

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

*Review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area
Alzheimer's Awareness*

Alzheimer's – A Beautiful Spirit Celebrated

By Linn Possell

When Linn Possell's mother was diagnosed with frontal-lobe dementia or Fronto-Temporal Dementia, Possell struggled with staying connected to her mother. In this book, she describes what strategies she took to remain connected. She hopes to help others embrace a different way of experiencing and interacting with their loved ones who have dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Regardless of cognitive decline, Possell believes our soul continues to find expression. Even in the midst of dementia, we can find a beautiful connection with one another.

This book focuses on the emotional side of dementia – both for the person diagnosed and the caregivers/family members. Dealing with the emotions is extremely difficult, and putting aside your emotions (as the caregiver) is paramount to help the person diagnosed deal with their emotions. But, as a caregiver, it is important to acknowledge and “sit” with these emotions until we can work through them. Possell helps family members and caregivers work through all the different emotions so they can get on with accepting, helping, loving and celebrating life with the person living with Alzheimer's or other dementia.

Reverend Possell relates that the reason Alzheimer's is so “hard” is not simply because we slowly watch someone we love struggle with change and loss, but that Alzheimer's also requires US to change. A question to ask is “Can we change: our expectations, our relationships, our comfort, sometimes our definition of security or home and finally, our ability to celebrate a spirit less familiar?” She gives the reader ideas to recognize the changes needed and ways to make these changes.

People experience all kinds of fears with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's: fear of losing control, losing abilities, losing awareness, memory, connection and

ultimately losing life. Losing life may not be the fear of death, but of losing the life they know. In this book, Possell wants family and caregivers to look beyond accomplishments, skills and abilities and witness the spirit that is the source of everything they did. She believes that who we are is about how we live, connect with others, and how we celebrate our life.

Possel also discusses the emotions when moving a loved one to a facility, especially after promising not to do so. She talks about finding the appropriate care and helping your loved one adjust. If caring for them in your home, she talks about a care plan that is needed.

The last part of the book discusses healing for the caregivers/family members that needs to take place. Love, memories, positive energy, prayer – all of these work toward healing and peace.

People living with Alzheimer's and related dementia can thrive and have a wonderful quality of life when family and caregivers give them the opportunity to live their lives in an environment that is nurturing and responsive to their needs. This book will help the reader begin to rethink what is possible for their loved one and for their own life.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.

