

## Ways to Manage your Guilt

- Accept your feelings as they come and deal with them, even the ones that are difficult such as resentment and anger.
- Don't let feelings bottle up, talk about your feelings and emotions as you experience them.
- Realize that there may be days when you do not like being a caregiver and that is understandable and acceptable, tomorrow is a new day and with it will come new experiences.
- Allow yourself to have an "off day" once in a while without judging or trying to analyze everything you are feeling or doing.
- Know that sometimes the role of caregiving is overwhelming and with that role will come a flood of emotions, some positive, some negative.
- Be honest with yourself about what you are feeling and do not try to be a hero in your role as a caregiver. No one is asking you to do everything so accept help when it is offered, or ask for help when you need it.
- If you find yourself having a bad day, take a break, do something relaxing, something special for yourself and allow yourself to enjoy it!
- If you find yourself feeling guilty day after day, stop and try to determine where the guilt is coming from.
- Journal daily or even once a week to help you release your feelings and put them down on paper. This is also a great way to make a memory log for yourself later in life to reflect back on what an amazing job you really did as a caregiver.
- If you feel guilty because you had to miss your friend's birthday party due to caring for your loved one, then simply pick up the phone and make plans with your friend to take her/him to a special lunch when you have the opportunity. If you are house bound caring for a loved one, then invite your friend over for a lunch. You will find that friends understand and will be more than supportive.
- Know that nine out of ten times, it is our expectations that are not met and no one else's in life and thus the guilt we often feel is not real. Review your expectations of the situation and make sure they are truly realistic.
- Laugh every day, smile every hour and remember that whatever challenge you are facing, it will pass!