

- Overwhelmed by caregiving demands?
- Is your mounting “to-do” list crushing you?
- Forsaken by lack of help & broken promises?
- Do you find it difficult to ask for help?

Studies show that the demands of caregiving can weaken the immune system, while a network of support protects it. Maya’s Model includes research & over 50 exercises to help develop a thriving network of support for caregivers like you.

“Working with caregivers daily, I personally recommend Maya’s techniques. This book will save professional and family caregivers from a lot of stress and heartache.”

Theresa Colvin
Caregiver Specialist
Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging



MAYA HENNESSEY is a national consultant and trainer featured in the Bill Moyer’s series on addiction “Close to Home” on the power of Collaboration to preserve and rebuild families. The November 2004 Counselor names Maya among the women America making a difference in the field of addictions. Maya participated in Chicago Mayor Daley’s Task Force on Women’s Health, where First Lady Hillary Clinton came to meet and greet each committee member. Caring for her late husband through his illness and death, ignited Maya’s passion to empower caregivers. Maya lives on Lake Michigan in Chicago.

If Only I’d Had This Caregiving Book

MAYA HENNESSEY

Maya's Story

EACH CAREGIVER HAS A PERSONAL STORY TO TELL. HERE'S MINE.

It was a gorgeous day at Eagle Creek Resort and Conference Center in downstate Illinois. I'd finished my presentation on "Empowering Women." My husband, Eddie, and I were eating in the restaurant overlooking the forest and lake.

We were looking forward to three days of soaking up the sun and hiking the trails. He went back to the buffet table for more, while I stared out the window, happily absorbed in the brilliant blue sky and beautiful lush greens surrounding the sparkling lake. "Excuse me, ma'am," said the hostess. "Your husband seems to have had a seizure." The rest is a blur. Through my shock and anxiety I heard snatches of questions and comments. Does he take medicine? Something about the house doctor... something about an ambulance...

Our lives would never be the same. The next six months were a whirlwind. We charged through doctor's offices, hospitals, and Internet searches looking for answers, chasing down yet another approach. Hopes dashed, frustration mounting to a screaming roar, we ran out of theories, we ran out of sick and vacation days, we ran out of money, we ran out of hope, we ran out of energy, and still no conclusions. I thought nothing could be worse than the anguish of not knowing, until I heard the doctor's words, "It's an inoperable tumor. He has about six months to live.

"It can't be true. This can't be happening to us. He's only 50 years old. I vacillated between disbelief and the ugly reality. No matter what life dished out to us, Eddie and I ended each day cuddling and chatting in the comfort of each other's arms, certain our love could conquer all.

As the tumor grew, Eddie's seizures and periods of confusion increased in duration and intensity, leaving disasters in their wake...

www.MayaHennessey.com

CHAPTER 1

The Frog

Drop a frog in hot water and he will jump out and scurry away. But, place the frog in lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat, and you can boil him to death without fuss or fanfare. The incremental changes in temperature go unnoticed until too late.

Walk with me through my story of near destruction, mistakes I made, and the lessons I learned that evolved into the model I present you, Caregiver, unsung hero that YOU are.

Pleasurable activities are medicine for your immune system. The goal is to put those activities back into your life and manage caregiving by creating an effective social support network (SSN) using Maya's Model.

In this chapter you'll be given an opportunity to sample Maya's Model, which has four components: You, Your To-Do List, and Your Social Support Network, and Mind Mapping. In the following chapters you'll delve deeper to understand and apply each component of the model, to ease the stress and strengthen the support to thrive and survive caregiving

You DESERVE THE BEST!

Because you selflessly give your life to the care of your loved one, I believe that you deserve all the needed help, money, resources, and physical and emotional support, and I believe that no one should be allowed to make caregiving harder for you. But, what's more important is that you believe. The following is a list of my beliefs that caregivers deserve the best of everything, including love, respect, and plenty of help. As you review these 10 statements, what comes to mind? Take out your notebook and journal about your feelings and reactions to these beliefs. Do you agree? Do you disagree?

EXERCISE: You Deserve the Best!

I believe you deserve everything in the following statements. But, do you agree? As you review these, notice how you feel, and what you think, and if you agree or disagree.

- I believe that as primary caregiver, dedicating time and other resources to the care of your loved one, orchestrating and coordinating all aspects of your lives, that you are the one person who understands what works, what doesn't, and why.
AGREE DISAGREEAGREE
- I believe you are worthy and deserving of a life of your own, including the people, places, things, and activities you enjoy.
AGREE DISAGREEAGREE
- I believe you deserve all the money you need, all the help you need, and all the support you need.
AGREE DISAGREEAGREE
- I believe you have a right to have and express all of your emotions (sadness, anger, joy, fear) whether or not others understand or agree.
AGREE DISAGREEAGREE
- I believe you have a unique set of skills, abilities, likes, dislikes, and capabilities, with an inner wisdom about the ideal way to resolve the issues in your life, because you alone understand the needs and limitations of your situation.
AGREE DISAGREEAGREE

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