

## **The Story of Rosie and Vince**

Rosie was a vibrant woman who came into the Memory clinic intake appointment dressed to the nine's, right down to her designer glasses. She looked at least a decade younger than her 72 years would suggest. Rosie came accompanied by her husband of 45 years, Vince. You could tell by just taking one look at them that they were still madly in love after all this time together, and it was heart-warming to witness.

Rosie was referred to the memory clinic for diagnostic testing due to memory changes. Rosie was a highly educated woman who held advanced degrees, and had been at the top of her game in her chosen professional field before her retirement 4 years ago. Rosie's memory changes had accelerated since retiring, and her short term memory had become severely impaired. Rosie was admittedly nervous about coming in for testing because dementia ran in her family, and Rosie was petrified that her own mental decline could be leading to that same eventual outcome.

In the intake appointment, Rosie stated that a lot of her current distress was related to fretting about her husband's health. Vince had been recently diagnosed with a terminal illness and was "living on borrowed time." Vince had his own stressors— not the least of which was worrying about Rosie's progressive memory changes that were now impacting her ability to be independent in many areas of her life. Most heart-wrenching for Vince was the loss the of Rosie's ability to be an equal partner in their marriage in the way she had always been due to memory, mood and functional changes along the way. So often now, Rosie was physically present, but seemed more and more "checked out" in a world of her own that Vince didn't understand or know how to penetrate. Vince had a lot on his plate, but his love and dedication to Rosie's well-being by far took precedence over his own mortality concerns that day.

When Rosie and Vince returned to the follow up appointment a few weeks later, the news that they dreaded most was delivered. Our team informed Rosie that testing results indicated that she had a probable Alzheimer's disease which was already in the moderate stages. Even though Rosie and Vince both secretly suspected that diagnosis would come, hearing the words spoken out loud pierced the fragile bubble of denial they had cautiously been living in, and life as they knew it would never be the same again.