

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

When Caring Takes Courage

By Mara Botonis

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

What activities can you do with your loved one who has Alzheimer's or dementia? How can you engage them and create a moment of joy for both of you? This book, *When Caring Takes Courage*, may help you answer these questions and is based on Biography Based Care®, also known as Person Centered Care. Biography Based Care® is care that is tailored to the person who is being cared for based on their life experiences, favorite and familiar preferences. Each person is unique, even when they have dementia. The Biography Based Care® approach offers practical strategies to help you:

1. Engage your loved one based on their current abilities and preferences.
2. Give context to daily tasks that relate back to the people, places and times in your loved one's life that are most familiar right now.
3. Provide care in a way that can decrease agitation and promote a sense of well-being and fulfillment for both of you.

To help you with knowing what your loved one's preferences are, there is a biography form in the book that can be copied and filled out. On this form, you list as much information as possible about your loved one's life – parents, grandparents, siblings' names, important dates in their life, routines in their day, hobbies, work career, holiday traditions, favorite music, sports, bathing preferences (morning or evening, shower or bath), foods they don't like, snacks they like, etc. This approach is about translating this information into activities that engage your loved one, creating the best possible day and helping you navigate the times of agitation and frustration. We also have a Personal History

Sheet form on our website at www.effinghamalz.org that is similar to this form that is free to use.

This book is broken down into 2 parts – “Getting through Your Day” and “Creating the Best Possible Day”. “Getting Through Your Day” has eighteen easy-to-read chapters pertaining to issues such as communication and bathing, to finances and care options. In Section 2, the author talks about how you, as the caregiver, can enhance your loved one’s quality of life through meaningful, life-enriching activities and interactions. She has divided this concept into six areas – physical, spiritual calm, emotional, purposeful, social, and intellectual. There is a chapter explaining each of these activities and ways to incorporate them into your day. Also included are ideas for activities that fulfill all or some of the six areas.

At the back of the book is a Recommended Reading List, Directory of Organizations and Resources and Web Sites and Blogs for Alzheimer’s Caregivers. I hope you find this book helpful in your journey

When Caring Takes Courage is available at the Effingham Public Library from the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, it can be checked out under Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness.