

What the Hell Happened to My Brain?: Living Beyond Dementia

Forewords by Richard Taylor PhD,
Dr Shibley Rahman and Glenn Rees AM

Kate Swaffer was just 49 years old when she was diagnosed with a form of younger onset dementia. In this book, she offers an all-too-rare first-hand insight into that experience, sounding a clarion call for change in how we ensure a better quality of life for people with dementia. Kate describes vividly her experiences of living with dementia, exploring the effects of memory difficulties, loss of independence, leaving long-term employment, the impact on her teenage sons, and the enormous impact of the dementia diagnosis on her sense of self. Never shying away from difficult issues, she tackles head-on stigma, inadequacies in care and support, and the media's role in perpetuating myths about dementia, suggesting ways in which we can include and empower people with the diagnosis. She also reflects on the ways in which her writing and dementia advocacy work have taken her on a process of self-discovery and enabled her to develop a new and meaningful personal identity. Kate's powerful words will challenge misconceptions about dementia, and open our eyes to new ways of supporting people with the diagnosis. A must read for people with dementia and their families as well as for professionals and carers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Kate Swaffer commenced her professional career as a nurse specialising in dementia and then operating theatres. Following her diagnosis of younger onset dementia, she went on to complete a BA in Writing and Creative Communications, a Bachelor of Psychology at UniSA, and a MSc in Dementia Care at the University of Wollongong, and is currently commencing a PhD. She works as an author and international speaker and is an advocate and activist for dementia and aged care. She has published many articles, a book of poetry and in January 2016, her first book on dementia, *What the hell happened to my brain?: Living Beyond dementia*. She also publishes a daily blog at www.kateswaffer.com

In 2015, she was also named Dementia Leader of the Year in the University of Stirling International Dementia Awards and Emerging Leader in Disability Awareness in the National Disability Awards, was winner of the Bethanie Education Medallion, and a SA finalist in the Australian of the Year Awards for 2016. She is Co-founder, Chair and Editor of Dementia Alliance International, a board member of Alzheimer's Disease International and joined the World Dementia Council in February 2016. She is also the inaugural Chair of Alzheimer's Australia Dementia Advisory Committee and Co-chair of the Consumers Dementia Research Network, as well as being on a number of other local, national and international committees.



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