



## A Letter to Remember from Ronan Smith

### **“A” is for Alzheimer’s**

– which is the diagnosed condition that I am living with. “Probable early stages of early on-set Alzheimer’s disease” was the exact phrase used in March 2014 when I received the diagnosis. The progression since has been very marginal: but nonetheless noticeable.

### **“A” is for Attitude**

– the journey since the diagnosis has led me to realise that hope is a decision. It doesn’t drop down on to you from afar, courtesy of another agency. Don’t sit about waiting for that, hope is a decision you make. At least, that is what I believe it to be. I’ve also discovered that it is a decision that you have to re-make, and re-make, and re-make. Stubbornly, insistently. There are, after all, a lot of people in white coats working very hard, and making progress, in many laboratories around the world, and an effective treatment may indeed emerge. So I stay as healthy and active as I can, and I hope for that outcome.

### **“A” is for Advocacy**

– Get out there if Alzheimer’s is in your life, either as a patient or as a carer, get out there in your community and just talk about it, and what it entails. About how it is possible to live with it, and how it is possible to be supportive of those living with it, and to be supportive of people caring for those living with it – even if you yourself are not living with it. Help unpick and unmask the stigma, the fear that seems to surround it, which is unnecessary and unhelpful. It’s just another disease, like so many others: it just needs to be seen for what it is, and not feared.

Ronan Smith

*Help unpick and  
unmask the stigma,...*

