

# Montessori Best Practices for People Living with Dementia

Presented by  
Cameron Camp and Stacey Flint



Center for Applied  
Research in Dementia  
Creating effective memory interventions®



**WINDSONG**  
*Memory Care*

**Montessori Inspired  
Lifestyle® Communities**  
in Oregon | Washington | Colorado

# **We believe...**

- **It is possible to live well with dementia**
- **Persons with dementia can still learn**
- **Independence and purpose matter!**
- **Responsive behaviors in dementia are best addressed through engagement in purposeful activity**



# The Montessori Approach

- Dignity, equality, and respect
- Focus on strengths and the minimal amount of assistance needed to be successful
- Meaningful roles and community involvement
- An environment that promotes engagement

# Paradigm Shift from the Status Quo

- Memory and cognition are highly valued in our culture
- Dementia is viewed through a medicalized lens
- Focus on disease and associated losses
- Emphasis on entertainment and distraction rather than purposeful roles



# What Effects Are Produced?

## Medical Approach

- Overuse of psychotropic medication
- Overuse of hypnotics
- Disengagement & apathy
- High staff turnover
- Decreased physical health
- Dependence
- Low satisfaction
- Decreased quality of life

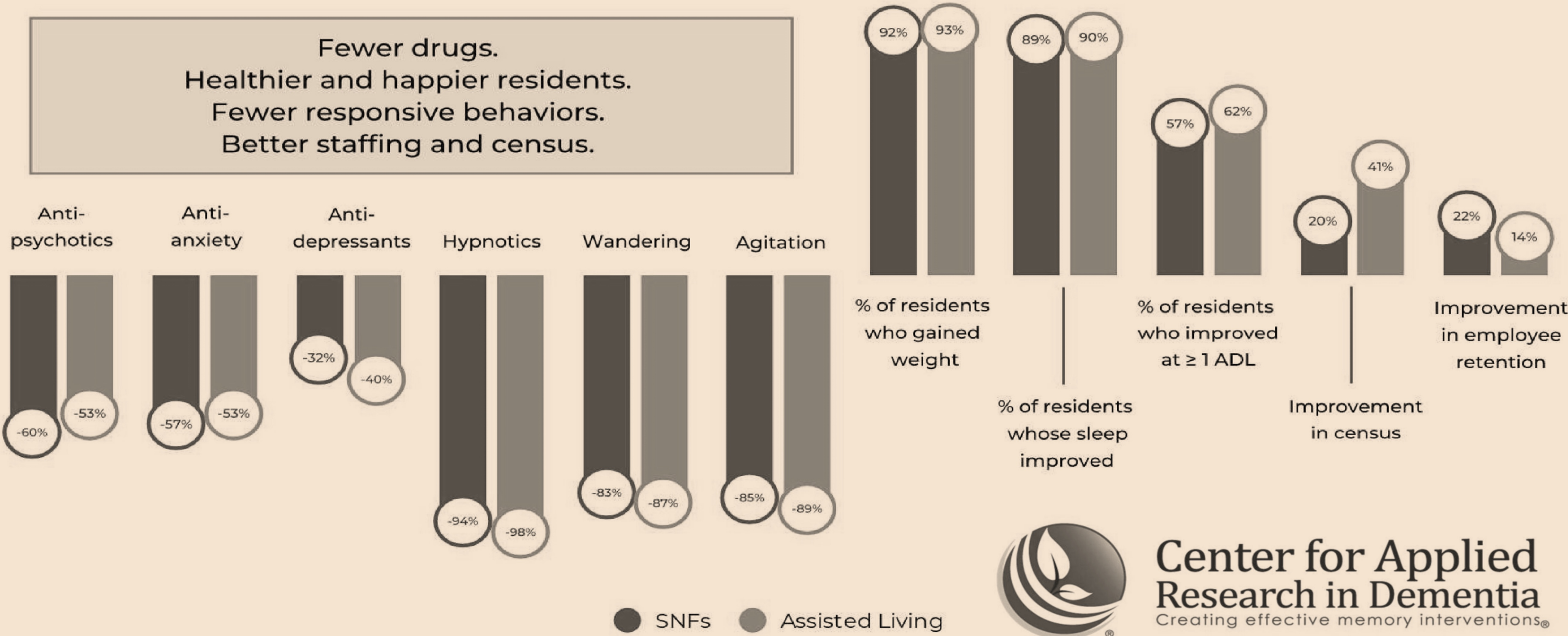
## Rehabilitation Approach

- Reductions in use of psychotropic medications
- Elimination of hypnotics
- Engagement and purpose
- Reduction in staff turnover
- Increased physical health
- Independence
- High satisfaction
- High quality of life

# Better outcomes for Assisted Living and SNFs

Results after 1 year of Montessori-Based Dementia Training across  
7 Assisted Living Facilities and 9 SNFs (Wit-Hoblit, Miller, & Camp, 2016)

Fewer drugs.  
Healthier and happier residents.  
Fewer responsive behaviors.  
Better staffing and census.



**Center for Applied Research in Dementia**  
Creating effective memory interventions®









What Effects Are Produced?





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54%



Search



**Landon Miller** · 1st

Director of Resident Experience at Frontier Management, LLC

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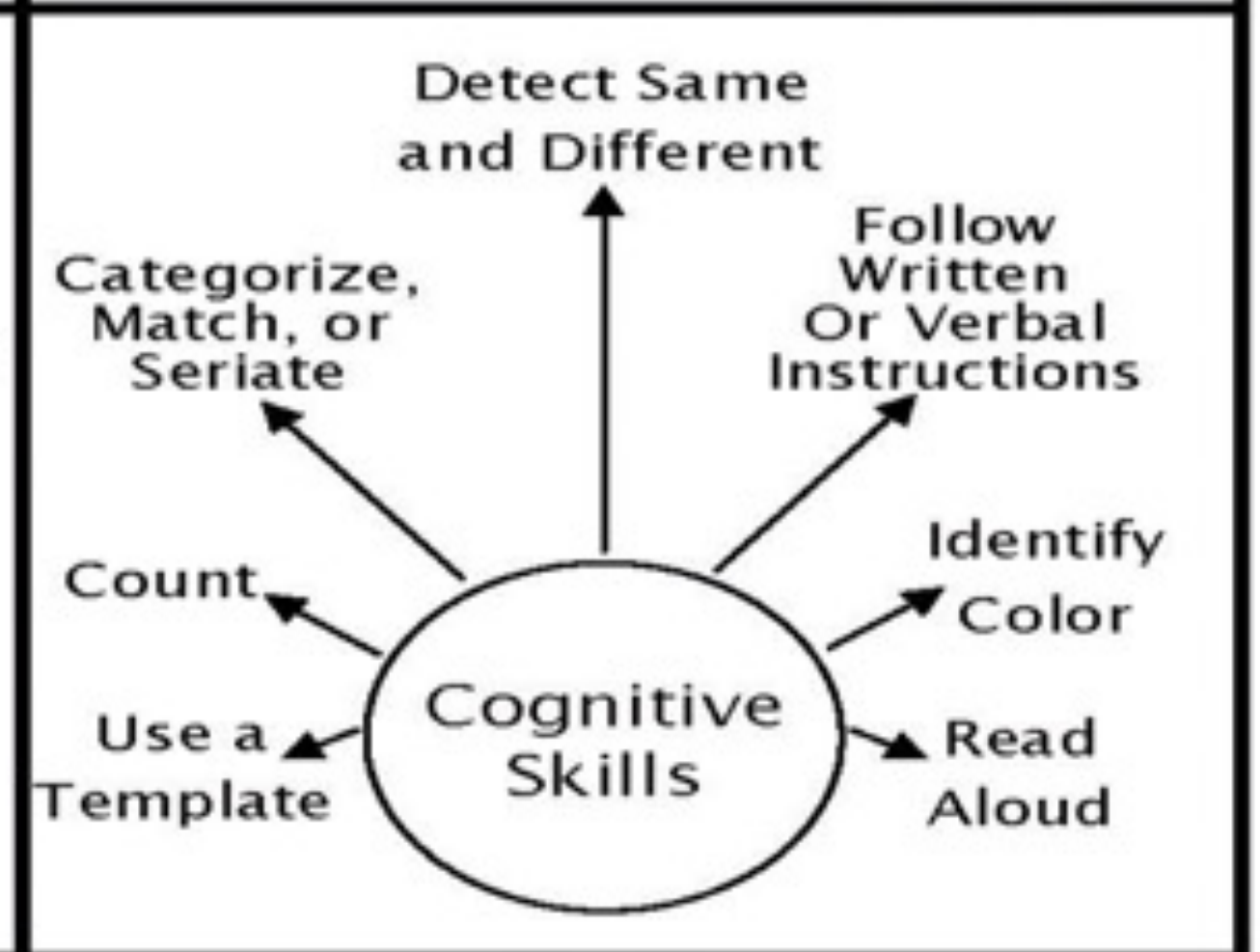
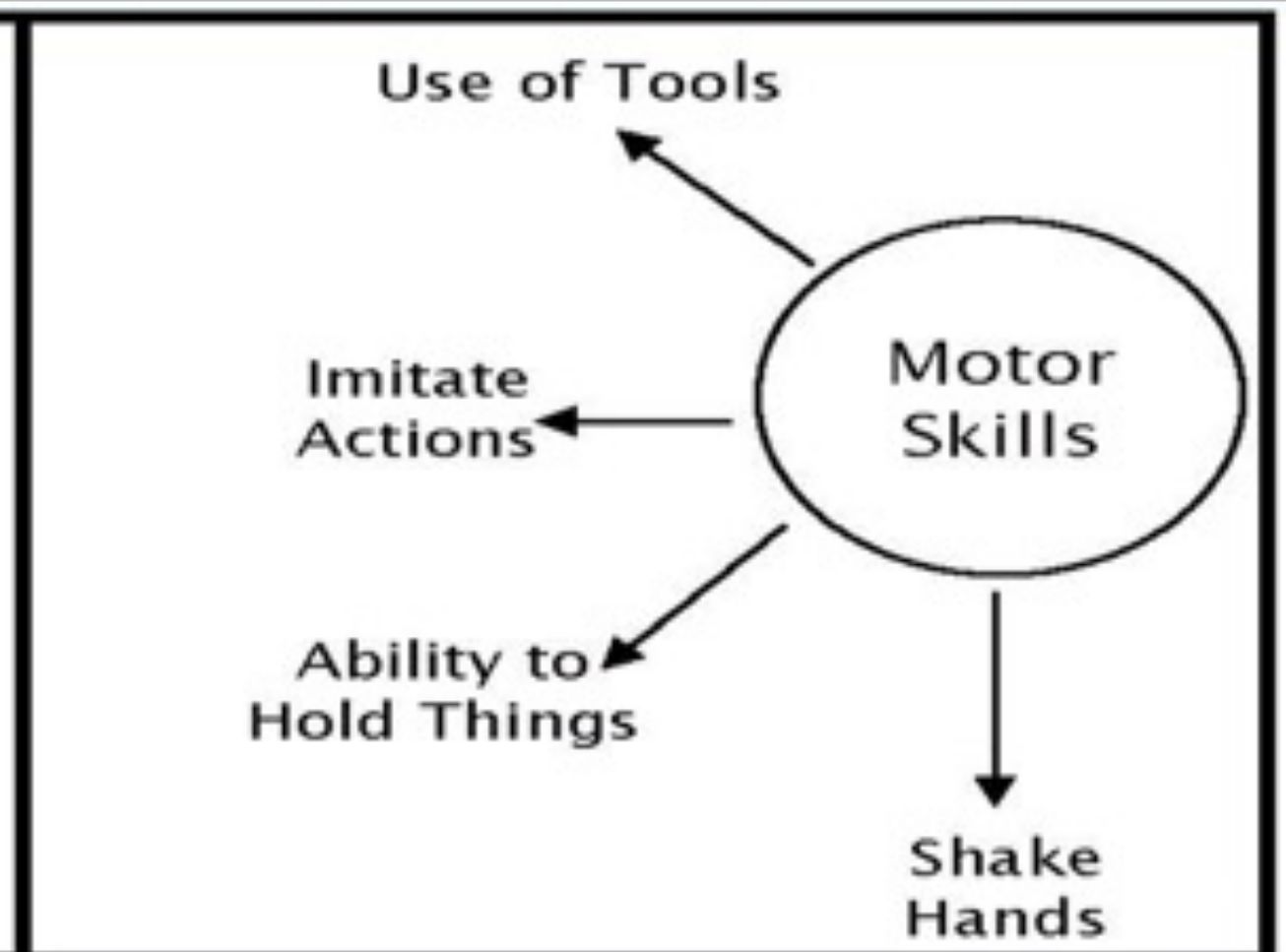
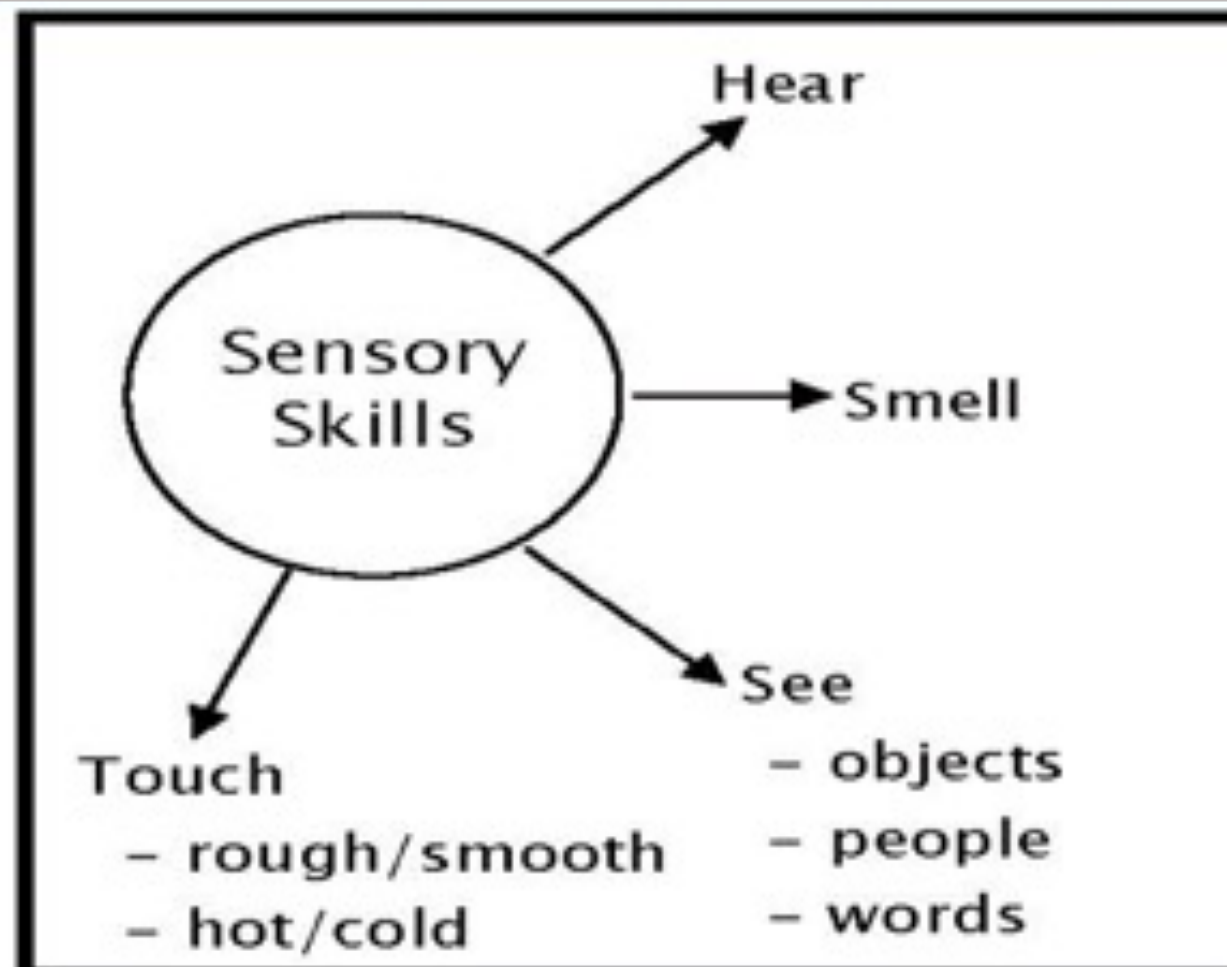
Fearless at 84! Dee represents many of our assisted living residents. As senior living leaders, we must give the power back to the residents we serve and give them ample opportunities to live life on their terms. Just because they are retired does not mean they no longer want to experience new and excited things! We should help give residents like Dee and reason to experience excitement everyday!

[#FrontierCulture](#) [#pheasantpointe](#) [#retireees](#) [#experience](#)  
[#leadership](#) [#empowerment](#)



# Finding Strengths

1. Identify the strength
2. Find a meaningful way to draw on that strength
3. Just TRY it!



# Independence

- Montessori's philosophy was to step back and allow children to be independent.
- "Everything you do for me, you take away from me." - Montessori
- How can we do this with persons with dementia?
  - Find strengths, focus and build on them
  - Utilize "cognitive ramps"
  - Think of dementia as a disability, not a disease.
  - Teach them what they need to be successful





# Purpose and Self-Esteem



# 12 Key Montessori Principles

1. The activity should have a sense of purpose and capture interest
2. Invite the person to participate
3. Offer choice whenever possible
4. Demonstrate more. Talk less.
5. Physical skills. Focus on what the person CAN do.
6. Match your speed to theirs. Slow down!
7. Use visual hints, cues, or templates
8. Give the person something to hold
9. Go from simple to more complex
10. Break a task down into steps
11. To end, ask: "Did you enjoy doing this?" and "Would you like to do this again?"
12. There is no right & wrong. Think engagement.



# The Importance of Activity

- Activity is not just entertainment. Activity is everything we do from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed.
- The activities we do give us a sense of control, a role within our community, and they shape our identity.
- Activities **MUST HAVE PURPOSE**. Leisure and entertainment-based activities are good for a little while, but we need purposeful activity too.



# Responsive Behaviors

- Behaviors associated with dementia
- Commonly viewed as the most challenging aspect of caregiving
- How to manage responsive behaviors?
  - Before it occurs: Prepared environment that meets needs
  - When it occurs: Becoming a “detective” to understand the root cause of the behavior
- When someone is engaged in a meaningful activity, responsive behaviors drop dramatically





# Where is Montessori for Dementia Being Used?

- \* France
- \* New Zealand
- \* Belgium
- \* Switzerland
- \* Ireland
- \* Spain
- \* Greece
- \* Slovenia
- \* Poland
- \* Taiwan
- \* Singapore
- \* Hong Kong
- \* Australia
- \* Canada
- \* Italy
- \* United States

# Where is Montessori for Dementia Going?

- \* Germany
- \* Austria
- \* Mainland China
- \* Japan
- \* Indonesia
- \* Korea
- \* Netherlands
- \* Mexico
- \* Argentina
- \* Norway
- \* Chile
- \* Brazil
- \* ??????????????????????





**Help me do it by myself.**

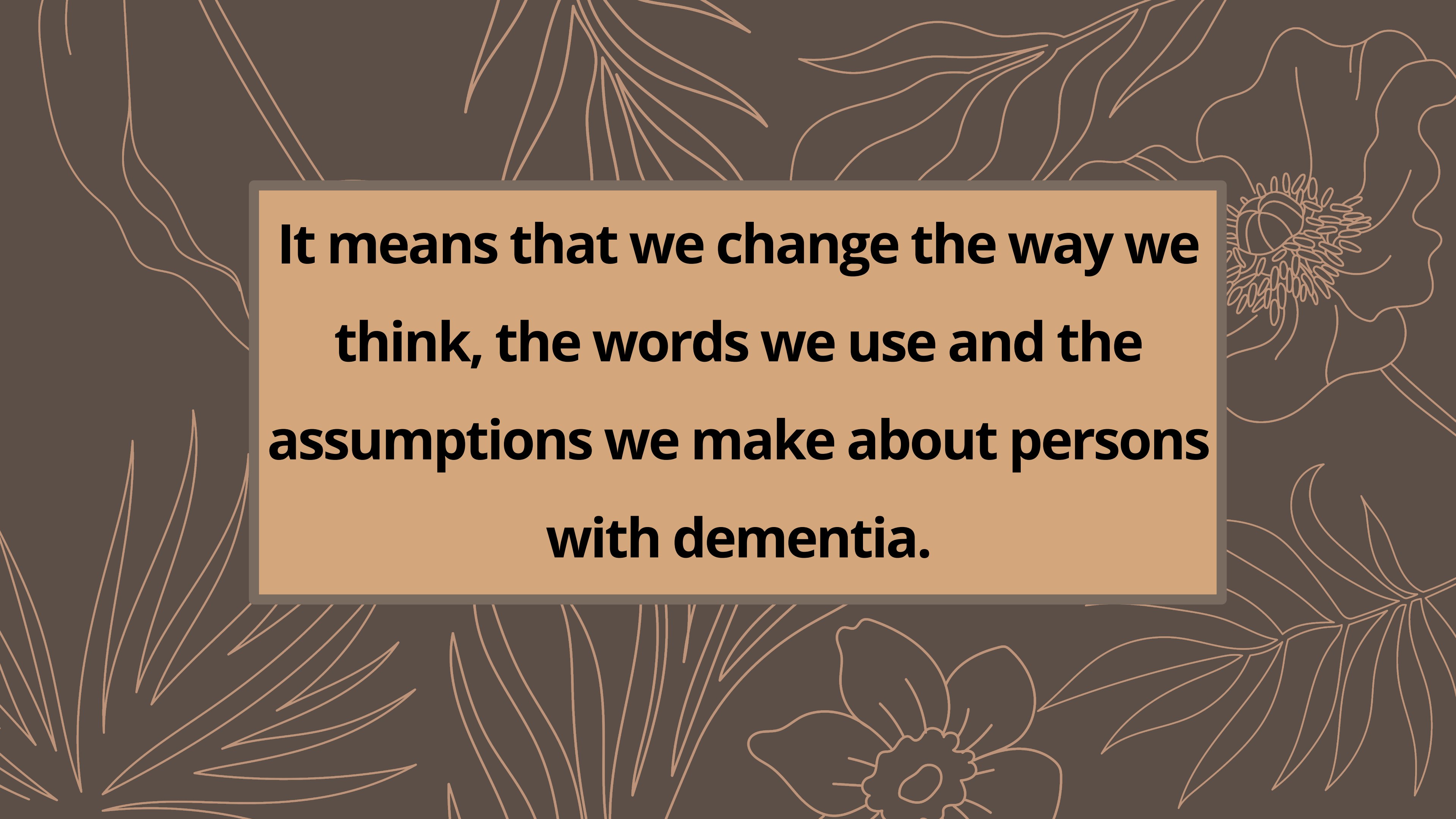
**~ Maria Montessori**



**What does it mean to be a  
Montessori Inspired Lifestyle  
Organization?**



- Reduction in PRN psychotropic medication usage.
- Decrease in falls, resident-to-resident and resident-to-staff incidents.
- More fulfilling living and working environments for all.
- Staff retention due to higher satisfaction.
- Lower “behaviors” and acuity due to increased attention and activity of residents.
- Improved family relationships and ability to engage with their loved one.
- Improved satisfaction surveys from family members and loved one’s.
- Higher organic search engine position.
- Unpaid local (and national) recognition on social media, print media and television.
- More followers on social media and an increase in word-of-mouth traffic.



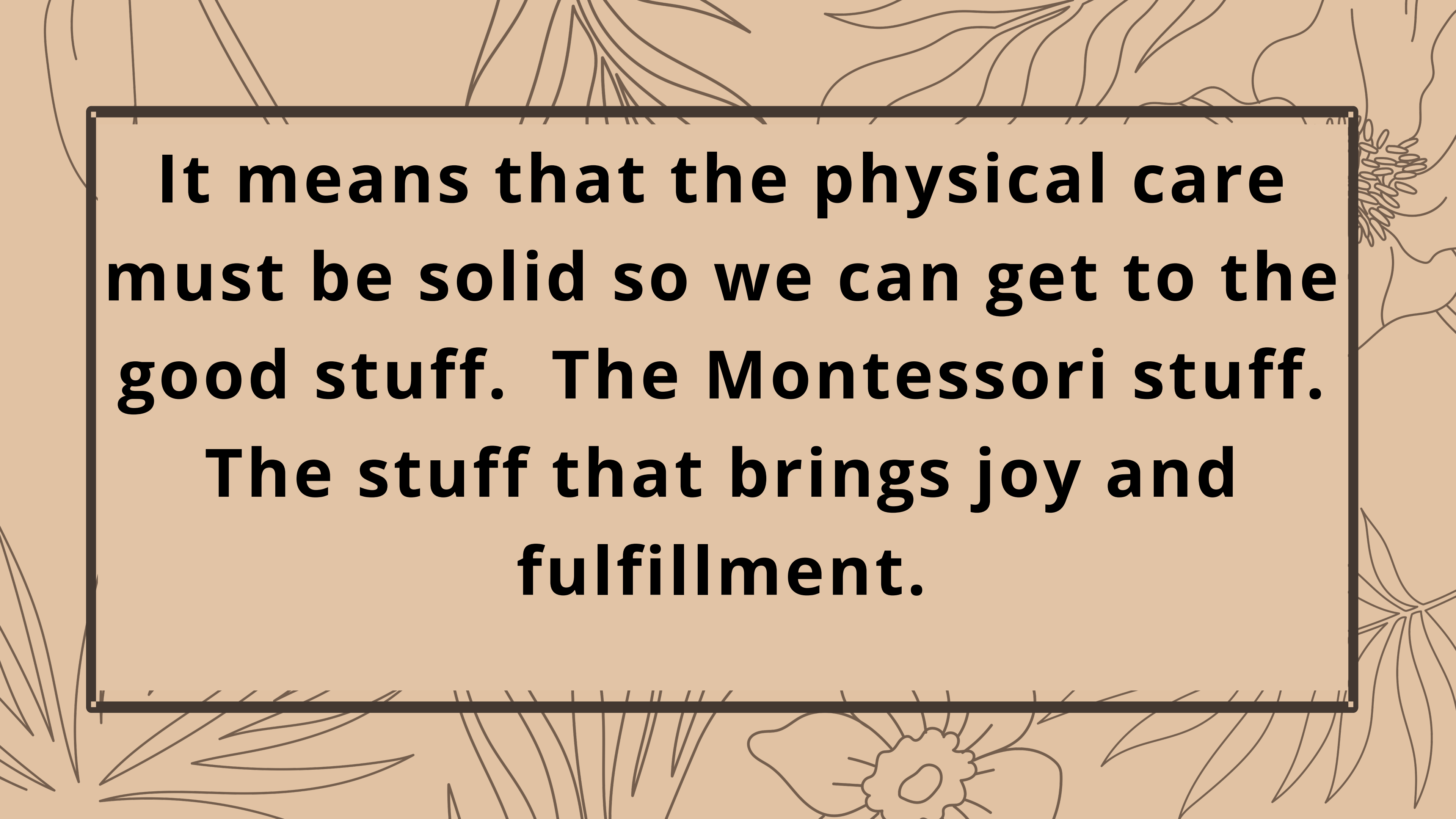
**It means that we change the way we think, the words we use and the assumptions we make about persons with dementia.**



**It means that our  
actions are driven by  
the**

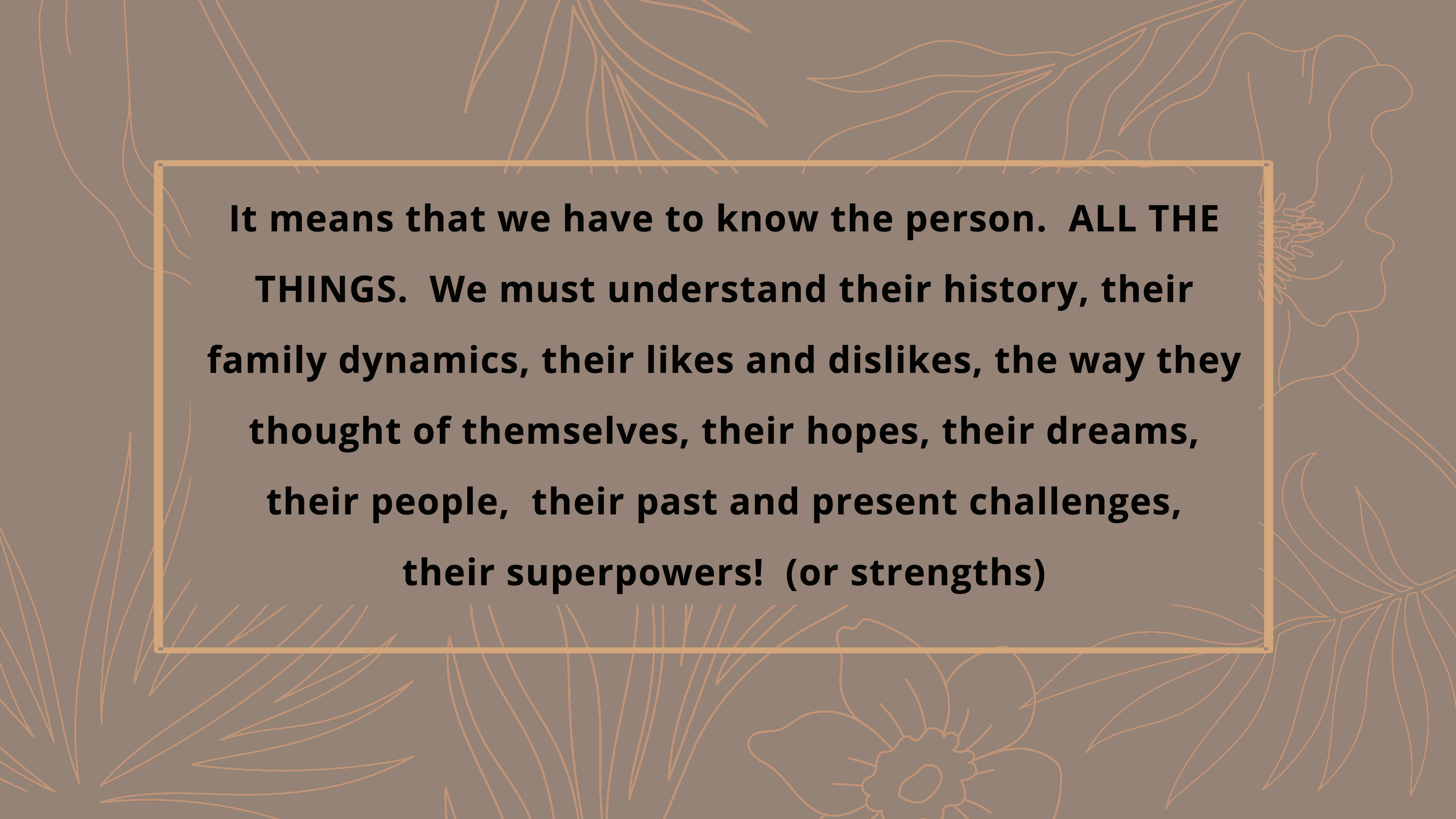
*12 Principles of the  
Montessori Inspired  
Lifestyle*

- **The Activity Should capture the persons interests.**
- **Always invite them to participate.**
- **Offer Choice whenever possible.**
- **Talk Less. Demonstrate More.**
- **Physical Skills: focus on what we CAN do.**
- **Match your speed with the person.**
- **Use visual cues/hints.**
- **Give the person something to hold.**
- **Go from simple tasks to more complex ones.**
- **To end ask: Did you enjoy this? Would you like to do this again?**
- **Break the task down into simple steps to follow.**
- **There is no right or wrong, just engagement!**



**It means that the physical care must be solid so we can get to the good stuff. The Montessori stuff. The stuff that brings joy and fulfillment.**





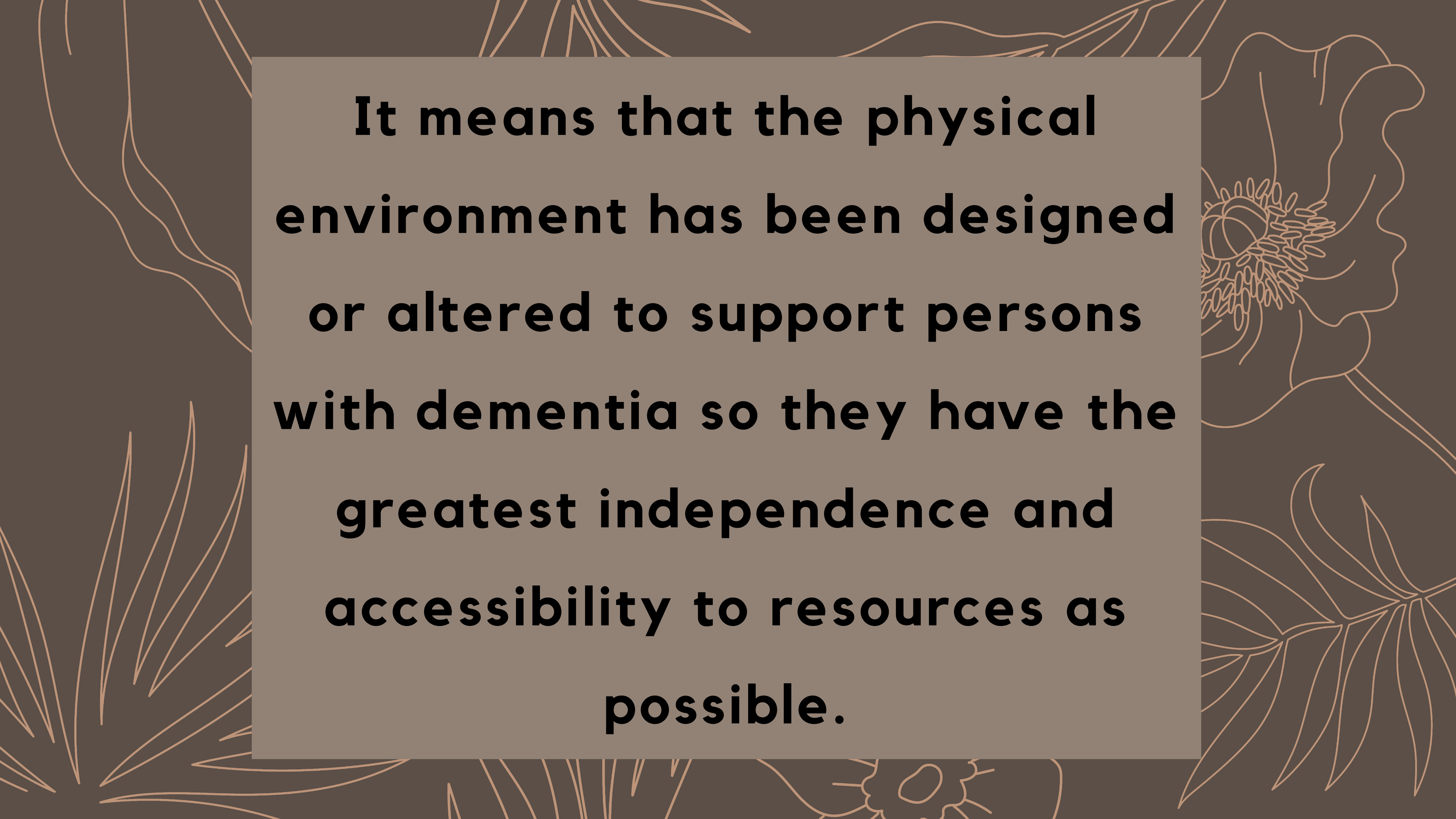
**It means that we have to know the person. ALL THE THINGS. We must understand their history, their family dynamics, their likes and dislikes, the way they thought of themselves, their hopes, their dreams, their people, their past and present challenges, their superpowers! (or strengths)**

# It means that we are inquirers. We ask:



- What would this person be doing if they didn't have dementia? How would they **CHOOSE** to spend their time?
- How would they like to connect with the outside world?
- Help them build a community: Offer opportunities to everyone so they can be a useful member of their community.
- What is the point of this activity? Who benefits? Who chose it?





**It means that the physical environment has been designed or altered to support persons with dementia so they have the greatest independence and accessibility to resources as possible.**

# **It means that the organization is committed to:**

- **Regular and interactive staff training.**
- **Routine in-servicing.**
- **Every employee, manager, and family member is involved with Montessori, not just the activity department.**
- **Family engagement.**
- **Dementia training and information for staff and families.**



**Montessori is our**

**WHY!**

**Our Stories**

My first word of advice is this, say yes. In fact, say yes as often as you can. Saying yes begins things. Saying yes is how things grow. Saying yes leads to new experiences and new experiences will lead to knowledge and wisdom. YES is for ALL people, and an attitude of yes is how you will be able to go forward in these uncertain times.

**~Michael Hogan**



# *Connecting to the Outside World*

**Plant/Hydro Dip Fundraiser**

**Balloon Pet Adoption Fundraiser**

**Junk in Your Trunk Fundraiser**

**Holiday Parade of Lights**

**Rock Exchange Depot**

**Intergenerational**



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a Montessori Inspired Lifestyle Memory Care Community

# Drive-Thru FREE plant pickup

June 12, 19 & 26  
Fridays 1-3 pm

We are  
cultivating community

Come by and say hi and choose a blooming  
plant potted and decorated by our residents

For the safety of staff  
and residents, please  
• stay in your car and  
• wear a mask to pick  
up your plant

Pick up  
a summer  
flowering plant

Donate to our  
Walk to End Alz team  
and get a second plant!

Come grow with  
us and BLOOM!



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ONLY \$5 EACH!

20+ PETS TO CHOOSE FROM











**WINDSONG**  
at Southridge  
Memory Care

*Junk in Your Trunk*

**YARD SALE**

**Friday, June 17**  
**9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

4000 W 24th Ave ~ Kennewick, WA 99338  
Contact Kris to reserve your space today!  
ktodd@windsongmemorycare.com or 509.202.4327  
www.WindSongMemoryCare.com

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alzheimer's association

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lots to browse!  
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**WINDSONG**  
at Southridge

**LEMONADE MENU**

The Chelsea  
"Mango Tango"

The Coralou  
"Lavender"

Clapperton's  
"Comfortably Plum"

Rusty's  
"Teamonade"

The Ruth  
"Strawberry Mint"















*Why Not?*



*Thank you for attending our session today.*

**Thank you!  
Questions?**

**Email us at:**

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**For more information, check us out at  
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