



美國華聯商會

Peninsula Chinese Business Association

50 Victoria Avenue Suite #208, Millbrae, CA 94030

November 1, 2021

Dear Members and Friends,

"An elderly couple, both 89 years old, met when they were teenagers. Over the years, the husband accompanied his wife everywhere they went and never left her alone. That is because everywhere they went, everything was new and strange to her. Five years ago, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She no longer worries if he leaves her alone because she doesn't remember where she's at or realize what's new. She doesn't recognize all of her grandchildren and the children that she does not see very often.

One of the most significant changes for the husband is the role reversal. He must take on work that his wife used to do like household chores or preparing food. He also needs to help her choose clothes, take medication on time, exercise her brain, ensure she bathes correctly, and much more. He constantly tells her stories about their children, successes, and their happiest moments and regrets, all in hopes that she can recall one or two things. But the response is always the same. She sighs heavily at him and tries to steady her mind. When each story ends, he gives her a smile and hopes for better luck next time. Why does he keep doing it? Because he is scared that one day, she may not remember him. No matter what happens, he knows who she is, and she is the love of his life."

It is a true story, and the couple is my parents.

Alzheimer's is very different from cancer. One way to view it is that while cancer causes the patient to suffer, Alzheimer's wreaks havoc on the patient's loved ones.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, over 16,000 Californians died from Alzheimer's disease in 2019, the highest in the nation. The condition is the third leading cause of death in the state. Currently, 650,000 California seniors live with Alzheimer's, and this figure is expected to increase 29% by 2025. The CDC states that the number of seniors who have Alzheimer's and other dementias will reach almost 14 million nationwide by 2060.



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The disease is a silent killer that tortures the patient and their family. Looking at the bright side, it gives one relief for the patient which is that it takes away all the bad memories. My mother went through long, difficult experiences and had difficulty letting go of those memories. Today, her mind is empty because Alzheimer's took away her ability to recall those events.

Before, I thought no one could take away my knowledge and memories because I own them forever. But that is not true. They can leave me at any time without my permission. And if I lose my memory, I will be losing a primary part of me. Today, my philosophy on how I define value is different. I appreciate every day that I have with people and things I care about, and I take life one day at a time.

Please pass along your knowledge and experiences to the people you care about. Pray when you have bad memories, praise the good ones, and celebrate them with others. Life can unexpectedly change, but we don't know when. When it does, it will likely never be the same as it was.

Have a wonderful day,

Johnny DaRosa

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致：美國華聯商會會員及朋友們，

請讓我在此和大家說說故事：一對老夫婦，相識於少年時代，今年，他們同樣都是 89 歲。這些年來，丈夫走到哪裡都攜著妻子，每到一處，對妻子而言都是既新鮮又陌生。所以，丈夫分秒都會陪伴在側。但在 5 年前，這種甜蜜常態有所改變……因為妻子被診斷患上阿茲海默症。她漸漸已不擔心丈夫是否有陪伴，因她已忘記了自己身在何處，也對周遭的新舊事物失卻認知，她甚至忘記了她的孫兒們，還有那些不常相見的兒女。

丈夫在妻子患病後，便成了她的照護者。除了負責以往妻子的一般家務及煮食，還需要安排她準時服藥、幫忙她洗澡、替她選衣服，以及一切生活上的瑣碎事……她已漸漸失卻照顧自己的能力，失卻生活質素及樂趣，她現在只是尋求最基本的生存。

身體的苦總不及內心的苦，丈夫每天都耐心幫助她鍛鍊大腦，希望可以延緩病情。他堅持每天都給她訴說兒女、孫子們的故事，不論是他們的成功、幸福或是遺憾，都重複說了一遍又一遍。丈夫只希望能令她記起一些事，縱是零零碎碎的也好。無奈，每次妻子的反應都是一樣，她對著丈夫只是深深的嘆氣，然後努力令自己的心情平伏下來。她已不能掌控自己的腦部思想，阿茲海默症，正在剝奪屬於她的權利。丈夫對於妻子的反應，感到很痛心，但仍然會給她一個微笑，並希望明天會得到上天的眷顧，令她恢復一些記憶。

丈夫堅持每天給她說親人的故事，因為他深怕有一天，她連自己也忘記了。夫妻倆人感情深厚，多年的甜，縱有酸，就此一筆勾消，如同陌生人，實在捨不得。儘管如此，丈夫都自我安慰：「至少我還記得她，她是我的一生摯愛。」

這是一個真實故事，老夫婦是我的父母。

如果將阿茲海默症與癌症相比，兩者的病患、家人同樣受苦。但阿茲海默症對病患的親人及愛人來說，也就更具殺傷力。

根據阿茲海默症協會的數據；2019 年，加州有超過 16,000 人死於阿茲海默症，數字是全美最高，亦是加州第三大死亡原因。目前，加州有 65 萬名老年人患有阿茲海默症，並預計到 2025 年，此數字將增加 29%。CDC（美國疾病控制與預防中心）表示，至 2060 年，全國老年人患上阿茲海默症及其他腦部退化症人數，將達至 1400 萬。



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阿茲海默症，是折磨患者及其家人的無聲殺手。如果硬要找它的好處，也可以說成它給予患者最後的解脫，就是失去所有的記憶。我的母親曾有漫長而艱辛的經歷，她對這些憾事始終未能釋懷，被折磨了大半生，苦不堪言。今天，阿茲海默症已令她的腦部空白一片，以往的種種遺憾與痛苦，最終可以忘記得一乾二淨。

母親的遭遇，改變了我對「人生價值」的哲學。從前，我會認為我的知識及記憶可以永久保存，但事實證明並非如此。它們可以未經我批准或同意，就可以溜走。如果我失去記憶，就是毀了我的大半生。今天，我將「人生價值」重新定義：「我感恩每天都有我所關心的人和事在身邊，我要活好每一天。」

請將你的知識、經驗與你關心的人分享。當有不快的回憶，請祈禱。遇上美好的事物就要讚美及與他人慶祝。人生禍福難料，縱是平常日子，都值得珍惜、細味每一天。

祝大家有美好的一天

美國華聯商會 會長，

Johnny DaRosa

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二零二一年十一月一日

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