WORKS ON *paper* THAT MOVE & EMOTE *for you and your family*.

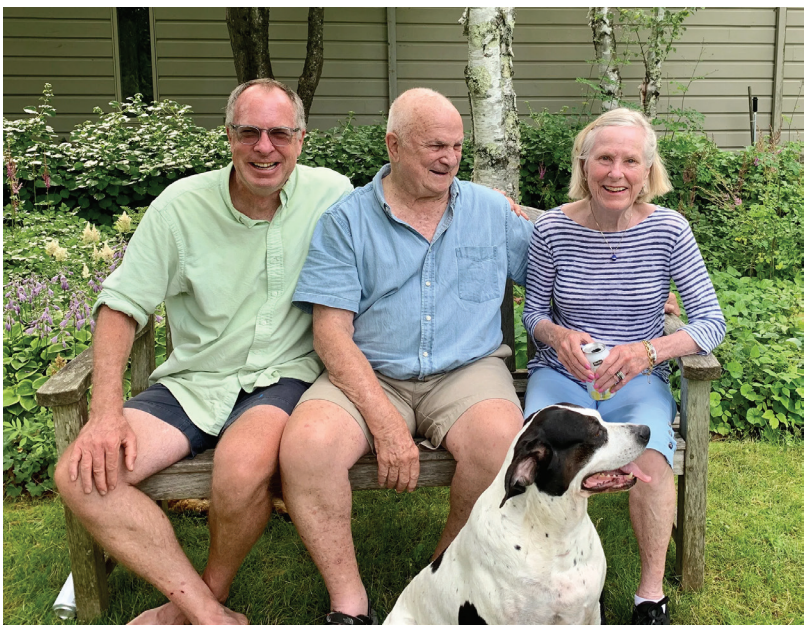
Discover *Your* Connected Moment

Through a unique process of reflection and exploration, you will discover the beauty and inspiration in a cherished moment you experienced with someone with dementia. Your moment will be expressed in a brief story, and an accompanying one-of-a-kind vibrant abstract painting, that together, celebrate and memorialize them.

Workbook



Nat Connacher
Artist & Writer



WITH MY PARENTS *Jim & Mary Connacher with Pippa*
Stowe, Vermont, July 2020

The Inspiration

I developed this process organically as my own way of coping with what was happening to my mother as Alzheimer's began to fragment her memories and distance her connection to the world. I wanted a way to express my deep connection with and love for my mom by celebrating our shared moments of resilience we were building together, and to see my mother and not the disease.

Through this journey, the *Connecting Moments* art series emerged as brief observational stories and associated expressive paintings that visually represent the most enduring moments with my mom, along with their full array of emotions.

EXAMPLE



Safe harbor
Acrylic paint on watercolor paper,
stretched, 3 panels, 2024
36" X 52"

In 2017, I spent four days with my parents preparing to sell my mother's ancestral island at Lake of the Woods, Canada. Mornings for my mother were about confusion, anxiety and pain as she tried to center herself with tea. Often, she retreated to bed before feeling safe to continue her day. Feeling safe knowing where and how she was. Feeling safe enough to swim in the very waters where she first learned to swim.

The Opportunity

My goal is to share my process with you to help you pinpoint connecting moments experienced with your parent, partner or friend who is/was living with the challenges of dementia and create a tangible reminder through both words and art to depict the bond that is forever pure and true between the both of you.

Your unique painting will have multiple panels representing fragmented memories as well as bursts of keen awareness that you experienced with your person. When these memories are reconfigured and connected, the story of a specific, cherished moment will emerge.

This is not just a dementia story, but our shared human story. A story of momentum and inspiration that shows us that change—even unwelcomed—can often bring beauty and inspiration.

First Steps

This questionnaire is a gentle, thoughtful guide to help you recall and articulate your important connecting moment with someone affected by dementia. The questions will help you gain insights into your emotions, memories, and shared experiences which will culminate in a unique-to-you, 3 to 6 sentence story about this moment. That story will inspire the creation of your personalized painting.

To begin, simply read through the questions and familiarize yourself with the process. Then, find a quiet place and time to begin. Keep in mind, you can write or record your answers and return to this process whenever new thoughts- even unprompted by these questions- may arise. If you would like, include a family member or a close friend who has knowledge of your relationship with your person with dementia. Do not worry if all the questions don't resonate with you, this is simply a guide.

Finally, if you find that you have multiple moments you resonate with, that is ok too. Once a moment is selected, together you and I will refine your connecting moment story, and I will create a painting that encapsulates it.

Introduce Yourself

Your Name

Your Phone & Email

Your Person & Their Age (if still living)

Photo(s) of your Person

Shared History

Recalling your relationship with your person over the course of your life.

What is/was your relationship to your person with dementia?
(e.g., parent, partner, sibling, friend)?

How long have you known this person?

What types of activities do/did you typically enjoy together?
(e.g., cooking, listening to music, storytelling)

Reflect and focus on a particularly joyful moment(s)
you shared with them. Briefly describe the moment(s),
the environment, the emotions.

Describe your learning, your observations, your insights
that you still carry with you.

Describe shared rituals, traditions, or activities
you most vividly remember.

Navigating Change

Reflect on how dementia has affected your person and your connection to them.

What stage of dementia is the person currently experiencing (if known)?

How do/did you see the disease affecting their personality or behavior?

How did your relationship change since their diagnosis?

What feelings come up for you when you spend/spent time with them?

What emotions resonate for you when reflecting on your collaborative journey with dementia?

How do/did you cope with challenges of maintaining the connection?

What specific activities and objects bring/brought comfort or familiarity to your person living with dementia?

Connection Points

Reflect on how your connection with your person changed as their dementia developed.

What difficulties, if any, have you encountered while communicating?

What is a memorable experience you can identify that highlights an impactful connecting moment?

Describe that moment that brought a smile or spark to your eyes or theirs.

Where were you during this moment?
(e.g., home, outdoors, a special location)

What particular sounds, scents, or visuals
heightened the experience? (e.g., music, a familiar scent)

Describe a shared smile, laugh, or gesture that
stood out the most.

What positive responces can you identify reacting
to specific sounds, smells, objects, or people?

Which words or stories are/were repeated?

How do these fleeting moments impact you?

Discovering Your Unique Connected Moment

Now it's time to put it all together.

Reflecting on all your responses, what moment stands out as your most connected experience?

Describe what makes that moment special to you.

Reflect on the moment, take a breath and describe, as you recall it, how you where feeling.

What does this moment reveal about your relationship?

Describe this specific moment in 3 to 4 sentences.

Your Unique Connected Moment

Fitting artwork into your life to strengthen your connection to your person.

Where will you place the artwork?
(Please include a picture for visual understanding)

What family members, friends or others may experience this piece of art?

What size do you envision?

Additional photos.

Additional Notes

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www.itswhatsinside.life *(www.connacher.com)*
Displaying my art and creative journey.

www.connacherart.com
Purchase prints of my art.

https://www.instagram.com/connacherart/



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