

Whittling Us Down

Writing in *The Grand Essentials*, author Ben Patterson says he has a theory about old age:

“I believe that when life has whittled us down, when joints have failed and skin has wrinkled and capillaries have clogged and hardened, what is left of us will be what we were all along, in our essence.”

Exhibit A, he added, is a distant uncle. “All his life he did nothing but find new ways to get rich. He spent his senescence very comfortably, drooling and babbling constantly about the money he made. When life whittled him down to his essence, all there was left was raw greed. This is what he had cultivated in a thousand little ways over a lifetime.”

Exhibit B, Patterson noted, was his wife’s grandmother. “When she died in her mid-80s, she had already been senile for several years. What did this lady talk about? The best example I can think of was when we asked her to pray before dinner. She would reach out and hold the hands of those sitting beside her, a broad, beatific smile would spread across her face, her dim eyes would fill with tears as she looked up to heaven, and her chin would quaver as she poured out her love to Jesus. That was Edna in a nutshell. She loved Jesus and she loved people. She couldn’t remember our names, but she couldn’t keep her hands from patting us lovingly whenever we got near her.



“When life whittled her down to her essence, all there was left was love: love for God and love for people,” Patterson declared.

And so it should be with us. Gladly, in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, our associates daily demonstrate their love for God by loving and serving our residents. That is their essence.

– Beecher Hunter