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The Safely Home Wandering Bracelet

by Dave Fost



Have you seen this? Knowing the information could very well reduce some stress. Why do you and I need to ensure we have a bracelet coded with our information? Here is the REALITY. We want to ensure minimal stress upon our caregivers and family. The bonus here is that we will reduce stress by wearing a stationery bracelet coded with our own information.

This is not coming from a guy who is being paid by some organization, including the Alzheimer Society. I am having fun being involved with the Society, but I am not of the Society. I do have Alzheimer's.

Two and a half years ago, my wife encouraged me to get one of these bracelets. I didn't need it at that time. Still don't. However, my wife is very pro-active. So I 'went along' eyeballs looking upward, to check my brain. What I saw there was a little disappointing! However, I went along with the charade and wore it for two weeks. It was a pain in the bu...I mean the arm, so off it came. No, not the arm, the bracelet.

Then two weeks later I had a revelation. Not sure which chapter or verse, but I thought, "Dave, you idiot." You see, how could I encourage others to use a bracelet while I was too stubborn to leave it on my own arm? It was "poor me" confirming the 'idiot theory.'

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"There is no way I am going to wear a wandering bracelet;
I've never seen a bracelet wandering anywhere."

- Dave Fost

Bracelet continued from page 1

Here is why we need to wear a Safely Home bracelet...

1. We will, most likely, need it...period. Most of us with a form of dementia, will 'accidentally' go roaming alone. Then it will be a sudden realization, "I have never been here before. Where am I?" We have been there many times...but on that day the brain will have a mini-short circuit. What a horrifying experience that would be! At least that is what some people tell me.

2. The bracelet is worn on the arm with your I.D. number on the reverse side. If you become disoriented you can go into an establishment and let them know that you are lost. They will likely see the bracelet, or you can show it to them. The person will call 911, the police will arrive and call in your I.D. number. It will identify your information and they will call your place of residence. Yes, even if you are on vacation across the country, you will be covered.

3. Your caregiver will be able to relax knowing that you will be identified. That is a BIG BONUS for wearing it.

4. PLEASE be pro-active and check it out. For sure, your local Alzheimer Society will have them on site and will give you all the necessary support available in this and many others areas. It will be worth a call or visit. The form is free. The bracelet is low cost AND it is a tax-deductible medical expense!

Finally, as an aside, here is something that happened in one of the support groups I co-facilitate: One man advised us he did not need a bracelet as he has all his information in his backside pocket. I would not think any of us would want to have someone rooting around in our rear pocket for documents. Not a good idea!

I wish you full safety and sound mind for you and your family.

For more information on the Safely Home / BC Photo Registry contact your local resource centre. You can also e-mail us at registry@alzheimerbc.org.



The Safely Home bracelet looks similar to a MedicAlert bracelet.

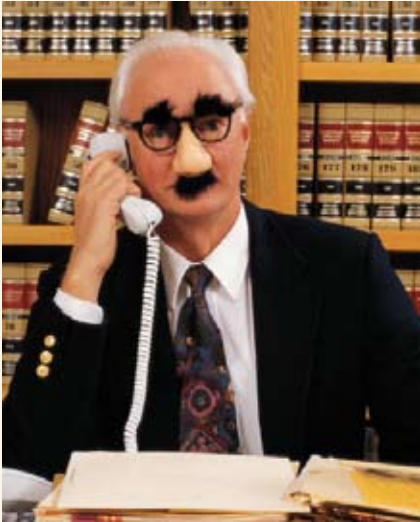


Engraved on the bracelet is an ID number and a first name.

Humour

by John Foster

member of the
Kamloops Early Stage Support Group



The one course that I enjoyed and was an honor student in was psychology. I developed from a more or less morose non-social young person to a silly but good-humoured old man as a result of psychology class. One particularly memorable lecture we were given was titled, “Humour as a disarming mechanism.” In a world where people were often as morose and sometimes as bad tempered as I was, I found this technique invaluable. Not only was the procedure helpful to my own personality, but also I am sure I was able to help others. In a group of people quarrelling and being critical and depressed about things around them, a humorous remark often helps.

An example of using humour to defuse a situation occurred during a fairly recent encounter with a group of people talking about the Clinton-Lewinsky affair. The discussion was both critical and obscene, making the conversation as uncomfortable and stressful as possible for all involved. I added a humorous remark, “You people are not looking at the positive or constructive side of things. I am sure Clinton will never get caught again.” It completely changed the tone of the conversation, much for the better.



Humour can help kids to relate to you.

Humour is also sometimes useful for noisy children control. The standard technique is to shout, “Shut up!” often making more noise than the kids. Once, when encountering noisy grandchildren, I started telling them that my headache was so bad that my dentures ached, as kids are inherently fascinated by dentures. I took my dentures out and said I could still feel them aching. After some giggling and a couple of remarks about how silly grandpa was, the noise throttled down to a tolerable level.

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Frustration with communication: Thoughts and tips for others with similar experiences

Here are some of the insights from our early stage group from White Rock and South Surrey:

Jean: It's frustrating not to be able to get the right word out.



Joe: Sometimes I just can't find the word. I want to get the real message across. You know what you want to say but you can't find the right word.

Colette: I find it embarrassing. I am trying to tell a story and I blank out. I can't finish the story. I tell my kids and my grandkids: Don't look for that last word in my sentence; it may not come out. I try not to focus on it and it might just pop out later. Don't worry about it.



Luc: Sometimes you figure something is your fault because you have Alzheimer's and you have done or said something wrong. I was playing bridge and the lady who was my partner began to cry. I thought I had done something wrong but I found out after she was crying because she saw her husband walk by and he has just been diagnosed with a terminal condition. It wasn't me at all!



Joe: The doctor has put me on a different medication and since then I have found it easier to get the words out and I've felt calmer. (I was switched from one cholinesterase inhibitor to another). I can control myself better. I am less angry, less frustrated, less anxious.



Joe: Don't go forward with the conversation if you know you can't finish it.

Greta: I use words from my native language (Dutch) and people have problems understanding what I mean sometimes. It takes a lot of concentration to keep the conversation going.



Luc: I watched the politician's debate and it made me feel good to see them sometimes stumbling over their words; sometimes even they cannot find the right word to communicate.



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Frustration continued from page 4

Joe: Sometimes you can find a different word or a different description to get your message across. Sometimes you learn to just drop it.

Jean: I think we are all doing so well. For many of us it is hard because we still speak two different languages (four of our group members are originally from Holland).

Colette: I am embarrassed when I can't remember a person's name. But I find it is better to be honest – and say: I have a bit of a memory problem and I can't remember your name. People are quite nice about it and understand.

Jean: It's very important for people with memory loss to attend the ASBC support groups. It's nice to be able to share ideas and tips.

From the South Okanagan Early Stage support group:

What is the best advice you have ever received?

- Be good / be kind
- Don't smoke
- When facing a challenge, get into a support group
- If it isn't fatal, it's no big deal
- Focus on our strengths
- Get a good life partner
- Remember to laugh

Humour continued from page 3

Humour can be a defensive mechanism, too. It helps for things like getting out of traffic tickets. When the seat belt law came out, us older drivers had a difficult time remembering to comply with the law. One wet, windy night I encountered a police roadblock when I didn't have my belt done up. I was sure the police weren't out there in that weather to catch me. I told them that I had to get out of the vehicle back there and when I got back in, I couldn't possibly do up my belt, "...You see, I had urinated on it." I assured them with mock solemnity. In cases like this, humour is probably the only answer.

One does have to be careful not to overuse humour. You will encounter depressed people who are so determined to be miserable that no amount of humour will cheer them up. These are people who answer a humorous remark with, "Can't you be serious?" or "Oh, shut up." But in cases like this I still feel that humour is the only therapy and I find it rewarding to get even a faint smile from folks like that.





HOPE is critical-
as we continue down the path of life.

It is a decision we have to make
ourselves.

It is what allows us waking up
and facing the challenges of that day.

It is also the fuel that allows us
to have a productive life.

One that becomes contagious for those
around us.

The benefit HOPE allows us the
Roadway of Awareness and Happiness.

by Dave Fost

observation in a men's support group for
Alzheimers, June 2007

(June 6, 2007) Copyrighted under: One man's
Experience with Early Onset a Life of Confusion
Life Lived Positively

Health Line Services BC

A 24-hour line that puts you in touch
with a Registered Nurse who will
answer your questions about symptoms,
health concerns, when to see a health
professional, etc. Call 1-888-215-4700
or in Vancouver (604) 215-4700. Deaf
and hearing impaired toll free province-
wide 1-866-TTY-4700.

Suggested Websites

www.dasninternational.org

Dementia Advocacy and Support Network International

A worldwide organization by and for those
diagnosed with dementia, working together
to improve quality of life.

www.alzheimersforum.org

Alzheimer Forum

A weekly web magazine by people with
dementia and for people with dementia

[www.alzheimer.ca/english/creativespace/
writingroom-intro.htm](http://www.alzheimer.ca/english/creativespace/writingroom-intro.htm)

Alzheimer Society Canada – Creative Space

A writing and art space where persons with
dementia express their experiences with the
disease.

[www.alzscot.org/pages/person_with_
dementia.htm](http://www.alzscot.org/pages/person_with_dementia.htm)

Alzheimer Scotland

The Learning Network is a forum on the
early stages of dementia.

DEMENTIA HELPLINE

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

1-800-936-6033

(Lower Mainland 604-681-8651)

Helping people with dementia, their friends,
and their family members to build the
confidence to maintain quality of life when
facing dementia.

The Dementia Journey



Whether you have a formal diagnosis or are caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, it can often leave you feeling frustrated and afraid. Thanks to a partnership between the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and the BC provincial health authorities, new help is available. The Dementia Journey website has now expanded province-wide. Through the stories of real people, it supports those with dementia and loved ones as they experience their own dementia journey and links visitors to current information to help plan the next steps of their lives. To find out more please visit:

www.dementiajourney.ca

Our Vision



Our ultimate vision is to create a world without Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Our Mission

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. exists to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, to promote public awareness and to search for the causes and the cure.

The Alzheimer Society offers a variety of programs and services. Check with your local resource centre to find out about upcoming events, programs and workshops that are available in your community. www.alzheimerbc.org.

Contribute to the newsletter!

We really want you to feel part of this newsletter. You can contribute in the following ways:

- Send us news from your support group, for example, what topics of interest or activities have you covered?
- Submit articles on how to live a full and meaningful life after a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia
- Drop off photographs



Send your contributions to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. (Attention: *Insight*)

fax:
(604) 669-6907

mail:
Alzheimer Society of B.C.
#300 - 828 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2

e-mail:
info@alzheimerbc.org

Tele-Workshops



The Alzheimer Society of B.C. in partnership with Care-Ring Voice Network offers free one-hour telephone/internet workshops.

The tele-workshops are free. All you need is a phone. However, participants who also have access to high speed Internet will be able to follow along with the online presentation. During the tele-workshops, you can ask questions and also hear from other participants.

You can register by phone toll free at 1-866-396-2433, Monday to Friday 6:00am to 2:00pm P.S.T. You can also register online at www.alzheimerbc.org. Click on 'Caregivers Can Learn from Home' at the bottom of the page. Then scroll down and find the workshop you are interested in. To register you will be directed to the Care-ring Voice website.

Upcoming Tele-Workshops

Healthy Brain

Thursday, March 26, 2009
7pm to 8pm

About *Insight*

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is committed to ensuring that 85% of the content of *Insight* is written by people with dementia for people with dementia.

University
of Victoria



Centre
on Aging

The Caregiver Appraisal Study, part of the Alzheimer Drug Therapy Initiative, is looking for caregivers and their family members from across B.C. to discuss their experiences with Alzheimer's medications: Aricept, Exelon, & Reminyl. All correspondence is confidential, and participation is voluntary. For more information, please call the University of Victoria's Centre on Aging toll-free at 1-866-511-2594.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is committed to protecting the privacy of people whose personal information is collected and held by the Society, and we adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. If at any time you wish to have your name removed from this or another mailing, contact us by phone at 604-681-6530, toll-free at 1-800-667-3742, or via e-mail at info@alzheimerbc.org and we will gladly accommodate your request.

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