**10 things that help you thrive as a caregiver**

**1. Be assertive**  
With doctors, with people who “mean well” but don’t know the whole story.

And ask for help, when you need it.

**2. Be patient**  
With yourself above all, with your charge, and with others who share your concern for the sufferer.

**3. Be forgiving**  
Of your own missteps: There is no one-size-fits-all map to follow in this calling.

**4. Try not to eat (or drink) for comfort**  
You’ll just end up with one more thing to forgive yourself for!

**5. Talk about it**  
To your spouse, to your siblings (they need the opportunity to share your reality, anyway), to a support group, to good friends.

**6. Write about it**  
Keep a dump-it-all-here journal, compose an email or a letter to a supportive friend, join an online discussion page.

**7. Turn to faith**  
Whenever your situation seems hopeless, overwhelming, or bigger than you are, lean on your faith or spirituality.

**8. Walk off the stress**  
Or bike it off or swim it off. Physical activity is a side effect-free path to tranquility.

And getting or staying fit bolsters not only your self-confidence but also your emotional and physical stamina. Serotonin and endorphins are our friends.

**9. Don’t make assumptions**  
About anything: another person’s state of mind, or health, or view of your circumstances.

Communication is key here. Ask the question. Clarify the message. Choose your advisors with care. Take good notes when new facts emerge.

**10. Don’t take it personally**  
And by “it” I mean anything.

You are not the cause of the dementia sufferer’s ill-temper. And your actions may not be the motivation behind constructive criticism.

Opinion-givers are often moved by their own frustration, guilt, denial, sense of helplessness, or sheer lack of information.