

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Chicken Soup for the Soul

Living with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, C.D.P., co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

Most likely, you have all heard about the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. The short heartwarming stories touch everyone. In this version, all of the 101 stories are about Alzheimer's and other dementias. Reading this book is almost like attending a support group as individuals write about their feelings, strategies, successes and failures. These stories are meant to inspire and encourage everyone that is going through this disease.

The book is divided into 11 chapters that have 8 to 11 stories in each one. Each chapter covers an aspect of dementia. In Chapter 1, "Accepting a New Reality", authors describe how they adjusted to the diagnosis of their loved one. "What Does It Feel Like", is a unique take for Chapter 2. People diagnosed with Alzheimer's attempt to answer this question. "Strategies and Tips for Coping" is the subject for Chapter 3 and features insightful and useful tactics for life with the disease.

Chapter 4, "Next Steps and Tough Choices", discusses how they tackled issues about home care, assisted living facilities, driving and other issues. "Taking the Journey with Your Parent", provides inspiration and coping techniques for children caring for their parents in Chapter 5. The "Younger-Onset Alzheimer's" chapter offers inspiration and support from a unique perspective. Because Younger-Onset Alzheimer's happens to people under the age of sixty-five, and could be as young as mid-thirties, the individuals and their caregivers face a unique set of challenges at work and home.

"In Sickness and In Health", Chapter 7, details how the disease can change and deepen the relationship between spouses. Chapter 8, "The Lighter Side", demonstrates the power of laughter and the valuable lessons that can come with

a smile. “New Ways to Make Connections”, Chapter 9, describes how undiscovered abilities and long-ago melodies can spark moments of clarity and connection. Art, music, dance and other forms of therapy are used as a way to reach a person living with the disease.

Alzheimer’s is a disease that no one can face alone. In Chapter 10, “It Takes a Village”, the stories are of unexpected friendship and compassion. In the last chapter, “The Special Bond with Grandchildren”, authors highlight the powerful relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

These stories can support you through all the phases of your journey through Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. You’ll find great information, compassion, advice and suggestions within this book.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.