

Caregiver Warrior Prayer #1b

Dearest Lord

Please help me stay calm, patient and kind.

Please help me to be my personal best.

Please stop me from taking blame for things beyond
my control

or putting that blame on someone else.

Give me grace under fire, strength when I'm weary,
courage when I am scared.

Grant me the ability to be in touch with the love
that lives in my soul

so I may feel it for myself and spread it to those
who need it.

Let me be grateful beyond measure for this day I
have been granted

So that I can make it the best of days

The most precious of days.

Caring for Aging Parents Workshop – Aug 13, 2020 11a.m.-12:30 p.m.

1. The Grief You Feel Before the Loss – Anticipatory Grief (AG)

Its not talked about unfortunately

a. Just as intense or more than after death.

b. Normal – AG may not ease the grieving process after death, but will make it more natural and expected.

Examples are feeling relief when your loved one dies, or knowing you did the best you could for them in their last days. Another is you have been already grieving for a very long time, once you start caregiving your beloved.

c. Not everyone experiences AG – neither good nor bad.

You could be so busy with work and your family, that you won't allow yourself to go thru any grieving process until after death. That's ok – called survival.

d. Not a substitute for grieving after death – and when death finally happens you NEED do the work. You should be proactive in your grieving process after death by attending a support group, one on one counseling or spiritually. If you do not process grief, it may come out in different ways – esp. physically – heart attacks, etc. And if grief is never processed, each time it happens it's like a kettle running out of steam till it burns up.

e. Signs are: anger, anxiety, depression, emotional numbness, fatigue, fear, guilt, loneliness, poor concentration, sadness

f. Stages are: shock about upcoming loss, denying the reality of the loss, eventual acceptance.

g. Differences between AG and grief after death: increasing concern for person dying, visualizing what persons death will be like, preparing for what life will be like after your beloved is gone, unfinished business – this is valuable stuff which we will talk about in a bit. with dying person

Secondary losses – are many – loss of companion, best friend, changing roles in family dynamic, financial changes, loss of dreams of what could be, other episodes of loss – why the grieving process takes so long. Its like removing layers of an onion,

Benefits

- a. Provides opportunities for closure**
- b. Unfinished business – forgiveness, reconcile differences**
- c. Precious time!**
- d. Healing time**
- e. By seeing our loved ones in a frail state – easier to say it is ok for you to move onto Our Lord.**
- f. Provides an opportunity for beloved to plan their funeral and wake**
- g. Provides a chance for beloved to give cherished things away to specific people.**
- h. Provides a chance for both personal growth for your beloved and for you.**

How to Cope with AG

- 1. Let yourself feel the pain of grief. Acknowledge your fear of pain and loss**
- 2. Peer led support group to share your story. It reduces isolation and loneliness. It helps you think outside the box.**
- 3. Express yourself thru a trusted friend, family member, spiritual advisor, art, journaling, meditation, prayer**
- 4. Practice forgiveness and love. Say it often to the one you are caregiving**
- 5. Give your beloved permission to go to God.**
- 6. Spend quality time together – old photos, telling old stories, memories, playing favorite games, cooking favorite meals, listening to music, etc**
- 7. Ask the questions that facilitate meaningful conversation**
- 8. Take care of your emotional and physical health**

Role Reversal – Caring for Our Aging Loved One #3

- a. **Worry about your children’s security – now its parents.**
- b. **You are now a caregiver for one that caregave you – comes in stages, learning as you go.** You have spent an entire lifetime of caring for people. Draw from that massive reservoir!

First step: Awareness – keeps us in touch with reality, seeing patterns

- a. **Are you in denial about your parents decline?**
- b. **Are you in denial about your new role?**

Second Step: Assessment. Ask them what they want with love and listen. Is it time for a companion 24/7, a few hours a day, a week, etc. or is it feasible to have them move in with you, or is it time to put them in an assisted living facility.

Four life steps with assessment:

1. **Legal** – legal power of attorney before er’s arise; up to date wil/trust plan; Accurate list of insurance policies, financial records, property deeds, auto titles, safety deposit boxes, etc.
2. **Physical/medical** – an advanced medical directive or living will and power of attorney over medical and list to honor end of life wishes, what medical procedures would be acceptable to your loved one, and at what stage
3. **Social** – these become vital after losing ability to walk and drive – senior centers, adult day programs, faith communities, hobbies to share; email, telephone, visit, write letters and notes, care packages, dinners, lunches, talk about old times, go over old family photos, etc.
4. **Spiritual**- maintaining contact with church; reading Scripture and praying with them; taking them to Mass

Be gentle with yourself = you are learning as you go. You are doing the best you can just like your parents did for you. They sacrificed with time and patience for you, now it’s your turn. Realize that these changes are just as difficult for them as they are for you.

What to say and not to say

- 1. Trivializing or infantilizing comments – “Oh dear – you’ve done it again let me clean it up for you AGAIN”**
- 2. Guilt – “I do so much for you, at least you could do is...”**
- 3. Failure to listen – “No, you should watch the other tv program its much better...”**
- 4. be a rightfighter – its not about you being right. It’s about your parents feeling that what they say matters**
- 5. trying to explain things “Ive already answered that question – don’t you remember?”**

Agree with them. Say yes or ok to them. Allow them to keep their dignity and worth.

- 5. Don’t treat them as children – but say things like “Thank you for all of the things and activities you did for me as a kid. Now I get to return the favor.”**

Feeling Overwhelmed by a Loved One's Illness #4

- a. **that first flurry, when they “change.”** You are on auto-pilot reacting. You feel angry, exhausted, resentful and grateful at the same time. Illness is uninvited, not expected
- b. **You try to balance everything else – family, job, own health**

Definition of overwhelmed – end result of many layers of not being able to express your emotions.

Solutions:

- 1. Must journal and talk about your feelings to a professional or support group.** Sort your feelings out.
- 2. Summon the skills you already have** –you already have a lifetime history.
- 3. And the skills around you in other family members, friends** –ask for help but be specific; delegate certain tasks to other family members if possible; or hire a part time caregiver
- 4. Write down the tasks that need to be done**
- 5. Encourage your loved one to be honest how they are feeling – give them permission to do so.** Remember they are scared and this is just as new for them as it is for you.
- 6. Regain control of what you can** –set up good team communication
 - a. **Care manager of the hospital** – aka case worker
 - b. **Hospital chaplain**
 - c. **Set up rules and routines for the caregiver** – a job description so they know what to do when and where and
 - d. **Do not keep children out of the discussion** – they are very perceptive and you might learn a thing or two from them. They are also a great joy to your beloved.

Overcoming Caregiver Depression #5

What is Caregiver depression:

- a. When hope, patience, joy, enthusiasm and energy are missing from your life.
- b. It can happen either when you are at home caring for your beloved or if your beloved is in a nursing home.
- c. When you keep your feelings inside of yourself and do not talk about them to a trusted friend, family member or support group.

How to Step Up from Depression

1. The first step is to admit you are depressed.
2. Realize it is not abnormal nor a sign of weakness, but a sign of courage in facing difficult situations.
3. You are not alone.
4. Take action – be pro-active – exercise, walk, yoga, tai-chi, etc.; watch your diet; get out in nature; getting the body moving helps! Take your beloved with you if you can't leave them alone; call and visit your beloved in nursing homes more.
5. Plan fun activities you can share
6. Stick to a routine. But if you need a timeout, give yourself PERMISSION to take it. Set up respite care a few hours a week if possible.
7. Fake it till you make it – smile on the outside; it'll help how you feel on the inside.
8. Write a letter to your depression – complain at what it's doing to you. See what it says back to you. It may let you know what you need to pay attention to more. Often this writing turns to writing to God.

- 9. Find a trusted person or support group you can share with about your depression.** Find a person who will just listen to you and not give you platitudes. Listening is very healing and powerful.
- 10. Take time for yourself – breathe deeply, meditate. This is a gift to yourself. Avoid saying – I don't have time. MAKE THE TIME. A few minutes works wonders.** This might take some practice as we are all programmed to take care of others. There isn't a person alive who cannot take a moment for themselves. Even Our Lord had to do this many times.
- 11. Make a list of the care giving chores you are responsible for. Thank God that you have these to do for your beloved.**
- 12. Make another list on what you can improve and ask God for help in making this list.**
- 13. Be mindful of the moment – be present and not think about the future, the what ifs,** there are many articles on the web about mindfulness and books. These will guide you thru the process.
- 14. FORGIVE YOURSELF for not being perfect and not able to do it all.** The ABC's of healing depression: A**Acknowledge** your depression; B**believe** you can do better; C**continue** your caregiving for yourself and your beloved with **CONFIDENCE**.
- 15. Finally, know that your care is a gift to your beloved AND to you.**

Self Care for Caregivers #6

Problems arise when we don't put our needs first.

Caregivers are like tea pots-constantly giving of oneself and eventually it runs dry after filling everyone else's teacup. We tend to squeeze out every last drop from that teabag and even consider taking time for yourself as **SELFISH!**

1. Compassion fatigue – what we are left with after teapot dries up.

5 areas make up our entire being

- a. Physically** –headaches, exhaustion, aches, hi blood pressure, stress, bad sleep
- b. Emotionally** –self-doubt (am I doing the right thing for my beloved?), guilt and depression what we just talked about. Grumpiness, knee jerk reactions, irritability, anxiety outbursts and anger to those we love!
- c. Mentally** –inability to focus, in a fog, absent minded, forgetful, cant slow down
- d. Socially** –withdrawing from family and friends or being with them more – need a balance between being alone and socializing.
- e. Spiritually** –has God abandoned me, or move closer to God where faith becomes stronger

2. What is a caregiver to do?

- a. Acknowledge you are affected**
- b. Understand you need to care for yourself**
- c. Realize it is not selfish**
- d. Commit to self care as a healthy lifestyle**
- e. Become as good at taking care of yourself as you do others.**

Physically: rest, deep breathing, meditate, eat nutritiously, hydrate,
GET RESPITE HELP.

mentally: journal, visualize, letters of gratitude, lists of your caregiving accomplishments & what you need to improve

emotionally: find safe ways to vent your feelings to trusted friend, etc

socially: keep up your social connections, do something new, zoom

spiritually: pray with your loved one, connect with God and nature

How to get More Confidence as a Caregiver

- 1. You know more than you think – a whole lifetime of experiences of caring and caring for your family when sick**
- 2. Ask what you can do and include your beloved in the conversation; listen; write it down**
- 3. Assess what the needs are – DO NOT DO WHAT YOUR BELOVED CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES.** Can they still drive the car? Can they cook anymore without burning the house down. This could rob them of their dignity and worth and create a fear based attitude. You need to blend your beloved's needs and capabilities with the new routine and assessment does this.
- 4. Reassess as needed**
- 5. Your caregiving is a gift. Wrap it in love and kindness- patience, perseverance and optimism. This will make your caregiving BLESSED.**
- 6. Ask for help and guidance – google, doctors nurse, online support groups**
- 7. Affirm yourself – know you are doing the best you can! Forgive yourself for omissions/commissions. Start over,**
- 8. Let your loved one know caring for them is a privilege.**
- 9. Be grateful you have this time with them. Its catchy!**
- 10. Like the little engine – “I know I can, I know I can...**

I know I will. I know I will.

RESOURCES

I have the following **carenotes** in stock and will mail them to you if you would like them. Leave me your name, address and telephone number and the titles of what you would like. My email is blank8840@gmail.com OR you can call me at 310-338-9043 and leave me that info. Since I screen calls, always leave a message. I don't pick up until I know who it is.

Carenotes for "Caring for an Aging Parent

1. Making the Most of Your Time in a Nursing Home
2. Caring for Yourself When You're Caring for Someone Ill
3. Feeling Overwhelmed by a Loved One's Illness
4. Becoming a More Confidant Caregiver
5. Overcoming Caregiver Depression
6. Family Caregiving: When it Wears You Down
7. Self-Care for Caregivers
8. Using Hospice Care When a Loved One is Terminally Ill
9. What is Palliative Care and When Is It Called For?
10. The Grief You Feel Before the Loss
11. Role Reversal – Caring for an Aging Loved One
12. What Everyone Should Know About Dementia
13. Living and Dying with Alzheimer's
14. End of Life Concerns: A Guide for Families
15. Coping When Someone You Love is Dying

OTHER RESOURCES

1. The Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles has a very valuable resource book on memory loss, care counseling, a helpline, support groups, assisted living facilities, home health agencies, transportation, elder care attorneys among many others. AlzheimersLA.org or call 844-435-7259
2. Joseph Girard – Elder Care and estate planning attorney, Knights of Columbus member, laelderlaw.com
310-823-3943, 4560 Admiralty Way #254, Marina del Rey, Ca 90292
3. Caregiverwarrior.com
4. Aarp.org/caregiving/
5. Local counseling for yourself or loved one – Airport Marina Counseling – 310-670-1410.
7891 La Tijera Blvd, Westchester, Ca 90045; amcshelps.com
6. A Place for Mom – referrals to residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFE) – 1-888-857-0796
7. Caring.com – referrals to RCFE's and nursing home
8. Homeinstead.com – 424-732-0593 at home care
9. Visitingangels.com 6505 Sepulveda Blvd. ,Westchester, Ca 90045 323-291-0100 at home care.

A Caregiver's Serenity Prayer #9

God, grant me the tender, openhearted love needed on the caregiving journey-

The strength of body, serenity of mind, clarity of purpose and willingness of spirit to meet the extraordinary, everyday constant changes and challenges of caregiving with a smile and good cheer.

And, dear Lord, please grant me the compassion and courage to choose the right path through the myriad of decisions in making the very best choices for the highest good of my loved one, my family and myself.

Allow me to know that I AM enough, I DO enough and by giving of myself at the deepest soul level, caring with diligence for my own health and well being, a priority, I will experience the beautiful rewards of caring for another.

Let me seek, find and accept help and loving support from family, friends, community and professionals for this journey of caring.

Let my loved one receive the gift of love from my heart and hands with gratitude and healing according to Your will.

Bless the hands, hearts and spirits of both giver and receiver in Your circle of light and life and keep us filled with gratitude and grace each and every day!

Amen.