

Overcoming Communication Predicaments in Later Life

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OUTLINE

- **Communication Predicaments**
 - **Selective Assertiveness**
- **Writing as Selective Assertiveness**

Cross-Cultural Aging Stereotypes

- ❖ **NEGATIVE – Low Vitality**
 - Low Competence
 - Poor health
 - Dependence
 - Past-oriented, Little future
- ❖ **POSITIVE – Benevolence**
 - Friendliness, Helpfulness
 - Wisdom

Hiding Hearing Impairment Can be Risky for Older Adults

- **First impressions**
 - more negative of an older person communicating poorly when their hearing impairment not disclosed.

Ryan Anas & Vuckovich, 2007

PATRONIZING COMMUNICATION

FUNCTIONS

OVERLY CONTROLLING

OVERLY NURTURING

LANGUAGE

Overly familiar FORMS OF ADDRESS

SIMPLE VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR

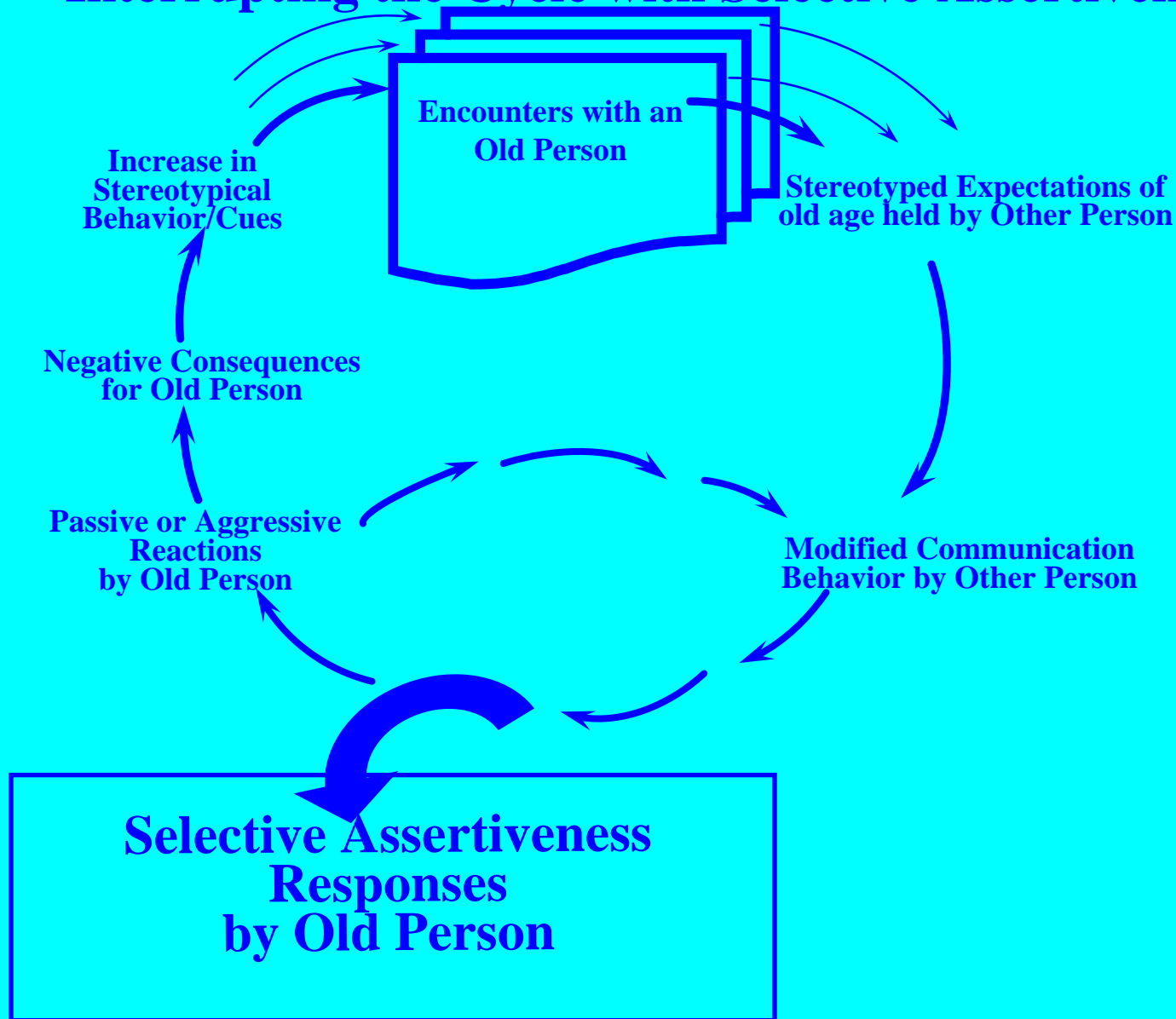
REPETITIONS

TOPIC MANAGEMENT

TONE OF VOICE

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

The Communication Predicament of Aging: Interrupting the Cycle with Selective Assertiveness



Tanta Becky

“I dasn’t take dese medicine.”

**Illustrates Patronizing Talk and Impact
of Low Expectations on performance of
the older person**

**The people who avoid me, who
try to help by telling every salesperson .
that I am visually impaired, and
who yell in my ear
to make sure that I can hear them –**

these actions no longer evoke my anger

**The anger has been replaced with
an inner smile of new secret knowledge.**

**I have won the battle within myself, and
occasionally I give others
something to think about.**

Ryan et al. 2008
Conversational Scenarios

Who? Older woman with a visual impairment

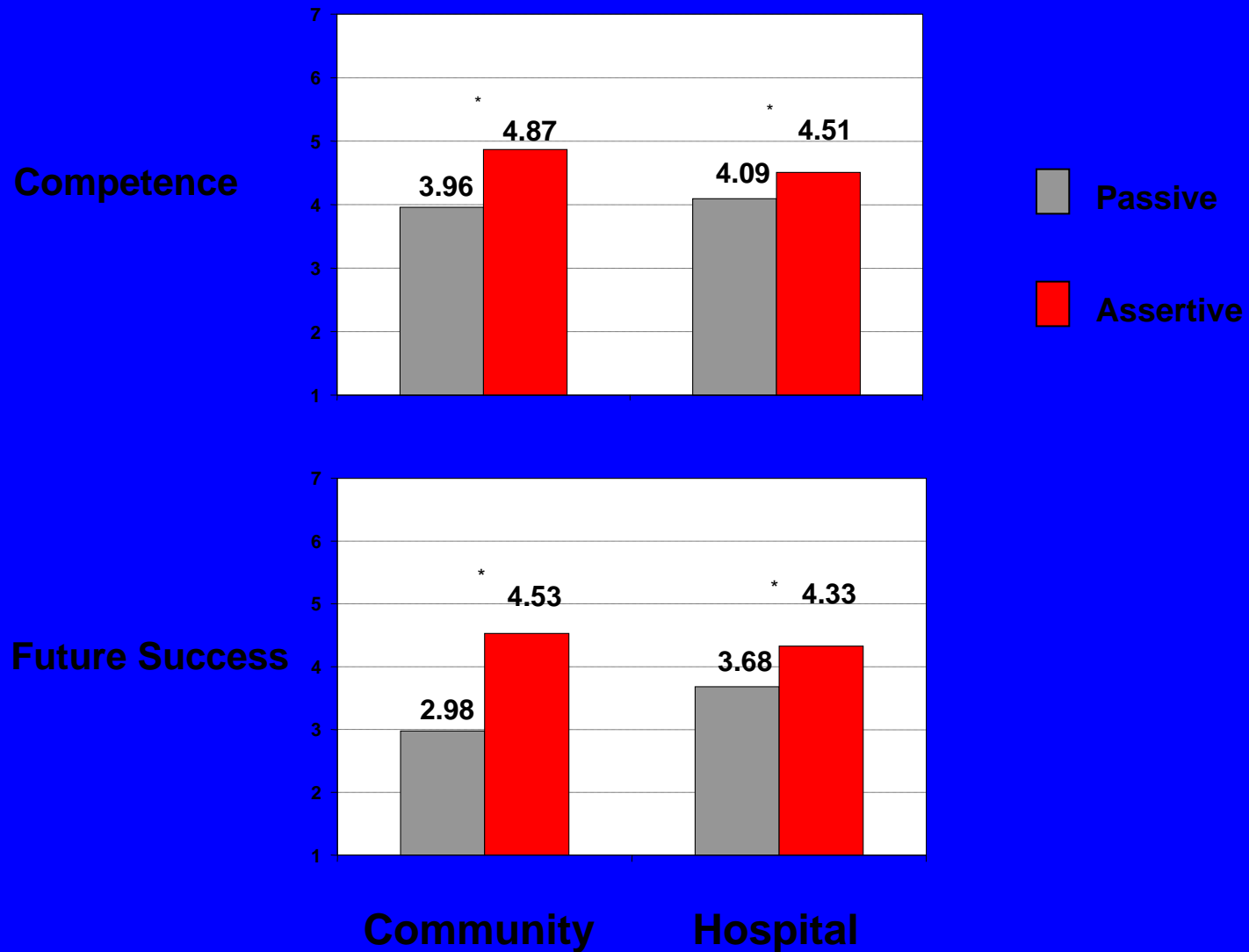
What? Denial of request for help with reading

Where? Community or Hospital setting

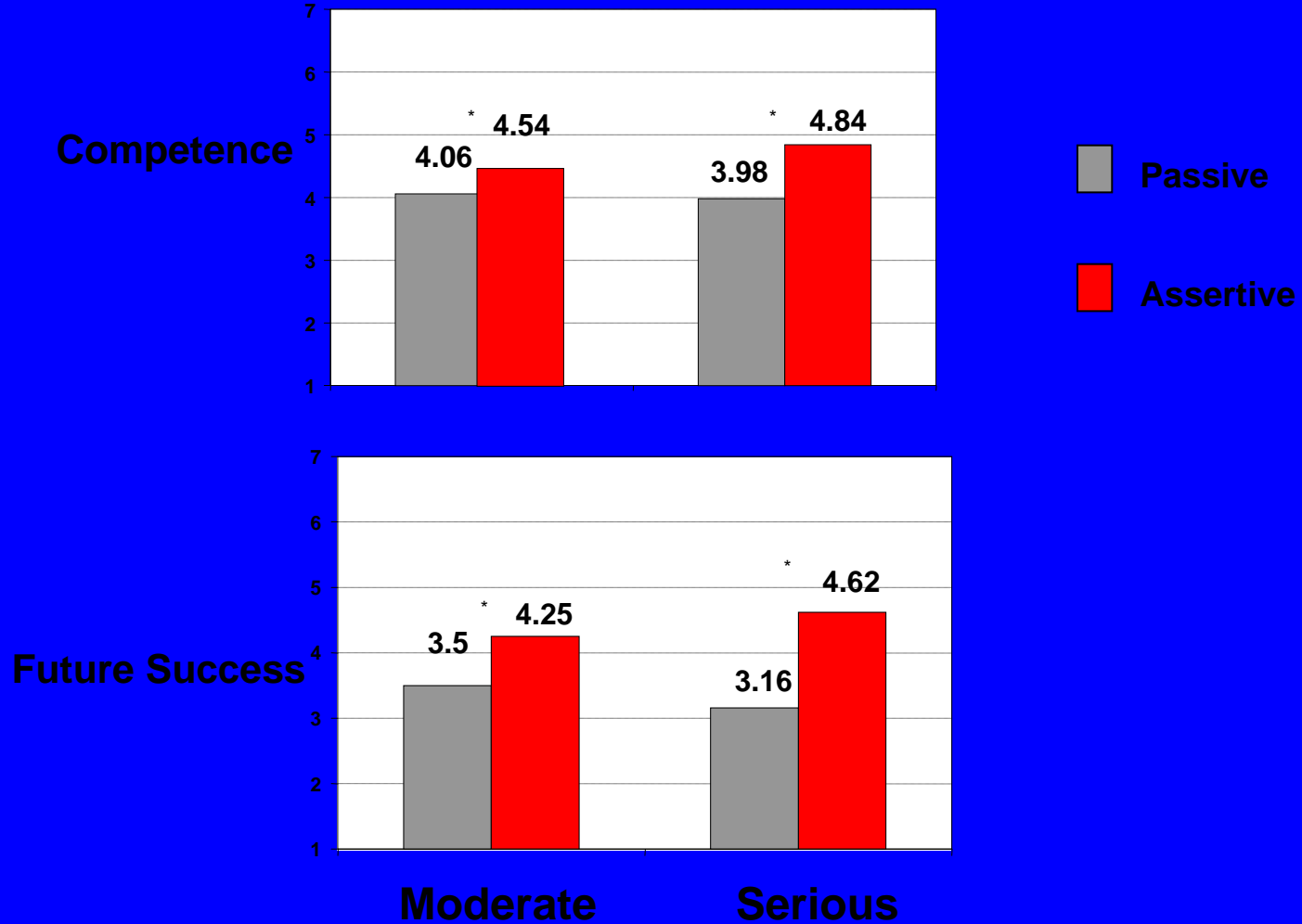
When? Moderate or Severe situation

How? Assertive or Passive response

Assertive Advantage as a Function of Setting



Assertive Advantage as a Function of Situation Seriousness

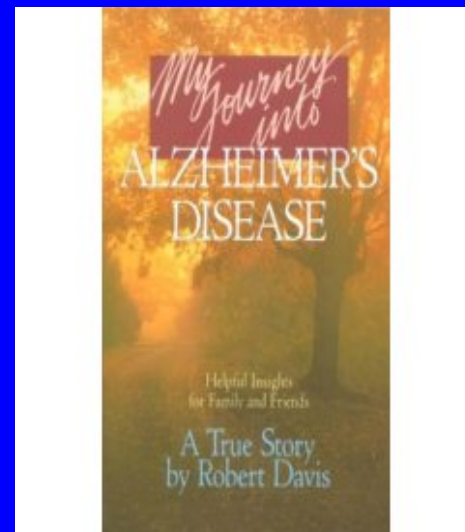
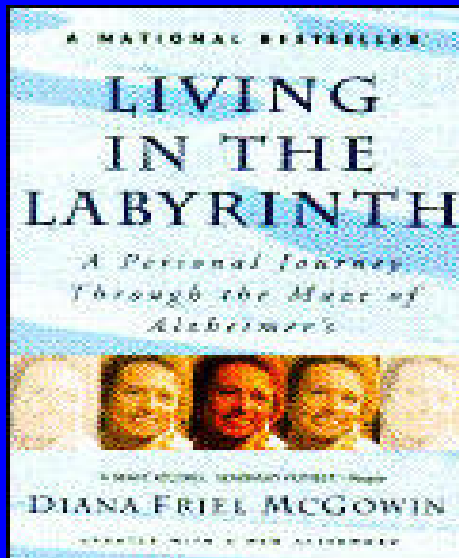
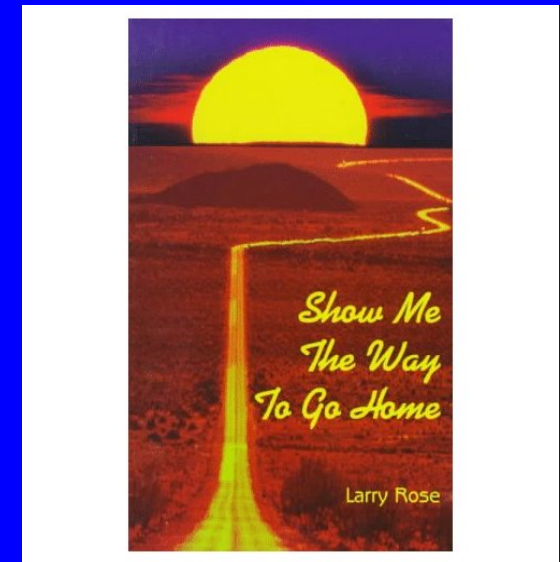


Writing as Selective Assertiveness –

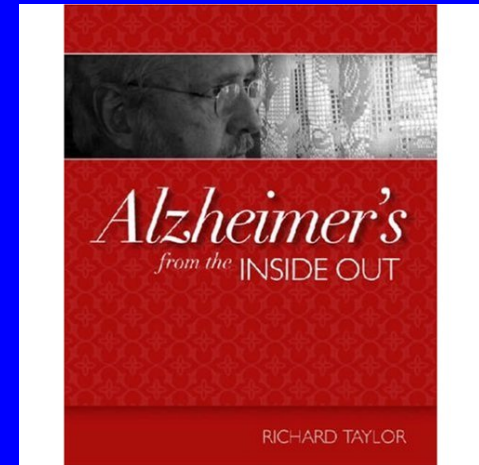
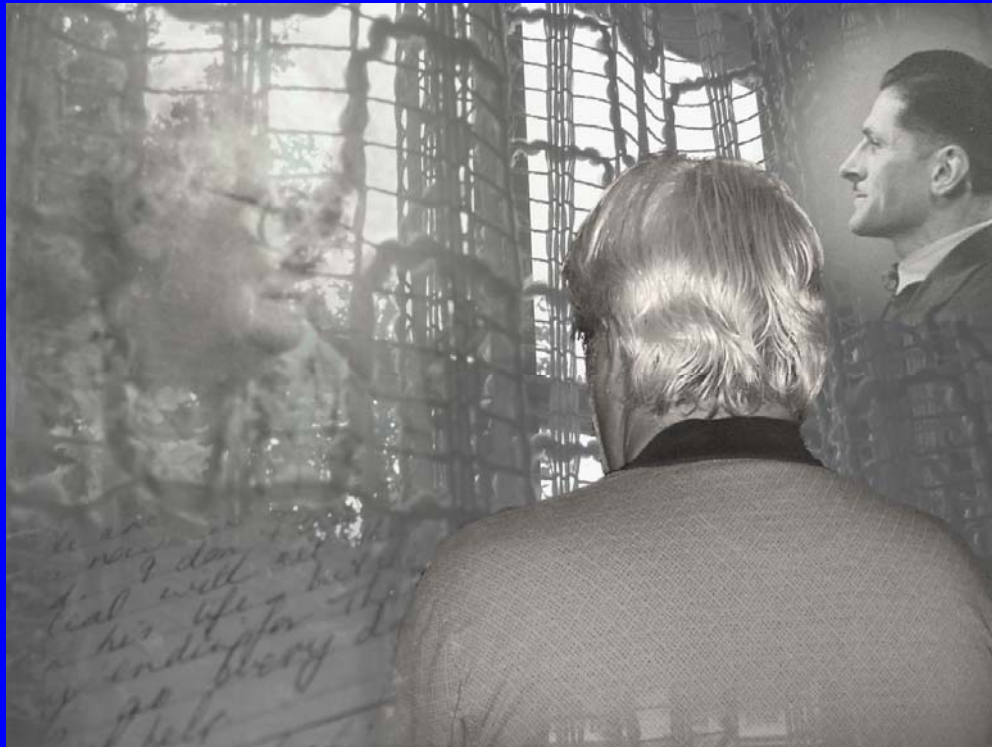
Telling my story my way



Author(ity) of Dementia Writers



Looking Through My Grandmother's Lace Curtains



Partial View



Partial View *An Alzheimer's Journal*

TEXT BY CARY SMITH HENDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY NANCY ANDREWS

I would love to see some people with Alzheimer's not trying to stay in the shadows all the time but to say, damn it, we're people too. And we want to be talked to and respected as if we were honest to God real people.

Henderson, 1998

Dancing *with* Dementia

MY STORY OF LIVING POSITIVELY WITH DEMENTIA

Christine Bryden



“We are adjusting our dance steps to the changing melody of dementia, listening to the music within, as well as being encouraged by the supportive music around us.”

Bryden, 2005

Clinical Messages

- Beware Automatic/Patronizing Reactions to Old People -- One word solution – LISTEN!
- Foster Selective Assertiveness by Older Persons
- Support Writing by Older Persons