

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

JUNE 2026



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COMMUNICATING WITH MY PARENTS, MARV AND ELIZABETH (BETTY) BOSSART

BY LIZ BOSSART MATHISON



Living through the experience of having both of my parents diagnosed with dementia and memory loss has taught me so much about a fundamental human action... communication. Different scholars have written about communication and its multifaceted nature. In reading about the different forms of communication, one definition in particular resonated with me as I wrote this article about my experience communicating with my parents: "The act of communicating is a transactional process in which individuals simultaneously send, receive, and interpret messages."

I will fully admit that it took time to learn how to communicate with my parents after noticing their cognitive changes, and I made many mistakes. I tried over and over to correct them, hoping they would "get it" or "get better". (Cont p. 6)

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

A few weeks ago, someone stopped me to share a story that has stayed close to my heart. They told me about their loved one who recently attended Memory Cafe for the very first time. Like so many individuals we meet, she was incredibly hesitant to come. There was fear, uncertainty, and worry about how others might view her because of the cognitive changes she was experiencing.

But something changed the moment she walked through our doors. After meeting just a few people and spending a little time in community, she shared that it felt like a weight had been completely lifted off her shoulders. For the first time in a long time, she felt safe. She felt understood. She felt like she could simply be herself without fear of judgment or needing to explain what she was going through.

I believe this is how many people feel after becoming part of Memory Cafe. Memory loss can often feel isolating, confusing, and heavy, not only for the individual experiencing cognitive changes, but also for the people who love and care for them. So many people carry fear of being misunderstood, excluded, or treated differently. That is why spaces like Memory Cafe matter so deeply.

At Memory Cafe, we believe every person deserves to feel welcomed, valued, connected, and seen for far more than a diagnosis. We believe in creating a place where people can laugh together, learn together, build friendships, and experience joy and belonging.

Every time someone walks through our doors and realizes they are not alone, it reminds us why this mission matters. If you are reading this and have felt hesitant about joining, or about bringing a loved one, I want to encourage you to walk through the doors at one of our programs.

My hope is that you will experience the same feeling she did: the relief of being welcomed into a place where you are understood, supported, and never alone.

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to recognize the intrinsic beauty and value of individuals living with memory loss while inspiring in them and their loved ones hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment.

The Sacred Disruption Reimagining Faith,
Mystery, and Belonging

May you walk your path with open hands,
no longer needing all the answers.

May you find beauty in the questions,
and courage in the not-yet.

May you trust in the journey
outgrow your need for certainty.

And may the Spirit who meets you in mystery
be your constant companion.

Amen

Dave Tomlinson. The Sacred Disruption Reimagining Faith, Mystery, and Belonging, from The Work of the People website, retrieved 2026.

Submitted by Jean Anderson, Memory Cafe Board member

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living with Memory Loss

By Bruce Dalager, Reprinted with permission

A couple of years ago an annual physical exam involving a brain scan revealed I had had a mild stroke. Further testing determined a diagnosis of vascular dementia. Prior to that scan I lived a generally healthy life. The dementia led to changes.



A friend of mine who had earlier had a similar diagnosis, had begun recently attending “Memory Café of the Red River Valley.” I was invited and other friends and family encouraged me to attend.

My life work had involved a lot of contact and interaction with crowds of people. I assumed that retirement would involve more isolation and less visiting. Not so! I soon learned that my new partner (dementia) is best treated with the opposite of isolation. Crawling into a hole is not best treatment for the wounded brain. The “Memory Café” provides a better treatment!

This treatment is in no way a “hard pill to swallow.” A small but growing group of people who share the same “partner” gather once a week for “The Gathering”. After a half hour of exercise, we gather into smaller groups for fellowship. There we learn the various effects of our common “partner”...dementia.

We have time to share our common experiences, fears, tears, and laughs. Even the most quiet, stoic person may break a laugh! Without pressure or awkwardness the café aims for an atmosphere where honesty regarding our “partner” brings a comradery greater even than mere friendship.

The workers and volunteers at Cafe are there to meet us, warmly greet us by name, introduce newcomers, and patiently direct us to our room to keep each of us welcome and unrattled. Other activities separate from “The Gathering” are also arranged regularly for members who desire. I have acquired new friends and have also been convinced that many of these friends share a common faith.

I’m grateful that Memory Café has opened a new life for me. Thank you to those who make it possible.

You, my friend, are invited to swallow this pill and live.

REDEFINING MEMORY CONFERENCE

Tuesday June 9

Delta Hotel | Ft. Collins



SPONSORS

We are very grateful for the generous support of each of our conference sponsors. Without your support this conference wouldn’t be possible! Thank you!

EVENT VENUE SPONSOR: DELTA HOTELS

CHAMPION (\$7,000): BELL BANK

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- TOUCHMARK
- UNITED VALLEY BANK
- VALLEY SENIOR SERVICES

FRIEND (\$500): Thank you to all of our Friends!

FOR OUR HEALTH: WHY EXERCISE AND STRENGTH TRAINING IN A GROUP SETTING MATTERS

By Dr. Lizette Sunde, Doctor of Physical Therapy and Owner of C.O.M.P.E.T.E Physical Therapy and Wellness LLC in Moorhead



If you're straddling the border of whether to get involved in a group exercise program this information is for you! The group format adds a critical layer beyond the exercise itself.

Dementia-friendly group exercise classes have demonstrated improvements in loneliness, mood, and social engagement! <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32599916>

Community-based group activities — including movement, arts, and music — show a positive trend in psychological well-being. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40953825>

Combining group exercise with other modalities such as reminiscence therapy has shown significant improvements in quality of life and life satisfaction with medium-to-large effect sizes, while also decelerating functional fitness deterioration. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41310327>

The American Occupational Therapy Association gives a Grade A (strong) recommendation for individual or group exercise interventions. So give it a try. It can help make you stronger, more independent, and you might just meet a new friend!

The Cognitive Benefits

We have vast amounts of excellent research that tell us multicomponent exercise (combining aerobic, strength, balance, and flexibility components) significantly improves global cognition and executive function in people with dementia. (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37142178>)

While exercise has meaningful benefits, it should not be the only definitive treatment for cognitive decline.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

"Why do they say we're "over the hill"? I don't even know what that means and why it's a bad thing. When I go hiking and I get over the hill that means I'm past the hard part and there's a snack in my future." -Ellen DeGeneres

My wife caught me sucking in my stomach while standing on the bathroom scale this morning. "I don't think that helps," she said sarcastically. "Sure it does," I replied. "How else can I see the numbers?"

According to my weight-to-height ratio, I should be 9 feet 4 inches tall.

I just put my scale in the corner and told it to think about what it did. It's not coming out until it apologizes.

"You don't stop laughing when you grow old; you grow old when you stop laughing."

-George Bernard Shaw

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

Did you hear about the golfer whose clubs burst into flames? He had several irons in the fire.

What do you call a fish that won't shut up? A big-mouth bass.

IN LOVING MEMORY



Sara Keller was a pure joy-giver and motivator, and we are so grateful for the opportunity we had to know her. We extend our deepest sympathies to her husband, Rick, and their family.

Quote of the Day

"You can sit there and stew, or you can accept this unexpected change. Instead of focusing on your disappointment, you could, IF YOU CHOOSE, begin to look for the silver lining."

-Dr. Cynthia Huling Hummel, diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment due to Alzheimer's disease.



JUNE MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY SCHEDULE

(PLEASE NOTE: LOCATIONS VARY, SEE DETAILS BELOW)

June 1st:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am**
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
 - 9:00-9:30 - Exercise with Coach Jake
 - 9:30-11:00
 - Men's Caregiver Support Group
 - Women's Caregiver Support Group
 - 'Social Club' (free respite group for your loved one)
 - 'The Gathering' - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30 PM**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - **Music Memories and Musing with Deb McTaggart**

June 8th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am** (noted above)
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
- **No Afternoon Programming due to Conference**

June 15th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am** (noted above)
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - **"Memory Cafe Open":** This is an open time to meet your Memory Cafe friends to have coffee and socialize. Puzzles, games, creative art available as well. There is no structured programming during this time; there are no respite services offered.

June 22nd:



- **9:30-11:00 AM:** Special Program w/Hope Blooms (**no support groups**)-**NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)**
- **11:30 - 'Dine and Dance'**- Mhd American Legion
(303 30th Street N, Moorhead, MN)

June 29th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am** (noted above)
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - **"Memory Cafe Open":** This is an open time to meet your Memory Cafe friends to have coffee and socialize. Puzzles, games, creative art available as well. There is no structured programming during this time; there are no respite services offered.

If you are living with memory loss or caring for someone living with memory loss, check us out! At Memory Cafe you'll find a welcoming community that understands the journey!

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

All meetings are held from 1-2:30 pm at various locations as noted below:

June 3rd- Musical Performance by The Norske Brothers
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)

June 10th- No Programming due to Conference

June 17th- Education: Conference take-a-ways w/ the Memory Cafe Staff

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)

June 24th - Support Group Meetings:
9:30 -11 am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group
1-2:30 pm - Caregiver Cafe

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, June 24th 9:30-11:00 AM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, Fargo)

This group is specifically for spouses who have lost a partner to a diagnosis of dementia or another type of memory loss.

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, June 23rd - 5:00- 6:30 PM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, Fargo)

'THE GATHERING' SUPPORT GROUP

Mondays, 9:30 - 11 AM, Bethel Church Support and education for individuals experiencing early stage memory loss or cognitive changes due to aging or any disease process.

'CLUB SANDWICH' SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, June 24th 3:30 - 5:00 PM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, Fargo)

Support for adult children who are caring for a parent or in-law with memory loss while managing their own families, careers and responsibilities.

June (Wednesday) Education

Wednesday, June 17th: 1:00-2:30 PM (NEW MC Building)

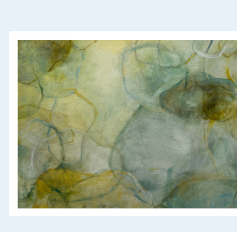
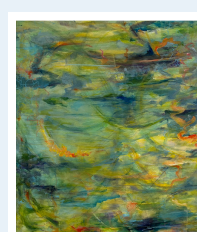
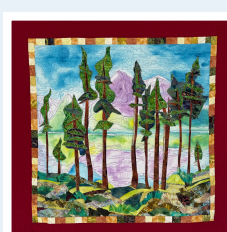
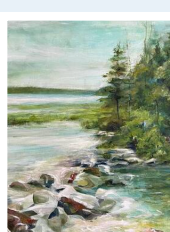
Join the staff of Memory Cafe as we recap the 7th Annual Redefining Memory Loss Conference! Together, we will share highlights and valuable education from our conference speakers, focusing on caring for those living with memory loss and ways to live well with memory loss. Whether you attended the conference or not, we encourage you to join us for this meaningful session filled with learning, discussion, and shared ideas.

CREATING MEMORIES, ART, AND MOMENTS OF JOY IN OUR LOVELY NEW HOME!



FINE ART SPONSORS

We have been deeply touched and encouraged by the warm response we have received for the local art we are featuring in our new building. The fine art pieces done by local painter Michelle Bolduc Roise, photographer Lee McKee, and hand-quilting (on loan) by Montana fiber artist Brenda Yirsa have been very well received. In fact, several of these pieces have been sponsored by our current and former participants of Memory Cafe! Other paintings have been sponsored by anonymous friends who are eager to support the mission of our Memory Cafe. We are deeply grateful, pleased, and honored to have these high-quality pieces on display in our new Memory Cafe home!



Current and former Memory Cafe caregivers who sponsored "White Line" by Michelle Roise. (Not pictured, Carol Lehman)

Dean Wieland, sponsor of "Minnesota Memories" by Michelle Roise, in honor of his artist wife, Mae.

"Mountain Reflections" quilt by Brenda Yirsa

"Summerlight" and "Integration 1" by Michelle Roise and sponsored by an anonymous friend in honor of her loving parents.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

By Deb McTaggart, Chorus Director

Sing From Your Heart recently concluded its sixth season with "An American Music Sampler," a musical celebration for the 250th Anniversary of the United States. The performance drew a great audience—including many first-time attendees! The feedback was overwhelmingly positive—many families shared how grateful they are for the chorus and how much it means to both the singers and their loved ones.

Our next season (starting in August) will feature well-known tunes from Broadway! More to come!

Join us on **Thursday, June 18, 1:00 PM** for a "Summer Sing" at the NEW Memory Cafe Center (3910 25th Street South, Fargo). This is a casual opportunity to gather and enjoy singing familiar songs together with friends!

For more information, please visit our website: singfromyourheartchorus.org

COMMUNICATING WITH MY PARENTS (CONT P. 1)

In the beginning, my first instinct was to correct them, redirect them, and prove that what they were telling me or how many times they were telling me something was wrong, and that I was right. I figured that if I corrected them, they would realize their "mistake" and learn from it. I believe it's perhaps human nature to want to correct someone who repeats a story, or to remind them that what they said isn't reality. But in the end, why does it matter? Why shame them and make them feel less than or wrong?

I often get the question from other adult children who have parents living with dementia and/or memory loss, "what did you say to your parents when they did _____ or said _____ over and over? My answer now, after caretaking for my parents over the course of 15 years, is simple...listen and acknowledge them, don't react, don't correct, and just love them for who they are now and allow them their dignity because they deserve it.

The Marv Bossart Parkinson's Foundation has supported Memory Café of the Red River Valley over the years because it provides essential support for individuals living with memory loss and dementia, as well as their caregivers. Our own family experienced this first-hand, which inspired us to help other families access the education and support they need. It is equally important for those with memory loss to feel recognized and understood.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

By Teryl Clausen, LSW (retired)
Care Partner Support Group Facilitator



As a facilitator of the women's caregiver support group, I have been so blessed to experience the care and support these women provide for each other. I have witnessed tears, frustration, laughter, understanding, kindness, respect, and encouragement to care well for one's self. Small victories are celebrated and emotions validated.

Sometimes the discussion is not related to the role of caregiving, but of their lives, both good and bad, as they get to know each other better. Often heard phrases:

- "I don't know what I'd do without this group."
- "Finally, someone understands what I'm going through, as my family and friends don't."
- "We have to laugh or we would cry."
- "This is not a journey to travel alone. We need each other."
- "I wish I would've started coming to this group sooner."
- "Memory Cafe is my lifeline!"

The person the women are caring for may be on different stages of their dementia journey, from newcomers to those who have lost their loved one from the disease. Those who are new can benefit from the experience of others who have "been there" already and from what the women have learned through the educational opportunities that Memory Café has provided over the years.

What can you expect when you come to this support group for the first time? You will be asked if you are comfortable introducing yourself to the group as well as sharing any information about your journey. It's always ok to just listen. We gather in small groups, so everyone has a chance to share what is on their mind. Confidentiality is expected and judgments are avoided.

We want everyone who joins us to feel welcome and accepted!

SAVE THE DATE!
MEMORY CAFE RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY!
TUESDAY, JULY 14TH at 4pm
3910 25TH ST. S. FARGO



BRAIN HEALTH STRATEGIES: WALK TOWARDS A SMILE!

Relational Wisdom 360
(Excerpted)

Here are seven insights that recent studies have revealed about the nature, power, and benefits of a smile:



- 1. Smiling is a natural and universal human characteristic.** It is common to all people groups, does not have to be taught, and is generally seen as a positive and reassuring gesture.
- 2. Smiling is contagious** and puts “wind under the wings of others.” One smiling person can change the mood of a room full of people. Why? Because when people see a smile, “mirror neurons” fire in their brains and evoke a similar neural response that makes them feel like they are smiling themselves ... and pretty soon, they are.
- 3. Smiling improves your health.** It reduces levels of stress-enhancing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, increases levels of pain-killing endorphins and sleep-assisting serotonin, reduces blood pressure, and boosts your immune system.
- 4. Smiling makes you look more attractive, courteous, and approachable.** When you smile, your face is saying, “All is well. I’m safe. Come and talk with me.”
- 5. Smiling improves your mood.** It’s actually more difficult to think negative thoughts when you have a smile on your face, even if it’s forced.
- 6. Smiling makes you look younger.** The muscles you use to smile actually lift your entire face and make you look younger. As Meryl Streep observed, “The best face-lift is a smile.”
- 7. Smiling makes you look competent and successful.** Smile and you will appear to be more confident, self-assured, accessible and helpful.

Even if you’re not a world-class smiler today, a little practice can make smiling a natural and enjoyable habit!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Northern Cass School
Home of the Jaguars

“Volunteering at Memory Cafe) was by far my favorite thing I have done for my community service hours. I did lots of different activities with the individuals such as workouts and different hands on activities. I loved trying to get everyone involved. I had so much fun bonding with the people there; it was so fun being with them and learning different things about them. I would most definitely do this again and plan to go to more of Memory Cafe activities this summer!” ~ Northern Cass High School PaY Volunteer

I’M THE LUCKY ONE!

By Mary Schmidt,
Memory Cafe Care Partner



“Oh, you are lucky!” I have heard this a few times and I tend to agree. But how do I, who for fourteen years have stumbled this path alongside a thief known as dementia, consider myself lucky? This thief has stolen our hopes and dreams and also Bob’s memory and physical and mental abilities, leaving me many times feeling exhausted and frightened. We can’t even share a cherished memory and yet I feel so lucky, so blessed.

Somewhere along this path (most likely through Memory Cafe, thank God for Memory Cafe), I came to a fork in the road. One arrow pointed to Rabbit Hole and the opposite direction was unmarked. I tried Rabbit Hole. This path left me feeling resentful, bitter, and spending time on the pity pot. I went the other direction. It was also rough and very rocky, but I started finding little blossoms along the way. They weren’t roses and daisies but compassion, empathy, understanding, and patience. I don’t remember those so much on my previous path of normalcy. And gratefulness! How grateful I am that this thief never stole Bob’s smile, wink, his humor or his many, “I love you” and “thank you”.

Bob is in a nursing home now, wheelchair bound. He can no longer stand. But he doesn’t need legs to smile, wink, laugh or to tell me how much he loves me. He still lights up when he sees me and says, “There she is, my beautiful wife!”

At home I would tuck him in at night and bless his forehead saying, “God Bless you, my dear.” He would respond by saying, “Oh, the day you danced into my life!” Many times I would hear, “Thank you, Mary, for all you do for me, for us.” Unfortunately, many caregivers never hear those words.

I see glimpses of the ‘old Bob’ now and then like a fleeting ghost wisping by. Once in a while, he will have a lucid moment like when I returned home from Texas after burying my dear sister. He, of course, couldn’t remember she had passed and when I reminded him, I couldn’t stop my tears. I apologized for crying and the ‘old Bob’, the counselor, came out. “You cry. You need that, Mary. You just cry.” How grateful I am for those precious moments.

At some point, the thief will steal these moments, probably along with the smile and recognition. But until then, I feel very blessed. Yes, I am lucky!

CONTACT US:

MEMORY CAFE RRV

3910 25th St. S. Fargo, ND 58104

701-404-6712

www.MemoryCafeRRV.org

hello@memorycaferrv.org

SCAN HERE →
FOR MORE INFORMATION



"Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."
-Fred Rogers

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The Marv Bossart Parkinson's Foundation

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