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
“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

References (cont.)

Well Spouse Association: [www.wellspouse.org](http://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]