



The Primrose Press

Volume 1, Issue 123, April 2022

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HAPPY



SPRING

When a Loved One with Alzheimer's Doesn't Recognize You

By Ava Stinnett

In early-stage dementia or Alzheimer's disease, intermittent symptoms of mild cognitive decline—such as word searching, forgetfulness, and trouble concentrating and problem-solving—are visible. As the disease advances, lapses in people's memories become even more apparent. Such lapses can cause an inability to remember—or recognize—family members. As a result, some family relationships diminish, leaving the person with Alzheimer's isolated and lonely. It's normal to feel sad, hurt, or abandoned, but it's not personal. These are simply effects of the disease. What can you do?

First, remember that even when memory is gone, emotions remain. Your loved one might still be able to pick up on vibes and read body language. Proceed with the conversation even if the person appears unresponsive. To encourage engagement, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America recommends using the 4S's for communicating: *simple*, *slow*, *show*, and *smile*. "Simple sentences are much appreciated by someone with Alzheimer's. Say it slow to allow enough time to capture words or questions. Show what you're saying, using facial expressions, body language, and gesturing. And smile—it goes a long way."

Next, avoid peppering your loved one with the question "Do you know who I am?" Instead, introduce yourself by name and relationship, such as "I'm Josephine, your daughter" and "Here's my husband, Mike." Be reassuring by maintaining eye contact, addressing them by name, smiling, and holding their hand as you remind them who you are. You might have to introduce yourself several times. Try to resist the urge to speak louder to make it easier for the person to understand.

It might seem pointless to stay in contact with a loved one who cannot recognize the faces of family and friends. However, numerous benefits come from visiting with people who have advanced dementia. Social wellness—making and keeping genuine, nurturing connections with others—is critical to physical and psychological health and might help delay cognitive impairment.

We are 'SPRINGING' into fun activities this month!

Family Dog Visits are back. Call for details.



Earth Day



Mike will be back soon!