

# Grab Back

It is not easy for the child of a person with dementia to visit his/her parent. Due to the parent's declining memory and other symptoms of the disease, it is hard to have a conversation which results in an uncomfortable and sometimes even painful situation for the child. There is an opportunity to make the visit a more pleasant experience for the child as well as the parent with dementia.

## Design Goal

My design goal is to help the child of a person with mid-stage dementia to empower his/her parent to be the initiator of a social moment in order to create a pleasant visit for both.

## Interaction vision

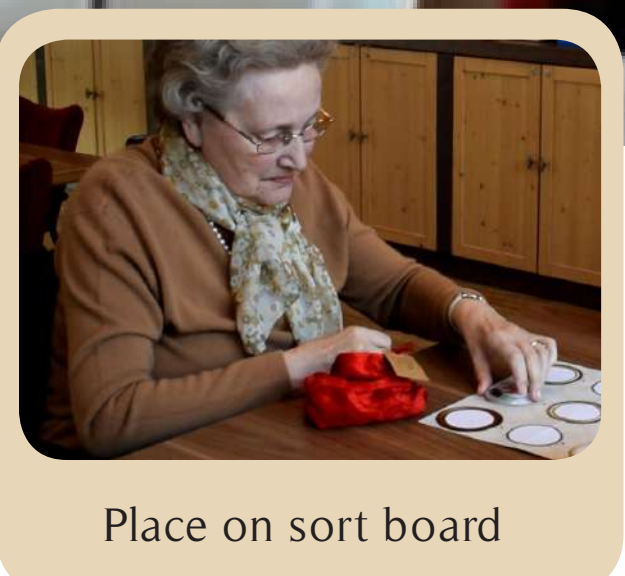
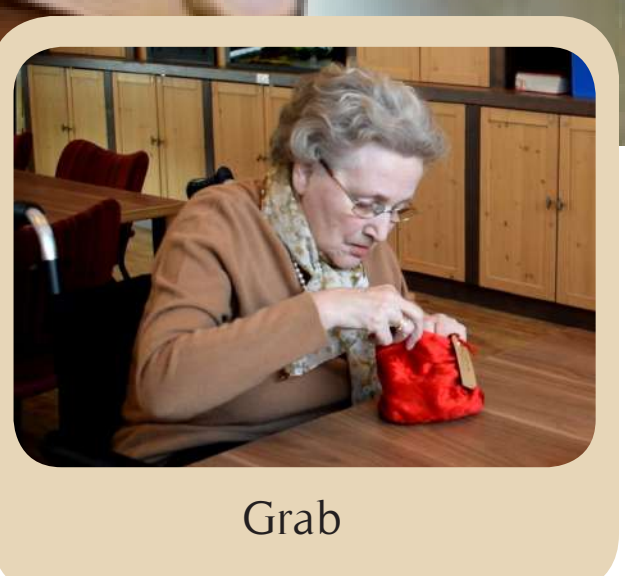
The interaction with the design should be *intuitive, low threshold* and *free*. The interaction between the child and the parent with dementia should be *open* and *familiar*.

## Grab Back

With the Grab Back the person with dementia can be empowered to take the initiative during a visit by grabbing a token out of a grab bag. These tokens can serve as topics of conversation. They can be ordered on a special board to create a nice overview of the discussed topics. Meaningful moments that occur during the visit could be written down in a special notebook.

Initially, the tokens will contain images of the past accompanied by a word that indicates a theme, but these can be easily replaced to make the content fit the person with dementia. Furthermore, by changing the content the visit will remain surprising and pleasant for the child.

Over time, the grab back can serve as a tool to make deterioration of the dementia more touchable and easier to communicate with other family members and caregivers.



The grab bag enables curiosity. Research shows that **curiosity leads to initiative**. The closed bag and the sound of the clattering tokens make the person with dementia curious to find out what is in the bag.

Research shows the person with dementia has a **need to order**. This need is fulfilled by the sort board where the tokens can be placed in picture frames to create a nice overview.

**Images that are related to the person with dementia spark the most.** However, caregivers indicate that most of the families will not take time to create this. Therefore the Grab Back contains a default content which should provide a starting point to explore the possibilities of the product. The default content can be easily and gradually replaced by personal content.

A small notebook allows the child to write down meaningful moments and share them with other family members. In this way a nice memory is created.

Observations show that **the child is tended to ask the person with dementia factual questions which leads to confusion**. Literature shows that questions about feelings and experiences lead to a more pleasant conversation. A booklet informs the child about this and provides some example questions.

**The product cannot always provide the desired effect** due to the fickleness of the disease dementia. The child is informed about this in the booklet. Furthermore, the product is designed in a way that it really easy and low threshold to get out and get away when it does not work.



"There is a reason that the grab bag already exists for such a long time. It triggers most of the people, especially children. Since people with dementia go back to their childhood, it is logical that a grab bag also triggers them."

Expert dementia Careyn

"Although it looks simple, still when you normally sit together, you are not thinking 'now I am going to talk about school, youth, work...' and something like this makes that easier."

Child of a person with dementia

"It is very low threshold. When the person with dementia has a bad day, what happens from time to time, you easily pick it up and think 'better luck next time'."

Caregiver elderly home Manna Enschede