



## *Nuggets of Hope*

A Newsletter for Caregivers

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### **The Fab Five -- Caregivers' Daily Challenges**

1. **Applaud your courage** in handling day-to-day challenges.
  - a. Your caregiving journey is a difficult one, but you've taken on the role. You can do it!
  - b. When you've done the best you can with what you have, you can go to bed knowing it's been a good day.
2. **Be in God's Word** for hope and encouragement to support you throughout each day.
3. **Caring for yourself is vital** to ensure that you can continue your daily care for your loved one.
  - a. To be told to take care of yourself can't be said enough. Caregivers are so tired at the end of the day, they just want to put their feet up; however, this isn't the best choice.
    - i. Eat right – nutritious food is best; forego high fat and fried foods.
    - ii. Exercise – Take a walk, stretch your muscles; stay limber.
4. **Don't be afraid to ask for help** and accept it when it's offered.
  - a. You can't do it all yourself.
  - b. Find a friend to confide in.
  - c. Join a support group.
5. **Eliminate thinking too far ahead.**
  - a. Take one day at a time and do it well.



## Alzheimer's Music Connect

Those who are caring for loved one's experiencing dementia or Alzheimer's, have you heard about this? My mother certainly benefitted from music during her challenge with Alzheimer's, and I find this article very interesting.

**Ron Gregory** spent 30 plus years in the music industry. His mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and music was part of his career. He got together with a group of friends in the medical profession who did psychology work, neurologists, and a radiologist, and just started talking to them about whether we could take music and use it with an Alzheimer's patient, but also tweak the music in a way that would make the experience even more incredible. They were able to develop a technology that allowed them to actually alter the way an Alzheimer's patient's brain reacts to the music. Not only are you stimulating the remote memories that music formed for them between the ages of eight and 20 years old with some music selections, but they also had technology that stimulates the brain waves that exist in every person's brain.

In YouTube clips of the person living with dementia or Alzheimer's, they hear music from their childhood or their youth and all of a sudden, they are responding. They are singing. They are following every word. They are tapping their toes. When the music is over, they go back to where they were.

It is that process that the brain goes through, pulling back the remote memories. These are things that are deeply inside of this person, and part of their development as a human being. Whether it is enhanced music or not, the music does stimulate people. Ron has seen this with people they have worked with and filmed, specifically one case where a man was in his 80s who had been non-communicative for quite some time. When they played the music for him, he became aware of the music and talked about not being sure that he really remembered the instruments because it had been so many years, but he knew it was an orchestra. He began tapping his foot and humming along with the music.

The next thing he notices that the roads outside of his room are icy and cars are speeding. He comments on it. His daughter was dumbfounded. She said he hadn't been aware of his surroundings in a year. To watch that happen, time and time again, brings tears to your eyes. You realize that inside this person are still the moments and memories that, with the right trigger, come right back up to the surface. To have that person be reconnected to the moment is just such a positive feeling for the caregiver.

How does this work? The music is recorded and all of these brain waves—alpha, beta, and delta—are mixed in according to a formula. That is where the music producers come in. They know how to put this mixture together. They use an ancient chant of the Om sound, which has been practiced in religions for centuries. They put this formula underneath the music, at or slightly below the hearing threshold. It is not noticed by anyone, but the brain picks up those rhythms and that is what causes the stimulation. That part of it is one piece.

The other piece is that “we use many of the same techniques that are applied by current radio stations to figure out which are the most popular and familiar songs to play for their audiences. While we are not guaranteeing that every song on a disk is going to be your loved one’s favorite, on the other hand, we also know that nine out of ten are going to be a favorite. It is quite an interesting process. It is so rewarding when you get to the final piece and you hear the way the music blends. We even take care to make sure that, tempo-wise, we do not take the person from a slow tempo, speed them up, and then leave them hanging.”

“There is priority 1 and 1A,” Gregory says. “That is the way we looked at it. The caregiver fatigue that I watched my father go through while caring for my mom was just like watching somebody with PTSD. He was shell-shocked in a way. We knew from a sizable national study that the impact of the music lasts on the listener/patient for up to three hours after the music has been played. One hour of exposure to music equals three hours of the person being calm and relaxed.

“Caregivers reported back to us saying they had as much as two hours of time for themselves—to read a newspaper, to do some laundry, to even just relax and know that their loved one was in good hands, in a safe environment. They could get that important downtime for themselves. It was such a great benefit.”



## RECIPE CORNER

*Le Parfait*

### Peach Parfaits

1 can (approx 1 lb, 13 oz) peach slices (I like to cut them into smaller pieces.)

Drain syrup from peach slices; measure 1 cup syrup. Divide peach slices among 6 – 8 parfait glasses or similar type of glass.

3 egg yolks  
½ cup sugar  
¼ cup orange juice  
1 tsp. vanilla

Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-colored. Gradually beat in sugar, the 1 cup of peach syrup, orange juice, and vanilla.

3 egg whites, stiffly beaten  
8 oz. tub Cool Whip

Fold into egg yolk mixture until blended. Spoon over peach slices in glasses. Chill no longer than 1 hour. Makes 6 – 8 servings.

### **Tomato Basil Spaghetti Squash Bake**

Yields: 4 servings

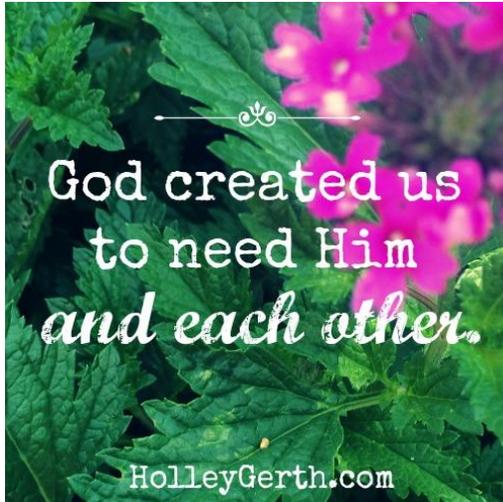
- 1 whole spaghetti squash, roasted, seeds removed, and scooped out (I roasted mine whole for easier handling, see <http://alaskascratch.wpengine.com/2012/09/11/chipotle-butternut-squash-soup>)
- 2T extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, finely sliced
- salt and pepper
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 whole ripe tomato, sliced
- ½ cup mozzarella cheese (or more if you prefer)

Preheat oven to 375. Lightly grease an oblong shallow casserole dish (or similar).

To a mixing bowl, add the cooked squash "noodles," olive oil, garlic, basil, a generous amount of salt and pepper, and the parmesan cheese. Toss to coat (more olive oil can be added if needed - you want it moist, but not dripping). Spread mixture into the casserole dish. Lay tomato slices on top and season them lightly with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and a little bit more freshly grated parmesan. Bake 25-30 minutes or until cheese is bubbly and beginning to brown. Serve promptly (a drizzle of balsamic and some more fresh basil on top is tasty, but optional).



## MEDITATION PLACE



If perfectionism could be identified by one phrase, it would be this: *"I'm fine."* We falsely believe being perfect means not needing anything. But we're not God and we're *always* in need. *Every single one of us.*

Even that woman you think has it all together. *Maybe especially her.* None of us are self-sufficient. We're not supposed to be. God created us to need Him and each other.

One of the hardest parts of overcoming perfectionism is raising our hands, opening up our hearts, and simply saying, *"I need help."*

A friend of mine recently went through a difficult time, and as several of us gathered around her to offer support, she kept saying, *"I'm not allowed to be broken."* How many of us have felt that way? I certainly have.

This friend is incredibly kind and generous. If you need anything, she's there. So we gently asked, *"How does it make you feel when you help us?"* She looked up with tears in her eyes and said, *"It's good. It makes me feel valued and loved."* We responded, *"Then give us the gift of helping you now."*

This the incorrect belief we have to change: *if we need help, we're a burden.* Because the opposite is true. In the kingdom of God, it's more of a blessing to give than receive. So don't deprive those around you of those benefits just because you're afraid of what they may think of you.

Let's give others the gift of helping us. We need it—and *they need to see we're not perfect* because it sets them free to ask for help and grace too. -- [Holley Gerth](http://HolleyGerth.com)