

A Caregiver's Dilemma

"I'm caring for someone and I'm doing the best I can. But as I sit and listen to others talk about their caregiving roles, I hear them say that they love their parent or spouse but it's difficult sometimes. I don't love the person I'm caring for, and I feel like an absolutely TERRIBLE person for thinking this let alone saying it. It's not keeping me from doing my best, but I have a long history with this person. There have been hard feelings and uncaring things said between us that are hard to forget. How do I reconcile that?"

This comment came to me while presenting to a group of caregivers recently. This caregiver approached me after the session ended because she couldn't bring herself to say those words out loud in front of the group. My first reaction was to suggest that she's far from a bad person, actually quite a remarkable one.

Caregiving is something that's hard to do for so many honest reasons. When you're caring for someone you love, someone who has done so many wonderful things for you over the years, it's an opportunity for you to give back in part for the love you've shared. That doesn't make caregiving easy, but loving the care recipient sure makes a difference. It increases our patience quotient -- we can draw on some of the loving and shared memories we've experienced over the years when having a bad day. But when there's no love and many bad feelings stand in the way and yet you must still perform the selfless act of caregiving, this introduces a very different set of circumstances. Whether motivated by faith, religious beliefs, or simply being the person you

are, I believe you have to draw from a very different reserve of thoughts, feelings and emotions when caring for someone when your relationship is strained.

You are the gift

Are you caregiving in similar circumstances? If you were looking at your situation from the outside, or if you had a friend in your shoes, would you judge them as harshly as you do yourself? Or would you suggest that they're a special person to continue providing the care and support the person needs, despite the absence of gratitude or thankfulness? Caregivers aren't in it for reward or gratitude, but what a wonderful gift when a simple thank you is expressed. If you are being present for someone in your life without the gift of gratitude, know that you are one of these very special people. **YOU** are the gift!

*This article is a reprint of a blog posted by
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