

***A Who has a What.***

***Will the What overcome the Who?***

***Will the Who emerge through the What?***

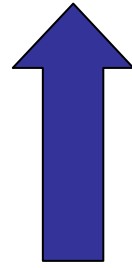
***Or will the two combine in a way that embraces and transcends the Condition?***

# ***What is personhood?***

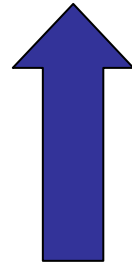
***A standing or status which is bestowed on one human being, by others, in the context of relationship and social being. It implies recognition, respect and trust.***

***Tom Kitwood (1997)***

**being a *person***



**relationships**



**communication**

***Once you've got Alzheimer's, you're branded. That was terrible. It still is terrible. I can't come to grips with that at all. It is so frustrating. Because I have Alzheimer's, what I say is irrelevant: nobody will listen***

***Les (quoted by Jane Crisp, 1995)***

**Mum**

**On the way to the airport**

**We stopped for a coffee in a hotel lounge**

**Mum looked dishevelled**

**A man kept staring over at her**

**She turned to me and said**

***you'd think he'd never seen a person in his life***

**Small, Froggatt & Downs (2007: 113)**

*seventeen months before she died  
my mother told us that she felt her  
'top layer' had been 'stripped'. I am  
her only child. After a lifetime of  
barriers and difference between us,  
we found one another. My mother  
used a new language to describe her  
experience. I was learning new  
ways of being and listening and to be  
unattached to assumptions.*

**Anthea McKinlay (1998)**

*intimacy that is hard to describe, an intimacy that makes me think of companionship differently because Amy does not know my name and has never asked. We sit and simply take up talking, wherever and whenever we are. Talking with Amy who 'exhibits no orientation to reality' is a wonderful experience in which we are always in the present, and the present could be anything we choose to create between us.*

***in communion with Reg, my beloved soulmate, I have grown in stature and spiritual independence. Our cherished interdependence has provided the companionship in which we can both increase the depth of our inner knowledge and experience.***

**Beth Shirley Brough (1998)**

***We're a nice little two-lot, you and I.  
I like us being with us.***

**woman with dementia to John Killick  
quoted in Killick & Allan (2001)**

***When you cannot get into contact with the patient you feel insufficient without hope, dissatisfied or burnt out. Care seems meaningless. You lose your commitment.***

***Ekman et al (1991)***



**Touch**



**Gesture**



**Posture & movement**



**Proximity & orientation**



**Facial expression**



**Eye contact & gaze**



**Voice – tone, volume, pitch, rate**



**Use of space**



**Use of objects**



**Presentation of self – dress, smell,**

***I just know by people's face, the way they look, the way they smile... that's the way I know people.***

**woman with dementia  
from study conducted by Allan (2001)**

*visit walking through a ward when an old lady stretched out her hands, took mine and started turning them, over and over as if she were washing them.*

*This went on until I must have begun to loosen my fingers and withdraw them for then she pulled them closer to hers and went on with her ringing movement.*

*Finally she let my hands fall, gently murmuring "Thank you... that's enough". Whatever it was that I had given her, I knew I couldn't have given it to her any other way.*

# Language



**Sounds**



**Words**



**Phrases/sentences**

**Changes can appear at all levels.**

*more widely known. You cannot imagine the acrobatics your tongue mechanically performs in order to produce the sounds of a language.*

...

*On my birthday Sandrine managed to get me to pronounce the whole alphabet more or less intelligibly. I could not have had a better present. It was as if those twenty-six letters had been wrenched from the void, my own hoarse voice seemed to emanate from a far-off country. The exhausting exercise left me feeling like a caveman discovering language for the first time.*

***When you strip us right down, when illness pares us to our core, we remain creatures of the word.***

***Nothing can save us but the word, the messages we send from deep in the shaft of sickness.***

**Michael Ignatieff (1994)**

***Finding a voice means that you can  
get your own feeling into your own  
words, and that your words have the  
feeling of you about them.***

**Seamus Heaney (1980)**

***I didn't know if you would understand,  
with you living on the other side.***

**woman with dementia to John Killi**

***You and I, John, we speak the same  
language. Only you speak it straight and  
I speak it upside down!***

**woman with dementia to John Killic**

***I'm blethering. I don't usually do that but  
it's all from beneath the surface.***

**woman with dementia to John Killic**

*Bobby was bigger than me.  
And when I got it, I got  
a right good whack from this bloke.  
He just ladled into me,  
and I couldn't stotter, I was  
lying in the playground. Biff!  
Bobby was going to get a doing.  
And I administered it.  
If you steam into me: Stars.  
I cloaked myself in my self  
And that was good for me.  
I got that from him.  
I had my dose  
And Bobby had his dose.  
Big Al's bigger than me too,  
but I'm not going  
to lie down under his blows.  
He's in there. I can still*

***Thus while one may be horrified by the ravages of developmental disorder or disease, one may see them as creative too - for if they destroy particular paths, particular ways of doing things, they may force the nervous system into ... an unexpected growth and evolution. This other side of development or disease is something I see, potentially, in almost every patient.***

**Oliver Sacks (1995)**

***Dementia strips people down to the essence of their being and frees them to be in more direct touch with their emotions. They communicate with greater authenticity than our customary conventional reliance on controlled emotional expression.***

**Faith Gibson (1998)**

***hard now and this is so easy!***

**woman with dementia talking  
about her experience of painting  
quoted by Jenny & Oropeza (1993)**

***I hope that when you have finished looking  
through the book you take a picture away  
with you. Not one which is in the book but  
rather an image that a person with dementia  
can still be valued and creative and not  
trapped within their condition. I trust that  
I have opened your eyes and shown that a  
person with dementia can relearn forgotten  
skills, as well as learn new ones.***

**James McKillop (2003)**

***Playing this instrument it really responds to me. I feel I fit in so beautifully. I feel I'm being drawn into another world. It's not just playing, there's part of yourself in that.***

**person with dementia  
quoted by Maria Mullan (2005)**

***A sense of humour is probably the most important valuable thing you can have when you have Alzheimer's.***

**Cary Smith Henderson  
(1998)**

**(man with young onset dementia)**

***I roar with laughing at people, and they laugh at me. But I don't know any jokes. It's all home-made humour. If it fits I say the phrase. Sparsmodic. I can laugh and like it.***

# ***Can we risk person-centred communication?***

***We must employ whatever power we have in the world of dementia care for this purpose. We must use our present knowledge, our skills and feelings, to communicate. We are morally obliged to continue working in extending our limited understanding, developing our embryonic skills, and taming our deep anxieties.***

**Faith Gibson (2001)**

*We have been on a wonderful journey,  
you and I. What fun we've had, laughing and  
singing. Holding a rainbow in our hands.*

**woman with dementia  
quoted by Claire Craig (2004)**