

Placing Human Dignity On Center Stage

A Performance Artist's Odyssey Toward Person-Centered Care

Kareen King, MA, RDT
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"Hello"

Each original song in this presentation features actual words and perspectives from the residents I served while working as a Drama Therapist and Activity Supervisor at Brookside Retirement Community.



Live, Dream, Thrive – What's Possible

- Song: "Not Dead Yet"
 - Kenny
 - Leona
 - Margaret
- Song: "The Person in the Picture Ain't Me"
 - Jewell
- Song: "Too Old to Cry"
 - Euleta

"Agile"

"I'm just as agile as the rest of you."

Emilou



My Final Words To You

Sometimes when you're on the fly
Opportunities will pass you by
And while you're rushing on your way
Stop a minute, 'cause it just might pay

To take a second look

Take a second look

(Excerpt from "Take a Second Look," by Kareen King, copyright 2008)

First Lovin' I've Had in Days

Kareen M. King, MA, RDT

I spotted 101-year-old Jewell in her merrywalker. She reached out her hand to me as I approached her in the hallway. She was wearing a lovely aqua pantsuit.

"Hi Jewell. You look beautiful."

"What can I do for you?" she replied.

"How about giving me one of your great arm massages? Let's go into the dining room where we can sit down together, o.k.?"

So Jewell and I sat down together and she began massaging my arm. One of my coworkers offered her a cheese cracker which she eagerly accepted.

"I've got a partner somewhere."

"Tell me about your partner, Jewell."

"I don't know where he's at. He's a huntin' his way around town."

"How long have you been married?"

"Let's see. . ."

"More than five years?"

"No. Less than that."

"Are you missing him?"

"Yes."

"What do you miss about him?"

"His constant yackin.'"

"What does he yack about?"

"Me bein' so slow."

"You slow? That's hard to believe. How old are you?"

"Forty."

"Do you like being forty?"

"No."

"Are you happy?"

"In a way yes, and in a way no."

"What part is happy?"

"The part that goes by and never asks questions."

"Is it o.k. that I ask you questions?"

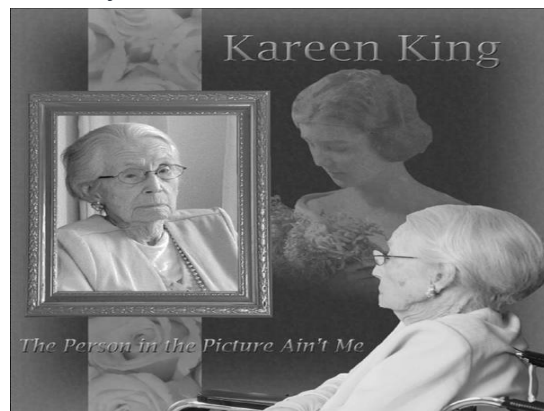
"Yes."

After Jewell consumed her second cracker, I took a wet towel and wiped off her lips, then brushed the crumbs off her clothes.

"Jewell, I'm going to have to leave now and get a few things done. I sure have enjoyed being with you. I hope we can get together again soon," I declared as I reached around her neck and gave her a hug.

"Thank you sooooo much. That's the first lovin' I've had in days," she declared.

(an excerpt from Kareen's blog, June 16, 2008, www.kareenking.com)



Validation is about entering the reality of a disoriented elder. (Naomi Feil is the founder and developer of Validation)

The "I-Thou" relationship is about honoring the sacredness of another human being and experiencing an authentic relationship between two people. (Martin Buber is the author of *I and Thou*)

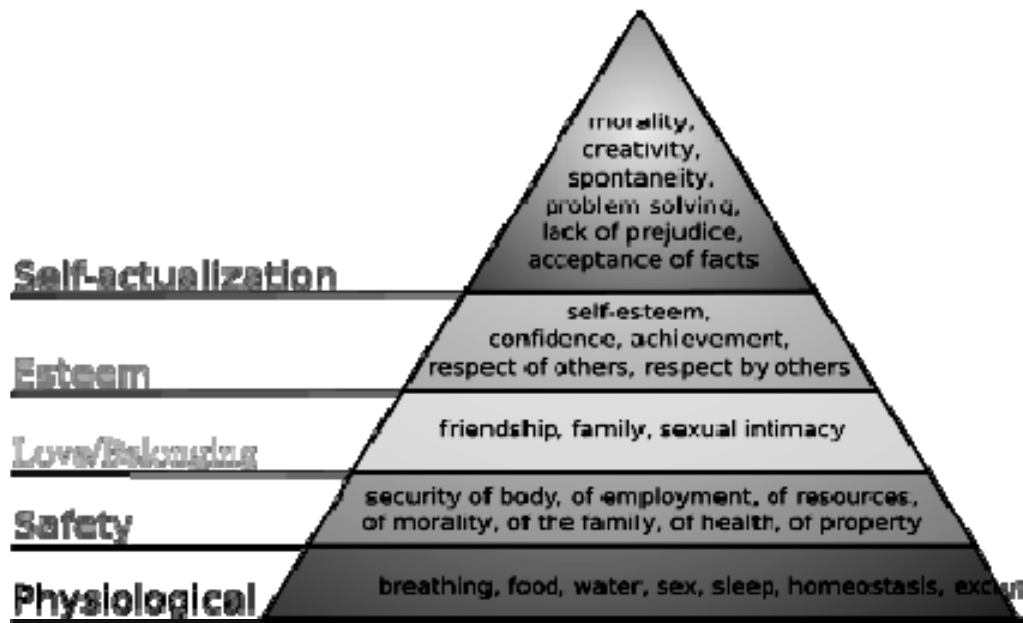
EXCEPTIONS TO MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Kareen King, MA, RDT

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Some individuals place certain needs above others. Van Gogh, for instance suffered from mental illness, yet was able to create magnificent works of art. Jakob Trachtenburg perfected a mathematical system and Viktor Frankl developed logotherapy while suffering in concentration camps.

On another spectrum, there is the individual who refuses to have his physiological needs met because of deprivation of esteem and love/belonging, an experience I witnessed first-hand in my work as a drama therapist in a skilled nursing facility.



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The following is an excerpt from "Meet Jewell," as cited in Kareen's blog at www.kareenking.com.

"Jewell, what do you need?" I inquired.

"I need someone to love me."

I hugged her.

"Honey, that's not the kind of lovin' I need," she responded.

"What kind do you need?" I countered.

"I want the kind that shines above all others."

"What kind is that?"

"I don't know. If I did, I'd tell you."

Just recently, I heard a coworker tell Jewell, "I love you very much."

"That's very, very, very thrilling," Jewell responded. "Can I depend on that?"

For additional stories, anecdotes, activity ideas, and resources, explore Kareen's blog by visiting www.kareenking.com.