

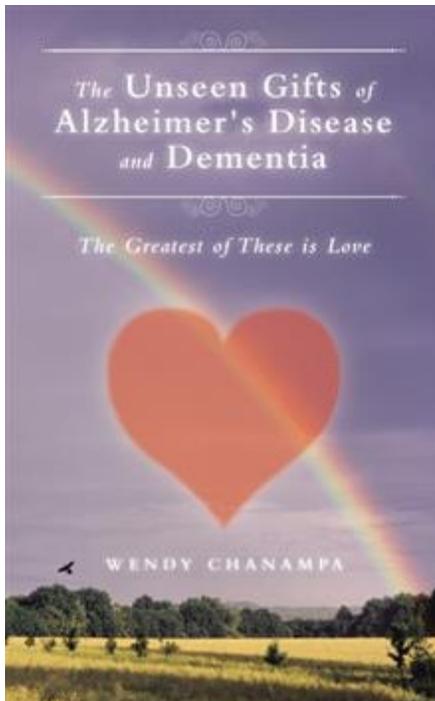
The Unseen Gifts of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

The Greatest of These is Love
by Wendy Chanampa, PAC Trainer

"To love a person is to learn the song that is in their heart and to sing it to them when they have forgotten."

Written by Arne Garborg (1851-1924)

This quote has hung on my wall for several years, and has long been my inspiration. It is the catalyst and grand influence behind this book.



The Unseen Gifts of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

is a collection of lessons learned from people living with dementia.

My favorite lesson is learning to walk in love and acceptance in the company of the person with dementia. As we meet them exactly where they are... learning to lay down our own agenda and live in their world is not easy, but definitely worth the effort. Once experienced and understood, life changes can take place. Learning to simply "be" with someone with dementia can be very enjoyable. Old connections can be reestablished and new ones created through all stages of the disease. The relationship will be different but may become a precious treasure.

Gentle self-love for caregivers and families is encouraged and essential. To often family stress and disagreements overshadow the entire well being of the individual with dementia, their families and caregivers. A hamster wheel scenario develops. The caregiver is exhausted and frustrated and the person with dementia becomes more difficult to interact with: their disease progresses; caregivers and family become more stressed; person with dementia more agitated and disruptive. This ultimately equals more stress. For everyone to live well, this needs to stop. To help all involved, we have to learn how to change. The person with dementia cannot. This book explores how to do just that through self-awareness, instinct, grief and support. As we learn to see the rainbow, the gifts will be revealed. We will see that we are the solution as we discover how to look up, beyond the clouds.

Letting go of our agenda and our dreams, facing our fears and learning to live in the moment are key elements in this journey. As we focus on the things that we can do to

improve the quality of life for all of us living with dementia (including families and caregivers), the many things that we cannot control hold less power.

This book focuses on teaching others how to see the hidden gifts of love that are everywhere in this relentless journey through dementia. There are so many storms yet rainbows can be found. We can learn to stop, look up and recognize that the person living with dementia is still there, just different. We must learn the song in their hearts and learn the steps to their dance. As we do this, we can survive and our loved ones with dementia can truly thrive. Amazing things will happen. With love, gratitude and acceptance people with dementia can live well. The gifts that they can continue to give us are the rainbows in the storm.

Wendy is a Registered Professional Guardian with expertise in senior care, a Certified Dementia Care Practitioner and a Certified Dementia Care Trainer through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and International Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. She is also a Certified PAC (Positive Approach® to Care) Dementia Care Trainer through Positive Approach, LLC

Wendy is extremely passionate about dementia care, focused on enhancing the quality of life for those affected. With over 30 years experience working with elders, she has extensive experience in dementia awareness. Wendy studied health care administration at Penn State University. In 2008 she became a registered guardian and started Senior Resource Consultants, Inc. Her practice includes care management, family counseling and caregiver training, and educating people about dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Her love of this population is evident in her training sessions and interactions. Having spent a lifetime acquiring experience in the dementia care field, Wendy has developed her natural ability relating to this population. Her unique hands on approach, real life stories and experiential learning are her trademarks. She is a frequent speaker at events and conferences focused on caring for Alzheimers and dementia patients. She is also the host of seminars effectively teaching coping mechanisms and care strategies to other caregivers and care organizations.