



Volunteer Voices

Whatcom Hospice & Outpatient Palliative Care Volunteer Newsletter
A Program of PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center

August 2019

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August Volunteer Education

The use of Acupuncture in Hospice

Friday, August 9th, 9am-10:30am

Lower Level Conference Room

Administration Building

Robyn Curtis, LAc, LMP will discuss how acupuncture complements the journey of the dying, treating symptoms like nausea and anxiety.

This is How People Die, Parts 2 & 3

By Barbara Karnes

Thursday, August 22, 3:00pm-5:00pm

Lower Level Conference Room

Administration Building

Part Two: The Labor of Dying (50 min)

Part Three: Questions and Thoughts (45 min)

Volunteer Hours for June:

Community Program: 338.31 hours

Hospice House: 608.59 hours

For a total of: 946.90 hours

Thank you for your commitment to our patients and their families!

Volunteer Lending Library

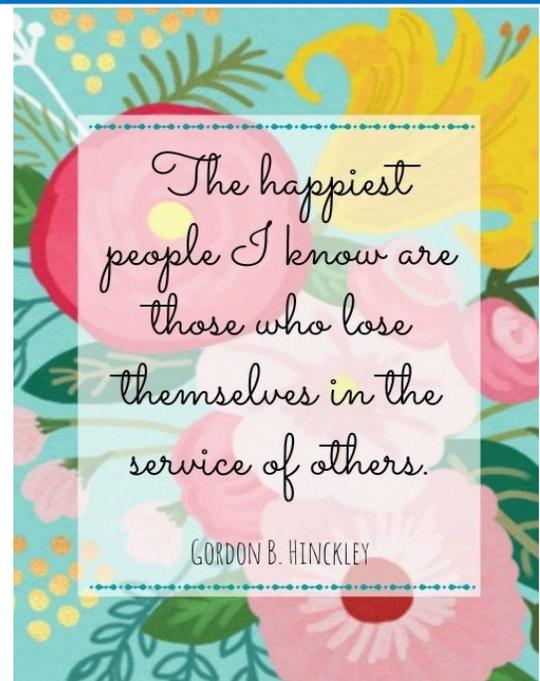
We have many resources (books, dvds, dementia picture books, fidget blankets) available to you for personal education or for use with patients. We have created a "Lending Library" located at Hospice House so you will have access to the resources 7 days a week. Let me know if you have questions or if there are books or DVDs you would like added to the library.

I say to people who care for people who are dying, if you really love that person and want to help them, be with them when their end comes close. Sit with them—you don't even have to talk. You don't have to do anything but really be there with them.

-Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

The main thing is that you're showing up, that you're here and that you're finding ever more capacity to love this world because it will not be healed without that.

- Joanna Macy -



Why Taking Care of Yourself Is The Best Thing You Can Do For Others

2/19/19 by Jenny Leigh Hodgins

Self-care is a catch-phrase often used to address caregiver support. As a new caregiver for my mother, I struggle with keeping my balance between my responsibilities for her and my entrepreneurial and creative tasks. I get so busy with things that I forget to take care of myself.

Pay Attention To Your Self-Care Signs

Fortunately, there are signs that help me pay attention. When I start to get negative, complain, feel overwhelmed or doubt, I know it's an indicator that I need to carve out some time for self-care. As a creator, when I feel empty of ideas, I take that as a signal that it is time to take a break from work. I'm still practicing self-care habits. Honestly, it's one of the hardest things for me to grasp. I'm used to running full-speed ahead, stopping for nothing until the tasks at hand are complete. They're never complete, either. I run around like a hamster in circles, tending to one thing after another until I start to feel the signs. Does this sound familiar? I'm learning to start paying attention to these and...stop.

Taking Care of Yourself Is Not Just For You

There are plenty of stressors on the caregiving path, making it crucial to be in good shape for myself and others. As I've quickly discovered, being a caregiver is not for the faint of heart. Being a caregiver requires stamina. (The same can be said for being an entrepreneur and creative professional!)

Taking care of my heart keeps me in good condition to be there for my mother. This is the best possible 'why' to justify self-care. If you're like me, you struggle with having yourself be the reason for self-care. It may seem indulgent or selfish.

But the reality is that your loved one depends on you, so as caregiver you want to be in the best shape to do your best. So start thinking that everything you do for yourself, for your balance, for your health and wellness, is directly fueling the best care for your loved one.

Doing Nothing Is A BIG Something

One of the most encouraging things I've learned from devouring online caregiver and entrepreneur blogs recently, is that doing nothing is actually really something.

Research has proven that when people take breaks, they refuel creativity and are more productive at work. In *Secret to Increased Productivity: Taking Time*, Entrepreneur magazine writer Joe Robinson wrote, "People who engage in respite activities during workday recovery breaks have higher levels of positive affect (observable expression of emotion) after the breaks, a study led by John Trougakos at the University of Toronto found."

The Tesla innovator, Elon Musk's Chief Automotive Designer, Franz von Holzhausen followed the premise that "all work with no downtime does not equal more productivity. Your body needs rest and time away from work to recharge and attack each day anew."

Having Fun Opens Your Creativity

Historian, Teacher, Curator, Sarah Elizabeth Lewis' book, *The Rise: Creativity The Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*, suggests that downtime and fun are "the improbable foundations of a creative human endeavor."

The book looks closely at creativity, sharing "narratives about" current and past creatives; writers, inventors, artists, choreographers, entrepreneurs. Lewis observes that there is so much value in 'play' that it's considered "essential for innovation."

Avoiding Burnout Protects Your Loved One

This is monumental for caregivers like you and me. We often think we can't stop helping or doing, for fear of consequences. But the reality is that caregiver burnout happens faster to those of us who don't take time off for ourselves.

You and I are no good to our loved ones if we've burned out. Like an airplane emergency, it is imperative we place the oxygen mask on ourselves first, so we can better help those around us.

Balance For Yourself And Others

As an SGI-USA Buddhist for 32+ years, I'm aware of the Buddhist concept, 'practice for oneself and others,' or 'jigyo keta' in Japanese. For years, I interpreted that to mean that I should contribute to others in order to overcome my selfishness or ego.

Sometimes that may be true. Like how volunteering for a soup kitchen can get me out of my funk during holidays when I'm alone or after a loss.

Although the following Entrepreneur magazine excerpt refers to business owners, the idea to find ways to vent your stress is equally applicable to caregivers;

But I now realize that the balance of practice for self and others is not about sacrificing myself for others. It is not about being a martyr. Rather, it is about the equality of self and others. I cannot help others if I'm neglecting myself.

I have to remind myself that taking time off doesn't mean I'm falling behind. It means I'm filling up my tank again, so I can move forward refreshed, full of energy and a renewed spirit.

4 Ways To Manage Stress

Although the following Entrepreneur magazine excerpt refers to business owners, the idea to find ways to vent your stress is equally applicable to caregivers;

"Some successful people exercise to blow off steam. Others unplug for a night to reset their minds. Writing works wonders for many people. Journaling your daily experiences is a way to express your dreams and your frustrations without the anxiety of wondering what others might think. Many people draft cathartic emails without clicking the "Send" button. It allows them to vent and air the words they'd really like to say."

6 Best Ways To Refresh Your Wellness

1. REST. Caregivers are no good to loved ones if depleted. So, the first way to soothe your soul, is to take a break. Taking time off helps you maintain balance.

2. NATURE. For me, getting my nature fix helps me just breathe and relax again. Getting out in nature is great therapy. There's something about the vibrations in nature, the fresh air, the beauty of a landscape, the authenticity of wild animals, that calms the mind.

3. EXERCISE. Taking a short walk outdoors can boost your productivity and your mood. It doesn't take a huge workout. Just a chance to move your body a bit, and take in the sights around you will do wonders for your energy level. Not to mention your heart health.

4. CUTE ANIMALS. Speaking of the heart, wellness coach, Elizabeth Scott states that just watching photos or videos online of cute animals has been scientifically proven to relax and rejuvenate people. Taking care of your pet has an even more positive impact on your wellness, raising endorphins, lowering blood pressure, and relieving stress.

5. MUSIC. Listening to relaxing music is calming. Listening to upbeat music is energizing. Studying or playing music has health and wellness benefits that are well-documented. Get your music groove on to boost your mind, body and spirit.

6. MEDITATE OR CHANT. The health and wellness benefits of meditation are well-documented and scientifically proven. Taking a few minutes to an hour daily to meditate lowers your stress, improves your emotional state, helps you sleep, lowers your blood pressure, improves your memory and more.

There are plenty of options on how to meditate, including chanting, nature walks, being silent with your thoughts, reading, and so on. My regular daily Buddhist practice gives me positive energy, focus, hope and a wider range of compassion for others.

My mother never hesitates to say, "Go chant!" if I exhibit signs of stress or negativity. We laugh at that together, but in honesty, it proves how powerful meditation can be toward keeping one's cup full and balanced.

Rest and self care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.

-Eleanor Brown

