The Patients' Bill of Last Rights

The dying voice sounds an ongoing request for basic human rights, last rights that belong to the dying because they are still among the living. Honour these Rights; One day you will want the same Rights.

The Right to BE IN CONTROL
Grant me the right to make as many decisions as possible regarding my care. Please do not take choices from me. Let me make my own decisions.

The Right to HAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE
I have lost my job; I can no longer fulfil my role in my family. Please help me find some sense of purpose in my last days.

The Right to REMINISCE
There has been pleasure in my life, moments of pride, moments of love. Please give me time to recollect those moments, and please listen to my recollections.

The Right to BE COMFORTABLE
The pain involved in dying is multifaceted. Although not all my pain can be taken away, please relieve whatever portion you can.

The Right to TOUCH AND BE TOUCHED
Sometimes I need distance. Yet sometimes I have a strong need to be close. When I want to reach out, please come to me and hold me as I hold you.

The Right to LAUGH
People often   far too often   come to me wearing masks of seriousness. Although dying, I still need to laugh. Please laugh with me and help others to laugh as well.

The Right to BE ANGRY AND SAD
It is difficult to leave behind all my attachments and all that I love. Please allow me the opportunity to be angry and sad.

The Right to HAVE A RESPECTED SPIRITUALITY
Whether I am questioning or affirming, doubting or praising, I sometimes need your ear, a non-judging ear. Please let my spirit travel its own journey, without judging its direction.

The Right to HEAR THE TRUTH
If you withhold the truth from me, you will treat me as if I am no longer living, and I need to know the truth about my life. Please help me find that truth.

The Right to BE IN DENIAL   **Author Unknown**
If I hear the truth and choose not to accept it, that is my right.

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