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# **Alzheimer's Caregivers Provide Perspective On Life**

As we settle in to the New Year, many of us reflect on the blessings we have in our lives. Inevitably, I think of family and friends - abundant in the ways they fill my life. This year, I am also thinking of the blessings I receive from the men and women who share with me their caregiving journey.

My monthly meetings with caregivers take place at a beautiful Italian Romanesque building on 100 acres atop a hill. At our last meeting, the weather outdoors was cold and a winter storm was looming. As was typical for our meetings, we had a mix of men and women; some brand new, others long-time participants.

I sat back and listened as stories were shared and advice was gently offered. I observed the ways in which group members cared for one another, and I thought about the wisdom around that table and how these men and women have enriched me over this past year.

Caregivers continually remind me of the importance of living life simply and the value of finding joy in small blessings and ordinary victories. They reveal that it is important and necessary to reach out to others when life gets difficult even though the desire to isolate ourselves can be intense. Caregivers bestow on me the perspective I need to cope with my own disappointments and challenges.

As a parent, I can get aggravated by the fact that my son hasn't done what I've asked him to do once or twice (or more) already, or I become annoyed at my daughter who "borrows" my things or gives me "that look." As a wife, I become upset when my husband can't simply know what I need or figure out why I feel the way I do. But still, in the face of these challenges, I am somehow reminded that this is as it should be.

As I sit around the table with caregivers or read the comments and stories on this blog, I realize that here is a group of people doing something that isn't as it should be.

You are engaged each day in an extraordinary challenge with no time off. Yet, as undeserving as it may be, you have found a way. I am humbled in these moments of clarity. These are the moments when I look outside myself and my own life and recognize that the issues and needs of others are far greater than my own at this time. This clarity and perspective is a gift - a gift I believe that makes me a better wife, parent and friend to those in my life.

I will conclude my first posting for 2009 with these beautiful words posted on this blog Dec. 9 by Lisa.

"It (caregiving) is a lonely, thankless, tiring, sad, never ending job but I see my face in his and pray someone will be kind to me too when the time comes." - Lisa. Free Medical Advice published By [Dr Vivienne Balonwu](#).

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