

Moving from Ideal to Real  
Perspectives on Caregiving  
Lois Litz October 26<sup>th</sup> 2019



Congratulations



You're here



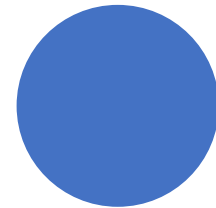
Because of things  
you **can't** control



Because of things  
you **can** control

- We cannot change what we will not acknowledge
- Talking about feelings does not make them bigger.
- What will my friends, family or community think?
- We cannot be who others think we should be, it is counterproductive and exhausting.

Who I should be vs  
who I am

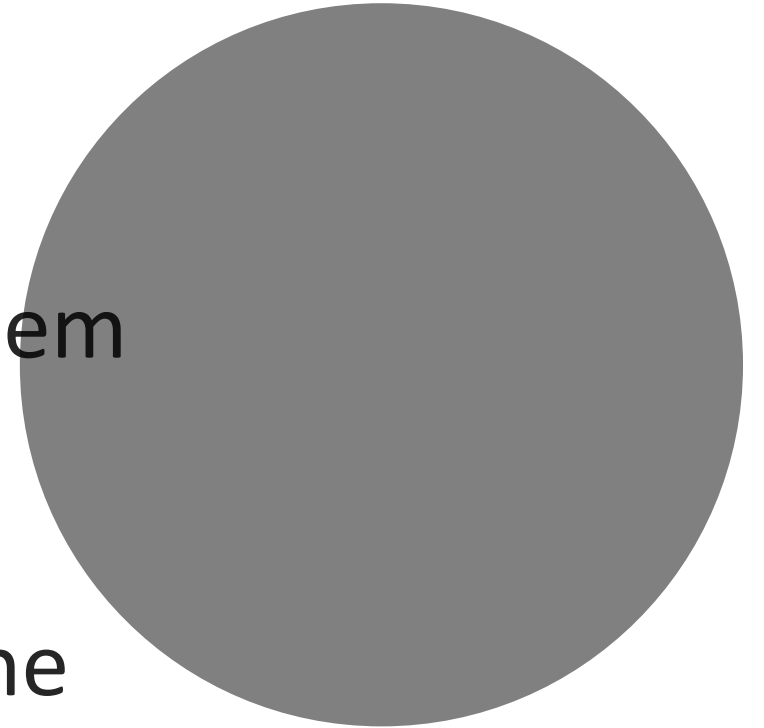


# If I care I will....

**Reframe-** The ability to look at an old problem in a new way.

When we are stressed, we develop tunnel vision, we need to be able to see beyond the present moment.

You're right- it is easier said than done

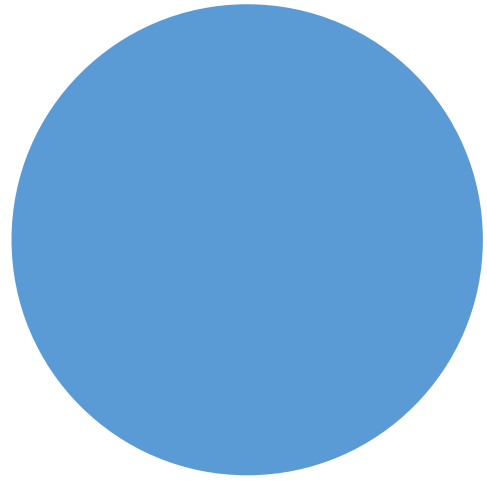


An **Ideal** Caregiver would not...

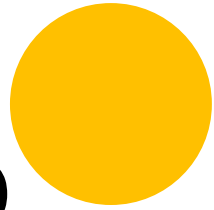
Feel...

Do.....

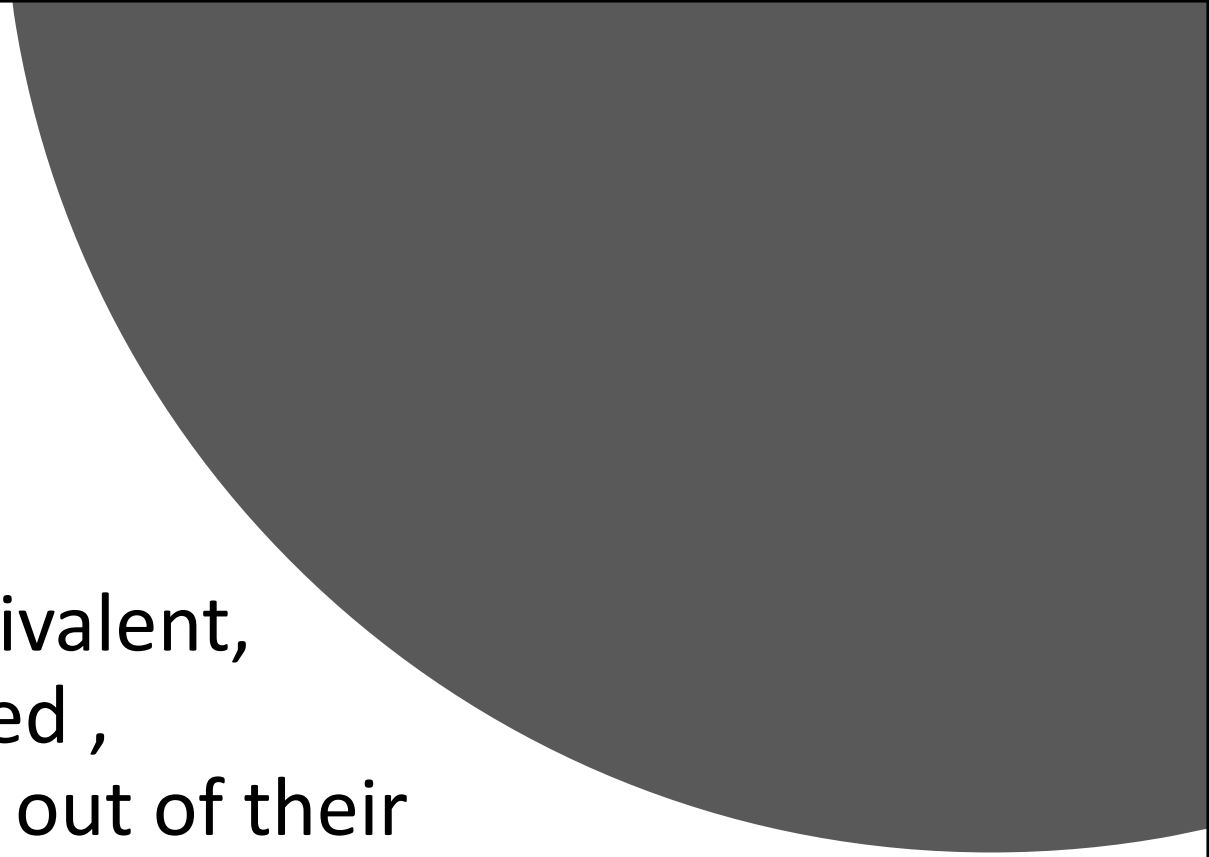
Need...



# Welcome to the World of **Real** Caregivers



strong , ambivalent,  
caring, flawed ,  
resourceful, out of their  
depth, angry, committed ,  
determined, exhausted,  
grateful, anxious blessed,  
impatient, growing,  
resentful , tender,  
faithful, loving people.





# Give yourself permission to feel **Ambivalence**

This is a huge privilege and a huge burden. *I'm so glad I'm here for them and How did this get to be my life!*

Acknowledge you can feel conflicting feelings and it's normal to do so.

Acknowledging a range of feelings, is like the steam release on a pressure cooker, it keeps you from trying too hard to stuff down the negative and only maintain the positive, It allows you to hear others who are expressing either positive or negative feelings.

# Impatience **With them**

How can it take so long to do get ready to go out?

How can they not understand?

How can I stand to say the same thing over and over?

## **With myself**

How can I not know its hard for them?

How can someone else be so much better at dealing with them than I am ?





# Jealousy

Of those who have the life you've lost

Of those who seem to handle things so much better than you do

Of those with siblings of those with no siblings

Of people who look happy and relaxed.

Remember: We compare to the best of what we see, we create **phantoms** of those with a "perfect" life.

Look for small things to be grateful for.

Forgive yourself and find others who reinforce you being real.

# Grief

There are very real losses.

There is a difference between self-pity and grief.

Self-pity is a self-indulgent preoccupation with your own difficulties and needs.

Grief is a natural response to loss. It is the emotional suffering one feels when something or someone one loves is taken away.

People find many things helpful when they are grieving, including talking to others, writing their thoughts and feelings down or becoming part of a group with others who understand their situation.

Feel free to ignore anyone who diminishes your grief by saying things like "at least they are still with you" "At least you have time", "God doesn't give you more than you can handle" etc.

Sleep-What's that?

Sleep is a necessity not a luxury

Let those who ask what you need, know that you need sleep.

If possible, build in respite in some form so you can sleep as early in the process as possible.

This is not selfish!

Exhaustion

# Taking Care of yourself

*The most unselfish thing you can do*

It helps them adjust, if you are ill or unable to care for them, they have others that they know and who know them.

Initially easier to do it all yourself, but that becomes a trap.

Your health and well being is as critical as their health and well being.

They may not be able to tell you to get help , in fact they may beg you not to, but they are not able to see the bigger picture.



# Look for Humour

I don't know if I should laugh or cry!

Laughter brings perspective

Sharing your stories will free others to share theirs

Laughter is a part of living ,caregivers need to claim it as a legitimate part of their experience.

# Addressing Family Issues

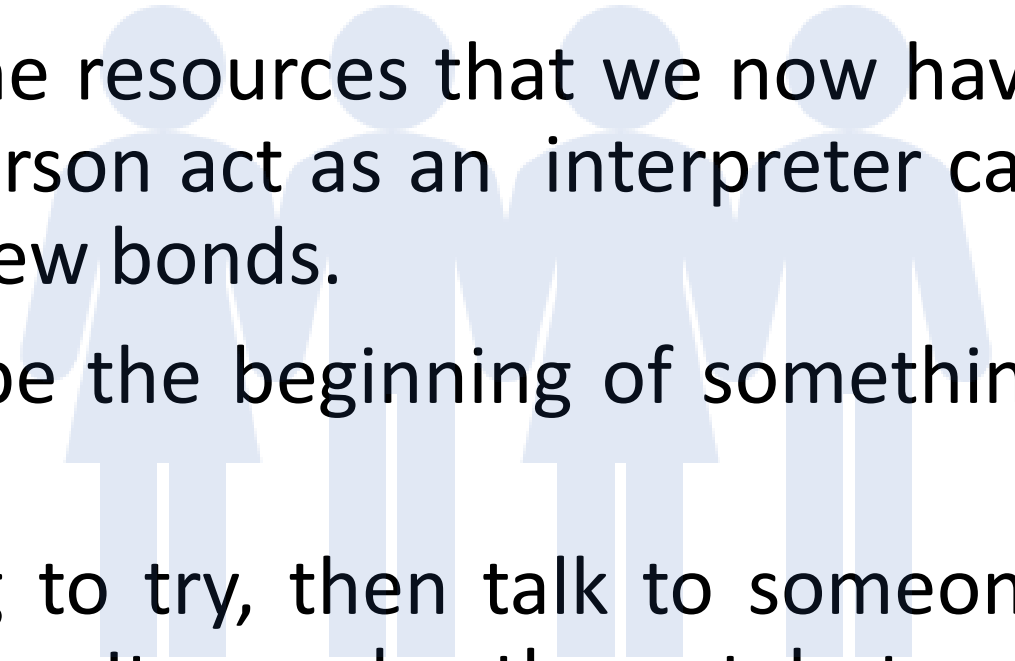
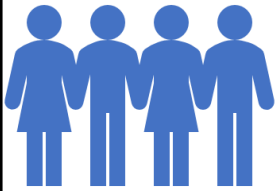
We are generally the least mature within our family

We revert to old patterns and old assumptions

We may need help to use all the resources that we now have as adults. Having an outside person act as an interpreter can break old patterns and create new bonds.

Holding a family meeting can be the beginning of something more positive

If you are the only one willing to try, then talk to someone about your family on your own. It may be the catalyst you need to grow past old hurts and bring the grownup you into your family dynamic.



Congratulations



You're human



You can acknowledge  
what you can't control



You can change what you  
do control.

## Acknowledgements

- ***Emotional Side of Caregiving***, Family Caregiver Alliance, (<https://www.caregiver.org>) 21/08/2018
- **10 ways to care for yourself When caring For Loved Ones**, Christine Northrup, MD. <https://www.dnorthrup.com> 07/01/2019
- **Things NOT to say to a Caregiver**, Michelle Daly, <https://thecaregiverspace.org> 26/07/2016.
- **Conversations** with wonderful people who have opened their lives to me in the past thirty years.