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Bursack: Book 'I Still Do' offers insight

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By: [Carol Bradley Bursack](#), INFORUM

Dear Readers: There are books, and there are books. I get many sent to me to review, way more than I can give attention to. However, when a publicist asked permission to send, "I Still Do: Loving and Living with Alzheimer's," by Judith Fox to me, I was intrigued enough to say yes.

I knew this was a book coming from the heart. That's not new. However this book is as much about image as words.

Fox married Edmund Ackell, MD. Three years later he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. For the next 10 years, Fox watched her surgeon husband become unable to turn on a coffee pot or place a phone call. The prose/poetry in this book is impressive, but the photography is what makes it unique.

Or is it? The words, though spare, are powerful. Next to one image of her husband's shadow, she simply says, "Alzheimer's taunts and jeers. Yanks our chains. Unveils the person we married and then replaces him with someone who doesn't know our name. How are we supposed to deal with that?"

Fox asked her husband's permission to photograph him for this book. She told him that some of the photographs "saw straight to his soul." She asked if he minded being so exposed. He said, "No, you can show my soul; just don't show ..." Well, you'll have to read the book.

Fox shows her great love for her husband through her photos and text, but admits that all days aren't smooth. Next to a photo of her husband in a thoughtful mood, Fox writes, "We arrive as do millions of others. ... Some days we manage, some days we don't."

With the holiday season approaching, I'd recommend that those of you who have friends or family members caring for a spouse with Alzheimer's consider this beautiful, quality hardbound book as a gift of comfort. Yes, it will bring pain, but it's the pain of recognition that one is not alone.

This book serves as a reminder to all of us that dementia should not be hidden due to vague feelings of shame. There is still stigma attached to mental illness, and dementia is often viewed the same way. When people like Fox and her educated husband choose to share their journey through Alzheimer's with others, a little of the stigma goes away. The power of "I Still Do" drew tears from this writer. I believe I'm not the only one who will respond this way. The book, published by PowerHouse Books, is available in select bookstores and online.

Bursack is the author of "Minding Our Elders," a support book on family elder care, and maintains a Web site at www.mindingourelders.com. To view past columns, go to www.inforum.com and click on columnists. Readers can reach Bursack at carol@mindingourelders.com or write her at

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