Alanna Shaikh: How I'm preparing to get Alzheimer's

During her Ted Talk, Alanna Shaikh explained how her dad’s disease had also an impact on her life. She explained that when a family member is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease the effects can be overwhelming and detrimental on each patient as well as on their family members. She explained that the diagnosis can trigger a range of emotions including anger, fear, frustration and sadness. Also, she mentioned multiple possible ways to prevent the disease and motivated her audience to care for their loved ones who suffer from Alzheimer’s and to keep a healthy lifestyle in order to prevent the disease.

Alanna Shaikh’s father was officially diagnosed with Alzheimer’sdisease in 2005. Since then, his mental health as well as his physical health deteriorated over time. Alanna watched her father’s disease slowly take away him from her life. She grew up watching how her father, the man who was once her hero, needed help to eat, to communicate with others, to sleep and to get dressed.

As a person diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and, eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks, Alanna’s father also had dementia caused by Alzheimer’s.

Alanna explains to her audience that Alzheimer’s can manifest in the life of anybody since Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder that causes brain cells to degenerate and die. The early signs of the disease may be forgetting recent events or conversations. As the disease progresses, a person with Alzheimer's disease will develop severe memory impairment and lose the ability to carry out everyday tasks.

Even though Alzheimer's disease medications may slow the rate of decline, maximize function and maintain independence for a time, the caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease, such as Alanna, also need some way of support. People surrounding someone with Alzheimer's disease should take care of themselves as a caregiver. They should be engaged in their own activities and do not forget to put their health as a priority.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease is a balancing act and a brave choice according to Alanna. Caregivers of someone with Alzheimer’s disease are often in charge of caring for their loved one, making sure he or she is safe and comfortable, keep track of his/ her medications and doctor’s appointments, and give him/her love and support.However, since full-time caregivers often suffer from stress, depression, high-blood pressure and other types of pain brought about by the exhaustion of providing constant care, these individuals should take good care of their own mental and physical health at the same time they care for the person who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease.