

WE HAVE
DEMENTIA.
WE ARE STILL
FUNCTIONING
PEOPLE.

HAVE YOU
CONSIDERED
HOW
IT WOULD
MAKE US
FEEL ... IF ...?



Have You Considered?

Thoughtful works by a person
with early-onset dementia
—living well and living with purpose—
in spite of the obstacles. ~J9W~

20 DEC 2024

You do not put us in a box as if we are all the same or should be the same—you do not act as if only you know what is best for us—you are open to learning from us just what we are capable of doing.

You realize that with our changing brains, we may not always be as good at expressing ourselves as we used to be—you just give us grace.

Our need for social interaction and inclusion is noticed, and we are not ignored.

We are included in life and not left alone in isolation to feel unwanted or unneeded.

We are treated as friends, still worthy of inclusion and attention—we are wanted.

You do not shake your head at us and tsk, tsk us away—you do not dismiss us.

You do not assume that we are always wrong just because we have dementia.

We are given the kindness and respect everyone wants to be given.

Our autonomy is respected, and our self-sufficiency is permitted.

We are included in decisions and included in the conversation, especially when it is about us—we are not spoken at, but instead are spoken with.

You remember we can be offended by your words and actions.

We are cherished and included—
instead of being made to feel inconvenient, incompetent,
invalid, incapable, inept, or insignificant.

You recognize that we can be diagnosed in earlier stages—we don't look like the stereotypical late-stage disease—you do not doubt us or disrespect us by questioning our diagnosis, especially behind our backs—and so you refrain from telling us that we do not look like we have dementia.

You do not discriminate against us just because of the diagnosis and then exclude us from contributing as if we are incapable or incompetent—you do not act as if we are somehow now a liability and use that as an excuse to exclude us from participating—just because we have a dementia diagnosis.

Our abilities are recognized and encouraged—you focus on what we can still do—you do not focus just on what we are no longer able to do so well.

Your will is not exerted upon us, and you do not decide everything for us, as if you are the authority on what it is to have dementia—you refrain from trying to put us in our place.

Our choices are respected—even the smallest of choices.

You put aside your will to control us and instead honor our dignity, individuality, autonomy.

You support us in doing what we are still able to do and do not limit what we get to do—you do not dictate what we are allowed to do—you ask us what we want to do—you ask us how we can help—you let us participate—you let us volunteer—you do not reject us.

Our opinions are heard, and you do not accuse us of having outbursts just because we do not agree with you—we are simply heard and respected and not judged for having an opinion of our own.

You realize our feelings are as important as anyone else's feelings—you are kind.

Have you considered how kind it would be to generously give respect, encouragement, understanding, compassion and grace?