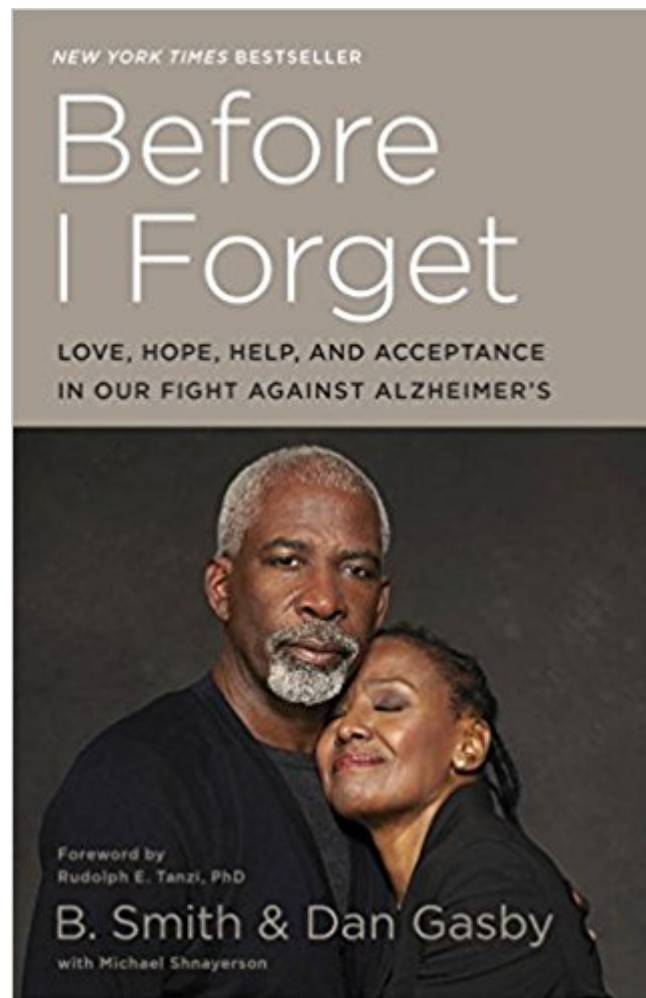




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Before I Forget: Love, Hope, Help, And Acceptance In Our Fight Against Alzheimer's



Synopsis

"I know where I'm going. I'm still myself. I just can't remember things as well as I once did. So on short trips, I work hard not to be confused. I'll say to myself, What are we going to do? How long are we staying? It's like I'm talking to my other self—the self I used to be. She tells me, This is what we need to buy—not that. I'm conscious of that other self guiding me now." —**Â** Restaurateur, magazine publisher, celebrity chef, and nationally known lifestyle maven, B. Smith is struggling at 66 with a tag she never expected to add to that string: Alzheimer's patient. **Â** She's not alone. Every 67 seconds someone newly develops it, and millions of lives are affected by its aftershocks. **Â** B. and her husband, Dan, working with Vanity Fair contributing editor Michael Shnayerson, unstintingly share their unfolding story. Crafted in short chapters that interweave their narrative with practical and helpful advice, readers learn about dealing with Alzheimer's day-to-day challenges: the family realities and tensions, ways of coping, coming research that may tip the scale, as well as lessons learned along the way. **Â** At its heart, *Before I Forget* is a love story: illuminating a love of family, life, and hope. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Books for a Better Life Award nominee "...An enduring love story." - Publisher's Weekly starred review "The vulnerability, courage, and honesty in *Before I Forget* are heart-opening. Fear can be paralyzing yet B. and Dan beautifully demonstrate that there is a different way to approach this stealthy invader. Alzheimer's needs to come out of

the shadows, and this book is an important step. —**Dr. David Satcher**, Former Surgeon General of the United States

Shriver "What an amazing couple and what an amazing book! It is medically and scientifically accurate, and yet places this devastating disease in the context of a beautiful and intimate relationship. We must do better as a community, in our families and within our government in responding to this disease. African-Americans are especially called upon to get more involved in the research as this disease disproportionately impacts us." —**Dr. David Satcher**, Former Surgeon General of the United States

B. and her husband Dan made it to the top by breaking through societal barriers. Now they are facing down her heart-breaking diagnosis and fighting to live each day with love and dignity. Read *Before I Forget* to understand how Alzheimer's tests both patient and family. Admire their courage, honesty, and how they use their celebrity to advocate for research and prevention. —**Meryl Comer**, president of the Geoffrey Beene Foundation Alzheimer's Initiative and author of *Slow Dancing With A Stranger: Lost and Found in the Age of Alzheimer's*

"An important story, told with utter honesty. With Alzheimer's, all of us are at risk, though for reasons no one quite understands yet, African-Americans are especially vulnerable - a message this book conveys powerfully. *Before I Forget* is a deeply personal call to arms. —**Harry Belafonte**

"For those who have Alzheimer's now, there are lifestyle measures that may allay some symptoms of the disease and measures that B. and Dan report on in this helpful and poignant book. There is also so much that family caregivers can learn about how to deal with Alzheimer's and its many emotional challenges, hardships and, if one is looking, the state of grace it sometimes brings. —**Rudolph E. Tanzi**, Ph.D.

"This book is an act of courage and generosity. Courage is reflected both in the extraordinary strength Dan and B. have displayed over the course of the disease and their willingness to be honest at times brutally so about its progression. This honesty results in an intelligent and accessible work of insight, wisdom, and advice to all who will be touched in some way by this terrible disease. The "Lessons Learned" sections would alone make it required reading. It is a clarion call for better research, better treatment, and above all else better understanding of one of the great health care crises of our time. I commend this to everyone because all of us have or will be touched by this disease. *Before I Forget* is destined to be a landmark in the conquest of Alzheimer's." —**Neil Kerwin**, Ph.D., President, American University, and Professor of Public Administration and Policy

"A brave and important story, told with candor, love and useful information. *Before I Forget* offers a real glimpse into what Alzheimer's actually looks like in a loved one, and sheds a hopeful light on why this disease needs much more research,

funding, and attention." — Kimberly Williams-Paisley, actor and author of *Where the Light Gets In*

"Before I Forget" is Dan Gasby's valentine to his wife, B. Smith, courageously lifts the veil that shields those with Alzheimer's. It is a moving testimony to the power of love and the true meaning of what "in sickness and health" really means. *Before I Forget* is, quite simply, unforgettable." — George and Trish Vradenburg, Co-Founders, *USA Against Alzheimer's*

"A powerful portrait of Alzheimer's, marked by strong emotions and often bleak honesty." — *The Washington Post*

"You'd be hard-pressed to find a book that will affect you more. Without being a spoiler, there is no happy ending to this book, save but the sheer love that makes it soar. If you're an Alzheimer's caretaker, or are facing the disease yourself, you absolutely will want this memoir. *Before I Forget* is a book you never will." — Terri Schlichenmeyer

"They share an inspirational message of hope while issuing a rallying cry to the African-American community which suffers from Alzheimer's at over twice the rate of whites. Above all, the memoir is a reaffirmation of a couple's undying love." — Kam Williams

"Barbara Smith (aka B. Smith) and Dan Gasby have given an incredible gift to the community by writing this book." — Shawn Katterman, PhD, *Midwestern Psychological Association*

B. SMITH is a true American success story. Born in rural western Pennsylvania and faced with what would be for most insurmountable obstacles, Barbara "B." Smith was one of the first supermodels. She wrote three highly acclaimed cookbooks and over a 28-year period founded three successful restaurants, while also launching a nationally syndicated television show and a magazine. She is still the only African-American woman with home products distributed exclusively at Bed Bath & Beyond. She is also a recipient of numerous national and local awards for helping those in need.

DAN GASBY has been a television media sales executive and a television producer for both network & syndicated programs. He helped publish and launch B.'s eponymous magazine and helped cofound her lifestyle retail brand.

MICHAEL SHNAYERSON is a long-time contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*. He is also the author or co-author of six books, among them entertainer and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte's *My Song: A Memoir of Art, Race and Defiance*, published in 2011. He has recently published an unauthorized biography of New York governor Andrew Cuomo, *The Contender*. From the Hardcover edition.

A special thank you to Crown Publishing and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest

review. BEFORE I FORGET a courageous, rare, and bold memoir of the painful truth, a personal journey and fight of early-onset Alzheimer's; a supermodel, restaurateur, publisher, and celebrity chef, B. Smith. With incredible insights, education, and impeccable research from husband Dan Gasby, and beautifully written by Vanity Fair contributing editor and master storyteller, Michael Shanayerson keeping you glued to the pages, as if a work of fiction versus non-fiction, with wit, honesty, and sensitivity. A beautiful love story, which will melt your heart. Top Non-Fiction Books of 2016 • A Must Read! America's super couple steps out boldly to use their status and connections as advocates to help fight this terrible disease, for more awareness, research, and education-- for a cure. Another critical reason for stepping out to take action, is finding and testing new drugs. They are expensive, like \$1 billion for each new candidate. So it is important people take part in clinical trials. Alzheimer's is the most under recognized threat to public health in the twenty-first century. The two most forward thinking states with driving forces are NC and Minnesota (education and activism on Alzheimer's). There is much to learn and need for education and continued research in this fight. The easiest way is The Brain Registry • you do not have to have Alzheimer's to sign up or participate in a brain study trial. There have been many fiction books written today, tackling Alzheimer's; however, this is the first book I have read which really hits home with a realistic everyday walk from a caregiver's point of view, a husband, a daughter and a patient, suffering from this frightening disease. Nine months before the book, Barbara was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. As Dan reiterates in the memoir, they appreciate works of fiction, like Still Alice, and other books, which create social awareness helping educate communities about Alzheimer's and hopefully lessening the stigma of the disease. A disease that kills brain cells. The cells it kills first govern memory, (short-term), as the first indication. As it progresses, the long term memory diminishes, too. Eventually Alzheimer's affect those parts of the brain that control actions and processes we take for granted from the five senses to physical coordination to swallowing to continence. It is unfortunately, both progressive, and so far, irreversible. Some 5.2 million Americans are living with this disease each year, with a new case every sixty-seven seconds. What was the sixth leading cause of death in the US has now moved up to third, just behind heart disease and cancer. One in nine Americans age sixty-five or older has it: 11% of the senior population; up to 33% for all Americans eighty-five and older. The scary number is 200,000 Americans under sixty-five have Alzheimer's. Early-onset or familial

Alzheimer's disease, as opposed to late-onset, which is everyone sixty-five and older. When you think about 200,000 households where a family member under sixty-five wakes up in a fog every morning, and drifts through the day needing constant guidance from a loved one or hired caregiver. Plus, out of this number, two-thirds are women. A woman of sixty-five has a 1-in-6 chance of getting Alzheimer's at some point in her remaining years versus a man's 1-in-11 chance. The difference is in part because women tend to live longer, and the aging process seems to exacerbate the genetic and lifestyle factors associated with the disease. Alzheimer's changes everything around you. Where the book really delves into the statistics, is the alarming number of African Americans getting Alzheimer's. They are twice as likely as Caucasians to get it. Ten percent over sixty-five have it. By the age of eight-five, half of all African Americans have it. Diabetes is also higher in the black community, and they tend to ignore the symptoms of Alzheimer's longer than whites as there is a stigma to Alzheimer's greater than for most diseases. B. Smith is a perfect role model and spokesperson, to speak out for the African American community; to recognize symptoms, and take action sooner. From anger, forgetfulness, memory lapses, thoughtless, emotional ups and downs, preoccupied, unresponsive, wandering, mood swings, and the seven stages (or the three-main stages). Dan tells of his love story when the couple met, their twenty-one-year marriage, and how they have worked together to build their brand and their lives. Their restaurants, their business, their dreams, and their lives. Now struggling between proper care, fearful to allow her to be out of his sight, some scary hours when B goes missing, and her need for independence--fighting against an in-home health caregiver. The patient is being robbed of their independence, making them feel even worse. (B walked the streets of Manhattan for seventeen hours in high heels, lost) amazing. We also hear from B. Smith - her feelings, emotions, fears, confusion, routines, loss of human dignity, mobility, simple pleasures, and her need to be alone. Putting pride and privacy aside, Dan's challenge as her husband and caregiver is to immerse himself in the present with her. Not to expect her to remember, just be there with her. Join the journey. They are on a journey you cannot prevent or block. The signs of Alzheimer's:

- Agitation: nervousness, restless
- Agnosia: Difficulty with processing sensory information; inability to recognize familiar objects, tastes, sounds, and other sensations
- Amnesia: Loss of memory
- Anomia: Inability to remember names
- Anxiety: excessive worry or concerns
- Apathy: Indifference; inability to feel optimistic and happy
- Aphasia: inability to express oneself through

speech. Apraxia: Loss of fine motor skills. By stepping out to tell their story, B and Dan have joined a campaign of doctors, scientists, and policy makers, among other who see 2020 as the target date for managing Alzheimer's and are doing all they can to hit that target. Not for curing it, not for preventing it, not yet for either of those. Just for catching it earlier, and maybe keeping it in check so that patients live longer and keep some semblance of the lives they had before this awful disease afflicted them. We all know someone who suffers from Alzheimer's. I have a favorite aunt; she cannot be away from her husband for a second. She does not recognize anyone else for him; not even her own children. Same as B. Smith in the story, she does not want an outside caregiver, thereby putting burdens upon the family. From driving, replaying questions, anger, guilt, resentment, self-pity, misplacing things, memory loss, late to appointments, horrors, sleepwalking, binge late night eating, denial, to hoarding. The aging of the baby boomers means the numbers are going up. A patient spends millions of dollars a year on care giving alone, in addition to the emotional cost. Sadly Medicare does not pay for a PET scan.

"Time is elastic for that," is the word I use. A moment stretches to infinity; a day shrinks to no time at all. In public, she is as poised as ever. Alzheimer's is perfect for celebrities. They greet people without being expected to know who those people are. The painful truth is that the woman who's greeting them so warmly has no idea what day of the week it is, or year. To a patient with the long-term human tragedy of Alzheimer's -- five minutes can seem like an hour; an hour can seem like five minutes. One person has the disease, but everyone in the family is affected. No one's life is ever the same. Not only thinking about managing them, but managing your own life in tandem with theirs; building in the time to be a daily caregiver, but also scheduling time off to replenish yourself and be able to help your loved on the next day. Inspiring and enlightening, a compelling and powerful read. I love how the book was broken out, easy to read from diet, health, insurance, tests, spirituality, research, Medicare, alternative therapies, yoga, exercise, patience, and unconditional love.

Dan: "I've come to realize Alzheimer's is like a tornado moving through a town. It destroys some buildings and leaves other untouched. You can thank God for the ones that were spared, or you can shake your fist at fate. As far as I'm concerned, it's the luck of the neurological draw, brain cell by brain cell, plaque by plaque. With Alzheimer's, the past is the best place to dwell. You want to linger over everyone one of those sweet, long-ago scenes. They're where happiness still resides.

“There is still a living spirit inside the diminished person, the spirit of someone you love. You will laugh and cry! The number of Americans with Alzheimer’s will grow from more than five million today and to as many as sixteen million by mid-century. Caring for people with Alzheimer’s will cost our country twenty trillion in today’s dollars over this same period. Join their Journey for Hope, Help, and Acceptance in Our Fight Against Alzheimer’s. They are thinking of all the others who come after the beautiful people with dwindling minds. Join to help push, pressure, and politicize until we get a breakthrough. Thank you, for this incredible story! Alarming. Eye-opening.

I think this book is something everyone young and old should read, to get a better understanding about memory loss.

Very well written and sensitive personal account of a husband’s love for his ill wife. Having dined at B Smith’s restaurant for years, I never was fortunate enough to meet her but I felt that I connected with this story. It has humor and will make you cry. It’s raw in how frankly it is written, but this should be required reading for anyone dealing with a loved one with Alzheimers.

I haven’t finished it yet but so far I have learned a few things about both the disease and the role of caretaker. They sound like a great couple and I commend them for the adjustments they have had to make in their lives. I have just been diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer’s and at least I have an idea of what is coming. Nothing good!

Well written...so timely when so many are facing this devastating disease...I applaud the writers for sharing this very painful journey. The information provided is sure to help someone as it is helping me to have a dialogue with my loved ones about what to do should I fall victim...I was especially happy to read the perspective of the caretaker since they are often the forgotten victims.

I have read several excellent books about people with Alzheimer’s and this is one of the best. B. Smith and her husband jointly write the book with the assistance of a professional editor. Well done and very interesting. The husband does a lot of research on the subject and has several interesting suggestions. One I totally agree with is the suggestion that more people become involved in testing programs. Without enough people willing to volunteer for the testing programs, breakthroughs will

be longer coming. That is part of why I became involved in the A4 Study program about a year ago. Another excellent suggestion is to get people who currently hide the Alzheimer's patient by not going to the doctor to go to the doctor. The sooner people get diagnosed, the better chance that when a breakthrough medication becomes available, it will be able to be effective.

This book is amazing! God Bless both Dan and B for sharing their life challenge! I believe everyone should read this book. I have purchased to share with a very special family going through the same disease. I pray a cure comes soon for those suffering as this affects not only the person with the disease but most importantly the caretakers and people around them. A must read for all!

Get a tissue box out. The large one! B Smith is a favorite of mine. And hearing her story breaks my heart. Alzheimer's affects the entire family and it takes a dedicated family with a sense of humor and a steel shield to watch the person you love deteriorate. Stand strong!

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