



Keys to Caregiving

- Believe in the value of **caring for yourself**
- Accept negative and positive **feelings**
- Define **commitments** realistically
- Utilize **support**
- Selectively separate **past/present**
- Find **positive** meanings in the sacrifices that you are making

Marathon Metaphor

Caregiving as marathon, not sprint:



- Learn the up-hills and down-hills of the course
- Maintain sustainable pace
- Take any and all replenishment
- Run alongside others

Defining Commitments

- *"I feel I have to do this. But what's the right way to do it? How much should I do?"*
- Take stock of individual and family development, resources
- Choose consciously to define commitments and limitations/necessary balance

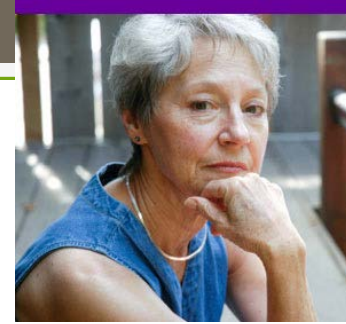
Utilizing Support

- *“Our family takes care of its own. Besides, no one can take care of him as well as I can”*
- Accepting help almost feels shameful, disempowering
- Use supports not to avoid care but to empower you to give care for as long as you choose

Finding Positive Meanings

- ***“What’s the purpose of this caregiving? Why am I making all of these sacrifices?”***
- Lack of purpose leads to greater likelihood of resentment and burnout
- Identify the personal, family and spiritual values that underlie your choice to provide care

Karen



- *"Shortly after I was pregnant I left my husband. And then after the child was born, I decided I was going to go back with him. And my parents knew it wasn't going to work. And my mother kept saying, 'You'll go back and have another baby.' And my father said to me, 'You can always come home. I don't care if you have 10 babies. You can always come home.' He left that door open for me. And I did just that. I went back and had another baby and came back with two babies. And, I'll never forget that. I always knew I could go home."*

Forgiveness

- About letting go and moving on, not forgetting
- Reduces the intensity of negative feelings
- Increase empathy and compassion
- Set boundaries on past and present hurts
- Also applies to forgiving oneself

Sweetening a Bad Relationship--Gloria

- Nurse, early 60's
- Lost step-father as a teen
- Mother long rejecting
- Now mother with DM, renal failure
- Trying to win approval through caregiving



- Regard parent as changed by age and illness—more vulnerable
- Practice compassion; fulfill duty
- Changing your stance changes the old dynamics—will recast past in softer light
- Gratitude for improved relationship, growth, time

- Caregiving brings strains and gains
- We meet the challenges with flexibility and determination and seek the positive and transformative



References

- Caregiving in the US 2015, a NAC/AARP report:
<http://www.caregiving.org/caregiving2015/>
- Alzheimer's Association:
http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_facts_and_figures.asp
- Schulz, R. & Beach, SR (1999). Caregiving as a risk factor for mortality: the Caregiver Health Effects Study., *JAMA*, Dec. 15, 282(23):2215-9.
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- Coon, DW (2012). Resilience and family caregiving. In Annual Review of Gerontology & Geriatrics: Emerging Perspective on Resilience in Adulthood and Later Life (Hayslip & Smith, eds.) New York: Springer

RESOURCES

- Well Spouse Association:
www.wellspouse.org
- AARP Caregiver Resource Center:
<https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=aarp%20caregiver%20resource%20center>

- The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers by Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D. (Guilford, 2006)

