

Reflections from the Author

Writing this book has been both a labor of love and a wrenching of my heart. I wanted and needed to tell you the stories about people with dementia that I have known and loved throughout my nursing career. As with every topic in every book, there are many lessons to be learned from the reading of another person's experiences. It is my fervent hope that you will see and learn the lessons contained herein to assist you as you live with and care for an elder with dementia.

I have chosen the subject of dementia for my career because I discovered I'm very good at it, and because it touches my heart in a way nothing else ever has. Nursing is a very broad palate from which to choose a specialty, and my story about Belle in "I Might Have To Kick You Out!" helps you see why I chose to build my business helping people with dementia and their families. I named my business "MIND In Memory Care" (Moving In Nurturing Directions In Memory Care) because nurturing is what I'm all about, and it's what I believe every person who lives with or works with a person with dementia must be all about in order to safely and effectively interact with these wonderful elders. I believe nurturing can be taught to those willing to learn, and I spend a great deal of time educating people who work in the facilities that house our loved ones with dementia. What better way to illustrate the best or worst way to handle a touchy interaction with an elder with dementia than to tell you a story about what I have experienced? Sometimes there are no answers and sometimes you will choose the wrong way, but you will always learn from it, and hopefully that learning will make you a better caregiver or partner to that loved one with dementia. The struggle is as necessary as the mistakes are inevitable, and what I want you to take away from reading this book is the knowledge that you're not alone in those struggles or those mistakes. There really can be good times ahead with your loved one, and you will learn to recognize and build upon them as they occur.

I feel it is very important for you to allow humor into your life as you live and work in the world of dementia. You can learn how to create many wonderful moments with your loved one, and when that person dies, you will have countless memories to warm your battered heart and bring a smile to your sad face. You can learn to live in the moment in your loved one's mind and see the world through their eyes so that you can make their world a nicer place, and in doing so, also make your own world a calmer and better place. These are the things I want my stories and the lessons they contain to do for you.

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