

Chapter 2 – Early Strategies and Support In the early stages of my journey with Alzheimer's, I began to explore what could be done beyond medical treatment. I discovered the importance of routine, mental exercise, and community. In Mossel Bay, our support group shared tips and encouragement. We spoke about memory aids, daily planning, and the importance of acceptance. There were days when fear threatened to overwhelm me, but through group discussions, I learned strategies that helped me navigate. What was once despair turned into purpose: the realization that my experience could help others. Commentary (2025): Modern Alzheimer's care emphasizes not only medical management but also community-based interventions, cognitive therapy, and support groups. Studies show social connection is as important as medication for maintaining quality of life.

Chapter 3 – Breaking the Silence One of the greatest challenges was facing the stigma of Alzheimer's. Too often, families kept silent, and individuals withdrew from society out of fear of embarrassment. I made the decision early on that I would not hide. By speaking openly, I found not shame, but strength. My talks with churches, community centers, and caregivers opened new doors of understanding. I learned that openness creates empathy, and empathy fosters resilience. People began to see me not as a patient, but as a voice of experience. Commentary (2025): Global campaigns now emphasize reducing the stigma of dementia. Awareness days, caregiver training, and patient advocacy have made Alzheimer's part of the public conversation. Yet John's example remains vital: openness is still the best antidote to stigma.