Meditation:
More Than A Stress Reliever For Care Partners

Consistent, responsible caregiving can become enormously stressful. If you provide care for another, it is essential for you to have concrete ways to relieve and reduce stress and renew your own energy to stay in balance.

Research suggests meditation can help ease stress, improve health and well-being and even boost brain activity. Meditation can increase concentration, mental performance, memory and the ability to calm and stabilize the mind.

Caregivers and care recipients can become care partners and use very simple meditation techniques that involve one or more of the following: the breath, sound/music, light, simple movement, imagery, and color. The care partners are able to experience a more relaxed and centered state of mind together. This mutual process provides the care-recipient with a way to focus, be in touch with feelings, and express those feelings in a safe, contained space. The caregiver strengthens his or her ability to live in the present moment, thus guarding against burn-out. Partnering in this way builds trust and, often, the care recipient will experience a decrease in agitation, along with more joy and peace of mind.

A qualified meditation trainer will offer practices to suit each caregiver individually, as well as practices that the care partners can do together. Each caregiving situation is different and so each set of practices is individually adapted for the people involved. All practices all include remembering our love for that individual as the challenges arise.

Some tips caregivers:
1) Meditate briefly before guiding your care partner in a meditation.
2) Make sure you are in a quiet place. If your care partner is in an assisted living facility with others, for example, go to the person’s room or another quiet place with no distractions.
3) Establish eye contact; take his or her hands with love. This can help the person to relax and focus on a simple meditation practice.
4) If there is short term memory loss, refer to a positive memory from much earlier. This can also help a person connect and focus.
5) If the person is tuned to music, then find a song, a chant, a prayer that you can sing together. This can be very centering and even joyous.

To the extent that we can stay in rhythm and balance as caregivers, we can help our loved ones needing care-taking to find some measure of peace, as they experience our love within the challenges of a debilitating illness.

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