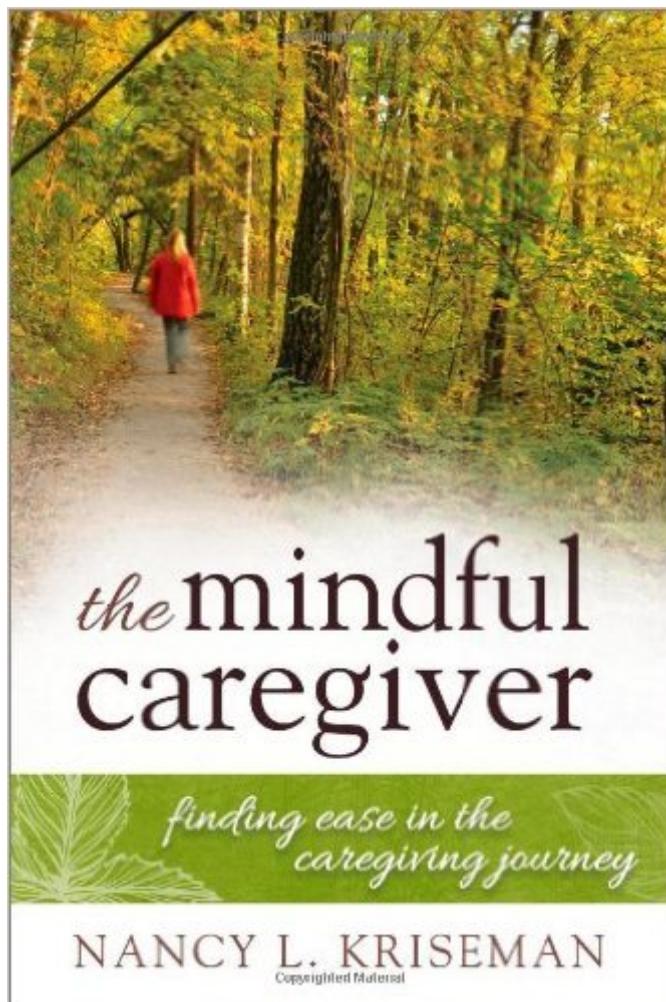


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# The Mindful Caregiver: Finding Ease In The Caregiving Journey



## Synopsis

Caregiving can be enormously challenging, terrifically rewarding, and potentially draining. Caregivers often wonder how they will navigate the tumultuous waters of caregiving and not lose themselves completely. The *Mindful Caregiver* highlights two major approaches to help transform the journey: adopting a practice of mindfulness, which helps caregivers become more self-aware and fully present with the person with whom they are caring, and honoring the spirit-side of caregiving which offers new ways of connecting to one another. These approaches take into account not just the needs of the care recipient, but also the needs of the caregiver and other people in his/her life. Remembering to care for oneself when someone else is in great need can be difficult, but with the suggestions and tips in this book, any caregiver can cultivate routines and practices that benefit everyone. Solutions that caregivers can use in their day to day routines are provided, so caregivers who use them can feel more empowered and hopeful. Using real stories throughout, Nancy Kriseman offers self-care exercises and addresses a wide variety of subjects such as setting realistic expectations, making the best possible decisions, advocating effectively, and evaluating available resources and services. The *Mindful Caregiver* provides inspiration, encouragement, and guidance for finding ease in the caregiving journey. By emphasizing both mindfulness and the spiritual dimension, caregivers can reap the gifts of caregiving, appreciate the special moments, and find strength during the challenging times.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book crams a lot of hard-learned wisdom into a very few pages. The chapters describe in very few words things that it's taken me years and years to learn. Right on target, highly comforting, very sensible advice. Highly recommended.

The Mindful Caregiver is a thoughtful book and an enjoyable read written from the heart based on the author's years of experience as a geriatric social worker and as a caregiver for her mother with Alzheimer's disease. The book provides practical approaches to caregiving and presents the often painful challenges in an easy to read format using real cases to illustrate and support the points. Kriseman explores coping strategies for the caregiver, how to advocate for the elder, navigate the health care system, and utilize support services. Throughout the book she emphasizes that taking care of oneself is essential for providing the best care for the care recipient and for sustaining that care over months to many years. As a practicing physician, I believe the book, while geared to caregivers of elders with terminal illnesses, provides many valuable points that can be applied to everyday life, and to caregiving for the chronically ill of all ages.

As a physician who works in the senior care industry I love this book. The Mindful Caregiver is written from perspective that can only be attained through years of experience. This book is an easy read and can be a really valuable resource for family members of individuals that require a high level of care. It has a great section on Alzheimer's disease and is filled with real life examples. The book really stresses the point that in order to be a good care provider, one MUST take care of one's self. There is a great chapter on the various professional resources, services, and support available to families that need assistance with the care of a loved one. There is also a section on how to be a great advocate for your care recipient. I have many patients, clients, and families that I think would benefit from this book and I plan on recommending it highly to them all.

I can glean some information from this book, but it focuses primarily on care of an elder. My husband is only 45 and not incapacitated, so I was looking for general support. I know my situation is rare and I have not found any sort of support group so I guess thinking this book might help was unrealistic, but I did try. Some of the ideas make sense, but if you are in a situation where you don't have an individual with dementia who needs to be under constant nursing care this really doesn't offer too many ideas. Again, a few that apply across the board, but not much. I was disappointed because I was hoping for more.

As a former caregiver for my mother, who had Alzheimer's disease, I recommend Nancy Kriseman's book, a comprehensive guide to bringing mindfulness to caregiving. Her main message is that family caregivers need to pay attention to own needs above all else. Our first order of business, she says, is to check in with ourselves about how we are doing: "Mindfulness reminds you that you matter! It nudges you to be kind and gentle, nonjudgmental, and compassionate with yourself. It can help you prioritize, set limits, stay true to yourself, and ultimately feel more at ease during the caregiving journey." Mindful caregiving means being intentional about the level of care we can provide and the choices we make. Being intentional requires that caregivers learn to ask themselves the following about how they provide care: Is this necessary? Am I doing too much? Am I expecting too much of myself? Kriseman shows us how to approach specific caregiving challenges with this type of intentionality, whether it's learning to communicate with a person who has lost their language, deciding whether or not to place a loved one in a facility, advocating for our loved ones in a facility, or watching over them at the end of life. In fact, "The Mindful Caregiver" could be described not just as a meditation on mindfulness, but as a top-notch how-to book for caregivers. Her tips for finding a geriatric care manager, deciding on an elder care facility, or advocating for your loved one in the E.R., for example, seem comprehensive. As readers we benefit from Kriseman's long career working with elders and their caregivers, and from her ability to write clearly and compassionately. We also benefit from the fact that Kriseman was a caregiver herself. Her mother was diagnosed at age 71 with Alzheimer's disease, and passed away 17 years later. If you are caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, you may appreciate that Kriseman includes many tips specifically for dementia caregivers. I found the scenes with her mother to be very moving. Kriseman writes: "I tried to stay connected with my mother and communicate with her about aspects of my life and her life until the very end of her disease. Truthfully, I am not sure how much she was able to understand. What mattered was that I could continue to treat her as my mother and honor our mother-daughter relationship." While many adult children feel as if they are switching roles with their aging parent with dementia (mothering their mother, for example), Kriseman reminds us that if we sit with our parent in a mindful way, open to the unexpected, we may be surprised by the ways in which our parent is still here. Kriseman says, "Even when my mother didn't seem to know that I was her daughter, she did know that I loved her." In addition to these

personal anecdotes, what makes *The Mindful Caregiver* particularly compelling are the author's descriptions of the challenges faced by some of her former clients. I found it intriguing to see how a seasoned professional like Kriseman responded to difficult situations such as a man who insists on driving when his doctor has told him he should stop; an elderly woman with significant health issues who risks her own well-being to care for her disabled husband at home because it's her duty; a daughter whose demanding mother makes her feel as if she never does enough to help her; a husband struggling to come to terms with his wife with young-onset dementia reacting violently to his attempts to hold her or touch her in any way; and caregivers of all stripes who are "over-functioning" that is, trying to do everything themselves because they assume that no one will help, or that no one can do things as well as they can. I appreciated that Kriseman goes into detail for each scenario, offering us road maps if we find ourselves in similar situations. Many readers will see themselves and their families in these pages, and feel both reassured that they are not alone and empowered to put their own needs firsts. I have given *The Mindful Caregiver* 4 stars because of some minor design and editing issues that I found distracting as a reader. The vertical spacing between the lines of text is tight, making your eye work too hard to follow the lines as you read. Editing issues include dangling modifiers and some redundancy that would have benefited from revision or trimming. But otherwise I highly recommend the book to anyone caring for a family member or friend with a long-term illness or condition.--author, *Inside the Dementia Epidemic: A Daughter's Memoir*

I have had to be a caregiver and think the tips will help caregiver. Also, had some funny touches and as a caregiver you definitely need humor. I bought and extra one for a gift for someone going thru the caregiving process.

Caring for my wife and dealing with most of the issues in this book really brought this books subjects into focus. In some cases it has helped anticipate those problems that are almost sure to come.

I read this on the plane going to assist elderly parents with planning for moving into a retirement facility. This book was so helpful to my family finding a way forward. Sometimes the situation is so overwhelming, Nancy's book really helped us focus on the important issues. I highly recommend it.

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