



A Timeline of Caregiving Spouses' Experiences of

# RELATIONSHIP TURNING POINTS

In Marriages Impacted by Alzheimer's Disease

*My Spouse has Dementia*

## DIAGNOSIS

*"The diagnosis drew us closer because we could talk about it openly because he had the diagnosis." - Jennifer*

## CONFUSION ABOUT EARLY SYMPTOMS

*"I was so confused. I didn't know what to make of it, so the relationship was a little different. It was questionable." - Garth*

*From Spouse to Caregiver*

## CHANGING ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

*"My wife really used to run the show, so our roles have switched completely. I'm the caregiver." - Tom*

## LOSS OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES

*"I had to take away his keys." - Bella*

## INCREASINGLY SEVERE SYMPTOMS

*"The symptoms overtook her ability to control her own moods and her own routine." - Tom*

## FEELING LESS ROMANTIC

*"I am feeling less and less romantic as I'm being more and more of a caretaker." - Joni*

*My Spouse is Gone*

## CHANGING LIVING SITUATION

*"Not sleeping in the same bed after 50 years, it was a major kind of a thing in our relationship" - Michael*

## FEWER INTIMATE CONVERSATIONS

*"She was always able to have really good conversations, that's probably the number one missing thing." - Michael*

## FORGET SPOUSE'S NAME

*"She forgot my name. It really devastated me at that moment." - Frank*



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Communication

Married Couples' use of

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

To Maintain Closeness in Alzheimer's Disease

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

- ♥ Accept the reality of Alzheimer's disease
- ♥ Allow your spouse to help you
- ♥ Be willing to help where you can
- ♥ Express appreciation



THE PERSON  
WITH DEMENTIA

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

- Avoid bringing attention to symptoms ♥
- Think about caregiving as expressing love ♥
- Be flexible and patient with your spouse ♥
- Avoid unnecessary confrontation ♥



THE LOVING  
SPOUSE

## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?



THE COUPLE

- Be kind and patient
- Find activities you can enjoy together
- Have open and intimate conversations
- Express love often

**QUESTIONS?**

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