



All quotes taken from *The Dementia Handbook* and *Dementia With Dignity*  
(Maya Angelou also quoted).

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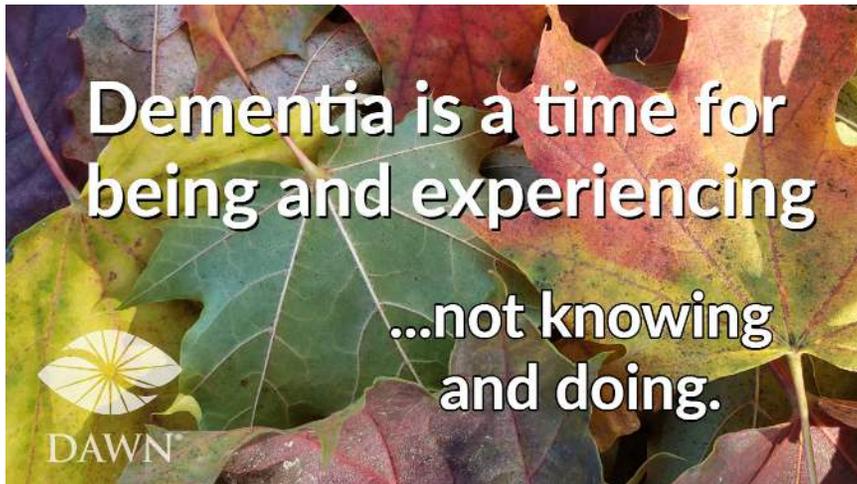


## DAWN Quotes

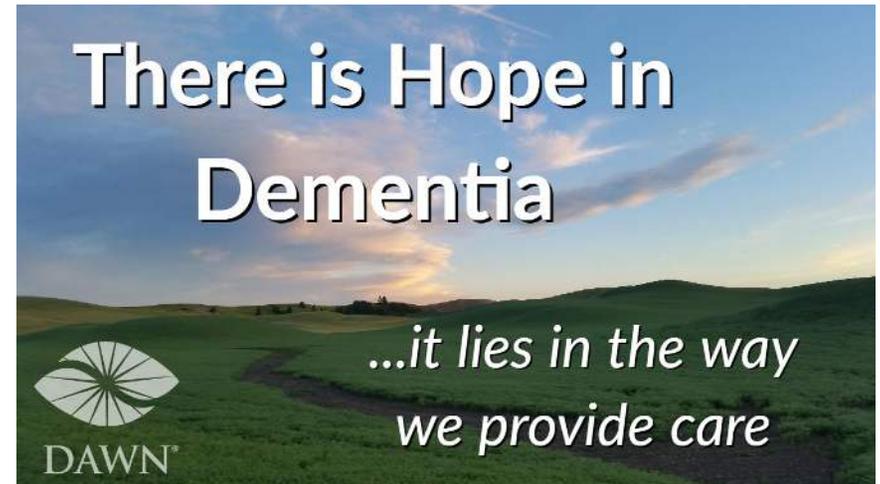
for you, our friends



from Judy Cornish  
author of *Dementia With Dignity*



Dementia does not mean a total loss of abilities. We lose rational thought, but not intuitive thought. We have two psychological selves: our experiential selves and our remembering selves. We lose only the remembering self—not our ability to exist in and experience the present.



Whenever I am with someone experiencing dementia, I assume the role of mood creator. I make sure that I am not radiating sadness, concern, or amazement at their impairments. For both of us, I am looking for something beautiful, funny, or heartwarming to enjoy.



When we are caring for people with dementia, our focus should be on what they can do, not on what they cannot do. Putting our focus on their strengths enhances companionship and lowers stress for all.



Remember: people experiencing dementia are often unaware of their impairments, a condition we call anosognosia. When people are unaware that they lack memory or good judgment, they are even more resistant to taking direction from others. Always strive to be kind and patient.



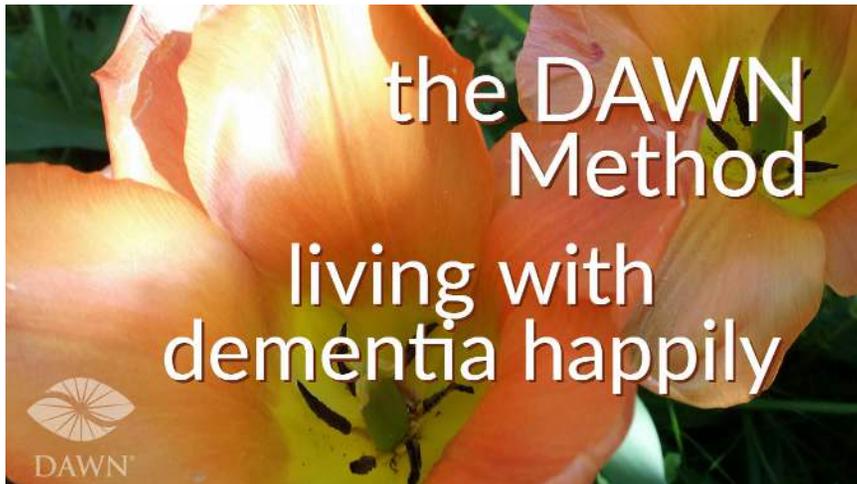
make it  
safe to  
fail

I do not expect my friends with dementia to be able to see cause and effect, prioritize ideas or actions, or be able to follow the steps of a task or sequence. Because I don't expect them to be able to do these things, I don't become frustrated when they can't.



People do not stop  
experiencing things just  
because they stop  
remembering them.

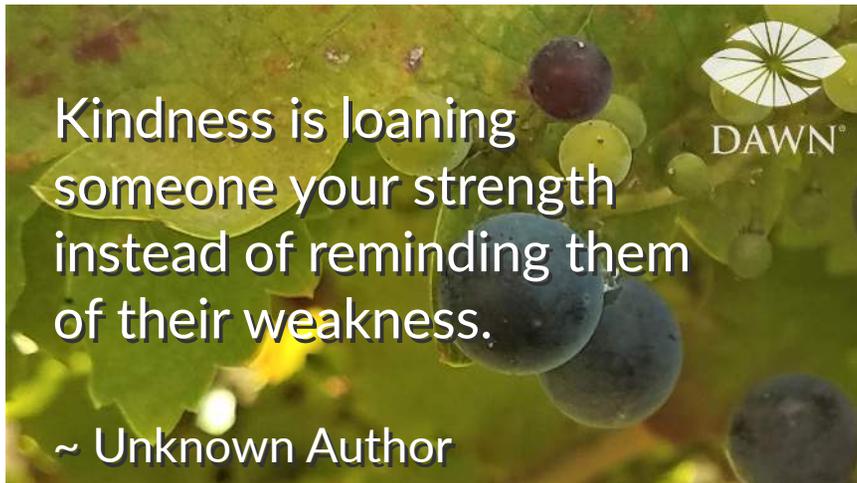
When we are with people who have dementia, we should take responsibility for their moods. Know that we are already creating their moods because changing moods requires rational thought and memory. Whatever mood we bring into their presence will be the mood they begin to feel.



Intuitive thought enables us to do the fun things in life: to be creative, enjoy beauty in all its forms, feel our own feelings and interpret the moods and feelings of those around us. Our friends with dementia have not lost intuitive thought.



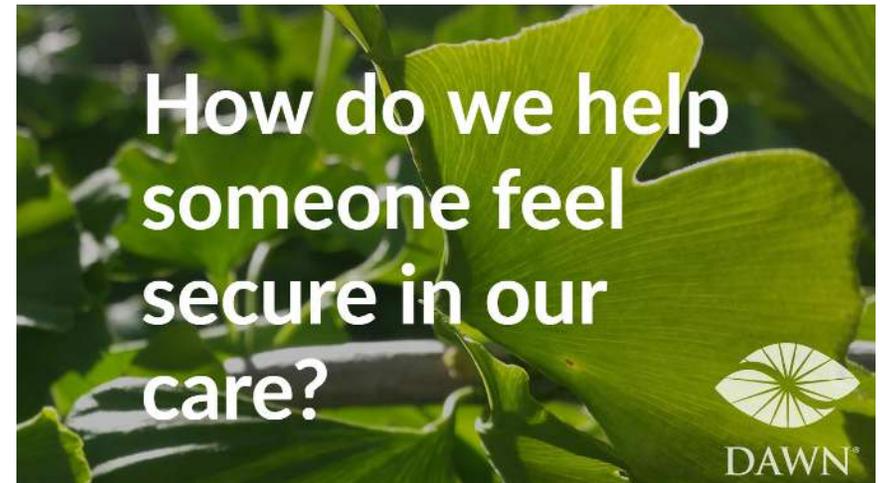
Meeting emotional needs is the essence of being a dementia caregiver. Any situational behavior could be caused by a variety of emotional needs. Making environmental changes may help, but unless the emotional need driving the behavior is met, difficulties will continue.



Kindness is loaning  
someone your strength  
instead of reminding them  
of their weakness.

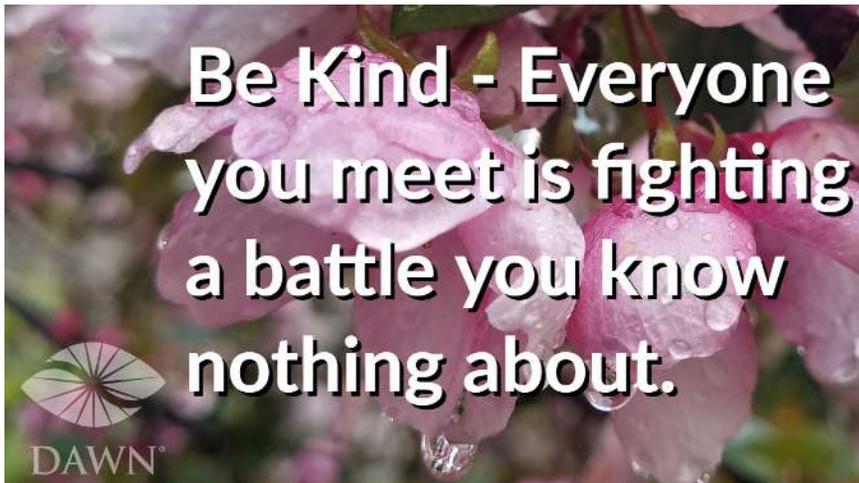
~ Unknown Author

This is the essence of what we do when we provide strength-based dementia care. We use our own rational thinking and memory skills for our companions when they are only able to experience what is happening right now.



How do we help  
someone feel  
secure in our  
care?

People with dementia continue to learn experientially. They will either learn that they are safe in our care, or that they are not, through their day-to-day experiences with us. It's up to us to help them learn that they are still safe even as the dementia progresses.



One of the most frustrating things about having dementia is waking up one day and finding yourself unable to perform a task or use a skill that has been effortless since you were a child. Always be kind and compassionate.

Here are three ways we can support the strengths of our loved ones with dementia:

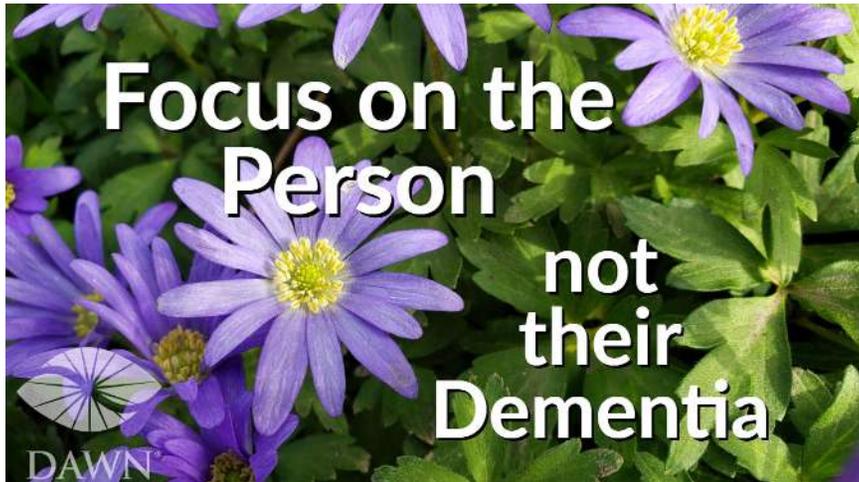
- 1) Alter their physical environments as necessary for safety;
- 2) Enrich their lives with appropriate stimulation;
- 3) Communicate with them by supporting their loss of memory and rational thought.



Maya Angelou said that although people forget what we say or do, they never forget how we make them feel. This is never truer than when we are with people experiencing dementia. This underlines the importance of being careful about how we say things, not just what we say.



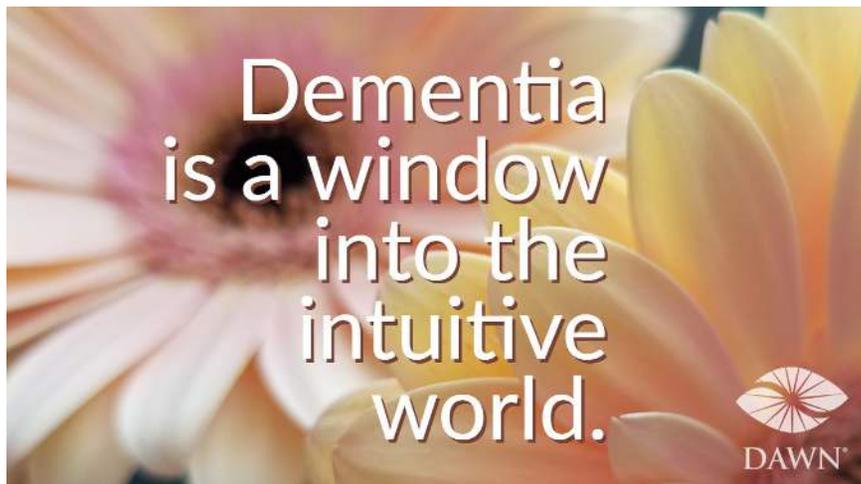
Don't put them on the spot. We need to stop testing their increasingly defective ability to use memory and recall. If our loved one with dementia knows they are safe from memory tests, they will feel safer with us and experience less anxiety about their growing forgetfulness.



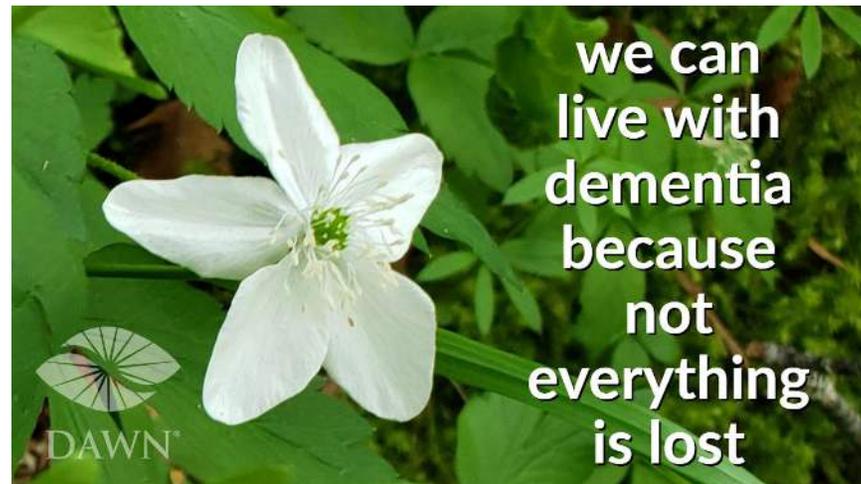
As a dementia caregiver, always look for underlying emotional needs. Any behavioral concern can result from feeling disempowered, embarrassed, confused, or at risk. So empathetically watch your loved one and then address the emotional need prompting the behavior first.



When someone with dementia is gradually losing vocabulary and the ability to organize words into logical sentences, more and more time is needed to find words that accurately express what she or he wants to say. Allow pauses as your loved one searches for the needed words.



Intuitive thought gives us access to two of the most valuable things in life: enjoying beauty, and recognizing the feelings of people around us. Those with dementia are fully able to use intuitive thought. We can help by filling their lives with sensory stimulation and beauty.



I have watched my friends with dementia develop a sense of wellbeing when they enjoy the following four emotions: Feeling socially successful; Feeling some degree of control over self and life; Feeling valued and respected; and Feeling that the future is secure.