

Lessons of a Potter

A man once had a friend who was a skilled potter. He often went to watch him work, and was fascinated at the application of his craft, molding the clay into various vessels. One day, he asked his friend how he determined what he was going to make.

The potter said he had discovered that when he was rested, he tended to make beautiful things, but when he was tired, he made more ordinary vessels for menial uses.

As the potter reflected on what he had just said, he concluded that when he was relaxed, he had both the ability to focus and the patience to make something beautiful. Oftentimes, the process of making a perfect object involved crushing an almost-completed vase or bowl back into a lump so that he might start over. Beautiful objects also required that he be much more careful at each stage. When he was tired, by contrast, he was less able to focus, less patient, and thus more apt to make mistakes and more likely to resort to making items that did not demand such precision.

Do the potter's observations have application to us in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home? The answer is obvious. Professionally, we cannot be at "the top of our game" unless we are rested and dealing appropriately with the stress that comes our way.

So it is with our personal lives. Building character takes focus and patience, with attention to detail and an ability to be consistent over time.

While God is ultimately our Potter, we also play the role of potter in forming our own character and values system. The more stressed we are, the less likely we are to create a character of beauty.

Remember: reputation can be made in a moment. Character is built in a lifetime.

--Beecher Hunter