

care *AD*vantage[®] **FREE**

for caregivers of people with *Alzheimer's Disease* and related illnesses



**Breaking the
Genetic Code**

**Talking
About
the End
of Intimacy**

**Guest Column:
Government
Progress on
Alzheimer's Disease**

I Still Do...



PROSE AND PHOTOS BY JUDITH FOX



Why do family caregivers do what we do?

Is it an instinct to protect?

A willingness to sacrifice for someone we love?

Is it responsibility?

Guilt?

Lack of options?

*Or is it, perhaps, an understanding
that we can do no less
and the hope*

that someone else would do no less for us?

*We strive, as do millions of others,
to figure out ways to live in the presence of
a disease that mercilessly erases my husband's
life bit by bit, memory by memory.
Some days we manage, some days we don't.*



Ed has beautiful hands;

I could photograph them all day long.

*His hands are large and soft and warm and must have
been a comfort to his patients when he was a surgeon.*

I know they're a comfort to me, now.

Judith Fox's life was turned upside down in 1998 when her husband, Edmund Ackell, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. With the couple only married three years at the time, the future as they had planned it wasn't going to happen.

For a couple of years after Ed's diagnosis, they denied growing evidence of the illness. Judith was actively making, exhibiting and selling fine art photographs during this period. Although she bought a stack of books on Alzheimer's disease, it took her two years to open the first one.

"I've always seen things more clearly through my camera lens," she explained, "and I wasn't ready to confront—

to literally zoom in on—what was happening to Ed."

Eventually, "the dancing and the denial stopped," she said. And she began photographing her husband "to remember him, to celebrate him and to keep him close as he's leaving."

What followed is "I Still Do: Loving and Living with Alzheimer's" (powerHouse Books, 2009), a book of prose and photography that literally zooms in on not only what was happening to Ed but also on what was happening to Judith in her changing role as caregiver—and how their love story continued to evolve.

*In the midst of a devastating disease,
there are still lovely moments, laughs,
hands held and bodies touched,
and the precious and fragile gift of time together.*



*Sometimes Ed doesn't remember
that we're married.
Which is something I can deal with.*

*He never forgets that he loves me
and that I love him.*

*Which is preferable to remembering
that we're married
and forgetting that we love each other.*

JUDITH FOX of La Jolla, CA is a former business executive and an award-winning photographer whose work is in several permanent museum collections. Following the release of her book "I Still Do: Loving and Living with Alzheimer's," she became a global advocate for Alzheimer's disease awareness and education, and has been a speaker and consultant for organizations and corporations. The excerpted prose and photographs are reprinted with permission of Judith Fox and powerHouse Books, Brooklyn, NY.

