



## **August 2021 - #6 Having purpose.**

Tips for supporting a person with dementia through COVID-19 pandemic

**Dementia Advisors are available for advice and support (or a chat) by phone and email**

Contact: local dementia advisor or

Email: [admin@dementiawellington.org.nz](mailto:admin@dementiawellington.org.nz)

Check **Dementia Wellington's Website** and **Facebook**

Website: [www.dementiawellington.org.nz](http://www.dementiawellington.org.nz)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/dementiawellington](http://www.facebook.com/dementiawellington)

**Having purpose to our day can be a challenge for many of us at this Covid-19 time. How much harder might it be for people living with dementia? In this issue we share tips for supporting a person with dementia to have purpose and feel valued - with real life examples from our clients**

Feeling valued and having a sense of contribution can be derived from an experience in the past as much as in the here and now. A conversation about a purposeful past event, activity

or meaningful contribution may be really affirming at this time. Yet another good reason to reminisce and sort photos...

### **Fran a friend of Craig, who lives with dementia**

Craig told me on Zoom he had been busy cleaning the fridge - he said he took everything out and wiped it all down. We laughed together about how hard it was to get all the things back in the right place afterwards - he had an extra shelf that he could not fit in. He said he hid it under the bed. We did laugh together about that. He was pleased he had done the job. Who cares about the shelf under the bed?

He also enjoys watching the daily street activity out his window and said that his neighbour always waves and calls out hi when he sees Craig. And other neighbours have stopped for a chat through the window too. This makes Craig feel like he is part of the world. He must like this as he chose to tell me he is greeted by his neighbours when they see him sitting at the window. And he knows this also pleases his neighbours, so it is two-way. He gets pleasure and value from that.

In our Zoom calls I try to make sure Craig does most of the talking, just adding prompts and fillers as needed. I go with the flow and follow his lead. We end up sometimes in some delightfully funny places. And sometimes in some thoughtful places. I often thank him for giving me things to think about or for making the time so much fun.

### **Ian, “the odd job man”**

Because of my condition/ dementia, I don't feel motivated, so in the morning when my wife asks, what would you like to do today, I answer nothing. Then my wife goes to the list we made together of jobs that need doing and says well this job is still on the list. My wife and I are now adding to list, so that we can continue to use it as a motivator.

### **John (supporter)**

Monday-house cleaning. The “Wet” i.e., all aspects involving “soap” and water, mops, rags.

“Other day”-the “dry”-dusting and vac. cleaning (the latter is known as “Zipping on the Doo Dah”). To be honest “dusting” rather overstates the case.

Mild cognitive impairment is a prerequisite for those amongst the “Chosen” to perform the above mentioned “honours”.

### **John, “personal trainer”**

Judith (supporter) knows it’s important to get daily exercise but is missing her aqua fit classes, her husband John (has dementia) reminds her to go for a walk and ensures she maintains a good pace. She calls him her personal trainer.

### **Fred and his wife Yvonne**

While out walking we count the teds in the windows and look for interesting things to take photos of to send to the YODAT community. (*Younger Onset Dementia Aotearoa Trust*) This means we are becoming more familiar with our local community.

Fred has had several conversations with his family throughout NZ preferring to use the telephone rather than any of the face to face options.

Fred is able to do DIY around the house so with the extra time around home he has completed some of the jobs that have been on the ‘to do’ list for a while. Still a couple left for the next week or two.

**A big thank you to our contributors this week, who have showed how it is possible to bring purpose to everyday activities**

The New Zealand Government’s website for information regarding COVID-19 [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

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