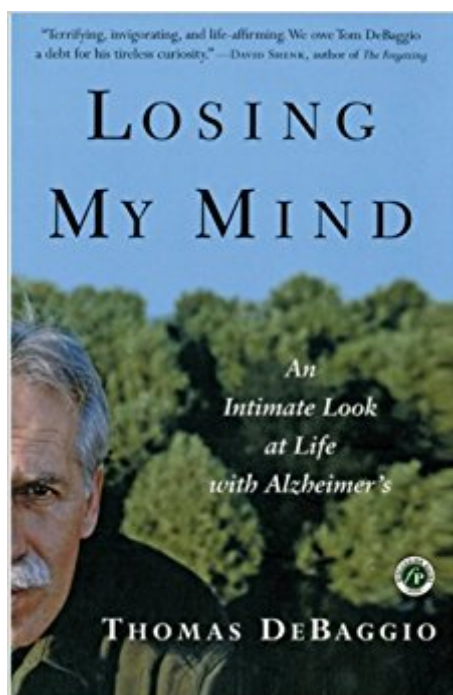


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# Losing My Mind: An Intimate Look At Life With Alzheimer's



## Synopsis

"We are foolish, those of us who think we can escape the traps of aging," writes Tom DeBaggio. "I was one of them, dreaming of a perfect and healthy old age....Now, at fifty-eight, I realize the foolishness of my dreams as I watch my brain self-destruct from Alzheimer's." *Losing My Mind* is DeBaggio's extraordinary account of his early onset Alzheimer's, a disease that "silently hollows the brain" and slowly "gobbles memory and destroys life." But with DeBaggio's curse came an unexpected blessing: the ability to chart the mechanics and musings of his failing mind. Whether describing the happy days of his youth or lamenting over the burden his disease has placed upon his loved ones, DeBaggio manages to inspire the reader with his ability to function, to think, and ultimately to survive. By turns an autobiography, a medical history, and a book of meditations, *Losing My Mind* is a testament to the splendor of memory and a triumphant celebration of the human spirit.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This first-person account of Alzheimer's ties several powerful stories together. *Losing My Mind* blends personal history with the fear and pain of developing the disease at the age of 57; it is both a sadly fascinating account of Alzheimer's progression and an attempt for the writer to remember his past before it is gone for good. While his history is recounted in chronological order, these memories--of his childhood; marriage to his wife, Joyce; their years in writing and politics; his passion for herbs and the growing of a successful business--are interspersed with unrelated

musings on everything from his cat's sudden deafness to losing his wallet. Clips from articles on Alzheimer's research are sprinkled around, and statistics like the \$174,000 that a patient spends on the disease over a lifetime are sobering. Throughout the book, he clearly speaks of his diagnosis as a "sentence

"I have a clear sense of history, I just don't know whether it is mine," writes DeBaggio in this moving and unusual memoir. The author, who has previously written about his gardening business (*Growing Herbs from Seed, Cutting and Root*), documents his mental deterioration from Alzheimer's. Diagnosed with the disease in 1999 at the age of 57, DeBaggio undertook this project in order to increase awareness of this devastating illness from a patient's point of view. He describes how his gradual loss of memory has impacted his life. For example, after he became confused about how to get to his niece's house, he realized he had to give up driving a car. The increased loss of language has been extremely difficult for a man who once worked as a journalist and a freelance writer. Interspersed throughout the narrative are DeBaggio's recollections of his childhood events that may soon be lost to him. He also describes the disease's negative effect on his wife and grown son. Although DeBaggio provides information on the medical advances that are being made to treat this disease, it is clear that a breakthrough will come too late for him. With this rare first-person account, DeBaggio has made a significant contribution to literature on an illness that currently affects four million Americans. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book should be a best seller. Most of the Alzheimer's books are for the caretaker. Or written about the person with Alzheimer's. And this makes sense. The stresses on caretakers is off the scale. Anyone who says God does not give a person more than they can handle is not living in the world I have seen. But too few books are written by the person suffering Alzheimer's. This is needed for those diagnosed in early stages. Not all with Alzheimer's can express themselves. Some can. This is a good book for anyone to understand what it feels like to be unable to remember the name of your next door neighbor for 20 years. To be able to quote Shakespeare but not your address. It explains what it feels like when someone discovers a person has Alzheimer's and instantly others talk louder. Good, decent people with the best of intentions. They only act out of inexperience, not cruelty. They are surprised Alzheimer's patients in early stages can still write novels and even teach at universities. If you have the courage, to see life through the eyes of a person looking into the abyss, this is a worthwhile book.

I purchased this book because my mother has just been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. This book has helped me to empathize with what my mom is presently going through and what she will be going through. The author is the one with the disease and so the book is written about what he is experiencing and thinking. It gets a little confusing at times when he jumps into the past telling about his growing up years and then back to the present and then to what the doctors are saying. However, the confusion is small on my part compared to what he must have been experiencing in his own mind. It is a great book for those who have family experiencing this horrible disease.

This book is a look at life from the viewpoint of an individual diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's and how he viewed his progression toward the final stages of the disease. It is an extremely accurate presentation of how Alzheimer's slowly robs an individual of their ability to think and reason and how that impacts on the immediate family and caregivers. This review is based on my observations of my mother-in-law's progress through the disease and her passing in 1994. The final two years of her life was spent in an Alzheimer's ward where she no longer recognized her own family. My wife was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's in 2002, but with proper medical follow-up and new medications the Alzheimer's progress was significantly slowed. "Losing My Mind" was a great help in knowing what to expect and how to react.

Some of the information is dated regarding Alzheimer's disease as the book is a product of its time, so therefore that should not be held against it. I found the author's story interesting, the poetry and other stuff was okay. There was some insight to the disease in its earlier stages from a first hand experience, but I wanted to know much more about later stages, but alas that is impossible to know.

I just finished this book and it gave me a better understanding of what my Mother is going through. She won't talk about it but this book gave me the best insiders look at her life with Alzheimer's. I now understand her moods, her fears, her anger. I highly recommend this book to anyone whose family member has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Also, what was extremely great was all the medical terms and current discoveries in treatment. Your local M.D. often can't recommend or give you a contact to join a support group. The medical community by large needs to get with the program as well as the State and Federal government. More and more folks will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's because we are all living longer. They, the politicians need to deal with it like we the family members and care givers, and victims! Thank You.

I think it is incredibly brave for a person going through the disease of "Alzheimer's" to unselfishly share that experience!! and I applaud the author's courage. It is a compelling read because this disorder can happen to any of us!

This is a touching and sad story, journal, by Thomas DeBaggio written during his losing battle with this devastating disease. It certainly gives an understand of what it is like to be losing yourself.....It helps with understanding.

Mr. DeBaggio is so wonderful to have shared his experiences with diagnosis, physicians, others reactions, and his own struggle to understand and deal with what is happening to him. This book brought a new enlightenment to me, newly dealing with a family diagnosis. It is so easy to forget the person who is actually fighting with the disease when it affects so many in the family. His true account of what his feelings are throughout the months it took to write the book has given me more compassion for my mom and the ability to be angry at the disease as the culprit for all of the cruel things that are happening to all of us while we watch the progression. Thank you, Mr. DeBaggio, for opening my eyes to my mom's struggles.

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