

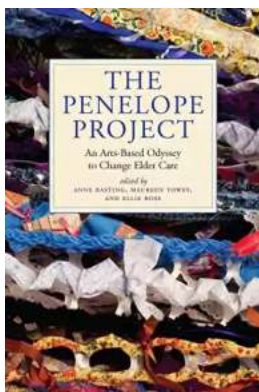
# An Arts-Based Odyssey to Change Elder Care: Humanities and Public Life

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Elder care is an essential aspect of our society that often goes unnoticed. The elderly deserve our love, respect, and support, but sadly, they are often neglected or overlooked. In this article, we will explore the transformative power of the arts in improving the lives of our beloved elderly population. Through various artistic expressions, we can create a profound impact on their well-being, contribute to creating a more compassionate society, and bring about positive changes in the field of elder care.

## The Power of the Arts:

The arts have always had a tremendous impact on our lives, providing us with a means of self-expression, emotional release, and personal growth. This impact is not limited to any age group; it transcends boundaries and reaches people of all ages. The elderly, however, can benefit immensely from the arts, as it offers them a respite from the challenges they face in their everyday lives.



## The Penelope Project: An Arts-Based Odyssey to Change Elder Care (Humanities and Public Life)

by Rhonda Blair (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 8190 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 222 pages



Art therapies, such as drawing, painting, and sculpting, can help stimulate their cognitive abilities, improve their motor skills, and provide an avenue for emotional expression. Music and dance therapy can stimulate memories, improve physical well-being, and enhance their overall quality of life. By engaging in these creative activities, the elderly are given an opportunity to explore their inner selves, engage with others, and find joy in the process.

### **The Role of Humanities:**

Humanities play a crucial role in fostering empathy, compassion, and understanding among individuals. By incorporating humanities into elder care, we can create a more holistic approach to improving their lives. Providing opportunities for reading, writing, storytelling, and engaging in philosophical discussions can help spark intellectual stimulation, increase social connections, and enhance their overall sense of well-being.

Moreover, by exposing the elderly to different literary works, historical events, and cultural experiences, we can ignite their curiosity, broaden their perspectives, and provide them with a renewed sense of purpose. The humanities empower the elderly by reminding them that their life experiences and wisdom are valuable, and that they still have much to contribute to society.

### **Public Engagement and Advocacy:**

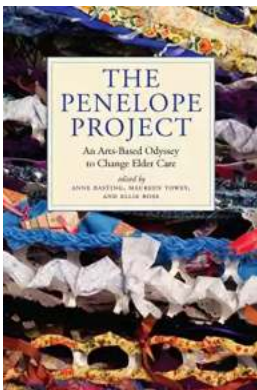
An arts-based odyssey to change elder care cannot be successful without public engagement and advocacy. It is crucial to create awareness about the challenges faced by the elderly and the transformative power of the arts in addressing them. Through social media campaigns, community events, and collaborations with

public institutions, we can generate support and bring about necessary changes in elder care policies and practices.

Public engagement can also involve inviting artists, writers, musicians, and dancers to share their talents and interact with the elderly population. This creates a vibrant atmosphere, provides opportunities for intergenerational connections, and reinforces the message that the elderly are valued members of our society deserving of respect, care, and attention.

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An arts-based odyssey to change elder care offers tremendous potential for improving the lives of the elderly. By harnessing the power of the arts and incorporating humanities into elder care, we can create a more compassionate and inclusive society. It is our responsibility to recognize the challenges faced by the elderly and lend them our support. Together, we can embark on this journey to transform elder care, create profound positive changes, and ensure that our beloved elderly lead lives filled with joy, creativity, and purpose.



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Of the 15,000 nursing homes in the United States, how many are places you'd want to visit, much less live in? Now that people are living longer and more of the population are elderly, this question is more important than ever, particularly for people with disabilities. We must transform long-term care into an experience we and our loved ones can face without dread. It can be done. The Penelope Project shows how by taking readers on an ambitious journey to create a long-term care community that engages its residents in challenging, meaningful art-making.

At Milwaukee's Luther Manor, a team of artists from the University of Wisconsin's theatre department and Sojourn Theatre Company, university students, staff, residents, and volunteers traded their bingo cards for copies of *The Odyssey*. They embarked on a two-year project to examine this ancient story from the perspective of the hero who never left home: Penelope, wife of Odysseus. Together, the team staged a play that engaged everyone and transcended the limits not just of old age and disability but also youth, institutional regulations, and disciplinary boundaries.

Inviting readers to see through the eyes of residents, students, artists, staff, family members, and experts in the fields of education, long-term care, and civically engaged arts practice, this book underscores the essential role of the arts and humanities in living richly. Waiting, as Penelope waited, need not be a time of loss and neglect. The Penelope Project boldly dreams of how to make late life a time of growth and learning. If you dream of improving people's lives through creative endeavors, this book provides practical advice.



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