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Awakenings in Real Life by Dan Cohen

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Current Words Publishing

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles, CA — December 22, 2025 — *Awakenings in Real Life*, a new memoir by Dan Cohen, will be released on January 13, 2026, by Current Words Publishing.

In the summer of 2015, while deep in the grip of dementia, Dan Cohen's father experienced a sudden and unexpected moment of clarity. His message to his family was simple and unmistakable: *he appreciated life and wanted to live*. That moment—brief, profound, and unforgettable—became the catalyst for **Awakenings in Real Life**, Cohen's deeply moving new memoir, on sale January 13, 2026, from Current Words Publishing.

Blending personal reflection, family memory, and hard-earned insight, *Awakenings in Real Life* explores the quiet, often overlooked moments when life seems to speak directly to us—sometimes at its most fragile edges. Cohen traces how his father's awakening, first shared in an online article read by hundreds of thousands, opened the door to a broader journey of meaning, gratitude, and renewed attention to the present moment

Neither a traditional grief memoir nor a clinical account of dementia, *Awakenings in Real Life* occupies a rare middle ground: intimate without being sentimental, hopeful without denying loss. Cohen invites readers to consider how awakenings—moments of clarity, connection, or resolve—can arrive unexpectedly, even amid illness, uncertainty, and change.

Based in New York, **Dan Cohen** is a storyteller, speaker, podcaster, and entrepreneur with more than 25 years of experience as a business consultant helping companies grow in competitive markets. He is the creator and host of the *Awakenings in Real Life* podcast, which expands on the themes explored in the book through conversations about meaning, resilience, and lived experience. This book stands at the center of that work.

Awakenings in Real Life will resonate with readers of memoir, caregivers, families touched by dementia and Alzheimer's, and anyone seeking reassurance that even in life's most difficult moments, clarity and purpose can still emerge.

Book Details:

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For a digital review copies, interview requests, or additional information, please contact david@currentwords.com. For more information, visit currentwords.com/awakenings-in-real-life

About the Author

Dan Cohen is a storyteller, podcaster, speaker, and entrepreneur based in New York. With more than 25 years of experience as a business consultant helping companies grow in competitive markets, Cohen brings a grounded, reflective perspective to his creative work.

His memoir, *Awakenings in Real Life*, was inspired by a brief but profound moment during his father's struggle with dementia, when a sudden awakening changed how Cohen understood attention, meaning, and the value of living fully. Blending personal reflection with lived experience, the book explores how moments of clarity can arise unexpectedly—even in the most difficult circumstances—and how noticing them can reshape the way we move through the world.

Cohen is also the creator and host of the *Awakenings in Real Life* podcast, where he extends these conversations through interviews and personal reflections focused on meaning, resilience, and everyday awakenings.

High-resolution author photo available upon request.

Excerpt from *Awakenings in Real Life*

Chapter 1

Awakening from Dementia

My dad developed dementia in 2005 as a result of a stroke. By the summer of 2015, my dad was in the late stages of dementia and was hospitalized with pneumonia for ten days. It took a lot out of him. He became incontinent and needed to be fed. He would often get agitated and cry like a child in pain (although no one was hurting him) when we shaved him or bathed him. He barely spoke, had no short-term memory, and needed 24-hour care. Prior to this episode, I could take Dad and Mom out to the movies and lunch, but sadly, those special times were no longer possible. And although I still followed my own advice of "acceptance" and "inclusion" (at that point, I still watched TV with my dad, and we would enjoy a meal together at home), I was overwhelmed with sadness.

My father was and *is* my hero. My dad grew up with three older brothers, so he became the protective "older brother" for each of his friends. He was never afraid to take on the local bully. In fact, he was an undefeated boxer in the army, going 26–0.

My father's toughness and drive served him well in life. He turned his street smarts into a successful business and marketing career. He was also a generous man who treated others with respect and kindness. No matter what his lot in life, he showed his appreciation to those kind to him, for example, Dad was always a generous tipper.

My dad was perhaps the most protective of, and most loving toward, his wife and three children. His messages to us growing up—seemingly contradictory but ultimately reasonable—were these: *You can do anything you put your mind to, and as long as you do your best, that's okay*.

After the pneumonia seemed to steal the last of my father's humanity, he got it again, along with bad hypertension. The hospital had to treat him with a high dose of steroids and antibiotics, because they were afraid the second pneumonia could be the end. During this hospital stay, it seemed as if a switch was flipped, and my dad began to *AWAKE*.

My brother Ken is an internist/cardiologist. One of his partners was Dad's doctor. Ken had admitting privileges at the hospital, so he was present often when Dad was hospitalized. As a result, he spent the most time with Dad.

Besides being my hero, Dad was the single most profound influence in Ken's life as well. Ken describes Dad, before the dementia, as a man who exuded love. He describes the dementia as being insidious at first, before rapidly progressing to a point where Dad hardly recognized us.

Ken witnessed Dad's awakening first. When he looks back on it, it still blows his mind and causes the hair to stand up on the back of his neck. Describing the awakening, Ken said, "He started to become more alert, and then it became like a light switch, 'Hey, I'm back!', and he had full conversations."

When I entered his room, at first I didn't realize what was happening. My dad asked me, "How are you doing?" The importance of what he said didn't dawn on me immediately because my father no longer initiated conversation or spoke in full sentences. He hadn't asked me about my own life or well-being for years. But at first, I didn't realize how huge this was, that he was initiating a normal conversation.

I responded, "I'm okay, Dad."

Then, he said, "You know I love you very much." I suddenly realized my father was much more alert—not quite the man he'd been before his stroke, but he had a strong resemblance to him. I felt my face lift into a wide smile.

My dad smiled back and then asked, "What happened to me?"

Excerpt from *Awakenings in Real Life* by Dan Cohen.

Industry Awards & Accolades

Winner, ACCI Literary Excellence Award — Best Non-Fiction/Memoir

Gold Winner, 2026 Manhattan Book Awards

Finalist, 2026 Storytrade Book Awards — Nonfiction Prodigy Award

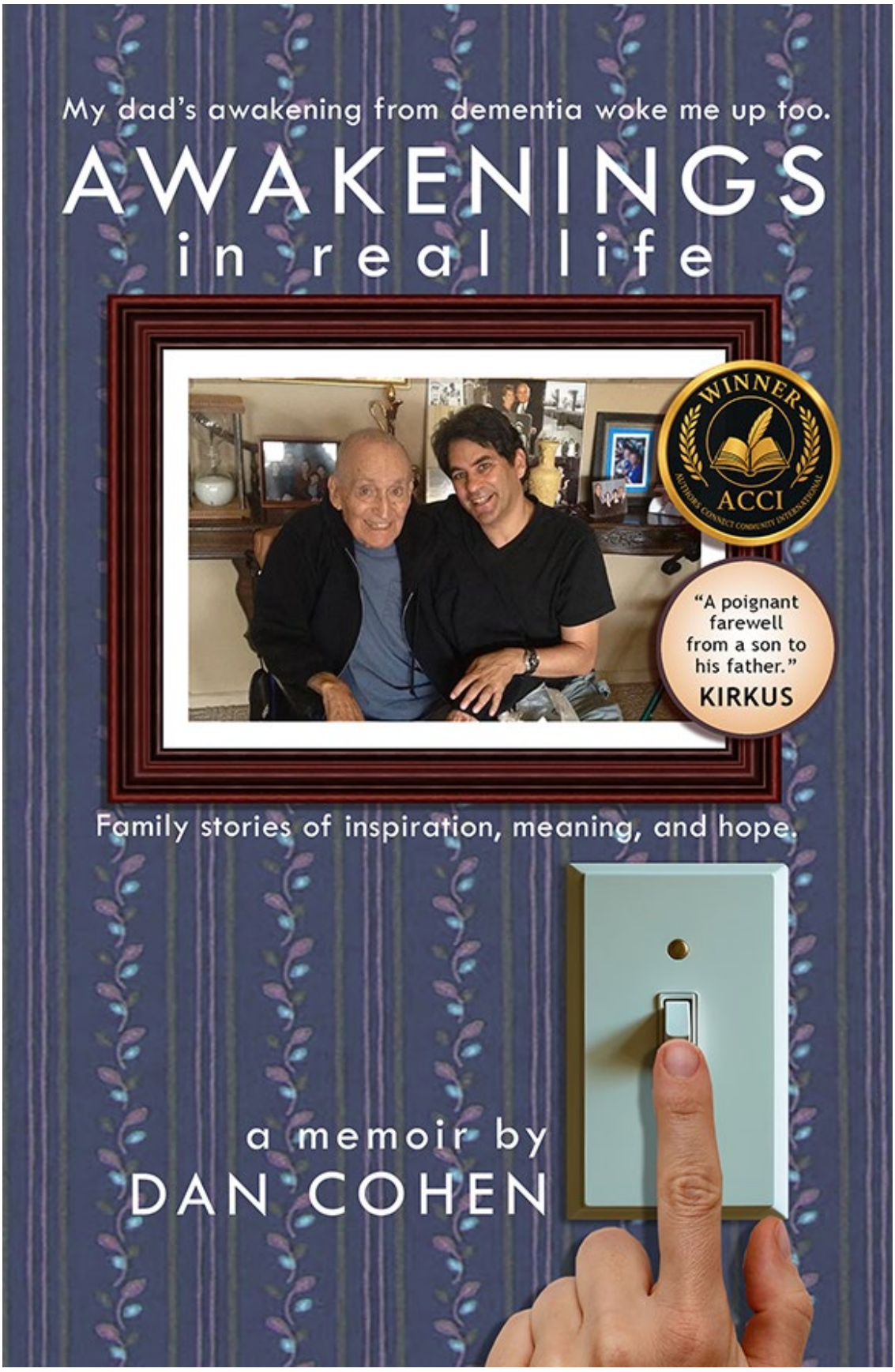
Best Memoir Nominee, 2026 Astra Book Awards

Praise for *Awakenings in Real Life*

“AWAKENINGS IN REAL LIFE offers a heartwarming collection of memories, insights, and personal reckonings as the author reflects on his father, his family, and his father’s dementia journey… It’s a book that doesn’t just share a journey—it invites you to walk alongside it.”
TEEPA SNOW
Author of *Understanding the Changing Brain: A Positive Approach to Dementia Care*

“A poignant farewell from a son to his father.”
KIRKUS REVIEWS

“Cohen’s journey embraces a heartfelt emotional experience that frames ‘awakening’ in a new manner. This will prove surprisingly uplifting and positive in a manner that adds extra dimensions of possibility and understanding to the dementia experience. [A] warm-hearted story of a father and son’s lifelong shared connections.”
MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW



Front cover for media use.

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