

ONLY LOVE REMAINS

Lessons from the Dying on the Meaning of Life
Euthanasia or Palliative Care?

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I found this a remarkable little book. It is written by a man who became a volunteer in the palliative care ward of a large Brussels hospital after he retired. His background includes being an industrial researcher at IBM, administrator of IT research programs for the European Commission, and university professor on Industrial EU Research for Competitiveness. In this volume, all that intellectual power is very practically focused on the meaning of life and the best approach to end-of-life care.

The first half of the book is a series of 16 clinical anecdotes, little sketches that illuminate the problems faced by the dying and the problems we have looking after them. He writes extraordinarily well and I was disappointed when I realized there were no more clinical stories to listen to.

The second half of the book explains what euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are, and discusses the current status of palliative care and the (legal) position of physician-assisted death in ten different countries.

‘I wrote this book in order to convey a message: approaching the end of life with the support of palliative care can create for the patient as well as the carer the conditions for moments of deep insight and the development of solidarity, gratitude, friendship and love.’

‘They gradually free themselves from all the conditioning that cluttered their existence during the frenzied business of living, and help us to discover that, in the end, all that remains viable and indelible are our experiences and expressions of love.’

I warmly recommend this book to anyone who works in palliative care and will leave it to you to decide which of the families and patients you look after might benefit from it. I hope that Stajano can provide us with another volume of stories with his insightful commentary.

If you need another reason to buy this book, it says 50% of the royalties will be donated to *Fondation Privée Soins Palliatifs Clinique de l'Europe*.

Dr. Roger Woodruff, Book Reviews Editor, IAHPC Book Reviews