

On the Path of the Perfecting Caregiver

Multiple Perspectives From a Caregiver

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Included in this document are pages from a newsletter I developed in the early weeks of 2025. Communitas EST is distributed to a listserv of individuals who believe in and support the values of assisting individuals with disabilities to work, live and recreative in their local communities. The co-directors of this organization, Pat Beeman and George Ducharme have been friends for over 30 years and I asked them for space to record my reflections as a caregiver for my wife, Marsha, over the past three years as she lived life with dementia.

Communitas EST

Pat Beeman • George G. Ducharme: Co-Directors



*"One candle in the
midst of a circle
represents the gift
each one of us
brings to others in a
circle of support – a
circle of friends"*

VOLUME 17, No. 1 – Spring, 2025

Multiple Perspectives from a Caregiver

In this issue of Communitas EST, I will provide excerpts from my journal as the primary caregiver for my wife, Marsha, as she continues to live with a changing brain formally diagnosed as Alzheimer's. George and Pat have been mentors and friends to both Marsha and me over the past 30 + years. For two years I have used a weekly calendar type structure to record my thoughts, reflections and truths on this journey as well as tap into the wisdom of authors whose quotes resonate with me. I welcome this opportunity to share my work with each of you.

Ernest Pancsofar

page

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A Week in Images and Quotes

October - 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>13</p> <p>A Gentler Approach to Caregiving</p> <p>One morning last week I was quite unsuccessful in coaxing Marsha to change into a new gown for the day. This request meant getting up from the couch and following me into the bathroom. I then thought of a general principle of behavior that was part of my special education background. I started with a small bowl of applesauce and assisted Marsha with 3-4 spoonfuls. Then, I went to the bathroom with the applesauce and told her she could finish it here. She immediately got up without any additional prodding and finished her applesauce before I started her morning hygiene routine.</p> <p><i>I don't consider myself to be a major talent, so the only solace I can take is to hope I'm growing.</i> Listen to the sound of silence. Improvisation is too good to leave to chance. Paul Simon Happy Birthday, Paul</p>	<p>14</p> <p><i>Anything not worth doing is worth not doing well.</i> Life is. I am. Anything might happen. If you can't find the exact quote you want, make it up. Robert Fulghum --- Scraping a bowl with a spoon may be music to someone's ears! (ELP)</p>	<p>15</p> <p><i>What I keep being reminded of is how everyone who is alive has both disabilities and abilities.</i> Helen Kivnick as quoted by Anne Basting in <i>Creative Care</i>, p. 193 <i>Marsha was accepted into Hospice (Comfort Care) today and more supports and services will be coming her way.</i> Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quickly you hardly catch it going. Tennessee Williams Unless they've had some experience with it, the hospice is still a mystery to most people. Because hospice deals with death, people tend not to talk about it. Art Buchwald</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Code of Ethics for Student Artists in Residence (SAIR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Be flexible, patient, humble, and dependable. ❖ Create an infectious sense of fun and discovery. ❖ Express gratitude and graciousness. ❖ Don't underestimate the capacity of elders. ❖ Create time for just being present in people's lives. <p>Anne Basting in <i>Creative Care</i>, p. 204</p> <p><i>If it is, it is, If it's not, it's not.</i> Ziggy Marley Hospice philosophy is best summarized as a compassionate, holistic, and person-centered approach to end-of-life care, focusing on enhancing the quality of life for patients and their families by addressing their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Continuagroup.com</p>	<p>17</p> <p><i>You try something, it doesn't work, and maybe people even criticize you. In a fixed mindset, you say, 'I tried this, it's over.' In a growth mindset, you look for what you've learned.</i> Carol S. Dweck <i>I shouldn't say I'm looking forward to leading a normal life, because I don't know what normal is.</i> Martina Navratilova</p>	<p>18</p> <p><i>We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.</i> Charles R. Swindoll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>To Hold in the Light ... Quaker related practice to see the divine in the smile of another.</i> ■ <i>One Candle Power ...</i> <p><i>One Candle Power</i> Seven Principles That Give Us a Sense of Our True Self and Our True Purpose Cathy Lulline Illustration: Peter ... as exemplified by the groundbreaking work of Communitas.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Connect with the Light</p> <p>Meditation Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Turn to the Light Within ... to focus on the values and ethics that drive current thoughts and actions.</i> ■ <i>I See the Light ... regarding truths as they present themselves.</i> ■ <i>The Light of My Life ... most important person, Marsha, and ways that I connect with her throughout the day.</i> ■ Heartlight ... Turn on your heartlight Let it shine wherever you go Let it make a happy glow For all the world to see. (Neil Diamond) If light is in your heart, you will find your way home. (Rumi)

Conversations between Marsha and Ernie

01/08/24

M: Who are you? Why are you here?

E: I'm your best friend. I don't want to be alone, so I am living here with you. Is that OK?

M: Yes, that's OK. I don't want to be alone either.

01/15/24

E: Some stores/places are closed and some are open today. Where would you like to go?

M: Some place that's open.

04/25/24

E: It's a little cold to go outside in your nightgown.

M: I could say a few things about you.

05/13/24

M: By the time we get there, we'll already be there!

05/22/24

E: Do you know when the best time of day is?

M: No.

E: Right now!

I am amazed by how Marsha expressed herself throughout this past year. I chose these snippets to share with you, the reader.

05/22/24 (continued)

M: When will you be back?

E: I'm not going anywhere. I'm staying here with you.

M: (with tears in her eyes and a big hug) I'm glad you're staying here.

06/17/24

M: You told me you'd come to bed now. (5:00 pm!)

E: I'll be right in.

After laying down for about 10 minutes.

M: I'd like to get up now.

E: OK.

08/18/24

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

09/29/24

M: I've got everything I need because of you.

E: What a nice thing to say. Thank you!

Poetic Expressions of my Journey with Marsha

01/20/23

We may not see
eye to eye
and meet resistance;
But we feel heart
to heart at our very
core essence.

02/25/23

Another week ends
And each day tends
To have unique ways
To always amaze
Me in what is true
In all that we do.
This Journey
With Ernie
Was not expected,
Yet, I feel connected
Strongly with you
Through and through.

07/12/24

I am not a wealthy person
But I certainly am a rich one.
We are growing older together
And when each day is done
I am thankful for your presence
You are the best person that I know
And I continue to be surprised
At just how much I grow.
When I support and care for you,
There's a richness in the air.
Love surrounds and flows through us;
We are a lovely pair.

I enjoy expressing my thoughts and reflections in poems. Here is a sample of this outlet as I journey together with Marsha as her primary caregiver.

05/21/24

Dishes and laundry are never quite done.
Add cleaning and dusting to this ongoing fun.
Reaching in the dryer I pull out some clothes,
And think about where each of them goes.
I wash dishes – just a few at a time
Then read from a chapter of a book about crime.
There is always something else that I could do,
But right now I'm sitting on the deck with you.
You center me in all ways that are good
And if I look closely, I know that I could
Figure out true meaning that's in my life
Together as we live as husband and wife.

05/06/24

It's what it is;
No more – no less.
Life can be orderly.
Life can be a mess.

But, there are lessons there
Amid moments of the day
Between the movements
Of what we do and say.

The journey of two
Includes me and you.
The journey of Ernie
Is mine alone to be.

Each incidence is not a coincidence.
We can't predict the future
But rest in the providence
Of what will happen next
To be taken in context.
The love we share today
As we each go on our way.

Steps That Lead to Our Basement as Reminders of the Ingredients of My Caregiving Supports

I wanted a visual reminder of key concepts/ways of being in my role as caregiver. I taped each word(s) on a different step going to our basement so that every time I went down or up these stairs, I would be reminded of the importance of each item in my day-to-day interactions with Marsha.

The **journey** continues each and every day
Step-by-step is the only way.

Learning is a process of making mistakes
and after each one success often awaits

Emergence is the unfolding of our talents and gifts
As the path ahead continually shifts.

Uncertainty is a truth that lingers near;
It's a fact of life and not to fear.

Togetherness means more as we engage;
And enjoy our lives at this elder stage.

Mindfulness is a way of life as we breathe and talk;
And slow down the pace of the steps we walk.

Small Steps are necessary on the continual journey
To bring peace and contentment to Marsha and Ernie.

My **Attitude** affects my moods from morning till night;
Keeping it positive turns the darkness into light.

Encouragement is expressed in both words and silence.
Keep things positive as I provide my assistance.

Support comes in many shapes and sizes,
Depending on the exact challenge that arises.

Acceptance recognizes the limits of our abilities,
But does not define the bounds of life's possibilities.

Unconditional love asks no questions and seeks no demands.
Its message is felt when we hold each other's hands.



Sample Truths I Have Learned Along the Way

As I interacted with Marsha over the past four years, I wrote down ideas/suggestions that I would put under the broad category of "truths." These truths work for me and may be worth exploring by readers who find themselves in a caregiving role. Here is a sample of the 110 truths . . . so far.

There is no "later" in your partner's time! (3)

Avoid using the word "no" in conversations with your partner. (9)

All things are possible

Many things are probable

Some things are bound to happen

Nothing will change until I do! (10)

Be prepared to be interrupted. Put things down and go with the flow.

Items on my to-do list can wait. (11)

There is no right versus wrong in our memories. Past events are only perceptions of what we believe to be true and are not worth arguing about. (12)

Take the responsibility to be wrong and mistaken following your partner's comments about what has occurred in the past. (13)

When your loved one misplaces something of value, calmly react that something is missing and wonder where it may be. Place no blame. (14)

React to stories from the past, even though you have heard them many times, as if this is the first time. (17)

Next Thursday, Friday or Saturday may all mean the same. The only reality is right now! (26)

"I'm sorry." is often the best response when being accused of an action from the past that you're quite sure was not your doing. "I'll remember not to do that in the future" is also not a bad response. (27)

When evaluating what course of action to take on any given day, think to yourself, "What would I say about this activity 10 years from now?" (28)

Sometimes outside supports cause greater stress than benefits. Your partner may not be ready for such supports . . . yet. (31)

A gentle approach to a perceived action is preferred over a verbal reprimand. (70)

We both have different memories of our past and we are both right to respect each other's memories. (72)

Don't argue facts.
Look beyond the facts. (74)

Negative sounding feedback can be restated in more positive terms; i.e., instead of "Your shoes are on the wrong feet." say, "This shoe would feel more comfortable on the other foot." and instead of "You spilled some food on your gown." say "Some food fell off your spoon." (81)

Reflections Using Meditation Card Prompts

Pat Beeman gave me a set of Meditation Cards with a word on each one to use as a point of focus for whatever we are going through at the time. My choice was to connect each word with my caregiving journey. Here is a sample of what I wrote for selected cards.

Clarity

Meditation Card

I remember when the first images were displayed from the Hubble telescope. There was a side-by-side comparison of a section of the universe before and after the use of the telescope. The clarity was amazing in the after photo. The entities were always there but it took a more powerful lens to bring clarity to what is. In a similar way we need a new lens with which to view individuals with Alzheimer's. The lens which we use brings clarity to who that person really is!

Surrender

Meditation Card

Instead of defining surrender as "giving up," I am using this term as "letting go."

*Let go of a need for predictable routines
Embrace acts of improvisation*

*Let go of a fear of the unknown for an unwanted disease
Embrace the essence of Marsha's identity*

*Let go of dreading making mistakes
Embrace the journey of making new discoveries*

*Let go of sadness
Embrace memories that brought us to this current moment*

*Let go of a need to be perfect
Embrace the process of perfecting my supports*

*Let go of self criticism
Embrace reflection*

*Let go of doing it alone
Embrace sharing with a support group*

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.*

Lessons Learned

Often, at the end of the day, I would reflect on what I learned that day about providing better supports for Marsha. Below are three samples.

April 24, 2024

Earlier this morning, Marsha refused to take her medicines. I waited about an hour and when she was looking out the window, I approached her again and offered her the medicines and she immediately brought them up and put them in her mouth. I'm not sure why she rejected them earlier, but I better understood the power of waiting and not trying to reason / explain the necessity of what she should be doing.

July 20, 2024

This learning occurs on my part if I am paying attention to events around me. I have noticed that Marsha appears to enjoy scraping her bowl to obtain the last bit of food. This occurred when she was eating her cereal for breakfast yesterday. A little while later I was having a very difficult time coaxing her to open her mouth for her morning medicines. Typically, if she does not take the medicines herself, I can put them in a small teaspoon of applesauce, and she'll accept them in her mouth --- but not today. She appeared quite confused no matter how I explained to her to open her mouth so I could give her the medicine. Solution: I put a small bowl of applesauce in front of her that included her medicines and told her this was the rest of her breakfast. Within just a few minutes she had scraped the bowl clean and taken her medicine.

August 11, 2024

Following our second trip in the car, Marsha told me she was not going in the house. I decided this was not an emergency and pulling her out of the car 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 until she decided to go in the house. After 5 minutes, I got out and invited her to join me in the house. Another 5 minutes elapsed, I poured a drink of juice and gave it to Marsha with the words, "Bring this glass back in the house when you are 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!

Acrostic Visual Organizers

Shadow Side		In the Light
What Do You Need	D	Develop Interdependence
A Lost Adventure	E	Enrichment of "What Is"
Doom & Gloom	M	Meaningful Times Together
Dreadful Fate	E	Enduring Love & Connection
Sadness & Depression	N	New Sense of "Normal"
Dwell on What is Lost	T	Thankful for What Still Is
A Lost You and	I	Welcome a "New" Us
Missing Parts of Marsha	A	Access to Marsha's "Essence"

Sacred Space
Unique Journeys
Personal Stories
Perspectives by Facilitator
Connected
Rspectful Listening
Transitions

GratITUDE
Routines Matter
Nonjudgemental
Useful Information
Personal Growth

My primary physician recommended that I join a caregiver support group. I searched for a group that contained many of my own values and found one at LiveWell in Southington, CT.

I captured my impressions of participating in this group with the SUPPORT GROUP acrostic summary.

Acrostic Visual Organizers (continued)

I nner Voice
N etworking
T ender Moments
R eframing
O ngoing Experiences
S tress Reduction
P ositive Feedback
E xploration
C ommitments
T ension
I nspirations
O pportunities
N ever Say Never

*While sitting on our deck
yesterday, I pondered on
the elements of
INTROSPECTION.*

*My inner voice speaks –
No one hears but me.
Wisdom and guidance
Are offered for free.*

*Networking on-line
With caregiving friends
Provides me resources
Some odds and ends.*

*Tender moments occur
at unexpected times
Be on the lookout
Compose some rhymes*

*Reframing can put
Events in a new light
Turning a wrong
Into a right.*

*Our life consists of
Ongoing Experiences
Let's not get stuck
Focusing on differences.*

*Stress reduction breaths
Relax my mind
Calm my spirit
From the daily grind.*

*Give positive feedback
And set the tone
With affirming words
In a negative-free zone.*

*This Alzheimer condition
Needs more exploration
Just how do I fit in
Amid this situation.*

*My commitments
To you made long ago
I am here by your side
Forever - - - you know.*

*For no apparent reason
Tension is in the air
I go with the flow
From here to there.*

*Inspiration's knocking
At my kitchen door.
I welcome its presence
I could use some more.*

*There are opportunities
To figure out what to do
I'll slow down and listen
To feedback from you.*

*Never Say Never!
Be open to the call.
There are no ANSWERS
But options for us all!*

Thank you for your presence
 I value your very essence
 As we enter our later years of life
 From a devoted husband to a beautiful wife.

Thank you for the warmth and care
 That I daily feel in the air
 When you're around I can plainly see
 Just how much you mean to me.

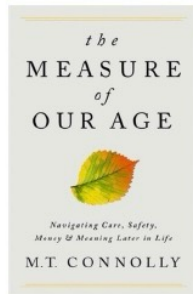
Thank you for our present and what will be;
 Our life is rich for both you and me.
 It's now a time for daily reflection
 To renew our love and daily affection. (ELP)

Acrostic Visual Organizers (continued)

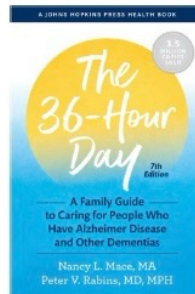
*We make gre **A** t company!*
*We are here **F** or each other.*
*Being mind **F** ul is necessary.*
*It's a good **I** ife my dear.*
*Follow **R** outines daily.*
*We are cal **M** and peaceful.*
*We hold h **A** nds together.*
*Quality **T** imes matter!*
*I like grow **I** ng older with you.*
*Let's do n **O** thing together!*
*Nadya and **N** atyra are special daughters!*
***S** low down!*



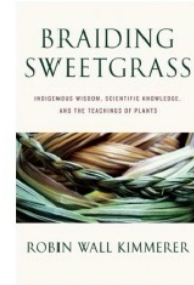
Recommended Books



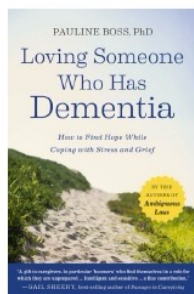
“It was a perfectly good place and got the maximum number of stars. But none of those stars told you if you’d be treated like a human being or a chair.”



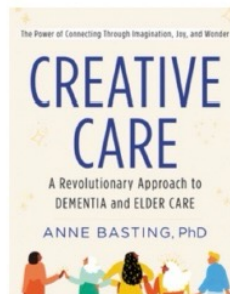
The content affirms many of the approaches I believe to be beneficial for a loved one with a brain changing disease.



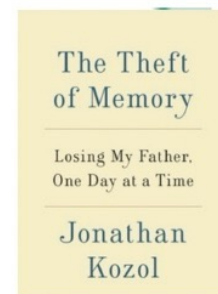
“I like the ecological idea of aging as progressive enrichment, rather than progressive loss.”



“... dementia does not destroy everything. Often something remains that is still wonderful. Out of the fog comes surprising wisdom.”



“... The creative care approach invites us to shift away from the temptation to focus so heavily on losses and instead train our eyes and hearts on the strengths that remain.”



“My father’s life intensifies my feelings of respect for people who do not insist on too much certitude about the maps they’re using and do not insist on knowing in advance what destination they’ll arrive at in the ends of days.”

Quotes by Ernie - - - Along the Way

October 3, 2024

*Today is Thursday:
a PERFECTING day – a
day to practice again!
There will never be a
perfect day, but there
will always be a
PERFECTING day!*

October 21, 2024

*WHAT will be will be.
HOW will I look within to
see . . .
WHY these events are
happening to me
WHERE our paths both
lead to eternity?
WHAT will Marsha teach
me today?
HOW will I show my love
in what I say?
WHY are these events
happening in this way?
WHERE is the path to
being?*

April 7, 2024

*Several months ago, I
decided not to oppose
Marsha on purchases in the
grocery store. If I could not
redirect her choices, we
bought what she selected
often to go uneaten at
home. To offset this waste, I
now make a monthly
donation to the Covenant
Food Kitchen. I'm not
necessarily recommending
this approach, but it works
for me.*

October 15, 2024

*Marsha was accepted
into Hospice (Comfort
Care) today and more
supports and services
will be coming her way.*

November 2, 2024

*What can I learn from
my interactions with
Marsha today?
How is what I am doing
today an improvement
on what I was doing
yesterday?
What am I discovering
when I sit in silence and
just breathe?
What contributions can I
make to other
caregivers when I
describe my journey
among the entries of
this journaling?*

April 24, 2024

*After an hour-long drive in
the car Marsha turned to
me prior to exiting the car
and said, "I want to ask you
something. Do you ever
have times when you know
something is not right, but
you just keep on going?"*

June 4, 2024

*As your brain changes, I am changing too.
As we age together, I pledge my love to you.
My life is different than what I had expected
Much richer and meaningful as we are connected
To the beauty life has to offer each and every day
As we live together in a mutually contented way.*

September 1, 2024

*It's like Groundhog Day,
the movie. Every day
similar events unfold but I
have a new opportunity to
respond differently based
on my cumulative
experiences with each
preceding "same" day.
Each day can be better
than the one before . . . if I
find respectful and
dignified ways to support
Marsha.*

July 16, 2024

*Respond to hurtful
words ... with peace
Respond to anger ...
with love
Respond to confusion ...
with understanding
Respond to agitation ...
with peace.
Respond to frustration
... with love
Respond to clutter with
understanding
As Nick Lowe aptly
wrote (What's So Funny
'bout) Peace, Love and
Understanding.*

Quotes of Note by Others

March 3, 2024

*Everybody is wondering what and where
They all came from.
Everybody is worrying about where they're going to go
When the whole thing's done.
But no one knows for certain and so it's all the same to me.
I think I'll just let the mystery be.*

Iris DeMent

January 14, 2024

*When we honestly ask
ourselves which
person in our lives
means the most to us,
we often find that it is
those who, instead of
giving advice,
solutions, or cures,
have chosen rather to
share our pain and
touch our wounds
with a warm and
tender hand.*

Henri Nouwen

April 7, 2024

*The memory of the
heart was far
stronger than
whatever was kept
in the mind.*

Louise Penny,
*Kingdom of the
Blind*, p. 3

December 8, 2024

*A lot of my loved one's
15 years with
dementia were very
positive for me, and
my presence seemed
always to be a positive
thing for him. I miss
him very much in both
of his modes, pre and
post. There was much
good in both.*

Carol Connolly

May 26, 2024

*Just watch this
moment, without
trying to change it at
all. What is
happening? What do
you feel? What do you
see? What do you
hear?*

Jon Kabat-Zinn

April 2, 2024

*Forever is composed of
nows.*

Emily Dickinson

March 1, 2024

*"What day is it?" asked
Pooh.
"It's today," squeaked
Piglet.
"My favorite day," said
Pooh.*

A. A. Milne

April 1, 2024

*The events in our
lives happen in a
sequence in time,
but in their
significance to
ourselves they find
their own order, . . .
the continuous
thread of revelation.*

Eudora Welty

November 10, 2024

*We have never arrived.
We are in a constant
state of becoming.*

Bob Dylan

March 16, 2024

*We must let go of the
life we have planned,
so as to accept the one
that is waiting for us.*

Joseph Campbell

December 7, 2024

*I wish to say what I
think and feel today,
with the proviso that
tomorrow perhaps I
shall contradict it all.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A Week in Images and Quotes

December - 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>01</p> <p><i>Old is that age we are not yet.</i></p> <p>M.T. Connolly, <i>The Measure of our Age</i> p. 286</p> <p><i>Know that you are the perfect age. Each year is special and precious, for you shall only live it once. Be comfortable with growing older.</i></p> <p>Louise Hay</p> <p><i>Life is about shifting the balance in favor of change and try as we might to hold on forever to the best of moments, it's simply impossible.</i></p> <p>Susan Krauss Whitbourne</p> <p><i>But he that dares not grasp the thorn should never crave the rose.</i></p> <p>Anne Brontë</p>	<p>02</p> <p><i>... I read books I haven't read for decades and they seem very different now than how I remember them. The books haven't changed, but I have.</i></p> <p>M.T. Connolly, p. 294</p> <p><i>John: You had the occasion to see this excellent musician and, if I recall correctly, you were quite impressed.</i></p> <p><i>I'm a background person.</i></p> <p>J. J. Cale</p> <p><i>I feel quite comfortable being a "background person."</i></p> <p><i>You must distinguish between what is urgent and what is important. You could accomplish all of the urgent things that you desire without accomplishing anything that is important.</i></p> <p>Gary Zukav</p>	<p>03</p> <p><i>I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear.</i></p> <p>Joan Didion</p> <p><i>I'm beginning to understand myself. But it would have been great to be able to understand myself when I was 20 rather than when I was 82.</i></p> <p>Dave Brubeck</p> <p><i>There is no recipe to be a great teacher, that's what is unique about them.</i></p> <p>Robert Sternberg</p> <p><i>I have often thought that some of our potentially great teachers would also have been potentially great teachers elsewhere. They just chose to come to CCSU on their path to become a great teacher. (ELP)</i></p>	<p>04</p> <p><i>No straight lines make up my life; And all my roads have bends; There's no clear-cut beginnings; And so far no dead-ends.</i></p> <p>Harry Chapin</p> <p><i>Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, and around in awareness.</i></p> <p>James Thurber</p> <p><i>Life's challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they're supposed to help you discover who you are.</i></p> <p>Bernice Johnson Reagon</p> <p><i>The ongoing discovery of who I am is enhanced as I experience my role as caregiver for Marsha. This is a gift and one I value immensely. (ELP)</i></p>	<p>05</p> <p>Christina Rossetti was born Dec 5th. I sent her following poem to my two daughters.</p> <p><i>For there is no friend like a sister in calm or stormy weather; To cheer one on the tedious way, to fetch one if one goes astray, To lift one if one totters down, to strengthen whilst one stands.</i></p> <p><i>The 36-Hour Day</i> 7th Edition A Family Guide to Caregiving for Those with Alzheimer's, Dementia and Other Dementias Nancy L. Mave, MA Peter V. Rabins, MD, MPH</p> <p><i>I may have referenced this book in a prior posting. The content affirms many of the approaches I believe to be beneficial for a loved one with a brain changing disease. (ELP)</i></p>	<p>06</p> <p>Ryan White was born Dec 5th. I sent her following poem to my two daughters.</p> <p><i>For there is no friend like a sister in calm or stormy weather; To cheer one on the tedious way, to fetch one if one goes astray, To lift one if one totters down, to strengthen whilst one stands.</i></p> <p>Ryan White would have been 54 on this date. He would be on my short list of who a "hero" is.</p> <p><i>NATIONAL BESTSELLER</i> RYAN WHITE <i>JUST THE TEN THINGS</i> "Heartbreaking... a powerful tale." —Neil Gaiman MY OWN STORY RYAN WHITE AND AN MARIE CUNNINGHAM WITH PETER G. HARRIS</p>	<p>07</p> <p><i>I wish to say what I think and feel today, with the proviso that tomorrow perhaps I shall contradict it all.</i></p> <p>Ralph Waldo Emerson</p> <p><i>You don't get to choose how you're going to die, or when. You can only decide how you're going to live. Now.</i></p> <p>Joan Baez</p> <p><i>I do find that there's a fine balance between preparation and seeing what happens naturally.</i></p> <p>Timothee Chalamet</p> <p><i>Problems arise in that one has to find a balance between what people need from you and what you need for yourself.</i></p> <p>Jessye Norman</p>

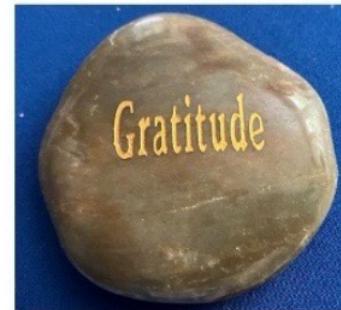


My sincere thanks and appreciation to George and Pat for allowing me space to share my journey with Marsha as her primary caregiver. My life is enriched and blessed by this "unexpected" role. If you would like to receive copies of my weekly entries beginning now – please let George and Pat know.

*A Circle of Support surrounds you
Whether you are aware of who they are:
People who are in your life
Who love you both near and far.*

*They have a commitment and purpose
To provide more choices for you
To lead a life of dignity
And to be content in all you do.*

*The challenges will be many
In the weeks and months ahead.
But, we are here to guide you
And be your golden thread.*



I am thankful for all the events from my past;

I am aware of the events of today;

I anticipate the events of the future with cautious optimism. (ELP)

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