

# The Willow Tree

Willow Lane 412 875 1606



## A Powerful Exercise for Moving Past Regret

You stayed in many toxic relationships. Many years too long. You never finished college. You left a really good job for a job you now can't stand. You had countless embarrassing, neglectful drunken moments, which ultimately led to your divorce. You filed for bankruptcy. You racked up thousands upon thousands of dollars in student loans. You threw yourself into work while a loved one was dying. You pursued the profession your parents demanded. You didn't say what you wanted to say. You didn't trust yourself.

And you regret it. And you keep thinking about these regrets—these bad moments, these bad decisions—over and over and over. You play out various scenarios. You play out different decisions you could've made.

"We all have regrets about decisions we make that didn't go according to plan," said Laura Reagan, LCSW-C, an integrative trauma therapist in private practice outside of Baltimore. "Mistakes are how we learn."

Still, knowing that each decision is a learning opportunity might not stop you from ruminating about your regrets. Reagan has found that stubborn, persistent regret is typically tied to feelings of shame and self-blame. It also "seems to be more common to ruminate about regrets for people whose parents were critical and controlling," she said.

Ruminating about our regrets is how we distract ourselves from the pain reflected in the behavior. "[I]t is easier for some of us to beat ourselves up for decisions we regret...than to allow ourselves to feel the emotions and beliefs about ourselves underlying those regrets." It's easier to regret not finishing college than it is to face the fear that you won't be able to find a high-paying job; your family will always see you as a disappointment; and you'll forever feel self-conscious at work because of your (lack of) education, said [Reagan](#), also host of [Therapy Chat podcast](#).

But even though it doesn't feel like it, you can move through your regrets. Reagan suggested trying this journaling exercise.

- Write down the decision or situation you deeply regret.
- Reflect on why you regret it. What about it do you regret? Did certain negative consequences cause problems in your life?
- From the perspective of a compassionate friend, write down why you made the decision you made at that time. Try to empathize with yourself. For instance, according to Reagan, if you didn't finish college, you might write: "College was hard for you."
- You were overwhelmed with being away from home, wanting to fit in with new people, and managing the academic load. When your parents suggested you move back home and take some time off, you thought they knew best. You were struggling and you made the decision you thought was best at the time." If you regret staying in an abusive relationship, you might write, she said: "When you and Mike started dating, he treated you so kindly. You wanted to trust him and you didn't recognize the red flags when he got angry and called you names, or behaved in an intimidating and aggressive manner. This is understandable, considering your father behaved that way towards your mother when you were growing up. You didn't have a model of a respectful romantic relationship to guide you"
- in recognizing the unhealthy dynamics of your relationship with Mike."
- Reflect on whether you'd do anything differently if you were in the same situation in the future. Write down your response.

**Focus on what you can control about your regret today. If you regret not completing college, can you go back?**

- What can you do to address your self-consciousness at work? Write down one or two changes you can make, along with the steps you can take to achieve them. For instance, Reagan said, if you regretted a past relationship, you decide to examine the parts that didn't work for you. You also examine the boundaries you want to set in future relationships and read a book on how. If you regret yelling at your kids so much, you check out reputable resources on how to effectively communicate with children and cultivate a close, healthy relationship with them.

Our regrets often have deeper layers. These layers are made of fears and feelings of shame about who we were, who we wanted to be, how our lives turned out today. But we are meant to be imperfect, mistake makers. This is not some platitude or empty affirmation. This is fact. While the results are rarely pretty—often painful and hard—this fact is critical. This fact is a wonderful thing.

As physician Lewis Thomas wrote in his essay "To Err is Human," "If we were not provided with the knack of being wrong, we could never get anything useful done. We think our way along by choosing between right and wrong alternatives, and the wrong choices have to be made as frequently as the right ones. We get along in life this way. We are built to make mistakes, coded for error.... If we had only a single center in our brains, capable of responding only when a correct decision was to be made, instead of the jumble of different credulous, easily conned clusters of neurons that provide for being flung off into blind alleys, up trees, down dead ends, out into blue sky, along wrong turnings, around bends, we could only stay the way we are today, stuck fast."

Thankfully, we don't stay stuck. We have the opportunity and ability to move, to shift, to blossom.

Last medically reviewed on September 11, 2017

## Celebrating August

### Your Management Team

**Executive Director**  
Dana Wittman

**Director of Resident Care**  
Britney Wilson RN

**Asst. Director Resident Care**  
Danielle Marko LPN

**Business Office Manager**  
Beverly Bozicevich

**Staff Recruitment**  
Klay Scott

**Marketing Liaison**  
Lisa Unis

**Maint/Housekeeping**  
Aaron Jennings

**Activities Director**  
Milly Soisson ADC

**Dining Services Manager**  
Samantha "Sami" Steenbeke

**Director of Willow Heights**  
John Desiderato

**AUGUST IS LIKE  
THE SUNDAY OF  
SUMMER.**

## The Gold Rush

On August 16, 1896, prospector George Carmack and his family were looking for gold along Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River in Canada's Yukon Territory. Gold was discovered in vast quantities, and Carmack immediately filed claims to mine the land. Word of the find quickly spread, and by the end of August, the length of the entire creek had been claimed by gold miners. Not even winter could stop the miners, and prospectors raced by dog sled to the Klondike and the newly renamed Bonanza Creek.

It wasn't until July of 1897 that the first shipments of Klondike gold arrived in the cities of Seattle and San Francisco. The gold shipments were valued at \$1.13 million. (That's over one billion of today's dollars!) Word of the gold spread like wildfire, and soon prospectors from all over the world were flooding the West Coast and preparing for the journey north. A great economic boom hit cities like Seattle and San Francisco, which birthed outfitting and supply industries for the prospectors.

It is estimated that 100,000 people attempted the trip into the Klondike between the summers of 1897 and 1898. Many gold-seekers had no experience whatsoever in mining or prospecting. Mass resignations occurred across the country as people left their livelihoods behind to search for riches. Even Seattle's mayor left his post to try his luck. Of the 100,000 aspiring gold miners, only 30,000 eventually made it to the Klondike.

Travel to the Yukon proved treacherous thanks to mountainous terrain and unpredictable weather. The Canadian government issued strict food and equipment requirements for prospectors in an attempt to prevent death from exposure and starvation. Of the 30,000 who made it to the Yukon, only 4,000 struck gold. And of these 4,000, only a few hundred became rich. By the summer of 1898, the word *Klondike* was spoken with scorn. As rumors of gold found in other northern locales spread, the Klondike was abandoned, and the gold rush was over.

## Independence Day: A Family Affair



On July 4<sup>th</sup> several families joined us for a picnic on the patio. This was the first of the year and residents were very happy to be able to share the day with family. The temperature was pretty high, but the ladies braved the heat, and the breeze helped to keep things in check. Everyone received a pair of sunglasses for protection ( and they all looked so cool!)

All were served their choice of hot dog or

cheeseburger, potato salad and baked beans.

After lunch we were entertained by a new friend, Ron Soltis, who offered dozens of sing a longs from patriotic to standards. Our residents love to sing so it was the perfect end to a perfect picnic.

Thank you to the families who joined us and made the day truly special.

Hopefully we'll see you all again soon!



### NOTES on DEMENTIA

Did you know that Dementia is not **memory loss**? People say that all the time but it is not. It is literally **brain failure**. Yes, that's harsh, but true.

Also Dementia is not the same as Alzheimer's because not all Dementias are Alzheimer's. So a person may have Alzheimer's dementia or Lewy bodies dementia and so on. (see diagram)

Dementia is an "umbrella" term that covers over 100 different brain failure diseases.

When a person living with Dementia is being taken care of by a loved one or an outside facilitator, it's easy for the care giver to get frustrated and short tempered. Phrases like "She knows exactly what she's doing, " or "She does that on purpose to get attention" are way off the mark. A PLwD is truly doing the best they can with the skills they have left.

When we say things like "Don't you remember you did that already?" or "What do you mean you're hungry?..you just ate! Don't you remember?"

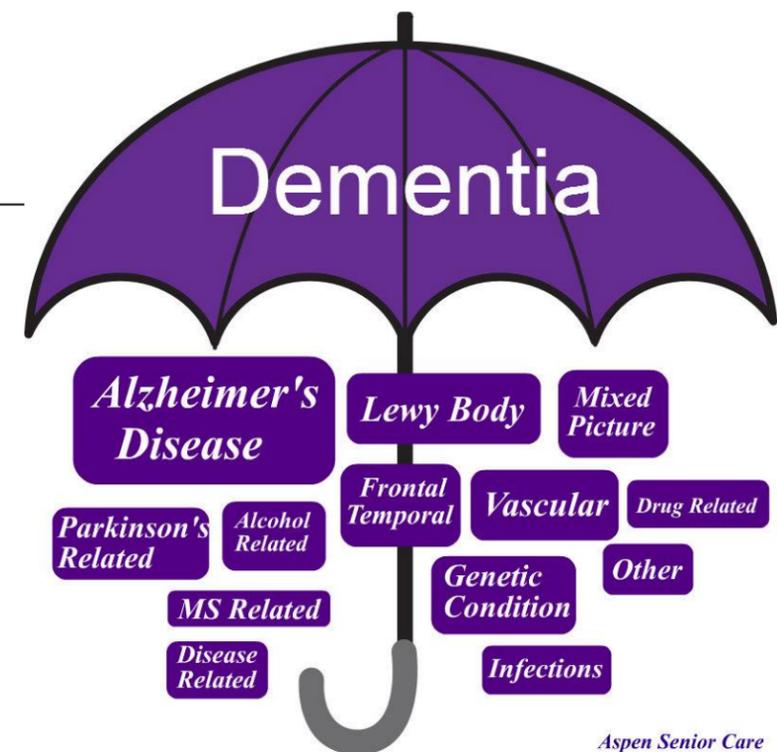
Guess what? NO, THEY DON'T REMEMBER. They are suffering from dementia or as it is being referred to nowadays **Neuro Cognitive Dysfunction**.

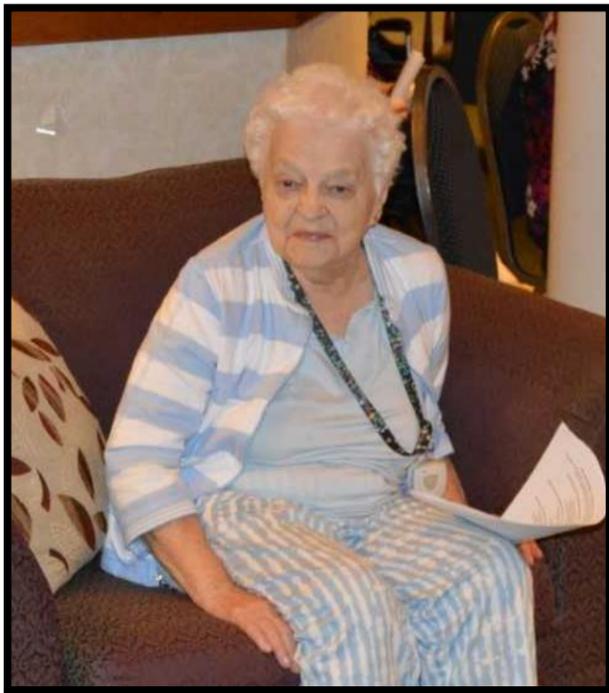
Don't ever say a person is demented. Don't ever say their life is over. It is changing, yes, but far from over.

Look to the person they were before they started to fade. Learn about them so that you are ready for the day when they want to engage with you. They are in there and still have so much joy to share. *ams*

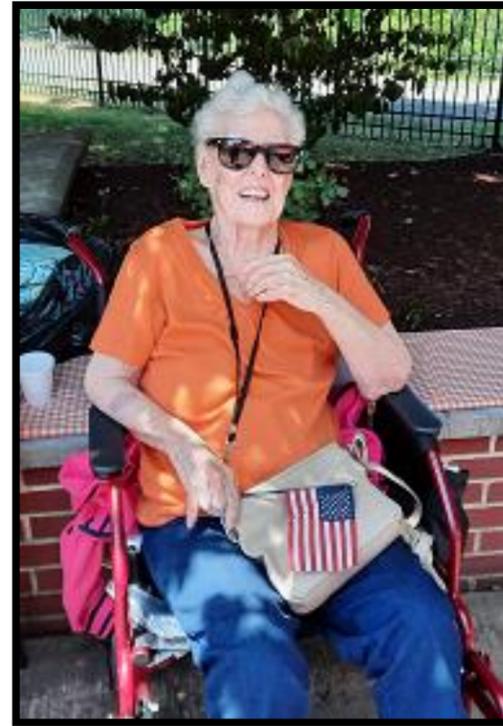
**Dementia doesn't rob a person of their dignity, it's our reaction to it that does.**

**Teepa Snow**





Christmas in July: A surprise visit from a little Christmas tree!



SISTER  
Squad





Mikey Dee will return to us for an evening program August 25 at 6:00. Families are encouraged to attend!



**Bingo is...Not just BINGO!**

Sure, everybody thinks Bingo is a game for the elderly; mindless, boring and out dated.

But guess what? More young people are joining in the fun and Bingo is turning out to be a great therapeutic tool for cognition issues.

Don't under estimate what a person with memory decline can do. I have seen many \*PLWD tear through BINGO and win! And they are joyful about it.

It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it is a fun way to bring people together.

\*person living w dementia

**Chain Reaction**

Your stomach might start to growl when you learn that August 24 is *Iconic American Restaurants Day*. This is a day to appreciate those perennial restaurant chains that have graced the American restaurant landscape for decades. Howard Johnson's. Beefsteak Charlie's. The Red Barn. Sizzler. And yes, even McDonald's.

If some of these restaurants don't sound familiar, that might be because so many iconic restaurants are regional. Friendly's restaurants—137 of them—were once found up and down the East Coast. In the mid-1990s, 200 Luby's Cafeterias could be found in and around Texas. One person's beloved restaurant chain is another person's head-scratcher.

What makes an American restaurant iconic, anyway? A recognizable logo? A classic menu? The sheer number of restaurants? Perhaps an iconic restaurant chain offers a place that provides all the trappings of a home-cooked meal out on the road.

**Upcoming events**

**SENIOR JOYRIDES ARE BACK!!!**

*Special Days in August*

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Joyride to Dollar Tree 9:30
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Creative Poetry Workshop w John Conte 2:00
- 4<sup>th</sup> Spa and Wellness with Debi and John 1:00
- 8<sup>th</sup> Friar Alessandro Concert DVD
- 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Communion with Anne 10:30
- 9<sup>th</sup> Pampering Party w Steph and Mary Kay 1:30
- 10<sup>th</sup> Mckees Rocks History Tour 9:30
- 16<sup>th</sup> Concert on DVD Rosemary Clooney
- 20<sup>th</sup> Elvis and Banana Splits 1:00
- 24<sup>th</sup> Sight Seeing 9:30
- 25<sup>th</sup> Resident Forum 1:00



**Christmas in July**

We celebrated Christmas in July for a couple of days last month and truly had a wonderful time. Montour Brownie Troop 38011 under the leadership of Krista Johnston came on a **Wednesday** Evening and sang Christmas carols dressed in their Christmas sparkle and shine and looking like little Christmas trees. The residents happily sang a long. Along with a lot of joy, the children also brought cookies and spent a little time with residents before heading off into the summer rain.

**Thursday night** Mikey Dee visited, much to the excitement of residents who adore him and performed many favorites, but also some Christmas music so we could sing a long again! He had the audience laughing as usual and the evening ended on such a positive note!

On **Friday** we were going to watch the movie Christmas with the Kranks, but the residents were Christmassed out so we played games instead.

**We were happily reminded that yes, Christmas is a great time of year, but love and family is a year round celebration!!**



This month we said good bye to our Executive Director, Dana Wittman as she moved on to bigger things! She served us successfully under Affinity for almost two years and will be missed.

The incoming management company, Lutheran Senior Life is a faith based organization whose mission is to continually transform and elevate health, wellness, and social services while fostering an *Abundant Life@* for those we serve and those who serve.

Our values compel us to:

- Treat all individuals with **dignity, respect, compassion** and **professionalism** to foster a faith-based, person-centered culture and environment.
- Promote **teamwork** and **collaboration** in everything we do.
- Focus on **innovation** by embracing change and being forward-thinking.
- Commit to exceptional **quality** and to **strive for excellence** by encouraging curiosity, seeking information and creating and accepting solutions that achieve measurable value.
- Strive to be **good stewards** in all of our actions and decisions.
- Sounds like a plan!!

**MLK's Dream**



Organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom expected 100,000 people to attend their demonstration on August 28, 1963. In the end, 250,000 showed up, making it the largest

demonstration in U.S. history. A speech by Martin Luther King Jr. was set to cap the march. King had used the phrase "**I have a dream**" in several speeches leading up to the event, and his advisors cautioned him against leaning too heavily on the theme. But when the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson said, "Tell them about the dream, Martin," King abandoned his drafted speech and launched into what is now one of the most famous speeches in history. The Dream lives on.

