

March/April 2023

# THE GRAPEVINE

*North Shore Caregivers Newsletter*



## **DANDELION VERSUS ORCHID: INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGHLY SENSITIVE PERSON PART 1**

Written by C.A. Bryson

The poet T.S. Eliot, in his poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' wrote (of the protagonist, a highly sensitive person):

'It is impossible to say just what I mean/  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in a pattern on a screen...'

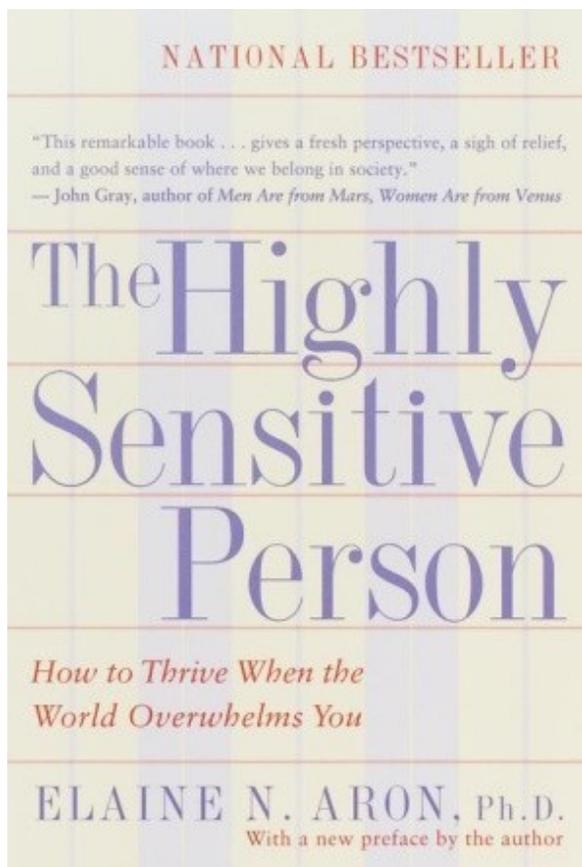
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## Highly sensitive person (continued)

In these lines are encapsulated the mindset of the highly sensitive person (HSP). Indeed, some people are like silk shirts in a washing machine: they need to be put on the 'delicate cycle'. The truth is though, that for many years some of us have found ourselves permanently on the 'heavy soil' cycle (but fortunately not the 'Permanent Press' setting). Still, the wear and tear on the delicate fabric of our souls is telling. And should you (as I do) find yourself on the caregiving journey, you are even more vulnerable.

I would argue, however, that the world is not divided in two, in binary fashion, with some people (the normals) fulfilling their roles as 'dandelions' (that ever-hardy weed), and others (the highly sensitive), in their roles as the delicate 'orchids'. Rather, I think the degree of sensitivity in an individual exists on a continuum, or put another way, on a spectrum.

Where do you fall, on that spectrum? To what extent are you, or are you not, an 'orchid'? To find out, complete the quiz below, with the caveat by author Elaine Aron, in her book 'The Highly Sensitive Person' (Citadel Press, 1996); that no quiz can decide once and for all where you belong. Trust your intuition, in other words (which, if you are an HSP, you have a lot of anyway.)



If you tend towards introversion though, chances are you are an HSP (Highly Sensitive Person), as 70% of HSPs are introverts. In other words, you have sensitive 'antennae'. Another clue is whether you have challenges falling asleep at night, and especially if you were like that as a child. (I for one, read for hours before being able to sleep). The reason behind the trouble sleeping, Aron explains, is because HSPs tend to get over-stimulated rather easily (hence their sensitivity to caffeine), so they have more difficulty winding down and falling asleep at night.

In Part II of this series, in the next issue of The Grapevine (Spring, 2023), I will go into the particulars of HSPs and how this relates to caregiving.

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## Highly sensitive person (continued)

If someone hasn't already written the book: 'The Highly Sensitive Caregiver', they certainly should, as it is sure to make to the New York Times Bestseller list. The trouble is, returning to the washing machine metaphor above; that not all washing machines have a delicate cycle. Indeed, it seems, not all washing machines are created equal, in life. Stay tuned for the next installment of what happens should you find yourself in that predicament, as well as on the caregiving journey. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I can suggest some things that might help. In the meantime, take the quiz, and read Aron's book.

### RESOURCE

HPS QUIZ: [HTTPS://HSPERSON.COM/TEST/HIGHLY-SENSITIVE-TEST](https://hsperson.com/test/highly-sensitive-test)  
OR TAKE THE QUIZ ON THE NEXT PAGE!

## Did you know about our other Seniors programs?



### Seniors One Stop

As we move through life, we face different challenges. NSCR's Seniors One Stop Program is here to support seniors, their families, friends, and service providers with information and resources that are offered in our community. For confidential information about housing, health care, finances and more, we are ready to assist you.

Program Coordinator: Kathy Jarvis  
[kathy.jarvis@nscr.ca](mailto:kathy.jarvis@nscr.ca), 604.982.3312



### North Shore Better at Home

Staying independent and socially connected are key ingredients to a healthy life.

The North Shore Better at Home Program supports local seniors by providing you with non-medical home services to enhance your independence and stay connected to the community.

Program Lead: Anita Parti  
[anita.parti@nscr.ca](mailto:anita.parti@nscr.ca), 604.982.3321

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## Are You Highly Sensitive? A Self-Test

Answer each question according to the way you feel, what you know to be true for you. If it is not very true or not true at all, choose False.

I seem to be aware of subtleties in my environment. ....	T	F
Other people's moods affect me. ....	T	F
I tend to be very sensitive to pain. ....	T	F
I find myself needing to withdraw during busy days, into bed or into a darkened room, or any place where I can have privacy and relief from stimulation .....	T	F
I am particularly sensitive to the effects of caffeine. ....	T	F
I am easily overwhelmed by things like bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or sirens close by. ....	T	F
I have a rich, complex inner life. ....	T	F
I am made uncomfortable by loud noises. ....	T	F
I am deeply moved by the arts or music. ....	T	F
I am conscientious. ....	T	F
I startle easily. ....	T	F
I get rattled when I have a lot to do in a short amount of time. ....	T	F
When people are uncomfortable in a physical environment, I tend to know what needs to be done to make it more comfortable. ....	T	F
I am annoyed when people try to get me to do too many things at once. ....	T	F
I try hard to avoid making mistakes or forgetting things. ....	T	F
I make it a point to avoid violent movies and TV shows. ....	T	F
I become unpleasantly aroused when a lot is going on around me. ....	T	F
Being very hungry creates a strong reaction in me, disrupting my concentration or mood. ....	T	F
Changes in my life shake me up. ....	T	F
I notice and enjoy delicate or fine scents, tastes, sounds, or works of art. ....	T	F
I make it a high priority to arrange my life to avoid upsetting or overwhelming situations. ....	T	F
When I must compete or be observed while performing a task, I become so nervous or shaky that I do much worse than I would otherwise. ....	T	F
When I was a child, my parents or teachers seemed to see me as sensitive or shy. ....	T	F

### Scoring Yourself:

'If you answered true to twelve or more of the questions, you're probably highly sensitive. But frankly, no psychological test is so accurate that you should base your life on it. If only one or two questions are true of you but they are extremely true, you might also be justified in calling yourself highly sensitive.'

## MARCH EVENTS

<b>THURS</b> <b>02</b> MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	<b>TUES</b> <b>07</b> CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:30-8:30PM	<b>WEDS</b> <b>08</b> KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 2:00-4:00PM
<b>MON</b> <b>20</b> PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:00-8:00PM	<b>TUES</b> <b>28</b> BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:00-8:00PM	

## APRIL EVENTS

<b>TUES</b> <b>04</b> CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:30-8:30PM	<b>THURS</b> <b>06</b> MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	<b>MON</b> <b>17</b> PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:00-8:00PM
<b>THURS</b> <b>19</b> KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 2:00-4:00PM		



## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

### Monthly Meetings

**Next meetings: Tuesday, Mar. 7 & Tuesday Apr. 4 (on Zoom)**

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

Currently we are meeting on Zoom. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



### Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca)

Or Phone: 604-982-3320



## MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses or partners – either living together or apart.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group to join us.

### Monthly Meetings

We are back meeting in-person at the NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

**Next 2 meetings: Mar. 2 & Apr. 6.**



### Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca)

Pat Dean (Group Leader) ~ [pdean@telus.net](mailto:pdean@telus.net)



# KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting.

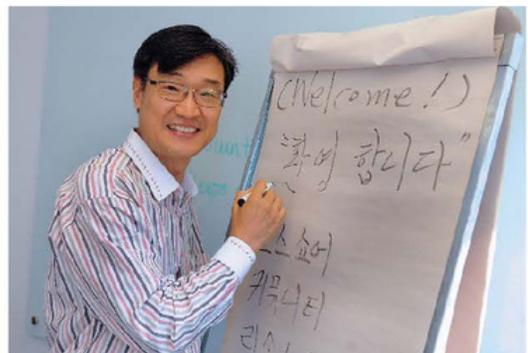
Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

## Monthly Meetings

Meetings are in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm (\*except in April where it will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday)

**Next Meetings: Mar. 8 & Apr. 19**

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



## Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ [infocwtc@gmail.com](mailto:infocwtc@gmail.com)

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca)



## PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, self-care and connecting.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

### Monthly Meetings

We are currently meeting on Zoom. Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00pm.

**Next Meetings: Mar. 20 & Apr. 17.**

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



### Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ [noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com](mailto:noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com)

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~  
[Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca)



## **CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for people experiencing grief in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

**Tuesday, March 28, 2023 on Zoom, 6:00-8:00PM**



As we move into Spring, things can seem more pronounced for those experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in hope, rejuvenation and renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailunas  
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator  
604.982.3320  
[vic.gailunas@nscr.ca](mailto:vic.gailunas@nscr.ca)

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## Caregiver Interview: Barb R.-D.

### What has been your journey into caregiving?

A first memory that my husband, Peter, may be having difficulty was seeing him absorbed in financials for a new product for his business, and he was struggling with the numbers. This seemed strange since in my many years married to Peter he was known for having strong financial skills. He had been an entrepreneur for 20 years at this time. As with many others it did take time to have Peter diagnosed appropriately. Fortunately, we were referred to the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health at UBC. The diagnosis in 2012 was FTD, Primary Progressive Aphasia, Semantic type, a dementia impacting loss of language, difficulty communicating and understanding, ability to make sound decisions, comprehension and often movement and behaviour. I have come to realize the importance of a correct diagnosis to assist with provision of the right medications, and to help us understand what could be coming next with this very unforgiving condition.



My tendency is to research so I threw myself into understanding FTD and our future. It was overwhelming to understand what lay ahead and how this diagnosis might impact both of our careers, which we loved, and our family, friendships, and retirement. We had considered ourselves very fortunate – friends, family, travel throughout the world, and active, adventurous lifestyles with plans to continue all activities. I often say now how lucky we were to travel extensively before Peter's diagnosis.

Within a year Peter's cognition was deteriorating and ending his driving was the first significant change. From there, the caregiving journey took center stage and in particular Peter's safety was primary.

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## Caregiver Interview (continued)

Not being able to drive led to his taking the Skytrain to work, then behavioural issues of paranoia set in which led to his retirement and selling his business. His dementia and not being able to adequately care for the business had led to poor management and not a great time to sell a business. I stepped down from CEO of my business to a Chair role and shifted roles to care for Peter. I would say we have maneuvered well through the years of caregiving, albeit with no compass and trial and error. We have lost friends while others, including family, have stepped up. I miss our active social life most of all. A year ago, I hired help 1 day a week and I anticipate increasing our care needs.

[What made you want to join a caregiver support group and how did you find out about the group at NSCR? What do you believe are some of the benefits to peer support and attending a caregiving group?](#)

Throughout this journey I have found tremendous value being with other caregivers facing similar issues. I quickly realized I had a lot to learn. I became aware of NSCR and their care support programs through the various correspondence I receive on dementia and was impressed by their overall vision and mission. I joined NSCR's Caregiver Support Program for this reason and receive advice and understanding with respect and no judgement. A takeaway from one meeting was the slogan "meet them where they are", (now hanging in my kitchen) to remind me of Peter's condition and where we are today. At our meetings I feel I can say anything, ask anything and will receive the wisdom I need to move forward through the difficult stages. While I read articles and blogs on Peter's dementia which are helpful technically, for myself it is the relationships with peers and care received at NSCR which are most meaningful.

[What workshops have you attended and how did you feel about them?](#)

So far, I have attended 2 workshops at NSCR. The Emotion-Focused Therapy program was an opportunity to have deeper thoughts and conversations on the emotional aspects of caregiving. The Death and Dying program helped me look forward and make the plans required for our future. I also attended a workshop facilitated by the Alzheimer's Society of B.C. to learn of their programs and opportunities.

[How do you take care of yourself? What are some things you do to bring yourself joy?](#)

Bringing in care to our home this year was for the sole purpose of having more time for myself and with girlfriends. I missed those times at the gym together, shopping, lunches, walks. I currently own a business and, although I am now not involved full-time, I derive great satisfaction being part of it and belonging to an executive peer group. Mentoring others when I can, particularly women entrepreneurs, provides great joy. And, with 13 members in our family including 5 grandchildren, life is busy. My next plan is to take up photography.