

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Take Your Oxygen First

By Leeza Gibbons, James Huysman, PsyD, LCSW and Rosemary DeAngelis Laird, MD

“Take your oxygen first!” is what everyone who has traveled by plane hears during the pre-flight instructions, if the emergency oxygen masks fall. The meaning of this is if you don’t take care of *yourself* first, you will be unable to care for your loved ones in their time of need. This, also, applies to caregivers caring for loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia. Leeza Gibbons, radio and TV personality, has written this book about what her family went through when her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

This book focuses on The Three E’s - Education, Empowerment and Energy. Gibbons believes that Educating yourself about the disease, better ways to manage your loved ones’ illness and about the need to nurture *your* physical, emotional and spiritual well-being helps you meet the challenges of caregiving. By Educating yourself, you are Empowering yourself to give you the strength to take responsibility for your own well-being and do something with your knowledge. Together, Education and Empowerment lead to Energy. Energy is the means by which we live rich and fulfilling lives no matter what you are facing. By making the Three E’s part of your life, you can rebuild your energy and discover a richer experience for your loved ones and yourself no matter what challenges you face.

There are four parts to this book:

Part I: Knowledge Is Power: Understanding Memory Loss Disorders and Finding Help

Part II: Caring for the Caregiver’s Body: The Benefits of Exercise, Eating Well, and Brain Fitness and Sleep

Part III: Caring for the Caregiver's Mind: Coping with Depression and Anxiety, Overcoming Denial and Guilt, and Managing Anger

Part IV: Caring for the Caregiver's Spirit: Nourishing Your Family's Spirit-And Your Own, Caregiving as a Spiritual Practice

At the back of the book, there are Caregiver Resources and other information.

Throughout the book, Leeza, her father, sister, brother, sister-in-law and children share their thoughts and feelings as they were dealing with Alzheimer's.

For caregivers, *Take Your Oxygen First* is a guide to better care for yourself, so you can best care for your loved one.

This book is available at the Effingham Public Library from the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, they can be checked out under Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness.

Review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness