

# 10 New Year's Resolutions to Keep for Family Caregivers of Seniors

The lives of those who are family caregivers of seniors can be difficult, with many demands on their time from their senior loved ones, spouses, children and their jobs.

It is often even more difficult when you add into the mix the additional stress of wanting to do the very best for family — and often having your efforts taken for granted. Your senior loved one demands your attention and time, often times with little or no spoken thanks in return from them or other family members.

Challenges face you every day, every minute some days. Sometimes those challenges are repetitive, but too often you are hit with something out of the blue.

As the calendar turns and family caregivers of seniors contemplate resolutions for beginning the year with a bang, we offer a few tips that can help you stay strong and energized in the New Year!

If you are one who doesn't believe in resolutions ("I never keep them"), you might call these promises you are making to your loved one and yourself. After all, by following through, you not only make their life better but yours too!

## Resolutions (Promises) for Caregivers

1. Thank yourself in case no one else does. Even if they don't say it out loud, they are thinking it and know how fortunate they are to have you caring for them.
2. Ask for help! There are people who can help you, give your respite and ease your daily caregiving responsibilities.



It is not a sign of failure to accept help!

3. Take time out of every day to care yourself so you can go on caring for your senior.

4. *Get your flu shot!* You can't afford to be sick! Be sure you take care of yourself, including all preventive health care to keep you well.

5. Read a book of inspiration or new ideas; learn more about how to cope with your senior's specific disease such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancer, etc.

6. Join a support group! Learn from others who walk in your shoes and then help someone else cope!

7. Maintain balance between your family, work and caregiving lives.

8. Deal with your emotions of anger, confusion, frustration and talk with others who can help you. Keep a journal to help release your emotions in private.

9. Check your senior loved one's finances to ensure they can cover their needs, seek advice from experts on how to make the money last.

10. *Stay positive – you are making a difference in the life of someone you love!*

We wish happiness and health to you and your senior loved one in the upcoming year!

Oh, and let us say it — **Thank you!**

by Kathy Birkett

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