

UW Medicine

Stepping Forward

“Living in the possible”

From Philip, living with dementia:

“My journey through Alzheimer’s continues to be marked with alternating times of bravery and fear, expectation and resignation, clarity alternating with frustrating confusion, and one hell of a lot of paradox.

“Yet our journeys must not be kept in the dark, but rather, be brought out in the open, and in that way, the fear of death is challenged and ultimately can be broken.”



From Katie, Philip’s daughter:

“The answers are going to be different for everyone. There is no road map for how this plays out. I know that, but I also know this: If you are brave enough, especially when it is a difficult time, you can find a sense of gratitude that will do more than just keep you going.”

Throughout this handbook, we have stressed that you are not defined by your disease. You have people who love you, things you like to do, and gifts to offer. Living with memory loss is not easy, but there are ways to cope with it. Healthy habits in your daily life can help you feel better and think more clearly. Meanwhile, you have time to adapt, and can find ways to keep enjoying life.

Most of all, you don't have to walk this path alone. Your family, your friends, and the team at the Memory and Brain Wellness Center are with you along the way.

As you step forward, we hope you feel informed, encouraged, and empowered for the road ahead.

We close with this poem, "Living in the Possible," written for our handbook by Mary Firebaugh of Seattle, Washington.



Painting by Lenny, a member of the Elderwise adult day program

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk with your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- To learn more about the Memory and Brain Wellness Center, visit depts.washington.edu/mbwc
- To set up clinic visit, call 206.520.5000.

Living in the Possible

*I used to spend holidays in the kitchen.
Now my son makes pizza, and I do jigsaw puzzles.*

*I used to pump the gas and check the tires,
Now I walk or bus or get a ride with friends.*

*I used to stay up late to get things done.
Now I do gentle yoga to relax.*

*I used to greet my friends by name.
Now they all get hugs, and Wow!, I get the same.*

*I used to read the paper every day.
Now I sing (off key), and paint and drum.*

*I used to worry and feel down.
Now I ask, get help, and help others when I can.*

*I used to think that life is earned by doing.
Now I know it is a gift to pass around.*

We wish you well as you step forward from here!