

# Maintaining Balance in Your Life While Caregiving

It is often difficult to sustain our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health during busy times. Practicing self-care is important for maintaining our health and well-being. Creating balance will benefit both you and the person you are caring for. You will be a more patient caregiver, less frustrated and resentful and you will be able to caregiver longer.



## Maintaining Balance



Maintaining balance is important to all areas of our life. Too much focus in any one area disrupts the others. Balance doesn't just happen. It is created by the choices we make. We continuously have to self-correct in response to what happens in life to maintain balance. Our well-being is based on our ability to **RESTORE** balance in the face of continual disruption. To do this we need to recognize what is disruptive and unbalances us and what balances us and allows our life to simply flow. By being attentive to our own lives, we begin to see patterns more clearly and then can act on them.

## Identifying Your Personal Drainers and Energizers

1. First make a list of what drains your energy, stresses you, frustrates you, worries you, irritates you, nags at you... Write down as many things as you can think of. Be specific. For example, don't just put people. List each person by name.
2. Secondly, make a list of what gives you energy, makes you happy, that you are passionate about, interests you, you enjoy, makes you feel good...
3. Take a look at your two lists. What stands out for you from this activity? Is there a theme to your drainers or your energizers? In order to achieve balance the aim is to increase your energizers and decrease your drainers by eliminating them or changing how you perceive them.
4. Then set a goal to eliminate two drainers and increase two energizers over the next week or month.

## Self-Management vs. Time Management

Time is finite. We can't create more time, but we can make choices as to how we use the time we have by saying no, scheduling less, asking for help, cancelling commitments... This is called self-management (the true key to effective time management) – what we do with ourselves during the time we have. Self-management includes:



- Restoring balance to the different areas of your life
- Creating more energizers and less drainers
- Creating realistic expectations for your available time and energy
- Managing your commitments – being able to say “no”
- Managing your energy throughout the day
- Being able to let go and ask for help
- Deciding how to handle everything we've told ourselves we “should” do
- Capturing everything that has our attention into a system that works for us
- Prioritizing demands – deciding what is truly important

## Prioritizing Our Lives

Every time we say **YES** to something, we say **NO** to something else. When we say **YES** to something we don't really want to do or don't have time to do - we need to ask ourselves what we actually are giving up in order to meet this commitment. Sometimes what we are giving up is more important to us than what we are going to say **YES** to doing.



*Is your Self Care being nurtured?*

**What is one thing you can do this coming week to nurture your self-care or manage your life more effectively?**

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