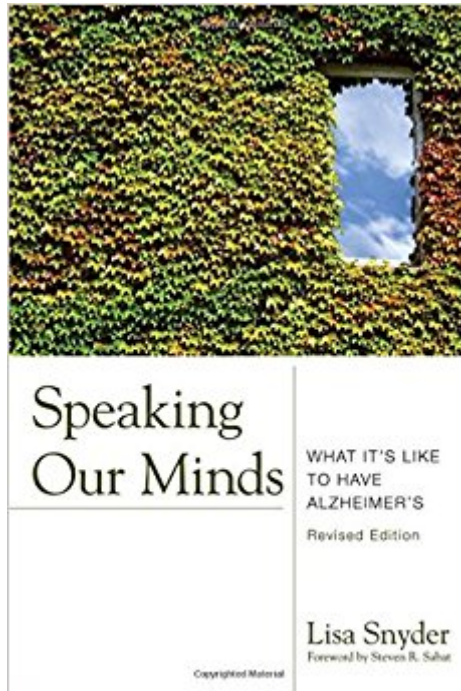




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# Speaking Our Minds



## Synopsis

Gain exceptional insight into the world of the person with Alzheimer's through this enlightening collection of first-hand accounts. This revised edition of *Speaking Our Minds* provides an unparalleled view into the day-to-day experience of Alzheimer's through the reflections of seven diverse individuals with the disease. By interweaving each person's responses from in-depth interviews with her own thoughtful interpretation, dementia expert Lisa Snyder explores the many dimensions of the Alzheimer's experience. As a result, this rich text offers professionals, family caregivers, students, and people who have dementia the opportunity to learn more about:

- \* The uniqueness of each person's experience and symptoms
- \* Coping strategies people use to face the changes and losses in their lives
- \* The changes that are experienced as the disease progresses
- \* Barriers to living full and dignified lives
- \* How to identify with and listen to persons with Alzheimer's
- \* Distinct issues for young-onset persons with dementia

This book is ideal for people with early-stage Alzheimer's and related dementias as well as for anyone who interacts with that person, including professional or family caregivers, friends, and relatives. Discussion questions provide thoughtful material for use in coursework in aging and dementia, support groups, or book groups. The variety of backgrounds and perspectives of each featured person means that you will likely find similarities between the people in this book and your own personal experience. Whether this is your first introduction to Alzheimer's or you have an extensive knowledge of the disease, you are sure to learn from some or all of the brave and honest people who are featured. This book will transform the way you look at Alzheimer's and how you interact with those who have it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Speaking Our Minds provides an insider's perspective of what can be a devastating illness. However with Snyder's support the personal experience of Alzheimer's takes center stage, and readers are introduced to the variety of manifestations and human responses. Snyder is a sympathetic and attentive listener and commentator, something which no doubt helped this cast of characters to speak so freely. Her accessible writing helps the reader feel at home in each individual's lounge room, and in step with the rhythm of their lives. Snyder is realistic about the difficulties experienced by her interviewees. She is alive to their uniqueness, and sensitive to their sorrows. Bea and Joe, Bill and Kathleen, Jean and her family, Bob and Erika, Booker and Brenda, Betty and Kurt, and Consuelo have brought the experience of Alzheimer's out of the shade and into the light of day. People with Alzheimer's and their families need professionals like Lisa Snyder to provide the emotional support and opportunity to speak that Alzheimer's, and attitudes towards it, too often denies. < --(Tony O'Brien, RN, MPhil, Senior Lecturer, Mental Health Nursing, University of Auckland)"Speaking Our Minds shows us the pain, humanity, and courage of individuals with Alzheimer's disease. It is a much-needed and much-appreciated book." --(Peter V. Rabins, MD Author of The 36-Hour Day and Professor of Psychiatry The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine)"Inspiring reflections abound in these perspectives and narratives. This book is for everyone living in a world with Alzheimer's. --(Lisa P. Gwyther, M.S.W., co-author of The Alzheimer's Action Plan and Education Director Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Duke University Medical Center

Lisa Snyder is a clinical social worker and Director of the Quality of Life Programs for the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the University of California, San Diego where she has counseled people with Alzheimer's and their families since 1987. She was one of the pioneers in developing support groups for people with mild dementia in the early 1990s and, in the years since, has focused on gaining a better understanding of the subjective experience of Alzheimer's and the concerns specific to families facing the earlier stages of the disease. Since 1995, she has been the publisher and editor for the international quarterly publication Perspectives - A Newsletter for Individuals with Alzheimer's or a Related Disorders which remains one of the few ongoing publications written specifically by and for people with dementia.

I have both the first and the revised editions of this Useful Book that provides The unusual perspective of what it is like to be the person with Dementia - not just caregiver advise. The stories told in this book, over time as the dementia increases, have been so personally helpful to me. I have cared now for four family members with Alzheimers. Each family member had very different losses, some with word finding loss early on, others with good verbal ability but sense of time and place - hence a great risk of becoming lost. This well written, thoughtful book helps me remember on a daily basis to remember my family members inside perspective - I have learned to redirect conversations, always introduce myself when walking into a room, make eye contact when speaking, and have become a much better listener. I find I return to these books when my patience grows thin, and the helpful vignettes recharge my batteries and for example, helps me understand a new stubbornness or paranoia from a rational-if-you- have dementia perspective. I recommend this book highly.

Scary to read as who hasn't been touched by at least one friend & relative having Alzheimer's. The author is an extraordinary human being. I can tell by her genuine respect & the dignity she shows for the people she is writing about. In a society that treats the elderly so shabbily in general, this was a blessing to read. I guess these patients have not been so debilitated by this sad disease to the point to where they cannot communicate with her. I am a hospice volunteer who visits a nursing home. I guess the patients I see are well \*into\* the disease. Most cannot verbalize at all in a way I can understand. But it amazes me that a lot of them can sing some of the words with me when I sing to them. (Naturally I sing songs in their era...which is not so different from my age!!!) They seem to enjoy this (altho I'd rate my singing at C-.) LOLI so applaud how brave these people are that she interviewed. They & their care takers have my utmost respect & admiration.

good book

Social worker Lisa Snyder has done a magnificent job of putting a human face on this disease affecting more than 5 million Americans. The seven narratives recounted in this book are filled with information and insights that any newcomer to the disease such as a diagnosed individual, relative or friend will deeply appreciate. Mixing verbatim remarks of men and women with Alzheimer's disease along with the author's solid commentary is a refreshing approach to understanding the disease. These stories are illuminating, sad, inspirational, and informative. Not everyone with the disease can be as eloquent as the people quoted in this book but their perspectives can shed light on the experiences of others who cannot tell their stories. We need more stories like these to be told

from the viewpoint of those with the disease. This is beautifully written book that will be a source of help and hope to all who challenged by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. I often recommended the first edition and will continue to recommend this revised edition to everyone I encounter through my work with the Alzheimer's Association.

My wife was diagnosed with AD last year at the age of 63. Within months after her diagnosis I had read several books about AD, joined a support group, and gone online at several sites not just to gather information but also to read and post comments on AD message boards. One of the things I now find comforting going through life as a spouse/caregiver of someone with AD is knowing that others have gone before me down the same or similar road ... that others have dealt successfully with some of the same challenges that I am now facing. While reading the stories provided by Lisa Snyder ... both the words of the people with Alzheimer's and the words of the author ... I often found myself nodding my head in agreement or acknowledgment. I understood where those people were 'coming from' ... and the insights provided by the author were right on target. Most of all, I enjoyed the conversational style of the author. I felt as if she and I were sitting together in my living room and she was talking with me as she related those stories. Both informative and empathetic, the author also clearly demonstrates through her profiles how each person with AD is unique. Despite many similarities regarding memory loss and other common AD symptoms, each person with AD truly follows a different path. At times I found myself hoping that my wife would not take the paths of some of those described in this book, but yet there is also much benefit in knowing some of the possibilities that may be just around the corner. The effects of this horrible disease, the challenges as the disease worsens, and yet also the hope and tender moments that can remain a long time despite worsening symptoms are all told through the honest words of those who are living through these daily experiences. I recommend this book highly for spouses, caregivers, and all others closely involved with people with Alzheimer's.

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