Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Teepa Snow - Positive Approach to Brain Change. Don't forget to add info@teepasnow.com to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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TODAY’S VOICE FOR DEMENTIA

Teepa is an advocate for those living with dementia and has made it her personal mission to help families and professionals better understand how it feels to be living with dementia related challenges and change. Her company, Positive Approach, LLC was founded in 2005 and offers education to family and professional care partners all over the world. Her goal? Making a difference...one mind at a time.

Living Well With Dementia
by Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

Living well with any chronic, progressive condition is difficult; yet to live well with one that carries with it a stigma and so many misconceptions creates a bigger challenge still. How can we, family and care partners, support the people we know living with dementia and help them to live well and thrive? Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as one answer, one way, or one lifestyle. To start, we have to think about what facets of life are important to living well. In my opinion, there are several common indicators that define a life well lived.

- *Is there satisfaction in relationships with those around us?*
- *Do we have the opportunity to engage in our own personal interests and activities?*
• **Is there an active belief that life is worth living?** Things we hold to, for example, that are valuable and important to us. These can be appreciated only by the perceiver, or might even be a shared value with those who are important to us.

• **Do we dream and create?** We need to imagine the possibilities, plan, and then reflect.

• **Are we experiencing joy every day?** Joy can be found in big or small things alike, or simply to be a part of a moment. We need these moments each day.

• **Is our life making a difference to someone?**

Now, let's consider the systems and language generally used to describe and talk about dementia. The most commonly used system is called the [Global Deterioration Scale](https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?agent.uid=1121511890020&format=html&print=true). Developed by Dr. Barry Reisberg (NYU School of Medicine), this scale focuses on difficulties, inabilities, and uses terms such as mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe, and profound losses. Its descriptors are primarily based on progression and loss patterns specific to Alzheimer's; not changes typically found in other dementias such as Lewy Body, Fronto-Temporal, or Vascular dementia. There are other existing scales but, similarly they also emphasize loss and inability.

How can living well be an expectation for someone who is being defined by words and scales (sometimes even inaccurate ones) describing what he or she can no longer do in this life?

I have opted to see things a little differently in my efforts to help. Instead of looking back on what a person was capable of, and lamenting on the losses in their life, I see great value in shifting the focus to what is possible now. Ask yourself if you have ever considered what a person affected by dementia is capable of at any given moment. The truth is all people change. Those living with dementia, however, are typically changing much more dramatically and more often. And yes, this can be surprising so there is even more need in these circumstance to place your focus on capabilities.

How is the person attempting to relate or connect with you or others? What are they interested in now? What skills and talents are available to them today? Which communication cues and prompts are helpful to them and working at the moment? What environmental supports or activities are making a positive and beneficial difference to those in your care? This is the approach I take, to ensure that someone is living well when experiencing brain change and I am committed to sharing my vision with others.

I created the **Living GEMS** approach to help us see a person with rapidly changing abilities as precious and unique, like a gemstone. Envision your hands filled with sapphires, diamonds, emeralds, ambers, rubies, and pearls; they are dramatically different from one another, but are also all valuable and beautiful. Each individual gem is formed on its own and will never be exactly like any other; however, each group of gems have similar characteristics and will require the right setting and care to shine. This is also true for anyone living with brain change. Instead of focusing on who a person used to be, we need to observe who they are now so we can change alongside them and learn how to help them shine. This shift in approach has been vital in my efforts to truly support and help someone live life fully and well under any changing circumstance.

The importance of providing an ability-based approach of support and care cannot be overstated. The way you think of and respond to the changing journey is critical to supporting any life lived with a form of dementia. It will reflect your acceptance of change, and also a refusal to accept that change can define the value of a person's life. The GEMS™ approach defines that a person living with brain change is different from who they once were, but always valuable and living. Transitioning from one Gem™ ability to another does not represent a loss in their value; instead it represents a new and different opportunity to shine.

It is encouraging to look around the world at what others are doing to help bring about awareness and knowledge related to living well with dementia. We are seeing progress but, in my opinion, we still have a long way to go. Conversations and dialogues about dementia should no longer begin and end with how to find a cure. To me, it starts with listening and valuing those who are living with dementia and opening our hearts and minds to new ideas that will encourage and help them shine.
We would like to celebrate and dedicate this month’s Journal to those advocates and individuals who are making amazing strides choosing to do it differently, and LIVE WELL WITH DEMENTIA.

**Video Spotlight: Filling the Day with Meaning**

*Presented by the [The Pines Education Institute](https://www.thepineseducationinstitute.com) and Teepa Snow*

In the following video, Teepa explains how a simple activity triggered an engaged response from a typically disengaged resident in memory care. The outcome even surprised his daughter! What it means to go with the flow, praise effort, and acknowledge skill.

![Video Thumbnail](https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?agent.uid=1121511890020&format=html&print=true)

**Dementia: Rediscovering Moments of Joy through Activities**

*Order this DVD* from the Dementia Care Academy

**Positive Partner: Alzheimer's Foundation of America**

[The Alzheimer's Foundation of America](https://www.alz.org) is a long-time friend of Teepa Snow's and is proud to share their new online and DVD-based training program will be released late summer. The video will equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge to provide person-centered dementia care and critical perspectives and insights from a variety of health care professionals (including Teepa!), as well as individuals living with dementia and their families. For further questions, please contact Kristen Cribbs, AFA’s Deputy Director, Educational Services, at 866.232.8484.
The Positive Approach™ Care Skills Day Training
*Available for organizations anywhere in the USA*

- Do you experience frustration or "resistance" when trying to provide care?
- Do you want to learn to better connect with people who can no longer verbally communicate with you?

Benefit from the in person experience of working with a Master Trained PAC Care Skills Coach. Now available anywhere in the country, a PAC Coach can come to you and work directly with your staff modeling and teaching Teepa's tried and true care partnering techniques.

Positive Physical Approach™ and Hand Under Hand™ grow the practical interpersonal skills needed to help you or your team shift from "dealing with" challenging situations to engaging in successful interactions. With practice, a PAC coach guides teams toward hands on skills to prevent unwanted reactions and improve quality of life for residents, staff and family members.

**Receive a 10% discount** when you contact [Lee Mohler](mailto:Lee.Mohler@Teepa.com) to make your reservation before August 31, 2015. Space is limited.
Opening Minds through Art (OMA) is grounded in person-centered ethics and founded on the fact that people with dementia are capable of expressing themselves creatively. There is a growing body of empirical evidence that creative expression improves their physical and psychological well-being. The program is implemented in group sessions: Up to 12 people with dementia with the assistance of 12 trained volunteers working on a one-to-one basis.

The art-making sessions culminate in a gallery exhibition celebrating the artists’ accomplishments while educating the public about the creative capacities of people with dementia.

OMA was founded in 2007 and now annually serves 400 pairs of elders and volunteers. In 2011, OMA received the Best Practice Award from LeadingAge Ohio.

OMA’s Mission
Building bridges across age and cognitive barriers through art.

The OMA Methodology
OMA is founded on strengths-based psychology: Capitalizing on what people with dementia still can do. The OMA art-making process involves carefully staged steps aimed at maximizing the possibility of creative expression. This is experienced when participants are provided with manageable choices and failure free activities that allow them to become active agents in their own creative process.

This one-to-one ratio in the creative process builds their confidence and allows for close relationships between people with dementia and trained volunteers/staff.

Goals
1. To promote the social engagement, autonomy, and dignity of people with dementia by providing creative self-expression opportunities.
2. To provide staff and volunteers with opportunities to build close relationships with people with dementia.
3. To show the public the creative self-expression capacities of people with dementia through exhibitions of their artwork.
4. To contribute to the scholarly literature on dementia and the arts.

Training
All OMA volunteers are trained in:

1. The basics of dementia.
2. The foundation of OMA philosophy and methodology.
3. Skills for effective communication and facilitation of the creative process for people with dementia.
Become a Facilitator with OMA

Support
The program is conducted by Scripps Gerontology Center, an Ohio Center of Excellence at Miami University and supported by the Cedar Village May-Drury Fund in memory of Polly Anne and Edwin P. Drury.

For more information please contact:

Elizabeth Lokon, Ph.D.  
Director & Founder of OMA

Elizabeth Rohrbaugh  
Assistant Director of OMA

Additional Resources:

- Journal of Intergenerational Relationships - Building Bridges Across Age and Cognitive Barriers Through Art: College Students’ Reflections on an Intergenerational Program With Elders who Have Dementia
- Leading Age Magazine - Using Art to Overcome Cognitive Barriers
- SAGE Publications - "It makes me feel like myself": Person-centered versus traditional visual arts activities for people with dementia

MEDITATION: Change
I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it.

- Maya Angelou

Living Well...Dementia World News

AWARE

Dementia Diaries

Dementia Diaries is a new project that brings together people's diverse experiences of living with dementia as a series of audio diaries. It serves as a public record and a personal archive that documents the day-to-day lives of people living with dementia, with the aim of prompting a richer dialogue about the varied forms of the condition.

Listen to a BBC interview on the Dementia Diaries Project

Browse the Dementia Diaries

8 Uplifting Tales Of Coping With Dementia

KNOWLEDEGABLE

Dynamic Dementia Project

Positive Approach™ has been working with Shared Syndicate to produce a short film about Lewy Body dementia. Earlier this year, we promoted a kickstarter campaign to fund the making of Where Did You Go? the first phase production of the Dynamic Dementia Project. The three phase project poses questions that explore both the light and dark aspects of the condition of dementia and seeks to build greater understanding and perspective through different artistic mediums.

As documented recently at the World Health Organization conference, there are currently estimated to be 47.5 million people living globally with some form of dementia. For various reasons, many of these individuals, unfortunately, are NOT living well. Producer/directors Joseph Jones and Penelope Wildgoose hope to raise greater global awareness by profiling this problem in both their documentary and short film.

https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?agent.uid=112151189020&format=html&print=true
one woman's story through the lens of her living with undiagnosed Lewy Body dementia, the intense dramatic short portrays what can happen without the education and support systems it takes to live well with an atypical dementia.

Teepa will be onset in the UK this August as advisor on the film, as well as make her training debut.

Read more about the project

If you made a pledge to the Kickstarter campaign earlier this year, please consider turning your pledge into a contribution. Get involved, join the consortium and become a Dynamic Dementia Advocate! A group of individuals who are supporting dementia, creatively.

Contribute

SKILLED

Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-being Webinar with Dr. Al Power Is Now Available for Viewing

Dementia Alliance International (DAI) is a non-profit organization comprised of people living with dementia. DAI represents, supports, and educates others living with the disease. Recently, members and others were privileged to have Dr Allan Power present a session, Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-Being as part of our A Meeting of the Minds Webinar series.
Dr Allen Power is an internist, geriatrician, and clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Rochester, New York, and is an international educator on transformational models of elder care, particularly for those with changing cognitive abilities. Dr. Power is the author of two books, Dementia Beyond Drugs, and the newly released Dementia Beyond Disease. He has served as an advisor and educator for the US government for their antipsychotic reduction initiative. Dr. Power is also a board member and educator for The Eden Alternative, the world's largest culture change movement for elder care. Read more

Membership of Dementia Alliance International is free, and is exclusive to those with a medically confirmed diagnosis of a dementia. Join DAI at http://www.joindai.org. If you do not have a diagnosis of dementia, you may subscribe to the weekly blog or visit www.infodai.org.

COMPETENT
News from the Dementia Action Alliance

Every once in a while something special comes along that has the power to stop us in our tracks. The "Person-Centered Matters" video about people living with dementia and those who care about them has such a power. Read More

The Dementia Action Alliance is identifying how best to make resource materials about living well with dementia available for people across the country based on feedback received from a national online survey.

If you are a person living with dementia or a family member/friend care partner, please take a few moments to complete the survey.

HELP OTHERS LIVE WELL

If you know someone working or living with dementia who might benefit from the teachings of Teepa Snow, please forward this to them now.
Be knowledgeable. Be prepared. Be positive.

If this journal was helpful to you, we would appreciate your feedback. Please share your comments and further interest with us.

STAY CONNECTED

Visit our website for resources and program offerings!

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