



TEEPA SNOW, Dementia Care Expert, has developed a classification model called GEMS™ comparing different states of being and ability to the characteristics of precious jewels.

SAPPHIRES. Normal aging. May feel blue. True to self. Life-long patterns prevail. Slowing down. Needs time to make decisions. Continued cognitive skill. Needs reminders and prompts. Abilities affected by stress, fatigue or pain. Can bounce back. Can learn new things. Takes time, effort and practice. No Dementia. Healthy and non-stressed.

DIAMONDS. Still clear and sharp. Successful with established habits and routines. Becoming rigid. Limited perspective, resists change, won't let things go. Respects authority. Can be mean and paranoid over money. Becoming territorial. Less aware of boundaries. Repeats self: same stories, same questions. Socially can cover mistakes. People will experience them differently. New information difficult to grasp. May or may not be Dementia related.

EMERALDS. Making mistakes. Not noticing or gets upset when unable to fix them. Language vague. Will struggle to communicate. Asks "what, where, when". Comprehension of ability loss. May be lost in time: "going back". Needs help with personal care.

Doesn't want it, may emotionally react. "On the go", but "way finding" difficult. Needs "friendly guide" and daily structure. Loses important things: may think someone is "taking" them. Has Dementia. Fears being seen as incompetent. Needs meaningful engagement.



AMBERS. Focused on sensation: look, sound, feel, smell or taste. Lives in a "moment of time". Not aware of larger environment. No safety awareness. Will explore, touch or take things. Communication limited. Difficulty understanding and expressing needs. Private and quiet, or public and noisy. No ability to delay needs or wants. Needs physical help completing tasks. May resist verbally or react physically. Noticeable brain change. Harder to connect with. May exhaust Caregivers.

RUBIES. No ability to communicate clearly. Can "copy" but unable to "understand". Losing fine motor control in mouth, eyes, fingers and feet. Can imitate big movement. Transition difficult, slow to change gears. Need help starting or stopping. Monocular vision. Limited awareness, loss of depth perception. Can move forward only. Not able to back up safely, falls prevalent. Responds to rhythmic interaction: sing, hum, pray, rock, sway and dance. Significant Dementia. Dependent on Caregivers to anticipate and meet needs.

PEARLS. Hidden in a shell. Caregivers are the "bridge" of connection to the world. The Care Recipient's "person" is still there. Moments of connection take time and will be short. Knows familiar and unfamiliar. May cry or mumble when distressed. Unable to move by themselves. Often in fetal position: still and quiet. Primitive reflexes take over: startle, grasp, sucking, rooting. Difficulty swallowing. May need to eat or drink. Brain failure will shut down body. Important for the Caregiver to "let go" as the Care Recipient attempts to "leave".

