10 gentle ways to start a conversation with someone living with dementia

Statements, objects and things to do together, not questions to get right. There is no wrong answer to any of them.

Say "tell me about", never "do you remember". Do not correct anything. Take the answer you get, and stop when they have had enough.

These are conversation prompts, not care advice. For anything about diagnosis, symptoms or care, ask the GP or memory service. Alzheimer's Society has practical guidance: alzheimers.org.uk

No. 01 Bring a photograph you love and say so: "I love this one of you. Tell me about it."

No. 02 Put something familiar in their hands, a tea towel, a tool, a handbag, and let them hold it for a while before you say anything.

No. 03 Play a song from when they were in their twenties and listen together. If they sing, sing with them.

No. 04 Talk about the weather and where it takes you: "It's a proper seaside day today." Then wait.

No. 05 Mention a dish they used to make: "I tried making your stew. Yours was better."

No. 06 Look through an old magazine, a seed catalogue or a football programme together and talk about the pictures.

No. 07 Tell them a memory of your own about them: "You taught me to ride a bike on the back lane." No question needed.

No. 08 Do a small job together, pairing socks or folding towels, and talk about the job in front of you.

No. 09 Comment on something here and now: the flowers, the sunshine, how warm their hands are.

No. 10 "You always looked smart. Tell me about getting dressed up to go out."

This sheet comes from captureandkeep.co.uk/questions/questions-for-a-parent-with-dementia/, where there are more prompts and the three rules in full.