A holiday visit may provide a closer look into your aging relative’s life and routine. And, sometimes that look yields concern.

Your aging relative may need more help if:

1. You find that some bills, such as for utilities, have been unpaid.
2. You find a stack of unopened mail.
3. The refrigerator is stocked with old food; you can’t find any fresh groceries.
4. Your aging relative has lost weight and appears gaunt.
5. Your aging relative’s appearance is unkempt.
6. Your aging relative’s home is unusually cluttered and dirty.
7. The outside of the home needs maintenance.
8. You find multiple bottles of medications, but your relative is unclear about when and why to take the medications.
9. Your aging relative no longer participates in regular activities, such as attending church or the local senior center.
10. You learn that your aging relative has received driving violations.

If you have concerns, contact your local Area Agency on Aging (call the ElderCare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 for a referral). Ask for a referral to a geriatric assessment center near your aging relative. A team, consisting of a geriatrician, social worker and other professionals, can run a battery of tests to determine your aging relative’s health care condition and care needs. The team may find a short-term problem that can be easily fixed (an untreated infection, for instance). Or, they find determine a diagnosis that indicates more help and care is needed. Either way, it’s good to know where you are. Then, you’ll know where you need to go.
Holiday Stress and Caregiving
By Michael Plontz

While everyone else is enjoying the hustle and bustle and the joy of the holiday season, there are many caregivers out there who just want the whole thing over with. Caregiving creates a level of stress unmatched by most endeavors. Add to that the extra stress of family gatherings, gift buying, cooking, and other obligations and it is almost unbearable. How can caregivers better cope with this stress on top of stress?

The following tips may help you weather the holidays much better:

1. Start your own tradition. Often we feel bound by past holiday traditions, but it doesn't have to be that way. Instead of having 20 family members and guests in your home, and cooking for all of them, try a different approach. Suggest that someone else host Passover or Easter dinner. Or, if your home is the only appropriate one, enlist the help of friends and relatives for everything from cleaning to preparing food. A potluck is a great idea—you can even assign specific dishes to ensure that a complete dinner is provided.

2. There are great ways to shop non-traditionally as well. The Internet is a fantastic way to shop for food and gifts without leaving home. Another way to shop from home is using catalogs (many people feel uncomfortable about putting credit card numbers out in cyberspace). If you would rather go out, use the catalogs to make lists of specific gifts for each person. That way you know exactly where to go and exactly what to get.

3. Make sure you leave enough time to enjoy the holidays. It shouldn't be all about the hustle and bustle.

4. The motto "Everything in moderation" should be your guide through the holidays. There are many temptations abundant throughout the season—alcohol, sweets and rich food. Go ahead. Have some. Just don't over-indulge. It make make you sick or uncomfortable even through the following day.

5. Be prepared for unexpected circumstances. Something may come up, and probably will, so what can you do? If you can, change the situation. If you can't, accept it and move on. You cannot control life no matter how planned out you believe you have things. Laugh a lot...

6. Try to keep up on your regular exercise routine, or start one, during the holidays. Walking five times a week is a great way to stay in shape. There is also something about pounding the pavement that helps release frustrations and clears your head. If you are looking out your window and the snow is flurrying and drifting, find an alternative. Many health clubs have indoor tracks. If that doesn't appeal to you, check with the nearest shopping mall. Some open early just for walkers.

7. Ideally caregivers should have a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly break.

Daily—Half an hour of yoga, meditation, needlepoint, reading, etc.
Weekly—A couple of hours spent away from the house at the mall, library, coffeehouse, etc.
Monthly—An evening out with your friends, a play, a concert, etc.
Yearly—A well-planned (and well-deserved) vacation.

Planning ahead for these breaks is imperative. You may need to arrange for respite care for your loved one.

It can be done. You can care for your loved one, attend to your daily activities, and enjoy the holidays. We all do what we can, and nobody should expect more than that from us. Especially us. Happy Holidays.

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Easing the Added Stress of Caregiving During the Holidays

For millions of Americans who find themselves in the role of caregiver to an older frail, ill, or disabled relative, the holiday season can add to an already heavy load of responsibilities and cause feelings of stress to soar.

Stress occurs when we work too much, sleep too little, try to cope with difficult or troubling situations, and when we neglect to take good care of ourselves—all of which are typically everyday state of conditions for the millions of Americans who find themselves in the role of caregiver to an older frail, ill, or disabled relative. The added physical and emotional demands that are involved in celebrating the holidays can add to an already heavy load of caregiving responsibilities and cause feelings of stress to soar.

The holidays are traditionally a time when we reflect on past memories. For those who are caring for a frail and elderly family member, these reflections often deepen the awareness of the extent of the older person’s losses (for example, memory loss for those with Alzheimer’s) and how much life has changed for them. Holiday-time reminiscing can also underscore the loss caregivers face in the altered quality of their personal relationship with the older person. The emotional pain of confronting such losses can heighten feelings of stress.

The holidays are also a traditional time for family gatherings. While this can be immensely enjoyable, when tensions among family members or unresolved conflicts surface, it can become a source of extreme stress. Caregivers too often find themselves in the middle of family discord as they try to mediate the needs of the older person as well as express their own position.

If you are a family caregiver, consider the following suggestions and think about which ones you can put in place during the coming weeks to help ease your feelings of stress during the holidays:

- Set manageable expectations and limits for yourself. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do—as well as what you want to do and don’t want to do.
- Try not to set yourself up for disappointment by comparing this year’s holiday season with the nostalgia of past holidays. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way.
- Ask for and accept help! It’s so often the case that, while people want to be useful, they may not always know what to do. Let other family members and friends know what they can do to share in the responsibility of caregiving. Don’t forget to consider asking people who live at a distance, as well as neighbors and people from faith-based groups or clubs, to pitch in and help.
- Maintain or establish social interaction with friends and other family members. Isolation can further increase feelings of stress. Having the chance to have fun, laugh, and focus on something other than your at-home caregiving responsibilities can help you keep stress at bay and maintain emotional balance.
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely. There’s room for feelings such as sadness, grief and/or loneliness to be present along with other more joyful emotions. If you do feel down, avoid critical self-perceptions, and, instead, try to articulate the understanding you need from those around you. Consider seeking the help of a therapist to help you sort out your feelings and deal with your concerns and troubling issues.
- If the elderly person you are caring for has dementia, avoid overly stimulating environments since that can add to their anxiety and end up increasing your stress level.
- If including the elderly person in large family gatherings creates added work and stress for you, consider alternatives, such as suggesting family members plan to spend individual quality time visiting with their elderly relative.
- Don’t abandon healthy eating and drinking habits. While it’s certainly okay to treat yourself during the holidays, avoid giving in to stress-driven
urges for overeating or for overindulging in alcohol.

- Exercise regularly. Even if it means finding someone else to take over your caregiver duties, getting regularly scheduled exercise—for example, walking, swimming, yoga, biking, or aerobics—can be of tremendous benefit to both your physical and emotional well-being.

- Seek emotional and moral support from other caregivers—there is great strength in knowing you are not alone. Many communities have support groups for family caregivers of elderly persons through local hospitals, churches and/or community centers.

- Use community resources such as meal or shopping services, home-care aides, adult day services, and/or volunteer help from faith-based organizations or civic groups.

- Try to find time for yourself to do something you especially enjoy such as reading, walking, listening to music, gardening and/or visiting with a friend.

- Find ways to ensure you get enough rest. Sleep deprivation can sap your energy, distort your thinking and lead directly to making your mind and your body feel stressed to the maximum.

- If you experience any signs of depression (for example, extreme sadness, trouble concentrating, withdrawal, or hopelessness), don’t delay in getting professional help for yourself. Depression is a serious, but very treatable condition. If left untreated, depression does not “just go away.” Instead, the symptoms progressively worsen and can even become debilitating. You can click here for information about depression, including a more detailed list of commonly experienced symptoms and ways to receive help.

Throughout the holiday season (as well as year-round), remember to be good to yourself. As a family caregiver, you’re doing a very hard job and deserve understanding, support and quality time for yourself to help ensure you meet your own emotional needs. Many caregivers have found that therapy offers life-strengthening help in dealing with the many challenges of caregiving. Therapy can provide a time and place that is devoted exclusively to your feelings, needs, and concerns—and can result in a healthy perspective that allows you to devote your best efforts to your older loved one while also making sure you take the very best care of yourself.
Seniors and the "Holiday Blues"

Although the winter holiday season is supposed to be a time of sharing joy and good tidings, oftentimes people—especially those who are older—find that, as the season unfolds, they feel progressively disappointed, stressed and sad.

There are many influencing factors that can contribute to seniors being at particular risk of suffering from the "holiday blues," including:

- **Reminders of past losses of significant loved ones**—Many seniors have survived a number of their cherished friends and family members and these losses often take on greater significance during the holidays.

- **Sadness over the contrast between "then" and "now"**—For many older people, the memories of holidays past so outweigh present day celebrations they feel unable to focus on or experience pleasure in the "now."

- **Unrealistic expectations**—the holidays can bring a host of expectations, such as family togetherness, festive events and feelings of expanded happiness. Reality too often falls short of these expectations, which can cause an individual to plummet to new lows of sadness, feelings of loneliness and despair.

- **Spending the holidays alone**—Some seniors live by themselves and/or at a distance from friends and family and spend much, if not all, of the holidays alone. Grown children often become busy with their own social obligations and may not realize how much their parents or grandparents look forward to sharing time during the holidays with them.

- **Coping with failing health**—The holidays can often serve to underscore the limitations failing health imposes on the ability to participate in once-enjoyed activities.

**What Can You Do?**

The following strategies can be useful in helping to get around potential sources of the "holiday blues."

- **Adjust your expectations**—For example, if you think the perfect family get-together won't be a part of this year's holidays, keeping this realistic assumption in mind can help you avoid frustration when and if something should go wrong or be less than desirable when your family gets together.

- **Limit predictable sources of stress**—If you feel the annual trappings of shopping, decorating, cooking and attending social events risk becoming overwhelming and stressful, limit the activities you commit to.

- **Get together with friends and family members**—As much as possible, share the holidays with friends and family members in person, as well by phone, email, and mail. The holiday season is also a good time to contact someone you have not heard from for awhile. For those who have recently suffered the loss of someone especially close, spend time with special friends and family with whom you can reminisce and share stories and cherished memories about your loved one.

- **Attend holiday community events**—Most communities offer special events during the holidays, such as theatrical and orchestral performances, that can be enjoyable to look forward to and to attend.
• **Join a social group**—Feelings of loneliness and isolation can often be remedied by participating in activities with others. This can also help in opening up the potential for making new friends. You might consider looking into groups affiliated with your local church, museum, library or community center.

• **Engage in volunteer activity**—Helping others is a pretty foolproof method of making the holidays feel more meaningful. There are many volunteer organizations that need extra help during this time of year.

• **Enjoy activities that are free**—Financial strain can be the cause of added stress during the holidays, however, there are many ways of enjoying the season that are free, including driving or walking around to admire holiday decorations, going window shopping without buying, making a snowperson with children, and attending free concerts.

• **Don’t drink too much**—Many of the season’s parties and social gatherings include alcohol. Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase feelings of overwhelm or depression. Alcohol is NOT an antidepressant and, in fact, often worsens mood.

• **Seek new, enjoyable ways of getting physical exercise**—Exercising, for example, aerobics, walking, skiing, hiking, yoga, or swimming can help burn away a lot of stress as well as the extra calories of holiday meals.

• **Adopt a pet**—Many have found that assuming the responsibility of caring for and loving a pet brings new joy and companionship into their lives.

• **Remember that life brings changes**—As families change and grow, traditions often need to adapt to the new configurations. While you can hold onto certain family rituals, for instance, a certain holiday activity or preparing a long-cherished family recipe, some traditions, such as everyone gathering at your house, may not be possible this year. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don’t set yourself up for disappointment by comparing this year’s holiday season with the “good old days.”

**Spend Time With Supportive and Caring People**

In all of the ways listed above—as well as any other opportunities you can think of that specifically apply to your life—it cannot be emphasized enough how important it can be to spend the holiday season in the company of supportive and caring people.

Many seniors have found that seeking the counsel of a therapist during this time of year provides just the kind of support and care that helps them with the many emotional issues that arise in response to the holidays. Therapy provides a safe, comforting, and confidential setting in which to receive the kind of help and understanding that can best assist in first relieving, then understanding, and finally recovering from the effects of feelings of sadness, disillusionment or loneliness.

**Could It Be Depression?**

The added demands of the holiday season can sometimes overload an already stressed, almost depressed emotional system. If you are unable to shake what you think are the “holiday blues,” you may be suffering from depression. The difference between the “holiday blues” and depression is essentially based on the duration and the degree of the symptoms. When conditions and affects such as the following last for two weeks or longer, it could, in fact, be depression:

• Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood

• Sudden loss of pleasure and interest in activities that are usually enjoyed

• Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness

• Difficultly sleeping, or increased sleeping
10 Tips for Coping with Caregiving Blues during the Holidays

by Carol Bradley Bursack, Editor-in-Chief

The holiday season is fraught with stress for most folks, even if it's good stress. Expectations of a "perfect" holiday, fed by advertising and media coverage, can contribute to depression for those who don't feel their holiday is measuring up. Add caregiving for elderly family members to this seasonal hoopla, and the result can be overwhelming negative stress. How can caregivers cope with the demands of creating a nice holiday environment for their loved ones and stay true to themselves?

Many people suffer from "holiday blues," even without the stress of caregiving. The shorter days with less sunlight affect some people. The expectation - often unfounded except in advertising and fiction - that everyone else is having a perfect holiday while you are not, can bring on depression severe enough that there are often increased suicide rates during the holidays.

If we add the significant obligations of caregiving to an existing risk of holiday blues, we can have a recipe for trouble. During this season, caregivers need to be especially vigilant in recognizing their own, perhaps unrealistic, expectations for a "perfect" holiday, as well as the possibly excessive expectations of others.

Tradition frequently plays a starring role in holiday stress, since many family traditions date back years, if not generations. Sometimes, it can seem as though not following through on every traditional holiday food, activity and decoration would be slap in the face to the whole family. Some caregivers are responsible for elders and children at the same time, a situation so common these days that these folks in the middle have been designated the "sandwich generation." We have children who want each holiday done like the one before because they are used to routine. We have elders who say, "This is the way we've always done it." The caregiver in the middle can feel overwhelmed.

What can caregivers do to minimize this stress and have at least a chance at enjoying the holidays?

1. Put first things first. If you've always felt depressed during the holidays, caregiving won't make things easier. If you get depressed from the lack of sunlight in the winter months, see your doctor. There are therapies that can help this syndrome, which is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). If you don't have a problem with the sunlight, but still suffer seasonal depression, talking with a counselor to learn to cope with this depression is often a good idea.

2. If you have always enjoyed the holidays, but now find them overwhelming because of too many demands on your time, you will need to learn to simplify the season. Yes, that will mean disappointing a few people, perhaps elders and children alike, but simplification is often the only choice you have, if you are to remain somewhat sane.

3. Learn to detach from the negative feedback you may get from others because of changes you are making. Detaching simply means that you recognize the other person's feelings, but you will not allow yourself to react or be controlled by their feelings without considering your own needs, as well. You set boundaries by telling others what you can and can't do. You look at the situation with open eyes, perhaps get some feedback from people you think can help you, and then make your own decisions. Acknowledging your loved ones' views, and telling them you love them, but simply can't do it all, generally helps. If your mom says, "But we've always done it that way," you say, "Yes, we have, but now our holiday has to change a little, since our lives have changed." If your kids lay on the guilt because you can't bake every kind of cookie they want, let them know that you want to please them, but that your time is limited now, so they can help you by being flexible. If you offer to let them help you, they may feel part of the decision, rather than brushed off. The main idea is that you don't react to their negativity. Generally, when you stop reacting, other people will calm down.
4. Use music as a soothing tool. If you have elders in nursing homes, bring them a CD player and CDs so they can play old songs they enjoy. Around the house, play Christmas tunes your kids like, but don’t forget your own needs. If you have some favorite holiday tunes on CDs, play those too. However, if you get a sick feeling every time you enter a mall because the Christmas music reminds you of all you have to do, then play other types of music at home. Do consider music of some kind. Classical music can be very therapeutic, religious music helps many, and old rock and roll or country songs may give you a boost.

5. Soothing light can help most people relax. Obviously, candles aren’t allowed in nursing homes and likely aren’t a good idea for elders or kids. But there are many softly lit holiday decorations you can safely use, or get some indirect lamps for atmosphere. Soft lights, combined with good music, can help calm nearly anyone, including a caregiver. Try it while you bake treats, decorate your home or the elders’ homes, or do other holiday duties.

6. Meditation can be as simple as getting up early or going to bed late. The idea is to have some quiet time for yourself. Some people like guided meditation, where music or soothing words on CD or DVD help them relax in a progressive manner. Other people prefer going outside, maybe to a park or sitting near water, if possible, to enjoy natural calm. Some folks concentrate on their breathing pattern while they repeat one soothing word. This helps them calm their overactive brain. There’s no right or wrong way to meditate, but numerous studies have shown meditation can have a healthy effect on mood, as well as physical wellbeing. Also, try to eat right and exercise. This is extra hard during the holiday season, but you can feel better if you treat your body right.

7. Ask your spouse, a friend or relative to take over some of your duties for a time. It’s amazing how many of us think we have to do everything ourselves, even though others would help if we only asked them. When we don’t ask for help, people often don’t know we need help, or else they simply don’t know what to do.

8. Take a trip down memory lane. Remember your parents when they were young and healthy. Remember your children when they were tiny. Remember the good times before these difficult times. When you do that, you’ll likely find a better balance in your life, because you’ll start to recognize that life is cyclical, and better times will come again.

9. Allow yourself to feel the pain of your aging parents’ losses. As my elders aged and grew frail, I was deeply saddened by their physical and psychological pain. The holidays threw a spotlight on all the things they could no longer enjoy. This pain is real. Allow yourself to feel it. Write it down. Talk about it with other caregivers, a religious leader, or a good friend. Get it out. It’s natural, human and okay to feel the loss. If you feel bitter or angry, say so. Get it all out and don’t allow shame to enter into the equation. You have a right to all of your feelings.

10. Let go of perfection. It’s likely that all of those holidays you remember as being so wonderful really weren’t that perfect. Every human being looks at events differently. Time skews our memories. Life wasn’t perfect thirty years ago, twenty years ago or ten years ago. It’s far from perfect now. Do your best with what you have. Take care of yourself along with the others, and your holidays will be as good as they can be. Let that be good enough.

Related Articles

Click on the links below to see helpful articles and checklists on various elder care topics.

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- Families need to communicate in order to plan for aging loved one’s care
- The Simply Abundant Moments In Caregiving: An Eldercare Vista
- Your Parents Are Aging and Need Care: What If They Abused You As a Child?
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- Faith-based and Community Organizations: How to Enhance Your Visitation and Support
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- Caregivers May Pick and Choose Eldercare Battles
- Creating Time Well Spent: Enhancing Your Visits with an Older Adult
- Long-Distance Caregiving Decisions in Eldercare
- Hold That Reactionary Thought
Caregiving and the holidays: from stress to success!

For many caregivers the holiday season gives rise to stress, frustration and anger, instead of peace and good will.

Caregivers may feel resentful towards other family members who they feel have not offered enough assistance. Managing care for someone who has a cognitive impairment may leave caregivers feeling that they will not be able to participate as fully as they would like in family gatherings. Already feeling overwhelmed with caregiving tasks, stressed-out caregivers may view traditional holiday preparations as more of a drain of precious energy than a joy.

Following are some suggestions that may help make the holidays more enjoyable for you and your loved ones. Keep in mind that the holidays can, in fact, provide unique opportunities to seek better communication, connection and support from family and friends.

An opportunity for communication

It’s hard to know how much to communicate about a loved one’s decline in cognitive functioning and personal care needs. Whom do you tell? How much do you tell?

Although it is understandable to have reservations about discussing a loved one’s impairments, honest communication about the realities of the caregiving situation offers others the opportunity to respond with assistance. Sharing the truths of your situation may help reduce some of the feelings of isolation and lack of appreciation common in caregivers.

Holiday greetings and a brief note

Some caregivers have had success in writing a brief note describing the person’s condition and enclosing it in a holiday greeting card. This can be a nonthreatening way to inform distant or uninvolved relatives about the realities of the caregiving situation. If written in a tone that's not accusatory or guilt-inducing, family members may be more forthcoming with assistance or, at least, have a better understanding of the effort you are putting into providing care.

Let sleeping dogs lie?

It is common for caregivers to be disappointed with family members who they feel are not “pulling their weight” in caregiving responsibilities. If this holds true for you, and your goal is to enjoy the holidays, you must decide how much and when to communicate this disappointment. Consider clearing the air before the holidays or perhaps resolve within yourself to put those feelings on hold, with the intention to discuss the matter after the holiday season passes. In the meantime, enjoy the holiday!

Be clear about your energy level

Let family members know that your caregiving duties are keeping you very busy and that you only have so much energy for holiday preparation and hosting duties.

Accept the need to adapt
Caregivers often have to adapt their traditional role or experience of the holidays. This may mean allowing another family member to host more time-intensive festivities. You may need to modify the amount of time away from home to match the comfort level of your impaired loved one. You may also have to choose which events to attend based on which would be the simplest, least exhausting and most enjoyable for the person for whom you provide care—and for you.

The visit room

Don’t expect the person with cognitive impairment to be able to adapt to all situations; you may need to adapt the environment to their needs. See if you can arrange to have another room in the house designated as a quiet place for the impaired person. Many people with dementia find multiple conversations and background noise disturbing. To avoid this anxiety, the person may benefit from time in a quieter room with less stimulus where family members could take turns visiting with them.

Share your wish list

- **Respite**: some caregivers ask for time off from caregiving duties as a gift for the holidays. This could mean another family member gives you a break. Sometimes asking for a Saturday off "In the next three months" is more accepted, as family members can then schedule it into their calendars. If this is not possible, perhaps they would consider paying for a home care worker or a stay at a respite facility. Your FCA Family Consultant can help you locate these resources in your area.
- **Home repairs**: Do light bulbs need changing, or grab bars need installation? That maddening pile of junk in the garage needs to go to the dump? Tasks such as these may be the perfect way for a family member to help out if providing personal care is too uncomfortable for them.
- **Care for you!** How about a gift certificate for a massage, facial or manicure? How about an opportunity to spend the day fishing or a walk in the outdoors?
- **Book your homecare worker early!** Speak with your home care worker or home care agency early about your holiday plans!

Schedule one-on-one time

While caregiving, it is easy to get caught up in all the tasks of personal care and homemaking chores. Make a point of setting some time aside this holiday season to enjoy the person you care for in a relaxed, one-on-one context. The best activities are those which take advantage of long-term memory—usually less impaired in people with dementia. Try looking through family photo albums or unpacking holiday decorations, which may stimulate memories.

Reflect on the rewards

Reflecting on the rewards of caregiving can help maintain your self-esteem. It may feel very rewarding to know that you are fulfilling a vow or promise you have made to the person for whom you provide care. Your caregiving may be an expression of living up to your personal ideals or religious beliefs. You may also be experiencing a great deal of growth as you learn new skills and meet challenges in ways you never imagined possible.

A little thank you goes a long way

After the holidays, write a thank you note to family members or friends who spent time with your loved one. Emphasize the positive impact their visit or brief time spent with your loved one had on them. This may reinforce positive feelings from their visit and diminish any discomfort they experienced. They may then be more encouraged to visit again or be more supportive of your efforts.
10 Reasons to Be Thankful for Your Caregiving Role

1. A built-in excuse to cut back on time spent with certain family members over the holidays. What a great way to cut down on these distasteful side dishes of judgments and opinions. Who needs those calories!

2. You’re crabby? Someone even ventures to question your crabbiness? Give them the throwdown: “It’s the caregiving.” And, it’s not even a lie!

3. A guilt-free way out of helping at the church bazaar or the school holiday festival. “You know, what with caregiving, I’m booked.”

4. A reason to throw a pity party, complete with ice cream and more ice cream, for yourself, any time, any day.

5. You never have to explain that trip to your car, the trip that begins and ends in the driveway. You don’t go anywhere, you just go to the car. To hide. And, everyone knows why. It’s the caregiving. And, on those days you can’t even get out to car, you go to bathroom, with your pillow. They still know why.

6. No explanation needed for those bad hair days. Or for the grey hair. Or for no hair. It’s the caregiving.

7. Acceptance from family members of burnt food, especially cookies and casseroles.

8. Pajamas and slippers all day, every weekend.

9. You’re a whiz with a wheelchair. A whiz with one hand. You receive admiring glances at the doctor’s office, at worship services, at the grocery store. It’s all in the wrist.

10. Finally, be grateful for your caregiving role because it shows you your priorities, highlights the love you have for others as well as the love you receive from others, and puts the true meaning of relationships and life in the forefront of your day, every day. Caregiving may seem to tear you apart, but after you put yourself back together, you’ll be amazed at what’s created. You, times 10.