

## **She is not doing on Purpose**

Wg Cdr DP Sabharwal, Veteran

She was a senior secondary school teacher. As a yoga trainer, she used to teach Yoga to almost 80 ladies and children. She was an avid gardener who looked after more than 70 pots with plants, flowers, herbs, and vegetables. She was an excellent cook known as 'cake Aunty' who used to bake birthday cakes for children in Air force stations. She was an adoring mother, a perfect wife, and an excellent housekeeper whose home used to be spick-and-span in spite of two boys at home. And then something went for a toss. she started behaving differently.

There wasn't a madness in what she started doing off and on. Everything was minor in nature, but totally against her grain. She will forget where she had kept the money; she would miss adding salt to the vegetable; instead of calling elder son; she would ring up the younger one; In a market she would struggle to remember what for she had come there; when asked, she would just stare at me and not hand over the glass of water that was lying in front of her and so on. Such 'random' acts from the almost-perfect life-partner of 30 years used to baffle me in the beginning. Over a period of three years, this feeling gave way to irritation, annoyance, frustration and even anger till it was detected that she was suffering from Alzheimer's.

I got the reason of her 'odd behaviour at times' but since she used to behave normally most of the time, it was difficult to accept what she did on those few moments. The result was accusations thrust at her like: you can't be so naïve; why are you behaving this way; what's wrong with you; are you testing my patience; come on be sensible; why are you acting dumb and so on. The result used to be her silence, withdrawal from the scene, sulking and at times yelling and throwing things as if in a fit.

I analysed the whole thing like an engineer and that too a military officer would do, and I reached a conclusion: I could not control her behaviour, but I decided to do so with mine. I put five big posters in prominent places on my hose walls saying: 'She is not doing on purpose'. The results were astonishing. Within three months, I became calm, and she became calmer.