*3 caregiving books web page content*

Ten years ago, I began a job that would have a profound impact on my life. As the new coordinator of a memory counseling program at a local medical center, I soon developed relationships with many caregivers—usually a husband or wife caring for their spouse or an adult child caring for a parent with some type of dementia. As I interacted with these family caregivers one-on-one in the office, on the phone, and in support groups, I developed great empathy and a profound respect for those engaged in the labor of love we call caregiving.

Caregiving is a journey of compassion, walking alongside someone coping with illness or disability or the effects of aging. It is one of the most difficult—and most important—jobs in the world. And that's true whether the cared-for person is a child, or an adult with dementia, or a long-term illness such as Parkinson's disease, or is recovering from an accident or a surgical procedure.

Most of the time, caregiving is an *unexpected* journey. Few family caregivers ever foresee the day when a tragic accident, a mental or physical illness, or dementia would put them in a caregiving role. And while everyone understands that health often declines with age, few of us are fully prepared to meet the challenges of caring for an elder loved one. So, whether the caregiving journey is short term or for the long haul, more often than not, it's an unplanned journey into unknown territory. And for so very many, it's not an easy journey.

Caregiving can be exhausting! It's not unusual for caregivers to feel overwhelmed, stressed out, or to even get sick themselves while caring for someone else. For some, it's also a lonely journey because they don't have enough support or help. Without adequate support and proper self-care, caregiving can take an awful toll on body, mind, and spirit.

But here's the great news—no caregiving experience has to be like that! When caregiving tasks are shared and caregivers understand how to take care of themselves as well as their family member, the whole experience is much brighter for everyone.

If you are a caregiver, these three books for you! My hope is that they will help you create a "best case scenario" caregiving experience for both you and the person in your care.