



**Caregiving: Insights from a
Spiritual Perspective
Janice Keefe**



Balance

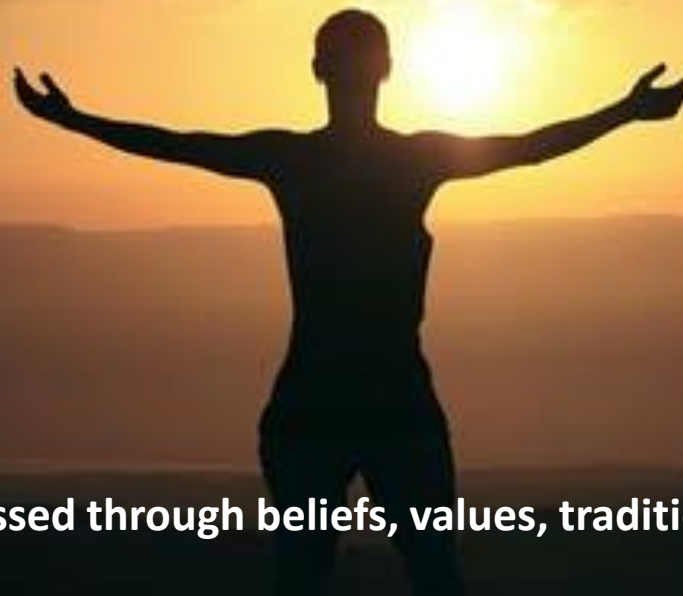
Spirit

Mind

Body

Spirituality

A dynamic and intrinsic aspect of humanity through which persons seek ultimate meaning, purpose, and transcendence, and experience a relationship to self, family, others and community, society, nature and the significant or sacred.



Spirituality is expressed through beliefs, values, traditions and practices

Puchalski et al., 2014, p.644

Family Caregivers ... different Spiritual Paths

Family caregivers:

- **Different spiritual paths**
- **Coping or thriving**
- **May enjoy various PLEASURES**
- **Strive to reach their POTENTIAL**
- **Go through various PROCESSES**
- **Engage in a range of PRACTICES**
- **And Find PURPOSE**

Suzanne Bermault-Phillips, 2017



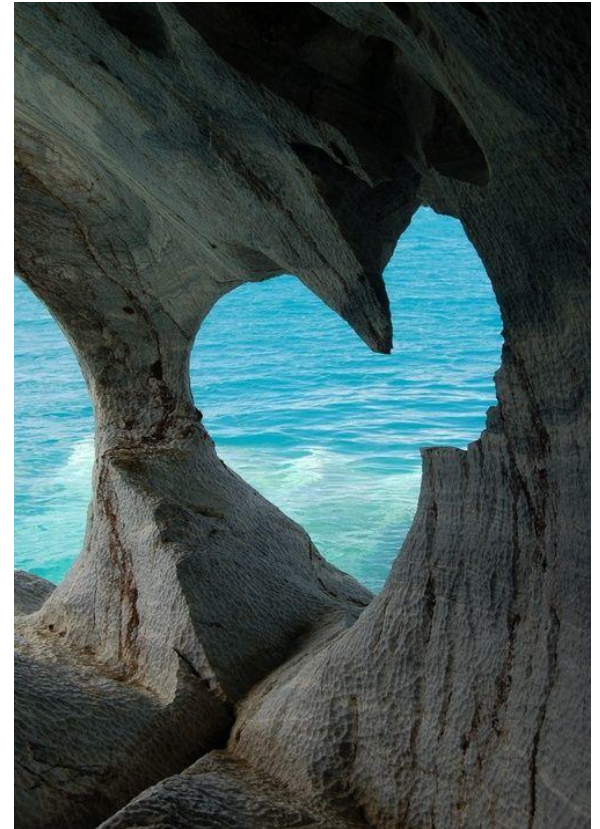
Yes you Can!

With the right mindset, anything is possible

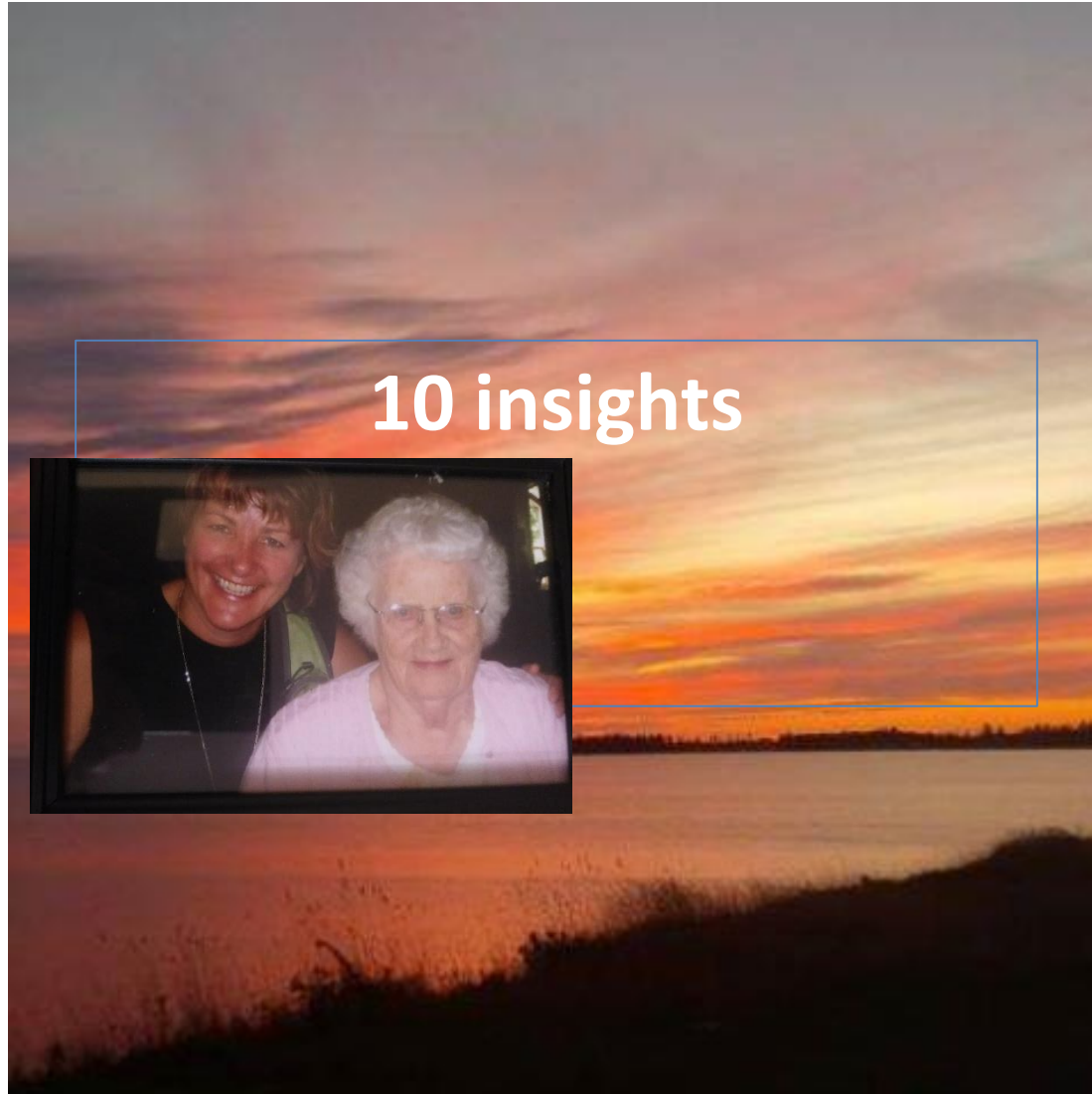


A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

[\(Ezekiel 36:26\)](#)



Integrating research, spirituality & experience



1. Recognize the vulnerability.. Even if they don't

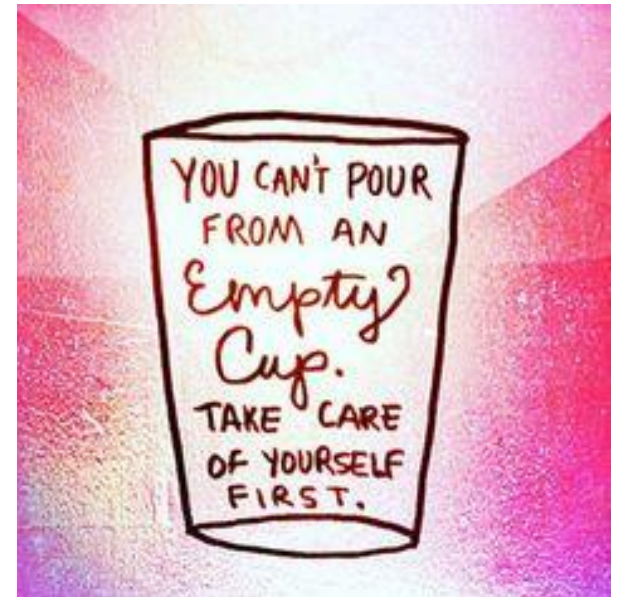
- Respect the dignity of the person
- Know that they may be fighting against dependency and fear



[Care] bears witness that the human person is always precious, even if marked by age and sickness.” Pope Francis

2. Learn to take care of yourself

- Put your oxygen mask on first
- A break is important
- Find opportunities for laughter
- If you are run down – nothing works

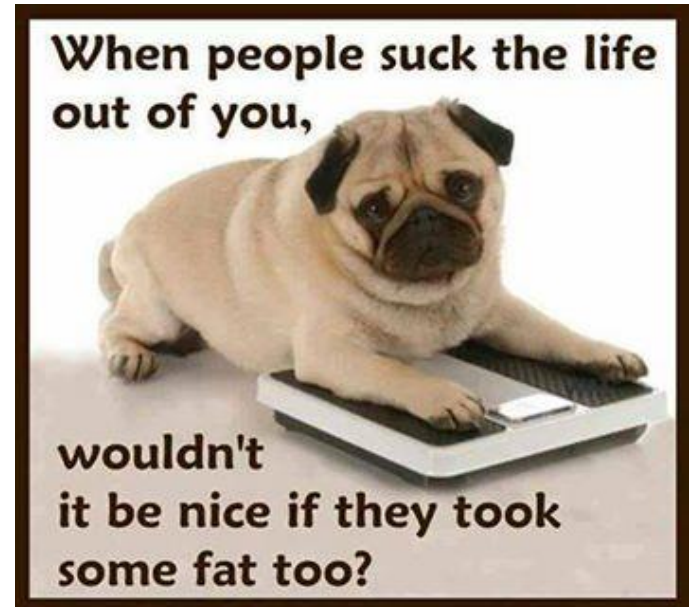


“Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.”

- Eleanor Brown

3. Recognize your limitations

- Striving for balance can be exhausting
- It's not ONLY about the person needing care
- We need to forgive ourselves too



*We can't always be superheroes!
What matters most is that you
tried your best.*



My Brothers, Sister, and Me –Cork, Ireland 2017

Table Talk

Take 10 minutes

Accepting help

Discuss at the table

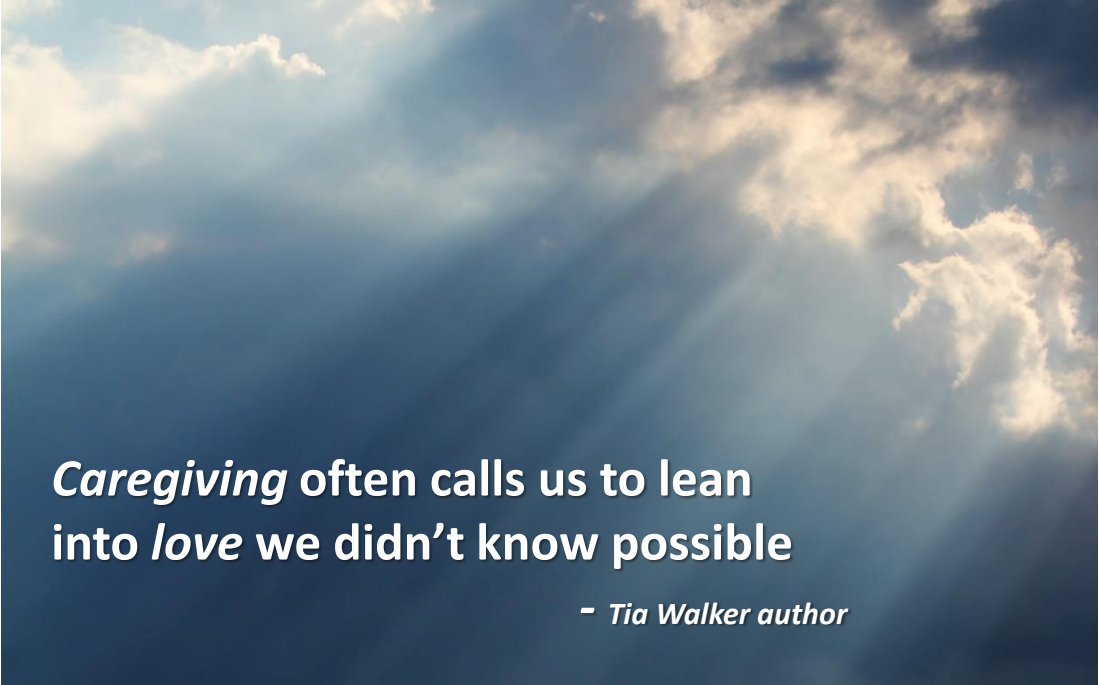
- Did you ever say – *“it’s okay- I’m fine”*
 - When you really meant was:
“I’m struggling here but I have to protect my loved one.”
- What are the barriers to accepting help?
 - Name one
- Where might there be opportunities?

Take 10 minutes

Ask that you allow everyone WHO WANTS to speak.

5. Recognize the person within

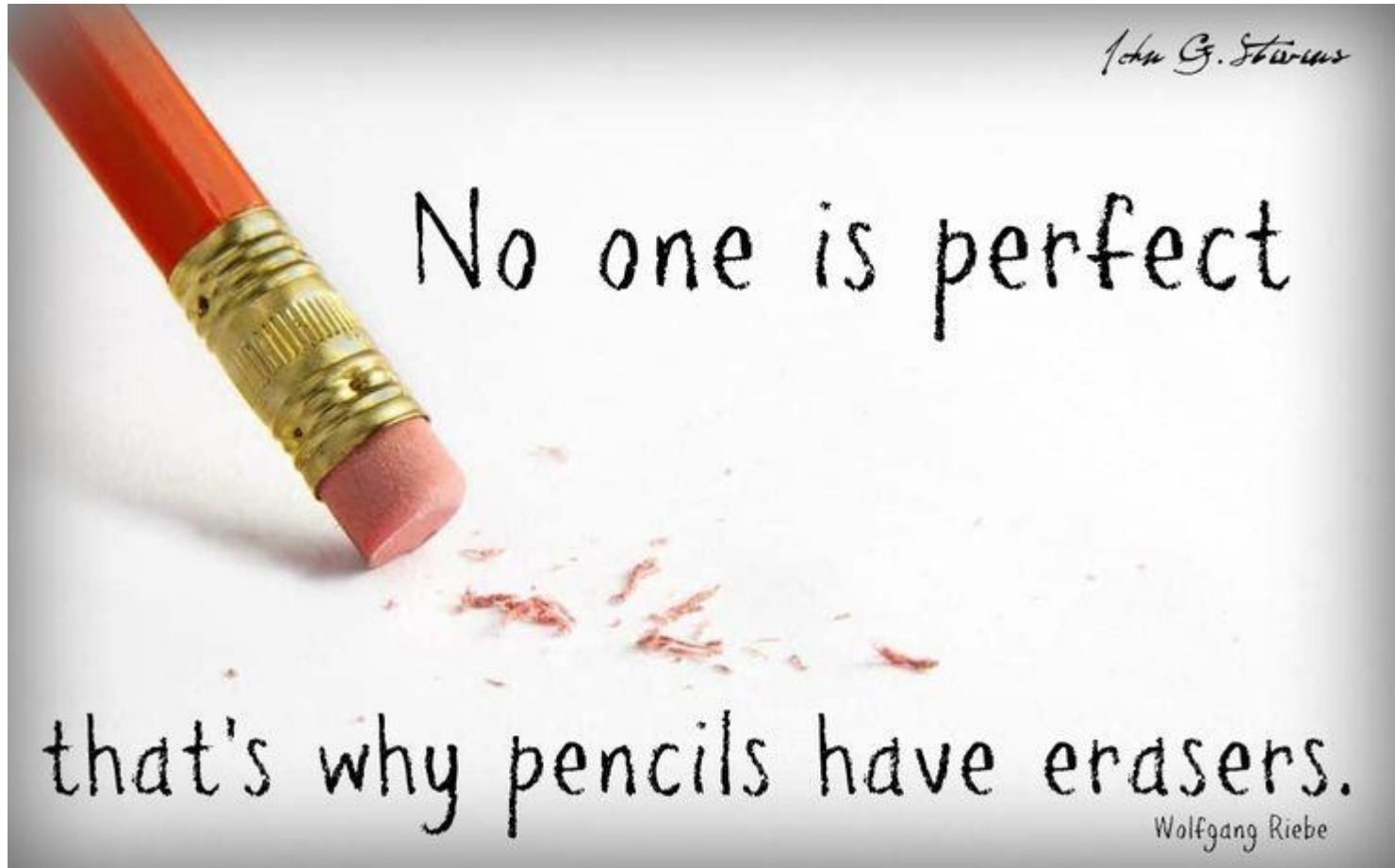
- The dignity of every living person is central
- It is not helpful to correct or reorient people with dementia



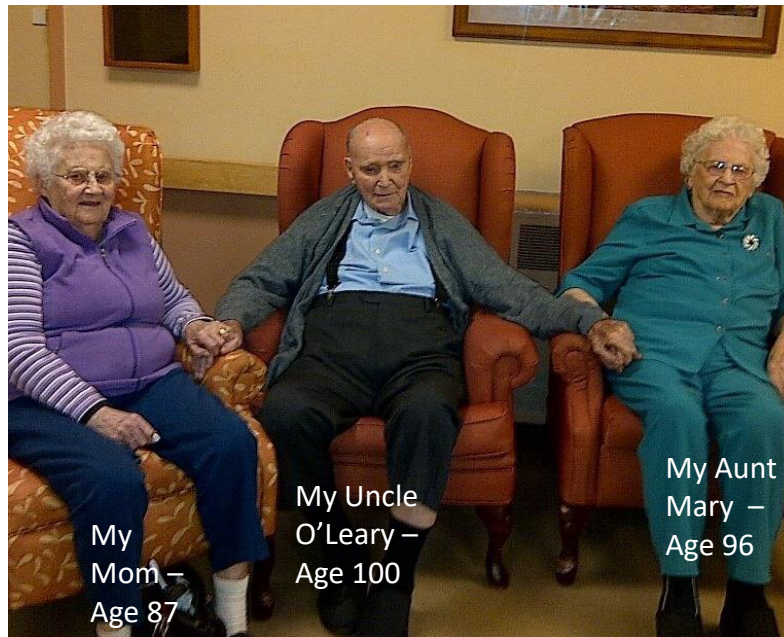
***Caregiving* often calls us to lean
into *love* we didn't know possible**

- *Tia Walker author*

6. Learn to forgive yourself when you are not perfect



7. Don't be afraid to pray, meditate or reflect



My
Mom –
Age 87

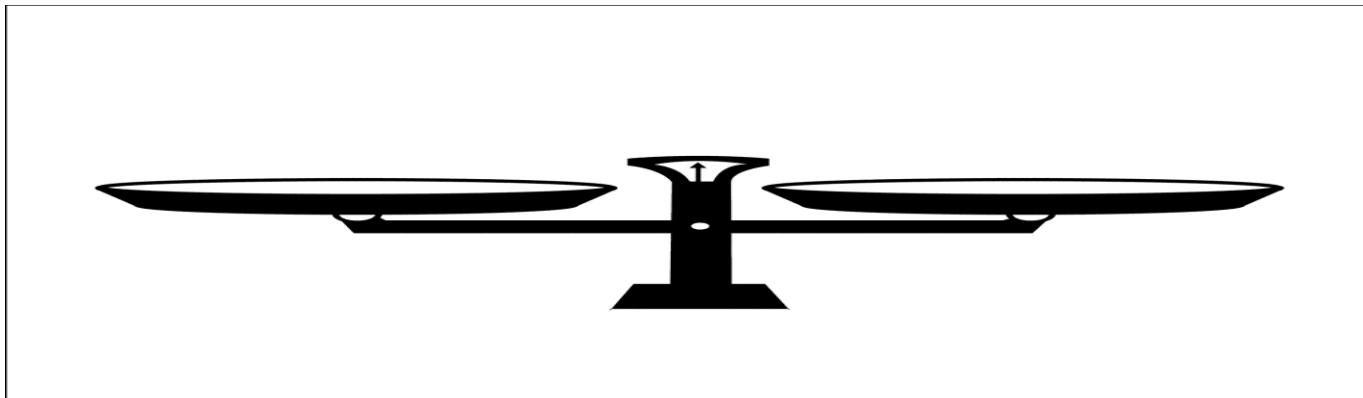
My Uncle
O'Leary –
Age 100

My Aunt
Mary –
Age 96

How do we nurture the soul? By revering our own life. By learning to love it all, not only the joys and the victories, but also the pain and the struggles.”

- Nathaniel Branden, psychotherapist, author

8. Remember to recognize the Rewards



Most Rewarding Aspects of Caring

1. quality of relationship

“When he is happy he appreciated what I do. I’m happy when he is happy”

2. feeling of accomplishment

“Knowing that I am helping them to remain in own home and community”

3. meaning and purpose

Satisfied that she is able to provide care for her mother who had provided so much for her family

“Satisfaction in knowing you have tried”



"I tend to look on the negative side of things. Do you guys do rose coloured glasses?"

Search ID: pjun1052

9. Learn to be at peace



*“Peace comes from within.
Do not seek it without.”*

- Buddha

10. Over to You

- What are the spiritual activities and or practices that you find helpful?
- What are your insights as a caregiver to add to what is presented?
- How can we best take care of ourselves

Spiritual/religious Practices (continued)

- Engage in new Learning
 - Read books, internet to learn about spirituality, moral, character development, religion
 - Join a study group or attend a workshop
- Help Others
 - Give of your Time Talent or Treasure
 - Mentor others

BUT MOST IMPORTANT

Take Care of YOURSELF

- Take time for regular meditation, reflection or prayer

Spiritual/religious Practices

- Spiritual Growth
 - Journaling, appreciate lessons learned
 - Cultivate a personal characteristic; select a behaviour to work on
 - Practice Gratitude, Optimism, Forgiveness
- Cultivate Relationships
 - Play with young children;
 - share a meal; join share group

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF- Spiritually

Put on your own

Oxygen Mask FIRST

- Take time
- Spend time
- Participate in rituals, rites or services
- Join a choir or growth group
- Go on a pilgrimage
- Be creative
- And ALWAYS



**Family and friend caregivers are important.
Thank you for what you do!**



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