

Balance

2012 New Year's Issue

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Serving people of all faiths.

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And the Angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2:10

Joy is contagious. Spread it around. Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so the emotional impact of caregiving can be a matter of perspective. Even when the task is challenging, caregivers can enjoy times of wonderfully positive emotions.

One of those positive emotions is joy. In the coming year, allow yourself to experience joy from being able to provide care and assistance to someone who gave much of their life, time, and treasure to raise you.

Celebrate your parent's lives with them as you listen to them share their memories. Receive joy from those special moments when honest communication and love flow between you and your parents. Enjoy laughing together over some silly thing.

Father, in this new year, help me get my eyes off the problems of caregiving enough to enjoy special memories and moments with my loved one. And help me trust you more. Free me from my fears and fill me with the joy of the Lord.

The Caregiver's Beatitudes

Blessed are you who clean, dress and groom me.
In the kingdom you will be bathed in glory.

Blessed are you who prepare my meals and feed me.
In the kingdom you will feast with delight.

Blessed are you who exercise my muscles and joints.
In the kingdom you will run without weariness.

Blessed are you who visit me.
In the kingdom you will be surrounded with love.

Blessed are you who endure my endless questions with patience.
In the kingdom you will be rewarded with peace.

Blessed are you who do my laundry.
In the Kingdom you will be clothed in joy.

Blessed are you who volunteer to entertain me.
In the kingdom you will sing and dance with God.

Blessed are you who quiet me when I scream, find me when I'm lost, and calm me when I'm agitated.
Your reward in heaven will be great.

—Kathleen Kuhn, M.S

Daily Resolutions Or Just for the New Year?



Each New Year brings forth pause in our lives; a time to reflect on unfulfilled dreams, unrealized expectations and uncompleted tasks. As a caregiver, there are so many up and downs; emotions running rampant at times, getting the best of us. At times, we can

find ourselves wondering why; we don't have a caregiver for ourselves. What has happened to our own life?

It is interesting that many people use the holidays or the beginning of the New Year to gauge one's successes or failures. The coming of each New Year ushers forth a whole new list of resolutions.

In living a spiritual life, or the life of the Higher Power, there are no not-so-good days, nor some days or tomorrows. We only have the present moment... "NOW". Every day is a new day; and it is important to look freshly at each new day as an opportunity to awaken your consciousness more... to make choices that will enhance the quality of your life and empower you, no matter what your circumstances may be.

Think of yourself as a light worker, bringing love and light in all you do. Caregivers can be likened to spiritual warriors with a tender heart filled with sadness. When you find yourself feeling low, depressed or negative, no one can change your attitude and feelings but you. Take a moment just to look where your thoughts have taken you today up till this very moment. Were they negative? Fearful? Positive? Loving? Inspiring?

Even amidst a loved one's near departure from this life, there is beauty surrounding us everywhere. How you choose to view it all is how your life shows up. Is the cup half full or half empty? The choice is yours.

So as you move into the coming year, choose to remain conscious and loving. Be mindful of your thoughts. Be mindful of how you relate to and treat others. Take responsibility for whom you are. Don't worry about the next person will think. Don't seek their approval either. Take charge of your life. Dare to be your authentic self. Be free to express yourself with love in all aspects of your life as you were truly born to be. Be your Divine self.

Author: Gail Mitchell, National Organization for Empowering Caregivers

Wishing You the Happiest New Year

Guidelines to Know If It's Time For a Change



Before you can even make new resolutions, it is important to know when it is time to make changes in your life. The following are some questions to consider -

1. Are you ready to make a change?
2. On a scale of 1-10, ten being powerful desire, how ready are you? If you are at 7 or above you're ready to begin on your goal. If you're a 6 or below, ask yourself, "What needs to occur for my passion to rise above 7?"
3. Why are you considering making this change?
4. Do you feel an increased level of energy when thinking about this goal?
5. Have you considered what tools/resources you will need to accomplish this goal?
6. Can you see what your life looks like once you've accomplished your goal?
7. Are you ready to make your goal known to family, friends, God... for support and accountability?
8. Have you written your goal down in explicit detail?
9. Have you set a start-time and an end-date for the goal in mind?
10. Do you have a heartfelt commitment towards this goal?
11. Is this goal in alignment with the what's in your best interest, and the best interest of those around you?
12. Are you willing to do "the work" it will take to accomplish this goal?

There you have it! A twelve-step guide for discerning personal transformation. Print it out and keep it handy throughout your new year and beyond. If the questions fed an already burning fire inside you towards that next change in your life, that's fantastic.

If the questions assisted you in knowing that now is not quite the right time to move on a new goal, then strive for patience, gentleness and self-acceptance in the new year.

Adapted from Dave Turo-Shields, CounselingPros.com, Inc. and www.Overcoming-Depression.com.

Popping the Cork: A New Year's Resolution for Caregivers

Before the ball drops in Times Square, promise yourself this year will be the year you become your own best caregiver. Resolve to do what thousands of others need to do - make time for yourself, because in so doing, you make your time with others better and more valuable.



Here are some ideas to get you started:

Accept Help

Those called to caregiving know in ways others don't that giving care too often means putting yourself last. But let's face it, you can't do everything. Quite simply, you deserve a break. While you're at it, don't just experience the beauty of your own respite. Witness the enjoyment your loved one may get from interacting with others who might step in to provide care while you are gone. Lean on friends and let them help.

Laugh, Exercise and Relax

Laugh, exercise and relax, not necessarily in that order. But understand the importance of letting go. Laughter has long been touted as an antidote for what ails you, and exercise tones our bodies as well as our minds. Laughter and exercise together are a formidable formula for relaxation, the latter literally a key to life. As for how to do the "ho-ho-ho," why not rent a funny movie?

It's All About You

Maintain "me" time. No matter your obligations, continue with hobbies and personal routines. Read a good book, dig in the dirt, create a scrapbook or cook. Treat yourself to a manicure or a pedicure. Or a massage. Keep up with friends and social activities. After all, time away can be a quality investment since you will return refreshed and ready to tackle new challenges.

Stay positive!

Your outlook is contagious and by turning the corners of your mouth up, you just might help a loved one do the same. Keeping a journal can provide an outlet for your emotions and can double as a barometer of your moods and attitudes.

Take Care of Yourself

This includes eating regular, well-balanced meals; getting plenty of rest, and limiting alcohol as well as caffeine consumption. Poor sleep is a condition that needs to be addressed, diagnosed and treated — it could be as important as nutrition, exercise and social engagement to the health of a caregiver. Taking care of yourself is the "golden rule" of caregiving.

So there you have it. Five resolutions you should be sure to keep in this year! At a time of life when the daunting burden of caring for a disabled loved one will no doubt be added to an already-heavy load, it's important to remember your own best health is a necessary pre-requisite to good care. Know you are investing in your own best future by taking care of the business of love. Have a Happy 2012!

Adapted from Fearless Caregiver Newsletter, December 2010,

CAREGIVER NEWS

CAN salutes St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral and the Knights of Malta for honoring both paid and volunteer caregivers throughout the Greater Cincinnati area. A special White Mass was held November 6, 2011 on the occasion of National Family Caregiver Month. Kathleen Donnellan, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of SouthWestern Ohio, was among those presenting roses to this year's honorees. Among the honorees was Mary Jane Hack who has served as a support group facilitator since 1998. Thank you for your thirteen years service and dedication to family caregivers.

CAN's family caregiver support groups have benefited greatly from the generosity of its volunteer support group facilitators. Leaving this volunteer post after many years of service are Mary Jane Hack, St. Martin of Tours, and Betsy Needels, St. Michael's. CAN and the many caregivers you supported thank you!

RESOURCES

IN PRINT

To Survive Caregiving: A Daughter's Experience, A Doctor's Advice on Finding Hope, Help and Health, Cheryl E.

Woodson, Infinity Publishing, 2007. The book shoots from the hip and from the heart, using everyday language, real caregiver stories, compassion and humor to bring practical information to overwhelmed caregivers.

Spirituality of Caregiving, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Upper Room Books 2011. This book shares many heartfelt insights on what it means to be a caregiver and to be cared for and how the caregiving relationship can lead to spiritual growth.

Caregiving: My Story, Your Guide, Oliver J. DeSofi, AuthorHouse, 2010. The author wants to share what he learned; information from doctors, insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry, disability claims and a number of other important issues including positive thinking and a happy life. His real life experiences have been "battle" tested in the totality of caregiving.

ON THE WEB

www.respitelocator.org Search for local respite services in your area.

www.wellspouse.com Support for spousal caregivers

www.medicaid.gov Website from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. It presents extensive information on Medicaid and CHIP programs designed to help people and providers be better informed.



Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward.

-Kurt Vonnegut

Articles of Interest

Call the Caregiver CAREline, (513) 929-4483, for a single copy of one or more of the articles listed below for your personal use.

- "The Stages of Caregiving"
- "Alcoholism and Aging"
- "Caring for an In-law or a Stepparent"
- "The Sandwich Generation"
- "Taking Care of a Crabby or Formerly Abusive Parent"
- "A Depression Checklist for Family Caregivers"

Medicare Offers New Tools

Medicare beneficiaries have new tools to help in the selection of health plans and physicians. Beneficiaries can compare Medicare plans' quality ratings, identify which drugs may or may not be on a plan's formulary or be restricted, and compare the cost ranges for plans available in their community. They can also compare healthcare provider information.

Medicare's Plan Finder now makes it easier for beneficiaries to choose high-quality health plans. Users will find an icon that shows those plans that had a low overall quality rating the past three years. In 2012, users will also see a gold star icon for those plans that have a five-star rating. Go to www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan.

Medicare's Physician Compare is a new Web-based resource designed to help beneficiaries search for provider information. The Web site, which was required by the Affordable Care Act, expands and updates the Healthcare Provider Directory of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Physician Compare contains information about physicians enrolled in the Medicare program, as well as information about other types of health professionals who routinely care for Medicare beneficiaries.

The Web site is designed to help all patients - not just Medicare beneficiaries - locate health professionals in their communities. Find such information as office addresses and phone numbers, the professional's education and medical specialty, and foreign languages spoken. Go to www.medicare.gov/find-a-doctor.

(Go to Allsup.com for more information)



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catholiccharitiesswo.org/can/

The Caregiver Assistance Network is a program of Catholic Charities SouthWestern Ohio and funded in part by the Ohio Department of Aging through the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio.

Your donation would help us publish this newsletter and provide our services which are so important to the family caregiver community. Please consider making a donation to CAN by using the envelope in the mid-fold or online at catholiccharitiesswo.org (designate "CAN").



Kathleen Donnellan, CEO, Catholic Charities SWO introduces Dr. John Glick



Comfort Keepers booth set up to coincide with this year's theme "Rubber Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul".



The 15th Annual "Caring Matters" Caregiver Conference took place on September 14th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Blue Ash. Over 200 family caregivers, and healthcare professionals attended. This included 30 agencies and organizations who provide services to older adults. This year's theme: "Rubber Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul" was addressed by our wonderful and energetic keynote speaker, **Dr. John Glick**, "The Humor Doctor", writer and collaborator with Dr. Patch Adams of the Gesundheit Institute. Additional speakers, including Mary Duennes, Dr. Gary Zola, Charles Locy and Dr. Renee' Zucchero, provided practical insights and valuable resource information to all the participants. We thank them for sharing their many talents, expertise, and professional experiences with us.

The event was sponsored by the Caregiver Assistance Network, a program of Catholic Charities of SouthWestern Ohio, and was co-sponsored by Bayley Place, Deaconess Foundation/ITN Greater Cincinnati, Mercy Health Partners, The Kenwood by Senior Star, and Visiting Angels. The event's evaluations proved very positive. Mark your calendar, plans are underway for the 16th Annual "Caring Matters" conference. Save the date, September 12, 2011. Hope to see you then.



Conference participants visiting 30 exhibits during Caring Matters 15.



Caregivers enjoying the gift of laughter, dancing, and having fun.