

GRAND ROUNDS

Thursday, September 29, 2022

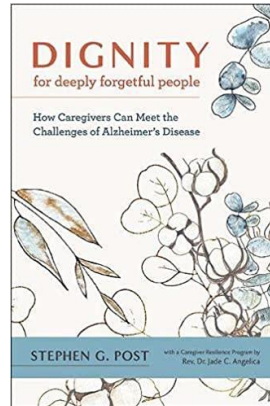
Location: Zoom (please [RSVP](#) for link)

4:30pm- 6:00pm

Dignity for Deeply Forgetful People

Stephen G. Post, PhD

How can we approach a "deeply forgetful" person so as to notice and affirm their worth and dignity? How can we overcome the influence of "hypercognitive" values, with their emphasis on human worth as a matter of linear rationality? Is symbolic rationality actually both more important and enduring? Deeply forgetful people will often identify with a meaningful symbolic object even in the end stages, still somehow sensing that their identity is connected with a doll they clutch or a cowboy hat they wear. Is "dementia" itself a word that invites negative metaphors, like "husk," "shell," and "gone"? Post's phrase "paradoxical lucidity" stresses the surprising moments of relative lucidity as reported by most caregivers, usually stimulated by music, art, nature, smell, and even a dementia dog. He will address the problems that deeply forgetful people sometimes face in avoiding the intensive care unit and hospitalization in favor of hospice care. He will address pre-emptive assisted suicide in Europe and Canada with caution, based on his direct observations. Post shares impressive strategies for better communication with deeply forgetful people, and advocates for a nationally supported caregiver respite program.



STEPHEN G. POST, PhD, is Director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at Stony Brook University Renaissance School of Medicine, where he also serves as Professor of Family, Population, and Preventative Medicine and Head of the Division of Medicine in Society. He is an elected Member of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board of Alzheimer's Disease International and one of only three recipients of the Alzheimer's Association Distinguished Service Award "In Recognition of Outstanding Achievement." His first book, *The Moral Challenge of Alzheimer's Disease* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995/2000) was hailed as a "medical classic of the century" by the *British Medical Journal*. He has been featured internationally in the media, including The Daily Show. Post received the *United States Congress Certificate of Special Recognition*, and shared the Pioneer Medal for Outstanding Leadership in HealthCare with Dr. Edmund D. Pellegrino, MD, the first Dean of Stony Brook School of Medicine, in 2012.

Please RSVP [here](#) or to bioethics@stonybrookmedicine.edu

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