

NEW LIGHT ON DEMENTIA

How to prevent (the advance of) dementia

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Marieke de Vrij

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I make sure I often clear my mind

Durk (76)

I have had vascular dementia for the last four years. During this time I have consistently followed the advice given in this book. When I was diagnosed I was naturally not happy but I am pragmatic and asked the doctor: 'Is there anything I can do about it?' The bluntness of the answer shocked me: 'There is nothing you can do about it. Just living a healthy life is the best you can do'. Fortunately, I already knew Marieke de Vrij. Her specific advice gave me hope and courage: something can be done about it and it is a meaningful process.

So, for the first time in my life I started to meditate. How? In fact, I do the so-called name exercise as described in her Dutch book: 'Ik beken mijn naam (I acknowledge my name)'. After having meditated, I feel calm in my head. I also make sure to clear my mind time and time again. I take a rest in time and interrupt activities or contacts that cause unrest. I don't feel well when I have seen something that is exciting or thrilling, so I don't do that anymore.

I am guided by this principle in more of my activities. It is a very different approach from what I see fellow sufferers do. Many of them are pressured by their partners to continue to participate as much as possible even at times when to me it is obvious that they need to rest. That simply cannot be right. At a time that I was making progress, I noted that the opposite happened to my fellow sufferers.

My condition has hardly deteriorated over these years and in some aspects it has actually improved. The clearer my head is, the more alert I am. I am now aware of the fact that I am better off not watching TV or having intense discussions in the evening. I find it hard to read this book. My concentration has clearly decreased. If the advice is explained properly, I understand them very well. I am now a different person than I used to be. I have become more sensitive and emotional.

I wish I had known this book before

Marleen (67)

Over the last 30 years I have experienced the dementia process of a number of family members at close quarters. I have personally felt many of the insights and experiences set out in this book, without always understanding them properly, let alone finding the right words for them.

My involvement with this book encouraged me to retrospectively and consciously feel the soul processes of in particular my father-in-law, my godmother and my brother. Periodically I had intense experiences of the dementia process with them. Had I experienced the insights of the book as deeply as I have now, I would often have responded in a different way.

In recent years I have been dealing with a partner diagnosed with 'the onset of dementia'. It is a miracle that his diagnosis to this day remains 'beginning dementia', thanks to the explanations and advice from Marieke de Vrij. It is incredibly encouraging to find out that more is possible than what the doctor told us when he gave the diagnosis.

Of course a lot has changed since the diagnosis. As partner I have gone through all stages of despair, distress, disorganisation and misery, incomprehension, anger and disillusion. I have a 'different' partner now. Because of this I continue to learn and look at our life 'in a different light'. The advance of dementia has been reduced at this moment. My partner's focus and concentration have improved by systematically and consistently following the advice provided in this book.

We now live in a different, more emotional, reality, also very worthwhile.

Foreword

This is the English version of the second book on dementia written by Marieke de Vrij and published by the Foundation Stichting De Vrije Mare. Her first book on this topic was published in 2002. Over the years, the demand for this book was such that it had to be reprinted several times. Since 2002, knowledge about dementia has expanded, among others, about how to prevent (the advance of) dementia. This is a very timely theme in a society where some already refer to dementia as the epidemic of the 21st century. Dementia also increasingly affects young persons. Thus, a new book based on the new knowledge and insights was written and published in 2018. Subsequently, it was decided to prepare an English translation of this book and publish it as an E-book in 2019. This is the result.

We are grateful for the support of the Fred Foundation and its founder Fred Matser. Their financial contribution made the translation and the free download of this book possible.

A number of experts were asked to read the preliminary version of the manuscript. Below are the comments from two of them.

Vincent de Jong, medical practitioner _____

Reading this book indeed opens another dimension of looking at dementia. This dimension takes hold of you as it alters the way you look at dementia, it alters your own interaction with persons suffering from dementia and it stimulates you to carefully consider the way you handle your own processes in life.

Boukje van Hettema, registered nurse _____

This book is written beautifully and puts dementia in a totally different light. It broadens the current view about the causes of dementia and how to deal with persons suffering from dementia. It shows what steps you can take to prevent dementia or its advance.

Introduction

In our western society, dementia is an increasingly common phenomenon. A number of institutions have been set up in the Netherlands with this specific theme in mind; these foundations distribute information and research results concerning dementia.

For example, when asked what dementia actually is, the Dutch Alzheimer Foundation gives the following answer:

“Dementia is the name for a combination of symptoms (a syndrome), in which the brain can no longer process information properly. Dementia is a collective term for more than fifty illnesses.” (www.alzheimer-nederland.nl, 03-01-2018).

The Dutch Brain Foundation gives a similar description:

“Dementia is the collective term for a variety of brain diseases in which mental abilities (e.g. memory, language) deteriorate. Dementia is often associated with old age, however it is not an inevitable consequence of old age. Most people over 65 years of age do not have mental health problems, even though certain cognitive abilities are not as they were in their ‘younger years’ – which is a very natural process.” (www.hersenstichting.nl, 03-01-2018).

The Dutch Alzheimer Foundation notes the following with respect to the extent of dementia in the Netherlands:

“One in five persons develops dementia. Women have an increased risk: one in three women develops dementia during their lifetime. The older a person gets, the greater the chance of developing dementia. Beyond the age of 90, a good 40% of people have some form of dementia.” (www.alzheimer-nederland.nl, 03-01-2018).

Various forms of dementia are distinguished. The most common form is Alzheimer’s disease (70%), a condition in which the cells in certain parts of the brain no longer function. Vascular dementia is another fairly common type of dementia. This condition is caused by

the narrowing or closing off of blood vessels in the brain. These two forms of dementia are involved in more than 90% of the cases. There are other forms such as: dementia with Lewy bodies, Parkinson's Disease and frontotemporal dementia. Often these different forms of dementia cannot be easily distinguished from each other. In this book no distinction is made between the different forms. The insights and recommendations described in this book may apply to any form of dementia.

Fear of dementia is substantial and is actually spreading. It is often assumed in public discussions that dementia is primarily a degenerative process which affects a person's core being. This point of view leads to an increase in requests for euthanasia. For that reason it is important that in this time and age more spiritual knowledge is released about what dementia means for the soul of the person with dementia. This book is about just that. It provides descriptions of non-physical processes which take place behind the directly visible symptoms.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about dementia and also still a great lack of knowledge about the underlying causes. In medical science dementia is considered to be a condition that is almost always caused by the deterioration of the brain.

In this book it is also assumed that dementia has a physical cause. However, in many cases there is also a psychological constellation in which the development of dementia gets a chance. It is assumed that dementia has something to say to human beings, that it can be a meaningful process provided that its relevance and value is understood. This innovative approach can give hope, courage and consolation to the person involved and to people close to him or her. The new knowledge is about the inner state of a person with dementia, his field of experience and spiritual development. How those who care for a person with dementia may use these insights is also discussed.

In a person with dementia, certain parts of the brain no longer function adequately, causing previous mental censorship to weaken and/or disappear. This offers the person a chance to re-experience without censorship experiences that remained underdeveloped or suppressed.

The structure of this book is such that in the first chapters the spiritual insights regarding dementia are discussed. This part ends with a special chapter focusing on how to prevent dementia or help slow down its advance. The second part consists mainly of practical advice on caring for people with dementia. In the final chapter the relationship between dementia and euthanasia is discussed.



Each chapter ends with a short summary recognized by this swan icon.

About Marieke and her work

Marieke de Vrij (1953) is a spiritual and social counsellor who inspires many to extend their current (professional) knowledge and expand their awareness.

Marieke wishes to bring back inspiration in society and to make sustainable progress by doing so. She wishes to help shape broad social developments and initiates innovation in various fields. This she does by giving advice, talks, trainings, seminars, workshops and symposia, as well as by writing books on different topics. She also offers theme-oriented group consultations in various areas of expertise for individuals, companies, government institutions, healthcare institutions and other public groups.

Marieke has exceptionally clear and subtle abilities which enable her to feel the collective and individual consciousness and its potential in a nuanced way.

About her language

When reading this book you will notice the slightly different word usage which Marieke uses and which is characteristic in the book. She introduces her very own words and her sentence structure is not always easy at first sight. This special use of language refers to multiple energetic layers and has a deep emotional meaning. Words often return to their most original meaning. It is not always easy to simplify this language because much of the value of the insights that have been provided may otherwise be lost. For this reason, the most important of her literal texts are shown in **bold**. It was a challenge to the composers of the book to increase the readability without compromising the content.

Given the language used, it is important that the reader reads the text several times in order to enable a deeper understanding.

Chapter 1

Spiritual insights into dementia



Spiritual insights into dementia

*Everything has meaning but
this is only discernible with the eyes of the soul.*

At some point in our lives, we all come face to face with dementia. This chapter is about the possible significance of the dementia process. It deals with the question as to what specific meaning dementia may have for our path in life and what we may learn from spiritual insights into dementia.

The word 'spiritual' comes from the Latin word 'spiritus', which means spirit and soul, but also includes meanings such as inspiration, passion, self-consciousness and breath. Someone interested in the spiritual aspects of his life tends to focus on questions such as: what gives meaning and passion to my life? What literally and metaphorically gives me the breath to live?

The assumption in this book is that a person continues to live spiritually in an immaterial form after his physical death.

The soul enters earthly life and becomes a human being with talents and characteristics, limitations and desires. This soul/human has both positive and negative experiences in order to enlarge his consciousness. Towards the end of earthly life the phase of letting go, saying goodbye and moving on to the immaterial, spiritual world, begins. This transition is made easier if difficult experiences can be left behind on earth because they have been processed.

Towards the end of a person's life, dementia can be helpful to come to terms with particular experiences and characteristics by providing emotional attention to these and thus assimilating them. This happens naturally within the dementia process as control over the mind and its mental censorship, disappears.

Life is full of meaning to those who wish to observe and comprehend it in their own special way. Many of life's events are not straightforward and coming to terms with them requires continuous processing. Delay in processing of that which formed an essential part of the life of a person, may result in matters that have not been adequately dealt with when parting and saying goodbye to life. Dementia offers an opportunity to deal with those matters and give them meaning in such a way that the soul is able to go back to its origin in the immaterial world.

In general, earthly life is not simply straightforward and it may not be easy to see the big picture. A person has to deal with many unexpected events and has to face a degree of mystery in the way things happen. Many people are often deeper touched emotionally than they wish to acknowledge. At such times, they show themselves stronger and braver than how they really feel deep down. It may be that a person takes weeks or months to actually face up to matters that make him feel vulnerable or doubtful. This pattern can turn into a habit which eventually results in a permanent delay in coming to terms with events.

With dementia there is an inner decision of the soul to still come to terms with not fully assimilated experiences during life as well as possible. It is important to relive such experiences energetically in such a way that their effects do not continue into the immaterial world.

This process often does not take place consciously during the day. In dementia, the body wants to rid itself of all psychological information which still burdens the body excessively. The purpose of this is to cleanse the body in such a way that the person can take on his immaterial appearance after death without unnecessary aggravating frequencies. Thus, after death, he can also manifest himself in a higher light frequency.

Dementia as a result of controlled behaviour - an example

Dementia tends to affect people who have restrained themselves over a longer period of time in the way in which they react to events and experiences. For various reasons they have not consciously come to terms with the events that really had an impact in their lives. The consequence is, that whatever has not been processed and assimilated takes up so much room that in the here and now there is no more space left in the mind and one forgets things. The person is overflowing with that which has not been 'lived through' or come to terms with emotionally at the appropriate time.

During the initial stages of dementia, the part of the brain which takes in information from the outside, is weakened for the benefit of the inner processes which need attention.

This process is illustrated by the experience of my grandmother:

"My grandmother was in her mid-fifties when serious dementia set in. She passed away at a young age. Her partner, my grandfather, unexpectedly died at the age of 36. This meant that my grandmother had to make a living as well as care for her three young children all by herself in difficult times including the war.

Once I met her again after her death - in a contact with the immaterial world - when I was an adult and she had passed away long ago. She spoke to me and her words were as follows: 'Marieke, during my life I kept going over my mourning process and I did not make progress. In a way, I paralysed everything around me as I was unable to come to terms with it.'

My grandmother conveyed this message to me to warn another family member not to follow in her footsteps by getting stuck in constantly going over matters that had traumatized her. As the dementia of my grandmother progressed, the connection with her outer world diminished and the mourning process could occur at an essentially deep inner level so that she was able to come to terms with her life at a deeper layer."

Dementia means that the person with dementia is allowed to increasingly let go of daily concerns and responsibilities. Conscious thinking decreases and may no longer exercise control. This means there is increasing space and capacity to 'relive' events so that they may emotionally be reflected upon and assimilated.

Highlighting dark areas

Symbolically, dementia helps to highlight dark areas which have not had enough light in life. It is not a matter of a decrease in energy but the energy becomes lighter. I use the term 'higher energy frequency'. Such energy may manifest itself in a way that what was inner and previously unseen comes to the surface and thus can be completed prior to leaving life on earth.

On the one hand, this special energy provides an opportunity to experience and feel matters in the present in a broader, deeper and more nuanced way. The experiences penetrate deeper, as it were.

On the other hand, this 'higher energy frequency' allows someone to go back further into the past. This means he can now take care of overdue (psychological) maintenance and free up time, space and feelings for this.

Thus, dementia can stretch the field of experience, both forwards in time to the spiritual world and backwards in time to the unprocessed past.

The narrowing of memory

During the process of dementia, to a greater or lesser degree, an imbalance develops between dealing with daily matters and staying in one's own memories of the past. It is not easy to find a way back into the here and now, if this imbalance is severe. In other words, the capacity to remember in the now diminishes and narrows.

This process brings about a situation where a person can slowly and quietly start to feel and experience other aspects of himself. Fond old memories can surface, for instance

memories of contact with parents or with a child prior to their death. These instances of what the outside world refers to as 'forgetfulness' may bring a person closer to his essence (the soul). The memories from the past that are recalled within dementia, however curious these may be to outsiders, also have this effect.



Dementia is one of the possibilities to come to terms with emotional matters from the (distant) past just before completing one's life on earth.

The prolonged restraining and repressing of emotions, desires or characteristics leads to a backlog in assimilation processes. People tend to 'survive' by repressing the feelings which affect them on a deeper level, instead of coming to terms with them. Dementia provides a possibility to heal such feelings. The thinking mind loses its dominance which gives the emotional mind more room. Looked at from a spiritual point of view, dementia is an opportunity to experience and give attention to what has not yet been fully processed or lived.

Chapter 2

Possible causes and manifestations of dementia



Possible causes and manifestations of dementia

Dementia can be expressed in many forms, partly also because the group of persons with dementia is diverse in terms of personalities. The backgrounds and personality characteristics described in this chapter, may increase the risk of dementia but do not necessarily have to do so. They are risk-increasing but cannot predict in advance the eventual course of dementia in a person. It is also possible that several patterns are active within the same individual.

It is worth pointing out that dementia-like symptoms may also temporary occur to a greater or lesser extent as a result of mourning processes, imbalanced eating patterns or the use of certain types of medication. The resulting weakening of the memory system, which may also become permanent, is beyond the scope of this book.

Within the field of dementia, personality characteristics and memories may emerge that in an earlier stage of life have not been given sufficient room to be lived and dealt with in its fullness. On the other hand, it can also happen that certain characteristics and memories have taken up too much room during the life time of a person. In the latter case, the dementia process can lead to the extinction of an overly persistent role pattern.

In this chapter a number of examples are presented of matters that can still require attention within dementia in order to be acknowledged, relived and detached.

Memories or traumas that have not been coped with adequately

Dementia may develop as a consequence of memories or traumas which have not been dealt with adequately at the time. Most people at one time or another, experience very difficult things in life, e.g. wartime experiences or a child losing his parents at a young age.

There can be many events that very much affect a person emotionally. If one does not start in time to actively explore what has happened, in all its nuances, as well as give it meaning, then this may lead to an increasing emotional backlog in coping. Dementia is one of the possibilities to explore and as yet come to terms with such emotions on a deeper level.

Dealing with emotional memories too nonchalantly

Some people have a very casual approach to recalling past emotions, possibly linked to trauma. Dementia may manifest itself as a result. There are people who experience a lot but deal with these experiences by taking the attitude that nothing really matters. They barely connect with such experiences while their body consciousness knows what they have gone through, especially when it has been traumatic. In such a case, dementia may offer the chance to realize that such events had deeper ramifications than initially thought. For example: someone has experienced extreme domestic violence but trivialises or downplays it by saying: “Oh well, that is happening all over the world, I also experienced it ... did you?” In such a case, dementia can help to stop and think and reflect on the significance of what actually happened.

Forgetting oneself in the readiness to be there for others

There are also people who have a tendency to always put others above themselves and who have traumas they have not yet integrated. Dementia can help them to come to terms with these traumas.

A good example of this are mothers with self-sacrificing behaviour. Mothers who always kept on doing this and that, always on the go, not admitting being tired, not looking after their own needs, not following their own interests. In all their care for others they did not allow themselves to manage their inner traumas and to realize their own potential.

Being overfull

Being overcrowded is an important dimension of dementia. It means that a person is too busy and experiencing too many events and subsequently, does not create enough room to process and let go of those experiences in time. This increases the pressure in a person and in turn creates a sort of short circuit in the mind: dementia.

Dementia can create balance in these matters. Thus, a full and busy life may lead to dementia if this life leaves too little room for daily musings and depth of the mind.

Absorbing more flows of information than one can process and integrate, causes indirectly, eventually episodes of forgetfulness which may increase over time. In a demanding society with its high pressure to perform this also promotes disinterest and a lack of willingness to act. It may eventually lead to dementia at a younger age as well as an advance of dementia. This happens when the observed or absorbed information, in its multiple meanings, is not integrated in the person's perspective on life. An overload of impressions obstructs authentic life. People overestimate their capacity to absorb experiences and they allow themselves too little peace and quiet to come to terms with these matters.

Living life to the (over)full

There are people who wish to live life to the full and who keep this going well into old age. In this way they generate a chronic lack of sleep which in turn affects their physical ageing. Within dementia they are urged to rest and recover from the (too) much experienced. Dementia, which slows a person down, may then allow him to retrospectively experience the fully-lived.

Behaviour involving shame and secrets

Some people may have become too tied up in their life with matters that burden their soul and that still require attention. Matters of which one was too ashamed to express them. Matters that at times became visible through a crack, while the person in question did his best to keep them well-concealed. Dementia can then be an 'escape valve' for a person who has become overburdened in his life with personal secrets, such as his own sexual orientation and/or other matters about which he did not dare or was not allowed to speak.

Excessive bravery

Always having presented yourself as firmer than you actually were, may be one of the most important risk factors of dementia. Such people appear to cope well with emotions at the time, while in reality the processing of emotions could not take place at the moments of the experience. At a later stage in life these deeply hidden emotions emerge and still require attention. Dementia is one of the possibilities that gives the opportunity to do so. The person with dementia can let go of putting a brave face on things and just be with what and whom he is.

An excessive drive to prove oneself

There are people who have become too 'full' because of their intense drive to prove themselves to others and to themselves. By always pushing to the limit, they undermine themselves as they simply do not dare to be who they really are. They seem to live too much for their aspirations and this may lead to a 'clogged mind'. They do not take time to come to terms with the reason why they need to prove themselves constantly and feel the underlying pain. The tension this creates can be a great strain on the mind. The lack of a relaxed basic attitude to day-to-day life can have a similar effect. If this process is drawn out too long, dementia may get a chance.

Being overly worried

Worrying or being prone to worry may also be one of the factors in developing dementia. A person with dementia can find himself finally free of worries. One remembers less of what one could worry about. These are often the persons with dementia who are very pleasant company. Dementia in that case is a very enjoyable and a gentle conclusion to a life in which worries had been overly present.

The life that has not (yet) been lived can come to light

It may be that lifelong desires for closer contact, more self-creativity, greater enjoyment, or for more spontaneity, suddenly come to light within dementia. Desires that people close to such a person might hardly have been aware of. It can also be about secret longings of who someone had wanted to be, but could not be because of social conventions.

Particular characteristics that have been kept tightly under control and restrained for a long time, can be liberated through dementia. As a result, the person with dementia can show behaviour which others would never have expected. Within dementia one can no longer control and hold back and mental self-censorship no longer exist. It becomes legitimate for such a person to live and express his desires and qualities.

It may also be that a person with dementia reveals even more of himself than you already knew. Being around such a person who suddenly expresses himself very lovingly and warm is wonderful. You then notice inner qualities or an inner world that had always been there, but were expressed too little in the previous lifetime of the person.

Some examples of previously repressed longings and characteristics:

Longing for an authentic touch

Some persons with dementia develop a longing to just be touched out of a repressed need for the special refinement of touching. For others, this desire arises precisely from a wish

for a more robust touch, with all variants in between. Such longing may occur when persons with dementia miss being touched because they are disoriented with regard to their own body. It can also occur when they no longer know the natural touch of a partner while the need is still there. In addition, restrained sensual or sexual preferences may come up within dementia as such yearnings are no longer inhibited.

The light side of life as yet being lived

There are people with a naturally exuberant cheerfulness who want to enjoy everything to the full, but who have had to restrain themselves greatly because of social pressures. Their natural credo was: 'Reap the benefit of things that are enjoyable'. This can be understood in the widest sense of the word. It is not only about sweets but can also be about sexual pleasures, material goods or spiritual matters. The restraint of enjoyment was mostly the result of social taboos. Dementia is then beneficial in that it allows a person to enjoy life and to just be as he wishes.

Finally being able to speak freely

Sometimes a person was raised in a way where he was not able, or not allowed, to speak freely about things important to him, such as emotional issues or dislikes. The person might have wanted to express himself strongly but never dared to.

Such a person may change dramatically through dementia and now express loudly what could not be said before. It is often difficult for all those involved when a quiet or timid person has suddenly become very talkative. The fierceness with which they may speak is also new. Repressed material needs to be let out and dementia offers the possibility for this.

Extreme shyness can turn into indiscretion

Dementia sometimes also occurs in people who were previously extremely shy or timid in life. Timid people often have a very finely-tuned emotional nature. A simple yes or no will not do, they prefer to add an extra nuancing layer to each answer. In fact, this is a highly

qualified state of mind. If this quality is not invited and cannot remain activated during life, it sometimes happens that these people, as they grow older, need 'riotousness' and 'looseness' to counter the long withholding. If a person has such a character, he may become talkative with the onset of dementia. They want to talk to others about matters they used to keep quiet about, to discuss things they never discussed before. As there is no more restraint on what is said they can express a lot, even though there may be much repetition. This is often an overwhelming experience for others.

Unrest can finally be expressed

Some people always had to restrain the physical expression of their tension, unrest or anxiety. It may have been such a burden for them that now dementia gives them a license to finally express the restlessness in movement. It may affect, for example, people who had little or no freedom of movement in their professional lives. This has left such an impression on them that the body needs to be 'disinhibited' in order to release this impression. Dementia offers disinhibition. These persons need to move around a lot to express such disinhibition. Medication may be suggested to cope with the restlessness but my advice is not to give medication, disinhibition needs to take place. Outside walks in nature are a more adequate therapy than giving medication.

A greyish attitude can turn into youthful exuberance

There are children and young people who seem to already have the mindset of elderly persons. They are not lively and never delighted with pleasure. They do not live according to their chronological age. On average, they live too old at a young age and this continues throughout their lives. They rarely enjoy the pleasures of life. How wonderful dementia can be in such a case. Age is put aside, youthfulness enters, falling in love happens, there are special events to experience, everything is an inspiring world of exploration. Dementia opens up a type of life that has not yet been lived, although it is also part of life, and now

finally becomes accessible. Gloominess disappears and one lives the light-hearted and carefree life of a child, open to everything that comes along.

Too much attention can turn into thoughtlessness

There are also people who during their lives have shown high quality behaviour in involvement with other people, in doing a lot, in paying attention and/or in arranging matters for the common good. With dementia, such persons may suddenly become extraordinarily inaccurate or sloppy. They have already shown such an excessive focus before, that they now need thoughtlessness as an opposite. In this way, they can find themselves again and abandon the old behavioural pattern.

Dementia can extinguish behaviour patterns through repetition

In some cases of dementia, it is not a question of creating a balance but it is about an old (obsessive) pattern being repeated again and again in such a way that it becomes totally unappealing and no longer makes sense. This means that eventually the pattern wears out and becomes uninteresting because of the great familiarity of the subject for the person involved. The excessive focus on the subject becomes literally worthless. The experience of this pattern is out of date and may finally be erased through dementia for the benefit of life as it is.

An example:

“A person wants to become materially rich and repeats this wish in his mind, whether or not audible to third parties. He does this today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, all year round, the year after and for many years to come. It becomes an obsession and continues until the onset of dementia. Dementia can make this theme stronger: he now wishes to become

exorbitantly rich. The continuous repetition of this pattern creates an inner turning point at which his wish loses all meaning. If the person dies after that, then wanting-to-become-rich has become meaningless. So much attention has been paid to his wish that the idea of wanting to be rich has lost its meaning. This refers to a specific psychological mechanism, the so-called dialectic turning point. An idea has been repeated so often and has reached the limit, after which its opposite comes to the foreground. In this example, the opposite is the acceptance that, on a more substantial level, happiness in life need not depend on material wealth.”

Compare this pattern to an old-fashioned vinyl record with a scratch: the needle repeatedly gets stuck in the groove because of the scratch. At a certain moment, the needle jumps out of the groove and the rest of music is played. Sometimes dementia has this effect.

Peculiar repetitive images

The fear of being regarded as weak, as a result of losing certain capacities, may also lead to the development of typically and repetitive images within dementia. Thus, the desire for reliving the happy feeling of a certain experience can become stronger within dementia. This happens, for example, when people were greatly appreciated in the outside world for their work or as a result of special talents.

An illustration :

“A woman who was attractive when she was young and took great delight in this, now has great difficulty to cope with the fact that she no longer has the beauty of her younger years. However, due to her dementia, she is unaware of her ageing body. The tendency to conquer the hearts of others and charm them, as she once experienced it, relives.

She wishes to please others, which leads to a (one-sided) re-experience that feels good, is internally fulfilling and enriches her self-image. This will go on just up to the moment where, symbolically, the needle jumps out of the groove of her scratched record.”



Within dementia, the life that has not, or not enough, been lived may get a chance of being experienced as yet. This concerns talents, qualities, love, creativity and sensitivities which, due to circumstances, have not been lived to the full. On the other hand, there are matters which have been experienced as heavy, burdensome and challenging which still have to be assimilated. These include stressful memories, traumas or serious disappointments. Dementia can also help to extinguish a personality characteristic that obstructed the person's natural uniqueness. Only within a certain group of persons with dementia, the experiences and traumas that received too little attention and processing during their lives, are addressed. There are just as many others where non-lived creativity is the theme that emerges. Within dementia, they enter as yet into the refinement of their being, they can then become softer, more sensitive, more cheerful, etc. Dementia and the way it manifests itself often involves a combination of a number of the dimensions set out in this chapter.

Chapter 3

How well do we know a person with dementia?



How well do we know a person with dementia?

In the world of a person with dementia many things happen which people around that person do not observe.

A person with dementia is aware of more than those around him recognize. His field of experience has fanned out widely and is often very detailed and precise in a way that is hard to follow for others. What they bring to the outside does not match with what is happening in their own world of experience.

In other words: a person with dementia is more aware than others attribute to him.

Explanation

His field of experience has fanned out widely: it has become more rarefied and transparent. As a result, the person with dementia experiences more than only just that which is close by. Thus, restlessness of people in the back of a room can also be observed. The person with dementia is aware of this but is often unable to express it.

His field of experience is often very detailed and precise. This means that the person with dementia senses, without mistakes, more than you realise. This happens 'in an inimitable way', i.e. whoever is with this person cannot always follow him, let alone understand what he experiences.

What they bring to the outside (i.e. what they express in language) *does not match with what is happening in their own world of experience.* This means that they cannot express the fullness of their experiences in language or in any other way. Many persons with dementia are aware of what is happening in the minds of others without being able to put this into words. They therefore may know more than is apparent and they may recognize the feelings or emotions of others. What bystanders perceive is a faint extract of the real field of experience of the person with dementia.

A change in the awareness of hearing and listening

At some moments, a person with dementia may experience a sharp refinement in hearing, whilst at other times their hearing appears to disappear altogether. If persons with dementia have to focus too much on the outside world, energy is taken away from their assimilation processes. As a reaction they 'leave' mentally.

An example:

"If three people are visiting me and I am a person with dementia, then this visit requires a lot of energy from me. The moment it becomes too much for me, my mind just leaves. Then I am no longer in the now with the largest part of my attention. That is why it is important when you meet someone with dementia, to try and feel what that person can cope with in such a meeting (i.e. before the mind leaves).

As soon as you dare to look at it in this way, you do not take it quite as personally that mother always keeps 'disappearing' when you are there. It often has nothing to do with you at all. Mother already had the caregivers around her that day, with all its associated impressions. Additionally, there are the impressions of other people who are in the same space, and at some point, it is over."

The origin of the behaviour can often only be guessed at

Concealed grief or suffering may be a cause for dementia. Such grief or suffering might be: unfinished mourning processes for children who have died, abortion, incest, keeping secrets, etc. However, this does not mean that persons close to the person with dementia know what it is literally all about. Many have not taken part in the inner voyage of the ageing person who is now losing the connection to the outside world. That makes contact with the person with dementia complex, because father, mother, the neighbour or the family member with dementia changes and what is at the root of their new behaviour can only be guessed at.

My experience is that the origin of their new behaviour is often subject to misinterpretation because persons with dementia have only confided in a few persons in the past. It may also be that they wished to protect others by not sharing certain experiences. Within a process of dementia behaviour can refer to actual or symbolic (re)experiences of the past. This creates confusion among bystanders, all the more so because these matters are often mixed up.

Not to be recognized may be a compliment

It often happens that close family members find it disturbing if they are not recognized by the person with dementia. However, not to be recognized can also be considered a compliment: what is remembered are matters from the past that have not yet been processed. Everything that has been well assimilated is often no longer an active 'remembrance'. This means that, if the relationship with partner and children has been good, there is (temporarily) little to remember of this. The memories that now appear to be the focus are those that still have to be assimilated. Not being recognized therefore certainly does not mean that family members are no longer important for the person with dementia.

This is often a relief for people to hear.

Physically holding on to something

Many persons with dementia have a longing to hold on to something and, at the same time, they may be afraid that this is not allowed. This desire can be expressed in many different ways. Someone may literally want to have something in their hands. At times, such an object is then constantly and nervously moved around in the hands. It can also happen that someone needs to talk while at the same time holding on to the wall. In such a case, above all, one must not say: "Please, will you come with me?". Understand that the hand against the wall gives the person strength and stability for the communication. Also, when two persons with dementia fall in love, contact by way of holding hands is extremely important.

This can often be very moving if others are allowed to see it. Once it is understood that persons with dementia are more relaxed if they are allowed to hold on to something that gives them grip and stability, then communication will flow more easily.

Magnification of memories and characteristics

There is a tendency among persons with dementia to magnify certain matters. Thus, issues which have not yet been 'digested' can be magnified. Certain feelings such as anger, love or resistance can also be strengthened. It seems as if the pressure that has been put on them during the course of life releases as yet even stronger reactions. Persons with dementia may also closely examine their good memories and magnify them. In this way they create balance in their memory.

Whatever memories or assimilations are concerned, these can be supported by hanging large format photos of loved ones and situations.

The pain of memories not come to terms with

The uncontrolled 'tasting' of old memories, which are insufficiently assimilated, can be a painful matter. Within dementia, it is no longer an option to suppress and control things. Memories are flushing through them, as it were: fragmented and subject to several phenomena such as sensitivity to smell, sound, light and voice. In the chaos that occurs during that flushing of the memories, which just rise and fall, rise and go again, these people need understanding, loving closeness and quietness.

Aggressive behaviour of persons with dementia

The main cause of aggressive behaviour is frustration, because one knows one is approached like a helpless object. If this happens for too long or already happened before dementia, people can no longer hold back and are frustrated without restraint. They express that in behaviour which others call aggressive.

Persons with dementia would behave much more reasonably if they are asked how they

want things when entering a healthcare facility. It is important that they are spoken to in all reasonableness if their needs cannot be sufficiently met. However, when a person with dementia is 'incorporated' into an institution without respect for his individual dignity, such a person feels reduced and denied in himself. This process evokes psychological distress that can eventually manifest itself in 'aggressive behaviour'.

It is also possible that the person with dementia has experienced an earlier process in which he was belittled and labelled as incompetent and where others were always in charge. In such a case, a blunt strong form of aggression can be expressed. The frustration and belittling in the subconscious is released in such a way that the person in question no longer has control over himself. There is then a bitter anger based on hatred and resentment, as can sometimes be seen in psychiatry. In doing so, someone can also literally act very dangerously all of a sudden.

Detachment from the material body

When you look clairvoyantly at the energy field of persons with serious dementia, you see that these persons are only partially present in their bodies. The soul has already partly become detached from the material body. The spiritual body and the material body are no longer well connected. At times, the soul also partly turns to the immaterial areas where it takes in sensations of a spiritual, richer and more fulfilled life.

The mind becoming slowly lighter and more refined is a well-known phenomenon during the ageing process, as is the more subtle perception of things. This is intended to make a person more accessible within himself for the final stage of dying. Those who dare to accept this, can see how special the phase of dementia actually is. Symbolically speaking, someone empties his suitcases that are full of unnecessary emotional baggage.

Out of body experiences

Persons with dementia whose presence increasingly fades, can regularly go through stages

in which they are already more in the world beyond than they are here on earth. It can then be a shocking experience for them when they suddenly end up back in the here and now, in the middle of the still to be processed baggage-contents of their metaphorical suitcase. At night a person may have short spells of out-of-body-experiences, but it also happens that during the day he is largely away from the material body for hours and then suddenly shoots back into the body again. This is happening to prepare the mind for what still needs to be done in terms of processing and also in preparation for what is yet to come shortly after death.

Encounters with the deceased

Persons with dementia can sometimes experience encounters with people who have already died but who are still present in the process of assimilation of the past. For them it is therefore sometimes a reality that mother is still alive, because they have met mother just a moment ago. Because of the changes taking place in their mind they are sometimes partly in the immaterial world in connection with those who have gone before.

“My aunt was a very strong woman. She had one child, a son, who became totally paralysed having contracted poliomyelitis at the age of twenty-one. They decided to take care of him themselves. She looked after him during the day and her husband at night. In the end, her husband could not cope with it and became an alcoholic. My aunt was a tower of strength. Her son died after more than twenty years of care and her husband also died after a serious and long illness. My aunt has not been able to come to terms with these events and she suffered from serious dementia.

A week before one of my talks on dementia I met her in her spiritual immaterial appearance, as a deceased. I only met her briefly. It was a warm reunion. She let me know that she was doing very well. What struck me was that she was wearing a women’s suit of a special fabric and cut. I had no memory of this. Later I had my mother on the phone. I told her what

the suit looked like and my mother said: 'You couldn't have known that, at that time you were so young, but that was her favourite suit.'

Anyway ... during the night it felt like I met her; I don't know how else to interpret that. She said: 'Oh, Marieke, I am so happy! We are altogether again.' I sensed the presence of my uncle and my nephew. It was very brief that encounter, but it left a huge impression on me."

Regression

The fading of the mind that can occur through dementia varies widely depending on the person and can go very far into the past. In general, remembering is limited to this life including the prenatal time. Persons who are highly sensitive and who have experienced a lot which they did not come to terms with, can within dementia also go back to experiences of an earlier life, such as death after torture or something else that was extremely traumatic and not processed at the time. The person with dementia then literally acts out such an event as if it is happening in the present and is, in such a case, in what I refer to as a spontaneous reincarnation regression.

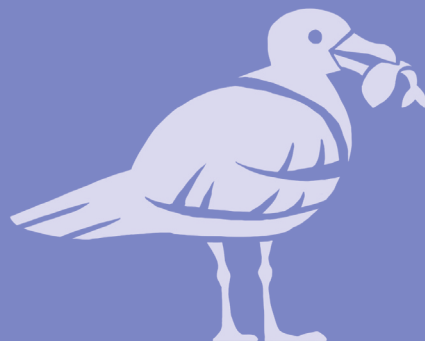
Spontaneous regressions are beneficial to the assimilation process. The moment old experiences are being relived, the emotions of the past also well up again. Because of this, the energetic impressions which are stored deeper in the body, are being vented, released and dispersed into the aura field. It often takes several days before the energetic impressions have disappeared from the aura field. The layer of past experiences that has been 'digested' and already been brought to the outside, does not come back. Thus, unassimilated experiences are being peeled off little by little and layer by layer, so that the body is eventually cleansed.



The inner world of a person with dementia contains a wealth of subtle emotional experiences from the past, the present and from his contact with the immaterial world. The person with dementia is often more aware than the environment often thinks but he cannot make this sufficiently clear. The process of the fading mind may lead to spontaneous regressions, out-of-body experiences and encounters with persons who have died. All this can cause a lot of confusion for the person with dementia, confusion that can be expressed in unrest, irritability and aggression. These inimitable processes can also lead to confusion among caregivers, family members and others from the environment of a person with dementia.

Chapter 4

What does a person with dementia practice and learn?



What does a person with dementia practice and learn?

Bystanders usually cannot observe the processes that take place within a person with dementia. They cannot see that he is practicing and learning a number of sensitive skills for the benefit of coming to terms with past emotional events. These skills are described in this chapter.

A talkative, inaudible mind

Persons with dementia may have a talkative mind which in general is not audible to others; their inner communication is intense but not expressed. At times we also can be full of all kinds of thoughts that cannot be ventilated out loud. In the same way, a person with dementia may have inner dialogues in areas that are not perceptible to bystanders. This may also involve an explanation of a certain mood to himself or imaginary others in order to feel what is being experienced at a deeper level. Thus, a person with dementia may have many inner dialogues, often until the experiences have been assimilated.

The inner world of experiences

Usually, due to ageing and impaired vision, the experience of the outer world diminishes for persons with dementia while their inner vision is strengthened. In their minds, series of images are active that are related to their life in the past. Images of this life can play fragmentarily through their mind in a way they experience in a strong visual sense. Sometimes they also feel overwhelmed by smells associated with memories. At such times they want to be left alone because these smells often help to put them in a mild mood. However, some smells and images can also evoke sensitivities associated with earlier (death) fears or anxieties.

Role-playing as a way to self-healing

Often people with dementia feel themselves pulled back into a different stage of their life

than the here and now. Then, as it were, a role-play game is started in which they have the leading role. They move into various positions to manipulate different outcomes within their minds. In this way their inner wounds heal.

Once persons with dementia have reached this stage, they sometimes have a great need to just be quietly present in a group so that their inner images are not disturbed. They feel that in this way those around them may also become part of the miracle of recovery. Thus, when people recount events or anecdotes from their youth and assume you know and were aware of these, then just listen and do not interrupt. Despite the fact that their images are not visible, for them it is a consolation that others may experience things turning out well.

The movement of the soul determines how experiences are processed

Persons with dementia develop skills to focus into past and present feelings and to interpret these. For long periods of time they may behave closed off, during which time they are actually turned inwards focusing on stimuli that come up. These matters will still need to be interpreted in a meaningful way.

Once this stage is over, the person as it were wakes up highly sensitive again, alert to what is happening in his environment. This alertness may be expressed in sudden positive or negative reactions to others.

A natural sequence in the processing of experiences

Physical bodies have the capacity to store memories in all their cells. Each physical body also has its own wisdom. This means that it 'knows' which memories from which tissues and organs are first to be processed and which ones are next. The body 'knows' at what level and to what extent the memories need to be processed. A body that is in the process of being cleansed, knows its own sequence. As a result, some tissues are first relieved to a certain extent, then others and next a return is made to the previous tissues in order to detach the memories there even more deeply.

If anyone attempts to influence this process, it may be that the natural sequence, guided by higher spiritual life, is compromised. What is important for processing, is often not what the environment thinks. In fact, a person with dementia is engaged in healing old traumas on his own. His spirit is in areas where memories of experiences that have made a deep impression are energetically stored. These experiences have insufficiently been digested and therefore have settled in the body on a cellular level, for example in the liver, kidneys, heart, lungs, intestines or other organs and tissues.

At a subtle level there is a lot of movement going on

When persons with dementia are absent in musings and reveries, it is important to let them be as much as possible. It may be a very significant process in which the body is almost completely at rest and the breathing is either minimal or very deep. The hands often lie motionless and small shocks may pass through the body. The person with dementia is already quite detached from the material world. In such a situation, it is often too much to ask him to be there for meals and other activities. There is a kind of natural mortification taking place, almost painlessly induced. This also means that at such a moment body fluids are already retreating, as it were. The experiences of a person with dementia in such timeless moments provide a preparation for life after death. This is a pleasant situation for the person himself, even if it seems rather bleak to the person(s) watching it. However, the person himself does not experience himself at that moment as grey and colorless, on the contrary. On a very subtle level there is a lot of movement going on, very light-hearted and detached from the dependence on the material body.

Extending life in order to digest emotions

Sometimes life can be extended when more time is needed to come to terms with experiences on an intuitive and emotional level. Caretakers and other bystanders may at times have a sense of despair about the long and drawn out process of dementia. It might be easier

for them to open up to the idea that the time is 'appropriate' for as long as the person with dementia needs it in his process of coming to terms with past experiences and emotions.

Help from the spiritual world

For the person with dementia there is ample help from the immaterial world. Their eyes usually show signs of this, they are closed more often and the eyelids are twitching frequently. In such a situation, it is very likely that the person is already 'opening' up to another dimension. There is an inner exchange going on between their spiritual guides and themselves. Many of these exchanges take place in a way that is not visible to outsiders.

The special value of the person with dementia

A person with dementia makes a valuable contribution to the collective field of humankind. On the one hand, by completing what he can during his earthly life. In this way, he will be spiritually lighter when approaching the immaterial world and accepting the energy frequency that will be his own. On the other hand, by not burdening the collective field of humanity with memories that have been insufficiently processed.

Thus, from a spiritual point of view a person with dementia does a high-quality job. He still wants to work on matters that he could not adequately live through and deal with during his life in this world.

Dementia is health-promoting at soul level

Dementia may actually be seen as a compassionate inner voyage of a person to free himself of the excess of emotional memories that he has not yet come to terms with. At soul level, this is a health-promoting process. A person with dementia is not always aware of this choice of his soul. If caretakers and others around a person with dementia recognize this state of affairs, acknowledge what is going on and talk about it with him, a process of what I refer to as soul recognition can be encouraged. This may lead to inner peace and acceptance and brings about a milder course of the dementia process.



Persons with dementia practice and learn a number of sensitive skills that help their ongoing inner processes. There is a natural sequence in these processes. Periods of apparent absence alternate with periods of highly sensitive alertness to what is happening in the environment. At a subtle level there is a lot of movement going on. It is important that those around a person with dementia learn to acknowledge and recognize when this person needs to be left alone for a longer period of time. In such a case it is better to delay activities and meals. At a certain point, the person with dementia will become aware of the outside world again.

It is important that people realize that for the person concerned, dementia can be conducive to the health of their soul.

Chapter 5

Preventing (the advance of) dementia



Preventing (the advance of) dementia

Dementia is an outlet to allow matters that have not been come to terms with in a responsible way before, to be processed in the way they deserve before the person dies. If this transformation is initiated earlier and more attentively, the process of dementia can be nipped in the bud. In any case, the intensity can be reduced of what dementia otherwise might unleash.

The recommendations in this chapter are particularly aimed at the individual. What can a person do if he is afraid of becoming demented? What can one do to guide the beginning dementia process in such a way that it does not progress unnecessarily fast?

The advice focusses on clearing the mind of unnecessary thoughts, experiences and emotional preoccupations. This is necessary so that the mind can do its work and bring unprocessed memories, that have received too little attention for a long time, to the surface. At such a point, assimilation can still take place.

Start the day peacefully

It is beneficial not to wash and dress yourself immediately after getting up, instead, first make a quiet tour through the house or garden. Walking itself makes that what happened during the night, slowly disappears and that the consciousness of the day can emerge. Walking quietly and peacefully into the day helps to regain a better and lucid consciousness which is related to the day.

Build in sufficient moments of rest

If you wish to do things, it is good to start slowly as well as to end slowly. It is important not to get too tired and to respect moments of rest in between your activities. When 'doing' and 'not doing' are properly balanced, new impressions are not very stressful for the processes

that are going on deeper in yourself. The moments of rest can take place in a chair, bed or by being outside, walking or just watching peacefully. In this way, the mind gets room to process more accurately those matters which have already been partially assimilated in a manner not perceptible to others.

Long-term psychological stress leads to unrest and an over-tired body. This can damage certain parts of the brain and can lead to forms of dementia, or to forms reminiscent of dementia. It is therefore of great importance not to overtire the body at times of psychological stress.

Meditate several times a day

The practice of meditation reassures the heart and makes you more deeply sensitive to your own source. If during the meditation images of nature are evoked, emerging thoughts flow away more easily. Meditation also helps to make it easier to talk about things at a later point in time. It is important to meditate more often per day. It is better to meditate several times a day briefly rather than meditating once a day for a long time. Nowadays, so much is going on that it is far more difficult to recuperate from daily events than before. The process of dementia can be slowed down or prevented by very consciously becoming silent for about 10 minutes, several times during the day, and just 'be'.

Limit television and/or talks in the evenings

In the evening hours, the memory tends to slumber. Then it is better not to become overstimulated as a result of television images, talks or other activities. These can affect and accelerate dreams and, in this way, disrupt the natural processing of events during the night. On the other hand, it is good to listen to music in the evenings or to see images of nature. It is also beneficial to give way to musings and reveries.

Set limits in interaction with others

Make sure that while interacting with others, no more is said than necessary. This is to avoid getting tired or getting overwhelmed by memories that are not relevant. It is important to speak generously about matters that really burden you. So, refrain from talking in an obscuring manner and just speak about what really is going on inside you, the rest is decoration, that is not what it is about.

Yawning and walking are helpful when you feel 'infected' with all kinds of memory fields by having been busy with others. Yawning and walking ensure that you get in a better flow and will not get overcrowded with things you do not know how to relate to.

Do not do more than is good for you

Take the time to decide on the spot whether an activity or a visit is good for you. Are you ready to 'do' or 'not do', for example, because you are already too full of a previous activity? You can only do things for others if these also benefit you. Your own overdue emotional processing now has priority, only in this way can the onset of dementia be brought to a halt. It is also important that new experiences are not piled up unnecessarily, because in the present this may again result in processing delays.

Avoid any performance pressure where sports activities are concerned. So, prior to going, do not set any distances when walking or cycling but feel along the way, how far you wish to go if you follow your feelings. Mental control is counterproductive if you want to prevent (the advance of) dementia. Being rushed or agitated is also counterproductive. The essence is, to do things more calmly and slowly than before.

Make the place where you live comfortably to relax

There are people who prefer to leave their house rather than stay at home, because a heavy atmosphere is active there. For example, being at home can remind them of negative experiences. Activities of family members may also be overly present, so that there is too

little free time available for them. If you practice staying at home more and dare to choose your own way in that, more processing can take place.

Thus, a comfortable place to live supports your processing and can thus prevent (expansion of) dementia. Take on small activities that require attention and precision and that do not make you tired. This is a good training to keep your consciousness active, alert and sharp.

Investigate (the secrets of) your inner life

Take the time to regularly focus your attention and calmly look into yourself. For this inner research process the following questions are of importance: what were the events that I did not think about sufficiently earlier in my life? What comes to mind when I am at rest and what still deserves more attention and given meaning? Are there emotional issues that occasionally come up during my meditations or in my dreams? What about my self-esteem? In what areas was I not true to myself and adapted myself to what others wanted? Is there still grief that hides in me and that I prefer to keep hidden? Are there traumatic experiences which I have 'put in the freezer' so I do not have to feel them? Are there longings and disappointments which need to be acknowledged? In which areas is it good to let go of control now? Are there still dormant characteristics that want to come to the surface?

If there is dementia in the family, examine the patterns of the family situation you were in. Was it normal in that situation that one could not speak freely?

Did one always have to keep things secret and as a result, did one not dare to move freely in the outside world? Are there still matters that have not been expressed or brought out in the open? Does this mean that there are still unspoken issues? Everything that is expressed during an experience or shortly afterwards, gives less cause for delays in processing.

It is not so that with this inner research process one can put a permanent stop to dementia. If there is an exceptionally large backlog in coming to terms with past events, it is not possible to simply eliminate this in a few months or even in one or two years. However, by changing your lifestyle it is possible to create room and attention at the moment an unassimilated experience comes up. A change in lifestyle means: including more time to rest and sleep well, not overloading yourself with external impressions and not engaging in conversations or activities that do not really interest you.

Regression therapy

Regression therapy (using half hypnosis) can be a suitable complementary therapy to relieve in a very quiet way, matters that are locked in the subconscious mind. Those who have practiced the processes set out earlier in this chapter for some time and thereby have gained more rest and focus, can benefit from regression therapy. With this therapy, deeper encapsulated heavy memories can be brought to the surface, so that processing can yet take place.

Half hypnosis supports accelerated processing of past experiences and emotions and it is effective to face up to and help heal undigested affairs. It is a good form of therapy because the consciousness of the person involved, instead of being eliminated, is lifted to a higher level.

Extra attention for soft fields of experience

When you experience emotionally intense matters, it is very good to look for softer atmospheres (beautiful sunsets, birds, young animals, small children, flowers etc.). The search for such gentle experiences makes you relax and thus makes it possible to ventilate the intense emotions. So, if you want to prevent (the advance of) dementia, you do well to look for beautiful atmospheres whenever you are faced with emotional negativity.

A healthy personality structure

The development of a healthy personality structure for oneself can have a preventive effect where dementia is concerned. A healthy personality structure means that a person knows how to live with himself and can be with who he is. He does not make himself more beautiful, does not negate himself, does not have to prove himself, has no intention to do so and is just who he is. He meets others simply as he is, does not project but allows and accepts experiences and examines what he feels and can do with them. Such a person does not have to be brave to stand his ground, does not have to convince anyone and dares to let go of control.

Be aware that here on earth we also have to practice being human in a small way. Also look at seemingly small processes, irregularities and effects in yourself. Dare to show yourself in simplicity and true interest. Whoever is able to do so is, as it were, less susceptible to dementia.

Energetic exercises

These exercises can be done by the person with (beginning) dementia or someone may join in to do them together.



Exercise to digest daily memories more easily

Place the palms of your hands at the back of your head below the base of the skull and bring mindful attention and warmth to it. This exercise helps to reduce the tensions of the day so that essential matters can be digested in a sequence of importance. Whoever does this energetic exercise regularly and often, will also bring about recalibration and processing of earlier events. This exercise is effective for cleaning up the memories of the past few weeks and eventually also has an effect on previously stored and unprocessed memory fields.

Series of four exercises to balance the mind

The following four exercises (the laying-on of hands) are simple and have a great effect if done with profound calmness and attention in the order indicated below. The exercises ensure that imbalances are removed from the body system. Balance is restored immediately, which enables the mind to be more open and start the processing operations that require priority.

Advice prior to starting the exercises: Relax your tongue during all exercises, especially the attachment (the rear part). Also take the tip of your tongue from the palate and place it against your lower teeth. Why? When the tongue is relaxed and not touching the palate, thinking stops. This strengthens the value of the exercises. Then, relax your jaw, your neck and shoulders.



1. Mindfully touch the frontal chakra (the area between the eyebrows) with the fingertips of one hand. This touch radiates energetically into the pituitary gland, relieves pressure, enhances calmness and induces equanimity. The touch evokes overdue memories of what really matters, supports the hope for good results and it helps to stop restless and superficial flare-ups.
2. Next, place the palms of your hands crosswise with the thumbs intertwined on your chest. This allows you to make contact with your heart and lungs. The exercise supports you to be in the present with an open and more deeply receptive mind. It also reduces feelings of being alone. Het vermindert ook gevoelens van alleen zijn.
3. Then put your hands on your kidney region. If you keep your thumbs in your waist, the hands naturally fall back to the kidney area. By breathing mindfully towards that area, you support the communication lines you maintain in the mind with those you love. Thus, you facilitate processing in accordance with the connections that are there.
4. Finally, place your hand palms on your upper legs and sink into the present moment.

Anyone who does this series of four laying-on of hands exercises daily, will notice that life is experienced with more inner peace. He notices that there is more overview of the patterns that he developed over the years and that he is better able to recuperate from things not liked.

It depends on the person how long he wants to keep doing these four exercises. As long as a position is experienced as pleasant, it can be held for as long as desired. It is essential that it is a relaxed and enjoyable experience, it should not be compulsory or a result of mental control.

Advice for conscious processing

Someone who is afraid of getting dementia or who already has serious reasons for such a prognosis, can choose not to wait for whatever may surface as soon as his life is more peaceful. He can also choose to consciously start processing of past experiences now, with or without the help of a therapist. A number of guidelines are set out below.

Contemplate matters that bewildered you

To be horrified is one of the deepest emotions a person knows and it is related to events that were unimaginable. In general terms, being shocked and horrified reflects the bewilderment about a situation that has never before been experienced with such intensity.

Initially, bewilderment paralyses, makes one aimless and ineffective. However, anyone who examines bewilderment at a later stage and relives what happened then, is able to give these experiences content and meaning.

Perplexity is a general emotion that most people have at some point in their lives to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, investigating what once baffled is a targeted action to get to those experiences that have probably not yet sufficiently been digested. Only when the past bewilderment no longer gives rise to contemplations, to deeper feeling and to

deeper moved thinking about it, only then is the processing of the bewildering experience complete and will it not give rise to (expansion of) dementia.

Learn to deeply feel past experiences without concealment

Inner despair is another feeling quality that still invites assimilation. Such despair may arise from the realization that others are unaware of your inner situation and are unable to follow and understand the profoundness of what you are going through. For anyone who has experienced situations like this several times in his life, with intense personal and emotional effects, it is wise to contemplate and feel how he has dealt with them.

It is important that a person is conscientiously able to say that he actually was a witness in all facets of these events, with all their deeply emotional details and repercussions. The point is here also that he did so attentively without concealing seriousness, without cover-up of the pain and without concealing the emotional fields that were touched by it.

If this is the case, then he does not have to be afraid that he will still have to deal with these past experiences through dementia.

Pay attention to all events that cannot yet be seen in neutrality

A person may have had to deal for a long time with hardships, unusual bullying, sexual harassment and abuse, as well as a lack of recognition in general. If this person has not been able to survive these events spiritually and with dignity, then he should now ask himself, what emotions from that past still require attention in order to neutralize these events. Whoever does this sincerely is less susceptible to dementia.

Still embrace lonely periods in your life

There are people who have been left alone for a long time during a demanding period in their lives. During such times they have felt extremely lonely and have not been able to allow others into this part of their lives. They have to ask themselves whether they have remained sufficiently 'at home' in themselves during those moments when they were faced

with extreme loneliness. If one has not been sufficiently at home in oneself and has not sufficiently embraced oneself, there is a risk of dementia if this theme is not processed in time. Learning to be at home in yourself while you are deeply lonely, is a good basis to prevent dementia.

Accept (as yet) periods of not-knowing of yourself

When matters come on your path that are unknown to you and you do not know how to relate to them, then the acceptance of not-knowing what is happening, is protective against dementia.

However, it works against you if you severely criticize yourself for not understanding what is happening. You should not belittle yourself but forgive yourself that you do not know what you cannot know.

In other words: many things in our lives come on our path in a mysteriously unusual way. We have to relate to them. You get in your own way when you criticize yourself and think that you should have seen it coming and that you should have known how to handle it. Such a situation gives rise to a crisis in thinking and feeling, in which you do not support yourself but undermine yourself.

Stop being a know-it-all

There are also people who are extremely talkative but who do not touch the real issues of life. Who think they know everything better without having thoroughly experienced and lived through the matters. These people would be wise to enhance their own personal experience of what is said before they speak further. If they do not, their tendency to be a know-it-all may affect their aging process and carry the risk of dementia.



Early response to issues that require conscious processing is the most important advice for those who fear getting dementia or for those who are affected by dementia. This early response requires a lot of rest and space in the mind. The recommendations in this chapter are related to this. To give in to dozing, quiet musings, to practice meditation, to have many experiences of nature and a balanced alternation between self-chosen activities and peaceful moments, is important. These matters are beneficial to prevent (the advance of) dementia or to make the dementia process milder. In this way, it does not have to result in the most severe forms of dementia.

Chapter 6

Recommendations on how to interact with a person with dementia



Recommendations on how to interact with a person with dementia

In the previous chapters the focus has been on a number of issues that help to better understand the inner life of a person with dementia. A special chapter was devoted on how to prevent dementia or help slow down the process. In daily interaction it is important to use these insights.

Thus, one can help accelerate processes of coming to terms with past experiences and behavioral problems may be prevented or reduced.

In this chapter suggestions are presented concerning:

- how to interact with a person with dementia,
- ways of physical contact,
- ways of dealing with processes of coming to terms with past experiences and emotions and the resulting behaviour,
- how to cope with aggressive behaviour.

Interaction

Let your heart speak, again and again, and practice careful interaction with a person with dementia in order for you to find the way to a deeper explanation of what is particularly going on in this person. Be still and in a loving way, so you will get to know the other better and will not fill in beforehand what would be best for him.

Being involved out of compassion with a person with dementia already feels like a warm bath for him. However, in doing so the ego of caregivers and others around him must not flow over to the person in question. Some people, with the best of intentions, surround a person with dementia with their complete energy field. They are not aware that this can

very unpleasant and disturbing for this person. Anyone close to those with dementia has to practice and ensure that his aura field is spread evenly around himself and never flows over to the other. Only then the other person is free to receive.

Eye contact

People around a person with dementia can make a special contribution if they approach him peacefully and with an open emotional mind (without rejection). In that way, this person is truly seen in his present state of being.

Such involvement is often shown by the degree to which you look into each other's eyes. This also applies to persons with dementia who are restless and who hardly seem to be present. Then a soft and engaged eye contact is extra important, not continuously but for as long as they can endure.

Approach the person in a calm and encouraging way

Whenever a person with dementia is approached from a perspective of unrest, he may feel disturbed. Thus, prior to visiting, one should take time to be in a calm frame of mind. The more neutral the visitor is, the more the person is able to show what is going on inside him without feeling inhibited.

Being encouraging and supportive around a person with dementia, based on knowing where the other 'is', does him well right away. Such an approach reinforces the person's aura field and makes self-recognition more flexible. It also helps him to go more pleasantly through this period, which increasingly borders on timelessness.

Do not interrupt gazing

Persons with dementia often stare into the distance. At such times they are only full of themselves and may be taking a rest from previous inner experiences. As a bystander, be prepared to endure such gazing calmly and for a long time, as it may give extraordinary clear insights to the person with dementia.

Language use

- ◆ Use short sentences, articulate your words well and take time to indicate commas and full stops in what you say. A comma is a moment of silence and a full stop is a slightly longer break.
- ◆ Dream away regularly with the person with dementia:
“Suppose it would be about us. You are talking to me and I have dementia. Then you would say: ‘Look mum, the autumn trees have such beautiful colours.’ And then you go and together you take a look at the trees for ten minutes. You allow yourselves to dream away. After a while you say: ‘Mum, do you remember?’ and you pick up the conversation again. It is important to take the time to do this.”
- ◆ Use familiar words and phrases. One reason why dementia often deteriorates in a nursing home is because people constantly have to deal with a different vocabulary than they were used to at home. So, the staff would do well to ask the family questions such as: “What phrases and expressions do you often use?” Such information can be used creatively. Try to come up with those sentences, words and names that are familiar and are known to help make a connection.
- ◆ If there are several visitors at the same time, do not talk to one another but limit yourselves to speaking only to the person with dementia. Also, make sure that breaks between everyone’s contribution to the conversation are respected.
- ◆ Ask as few questions as possible. To be able to answer, a person with dementia has to muster up a lot of mental alertness to formulate a response and mental perception has become limited.

Clothes to wear

Dress in clothes that the person with dementia is familiar with from times prior to dementia. That matters a lot.

“Suppose you are visiting one of your parents and you know that they liked a particular dress you had. Use that dress for your visits. Wear that dress or that shirt or that suit when you go. It makes it easier for your parent to be able to remember you.”

Make existing traumas known in the healthcare environment

Make those who take care of someone with dementia aware of existing traumas. Once dementia sets in, people are no longer able to easily express their concerns properly. Thus, it is extremely important that family members and caregivers together try and find out what traumas the person has experienced in his life. Take stock of all matters of which those close to a person with dementia know that he has not experienced them as being solved.

“Suppose you know that your parent with dementia has a war trauma. Then describe what your parent has experienced as well as you can to the staff who is looking after your parent. Also describe your suspicions if not everything of the trauma is clear to you. Try to imagine what the trauma was like, the time in which it happened, the social context in which suppression of the trauma took place and for what purpose. It might have been that your parent did not unnecessarily wish to burden the children at the time that they were growing up. Retrospectively, you can better explain the behaviour of a parent.”

Physical contact

People need to be touched in order to be taken to their bed or to their chair, they need to be washed and they need to eat. If the caregivers respectfully approach the body because it is full of a rich spiritual life, they touch it differently than when they think: “Come on, getting dressed can go a bit quicker”. Sometimes persons at an advanced stage of dementia also have partly ‘stepped out’ of their body. In such a case, be extra careful with touching, otherwise it is too much of a shock for them.

The skin is getting thinner and more sensitive

Far too little attention is given to the fact that the skin of an older person becomes thinner and more sensitive. This causes bodily contact to be experienced in a more intense way. It is therefore important to touch someone in a gentler way and to calmly come closer.

Also important is to make sure that his clothing is not abrasive, but comfortable and soft. The ageing process shows certain physical sensitivities which need to be handled carefully.

Helpful touches in case of unrest

♦ **Touching the knees in a loving way**

If you are sitting next to a person with dementia who is restless, and if it is allowed, then touch his knees lovingly so that he becomes aware of where he is sitting. By touching his knees, the lower legs become aware of the ground again. Those who are aware of the ground, are better able to stay in the present.

♦ **Touching the feet in a loving way**

If you have a good relationship with a person with dementia who is restless, then hold both upper feet in a loving way. This helps letting unrest flow away. It is especially beneficial for someone who feels overcrowded by impressions that have not yet been assimilated.

- ♦ **Brushing the hair softly**

Careful and attentive brushing of the hair, using gentle movements, helps to let go of memories which are compulsively going around and around. Especially at the back of the head a lot of stress can be present due to overexertion. By gently stroking or combing the hair, you can diminish that tension.

- ♦ **Touching the shoulders in a loving way**

For the person with dementia it is really supportive when you make contact by putting the palms of your hands gently on his shoulders. Do this while standing behind him. This calm gesture of encouragement strengthens his inner awareness of matters that he has come to terms with. Such a gesture may only be given by those who truly love the person. It should never be forced on him.

- ♦ **Extra carefulness in case of physical traumas**

Physical traumas, such as incest and abuse, may psychologically be deeply etched into the consciousness of the body. This requires extra careful handling. Often certain zones of the body have become blocked as a result of the unassimilated traumatic experiences.

“Suppose a person with dementia had a partner who was physically abusive and this person had been confronted with prolonged domestic violence. It is then of prime importance that such a person is cared for with all the softness of touch. Any approach to the body must be very gentle and slow as not to trigger a panic reaction or cause the person to shy away. Particularly the spots on the body which have been hit hard in the past deserve extra gentle treatment.”

Recommendations for dealing with processing behaviour

Speeding up processing

The affective atmosphere around persons with dementia is incredibly important. Particularly so where the processing of traumas is concerned: once a trauma has been assimilated, the memory of what happened can be 'detached', which means that it can be released outside the aura field. This process can be supported by gentle foot-reflex massage as long as the person has not reached the palliative stage. Sound and creative forms of expression can also stimulate such processing if the detachment involved is acknowledged and supported. Loving attention is the lubricant that helps stored memories, that for a long time did not get any attention, come to the fore. In this way, a person with dementia may be helped to come into an accelerated and positive development.

Being outside and in contact with nature

Nature has beneficial effects on persons with dementia, regardless of the season. To feel the flow of air, to see leaves fall, to see clouds or a clear evening sky, this all has healing effects. Persons with dementia are open and sensitive to inspired life such as bird sounds, animals or children playing outside. Sensing the radiating atmosphere of the earth can also have extremely pleasant effects. Small creatures such as ants, beetles and ladybirds may be a source of great amazement. Take persons with dementia also frequently outside to watch the stars. Looking up at the sky is a way of finding some relief from daily concerns.

Speaking loudly

Sometimes people have a history of not speaking out and repressing issues. Such a person can change to the extreme as a result of dementia and the disinhibition that may follow. Things that he could or did not dare to say before are now expressed loudly and fiercely. It is important that the person with dementia is confirmed in his need to speak out and hears from the start that he is being listened to. As a result, he may no longer find it necessary

to raise his voice. If you meet again, tell him what you heard the last time so he will feel acknowledged. On the other hand, if the topic is no longer of interest to him, do not return to it. Apparently, that issue has already been assimilated and the person possibly is now working on processing other matters.

Repetitive behaviour

Therapeutically, it is valuable if one is able to confirm the person with dementia in his natural self-esteem. This truly helps the person because by restoring his self-esteem he can experience his identity more naturally. Repetitive behaviour may have to do with all kinds of things that bystanders cannot exactly pinpoint, e.g. accumulated feelings of guilt that now can be cleansed.

An example:

“It happens during daytime activities in a care home that persons with dementia already want to go home after half an hour, because in their imagination there are children at home for whom they have to cook. They are hard to calm down. When they are reminded that the food has already been prepared and everyone has enjoyed it, they become calm again. Also, if they are worried about children who might be home alone without homecare, just say: ‘We sent someone to care for them at home. Don’t worry, we’ve just had a telephone call that the children are doing well’, after which such restlessness will disappear.

Their own past experience of failing still gets in the way of these persons, it is the same old story. They have wanted to do more than they actually were able to do and do not realize that things have already been done, so now they are still hindered by missed opportunities. It is important to let them know that you are aware of their thoughts and that everything has already been arranged. In this way they know that their care is acknowledged.

A person with dementia may suddenly and in an uncensored way be overcome by feelings of their own shortcomings. Because it is not always exactly known what causes these

feelings, it is important that they receive confirmation that just their thought of it already causes that the care is activated.

If the same themes reoccur and if you have photographs showing the children happy and well-fed at the table, you can say: 'Look at them, here they have already enjoyed their meal'. After that you can put the photo away and that is the end of it."

Responding positively to negative memories

To speak positively about negative memories which may be expressed, is helpful. Only in cases where the person with dementia does not seek any relief or processing, the negative might return. Events of the past are then endlessly ruminated without any clear processing. If a person expresses negative impressions of the past, there is no point in contradicting him. It is more important to focus on what was so difficult for him at the time and to let him talk about it, repeatedly. Once these are expressed sufficiently, the need to return these negative impressions to the memory system is no longer there.

Whether or not to initiate 'loaded' topics

It is incorrect to initiate conversation topics which have not been brought up by the person with dementia himself. If a visitor needs to switch himself off, as it were, while it might be quite normal to bring up a 'loaded' subject, he may take some time for it and thus show respect for himself. However, it is unfair to the person with dementia to repeatedly raise issues on your own initiative to which he should pay attention. It is important that the topic of conversation is not judgemental. Simply be aware and feel every time what subject might be brought up.

Recommendations for coping with aggression

Showing understanding and listening

Aggression in persons with dementia mostly stems from frustration, indignation and feelings of not being treated fairly. It usually has little to do with the people to whom it is shown and it is a learning process for those who literally have to deal with it. Aggressive behaviour may be triggered by something they or others have said or done. A person with dementia may feel not seen, not acknowledged, belittled or patronized. This has happened to him many times in his life. Increasing disinhibition within dementia diminishes his tolerance. This causes a primary reaction to emerge and also causes persons with dementia to have very little or no control over themselves. In such a situation showing understanding and listening are essential. Even if you only say to the person who expresses himself aggressively: “It’s enough for you, isn’t it? I understand that you are angry.” This ensures that anger is reduced because there is acknowledgement. It is important to examine the limits of tolerance in a person with dementia and act accordingly.

Offering more ‘space’ in the event of extreme aggression

A central issue with people who behave extremely aggressively is that rage or anger in fact increases when their space is limited. They do not react out of feelings of injustice but out of repressed bitterness, hate and resentment. It is best to immediately take a person with such behaviour into a larger space, such as a garden or a large hall where there is no noise or commotion. Also, an environment with pictures of beautiful views on the wall and atmospheric light has a reassuring influence. Such a person benefits from very light curtains in the room in which he is staying. Light curtains evoke a feeling of space behind them. Anything that offers a feeling of space may reduce the aggression. But when someone like that is told: “You will be given an injection and then taken to the isolation unit”, the aggression only gets worse. It is possible that someone with such an uncontrolled urge attacks bystanders. Only

in a large room can the aggression fade out without damage. Sounds and music may also help. If someone reaches the limits of his tolerance more often, attempt to experiment in good time with sounds and expanding music and look closely for the point where someone starts to relax.

Drinking lots of water

If someone has aggressive feelings, it is essential that his behaviour should be 'watered down', so that the emotions can flow away. Such a person should drink a lot more water than someone who is less aggressive. If such a person literally suffers from a fluid shortage verging on dehydration, the emotional tension will increase because the waste products from the organs are barely eliminated.

Place at table, place in bedroom

Someone showing unbridled aggressiveness should never be seated in the middle of a dining table. He should have a seat at a corner so he knows he can leave. (At the head of the table he would influence the atmosphere too much.) When someone has unrestrained aggression, he deserves a chair by himself rather than sitting on the couch next to others. If sleeping quarters are shared with others, never give a person showing this type of behaviour a bed in the middle of a room, but rather give him a bed in a corner or near the door where he can leave. Think carefully what the most suitable place will be if someone needs more space.

St John's Wort

St John's Wort may be given as a long-term therapy. It takes away the overtone of aggressive behaviour and enables people to observe themselves better in the environment they are in. Apple juice mixed with chamomile tea also helps to reduce the aggression.

Incidentally: instructions for the use of certain medication often mention that St. John's Wort must not be used simultaneously, because that could cause complications. However, it is not so much that St. John's Wort will give complications but rather that other medication is phased out too quickly, and then the dosage of St. John's Wort is started at too high a level. If one type of medication is being phased out and different medication is introduced too quickly, the transition is not as it should be. What is a better approach? It may be useful to start reducing medication in order to promote the psychological well-being of clients. However, such changes may only be effected if the persons concerned receive several massages a week for a number of weeks with the objective of detoxifying the physical system and eliminating waste products from the body. In addition, they must drink extra water to excrete these waste products. In the following weeks, the addition of St. John's wort can be gradually built up. Things may go wrong when the medication is phased out without the use of massage (techniques) that help to re-regulate and activate independence in the body and when, moreover, St John's Wort is introduced too quickly and in ever higher doses, while the cleansing process is still ongoing.

The use of medication

If in highly critical situations, the nursing staff feel that regular medication is necessary, then a reduced dosage of the sedatives or injections is recommended. When a person gets medication, which makes him unable to do anything (so-called 'knock-out' medication), aggression is sustained and stored in what I refer to as the psychological frame of reference of the person involved. At some other moment, this can lead to an uncontrolled and accelerated violent outburst of aggression. When this happens, it is often no longer manageable. However, with aggressive behavior, it is quite important to know how to drain the aggression at an accelerated rate. 'Knock-out' medication does not get rid of the aggression. It is therefore preferable to use other means to bring about a lasting and calmer pattern of behavior. In this way, the intensity does not build up quite as quickly and it is possible to intervene earlier if necessary.



The treatment of persons with dementia should take place carefully and with respect for and stimulation of their inner processes. In this way, processes of coming to terms with past experiences may be accelerated and behavioural problems can be prevented to a large extent. Basic advice is to have good eye contact, a calm approach and to provide information of what might still play a role within a person with dementia. The further dementia progresses, the greater care must be taken to touch a person very slowly, gently and softly. In this chapter a description is also given of how aggressive behaviour can be understood and addressed.

Chapter 7

Recommendations for the residential environment for a person with dementia who can no longer live at home



Recommendations for the residential environment for a person with dementia who can no longer live at home

The advice in this chapter is aimed at creating calm, safe and spacious living quarters with views to the outside and with personal colour schemes, for purposes of recognition. Such details have a positive influence on the inner processes which the person with dementia goes through in his last stages. Dementia cannot be reversed but it can be lightened by making adjustments in the living environment and daytime activities.

Points of attention for furnishing the room

Points of recognition from the past

A person with dementia often wishes to wander positively in the past and to simply be there recollecting beautiful memories. Therefore, furnish the room in which he stays in such a way that the atmosphere is calm and related to past atmospheres of which he has pleasant memories. Do not focus on your own ideas of interior design. Instead, feel and find out how things can best be arranged for the person with dementia to ensure that he can maintain his own ambience and atmosphere as much as possible. If possible, create a reflection in the interior of his room of furnishings that he previously experienced as valuable for his personal well-being.

Furnish the room with objects and artefacts he knows and which have a familiar smell. In particular, take things with you that carry the scent of the former house and thus keep the memory awake.

Seating comfort and view

Armchairs should be comfortable and soft to the touch and the seat should be fairly firm. The person with dementia should not really sink into it, because his mind is already fading.

So, the chair should have a solid physical basis as well as a surface that feels comfortable and soft. Persons with dementia often feel best if they can look outside. A view in a literal sense also gives a view in a psychological sense. If possible, a person with dementia should not have to look at blind walls. Blind walls literally and figuratively cause hopelessness and make people fearful. If these cannot be avoided, then try to decorate the walls with large and sunny paintings.

Points of attention in public spaces

The size and design of space

With dementia, a person experiences feelings of 'dissolving' due to the uncontrolled fading of the mind. The optical effect of large and unfamiliar spaces increases such feelings. So, do not make rooms unnecessarily large.

Good ventilation (sufficient oxygen) is also important. This allows processes of continued good breathing to be lighter and easier.

Create multiple seating areas near windows to the outside, with views of live nature, if possible. Avoid angular shapes in tables, cupboards and chairs. Rounded designs are preferable for furniture and carpets. Place plants in the corners of rooms to soften the angles. Existing doors may also be given a rounder look by framing them by arches. Round or oval forms in a space give a calmer and peaceful atmosphere.

Seating arrangements

It is advisable to choose round tables because these provide a little more room between people and therefore one does not have to be inadvertently involved with the process of others. Large round tables with a two and a half metre diameter are preferred.

Organise meeting areas in such a way that individuals are far enough apart and can also, if so desired, pull chairs closer together. This arrangement facilitates moments of alertness

and lucidity. Such moments are also influenced by the pleasant or unpleasant dynamics of the group in which people reside, as well as the time and space for rest.

Thus, ensure that persons with dementia are seated in such a way that they are not directly in contact with the aura field of someone else. The best thing for every person is to have at least half a metre distance between chairs.

Lighting

Maximise natural light and adjust the lighting to avoid bright lights in all spaces but ensure that there is enough warm light everywhere to be able to see properly. Light with a warm, soft pink radiance, for instance, indirectly increases feelings of love. It thus supports the atmosphere of processing in which one is placed. Avoid fluorescent tubes that give flickering light and make persons with dementia unnecessarily restless. Alternatively, use special daylight fluorescent tubes.

Corridors and walls

In corridors, create walking routes where you can easily and generously pass each other. Build niches for temporary obstacles such as trolleys for cleaning and food.

It is important that there are few mirrors. At this stage in life, people may not always recognize themselves and it is confusing to see the reflection of an unfamiliar face in the mirror. If mirrors are needed at all, have them treated with a warm coating that diffuses reflections and gives them a soft ambience.

Use of colours to strengthen orientation

The sense of orientation of a person with dementia decreases continuously. This makes him uncertain in his rhythm of movement while the surroundings also become less familiar. Recognition improves by using colors and images. A person with dementia may not remember where to go if corridors, doors and room numbers all look the same.

Explanation:

“In residential care centers, the different corridors could be marked by their own distinctive colours. It is then easier for persons with dementia to orientate themselves and find their way. The own room door, for instance, can be made recognizable, by a poster showing the front door of the former house. All personal items such as glasses, handbags, photo books and clothes can be given distinct marks or individually coloured stickers. It is important to find out and ask people what their favourite colour is. The application of such methods supports the memory of persons with increasing dementia and will make it easier to identify and remember objects and places. It strengthens feelings of safety and a person may not feel so lost.

In addition, it is important to have a collecting place in group rooms for all the attributes of a certain person, recognizable by the same color or image. For example, Mrs. A. has a red tray and can put her things on that tray. If items are lost, or found, she and the staff know that everything with a red label can be returned to that tray.”

Colour schemes in public spaces

The use of many pastel shades is advised because these colours correspond with the sensitivity of the process of a person with dementia. So, do not use bright colours but use the soft version of each colour. This can be creamy yellowish white, light pink, soft green, etc. In short, use the warm pastel shades that are not too intense but near neutral and have soothing and calming effects. For example, ceilings can be painted in a warm light pink which gives a sense of being safe and secure.

Considerations concerning daily activities

Music

It is beneficial to play soothing music several hours a day at a light sound frequency. Music that can bring about a warm swaying in the body without being overwhelming. This type of music relaxes and gives a feeling of familiarity and security. Playing this music is helpful at times when persons with dementia get too many impressions from things around them which they do not recognize very well and/or which make them feel unsafe. In such cases, extra attention should be paid to activities that provide security and trust.

Listening to and singing beloved songs together also has this effect. Moreover, this strengthens the group spirit and a person may feel less isolated in the process of dementia. However, care must be taken that no one is forced to take part. Participation should always be a free choice.

Outings and outdoor areas

Pleasant trips are also important for people in a closed section. A change of scenery, people and activities, for example in nature, can have positive effects on persons with dementia. Also beneficial is an enclosed courtyard with sunlight and plants that grow in the soil. Even for persons with severe dementia, garden experiences are important. Moreover, outdoor, natural light is distinctly different from light in the home or artificial light, no matter how pleasantly that is produced.

Encourage playfulness

Offer activities that encourage playfulness. In addition to all the processing of past experiences, there is also a need for looseness, pleasure, conviviality and freedom in the present. If you offer this enough - also in a closed section - a sense of more relaxation is immediately noticeable. It is joyful and liberating. Mischief may always be stimulated, not mandatory and

not while someone is processing past emotions, but it may be done afterwards.

Playfulness and naughtiness have beneficial effects. Everyone once had a very healthy part - at least as a child - where he was playful and naughty at times. Activities that encourage playfulness connect to these healthy elements that have been given too little attention in many adults. Such elements help to release feelings of always having to be brave and thus help to heal traumas.

Selective use of television

Compared to a hundred years ago, there is much more ether pollution, because not only radio and television but also other forms of telecommunications continuously transmit all kinds of information. Although we cannot actually perceive the radio waves that carry this information, we are nevertheless affected by them, because that information literally travels through our material body. (If radio waves are so strong that they can pass through concrete, metal, water and the like, then they can certainly also pass through a human body.) These air waves have a taxing effect on people with dementia as the conscious mind is fading. Another risk is that these persons will indirectly have to process matters that they have not experienced themselves.

Persons with dementia often still have to come to terms with intense experiences. Besides the rest and intensity that this requires, they also have a great need for light, pleasant, fine and fun television programs as a counterbalance. This is not just a matter of distraction but such programmes actually support their processing. That distinction is important.

Preference is given to programmes which contain sounds and images from earlier periods of their lives that support their process. For example, documentaries about relevant topics from the past. Finally, do not show any television programmes in which sounds and texts do not synchronize with the images. This has a very confusing effects on the mind of a person with dementia.

Dietary advice

The food and drink needs of persons with an advanced stage of dementia are increasingly related to a natural dying process. Their contact with the immaterial world expands and disengagement from this world is on the increase. It is then important that the food corresponds to this increasing disengagement. This means easily digestible, vitamin-rich foods and lots of foods that are of a soft or liquid composition. Fruit and vegetables are the most suitable for this as they are also easier to eat than solid food.

Soft fruit purée is very suitable and easy to digest, it also vitalizes the brain to some extent. Fine herbal tea with some honey has a soothing effect on the organs and prevents dehydration. Boiled rice is easily digestible and also an important ingredient in the diet of persons with dementia, as is natural seaweed. The minerals contained therein activate the thyroid gland and other organs to provide sufficient consciousness to a person with dementia for that part of his past that requires processing.

Breakfast in particular, is supportive to slowly coming back into the present and the advice here is to serve softly puréed fruit or vegetables.

Another advice is to feed small portions several times a day. At this stage in life, it is preferable to eat a little food five times a day rather than three larger meals a day. It is best not to give any solid food after 7 o'clock at night, fruit purée is allowed but do not give food that needs to be chewed or bit into. Thus, during nightlife the energy can be optimally used for mental and emotional processing that still needs to be done.

Spongy food is preferable. This has to do with the mental qualities that persons with dementia radiate. Their food intake needs to correspond with these qualities. Spongy food is defined as: watery fruit purée or softly-, but not over-cooked vegetables that can be swallowed almost like liquid food.

It is better to let people eat what they like rather than forcing food on them. Some persons with severe dementia like to nibble their food and closely examine it. Sometimes you see them spitting something out and eating it again. Do not let it bother you, just let it happen.



If a person with dementia can no longer live at home, he is usually dependent on residential facilities with closed indoor and outdoor areas. Appropriate arrangements in the personal room and in the common spaces can very well contribute to supporting the individual's inner process. This also applies to daytime activities and appropriate dietary needs. However, individual processes are so diverse that there can only be an invitation, never an obligation to participate.

Chapter 8

Natural death and euthanasia



Natural death and euthanasia

Every soul enters earthly life with talents and qualities, limitations and desires. A soul acquires both positive and negative experiences in order to enlarge consciousness.

Once a soul has finished its earthly incarnation plan, the phase of letting go, saying goodbye and making the transition to the immaterial world, starts. This transition (natural dying) is eased if burdensome memories can remain on earth. Dementia may be helpful in this process. That is what this book is about.

Every human being has the possibility to learn, up to the last breath. Experience has taught us that even in the last weeks, days, hours of life and sometimes even in the last minutes, a person can still gain deep insights into life. This allows him to let go of anything that still feels like a burden. Many persons with dementia experience exceptionally lucid moments, particularly in their very last days of life. For some, it even seems that at those moments dementia does not exist.

There are persons with beginning dementia, who do not wish to wait for their dementia to develop and therefore consider euthanasia. There is also an increasing number of people who, for fear of being faced with dementia, wish to lay down their arrangements for euthanasia at an early stage. This chapter aims to present nuances and considerations to deepen one's process of making these personal choices.

Dementia and the demand for euthanasia

The insights in this book make it clear that the dementia process serves a purpose. If this vision is not sufficiently understood in society, the demand for euthanasia will continue to increase. Euthanasia can also be encouraged in order to reduce the burden of care for the bystanders and/or for society at large.

*“A person who has always been in control may feel: ‘With euthanasia, I never have to be looked after and I can therefore keep control up to the very end’. This, while his learning pathway within dementia might be: ‘learning to let go of control’. Someone might also think that his dementia process is too burdensome for his children.
If a person with dementia lives alone and if he is aware of the situation in a care home, the line of thought might be: ‘I never want to experience that’.”*

So, there can be many reasons why people wish to make early arrangements to end their lives in case they are diagnosed with dementia. The culture of fear created around dementia is growing rapidly and makes more individuals consider early euthanasia. This puts enormous pressure on family members who have to deal with such a decision, as well as on doctors who are called upon to assist and account for it.

What does it mean for a society if such issues are dealt with too easily?

What happens with euthanasia?

In the case of early intervention in the dying process (euthanasia), the body itself is at that moment not yet able to end life in a natural way. The body is not yet free of the excess of unassimilated memories that can be detached through dementia. With euthanasia these memories come along to the immaterial world as baggage. This can slow down the ascent to the spiritual life there. After all, these burdensome memories have not yet been cleansed and still need to be processed, but now this has to be done in the immaterial world. It is an individual choice as to which framework of processing (during or after life on earth) a person chooses. Freedom of choice is the legitimate right of every human being.

When the person has died as a result of euthanasia and the soul gets to look back at this life, this soul often experiences disappointment when it looks from the immaterial reality to the early ending. Because with staying a little longer certain emotional

'baggage' would not have been taken along. In dementia, traumas and unassimilated processes are relived and experienced once more. Seen in this way, dementia is a gracious and merciful process.

He who goes free of any unassimilated experiences, leaves a clear and cleaned trail of the life that has been lived. What was particularly demanding has been given the time to settle. The experiences which have matured are also stored here on earth and other people can energetically draw from them. Even if these experiences have not been expressed, they are nevertheless stored in the collective field of humanity. Thus, if people try and round off matters as well as they can before they leave, then that also has an enlightening influence on humanity as a whole.

Natural dying and the effect of life-prolonging medical treatment

If the body is kept alive by medication and/or by medical-technical interventions, then stopping this treatment is not euthanasia. After all, the body could have died already in principle, without such medical actions. Is pneumonia seen as a process which accelerates natural dying or is life, in fact, extended by treating the condition? Our Western society has strayed from the knowledge of experience about natural death. Pain and illness are often insufficiently serious seen as processes that accompany and accelerate natural dying.

During life, some people use a lot of medication. Nowadays, there are a lot of medicinal drugs that, when used over a long period of time, delay and hinder a free and natural death. Such medication has a conserving effect. This means that tissues and psyche can become tightened and thus make the deep relaxation and release, necessary for natural death, more difficult. Consequently, the soul with its fine and subtle energy has to make far greater efforts to detach itself from the body and the dying process can take an unusually long time. The demand for euthanasia can then increase because the person is psychologically ready to die, while his body does not yet let go of the soul.

This is a process with extreme psychic pain. Help with dying in such a case is of a completely different order because, in fact, this is not a question of early termination. Life has been fulfilled and completed. It is a complex matter.

The experience of pain

In the body, unassimilated memories are stored and anchored as memory vibrations in the course of a person's life. The process of dementia ensures that detachment of such memories can take place in a very gradual way. Physical suffering with intense and excruciating pain can also have this function. Through these pains, old wounds are, little by little, disengaged from body consciousness. From the perspective of the immaterial world, such physical and psychological suffering is always seen as a purification process. Through the intensity of the physical pain experience, old and deeply-rooted psychological pains can be released from the body.

Someone with dementia may therefore, at the end of his life, also be faced with pains which help accelerate the process of letting go.

Nowadays, there are many possibilities within the field of pain management, to minimize pain so it can be coped with. In addition, there are more and more techniques that help people to relax so that the pain can be there in a more fluent way, rather than being hellish. Relief may also be given by sound and music, massage, fragrances, washing, etc. There is still much to be discovered about how a terminal body can be brought in a state of extreme relaxation so that the soul becomes detached more easily.

The beauty of the deteriorating body

Just as we would like to look at the Northern Lights, breathless about the colouring that shows itself there in the darkness of the absolute night, so you can also look breathlessly at the miraculous processes taking place within the body that is taking leave from the soul.

The body is the home, the temple of the soul. It deserves a sacred approach because the almost completed life was so splendidly allowed to use this body. The decay that this body now shows is like the ruins of a dilapidated house after having completed its assignment in a magnificent way.

“Consider the body – but also everything that is happening in it, the urine, the excrement, the last drops of sweat, the flaking of the old skin and the wilted body of an elderly person – as a dilapidated building and learn to understand and see its beauty. The smells that are emitted, the gases that are released, are also part of the life of a body that breathes out after having completed its task. The body still has its last excretions to do before definitively falling silent.”

It is the transitory nature of life itself. Nowadays, photographers travel all over the world to take pictures of derelict buildings in order to show the beauty of the transience of the material. Similarly, we must respect the impermanence of life and the transient body starting with ourselves. The art is to honour and respect the decaying body.

Moreover, it is good to realize that once a person with dementia has literally died, his mind regains its clarity immediately after dying. Knowing this can give relatives the necessary rest. It's good as it is.

Dementia is a healing illness at the spiritual level because the life of the soul is being brought back to the right proportions, as it were. The restrictions that had crept in are lifted and released. The immaterial body (light body) can therefore manifests itself beautifully after physical death because the ballast has remained here, on earth.



Freedom of choice is given to every human being and that is a great thing. In this book the view is expressed that dementia can be a meaningful process. The insights in this chapter may help to make a more deliberate decision concerning euthanasia in an early stage of dementia. The insights can also contribute to letting go of the anxiety about the later stages of dementia and to find encouragement and confidence in surrendering to dementia as it manifests itself.

Epilogue

There are many people working in healthcare who already do their work well according to the latest regular insights. They also achieve good results. However, their working methods are often not aimed at stimulating and supporting the deeper inner processes of the person(s) with dementia under their care. There are those who think that if they allow these new insights, this will be at the expense of their current way of working.

However, the opposite is true.

It would be very helpful if people understand more deeply that dementia is a backlog in processing for reasons that are justifiably so. Matters were once too serious or people were too preoccupied at some point. There was a difficult situation which made it so that there was really no time for processing. It may also be that people were raised with the expectation to put up with things, consequently they did not know that experiences need to be processed. If room is made to clear the backlog in processing more serious forms of dementia can be prevented.

The insights described in this book are important, not only for those with dementia but also for society at large. Young(er) and middle-aged people can use this knowledge for the benefit of their own parents and for persons who are already with dementia, but also for their own benefit. When people are taught at an early age to process what daily comes on their path, then this is beneficial to their health and (advance of) dementia can in many cases be prevented.



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