

Let me help you with your caregiving stressors and crises

Written by Dora Hutchens

Saturday, 05 February 2011 17:50 - Last Updated Tuesday, 17 April 2012 18:46

Not too long ago, I had my 59th birthday. I'd been married 30 years to a man a "bit" older than me, in fact old enough to be my father. When we got married, I always knew he would be older sometime, but I never thought that I would be too.

About 7 years ago, he began to show some of his father's issues with dementia. I had just started my own company. But soon afterward, I realized that I couldn't continue working outside our home because of his fading memory. He often forgot to eat or take his medicine when I wasn't home. He gradually lost the ability to use the phone to call me if he had problems. Once I came home to find him sick on the floor in the bathroom. He also experienced issues with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) related to his military service. I began to experience the crises related to caregiver stress.

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So I began on my journey to provide coaching and support to other caregivers like me.

Because I was an occupational therapist, I knew strategies to help him maximize his

functioning. I knew that I could share some of those strategies with others who may be

experiencing similar issues with providing care to their loved ones.

Then about 5 years ago, my father died and my mother was not able to continue to live by

herself. Before that, when I had provided care to my parents from a distance, I began to

understand that type of caregiving. Now she has come to live with us, and I

provided 24 hour care for my husband and my mother.

My husband died last year suddenly, although of course we expected it with his advancing

age. Now I am caring for my mother only, but her age continues to advance as well.

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I am absolutely not complaining; I have been proud to be able to care for them at home. I am

fortunate to work online from home, which is a blessing for us. I am able to give

medicines, cook, and look after my people while working. My caregiving journey has also

included when my husband had a mild heart attack accompanied by heart and respiratory

failure, with a 4-week hospitalization.

Which brings me to why I am writing now: I want to share my story with you in hopes that

it will help you with the challenges of providing care to your people especially when

caregiving becomes a crisis and a stressor. You will find lots of great information on my

website www.dorahutchens.com to help with caregiving.

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One of my best support resources has been the caregiving group on the AARP website. Here

is their link <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving/> I can always find something

there to help. The articles on Caregiver stress are great. You can also get digests of

questions and presentations sent directly to your mailbox.

One other site I have recently become aware of is the Home Instead caregiver site. This

month they are featuring questions related to how to provide care from a distance and how

siblings can work together to provide care. Here is the link:

<http://www.caregiverstress.com/category/helpful-tips-for-caregivers/caregiver->

[communication/5050-solving-family-conflict/real-life-situations/](http://www.caregiverstress.com/category/helpful-tips-for-caregivers/caregiver-communication/5050-solving-family-conflict/real-life-situations/)

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I give this to you to help you in your own caregiving journey. If you need special help,

please contact me. One of my services is a problem-solving session. You can find me at:

http://www.dorahutchens.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=54

Next time I am going to talk a little bit about how dementia has affected my family. I

hope you join me. Until then, I wish you peace,

Dora