Online Dementia Journal

Teepa Snow - 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.

How Will Dementia Change Everything?

YES, that is the question
by Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

March is considered the month of change. "In like a lion, out like a lamb" is the phrase oft used for this month. If only we could see the changes that come with the onset of dementia in that way. Dementia certainly provides change; it comes into our lives and frightens us with its roars and fierceness. What we thought was a cute and fluffy kitten or a sleek and self-contained cat is now a fully enraged lion, on the prowl and seeking to rule. It is hard to find a lamb, in this situation.

So for me, the question is not: Will dementia change everything? It is: How will dementia change everything? AND more importantly: How will I change to find the new place and life of calm that may be possible, once these changes are accepted. Continue

The Lost GEMS™

How Do We Engage Rubies and Pearls
by Peg Chabala and Dan Bulgarelli

By now, many of us are familiar with

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Upcoming Events

March 9, 2016 (AM)
Best Practices in Dementia Care
Timonium, MD

March 9, 2016 (PM)
Caregiver Education Seminar
Elizabethtown, KY

March 10, 2016
Educational Day
Fennimore, WI

March 12, 2016
Dementia Education Day
Middleburg Heights, OH

March 19, 2016
Educational Conference
Melbourne, FL

March 21, 2016
Educational Day
North Bay, ON

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Teepa’s GEMS™. Teepa helped show us the need to focus on a person’s retained abilities instead of loss as dementia progresses. Each person, much like a gemstone is unique, has many facets, and requires their own type of care to shine. When looking at this model it makes perfect sense, but do we really treat each of the GEMS™ equally?

One of the joys we have when interacting with those we care about is seeing them engaged and happy. This engagement can happen in many different ways and the bigger the better. We enjoy bingo games, baking together, putting puzzles together, and a multitude of other activities. But what about those who are no longer capable of participating in these activities? Continue

Songs You Know by Heart: Connecting Through Music in Dementia Care

by Mary Sue Wilkinson, Founder of Singing Heart to Heart

Do you interact with seniors or care for someone with dementia? Do you wish you had a better (and easier) way to connect? Are you short on time and sometimes short on energy? Are you looking for ways to focus on what people can do rather than on the support they need?

If so, then turn on the music!

Music provides an opportunity to do something meaningful with others, no matter one’s abilities or skills. The benefits to you and the person you care for are many. For starters it’s just plain fun. The right music will often awaken memories and increase communication and connection. Rest assured that a little music goes a long way. Whether you are a caregiver, a family member or an activity director, you are a very important person, uniquely qualified to help someone reap all the benefits and joy available through music. Try one idea or try them all. Then put on some music and get ready for some joy! Continue

Learn More about Mary Sue Wilkinson

From Advocate to a Positive Approach™ Provider:

Kathleen Douglas’ Journey

by Beth A. D. Nolan

In 2003, Kathleen Douglas was working as an Ombudsman for people living with dementia. She was seeking resources for a more person-centered approach. Through the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly...
NCCNHR), she was introduced to Teepa Snow before Teepa had formed Positive Approach™ to Care (PAC). At the NCCNHR national conference, Teepa was the keynote speaker, and Kathleen felt Teepa’s approach was a natural fit for, as Kathleen described it, “an advocacy culture.” A culture of advocacy was, in the changing funding arrangements for long-term care of the time, one in which those working with older adults continuously supported the rights, independence, or quality of care for those living with dementia. Soon after seeing Teepa speak, Kathleen bought every publication and DVD she could find to learn Teepa’s techniques.

Spotlight on PAC Team Member

Leslie Finkley
PAC Mentor Coach

Leslie Finkley is a PAC Mentor for the PAC Coach, Engagement, and Trainer certifications as well as onsite community trainings. Before starting her career with Positive Approach™, Leslie worked extensively in senior living communities. Initially, Leslie’s aspiration was to work in mental health as a counselor for seniors. She began her job search in the early ’90s and found limited mental health services for seniors, which meant limited career opportunities. She needed a Plan B and this is how she discovered the world of senior living. Her first job was as an activity director of a new assisted living facility. Leslie quickly learned that engaging a person in his/her own environment allowed her to better support the psychological and sociological needs of a person.

Several years later, Leslie met Teepa Snow when she started with another senior living company working as the activity director. Teepa’s Positive Approach™ philosophy helped her put all the puzzle pieces together to better understand the person, his/her health, and dementia; this drove her to proactively adapt the environment, fill a person’s day with meaning, and connect people for support. It was during this time that Leslie found the resources to truly transition from offering activities to providing engagement.

One of Leslie’s strengths is her diverse experience working in multiple departments within assisted living communities. She has worked as an assistant executive director and in marketing. Within dining, Leslie has been responsible for the department meeting the needs of Ambers, Rubies, and Pearls. She sustained Teepa's onsite training as the dementia care trainer within her community. Through these diverse roles, she has gained an appreciation for everyone's time, contribution, and needs. Leslie believes that if everyone feels value and purpose a building can transform beyond senior living to community living for all.
Care Skills Make the Difference
NEW RELEASE - DEMENTIA CARE DVD
Coming Soon!

"Dementia does not rob someone of their dignity, it’s our reaction to them that does." - Teepa Snow

In this compelling, practical, and heartfelt 55-minute DVD, you will witness Margaret, John, Gordon, Bob, Alice, and Edna experience the benefit of the Positive Approach™ hands on care techniques and strategies. Observe the acknowledgement, respect, and dignity they receive as you watch and learn from world renowned dementia training expert Teepa Snow. Her demonstrated care interactions will confirm the need and value of learning interpersonal skills to improve standards of care for persons living with dementia. See for yourself why...

...Care Skills make the difference!

The PAC Approved Engagement Certification Course is coming!

We have designed an all new Engagement Certification to help care partners truly enrich the lives of those we care about. Life is meant to be lived well and not just maintained. To truly live well we must be engaged in activities that stimulate us mentally, physically, and emotionally. Knowing what activities are best for each person can be difficult.

Focusing on the GEMS™ model and the six pieces of the puzzle, we will give you ideas for different activities and how they can be modified for individual abilities. This course is recommended for activity professionals, resident care directors, adult day program professionals, and anyone else.
that is interested in helping those we care about live life well while living with brain change.

We all want to do something that makes us feel worthwhile, but we don't all want to do the same things. Some may enjoy puzzles while others prefer to smell the fresh air. Engagement opportunities created with the person's history, likes/dislikes, and preferences in mind increase connection and decrease lonely, anxious, or disconnected feelings that often lead to challenging situations.

**What does meaningful engagement look like?**

It's creating a life worth living. Providing opportunities for people to be productive and useful; seeing self-care as engagement and not just a task to get done; stimulating a person's mind with just the right challenge; energizing the body; having fun; and restoring the soul. A great engagement program involves an entire community of care partners and gets people excited for more than just the next scheduled activity on the calendar.

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### When Should I Use The Court To Become My Relative's Guardian or Conservator?

by Louis Levenson

Making the decision to seek a guardian or conservator for a family member or loved one is always hard. Many are unsure of what options are available under the law. Some are concerned about upsetting their loved one by raising the issue before it is very obviously needed. Most wait too long.

A guardian is a Court appointed person who is responsible for personal affairs of an adult or a minor who is unable to properly care for him or herself. A conservator is responsible for managing the financial affairs for such individuals. A guardian or conservator is appointed by a judge only after the judge determines that the person is no longer capable of managing personal or financial affairs, or both. A guardian and conservator can be different people or the same person, whichever is most appropriate. 

[Continue](#)

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### Share your PAC Story

Has Teepa's Positive Approach made a difference in your life? We want to hear your story!

[Take the Survey](#)

### Update from Kate Swaffer

contributed by Robin Andrews

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[View Louis's Bio](#)
This month Positive Approach had the honor to catch up with friend and dementia advocate Kate Swaffer, who has been living with dementia since 2008. She is the founder of Dementia Alliance International, a non-profit group supporting people with dementia from around the world. Be sure to SAVE THE DATE as next month, April 27th 2:30 p.m. EST Teepa will join Kate for a DAI online webinar.

Kate is the author of a monthly blog called Creating Life with Words and recently released her new book What the Hell Happened to my Brain? We asked Kate to share a few words with us about her new book, being an advocate, and her thoughts about Teepa Snow. Continue

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Teepa Snow - Positive Approach to Brain Change, PO Box 430, Efland, NC 27243

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