

# A cinematic representation of the most dreaded disease, alzheimer, in still alice...

[Health & Medicine](#)



This paper explores the film, *Still Alice*, and how Dr. Alice Howland was a renowned linguistics professor at Columbia University. The film shows how words begin to escape her and she starts becoming lost on her daily jogs, Alice must come face-to-face with a devastating diagnosis: early-onset Alzheimer's disease. This paper will discuss how Alice's three grown children and husband must watch helplessly as their mother and wife disappears more and more with each passing day. *Still Alice* also portrays that Alice is still Alice beneath all the symptoms and through the good and bad days of Alzheimer's Disease. The film doesn't portray what you would think that a person would look like if they Alzheimer's, *Still Alice* portrays a side that some people do not see or know about. This paper will discuss how it affected Alice, John and Lydia. It will also show the process of how Julianne Moore prepared herself to play Alice. I will discuss how this film shaped my views of Alzheimer's disease.

*Still Alice* portrays a mother, wife and a Linguistics professor whose life suddenly take a turn when she starts showing signs and is diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. This film also portrays how Alice Howland's Alzheimer's affects her family and the sacrifices that they take to take care of her. This also shows how Alice struggles to deal with having Alzheimer's and decisions she had to make for the future because she knew she wasn't going to get any better only worse. She knew that at some point it would be difficult for her to answer the questions her disease advances, she becomes unable to give focused lectures and loses her job.

I think that one part of the message of the screenwriter by including a communication disorder in this film is that no matter how thing get you must <https://assignbuster.com/a-cinematic-representation-of-the-most-dreaded-disease-alzheimer-in-still-alice/>

stick by your family's side because they are all that you have. Another part of the message is that getting Alzheimer's and its symptoms can happen to anyone, at anytime and anywhere. I also think that the message is that a support system is much needed for someone who has Alzheimer's Disease to help remind them of the life that they had before their Alzheimer's. The last part of the message the screenwriter is that it's hard on the person who has Alzheimer's maybe more than their family and others who are taking care of them.

I felt that the characteristics of Alice's Alzheimer's Disease was portrayed accurately. I think that the director and Julianne Moore did a wonderful job of portraying Alzheimer's and what the symptoms are and how it affects Alice's family. I think that the preparation that Julianne Moore to get in sync with Alice was amazing. Julianne Moore prepared for the role over four months, watching documentaries about Alzheimer's disease. Through Skype, she talked to three women with early-onset Alzheimer's disease; she also visited a support group for women with Alzheimer's disease and a long-term care facility for Alzheimer's patients. She also undertook the cognitive testing used for diagnosing dementia with a neuropsychiatrist. I feel that the portrayal was promoted in a positive and negative way. I think that the film portrayed Alzheimer's in a positive way because it showed how everyone pitched in to help take care of Alice as she started to deteriorate. I think that the film portrayed Alzheimer's in a negative way because Alice's husband, John, gave up on trying to help take care of her and took the job offer he got in Minnesota and left it up to their kids and the nurse to take care of Alice.

The inclusion of Alzheimer's in *Still Alice* transformed Alice, John, Lydia Howland. It transformed Alice because her life change after she started showing signs of Alzheimer's and after she lost her job because of it. Alice knew that she was going to get worse, so she left instructions for herself by recording a video message instructing her future self to swallow her sleeping pills. As she deteriorates, Alice started to lose her sense of time and direction. She started to forget who her family was when she went to visit her daughter in the hospital with John to see their newborn granddaughter. At her doctor's suggestion, Alice delivers a speech at an Alzheimer's conference about her experience with the disease, using a highlighter to remind herself which parts of the speech she has already spoken, and receives a standing ovation. Later in the film, Alice get worse to the point where she is unable to speak.

Alice's Alzheimer's transformed John because it was hard for him to watch her deteriorate. John got a job in Minnesota and Alice asks him to postpone accepting the job, but he feels this is impossible. Alice begins to have difficulty answering the questions on her phone. She loses the phone and becomes distressed; John finds it a month later in the freezer, but Alice thinks it has only been missing for a day. This was very hard for John to watch his wife to just have Alzheimer's and start to not remember anything or anyone. It took a toll on his emotional state and I believe that's why he took the job in Minnesota.

Alice's Alzheimer's transformed Lydia because she must move from California to go back home to care for Alice. Lydia reads her a section of the play *Angels*

in America and asks her what she thinks it is about. Alice, barely able to speak, responds with a single word: "love". It's hard for Lydia because she is the youngest of three children and is the one that is taking care of her mother because Anna had a child and is unable to take care of her mother and her newborn child. Also, with her father in Minnesota and her brother busy with his life and job he is unable to take care of Alice. This is a lot of responsibility for someone who didn't go to college like her older sibling and who is trying to become an actress.

In my opinion, I do not think that there was any inaccuracy or misleading information about Alzheimer's Disease. I think that the portrayal was accurate, and that Julianne Moore did a phenomenal job on portraying the symptoms of Alzheimer's. I did not see any misleading information about Alzheimer's through Alice. I think that all the actors and the director did an amazing job of portraying what it's like to have a loved with Alzheimer's and what it's like to start having to make those hard decisions on how they are going to be taken care of when you are not around. I also think that they did an amazing job of getting most to all the information of Alzheimer's correct.

I think that this portrayal of Alzheimer's has shaped my views of Alzheimer's in many ways. In one way, is that I have put people who have Alzheimer's under one umbrella. I always thought that people with Alzheimer's were people in their 70s. I never thought that it could happen to someone whose 50 years old. I also didn't think that Alzheimer's patients had the thought of committing suicide to "ease the pain" of their family. Also, my view was shaped because I never thought about how much it takes to take care of

someone who has Alzheimer's. I knew that it would be hard, but I never knew how hard it would be to take care of a loved one.