

Loss of communication skills

One of the many problems I now encounter with my condition is the loss of my communication skills which from what I understand is not unusual for people who have this illness and also a problem that can occur at any stage within the illness... I know that when I was first diagnosed now over eight years ago one of the many factors then was my diminishing **“verbal”** communication skills, which since then has got progressively worse... quite often I know what I want to say, but the words just get lost in a vortex of perplexity and the moment I try to speak it all comes out as incomprehensible gobbledygook... what I notice is that this effects me far, far more when I'm over tired and especially at the end of the day when I start Sundowning... then I start stuttering and mumbling over words, and to try and make even the simplest of replies like “YES” to my dear wife comes out as (Ye, ye, ye, ye, ye, ye, ye, ye... Yes) which then drives me into utter frustration and quiet often verbal abuse and tears (At myself... and loss of ability)

So yes it is extremely frustrating and de-motivating for the sufferer, care giver and spouse... the reason I get so irritated and embarrassed by it is that part of my past profession as a Master Baker and Confectioner was to give public seminars and demonstrations to audiences of anything up to 1000 guests around Asia and the Middle East and at that time I could converse on technical matters related to my profession in four different languages... but now I can't even clearly communicate 'verbally' in my own Native English, yet the enigma of this illness is... that albeit slowly I can still type it down in English, but normally with a lot of spelling mistakes as not always does the computer spell check help...

Then there is also the bizarre problem whereby people with dementia can start substituting words when speaking, by saying things like... (Oh you know, that thing... what's its name... a thing-a-me-bob,) when my wife asks me what I want for breakfast it's not unusual for me to say (One of those things, and start flapping my arms) which she now realizes is I mean an Egg! Now a Tomato is, (A round red squishy thing) the list can be endless, and therein is another enigma that every sufferer seems to have their individual way of expressing things...

The important thing is to be patient with the person and do not try and answer for us by putting words into our mouth, as this only adds to more confusion and frustration in our brain, but you would be quite right in saying to us, just Slow down... take your time!

Thoughts by Barry Pankhurst

So please try to remember that for those of us with dementia this problem is extremely frustrating... which can then make us annoyed, and even more so if we realize what we're doing... as then the more we get annoyed and frustrated the worse it can become until total aggravation sends us into floods of tears... this could also be one of the reasons why so many dementia sufferers keep quiet as it becomes extremely embarrassing...

“Yes this illness covers us in a veil of miasma... Yet still within, the person you once knew... still abides...

Barry ©