

The Spirituality of Communication in Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

John Killick, Dementia Positive

Bethlem Royal Hospital, London

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References for presentation

A Who has a What.

Will the What overcome the Who?

Will the Who emerge through the What?

Or will the two combine in a way that embraces and transcends the Condition?

Oliver Sacks (1996)

Quoted with permission in Killick J & Allan K (2001)
Communication and the Care of People with Dementia
Buckingham: Open University Press (p.318)

A standing or status which is bestowed on one human being, by others, in the context of relationship and social being. It implies recognition, respect and trust.

Kitwood T (1997)

Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First
Buckingham: Open University (p.8)

being a *person*



relationships



communication

Defining spirituality is always tricky. In this context we mean the search for that which gives zest, energy, meaning and identity to a person's life, in relation to other people, and to the wider world. Spirituality can be experienced in feelings of awe or wonder, those moments of life which take you beyond the mundane into a sacred place.

Froggatt K & Moffitt L (1997)

Spiritual needs and religious practice in dementia care
In M Marshall (ed) *State of the Art in Dementia Care*
London: Centre for Policy on Ageing (p.225)

The unique essence of 'me' is at my core, and this is what will remain with me at the end. I will be perhaps more truly 'me' than I have ever been.

Boden C (1997)
Who Will I Be When I Die?
Melbourne: Harper Collins

Seventeen months before she died my mother told us that she felt her 'top layer' had been 'stripped'. I am her only child. After a lifetime of barriers and difference between us, we found one another. My mother used a new language to describe her experience. I was learning new ways of being and listening and to be unattached to assumptions.

McKinlay A (1998)
inner→out: a journey with dementia
Rothesay, Isle of Bute: Charcoal Press (no page numbers)

Contact with dementia or other forms of severe cognitive disability can – and indeed should - take us out of our customary patterns of over-busyness, hypercognitivism and extreme talkativity into a way of being in which emotion and feeling are given a much larger place. People who have dementia, for whom the life of the emotions is often intense, and without the ordinary forms of inhibition, may have something important to teach the rest of humankind.

Kitwood T (1997)
Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First
Buckingham: Open University (p.5)

People with dementia are magic mirrors where I have seen my human condition, and have repudiated the commonly held societal values of power and prestige that are unreal and shallow ... Because people with dementia have their egos stripped from them, their unconscious comes very close to the surface. They in turn show us the masks behind which we hide our authentic personhood from the world.

Everett D (1996)
Forget Me Not: The Spiritual Care of People with Alzheimer's Disease
Edmonton: Inkwell Press (p.167)

[We need] to savour every moment of being alive. To know when to stand still and listen to the soft rustling of existence.

de Hennezel M (1997)
Intimate Death: How the dying teach us to live
London: Little Brown (p.100)

One always finds out too late that the miracle and the moment are the same.

Mitterand, Francois Quoted in de Hennezel M (1997)
Intimate Death: How the dying teach us to live
London: Little Brown

For those of us who are cognitively intact time is like a stream of water in which we float with the current. For someone with Alzheimer's Disease time is frozen into individual snowflakes which touch the skin and melt.

Everett D (1996)

Forget Me Not: The Spiritual Care of People with Alzheimer's Disease
Edmonton: Inkwell Press (p.85)

Burning Bright

*Sometimes I picture myself like a candle.
I used to be a candle about eight feet tall – burning bright.
Now, every day I lose a little bit of me.
Someday the candle will be very small.
But the flame will be just as bright.*

Barb Noon, unpublished

Looking up

*Why cry
when you can laugh?
It doesn't cost you anything.
You can do it all your life.
You can put it in a wee
envelope in your baggage.
Or put it up on the wall
so that everyone can see it.
People think that you
need something beautiful
to make a beautiful picture.
But what you need is skill.
And the eye to see
that it is beautiful.
There's beauty in everything
if you look for it:
the sky through the skylight,
in colours or not.
It depends on your mood.
Oh I went to look up in the sky
and saw it shining there
and said, "That is Life."
Are you going to take me
to see the sun?*

Killick, J (2008)

Dementia Diary: Poems and Prose
London: Hawker (p.47)

Song

*I don't know what to do
I want to go home
I can sit here but
I don't seem happy any more
I don't know what to do
I want to but
I can't any more
I want to lay
I don't know when it will be
I want it so let me have it
Don't make it so hard for me
O World, I don't know what to do
I want to see my sunset good
I want it as it was promised
I'm waiting for the hour
I want to see my sunset good*

Unpublished

Videos

Mother Tongue (not available to buy)

There is a bridge (www.memorybridge.org)

John Killick

Dementia Positive

www.dementiapositive.co.uk johnkillick@dementiapositive.co.uk

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