

A Week in Images and Quotes

August - 2024

2024 Ongoing Caregiver Olympics

Agility & Flexibility

Able to juggle toiletry items to prepare for all unexpected events!

Persistence

Discovering multiple ways of administering daily medicines.

Reinforcement

Giving lots of encouragement throughout the day on all activities.

Humor

Recognizing the wit that often occurs at unexpected times; i.e., during the opening ceremonies, athletes from Hungary were passing in their boat and I remarked, "There's Hungary!" Marsha was slightly dozing beside me on the couch and responded, "Not really."

Respect

Interacting with loved one with dignity in an adult-to-adult manner.

THURSDAY

01

Caregiver Olympics

There are no medals, I've been told.
There is no Silver, Bronze or Gold.

There are many consequences
Among the daily experiences.

Success occurs in smaller steps
Amid the daily activity preps.

Mistakes are made.
There are no grades.

A marathon rather than a sprint and
we may get a clue or hint -

From peers who walk their very own journey.
Mine is the tale of Marsha and Ernie.

*There's an innocence about her;
She can't commit a sin.
The gates of heaven will open
And when they let her in
Applause will be heard in the air.
I hope before the gate is closed
They let me join her there. ELP*

FRIDAY

02

CLEANSE

Meditation Card

I chose to review this key word as emotional cleansing and the following five statements surfaced:

- 1. Accept current reality and support Marsha where she is at "right now."*
- 2. Maintain light classical music in background each day and "cleanse" my mind of local/national news - at least until 7:00 PM.*
- 3. Remember that all important activities will be completed, just not on an expected schedule.*
- 4. Avoid any negative feedback when Marsha experiences agitations and negative talk directed at me.*
- 5. Continue to share my thoughts and observations via my weekly journal.*

SATURDAY

03

I look back on my life like a good day's work, it was done and I am satisfied with it. Grandma Moses

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SUNDAY

04

RESILIENCY

Meditation Card

Caregiver resilience is the ability to adapt and persevere through challenging circumstances in caregiving.

Meaningandhope.org

I found this diagram to be quite intriguing in helping to define resiliency for caregivers. ELP

- *This the fundamental nature of gifts: they move, and their value increases with their passage.*

To learn again, you really have to listen. Robin Wall Kimmerer

MONDAY

05

Understanding and accepting the responsibilities that come with caregiving.

PRACTICING Readiness

Continuously learning and practicing the skills needed to provide effective care.

CULTIVATING Rewards

Recognizing the positive aspects and personal growth that can come from caregiving.

UNDERSTANDING Roles

Maintaining strong connections with loved ones and seeking support when needed.

HONORING Relationships

Realistically assessing and addressing the challenges of caregiving.

Caregiver Resilience

06

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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Learning Lesson: There's More Than One Way

After arriving back home from a brief trip in the car, Marsha told me she was not going in the house. I decided this was not an emergency and tugging on her or using loud words were not in order. I went in the house and invited her to join me. After five minutes with no movement, I went back out and sat in the driver's seat and told her I would wait for her to go in the house. After 5 minutes, I got out and invited her to join me in the house. After another 5 minutes elapsed, I poured a drink of juice, went out to the car and gave it to Marsha with the words, "Bring this glass back in the house when you're through," and I went back into the house. About 5 minutes later, I noticed Marsha getting out of the car and heading into the house. Success! ELP

Celebrate every tiny victory. (from a note card from Pat & George)

Now is the only thing that exists.

Dan Fogelberg

I write to discover what I know.
Flannery O'Connor

My goal is this: always to put myself in the place in which I am best able to serve, wherever my gifts and qualities find the best soil to grow, the widest field of action. There is no other goal.

Hermann Hesse

I just believe that the interesting time in a career is pre-success, what shaped things, how did you get to this point.

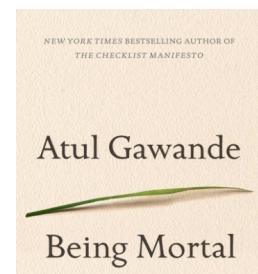
Steve Martin

What is NEXT? NOW
What is NOW? NEXT

ELP

Wisdom from the pen of Seamus Heaney:

- If you have the words, there's always a chance that you'll find the way.
- Which would be better, what sticks or what falls through? Or does the choice itself create the value?
- I rhyme to see myself.



What Do I Get Out of it?

1. Tender moments of appreciation for all Marsha has done for me throughout the past 48 years;
2. Continual awareness of the moment;
3. Creative outlet for discovering the gentlest approach to agitated behaviors;
4. Sharing my journey with others and benefiting from the wisdom of their feedback;
5. Reflecting on what means the most in my life: relationships;
6. A need to slow down;
7. Process is greater than any result;
8. Internal pat on the back for making it through another day content and pleased with events as they unfolded;
9. Sense of completeness: a closing of the circle of love that spirals upward;
10. Wonderment at the "essence" of Marsha.

- Our ultimate goal, after all, is not a good death but a good life to the very end.
- ODTAA syndrome - One Damn Thing After Another
- One has to decide whether one's fears or one's hopes are what should matter most.

Our on-line support group facilitator recommended this book.

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SUNDAY

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Marsha: *I like it when you're here because when you're here everything's going to be all right.*

The real meditation practice is how we live our lives from moment to moment to moment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

The best thing to hold onto in life is each other.

Audrey Hepburn

I've been writing in notebooks for 40 years or so.

Frank McCourt

MONDAY

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A sign at Randyland Pittsburgh, PA

I take simple everyday things that happen to me and I figure it happens to a lot of other people and I make simple rhymes out of them.

Edgar Guest

Just like Edgar Guest did say, Think about what you did today. And write a verse that contains a rhyme It's a way to reflect and honor the time That caught your attention ... and then You'll remember this moment all over again. ELP

TUESDAY

20

People tend to repeat the same quotes at me that I said when I was 23. And of course, you say things then, and sometimes they're ill-advised.

Elvis Costello

Naoki is speaking of living with autism, but I connected this to the perspective of a loved one with a steadily changing brain:

On our own we simply don't know how to get things done the same way you do things. But, like everyone else, we want to do the best we possibly can. When we sense you've given up on us, it makes us feel miserable. So please keep helping us, through to the end. Naoki Higashida

One is loved because one is loved. No reason is needed for loving.

Paulo Coelho

THURSDAY

22

I like the ecological idea of aging as progressive enrichment, rather than progressive loss.
p. 86

Respect one another, support one another, bring your gift to the world and receive the gifts of others, and there will be enough for all.
p. 152.

Robin Wall
Kimmerer,
*Braiding
Sweetgrass*

Last year about this time, I tried hiring a home companion for Marsha and the timing just wasn't right. She avoided the person by staying in her bedroom and not wanting to participate in any activities with this person. "I don't need her here! I don't want her here!"

Lately, I have requested a companion to come to our home once a week to get to know Marsha and build trust that I could leave for short periods of time. So far, it has worked beautifully. I was even able to go to the doctors to remedy some very itchy and irritating eyes. I also can give my undivided attention during the on-line support group meetings, which I value very much. ELP

I was thinking of the topic of "introspection" and wondered what the great philosopher Yoda had to contribute:

*Of the moment, be.
In the moment, live.
The art of remaining in the present, learn.
Exists not the past nor the future.*

I discovered me in the library. I went to find me in the library. Ray Bradbury

FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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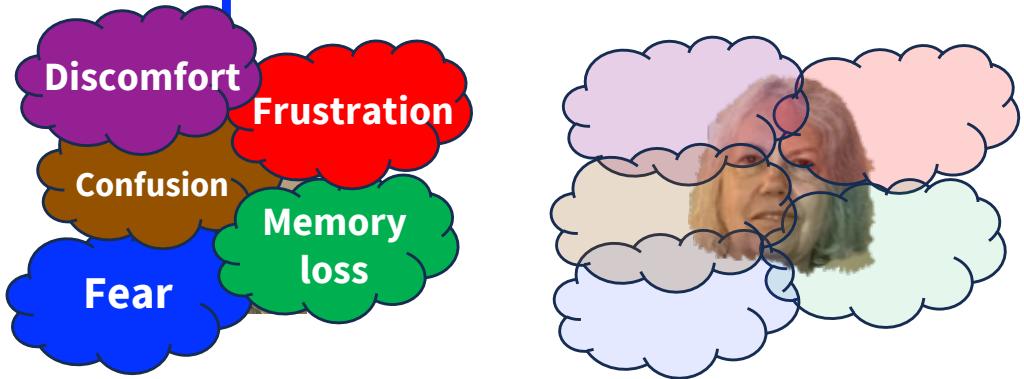
SATURDAY

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UNDERSTANDING THE LAYERS

Meditation Card

I am going to interpret this heading as layers of clouds that hide the essence of Marsha. Her essence is always there but is clouded over by such characteristics as confusion, fear, memory loss, frustration, discomfort. I like using the analogy of the sun, which is always there but can appear to lose its identify when thick layers of clouds obscure its view. Through my interactions with Marsha, I can lessen the thickness of the clouds by the way in which I provide supports. I will not eliminate those characteristics that affect her, but I can diminish their impact to bring out her essence. ELP



Words found on different items in the living room

Nice
Thanks
Peaceful
Dream
Moment
Enjoy
Together
Kind
Hearted
Happiness

A Poem to Marsha on the Occasion of my 73rd Birthday

Thanks for being here with me
Moment-to-moment is the way to be.
There's peaceful music in the air
Knowing together - we make a good pair.
You are kind, caring and good besides,
I feel happiness with you by my side
As we enjoy how our lives do unfold
A warm-hearted love as our hands we hold.
It's nice to have you in my life
As we dream on today as husband and wife

There is a loved one who needs our company.
It's not that easy as you have come to see.
You have to honor their presence in your life
Whether they are a parent, husband or wife.

Don't raise your voice - Joyce
Take a deep breath - Beth
Let it be - Lee
Just listen to me.
Count to 10 - Ben
Talk a step back - Jack
Put the music on - Dawn
Just keep on keeping on.

There must be
50 Ways to be
a Caregiver

- *In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these.*
- *And now you know the "rest of the story."*

Paul Harvey