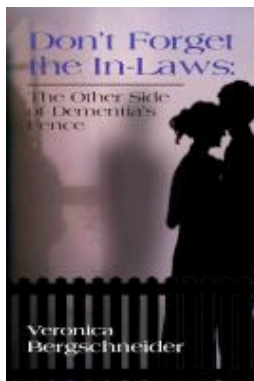


Don't Forget the In-Laws:

The Other Side
of Dementia's
Fence

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman in silhouette, embracing. They are positioned behind a dark, vertical-slatted fence that runs across the bottom of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light, possibly a window or a bright outdoor area. The overall mood is intimate and contemplative.

Veronica
Bergschneider



A diagnosis of dementia does not have to tear apart a family. ***Don't Forget the In-Laws: The Other Side of Dementia's Fence*** describes how a dementia patient's in-law experiences the grieving cycle. In it, author Veronica Bergschneider seeks to use her essays about that topic and questions it raises to discuss a challenge many face. She then enlightens readers on means she has employed in helping herself and her family to educate others on the subject.

Don't Forget the In-Laws

The Other Side of Dementia's Fence

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7719.html?s=pdf)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7719.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

Your free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

Don't Forget the In-Laws:

The Other Side of Dementia's Fence

Veronica Bergschneider

Copyright © 2014 Veronica Bergschneider

ISBN 978-1-63263-376-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2014

First Edition

Foreword

Neurological afflictions such as Alzheimer Disease and dementia affect not only the patient diagnosed with the condition, but the entire family. This includes the patient's children, grandchildren, and even his or her in-laws. In this last instance, however, the person seeking information for one in his or her part of the story tends to have difficulty finding and applying it to life. Many websites, such as the Alzheimer Association's <http://www.alz.org> and books like *The 36 Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People Who Have Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementias and Memory Loss* by Nancy Mace and Peter Rabins offer help to families, but focus their attention on sons, daughters, and caregivers of the patients, while Maria Shriver's *What's Happening to Grandpa?* and *The Memory Box* by Mary Bahr and David Cunningham help parents of young children explain to them what is happening with the patient. Other than using these and trying to apply the information to the whole family, what can the patient's in-law do to help everyone sufficiently while maintaining his or her own sanity? I have written *Don't Forget the In-Laws: The Other Side of Dementia's Fence* in an attempt to help bridge this gap, showing that the grieving process and other questions we have need not be faced alone or only as the family's emotional supporter, as I make suggestions on how we may cope with our own grief and other feelings as the in-laws of those on the slippery slope of dementia. Naturally, different suggestions will apply to different people, depending upon how large a support network exists or how introverted one may be. This book comes from my own experiences with and observations of the entire family in dealing with dementia and its fallout, in a style using past tense in my personal story and present for emotions and situations still happening as well as take away ideas to

Don't Forget the In-laws

hopefully help you relate to and learn from what I have felt and gone through.

The Grieving Cycle and Questions It Causes

Questions, Grief, and Alzheimer Disease: One In-Law's Take

By the time my mother in-law's diagnosis came down, I had heard of Alzheimer Disease. My own paternal grandmother had died of complications from it, although that happened when I was 27 and away from home. Coverage of the condition in the media through the years also provided information, but with so much out there, I couldn't internalize most of what I heard. I never expected the diagnosis and its results to affect me as much as they have through my mother in-law having contracted the condition. Once we heard the news, I read every piece of information I could find, but being as we're also the parents of two young children and have busy lives otherwise, no amount of information could still my mind.

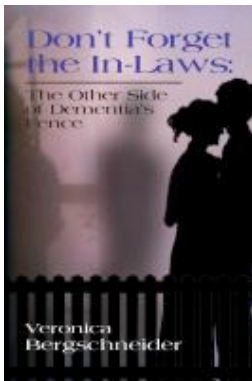
As I got into reading all of the things people recommended I read, I quickly realized they were targeted toward other audiences. Many items exist for the spouses, children, and even grandchildren of Alzheimer patients. Many others talk to those who give direct care for the patients. At first, I did help with taking her to doctor appointments, to church, and on errands. However, as the disease progressed and she forgot who I was, I began to seek out ways to stay in the background while coping and helping others cope with the losses happening at the time.

With the birth of our second daughter about a year after the diagnosis, life got busier and new priorities had to be made. As my priorities shifted, I began looking for books and articles targeted more for me. Coming up empty on that front combined with my desire to help my husband manage his mother although her concerns take up a lot of his time led me to create my own ways to cope.

I began talking with others in the church and online who have relatives afflicted by Alzheimer Disease and other dementia related conditions. At the same time, I started a list in my computer of the various emotions being in the situation puts me through. I had thought at the time I started the list that being as I am a writer, it might be enough to get me through, but I am far from the truth on that.

A lot of the time, I feel alone in my ordeal, even now with her in assisted living. The online “community” I tried connecting with through the Alzheimer’s Association helped at first. Eventually, I realized even they are mostly folks who have a spouse, parent, or grandparent with the condition. It has stressed me out knowing that even my children can get information in the form of books and articles aimed at those under twelve years old who have relatives with dementia. I’ve been pouring all of the time I am not either raising my girls or writing about many topics into helping my husband collect information he can use in managing his mother.

I tried in the time before she entered assisted living to take her out to church and on errands on occasion, but even on the rare good day where she recognized me and the girls, the answer was “no.” I took this as a sign that it was time for me to assist my husband with her from the background. I wrote her doctor a letter and sent along the list of some crazy stories she had told me such as the ones about my husband and me having split up when we at the time were happily married after 13 years and my best friend, who is not someone who to my knowledge would have done such a thing having been a county bus driver, but was ignored even when my husband took her for the doctor visit. I often wonder whether the doctor cares about her day to day self or only the presentation she makes during appointments, which with my luck would run similarly to when a person takes a dysfunctional car to the mechanic and it starts acting the way it should, only to revert back after the appointment to what it did beforehand.



*A diagnosis of dementia does not have to tear apart a family. **Don't Forget the In-Laws: The Other Side of Dementia's Fence** describes how a dementia patient's in-law experiences the grieving cycle. In it, author Veronica Bergschneider seeks to use her essays about that topic and questions it raises to discuss a challenge many face. She then enlightens readers on means she has employed in helping herself and her family to educate others on the subject.*

Don't Forget the In-Laws

The Other Side of Dementia's Fence

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7719.html?s=pdf)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7719.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**