

ElderCare Solutions

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....providing answers to difficult questions.

718-643-2864 (In New York City)
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A Program of
Little Flower
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CAREGIVING: MOVING BEYOND GUILT

Experts warn that emotions such as guilt can exact a heavy toll on the health of the caregiver, hurting everyone involved. Of all the emotional hurdles family caregivers face—including anger and resentment—guilt is the most pervasive and dangerous. Often there is tremendous guilt in feeling we aren't doing enough.

Guilt Becomes an Issue When Caregivers:

- Have expectations that are unrealistic.
- Find it difficult to ask for help.
- Feel that somehow there's something they could, might, should, would have done.
- Feel powerless.
- Have to say "no" to demands.

Guilt as a Sickness

Guilt can wear you down without your knowing it. You may feel guilty that you cannot give as much time as you'd like. Or you may feel guilty about placing your relative in a nursing home.

Or your aging relative might make you feel guilty for the quality or quantity of care you are able to provide. No matter how you look at it, this is not a healthy situation. You need to be firm about what you can provide, how much time you can spend, and what you need to keep yourself and your family happy. It is important to put yourself and your immediate family first. You will be a better caregiver when you feel less stressed and less guilty.

You Can't Repay Your Parents

You may think that you owe your parents because they cared for you as a child. The first thing to remember is that you can never repay your parents. If you approach caregiving from that frame of reference, you will always be behind the game; you will never be able to do everything for them that they did for you, and they shouldn't expect you to. Try to approach caregiving as someone who loves and wants to care for your parents (or other aging relative), not as someone who owes a debt.

What You Can do to Prevent Guilt:

- Call a counselor from *ElderCare Solutions* to find programs and resources in your community.
- Ask family or friends to help.
- Get access to information, especially during a crisis.
- Consider joining a support group—either in person or on the internet—to share feelings and frustrations with others who understand your situation.
- Learn to delegate caregiving chores.
- Acknowledge your limits.
- Forgive yourself for your mistakes.
- Remember that your best is good enough.

ElderCare Solutions

Please call on us to help with this or any other aging issue you may wish to discuss.

