-implantation genetic diagnosis impact the parents' decisions about Kate? If you were a physician, would you recommend it to a couple in a similar situation?
- What is the significance of the movie title?
- Was it right for Kate to decide not to take Anna's help and effectively end her life? Were there any pressures which impacted her decision?
- Was it right for Kate to ask Anna to refuse to participate in further efforts to prolong her life? What impact will it have on Anna if she doesn't help her sister live longer?
- If Anna had wanted to continue efforts to prolong her life, would it be right for Anna to refuse to help?
- What does the movie suggest about the joys of living and of dying?
- If Kate were 75 year old and suffering from leukemia, would you have felt differently about her choice?