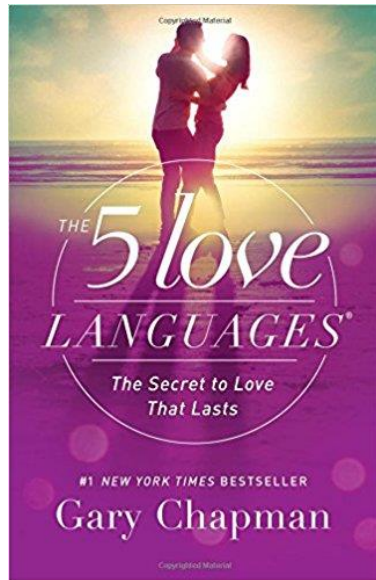


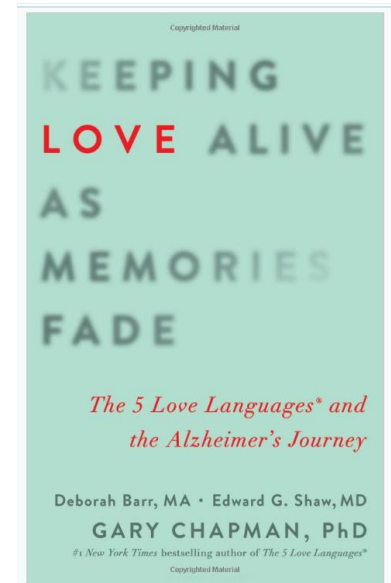
# Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade

The 5 Love Languages and the Alzheimer's Journey



Dr. Gary Chapman  
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Winston-Salem, NC

November 9, 2021



# My background and family



# That terrible day in August 2013

Agitation  
Aggression  
Paranoia  
I want to go home!



Wandering  
Resisting care  
Depression  
Sundowning  
Day-night reversal




# What do we call these behaviors?

The neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPS) of dementia


# Neuropsychiatric Symptoms

## Early- to Middle-Stage Dementia

- ▶ Apathy
  - ▶ Lack of insight, impaired judgment, and denial
  - ▶ Changes in emotional expression – emotional withdrawal/isolation, loss of empathy
  - ▶ Changes in mood – depression (irritability), anxiety, obsessive/compulsive behaviors, hoarding
  - ▶ Repetitive questions, vocalizations, and behaviors
  - ▶ Lost identity
  - ▶ Delusions involving money, fidelity, harm
  - ▶ Behavioral disinhibition – rudeness, socially inappropriate comments/behaviors, crying or laughing spells, excessive sweets
- 

# Neuropsychiatric Symptoms

## Middle- to Late-Stage Dementia

- ▶ Agitation
  - ▶ Aggression
  - ▶ Visual and auditory hallucinations and visual misperceptions
  - ▶ Wandering
  - ▶ Sexual behaviors
  - ▶ Resisting care
  - ▶ Sundowning
  - ▶ Day–night reversal
  - ▶ Urinary and fecal incontinence
- 

# Neuropsychiatric Symptoms

How common are they?

| Symptom                  | MCI–Early AD (%) | Middle–Late AD (%) |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Delusions/Hallucinations | 3–5              | 16–30              |
| Disinhibition            | 4                | 17                 |
| Irritability/Anxiety     | 10–17            | 25–34              |
| Agitation/Aggression     | 15               | 40                 |
| Sleep/Eating Disturbance | 18               | 31                 |
| Apathy                   | 18               | 45                 |
| Depression               | 26               | 44                 |
| ≥1 of the above          | 50               | 80                 |

\*modified from Lyketsos et al, JAMA 2002

# That terrible day in August 2013

Agitation  
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**What happened?**

**Take Rebecca's perspective ... she felt unattached to her "peeps" and her surroundings!**

# Why do people living with dementia have challenging behavioral expressions?

In (large) part, because they experience *attachment loss and separation distress* ... which affects their ability to express emotional love ... which in turn affects their relationships





# What is attachment in relationships?

It's how we come to like or love another, to experience the joy of being together (**attachment bonds**), and avoid the dislike of being apart (**separation distress**)

# Attachment Theory



Says our very first attachment is usually to our mother with whom we seek:

- ▶ Nourishment
- ▶ Comfort
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Security

# Secure Attachment

Securely attached children:

- ▶ Interact with strangers and don't do not feel threatened
- ▶ Separate from parents without feeling anxious
- ▶ Explore new situations without being fearful
- ▶ Confident with positive self-esteem
- ▶ Socially connected → form numerous long-lasting attachment bonds throughout life (parents, siblings, family, friends, coworkers, spouse/partner, and own children ... our “peeps”)



# Insecure Attachment

Insecurely attached children:

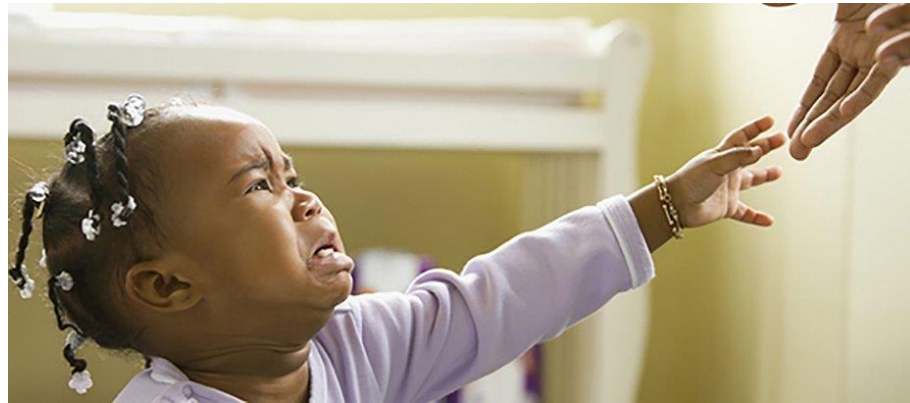
- ▶ Feel threatened by strangers
- ▶ Anxious and/or angry when separated from parents
- ▶ Fearful in new situations
- ▶ Lack confidence and self-esteem
- ▶ Socially isolated → weak attachment bonds with their “peeps”



# What happens when a parent and child become separated?

The child exhibits the behaviors of separation distress ...

- ▶ Crying
- ▶ Clinging
- ▶ Calling out
- ▶ Lashing out



... because she feels abandoned and is seeking\* her mother out to reattach to her.

\*brain *dopamine* levels increase when the seeking system is activated

# What does attachment have to do with aging and dementia?



A lot! Because of memory and cognitive loss, some seniors as well as people with living dementia are prone to feeling unattached from loved ones, leading to separation distress and seeking behaviors.

# Insecure Attachment in Dementia

## Contrasting Behaviors of Separation Distress

### Withdrawn Response

- Sadness
- Depression
- Grief
- Loneliness
- Helplessness



### Seeking Response

- Anxiety
- Worry
- Fear
- Panic
- Anger
- Aggression
- Pacing/Wandering
- Repetitive or distressing vocalizations  
("I want to go home" or  
"Help me, help, help!")



# What happens when the challenging behaviors of separation distress occur in people with dementia?



Family care partners and healthcare professionals tend to react to the “separation distress” by physically and emotionally distancing themselves\* from the person with dementia, *opposite of what they need!*

Or meds are used:

- Anti-psychotics (dopamine blocking drugs)
- Anti-anxiety drugs (benzodiazepines)
- Anti-convulsants (mood stabilizers)
- Anti-depressants (SSRI, SNRI, others)

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KEEPING  
**LOVE** ALIVE  
AS  
MEMORIES  
FADE

*The 5 Love Languages® and  
the Alzheimer's Journey*

Deborah Barr, MA • Edward G. Shaw, MD

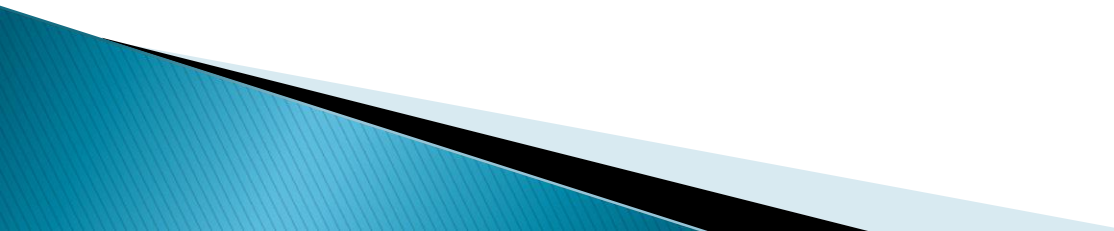
**GARY CHAPMAN, PhD**

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The 5 Love Languages®*

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# 40 Ways to Say “I Love You” to a person living with dementia

## Physical Touch

- ▶ Hold hands and take a walk
  - ▶ Give a hug and a kiss
  - ▶ Sit close or hold them
  - ▶ Rub their feet or back, gently stroke their cheek
  - ▶ Apply lotion to their hands
  - ▶ Let them hold a baby, dog or cat, or doll
  - ▶ Give them a mani-pedi and paint their nails
  - ▶ Dance with them
- 


# 40 Ways to Say “I Love You” to a person living with dementia

## Words of Affirmation

- ▶ Tell them “I Love You”
  - ▶ Answer each repeated question as if it were being asked for the first time
  - ▶ Talk to them (even if they can’t talk about ... about any topic that’s been important to them)
  - ▶ Tell them they look beautiful or handsome
  - ▶ Help them write a card or letter and sign it
  - ▶ Sing them to sleep
  - ▶ Tell them you’ve taken care of everything
  - ▶ Tell them you are proud of them and their life
  - ▶ Brag about them to others while they’re present
- 


# 40 Ways to Say “I Love You” to a person living with dementia

## Quality Time

- ▶ Read to them, or have them read to you (or a grandchild)
  - ▶ Reminisce about old times (while looking at family photo album or movie) or important events in history
  - ▶ Watch a favorite movie
  - ▶ Go for a ride in the car
  - ▶ Bake some cookies together
  - ▶ Laugh together
  - ▶ Color or paint with them, or do a puzzle together
  - ▶ Tell stories
- 

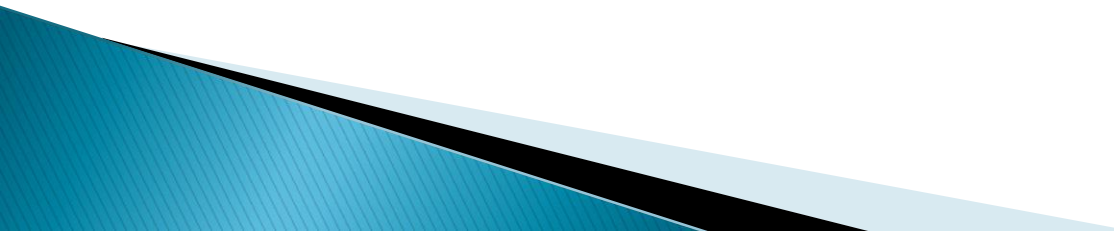
# 40 Ways to Say “I Love You” to a person living with dementia

## Acts of Service

- ▶ Look at them in the eye when they speak to you and you speak to them
  - ▶ Include them in the conversation even if they're not participating in it
  - ▶ Don't talk about them as if they're not present
  - ▶ Let them help you in the kitchen, around the house, or in whatever they want to contribute (do with not for)
  - ▶ Help them groom (makeup, shave, comb/brush hair, pick out clothes, get dressed)
  - ▶ Advocate for them
- 

# 40 Ways to Say “I Love You” to a person living with dementia

## Receiving Gifts

- ▶ Give them a piece of candy, ice cream, cookie, cake, or whatever they love
  - ▶ Give them a surprise package to open
  - ▶ Send or give them a card, open it with them and read it out loud
  - ▶ Give them an iPod loaded with music from their teen and young adult years
  - ▶ Be generous with the gift of your time
- 

# Love and Music



henry alive inside



(ORIGINAL) ALIVE INSIDE clip of HENRY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hlm0Qd4mP-I>

# Keeping Love Alive Using the 5 Love Languages



# Case Study: The Delusion of Infidelity

## Acknowledge, Affirm, and Redirect

I don't know, I've never seen him before.

Why, he's a perfect stranger.

**WHY, OF COURSE I'M NOT, HOW DARE YOU!**




Who was that man that just walked by?

It sure seemed like he knew you to me.

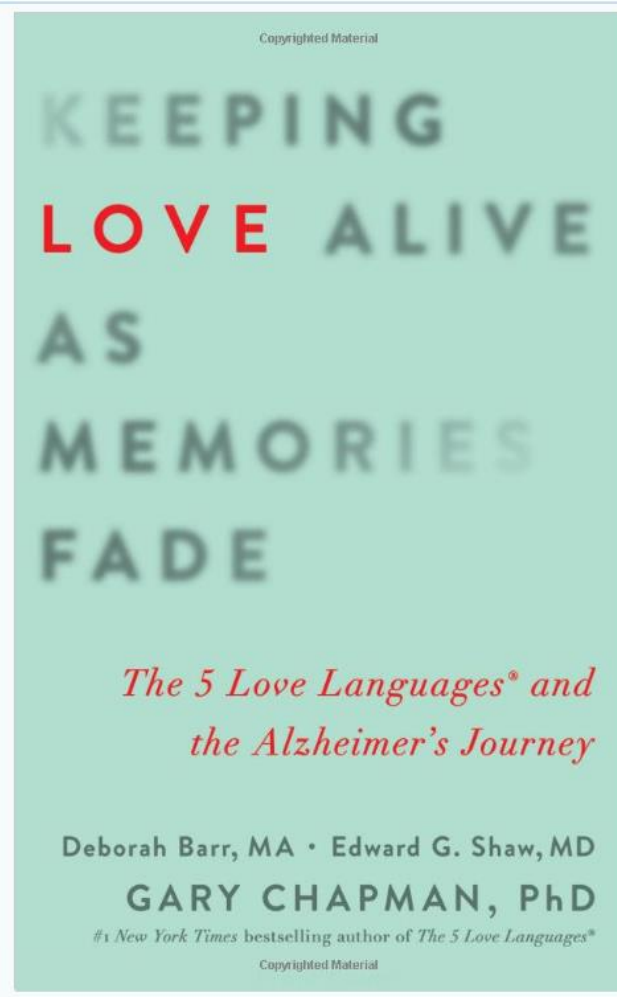
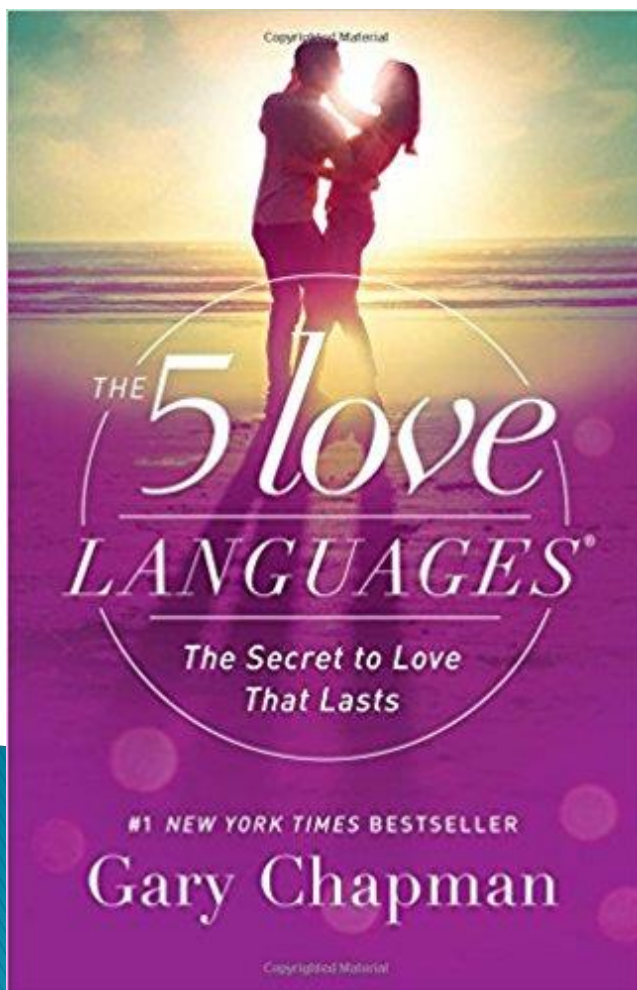
**YOU'RE SLEEPING WITH HIM, AREN'T YOU?**

# Affirm, Acknowledge, and Redirect

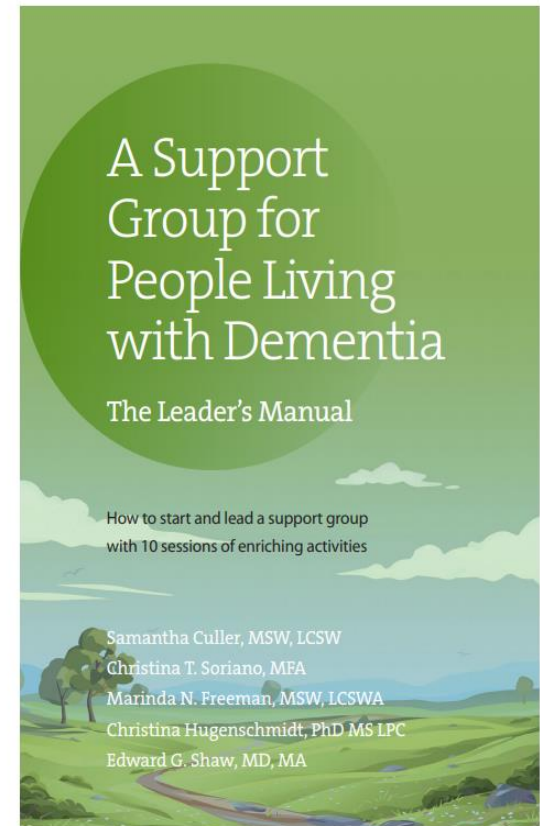
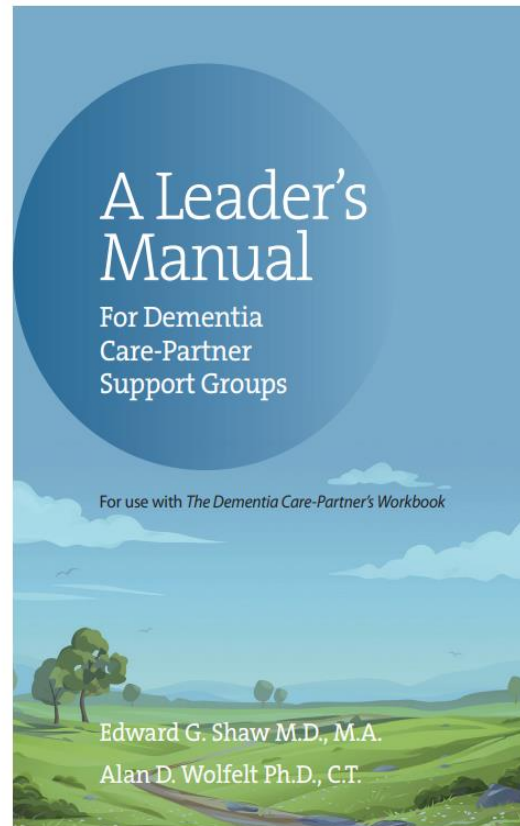
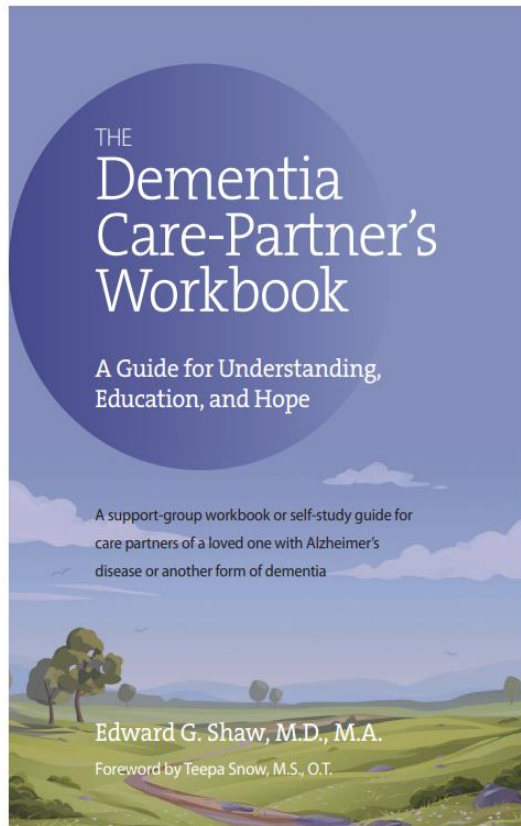
- ▶ Easier said than done
  - ▶ He's not responding this way on purpose
  - ▶ Stay calm and keep the drama level down
  - ▶ Don't take it personally
  - ▶ The battle (and the victory) is in your mind
  - ▶ ***Acknowledge*** what happened rather than ignoring it
  - ▶ ***Affirm*** your love, confirm your relationship, reinforce your attachment to them using ***the 5 love languages*** ... help them feel loved, safe, and secure
  - ▶ ***Redirect*** their attention
  - ▶ You can only do the best you can do and not better (you're only human) ... you'll do better next time!
- 

# Resources: Dr. Chapman

[www.5lovelanguages.com](http://www.5lovelanguages.com)



# Resources: Dr. Shaw



Available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)  
E-mail: [drshaw@empatheducation.com](mailto:drshaw@empatheducation.com)

