

Only Love Remains

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

Attilio Stajano

Preface by Marie de Hennezel

What happens to the dying in the final days and weeks of their lives? What emotions come to the surface and what do they want to talk about? Attilio Stajano, a volunteer worker at the palliative care ward of a Brussels hospital, presents a series of deeply moving personal encounters with seriously-ill patients. The dying, he discovers, have much to teach the living. Whilst their stories are all different, they share one thing in common: in the end, when all is said and done, *only love remains...*

How should we respond to the challenge of death? As a society and as individuals, we can choose to be patient and sensitive, giving dignity to those reaching the end of their lives – even when those lives appear to have no further value. The period leading to death can be full of profound experiences, telling us much about the meaning of life and the abiding nature of love. If we see the terminally-ill as an inconvenience, however, we forego the possibility of finding unexpected resources in ourselves: a tenderness, a touch, a readiness to assist that we did not know we were capable of.

Underlying this book is the momentous and very current debate over euthanasia. In a comprehensive appendix, the author reports on the provision of palliative care services and the laws governing euthanasia in European and English-speaking countries around the world, and the implications these have for the way we value and care for the dying.

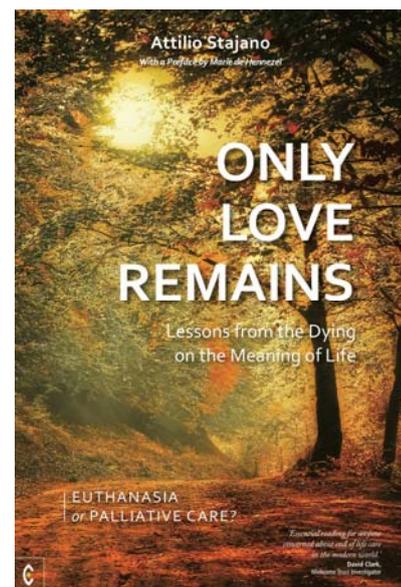
'Reading this book leads to the conviction that we should not miss this experience of assisting a loved one who is close to death.' – Marie de Hennezel, author of *The Warmth of the Heart Prevents Your Body From Rusting*

'Simple and precise words that say fundamental things about the thoughts and affections of those who discover and present to us the meaning of the life they are leaving.' – Tullio De Mauro, past Minister of Education, professor of linguistics, University of Rome La Sapienza

'A compelling narrative about care and people in the face of death. Written with grace and insight, this should be essential reading for anyone concerned about end of life care in the modern world.' – David Clark, Wellcome Trust Investigator, University of Glasgow



ATTILIO STAJANO works as a volunteer at the palliative care ward of a Brussels hospital. He has been an industrial researcher at IBM, administrator of research programmes on Information Technology at the European Commission, university professor on Industrial EU Research for Competitiveness in Bologna and at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GA, and European Union Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, PA. His website is www.stajano.org.



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