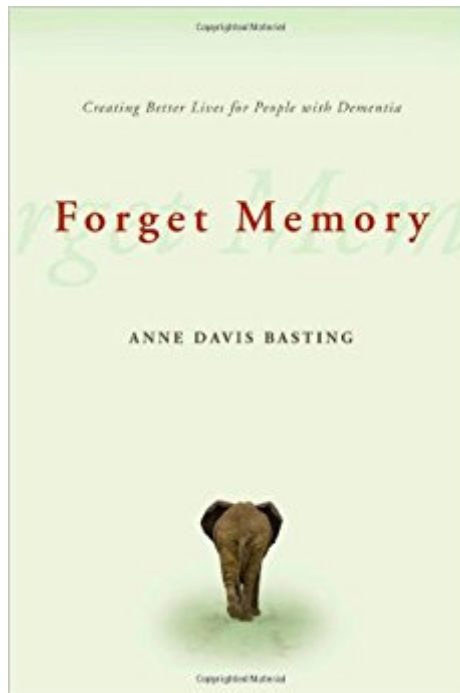




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# Forget Memory: Creating Better Lives For People With Dementia



## Synopsis

Memory loss can be one of the most terrifying aspects of a diagnosis of dementia. Yet the fear and dread of losing our memory make the experience of the disease worse than it needs to be, according to cultural critic and playwright Anne Davis Basting. She says, *Forget memory*. Basting emphasizes the importance of activities that focus on the present to improve the lives of persons with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Based on ten years of practice and research in the field, Basting's study includes specific examples of innovative programs that stimulate growth, humor, and emotional connection; translates into accessible language a wide range of provocative academic works on memory; and addresses how advances in medical research and clinical practice are already pushing radical changes in care for persons with dementia. Bold, optimistic, and innovative, Basting's cultural critique of dementia care offers a vision for how we can change the way we think about and care for people with memory loss.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The further I read the more impressed I became with Ann Basting's book." (Northeast Forum on Spirituality and Aging)"An outstanding survey for both health and general collections." (Midwest Book Review)"Challenges conceptions of what is possible with memory loss... of special importance in Basting's book are the several chapters dedicated to programs that awaken imagination and explor what is possible for people with dementia." (Kate de Medeiros, PhD Gerontologist)"Although *Forget Memory* may at first sight appear to be just another handbook for dementia carers, it defies

the usual expectations of this recent literary category. By effectively showing how people with dementia can be stakeholders of their own well-being, Basting both raises the hope of restoring the dignity of this population, and provides caretakers with invaluable guidance of how to creatively improve their efforts... an innovative guidebook for dementia care, and for the understanding of dementia and people with dementia... In some sense *Forget Memory* is a manifesto for a revolution." (Bjorn Moller Dementia)"A unique work. This wide-ranging critique of the current approach to the care of persons with dementia and memory impairment provides a much-needed prescription for change." (Peter V. Rabins, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, coauthor of *The 36-Hour Day*)"One of the most creative scholars in the area of dementia practice reminds in an unforgettable way that memory is more than we think and also less." (Peter J. Whitehouse, Case Western Reserve University, coauthor of *The Myth of Alzheimer's*)"With her big ideas and sharp criticism, Anne Basting is a vital part of the Alzheimer's community. I don't always agree with her, but I'm sure glad she's a part of this important conversation." (David Shenk, author of *The Forgetting*)" *Forget Memory* is truly a memorable book. From its readings of films like *Away from Her* and *Finding Nemo* to its moving accounts of art, music, and dance programs for people with dementia, *Forget Memory* offers us a vision of a more humane worldâ• and a better future for aging people of all ages." (Michael BÃ©rubÃ©, The Pennsylvania State University)"Anne Basting's *Forget Memory* brings a lighthearted spirit of hope, love, creativity, and even fun to the culture of fear surrounding memory loss. It should be an essential guide to all families, caregivers, and patients seeking a humane response to the diagnosis of dementia." (Elinor Fuchs, author of *Making an Exit: A Mother-Daughter Drama with Alzheimer's, Machine Tools, and Laughter*)"A powerful and provocative challenge to our culture's one-dimensional view of dementia as an unmitigated tragedy, *Forget Memory* rejects the stigma of memory loss and offers usâ• as individuals and as a societyâ• a deeply humane lifeline in the form of practical hope. Writing with grace and unpretentiousness, Basting insists on the persistence of creativity as memory diminishes, on the importance of the arts for expressing individuality, and on the key role to be played by a new generation of dementia activists." (Kathleen Woodward, editor of *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations*)"This book challenges the dreaded stigma attached to dementia by advocating news ways of thinking, and illustrates this with successful projects across the U.S.A." (Cathy Goodwin International Psychogeriatrics)"I believe this book is incredibly powerful and valuable... The suggested future movements are very important and realistic, which I believe are imperative to the advancement of care for anyone involved in, or influenced by dementia." (Amy Jenkins *Journal of Dementia and Mental Health*)

Anne Davis Basting is the director of the Center on Age and Community at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, where she is also an associate professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the Peck School of the Arts. Her published works include *The Stages of Age* and *The Arts and Dementia Care: A Resource Guide*.

A classic book that has effectively shifted attention away from memory as the sole focus of dementia care to a much more broad-based understanding of how to engage with people with dementia using creative approaches that tap into their present lives. A must read for those people with dementia, who have a friend or family member with dementia and by healthcare professionals.

"Forget Memory: Creating Better Lives for People with Dementia" by Anne Davis Basting.Â Forget Memory: Creating Better Lives for People with DementiaÂ This book provides excellent information on wonderful programs that are being used successfully in creating better lives for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. As this book documents, these programs produce positive results in the lives of the person with dementia, and the family. These programs give families a deeper level of appreciation and understanding of the person with dementia, and provide families with tools that enhance the life of the person with dementia so that the remaining years may be as meaningful and full of life as possible. It is well written and well documented. I was introduced to this book by a teacher who required it for our text in my college Gerontology class on Alzheimer's and Other Forms of Dementia. I plan to use these various programs when I have an opportunity to do so in working with those suffering with dementia. I highly recommend this small, easy to read book for those who are truly looking to understand people with dementia, how to reach them, and how to help families and caregivers successfully interact with people with dementia. The wonderful programs discussed in this book, Naomi Feil's Validation Therapy, the Green House Model, and the Eden Alternative Model, all offer positive, productive tools that may be implemented to create better lives for people with dementia and their families.

I read this book out of professional interest in using art to better the lives of people with dementia. At the outset, Basting takes issue with the Alzheimer's Association pervasive message that dementia is a tragedy characterized by unspeakable loss, and that the only salvation is to find a cure. (I work for the Alzheimer's Association, so her position instantly piqued my curiosity!) She then takes us through a critique of memory and memory loss, using examples from literature and pop culture. In

part three, she describes different community art projects in which writers and artists work with people with dementia. There is even an appendix listing the different programs. Alzheimer's is a horrible disease and the only one of the "top ten" for which there is no cure, treatment or way to prevent. Basting's suggestion that we try to take the fear out of a diagnosis and direct more energy toward creating positive social and creative experiences for PWD is very helpful. Especially if Alzheimer's becomes the epidemic it is projected to be (unless there is a cure) then all of us who work with PWD should be thinking of ways to make the post-diagnosis years (an average of eight) as pleasurable, meaningful and fear-free as we can. This book points the way to new possibilities.

I have just finished the book and was inspired by the rich insight, eloquent writing, and beauty in it. It helped me see memory and dementia through a new lens.

FORGET MEMORY: CREATING BETTER LIVES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA is based on ten years of practice and research in the field of memory and studies innovative programs that stimulate growth, humor and emotional connections. From how medical advances are changing options for people with dementia to stories of memory loss without old age attached, this is an outstanding survey for both health and general collections.

This book is an inspiration. It is beautifully and thoughtfully written, with such hope. You develop real faith in the resilience and creativity hidden within those with dementia.

The author has described the illness, Alzheimer's disease, and also created a list of the wealth of services, etc that can benefit the families and the Alzheimer patient.

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