‘Using sensitive personal examples, the text enhances our ability and skills in such a way as to ensure we treat the person living with dementia as an equal and valued citizen.’
- Henry Simmons, Chief Executive, Alzheimer Scotland

‘Person-centred and practical, this will without doubt change the lives of people affected by dementia.’
- Cathy Baldwin, Organisational Development Manager (Quality), Alzheimer’s Society

This guide to Adaptive Interaction explains how to assess the communication repertoires of people with dementia who can no longer speak, and offers creative interventions for communicating with them.

Outlining the challenges faced by people living with advanced dementia, this book shows how to relieve the strain on relationships between them, their families and professional caregivers through non-verbal communication. It includes communication assessment tools and guidance on how to build on the communication repertoire of the individual with dementia. With accessible evidence and case studies based on the authors’ research, this book can be used as the basis for developing interactions without words with people living with dementia.

**Dr Maggie Ellis** is Lecturer at the School of Psychology & Neuroscience, University of St Andrews, UK. **Arlene Astell** is Professor at the School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading, UK and Ontario Shores Research Chair in Dementia, University of Toronto, Canada.
Adaptive Interaction and Dementia
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We dedicate this book to our long-suffering husbands, Gordon and Paul, Arlene’s youngest child, Izzie, and Maggie’s dog, Jazzy, who have found for some time now that evenings and weekends are for book-writing. Thanks for your patience!
Acknowledgements

We would like to express gratitude to everyone who, over the years, has helped us in the development of Adaptive Interaction (AI). This includes, among many others, people with dementia, their family members and friends, formal caregivers, care home managers and academics. We are indebted and heartened by the commitment you have shown both to us and to Adaptive Interaction. Above all, we are grateful to you for putting your faith in an approach to communication that can elicit a range of feelings, for being willing to work through feelings of fear, uncertainty and self-consciousness to unearth joy, accomplishment and connection. Thank you.

We would also like to thank the illustrator of this book, Suzanne Scott. A recent chance meeting brought us together and we quickly realised we had met each other years ago. Good old serendipity! Suzanne has brought something very special to this book and we hope you love her illustrations as much as we do. Thanks Suzanne!
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  Facial expressions
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  Physical contact
This book represents a culmination of our combined efforts over the last (almost) 16 years. Maggie came to work for Arlene as a research assistant, fresh out of an undergraduate degree in psychology. At that point, Arlene was relatively early on in her academic career and Maggie became her first PhD student. In that respect, you could say that we have ‘grown up’ together!

Adaptive Interaction is very special to us. We developed it with a shared passion for helping people with dementia who don’t speak to connect with their families, friends and professional carers. It is an approach that we continue to research and one that we very much believe in. We strive to see it in use, at home and care facilities alike, and operate a tried and tested training programme that is available to anyone – from family members to care home managers to commissioners. We urge you to explore our website at www.astellis.co.uk where you will find details of how you can book a place on one of our courses. You will also find videos of Adaptive Interaction in use and hear the testimonies of those who use it.

One last point before we leave you to start your travels into Adaptive Interaction. You may notice that each chapter of this book contains a different song title. Why did we use this
musical reference? That’s easy. Songs represent little capsules of collaboration: collaboration between instruments, musicians, harmonies and rhythms. This is what Adaptive Interaction is all about – collaboration between people, their communication repertoires and the harmonies and rhythms that they ‘play’ together. Enjoy the music!

Maggie and Arlene
Chapter 1

Both Sides Now

Advanced Dementia from the Inside Out

What is this book about?

Adaptive Interaction and Dementia: How to Communicate without Speech is about losing your voice in a world dominated by words. Words are the glue of human existence. They shape our interactions in the world and connect us to other people. Every day we exchange millions of words through conversations, phone calls, emails, texts and so on. Just think for a moment how many words you have used today and the different ways you have used them. Aside from reading this book, how many texts or instant messages have you read or sent? How many emails or phone calls? How many chats and conversations?

Words enable us to be connected and this desire to be connected is universal. For instance, in 2015 there were over seven billion mobile phone subscriptions across the world (International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2015) – as many as there were people on the planet in 2015. With these multiple channels of communication at our fingertips we can be in touch with other people all of the time. Not only is this