In Just Five...The Resilient Caregiver - Challenge and Opportunity

by Jan Sturges, M.Ed., LPC, Caregiving Coordinator

In these historic times of social and economic unrest, most of us do our best to believe that, at the end of the day, our glass will remain half-full. We are practicing serendipity - the act of transforming adversity into inspiration.

Caregivers - individuals who have responsibility for the safety and well being of a dependent person - understand what it's like to live with uncertainty, and be persistent in the face of exhaustion and worry. They become attuned to the power of compassion that emanates from attending to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the person in their care. This is serendipity in action; it's the ability to "get up and dust yourself off" after the daily pitfalls of caregiving that gives individuals the strength to move beyond surviving to thriving - for a few minutes, a few days, a few years. It's focusing on the value of being instead of doing.

Resiliency - the "bounce back-ability" to achieve your personal best as a result of difficult times - is the wisdom to respond (not react) to changing circumstances. Resilient people are flexible and creative - they flow with change instead of resisting it. Caregivers learn to adapt when they accept the fact that their mother, wife, brother, friend may not "get better," and that both caregivers and care receivers may need to make sacrifices to accommodate one another's needs.

So, how do caregivers balance their own necessities with those of the person who depends on them when they are busy with day-to-day caregiving responsibilities in addition to the pressures of family, work and other obligations? Click here to read a few tips from resilient caregivers.