



April, 2016



### Interesting Quote

"By three methods we may learn wisdom:

First, by reflection, which is noblest;

Second, by imitation, which is easiest;

Third by experience, which is the bitterest."

If you're in a caregiving role, you can understand that experience can be the bitterest wisdom. Yet there is JOY in caregiving. That's your loved one, and who knows your loved one better than you. **You make the difference!** Call upon your faith and know that you do not walk alone.



### Did You Know?

Did you know:

- Laughter is so important for good health! Each time you laugh the blood flow to your heart increases for up to 45 minutes! This improves the health of your heart. – Wexner Medical Center
- Cardiovascular disease is the 4<sup>th</sup> cause of death among women in the U. S. and stroke is 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Eat 3 servings of fish per week for better heart health.



### Exercise for Brain Health

Older adults who are more physically active have less brain shrinkage (a process associated with dementia and cognitive decline) than their sedentary peers, according to a study of over 600 people. The study also revealed through MRIs that mental and social activities, while beneficial for the brain in other ways, did not affect brain size.

Another study found that people over 65 who exercised had a 40% lower risk of cognitive impairment and a 60% reduction in vascular-related dementia. Exercise may also lower blood pressure and cholesterol, improve blood sugar control, lower heart rate, and strengthen bones.

[www.davespharmacy.com](http://www.davespharmacy.com)

It's so important to get a little exercise. Thirty minutes a day is wonderful and it doesn't matter whether you do it all in 30 minutes at one time or take two fifteen-minute walks or even three ten-minute walks.

# Spring Cleaning

by Carol Bradley Bursack, Author, Speaker, Columnist and Eldercare consultant

*This is an excellent article. Be sure to read it all! Does any of it fit your life?*

It's a human tendency to get stuck in a rut as we carry out life's demands, and caregiving is no exception. With spring nearly upon us, it's a good time to take a fresh look at our caregiving lives to see if there are areas that need improvement or at least a fresh approach.

Making pro and con lists of what is working and what is not working is an effective method of examining anything from budgets to weight loss. It can be just as effective for caregiving. Below I've provided a template for a hypothetical caregiver we'll call Ann. If you're up for a little self-reflection, Ann's list could help you jumpstart your own self-improvement project.

## **Ann first writes about what's working in her caregiving life:**

- I found a wonderful [assisted living](#) facility for Mom near my home which has allowed me to enjoy more time with other family members and my friends.
- It took awhile, but Mom adjusted to her new life and now enjoys her own friends and the activities the facility provides. She also feels very safe, which is important to her and to me.
- Knowing Mom's safe and has people around her allows me to relax at work and not worry so much.
- I've got a good system for shopping for Mom's needs that integrates with my other errands. This has saved me a lot of time.

## **Ann writes about what isn't working in her caregiving life:**

- I still keep correcting Mom when I'm told that, because of her Alzheimer's, arguing is counterproductive and I should agree with her statements no matter how outlandish they seem. Of course, there are exceptions, but those times are rare.

- I'm angry with my brother because he won't travel to see Mom. Mom often doesn't recognize him and forgets he's even been there, but I feel my brother should visit anyway.
- I've been so happy that Mom is content for now that I haven't followed the advice of her doctor and the social workers. They say I should use this time to learn about the stages of Alzheimer's, since it's a progressive disease, and that I should research possible changes in her care needs.
- I keep putting off making an appointment for my physical, mammogram and other [routine medical tests](#) because Mom has so many medical appointments. Those take time, and I get tired of sitting in clinics. I think mine can wait.

Readers, you, like Ann, have likely worked hard to get to this place in your life and you deserve credit for all that you've done. First, give yourself credit for everything you've done right.

The next step is to tackle the "not working" list to see what, if anything, you can change that will make your life better. Using Ann's lists above, I created some suggestions that could help fix that hypothetical situation for her and others. Maybe these suggestions will help you jump start your own spring cleaning list.

### **Using Ann's lists, we'll help her refresh her approach to caregiving:**

***Refresh #1:** I still keep correcting Mom when I'm told that, because of her Alzheimer's, arguing is counterproductive and I should agree with her statements no matter how outlandish they seem. Of course, there are exceptions, but those times are rare.*

Admittedly it's hard to listen to people you once admired for their wisdom make bizarre statements, so your reflex reaction is to correct them. Also, you may feel that "lying" to your parent or spouse is wrong. You may even feel that agreeing with them when they are wrong is condescending.

It's important for you to change your thought process. Accept the wisdom of those who've studied the disease. They will tell you that when you validate your loved one, you are showing compassion. Conversely, arguing only increases the person's agitation and decreases their self-esteem. Your loved one with Alzheimer's disease is living in a reality that is different than yours, but just as real to him or her. You are the well person, so it's up to you to try to share your loved one's reality. When you adapt to this way of thinking, life will be easier for both of you. (Read: [10 Tips for Talking to Someone With Alzheimer's](#))

***Refresh #2:** I'm angry with my brother because he won't travel to see Mom. Mom often doesn't recognize him and forgets he's even been there, but I feel my brother should visit anyway.*

As unfair as it seems, there are many reasons why [siblings don't help with caregiving](#). Try to understand why your brother doesn't feel his visits are meaningful. He travels several hundred miles to visit his mom who doesn't remember who he is and will forget his visit as soon as he walks out the door.

Then suggest that your brother visit whenever he can for his own sake. Let him know that you understand that it's hard for him and it may seem like a waste of time. Thank him for taking care of Mom's finances, but offer him the perspective that he'll probably feel better emotionally after Mom is gone if he visits occasionally, no matter how painful it is.

**Refresh #3:** *I've been so happy that Mom is content for now that I haven't followed the advice of her doctor and the social workers. They say I should use this time to learn about the stages of Alzheimer's, since it's a progressive disease, and that I should research possible changes in her care needs.*

You deserve to take time to enjoy the fact that your mom's move has been successful and that you now have help and more choices in caregiving and other areas of your life. However, caregiving needs can change quickly. It would be wise to give yourself a deadline to begin researching the next step in her care. Talk with the assisted living administrator to learn what their care limits are, and ask about price increases as your mom needs more care. Also, check nursing home options in your community in case a move to a nursing home should become a necessity. I'd suggest that you go online to your state website and type "aging" in the search box. By doing so, you'll be led to many resources that your state provides. This process will help you develop a plan for your mom's future care.

**Refresh #4:** *I keep putting off making an appointment for my physical and my mammogram because Mom has so many medical appointments. Those take time, and I get tired of sitting in clinics. I think mine can wait.*

This is your time to take care of yourself. Your mom has professionals looking after her most of the time. Yes, you take her to medical appointments, but you still need to make time for your own. As I mentioned above, care needs can change quickly. Use this time to get caught up on your own care – physical and mental. If you do this, you'll feel more prepared for changes in your mom's care needs.

Now, it's time to write out your own lists. Delete the suggestions above that don't apply to you and then add your own take on things. Maybe you'll only have one or two negative areas that could use improvement. Maybe you won't have any. It's still a good exercise to think about your routine from time to time in case you can upgrade your own quality of life and maybe even that of your care receiver. What better time to do this than spring?



## RECIPE CORNER

## **Ham Loaf**

*Leftover Easter ham can be made into Ham Loaf that is soooo good that you'll wonder why you didn't make it for Easter dinner. This is a family pleaser, and I'm fixing it right now. 😊*

4 eggs, beaten  
2 c. milk  
2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. pepper

*Beat this altogether and then add meats and crumbs. Mix well by hand.*

2 lb. ground ham  
2 lb. hamburger  
2 c. bread crumbs or cracker crumbs

### **Sauce:**

1 c. brown sugar  
½ c. vinegar  
2 tsp. dry mustard  
Juice from 1 can sliced pineapple

*Mix above ingredients for sauce. Arrange pineapple slices on the bottom of a loaf pan. Pour a little of the sauce mixture over slices. Place ham loaf mixture in the pan. Pour the remaining sauce mixture over meat.*

*Bake at 375 for 1 ½ hours.*



## **Meditation Corner**

Easter is a special time of the year when we recall all that God did to help His people. God's Son, Jesus, died on the cross and took our sins upon his shoulders. We are made white as snow by His blood. Let us give thanks! Read selected verses from Psalm 118.

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;  
for His steadfast love endures forever! . . .*

*Out of my distress I called on the Lord;  
the Lord answered me and set me free.  
The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me? . . .*

*The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
This is the Lord's doing;*

*it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it. . . .*

*You are my God, and I will give thanks to You;  
You are my God; I will extol You.  
Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

Also, think about these verses from 1 John 4 . . .

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God,  
and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.  
Anyone who does not love does not know God,  
because God is love.*

*In this the love of God was made manifest among us,  
that God sent His only Son into the world,  
so that we might live through Him.*