

Alzheimer's? No, You Got the Wrong Guy! (continued)

by Larry Hamilton

1. Educate yourself about ALZ! Find support. Friends, partners, family, professionals, will want to assist you - when the need comes.
2. Be as physically active DAILY as much as you can. Learn every muscle!
3. Be safe! TEACH yourself upon waking to think carefully about what you are going to do NEXT - for the rest of the day. I sort of "kick start" myself by checking the "mood" of mind, body, and picture a "plan" and then carefully start the day in sync with our family. It may seem weird, but I personalize ALZ, and treat it as a vicious, unpredictable opponent who is lazy, but tries to fool me into making silly, maybe even dangerous mistakes. Sometimes we cohabit comfortably because my ALZ sleeps a lot.
4. If your doctor, or those who ride with you, question your driving competence, LISTEN to them and get a driving evaluation. I no longer drive. (I quit with no whining!)
5. If/when your ability to reply in normal conversation pace eventually slows, it's okay to say, "You're too fast for me." DO NOT stop talking because "they" are too impatient to listen. Let your family know that YOU know that you are "slowing down" from your usual speed of mouth.
6. GET MENTALLY CHALLENGED AND HANG ON! For example: Enroll in a class at OLLI in something you've never done before and know ZIP about. Don't quit! Write poems!
7. Perhaps most important, find or create the humor in your situation. Don't let ALZ rule! Laugh at least three times daily, or make someone else laugh.

ALZ has earned universal, eternal condemnation - and I hope others will hear, understand and rally to the cause. Perhaps we may stimulate some breakthrough in research. Who knows? Want to talk? I'm usually near hamphid@gmail.com.

P.S. Some of us experience a terrible rage at the news. "WHY ME?!" Best answer I've found so far is, "I was chosen because I have the strength to help those who follow".

OLLI member Larry Hamilton, an avid runner, still writes the running column he has written for the last 40 years for The State newspaper in Columbia, South Carolina. He recently ran a half-marathon in Kiawah Island, saying his goal was to finish before sundown. He is on the editorial board of Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine..