

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

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

The Mindful Caregiver

By Nancy L. Kriseman, LCSW

Frustration! Stress! Anger! Exhaustion! Loss! Isolation! These are some of the feelings families and caregivers have when caring for a person living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. A lot of the time, these feelings are not addressed or get pushed to the background while dealing with the everyday aspects of caregiving. In this book, Nancy Kriseman addresses the need of families and caregivers to be mindful of their own health and well-being. Ms. Kriseman is a geriatric social worker who has counseled many caregivers, families, friends and others. She was, also, the caregiver of her mother, who lived with Alzheimer's disease for 17 years. As a caregiver, she found that even though she was a geriatric social worker, her emotions got in the way of making decisions.

Ms. Kriseman introduces *mindfulness* as a way to renew hope for finding support and value for your role as a caregiver.

Mindfulness requires that you pay attention to how you feel in the present moment and that you slow down and connect to your heart. Mindfulness embraces the qualities of compassion, kindness and patience. It helps you slow down so you can make the best decisions for the person you are caring for. It also helps bring balance and ease while navigating the caregiving journey.

This book helps you determine your own path to mindfulness.

Ms. Kriseman provides a variety of ways that can help you be more mindful.

Here are the chapters and a summary of each:

Chapter 1 – Understanding the Caregiver Role – how caring for an older adult is different and about role changes.

Chapter 2 – Realistic Expectations – what does the person I’m caring for need?, not what I “should” do.

Chapter 3 – Self-Care Absolutely Matters! – understanding your thinking as a caregiver. Includes a Caregiver Bill of Rights.

Chapter 4 – Incorporating Mindfulness into Self-Care – ways to help with your self-care include meditation, breathing, laughter, rest, prayer, etc.

Chapter 5 – Inspiring More Meaningful Engagement – help with communicating with and engaging your loved one.

Chapter 6 – Navigating the Maze of Professional Resources, Services, and Support – questions you need to ask to best determine what you and the person you are caring for need.

Chapter 7 – Being a Partner and Advocate in Care – what you need to know when you are caring for a person in a hospital, rehab center, assisted living community or nursing home.

Chapter 8 – When the End is Near – insight and understanding to be better able to cope with loss and “finish well”.

Reading this book may give you a new perspective on your role as a caregiver – whether full-time or part-time – and help you be a “mindful” caregiver.

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

