



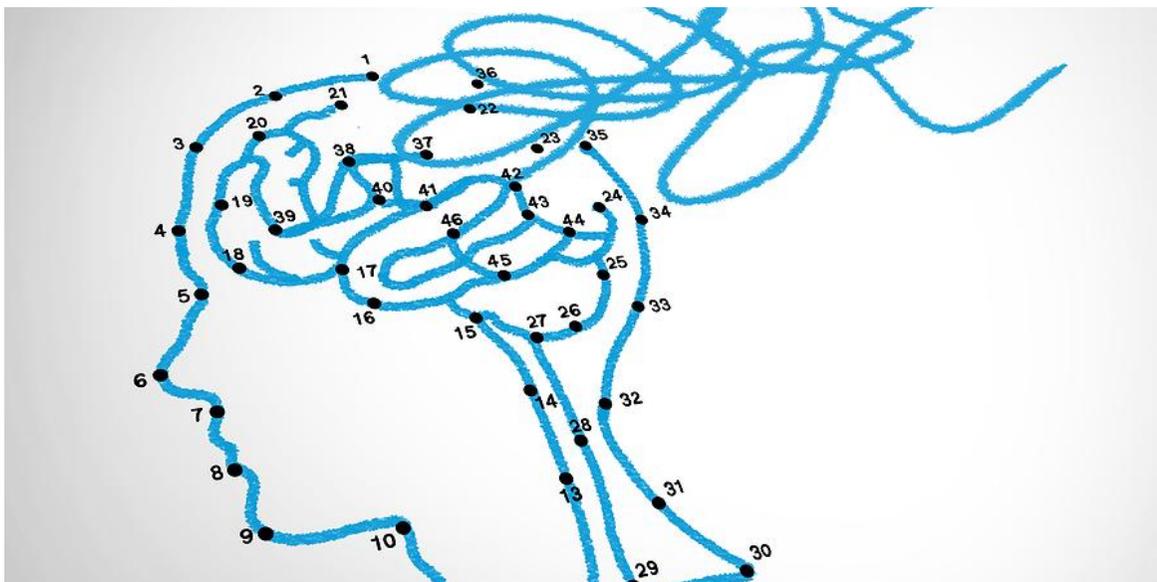
# Aging Wisely With Linda

Consultations/Consulting • Counseling/Coaching  
Expert on Dementia • Speaking/Teaching

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### Dementia: From Early Diagnosis to Caregiving

Fear and anxiety build when you hear that you or a family member have been diagnosed with a “dementia”. That early diagnosis is often called MCI or mild cognitive impairment. The good news is that MCI sometimes does not really progress beyond short-term memory loss and because of that, it should not be called dementia. So, anyone with this diagnosis can work on some lifestyle changes that can help them function better now and if they are on a path of a progressive illness like Alzheimer’s disease, work can be done on building cognitive reserve or new brain cells called neurogenesis.



Mild cognitive impairment is diagnosed after a medical professional has given a test that shows some early memory loss. It only moves on to a “dementia” diagnosis when it is coupled with another decline in functioning – such as not being able to manage finances or showing poor judgment. Then again, it will not move on to a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or another related dementia until it affects the ability to manage the activities of daily living.

Anxiety and stress will make this long journey more difficult for both parties. Therefore, early education and planning should happen as soon as someone is diagnosed with MCI. When we worry, we are not able to enjoy the moment and it colors our life with all the dark colors in our box of life. It is very important to start early with relaxation exercises, both for the body and the mind. Worry and stress can also be antecedents to serious illness. Learning mindfulness exercises and incorporating them into our lives is as important as your 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.



On the last page of this PDF, you’ll find a printable checklist of what families need to do to find joy each day and not get stuck in the worry web. Focusing on joy and quality in everyday life is much easier when you have a plan and have visited the professionals who can help you with your own designed “Road Map”.

**Affirmation: “I find awe in every day.”**

**Resources:**

[Alzheimer's Association of Northern California](#)

# Finding Joy Each Day

## Following a Dementia Diagnosis

- ❑ **Planning:** Meeting with an Elder law attorney and a Financial Planner, along with an “Aging Life Care” expert to help you design a ‘Road Map’ based on YOUR values and wishes.
- ❑ **Education:** Learn as much as you can about the illness. Empower everyone in the family to support a healthier lifestyle and focus on creating quality-of-life activities.
- ❑ **Diagnosis:** How and when was it given to you or your family member? Do you know the differences between all the different types of dementia?
- ❑ **Mental Health Care:** How will you get emotional support as a person with MCI or Dementia, and how that will differ from the support the family caregiver will need.
- ❑ **Support Groups and Programs:** Learn the resources in your community. Also, research financial support and programs in your area by using [BenefitsCheckUp](#).