



Promoting Positive Caregiving

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AARP Meditations for
Caregiving

Today's Talk



- Caregiving in America
- Strains and gains
- Keys to positive caregiving

















Family Caregiving in America

- 40 M Americans engage in some form of caregiving activity in a year (NAC/AARP, 2015)
- Numbers increasing because of demographics, medical advances





- But caregivers and their reactions to caregiving are highly varied:
- 38% highly stressed
- 45% somewhat stressed
- 16% not at all stressed

Most Stressed Caregivers

- Spousal Caregivers



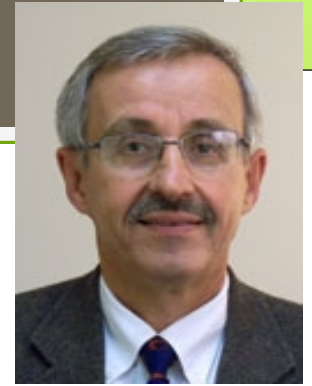
Military Caregivers



- Dementia Caregivers



Research on Caregiving's Negative Effects



- Dementia caregiving linked with 63% increased mortality (Schulz & Beach, JAMA, 1999)
- Schulz & Martire, 2004:
- Insomnia
- Depression and anxiety
- Musculoskeletal problems (e.g., back pain)
- Decreased use of preventative medical services

Research on Caregiving's Positive Effects

- AP-NORC 2017 survey of 1000 caregivers:
- 95% said caregiving was worthwhile
- (77% said it was stressful)





- *"When I wake up, I make the decision to speak in a joyous voice, to nurture positive energy, and to make this a good day."*
- *"[The disease] is not something to be afraid of; the more you know, the more empowered you become."*

Bettyville



- *"I know this home is just for now, but I treasure our days. I feel different than when I arrived because I have come through for her. It has taken me so long to feel okay in my own skin, but I feel better, more at home in the world. Most days."*



- *"The majority of caregivers...readily endorse caregiving gains or positive aspects of caregiving [including] having the opportunity to serve as a role model, having the chance to give back to care recipients...,experiencing an enhanced sense of purpose..., feeling appreciated, and helping to maintain the identity and well-being of the family (Coon, 2012, p. 233)*

- Caregiving brings “strains and gains”
- *How do we minimize its strains and maximize its gains in order to make this a more positive experience?*