

It's All About Relationships!!!!

Real "People" Connections!!!!

"I'm OK, Whenever I'm with you I feel
Like I'm Home"

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Definition of Relationship/Friendship

RELATIONSHIP – The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected – the state of being connected.

FRIENDSHIP – State of being friends, friendly feeling or attitude: kindness or help given to someone.

Relational Neuroscience

In her book, *Wired to Connect*, Psychiatrist Amy Banks, tells us there is hard wiring throughout our brains and bodies designed to help us engage in satisfying connections with others.

“Relational Neuroscience has shown that when we are cut off from others, these neuropathways suffer. The result is a neurological cascade that can result in chronic irritability and anger, depression, addiction, and chronic physical illness.”

RELATIONSHIPS

Focusing on Life

*Maintaining
Connections*

*Enjoying a Day
with Friends*



We need Friends and Fun to Remain Healthy and Thrive

Healthy human connections are critical for emotional and physical health. Dr. Jean Balor Miller

We need people, connections, healthy relationships to survive and thrive.

Relational Neuroscience tells us that people can't reach their full potential unless they have healthy connections with others.

(We used to think it was good to strive for independence, We need to think in terms of Interdependence. Mary Pipher)

DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA

Hearing the Diagnosis

Responding

Trying to understand the implications and how it will impact your life

To

Becoming Educated about it

Changes

Accepting it cognitively and emotionally

CHANGES FOR:

Person With dementia

Trying to understand the diagnosis and how they feel about themselves as:

They need more time to respond to respond to conversations,

They have a harder time performing familiar tasks, and

They rely more on their care partners and need more understanding as they continue to change.

CHANGES FOR:

Care

Partners

Working to realize how the brain changes will alter life as they knew it

Considering:

Taking Classes

Support Groups

Role Changes

Increased Responsibilities

Realizing they will have to change as their family member's abilities change

LETTING GO

Letting go of
life as it used
to be
and
accepting
a
“new”
normal

you know
why it's
HARD
to be
happy?



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it's because
we refuse to
LET GO
of the things
that make us
sad.

Relationships & Responsibilities Start to Change

For the Person with Dementia

There is not the equal sharing of responsibilities depending upon brain changes/capabilities

These changes are not easy to accept.

Unless family/friends are equally educated, as to how the person with dementia has changed and probably will change, family/friends are challenged to grasp the subtle changes and don't relate as well to this person with Brain Failure.

Again these changes are not easy for the parties to accept.

These challenges can lead to social distancing and isolation

Responsibilities and Relationships start to Change

For the Care Partner:

Adapting to increased needs of PWD

Adapting to changed roles and increased responsibilities

Doing more; taking care of self less

Less time for family and friends and life as they knew it

Attempting to let go of how things were and accepting a “new” normal

Feeling more isolated as they attempt to do it alone

Potential Results of a Lack of Healthy Relationships/Connections

For the Care Partner;

Feeling Isolated

Feeling Overwhelmed,

Getting Angry more Often

Feeling Down; Could Lead to Depression

Increased Stress

Having Less Patience

Quotes from Caregivers

“When Marla got sick; I got sick, I just didn’t know it at the time”

“I feel like I’m a Widow with a Living Spouse” Kathy

“You just get into it. When you’re walking into it you have no idea of what’s ahead of you. Only later do you realize you should have screamed bloody murder to get the family more involved from the start” Jesse

“Fear, guilt, helplessness, depression, anxiety, denial – I think I ran the gamut of all of these” Cloyd

“Stress? Who, me? Just because I started on blood pressure medicine in the middle of this doesn’t necessarily relate to stress, does it?”

“..it’s a hard learning process to accept the loss of abilities in your loved one.”
Bob

Relationships Help People Feel:

- › Calm
- › More Tolerant
- › More Resonant
- › More Productive

Each of These is Related to a Specific Neural Pathway!

STAY CONNECTED

Call those who
understand.

Go out with friends.

You don't have to go
through life "solo".

Make New Friends.



Some Background on the C.A.R.E. System Developed by Dr. Amy Banks

In general, the health and strength of our neural pathways depends upon our previous experience with good, healthy positive relationships. If we do not have the best developed system, we can still strengthen it.

C is for Calm – This pathway is governed by the smart vagus nerve.

A is for Accepted – This pathway is ruled by the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex.

R is for Resonant – This is controlled by the mirroring system.

E is for Energetic – This is connected to the dopamine reward system.

“C” IS FOR CALM

The

Smart

Vagus

Nerve

A feeling of calm regulated by a pathway of the autonomic nervous system called the smart vegus transmits signals to decrease stress connected to your sense of relationship.

It can shut down the “stress” response.

When Stressed, the primitive brain wants to kick in – When it’s in charge, it tends to make bad decisions. When you have good connections, the smart vegus keeps the primitive brain from kicking in. When isolated, the smart vegus doesn’t perform well. Over time it can lead to chronic stress, illness, depression and irritability. We need healthy relationships.

“A”
IS FOR ACCEPTED

“A sense of belonging flows from a well functioning dorsal Anterior Cingulate Cortex.....being left out hurts, emotionally and physically.

dorsal

When you're with someone who feels your emotional as well as physical pain it reinforces that they understand

Anterior

Cingulate

Being left out – social isolation happens frequently for the person with dementia. Not having time for relationships also impacts the care partner.

Cortex

(dACC)

“R”
IS FOR RESONANT

The

Mirroring

System

“My brain has a mirroring system that takes in information; creates activity in my prefrontal cortex and somatosensory cortex that help neurons there internally copy body movements and messages.”

This happens when a certain scene from a movie impacts us.

“We are built to imitate people and read their behaviors, intentions, and feelings.it’s a deep, in the bones feeling...when other people “get” it.”

“E”
IS FOR ENERGY

The

Dopamine

Reward

System

“Energy is a benefit of the relational brain’s dopamine reward system.”

“When we’re engaged in healthy growth-promoting activities, we are rewarded with a hit of dopamine that sweeps through the body’s reward circuitry, producing a wave of euphoria and energy”

After we’ve had a great talk with a friend whom we share a healthy relationship we feel energized.

WE ALL NEED HEALTHY RELATONSHIPS

Participate in Social
Engagement Options

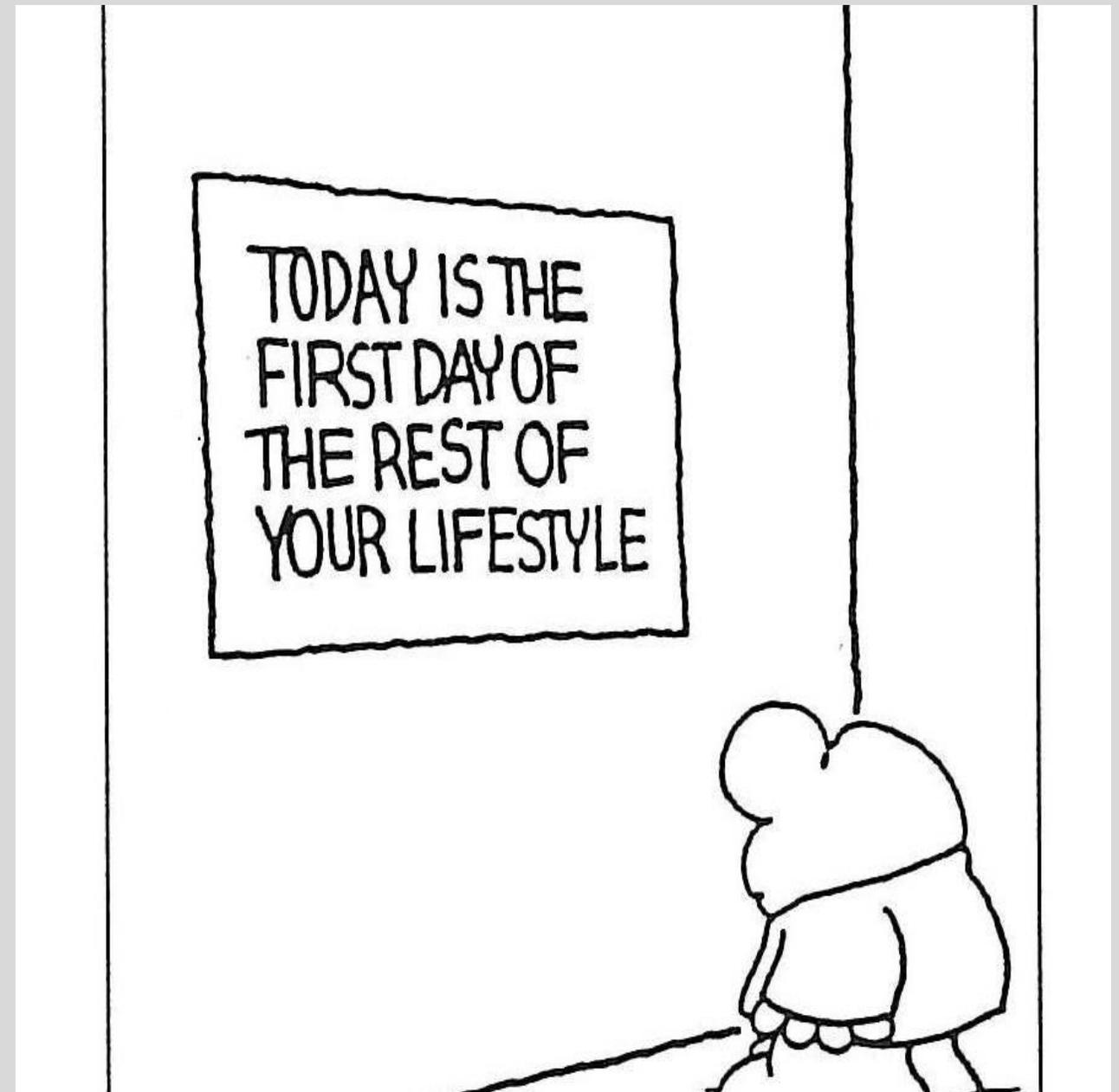
Memory Cafés

Spark Programs

Early Stage Support
Groups/Support Groups

Start Reconnecting with
Friends Who “get” it

Develop new Friendships



Spousal Support Group

Started 18 years ago - Transitional period for them

“The beauty of this group was that we grew to feel comfortable sharing our individual problems and emotional and social needs – feelings that were hard to share with those who were not experiencing our journey” Kathy

“My husband died first, I was afraid I wouldn't belong in the group anymore; these partners were now my best friends. They knew me better than my family. We still get together for dinner and do many things socially. They were and are my lifeline.” Inez

The Purple Canoe Club

Friendships developed from the Living With Alzheimer's classes and the Early Stage Support Groups. Steve, the founder of the group talked about a name for the group.

"I'm sure these loving and caring friendships have helped my friends and me and will help us in the challenges we'll confront. I cannot imagine how I would have managed alone. Needing a handle for our group of friends, we came up with Purple Canoe Club. The canoe is big, big enough for everyone, but unwieldy unless friends paddle together. Then those paddling can offer a helping, caring hand to others and give respite to each other. Understanding, caring and support together. These are essential for care partners." Steve Schultz

Wired to Connect: The surprising link between Brain Science and Healthy Strong Relationships

Includes Brain Exercises for Building
Better Relationships Amy Banks, M.D
with Leigh Ann Hirschman