

possibly also bisexual and trans) older people made no mention of these groups. Rather, this chapter discusses different forms of consensual non-monogamy; BDSM (bondage and discipline, domination and submission, sadism and masochism); younger men in relationships with older women; and sex over the internet or on the phone. This is very far indeed from the terrain of Greengross and Greengross (1989). Accounts from older lesbians are sprinkled throughout the book and treated as ordinary and on a par with those from heterosexual men and women. No accounts from non-heterosexual men were evident, except in the chapter 'Erectile Dysfunction: What Men Don't Say Out Loud' where she comments 'I realise this chapter seems heterosexually oriented. I didn't plan it that way. Many more straight than gay men were willing to share their stories about ED, and many women sent me questions about their male partners' (p. 241). She then presents accounts from two gay or bisexual men.

Researchers interested in the social construction of age and ageing may also find this book of interest for the ways in which age is made relevant. While some of the problems discussed are specific to ageing bodies, many are issues that may affect people of all ages (poor communication, lack of intimacy, mismatched desires, boredom). However, the fact that this book focuses on ageing and later life has the effect of making it seem as if these problems also are an artefact of ageing. The book includes one account from someone aged 49 and many from people in their fifties. While this definition of 'senior' has much to recommend it in terms of conceptualising ageing as a lifelong process rather than a state, it does have the effect of sometimes seeming to make age salient when other factors might actually be more relevant.

## References

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Susan H. McFadden and John T. McFadden, *Ageing Together: Dementia, Friendship & Flourishing Communities*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 2011, 256 pp., hbk £28.50, ISBN 13: 978 0 8018 9986 7.

This is not just a book about ageing, dementia and friendship; it is a book that will take the reader on a journey that will, hopefully, leave them in a

better place than where they started. The authors, often using vignettes, describe people with dementia who they have known as travelling along the *dementia road*, and you can't help but get on board with this analogy. Storytelling is highlighted to ensure their message gets across – real people with real stories, not just facts and figures although there are plenty of references to those too. There are lessons in this book that everyone can learn from. For example, it is better to say 'someone is experiencing some dementia' than to say 'he has Alzheimer's Disease' because with the former the emphasis is on the person and with latter it's on the disease (p. 30): this is very much a person-centred book.

Upon reading the preface and introduction I was a little concerned that dementia is regarded as simply about memory loss: 'Can aging persons continue to have meaningful friendships and maintain vital communities even though some experience the accumulations of forgetfulness and others do not?' (p. 3). The authors frequently lapse into describing dementia simply as 'progressive forgetfulness'. It's not that they do not acknowledge that other processes are affected, but they seem to prefer to focus a lot on the memory loss, and I found this frustrating at times. The authors make it clear at the outset that they are both Christians, though they acknowledge in the Preface 'we have much to learn from other religious perspectives'.

There is something for everyone in this book, with chapters written in different styles: the academic debate, the spiritual debate, the 'what if' scenarios, all these and more are represented. However, will this book teach you something about dementia you didn't already know? I would say that yes, it might. For example, the 'take me as I am' approach is one that we can all learn from: 'Given the opportunity, they [people with dementia] can even teach the cognitively fit a few important lessons about growing old with grace' (p. 15). This is further underlined in the last paragraph of Chapter 1, 'Dilemmas of Dementia Diagnosis', 'Other persons have learned to appreciate those living with dementia just as they are; in other words they make no effort to orient them to "reality"' (p. 17).

'Beyond Fear and Anxiety' (Chapter 7) was a little too academic for me, but having said that, it makes some excellent points, so it was worth my persevering with. I thoroughly enjoyed Chapter 11 and found it very uplifting and positive. It gives an interesting perspective on 'Practising Friendship in Thin Places' and I particularly like the example of 'relational mindfulness' on p. 174 where 'George learned to practice relational mindfulness with Joseph. Even though he had heard Joseph's tales of his early life over and over, he disciplined himself not to allow his mind to wander and to enter into the moment of the conversation as if it was the first time he had heard Joseph's story'.

The authors have included an excellent Notes section at the back of the book, with in-depth explanations of terminology and useful websites for further information. They have also included summing up paragraphs in each chapter – useful if you lose the thread in some of the more academic chapters. *Aging Together* can be refreshingly light hearted at times and the discussion questions towards the back of the book add real impact to the

overall message. It is one thing to passively read a book, but quite another to debate with yourself issues which are all too often swept under the carpet, e.g. 'Have you ever inadvertently contributed to the stigma associated with cognitive decline?' (p. 198).

This book is an excellent account of travelling along the dementia road. To me, the last paragraph of Chapter 4 (p. 75) says it all: it is about being in the moment with a focus in shift away from, *remember when...* to simply enjoying the *moment* together. In the final chapter the advantage of memory loss is explored, where past misdemeanours are forgotten and 'loving connections are experienced in the present moment' (p. 184). By this stage, you know what the authors are saying, and you know they're absolutely right.

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