

"Dementia Does Not Define Me"

Laurie Scherrer

DAA Board Member Living with Dementia

"Dementia does not define who I am. It is merely a small part of the many facets of my life, affecting decisions and changes in how I live. I am Laurie Scherrer and I am a wife, a writer, a scuba diver, an educator, and an advocate. I'm a traveler and a speaker. Oh, and I am also living with dementia.

People that live with dementia should not be reduced to simply a diagnostic label pronounced by a doctor. Nor should they be stigmatized by a society that sees the diagnosis rather than individual abilities and identities.

Living with dementia does not automatically equal total memory loss, inability to make our own decisions, nor undeserving of living an independent life enriched with purpose, beauty, and fulfillment. We are not defined, solely, by a label of dementia. As with most people, we are the cultivation of our upbringing, culture, spiritual fulfillment, lived experiences, accomplishments, failures, and our many challenges.



The medical profession and those in our communities often perceive us as incapable of contributing to any aspect of daily living. We are viewed as dying of dementia rather than LIVING WITH dementia. We are viewed as having limitations, which makes us feel worthless and incompetent.

Together, we will lift our voices to shout out that we are not a label and dementia does not define who we are. Together we can focus on our abilities, not our inabilities and on how we can be of help to others and thus help ourselves."