

**Song as the Sacred
Center of Care:
Transforming the
Dementia Experience
Through Music**

Love Everlasting (after Psalm 133)

What is goodness all about?

To wrap happiness all around us
Have blessings embrace and surround us
Give us joy and love ever unbounded
And make us feel that we're wanted in this big wide world

What is kindness all about?

To learn to live with one another
To share as sisters and brothers
To be free of persecution
To come up with a solution for peace and harmony...

What is life all about?

To give devotion to all around us
Bestow sweetness on all who surround us
To enjoy each other's bounty and love everlasting in peace and
harmony in this big wide world

*“Joy is love
dancing.”*

*The
woodpecker
knocks at the
door of our
dullness
and awakens
us into life
through our
ears.
--Robert Rice*



Affirming the
“Personhood” of the
person with Dementia
is Essential to Making
Connection with that
Person and his or her
Carers

Person Centered Principles

- “Individuals are still full persons even when they become cognitively impaired.

Principles

- People are best understood in context of their relationships, community and worldview, not just through brain pathology and its associated cognitive deficits.

Principles

- Moving beyond a biomedical framework to include psychological, relational and spiritual dimensions of the person's life ...opens avenues for planning that recognizes the individuality of each person.

Benjamin Mast (2013)

Personhood emphasizes a person's story before their symptoms, abilities ahead of their limits; and their capacity to relate to others rather than their losses of connection.

“We do not serve the weak or the broken. What we serve is the wholeness of each other and the wholeness in life.”

Rachel Naomi Remen (2000)

The religious and or spiritual dimensions of one's life are important throughout the journey of dementia. The connection to these remains long into a dementia process.

How Knowledge of the “Spiritual” Informs Connection

- Knowing a person’s past history assists in staying touch with the spiritual/ religious in the “now.”
- It is strength oriented, and celebrates that which is whole.

Songwriting Works'

8 Principles of Creative Engagement

1. Access
2. Inclusion
3. Originality
4. Authenticity
5. Respect
6. Reciprocity
7. Restoration
8. Celebration



....engages body, mind, memory, spirit, imagination

....sparks new social and neural connections

*....elicits stories, history, movement,
humor, joy, hope*

Songwriting in the Nursing Home

Theresa Allison, M.D., M. Music



STUDY RESULTS:

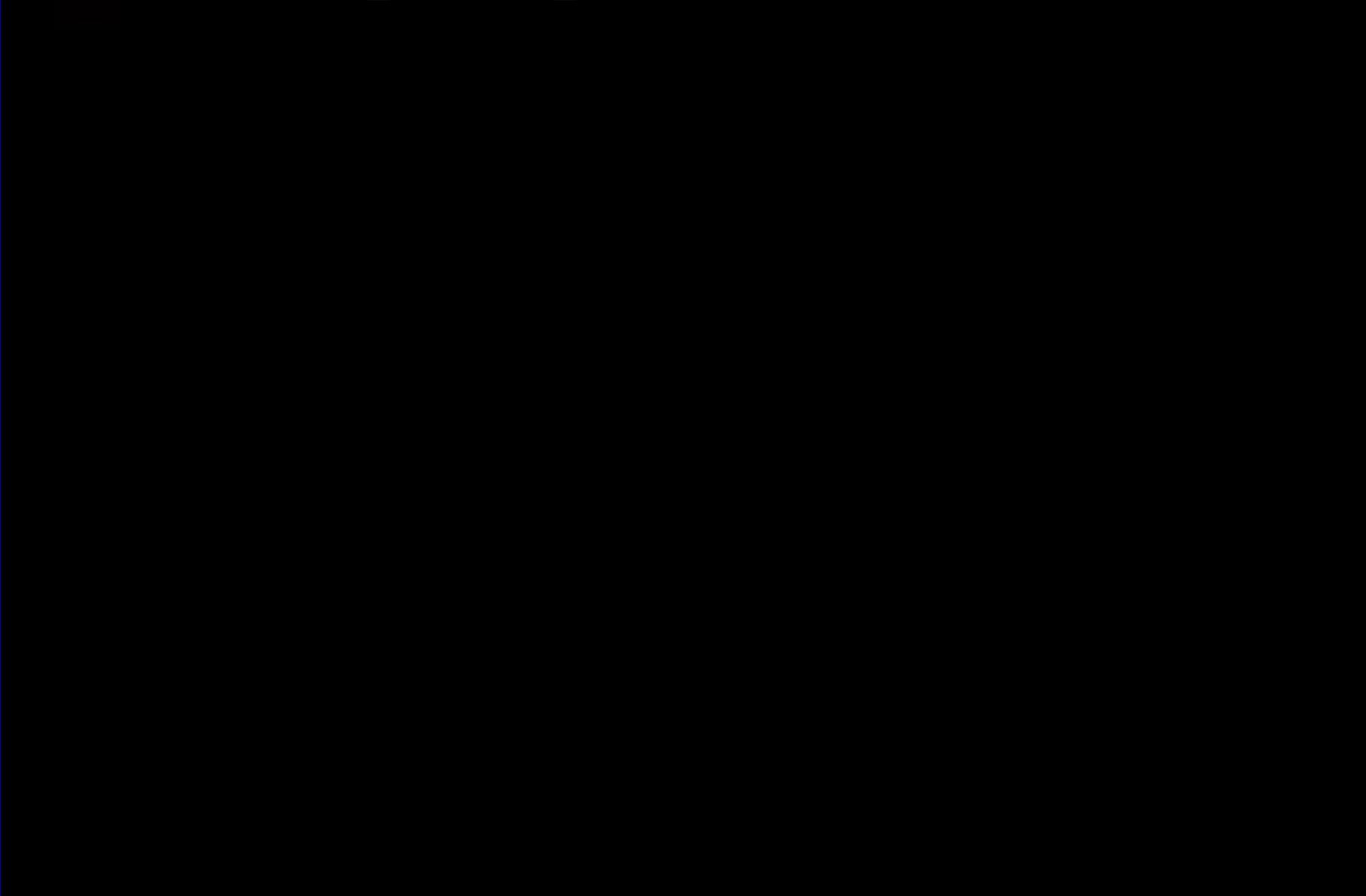
Creating and performing original songs enables institutionalized elders to remain vibrant and creative despite the progression of physical and cognitive challenges

“Music is always creative for the soul.”

--Songwriter explaining how the songwriting enables her to grow

In rehearsal and after performance (Mark Friedlander photo)

THE Songwriting Works™ PROCESS



*“It was very difficult for me to let go and return my Dad to Ohio. Other than serving during WWII, he has never lived anywhere else. As you know from the song, he and his twin served together...the longest time they were apart was while he lived with me in Washington (state). My Dad's twin does not have dementia and missed being with (him)... **When Dad opened up to help write the WWII song it made me realize I couldn't keep those twins apart any longer.** —M.B., participant's daughter*



*Songwriting at OlyCAP's Encore Program
Port Angeles, WA photo: Aimee Ringle*

Psalms, Songs & Stories™



“...Music makes manifest the inner self in the outer world....As in the Psalms themselves, the point of our songwriting is not lyrical perfection but significance.”

--Rabbi Sheldon Marder

*“We talk Torah.... It brings out our creative forces.
Music is always creative for the soul,”*
--Songwriter explaining how the songwriting enables her
to grow and develop



*At Jewish Home
Synagogue Dedication
Photo: Alain McLaughlin*

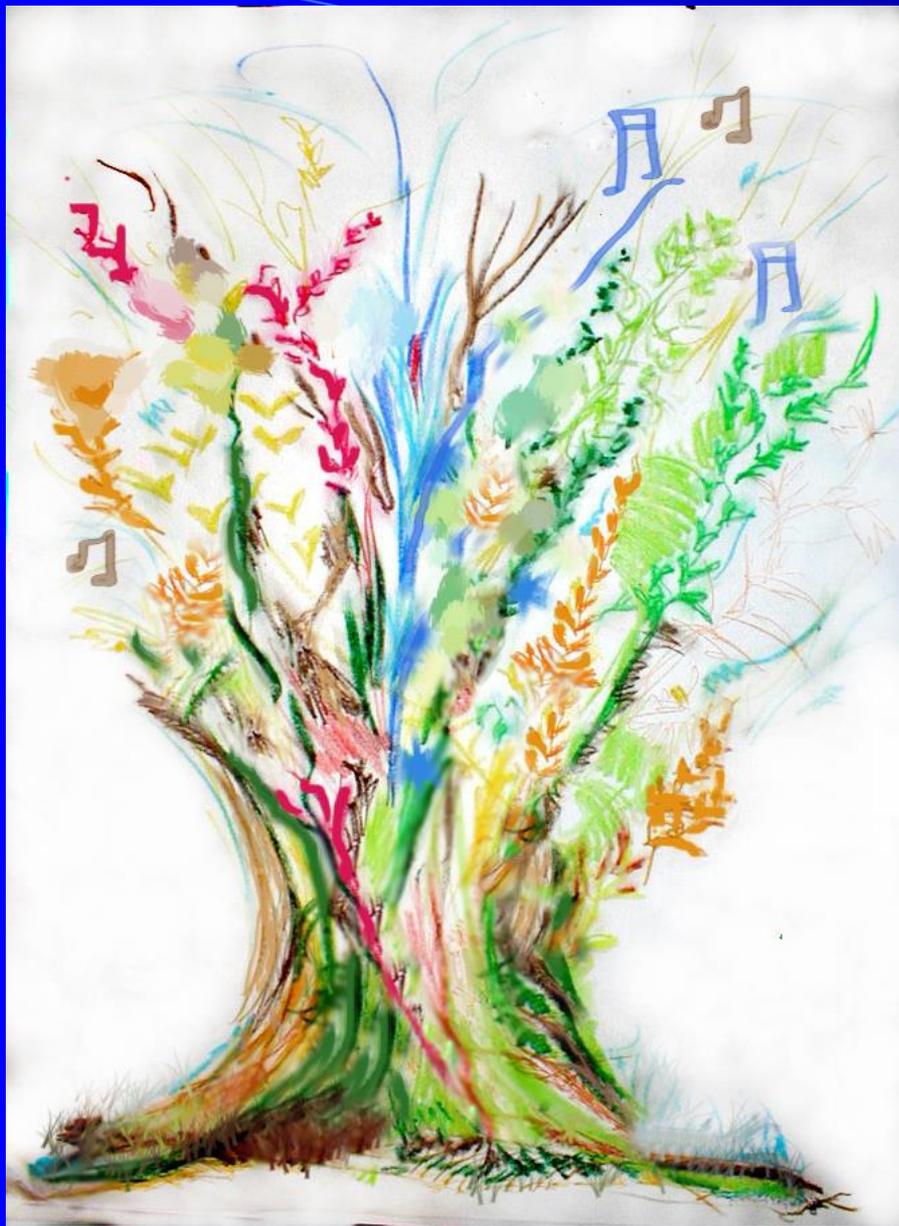
Psalms, Songs and Stories™ integrates:

- **Sacred learning as a way to achieve human dignity and adequacy**
 - **Text study as an uplifting religious experience**
 - **The wisdom of the group**
 - **The text-centered relationship**
- **Text as shelter for those whose well-being is threatened**
 - **Using poetry and teaching in pastoral care**



Photo: Alain McLaughlin

From "God Is in the Text," by Rabbi Sheldon Marder, in *Jewish Pastoral Care*, 2nd ed. D. Friedman, ed., (Jewish Lights Publications, 2005). (Alain McLaughlin photo) Excerpt and lyric reprinted with permission/



A tree is planted
in the soil of God
Its leaves like
prophesies of
hope and love
Its limbs reach up
like wings toward
heaven---
Its roots grow
strong with
Adonai--
They thrive

Song after Psalm One

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Songs and Stories Project with Judith-Kate Friedman and Rabbi Sheldon Marder. All rights reserved.

“I just never thought this was possible for me in my lifetime”

–Psalms, Songs & Stories songwriter, age 87



“This was a wonderful experience for me.... I’ve always been a “listener” and I found out that I can be a singer, too.”
–Songwriter reflecting on her part in the Synagogue Dedication

Psalms, Songs & Stories songwriters perform their compositions as part of the dedication ceremony for their new synagogue, June 2007. Photos: Alain McLaughlin

- Most important of all is the discovery that *God is in the text*—not only in Psalm 128, the Talmud, or a Hebrew poem, but also in the new song that is rooted both in traditional sources and in the wisdom of the group.
- As one elated participant remarked the instant we completed the Psalm 128 song:
‘Now I really understand why I believe what I believe.’”
- At that moment, she experienced a mystical sense of her place in the universe, for she was the maker of something that connected her to God.
- Soon after that, she became seriously ill; and it made all the difference that I, her rabbi, had intimate knowledge of her beliefs.”

From “God Is in the Text,” by Rabbi Sheldon Marder, in *Jewish Pastoral Care*, 2nd ed. D. Friedman, ed., (Jewish Lights Publications, 2005). Excerpt and lyric reprinted with permission.

Psalms Songwriting for Care Sharers

- Deepening reflection
- Core issues: life, death, transformation
- Transcending grief (Psalm 77)
- Weaving one's own music with everyday relationship/use of Scripture
- Meditations on blessing, gratitude, change
- A way to share quiet and spacious silence with elders as they explore self-expression and meaning inspired by the texts
- Self-renewal, kinship, community

Ways to Connect

- Incorporate long term memories of ritual.
- Encourage care partners to utilize spiritual/religious in day to day interactions
- Understand unusual behaviors and adapt to them.

Ways to Connect

- Confront stigma about what those with dementia can or cannot do.
- Understand unusual behaviors and learn ways to adapt communication.

Approaches for
creatively integrating
the “spiritual” into
sharing with those with
dementia and their care
partners

“Being present” and in
the “being in the now”
with a person are the
most essential
elements of “soul to
soul” connection.

Creative Ways to Access the “Spiritual”

- Use visual arts
- Connect with music and poetry
- Access the familiar from religious traditions

Creative Ways

- Purposefully observe and adapt ritual.
- Educate and support spiritual leaders to keep a person with dementia involved in traditional observances.

Assisting Carers to Use Creativity

- Offer shared spiritual activities.
- Adapt activities to include the spiritual in communication.
- Remember religious/ spiritual aspects of decision.

Assisting Carers

- Teach creativity skills.
- Encourage carers in their own religious/spiritual life to do self-care.
- Assist them in educating others about sharing with the person with dementia.

*“A friend knows the
song that is in my heart
and sings it to me when
my memory fails.”*

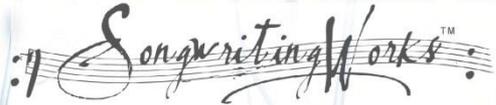
Donna Roberts

Creativity and Dementia Resources

- Alzheimer's Poetry Project
<alzpoety.blogspot.com>
- Elderwise <www.elderwise.com>
- Here:Now Freye Museum
<[http://freyemuseum.org/here_now
programs](http://freyemuseum.org/here_now_programs)>
- Memory Café <www.alzpoetry.com>

Creativity and Dementia Resources

- Meet Me at MOMA Modern Museum of Art
- <[www.moma.org/meet me](http://www.moma.org/meet%20me)>
- National Center for Creative Aging
<www.creativeaging.org>
- Time Slips <www.timeslips.org>



An Inaugural Health through Song Forum

**Music & the Brain:
Neuroscience,
Song &
the Oral Tradition**

Tuesday JUNE 18th
7pm • The Cotton Building
609 Water St. • Port Townsend

Mark Jude Tramo, MD, PhD
Director, Institute for Music & Brain Science
Faculty, UCLA Schools of Medicine & Music
on **HOW THE BRAIN LIGHTS UP ON MUSIC**

Kenneth Isaacs, MD
Neurologist & Chair, Washington Health Foundation
on **WHY MUSIC IS GOOD FOR HEALTHY AGING**

Daniel Deardorff
Author & Founder, the Mythsinger Foundation
on **WHAT MAKES SONGS HEALING**

Judith-Kate Friedman
Founder, Songwriting Works Educational Foundation
& **Fisher Qua**
of the Washington Health Foundation
moderating lively discussion

LIVE MUSIC featuring
locally composed songs by
Songwriting Works™ participants

Doors Open at 6:30pm
\$20 gen'l • \$12 students, elders, fixed income
\$50 very interested persons (VIP preferred seating)
No one turned away for lack of funds

Tickets at Quimper Sound
brownpapertickets.com
Info: 360-385-1160
songwritingworks.org



With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Washington Health Foundation, the Port Townsend Arts Commission, Arts Northwest and the Mythsinger Foundation • A benefit for Songwriting Works Educational Foundation

**Songwriting Works serves rural,
suburban and urban communities**

- Signature Songwriting Workshops
- Community Volunteer Music Teams™
- Training for Arts & Health Providers
- Symposia • Keynotes
- CDs • Commissions • Tributes
- Consulting • Research
- Collaboration

www.songwritingworks.org

Resources

- Kitwood, Thomas. (1997). *Dementia: The Person Comes First*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Mast, Benjamin T. (2013). Bringing person-centered care to people with early stage dementia. *Generations*. (37) 63-65.
- Remen, Rachel Naomi. (2000). *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging*. New York: Riverhead Books.



*Audience with performer Paula Lalish (2nd to left)
after Olympic Peninsula concert 11/2009*

“What Have I Learned?

Can you put a count on a sunset?”

--J.D. participant, age 87

Thank you.

Judith-Kate Friedman

Marty Richards