

SIMPLY CARING

Putting the Alzheimer's Puzzle Together

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Chapter 1

What Should Be The Foundation Of Care?



Experience is the best knowledge

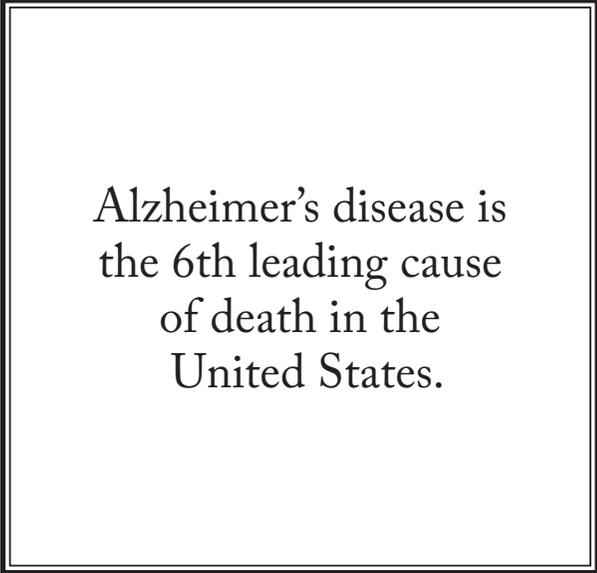
"If you have met one Alzheimer's patient, you have met one Alzheimer's patient." I am not sure where this quote originated but this statement is a true view of the different types of Alzheimer's personalities that caregivers will face. There are a variety of ways in which the disease possesses an individual. Alzheimer's affects everyone differently.

I am writing this information down in book form because it has been stored for too long in my brain. So many caregivers have come to me and asked me what they need to do next, and to help them cope with a specific situation. After answering, some have taken notes and have asked me if I had my ideas written down. In the heat of the moment when you are trying to give care or just help the person with Alzheimer's you so often need a guide to help lead the way and light up the path. I hope this tool will help make your journey easier and serve as a guide.

You are not alone on this journey. People will stand by you; open your heart to allow others to help and the journey will be lightened.

I have built my Dementia Practice by helping families through coaching and caring. Almost Home's philosophy is: *Life.Celebrated Daily.*

The foundation of our Coach and Care is Safety First. Our Program of Care is built on safety, structure, socialization and support. Attention to needs, friends, education, training and you, the caregiver, are all part of our care strategies. I will refer to these "care points" throughout this book.



Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States.

Safety first: Persons with Alzheimer's can't always make the distinction between what is safe and what is dangerous. As a caregiver, we must make those choices. We become the protector of the one we are caring for. I will touch on more detailed safety issues later.

Structure: Establishing routine and having things flow is essential in managing the day for an Alzheimer's patient. If we do not keep a routine, it is easy for one to get overwhelmed and frustrated. Unstructured time creates chaos. I will give you tips on how to maintain structure and add a rhythm to your day.

Socialization: Humans are social beings. They need others around to stay engaged in life. Without human interaction, quality of life is compromised. You will be given tips on how to keep friends and family engaged and helpful to you and the one you are caring for.

Support: You need a supportive team to follow through on this journey. Education to help understand the disease will be provided in this manual. You will also be coached on how to support yourself so that you can continue to be that wonderful caregiver.

Attention to needs of the person with dementia can be difficult. They can not always express what their needs are or what they want. Being a detective is necessary in trying to figure out what they need. Experience with them creates the relationship that makes it easier to be attentive.

We practice the Best **Friends** method. Human nature tends to trust friends more than strangers and sometimes more than family. Friends

help friends. Being a friend with total acceptance creates trust from the one you are caring for.

Education about the disease process, medications, medical procedures, end of life care, financial matters and care options are all part of my coaching families in the caring of their loved one.

Training comes after education. Caregivers can learn how to provide quality, proper care at different stages of the disease. As a certified trainer in many areas, I train both professional and family caregivers.

Caregivers will forget about themselves. Caregivers forget about their own needs and health. I help **You** watch for signs of caregiver stress. Also knowing proper nutrition and health maintenance can help you survive this exhausting, physically and emotionally debilitating, caregiving experience. You will never experience a more rewarding challenge.

As you finish this book, I hope that it will become a tool to help coach you through this disease process and help solve any caregiving problem, issue or struggle you may have. I have faith it will encourage you to go forward.

Look forward to the day of peace. Whatever bad moment you are in, remember this too shall pass.

Ask for help, go to the professionals. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

I am giving you permission to not feel guilty. You cannot do it alone. There is plenty of assistance available. It may be hard to access at times, but push forward, and ask for help.

Mother Theresa said, *Do not think that love in order to be genuine has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies .*

The person you love has a disease of the brain. Remember they cannot help themselves and you can not do it all. So, no guilty feelings allowed.

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