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Olathe, KS. August 25, 2011 - Every 71 seconds someone develops Alzheimer's. It's dire statistics like that prompted Alzheimer's Disease International to institute World Alzheimer's Day, a day when opinion leaders, caregivers, medical professionals, researchers and the media around the world to work to raise awareness about Alzheimer's and other dementias.

World Alzheimer's Day is on September 21st and this year's theme is "The Faces of Dementia." "When we think of the 'Faces of Dementia' we immediately think of Charlton Heston or Ronald Reagan, but there are 5.4 million other people in the US currently living with Alzheimer's," says Marie Marley, PhD, author of *Come Back Early Today: A Memoir of Love, Alzheimer's and Joy.*"

Alzheimer's is a ravaging disease that robs victims of their memories, cognitive functioning and sometimes even their very personalities. Marley puts a human face on this devastating disease in her new book, which narrates her unique personal experience caring for an Alzheimer's patient.

"There can be hope amidst the darkness of dementia," says Marie Marley, PhD, author of *Come Back Early Today: A Memoir of Love, Alzheimer's and Joy.* "Even though Ed was still demented, psychotropic medications helped transform him from an angry, depressed and delusional patient who slept most of the day into one of the most contented, loving, adorable people you'd ever want to meet. Not the face of your typical Alzheimer's patient!"

The use of such medications is highly controversial. They have a horrible reputation. Years ago nursing homes often used them to drug patients into submission. They were given in high doses that sedated patients and typically turn them into zombies. "Families were aghast," says Marley.

But today's medications can be used to treat non-dementia problems such as depression, obsessive compulsiveness, aggression, delusions and even psychosis – all in doses that do not sedate patients. They can improve patients' overall quality of life, which also improves quality of life for caregivers.

Yet these medicines have serious potential side effects. This is especially true of the newer antipsychotic drugs such as Abilify, Zyprexa, Seroquel, Risperdal and Geodon. Research has shown that these are associated with an increased risk of stroke and death in older adults with dementia.

"It's crucial to weigh the pros and cons of psychotropic drugs, especially the antipsychotics, before trying them," says Marley. "But for very old patients you have to wonder how much longer they're going to live anyway. You have to balance quality of life against length of life."

About the Author: Marie Marley is available for interviews about her experience of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. She is a medical grant writer at the American Academy of Family Physicians. *Come Back Early Today* is available at www.Amazon.com and the book's web site, www.ComeBackEarlyToday.com. A press kit is also available at the book's web site, where a free PDF of the book can be downloaded from the Press page using the password _____.

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