

## **Forget-Me-Not Spotlight**

### ***Surviving Alzheimer's –***

### ***Practical tips and soul-saving wisdom for caregivers***

***By Paula Spencer Scott***

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, C.D.P., co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

Paula Spencer Scott has had a lot of experience with Alzheimer's disease. Her grandmother, father, and two mothers-in-law had the disease and she was involved in the care of all of them – the family dynamics (long distance siblings, care options, what to do with houses, other medical issues, divided chores and divided opinions). She also works for Caring.com, whose mission is to provide family caregivers with support and eldercare information. She has had access to MDs, PhDs, MSWs and other experts as well as countless hands-on caregivers. She has written articles and blog posts about all aspects of caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. She states that even though the title is "Surviving Alzheimer's" the advice in this book can apply to many different kinds of progressive dementia.

In the first chapter of the book "The Big Picture", she shares insights and inspiration from 12 of the leading dementia experts. She calls them the Wizards of Alz. Each person discusses their thoughts and insights – from daily caregiving, communication, the need for meaningful activities, emotional connections, legal matters, and caregiver health, etc.

The second chapter "Everyday Problems" is the bulk of the book. She discusses many situations that may come up in everyday life caring for a person living with dementia. For each situation, there are three sections: WHAT it looks like or WHY it happens, TRY this and To help you cope... The situations range from managing personality changes, memory confusion, behavioral symptoms, personal care changes, health problems and eating challenges.

The third chapter "Personal and Family Stressors" is a great chapter that discusses the stress that caregivers often have and how to deal with it. She also discusses

the stressors that are family-related: criticism, denial, disagreement, favoritism, lack of family help, and relationship strain. Another section in this chapter is the emotional stressors: guilt, resentment, losing your temper, grieving. The practical stressors are lack of privacy, lack of “me” time, and sleep problems. For all of these stressors she gives you ideas that can help.

The final chapter is “Resources”- A toolkit for family caregivers. Scott discusses the Stages of Alzheimer’s: Overview, Test Yourself: Are You Headed for Burnout?, 11 Warning Signs of Depression and More Sources of Help.

Anyone in a dementia situation – caregiver or family member – would find this book very helpful and informative.

*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.*