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Why Picasso and Mozart May Hold the Keys To Alzheimer's Breakthrough

Hearthstone Reveals Revolutionary Approach to Alzheimer's Treatment

Today, over 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's Disease; these numbers are expected to grow to 16 million by 2050. The disease cannot be cured, but it can be treated. And while most, especially in the established medical industry, think of pharmacological solutions by default, a new therapeutic philosophy shows that *better* results can be achieved *without* the hazards and side effects of mind-altering drugs alone.

In his new book, *I'm Still Here: A Breakthrough Approach to Understanding Someone Living with Alzheimer's*, Dr. John Zeisel, President of *Hearthstone Alzheimer's Care Center*, provides new insight into the intricacies of the Alzheimer's mind, and gives caregivers valuable tools to help a person LWA (living with Alzheimer's) to function with the disease—tools that, surprisingly, include a reliance on Art, Drama and Music.

For the last 15 years, John Zeisel, PhD, has spearheaded a movement that embraces a “comprehensive Alzheimer's treatment,” which does not just rely on mind-altering drugs, but on innovative, even controversial, methods to stimulate the Alzheimer's mind. The *stunning* results in *Hearthstone's* care centers testify to the treatment's efficacy both in defining the challenges faced by the Alzheimer brain, and in improving the Alzheimer brain's cognition and communicative functions.

I'm Still Here's basic premise—that *the Alzheimer's mind is a working, thriving, and creative mind*—has led to revolutionary therapy techniques that even family and friends of the person LWA can practice. By understanding that the Alzheimer's brain can still learn and process information in unique ways, caregivers can interact with a person LWA as a functioning human being, not just as a “patient” or “victim.”

According to Zeisel, the typical pharmaceutical treatments focus on secondary symptoms only, rather than the primary. By focusing on the changes in the brain that cause primary symptoms, people with Alzheimer's are better equipped to deal with their caregivers and vice versa. The unconventional methods prescribed by the *Hearthstone Institute* are designed to stimulate the brain to react to its changing patterns through creative endeavors. For example:

- Performing arts such as drama and theater to stimulate strong emotional cognition.
- Trips to art museums that inspire patients to create their own works of art help channel frustration and manage temperament
 - Zeisel has created programs that are currently in place at the *MOMA* and the *Louvre*.
- Writing and performing poetry to aid in communication.
- Participation in music or reacting to a familiar film clips to aid in memory recovery.

Studies show that on average, Alzheimer's takes 10 years to develop, and the person with Alzheimer's can live 10 years or longer with the condition. Zeisel says that ignoring quality of life for the Alzheimer's patient during those 20+ years—waiting for a wonder drug that may never develop—is not an option. Written in an accessible, easy-to-read style, *I'm Still Here* is a fascinating and revolutionary approach to treating the (as-of-yet) incurable disease.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Zeisel, President and co-founder of *Hearthstone Alzheimer Care, Ltd.*, has a background that includes sociology and architecture. He received a Ph.D. from *Columbia University* and a Loeb Fellowship at *Harvard's Graduate School of Design*. He serves on committees for the *Massachusetts Alzheimer's Association*, the *New York City Office of Aging's Alzheimer's Unit*, the *International Healthcare Institute*, and *Centre for Health Design*.

John is on the faculty of *Harvard University's Department of Architecture*, and received a fellowship at the *National Institute for Advanced Studies* near The Hague in the Netherlands. He has also taught at *Yale* and *McGill Universities* and at *Harvard University's Graduate School of Design*. In 1994 he lectured at the *University of Minnesota Architecture School* as its Cass Gilbert Visiting Professor.

Before co-founding *Hearthstone*, John consulted to the senior housing industry, carrying out needs analyses, strategic planning, facility design programs, design review and market feasibility studies.

Dr. Zeisel has carried out research into the needs of seniors through basic and applied research, including post-occupancy evaluations and policy research studies. He was Principal Investigator on a three-year National Institute on Aging study to determine the relationship between environmental design characteristics in Alzheimer's Special Care Units and health and well-being outcomes of residents in such settings.

John is the author of *Independence through Interdependence: Congregate Housing for Older People* as well as two volumes of design guidelines, *Lowrise Housing for Older People* and *Midrise Elevator Housing for Older People*. Numerous articles on and by Dr. Zeisel have appeared in US and European publications. In 1990 the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), an organization of over 40 million members, published his consumer guide - *Selecting Retirement Housing*.

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