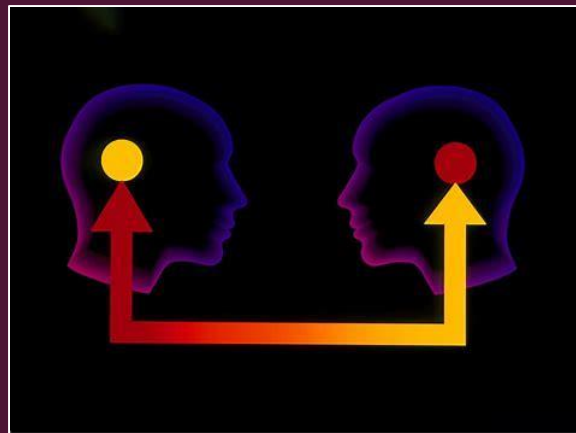

WHAT REMAINS UNCHANGED: USING THE PRINCIPLES OF VALIDATION TO GUIDE COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



A TALK BY DENISE FLOWERDAY

CERTIFIED VALIDATION TEACHER/CERTIFIED PAC
TRAINER/DEMENTIA COACH

WHAT IS VALIDATION?

- It is a set of principles that support an empathetic attitude
- It is a set of techniques that encourage communication between two people
- First and foremost Validation is an attitude
- The three pillars of Validation are respect, empathy and honesty



TO VALIDATE A PERSON IS TO.....

- To affirm and recognize someone for what they have done, who they are, and what they think
- To acknowledge that what a person thinks, feels, needs and experiences is real

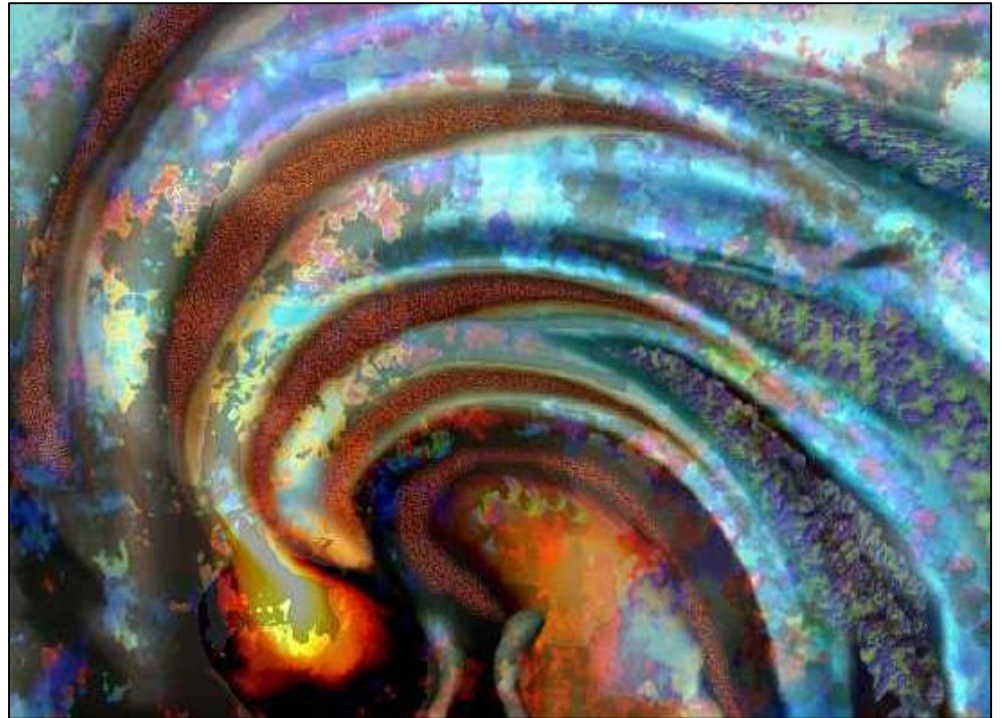


OUR GOALS FOR TODAY

- Introduction to Validation
- Learn 5 of 11 Validation Principles
- Consider what aspects of being human remain unchanged in a person living with dementia
- Explore the importance of handling our own stuff so that we can grow in our own capacity for empathy
- Be introduced to non-verbal communication techniques of Validation
- Be introduced to verbal communication techniques of Validation

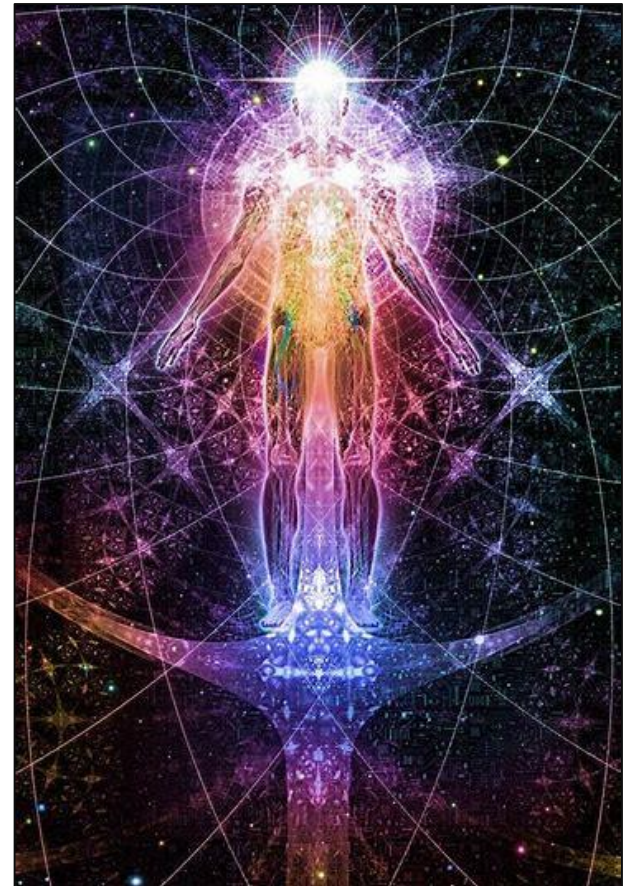
VALIDATION PRINCIPLE

**People with dementia live
on several levels of
awareness, often at the
same time**



WHAT DOES THIS PRINCIPLE TEACH US?

- A woman with dementia at a conference said that her sensitivity is heightened as her disease progresses.
- It is not really surprising if you think about how constant noise and addiction to language blocks our connection to the fundamental energy of things.
- Understand that people with dementia can detect nuance in your attitude towards them.
- Time confused people can be both in the present and in the past at the same time.
- As validators that means that we never lie to people with dementia because we know that on some level they know what is the truth.
- We should not harbor private judgements about this person while offering care with a smile on our face.



VALIDATION PRINCIPLE



Personal symbols used by people with dementia are people or things in present time, that represent people, things or concepts from the past that are laden with emotion.

THINK ABOUT THIS

**What are nearly all people doing in the years approaching
end of life?**



- Reviewing their life and taking inventory
- Revisiting unresolved feelings or events
- Seeking to make sense of them
- Seeking resolution

so that they can die in peace

Fred Story

ESPECIALLY IN PEOPLE WITH PTS

**what might seem like a
byproduct of dementia
may actually be a
predictable human
response to the situation
perceived.**



WHAT DOES THIS PRINCIPLE TEACH US?

- Recognize that all human beings use symbols. Because they are human, people with dementia do too.
- The difference is that we can understand our symbols in terms of metaphor.
- People with dementia lose the ability to interpret the 'as if'.
- Especially for time confused people, symbol becomes real.
- Any sort of disrespectful interruption or interaction with the symbol can bring unpleasant results.

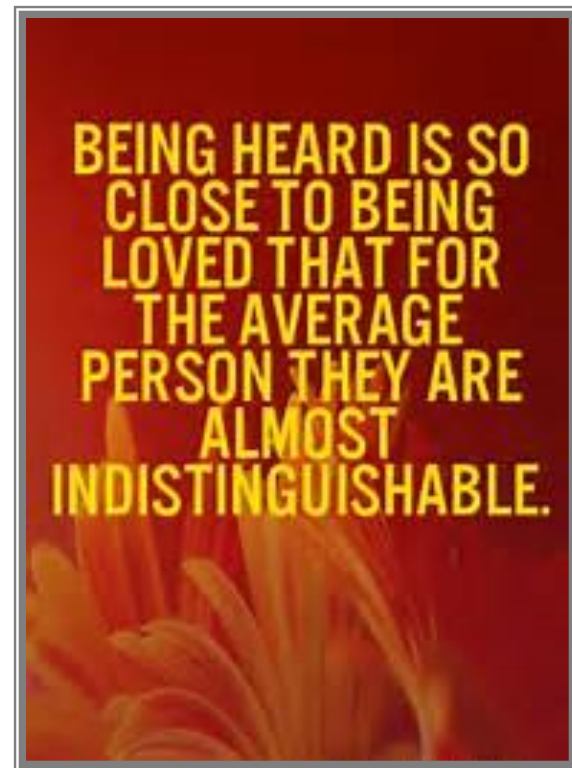
SOME POSSIBLE SYMBOLS USED BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA IN LONG TERM CARE

- A purse could = identity
- A drawer full of food could = safety or home
- An administrator could = a father/mother or a boss
- A caregiver could = a son or daughter or an old friend
- A chair could = a husband
- Rocking movement could=motherhood, mother, safety or joy
- Folding laundry could = motherhood
- Napkins could = important papers



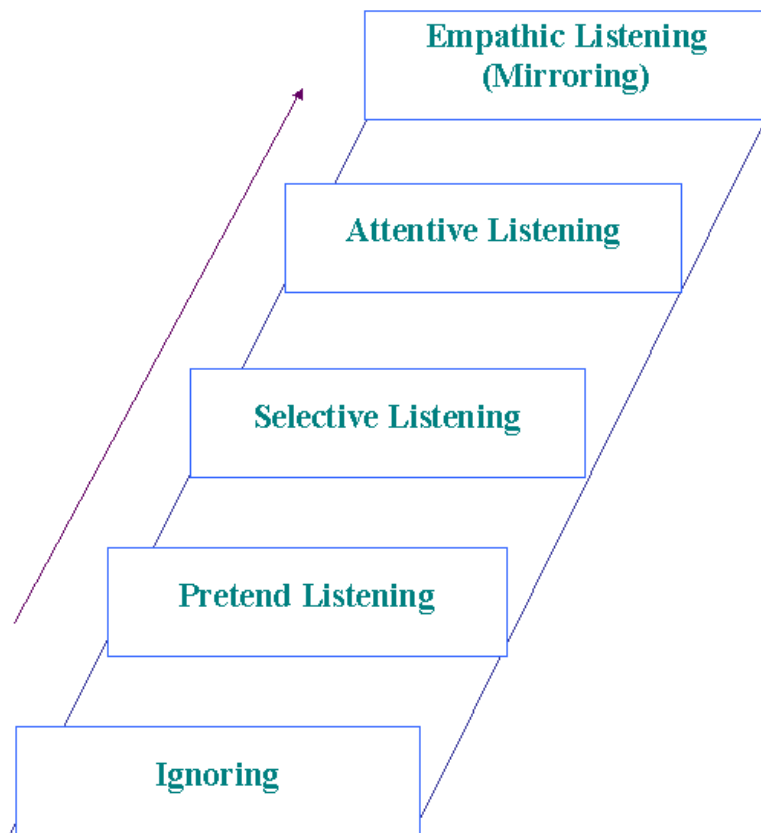
VALIDATION PRINCIPLE

Listening with empathy builds trust, reduces anxiety and restores dignity





Levels of Listening



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DO NOT FEEL LISTENED TO?



BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE



Center yourself

- Be conscious about leaving your judgements and agenda out of it
- Take a few deep breaths
- Bring yourself into focus completely on the person you are caring for

SOME NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO SUPPORT EMPATHETIC LISTENING AND CONNECTION

- Always Center yourself first
- Observe the energy of the person before approaching
- Calibrate your own energy to that person before approaching
- Establish Eye Contact
- Mirroring
- If it feel right....touch

How We Communicate

Verbal

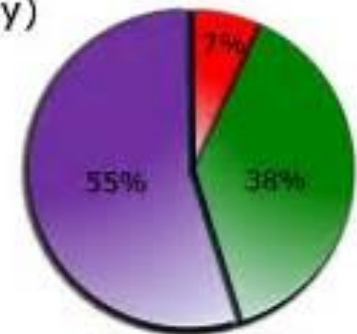
Words - (What we say)

Para-verbal

Tone (How we say it)

Non-verbal

Our Expressions and actions



Validation Principle

PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS THEY ARE: WE SHOULD NOT TRY TO CHANGE THEM



Theory: from Humanistic psychology (**Rogers**, Maslow, etc.): accept your client without judgment.

HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE GUIDE US?

- I think all of us know that reality orientation is not considered a best practice, and we have already covered the perils of telling small lies that may feel helpful in the moment
- Respect the person's reality, without judgement.
- We understand that their reality is their reality: they are not choosing their reaction to anything
- As validating caregivers, friends and loved ones, our goal is to become their trusted listener. We do not argue with their experience or their reality, we don't just put up with it from the outside, we join the person where they are in the moment. (empathy)

WHAT IF THE PERSON IS SUPER ANGRY OR EMOTIONAL ABOUT SOMETHING?

- We do not try to change the person's behavior, we accept it.
- We do not make them wrong for feeling what they do.
- We do not try to talk them out of feeling like they do.
- We try to help the individual fulfill the needs that are being expressed.

Freud said: cannot give insight or change behavior of a person who does not have the cognitive capacity for insight.

HOW TO APPLY THIS PRINCIPLE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PERSON

- Empathize with the emotion being expressed, not with the 'truth of the facts'. (don't be a fixer)
- Be genuinely interested and focused on what this person is telling you
- Try to hear the subtext and related it to the need they are expressing
- Imagine how you would feel in their perceived reality
- Give them what you would need in that situation



VALIDATION PRINCIPLE

There is a reason behind the behavior of people with living with dementia.



WHAT LOSSES MAY PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA BE EXPERIENCING

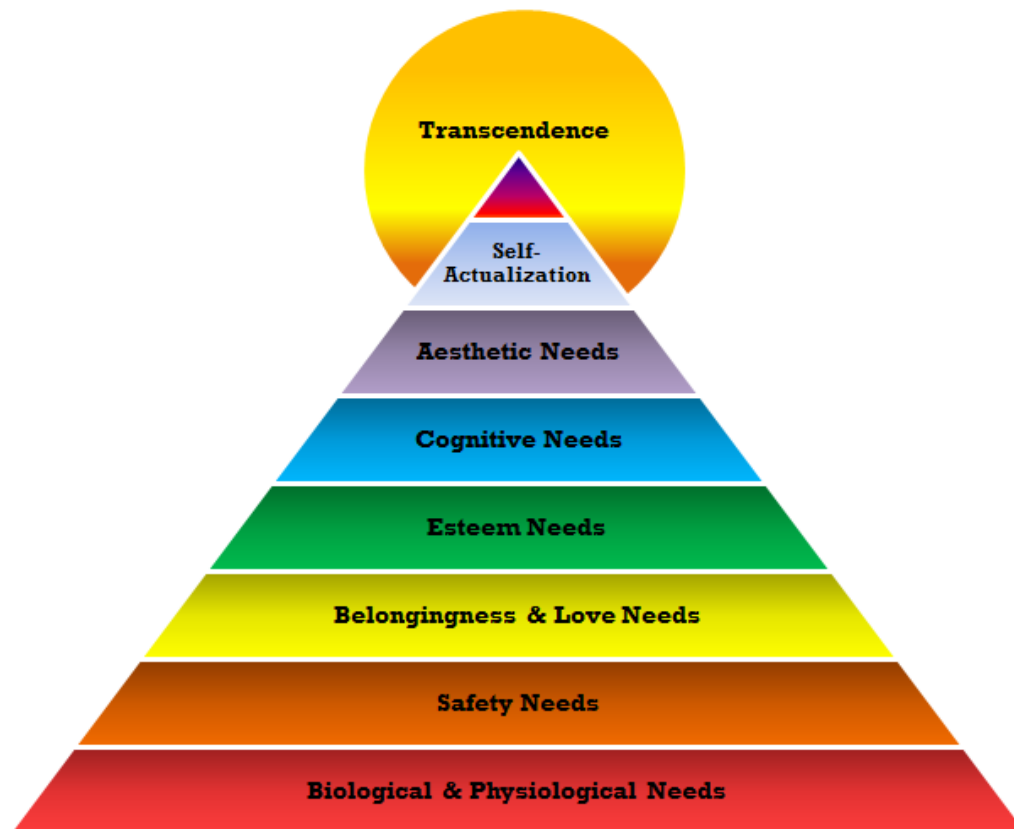
- Home/their place in the family
- Jobs/place in the world
- Identity
- Communication abilities
- Friends
- Autonomy
- pets
- Privacy
- Physical health
- Memories
- Purpose
- Social status
- identity

POSSIBLE LOSS OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Amnesia=cognitive
- Apraxia= motor function
- Agnosia- ability to interpret the 5 senses. Sometimes touch feels like daggers
- Aphasia= Verbal
- Hearing, eyesight



What they have not lost, is their human predicament which comes with this set of needs



Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs Pyramid

TO REVIEW.....

- People with dementia have their own wisdom and experience.
- People with dementia are in exactly the same experiential process of being human that you are.
- Like all people, people living with dementia need someone they can trust.
- A person with an empathetic listener will likely feel safe and motivated to increase his/her verbal and nonverbal communication and engagement with the world.
- The Validator understands that the person is expressing a need of some sort.
- We use Validating communication to help us learn what they might need.
- We use Validating communication to help them explore their feelings so that they can become resolved.

TO REVIEW CONTINUED...

- Non Verbal Techniques
- Centering
- Observing
- Calibrating
- Mirroring
- Listening
- Touch
- Anchored Touch




REVIEW CONTINUED: VERBAL TECHNIQUES

- Center yourself. Observe, Calibrate, Eye Contact, Mirroring, Touch
- Use Open Questions: “who, what, where, when, how” questions – never “why”.
- Re-phrase with emotion
- Extreme, Polarity,
- Imagining the Opposite



REMEMBER! OUR BEST PRACTICE IS ALWAYS TO:





I am more than just a senior care giver. I am a person who cares for other people. I provide compassionate care and companionship for senior adults who need it the most. I spend quality time with older people who are confused, disoriented and have impairments

I don't call such individuals 'demented' or 'Alzheimer's patients' or 'senile.' I call them by their names; that's what I do. I look closely into their eyes and listen to their voices; that's what I do. I touch their hearts with my heart; that's what I do.

I listen for their present emotions and for glimpses into their past. I ask questions to learn and build rapport. I enter their world and earn their trust, so that they can connect with another human being, express their emotions and needs, and restore their dignity.

In a society that ignores and bores its elders, I am turning the tide. I validate, that's what I do.