

## **Nancy's Appeal - I give so we have a space of kindness and openness for people with dementia**

Hello! I'm Nancy, one of the Steering Committee members of the Reimagining Dementia Coalition with a mission to successfully advocate for people with dementia to live their lives better for longer, to lead by example showing there is hope and it begins within each of us. Any diagnosis leaves a title that defines us, maybe even holds us captive, and because I've never wanted to own an Alzheimer's condition; you'll only hear me say, "I've been *diagnosed* with it."

My confidence chips away by such challenges as forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, misplacing thoughts and even getting lost while driving on familiar streets. Yet something wonderful happened during this time, words came to me at night that helped explain my complex emotions. I wrote them down in poetry form and by 2014 wrote my first book *Blue. River. Apple.* named after the test where you must remember three objects. Here are a few of my favorite lines:

"Can you hear me?  
I have so much to tell you.  
I try to mask the imperfections - a dab of foundation, a blush of pink, dressed in clothes,  
jewelry and resolve.  
Daily though I have to make sense of where I am on the sliding scale of *Blue. River. Apple.*  
I want to be positive, I am productive, I am loving and beloved  
I am grateful, creative and alive  
Therefore, I am blessed with a voice to tell my inner story - *Blue. River. Apple.*"

The Coalition came into my life at a time when I was looking for the big picture. I had done a lot of grassroots work in my local community in Las Vegas, Nevada and was ready to share my insights and ideas nationally and internationally. On my very first panel discussion I was asked to do for the Coalition, I had a last minute challenge ... and simply forgot. I was a no-call, no-show for the event! I didn't know if I would be invited back. Yet, the kindness, openness and connection I found within the Coalition made me feel as though they had, and would always have, my back and it's okay to be who I am today! They keep inviting me back - and supporting me to lead. I am proud to share all that I have learned in life, and with the Coalition - not to mention sharing my poetry - with anyone and everyone who will listen.

Years before, when my Dad got dementia, I didn't know what I didn't know so of course I didn't handle it as well as I might have. I don't want anyone else to experience that. My Dad sits on my shoulder as a reminder that we cannot let fear (within someone diagnosed or a caregiver) get in the way of connecting with our loved ones every day, that's what it's all about.

If empowering others and creating a safe space for their expression is important to you too, please join me in financially supporting the Coalition today. You would be joining

people throughout the world to an inclusive community where they feel fully invited to share their unique gifts and personal experiences.

From my heart to yours, I appreciate your checking us out,

Nancy