

Caregiving and Self-Care Guide ¹

1. Foundations: Understanding Your Role

- Accept that caregiving is both rewarding and demanding—acknowledge the emotional, physical, and spiritual weight it carries.
 - Remind yourself: *You are not alone*. Many others walk this path, and seeking support is a strength, not a weakness.
 - Recognize that caregiving is a **shared journey**, not something you must carry entirely on your own.
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2. Daily Self-Care Practices

- **Morning ritual:** Start with grounding (stretching, prayer, meditation, or deep breathing).
 - **Nutrition & hydration:** Don't skip meals—fueling yourself sustains your ability to care for others.
 - **Movement:** Even 10–15 minutes of walking or stretching helps reduce stress and keep energy steady.
 - **Mini-breaks:** Take 5 minutes every few hours to step outside, breathe deeply, or simply rest your eyes.
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3. Emotional Well-Being

- **Name your feelings:** Journaling or talking with a trusted friend helps process frustration, sadness, or guilt.
 - **Practice compassion for yourself:** Notice when your inner critic is harsh and instead speak to yourself as you would to a loved one.
 - **Stay connected:** Isolation drains resilience—maintain friendships, even through short calls or texts.
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¹ Created by using writings by Dr. Michael Obsatz, David Tillman using ChatGPT to summarize, www.lifesjourney.us

4. Boundaries & Balance

- **Set realistic expectations:** Accept that you cannot do everything; prioritize what matters most.
 - **Say “no” when necessary:** Protect your energy by declining tasks that go beyond your capacity.
 - **Share responsibilities:** Involve family members, friends, or community resources—caregiving should never rest on one set of shoulders.
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5. Practical Supports

- **Respite care:** Seek short-term relief through professional services, adult day programs, or trusted family/friends.
 - **Professional help:** Don’t hesitate to contact social workers, therapists, or support groups for guidance.
 - **Caregiving tools:** Use planners, medication reminders, or apps to ease the mental load.
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6. Meaning & Perspective

- **Reflect on purpose:** Consider how caregiving aligns with your values of love, service, or legacy.
 - **Celebrate small wins:** Acknowledge the acts of care you provide each day, no matter how small.
 - **Balance identity:** Remember you are more than a caregiver—you are also a friend, parent, partner, and individual with your own dreams.
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7. Weekly & Monthly Renewal

- **Plan one restorative activity per week** (a hobby, nature walk, creative outlet).
- **Check-in with yourself:** Ask—*Am I exhausted? Am I resentful? What do I need more of?*
- **Seek community:** Join caregiver groups to exchange stories, find encouragement, and release feelings in a safe space.



Caregiver Self-Care Checklist

Daily

- Start the day with grounding (stretch, pray, journal, or breathe)
 - Eat balanced meals and stay hydrated
 - Move your body for at least 10–15 minutes
 - Take short breaks (step outside, pause, breathe)
 - Connect with one person (friend, family, or support contact)
 - Acknowledge one caregiving win today
 - Practice kindness toward yourself
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Weekly

- Do one restorative activity (hobby, nature walk, creative outlet)
 - Take time for reflection—ask: *What do I need more of? Less of?*
 - Share responsibilities or ask for help when needed
 - Engage with a caregiver support group or community resource
 - Reconnect with your identity outside of caregiving (friend, partner, individual)
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Monthly

- Review your caregiving balance—what’s working? What’s draining?
- Plan at least one longer block of time just for yourself
- Celebrate progress and small victories
- Revisit your values and sense of purpose in caregiving
- Adjust routines to better support your well-being

Caregiver Reflective Journal

Write your reflections in a daily journal as a way for self-care and greater understanding.

Daily Reflections

1. How am I feeling right now (physically, emotionally, mentally)?
 - Tired, energized, calm, overwhelmed, grateful, etc.
 2. What is one caregiving moment from today I feel proud of?
 3. What was most challenging for me today?
 4. Did I make space for myself today? What did I do for self-care?
 5. What is one thing I'm grateful for today?
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Weekly Reflections

1. What gave me energy this week?
 2. What drained my energy this week?
 3. Where did I notice signs of stress or burnout?
 4. Did I ask for or accept help? How did it feel?
 5. What's one small adjustment I can make next week to care for myself better?
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Monthly Reflections

1. How do I see myself beyond the caregiving role?
 2. What values guide me in my caregiving journey?
 3. What am I learning about patience, love, or resilience through this experience?
 4. What is one boundary I'd like to strengthen?
 5. What is one thing I'd like to celebrate from this past month?
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✨ *Tip: Write freely and honestly. This journal is for you alone—there are no right or wrong answers.*