



A PRACTICAL CAREGIVING TOOLKIT

Caring Without Losing Yourself

You can love someone deeply and still need rest, help, limits, and support of your own.

Start with what is true

Caregiving can be meaningful, exhausting, tender, frustrating, and isolating - sometimes all in the same day. There is no prize for doing it alone.

1 Name today's actual need

Ask: what needs attention today, not forever? Medical information and treatment decisions belong with qualified professionals; you do not have to carry every answer.

2 Separate caring from controlling

You can offer presence, information, rides, meals, and encouragement. You cannot make every decision or remove every difficulty for another person.

3 Choose one support

Ask one person for one concrete thing: a meal, a ride, an errand, a call, company at an appointment, or time for you to rest.

4 Protect a small pause

A ten-minute walk, shower, quiet meal, or phone-off moment is not selfish. It helps make care sustainable.

Today's caregiver check-in

What does my person need? _____

What do I need? _____

One thing I can share, delay, or release: _____



PART 2: SUPPORT THAT LASTS

Ask for Help Before You Are at Empty

Specific requests make it easier for people to show up.

Scripts you can borrow

A When you need a break

"I need two hours this week to rest or handle my own responsibilities. Could you cover or help me find coverage?"

B When you need practical help

"Could you bring dinner Tuesday, make this phone call, or sit with us during the appointment?"

C When you need to set a limit

"I care about this, and I cannot take that on today. Here is what I can do."

D When you need family coordination

"I want us to make a simple plan so nobody is guessing or carrying everything alone."

A simple support map

Write names beside the kind of support they can offer. One person does not need to do it all.

Listening / emotional support: _____

Errands / meals / transportation: _____

Appointments / information / advocacy: _____

Emergency or backup contact: _____



PART 3: KEEPING YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE

Your Needs Belong Here Too

A sustainable care plan includes the caregiver, not only the person receiving care.

1 Notice your warning signs

Irritability, numbness, resentment, trouble sleeping, isolation, or feeling constantly on edge can be signs you need more support.

2 Add support early

Talk with a qualified professional, community organization, caregiver group, or trusted person before you are in crisis.

3 Make an urgent plan

If you feel unable to keep yourself or someone else safe, call local emergency services. In the U.S., call or text 988 for immediate crisis support.

4 Return to one small routine

Choose one practice that reminds you that you are a person, not only a caregiver: music, prayer, movement, a friend, nature, reading, or rest.

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If you are in immediate danger, at risk of harming yourself or someone else, or need urgent help, call local emergency services. In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Review date: August 2026.