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# CARE *for the caregiver*

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(NAPSA)—“There’s two victims in this,” says Ethelinn Block. “The person and the caregiver and that scares me....I’m already giving so much here that I wonder, at some point, this isn’t going to go on forever, will there be any of me left?”

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**Taking care of an ill or elderly loved one can be very demanding, especially if you are doing it alone. Don’t be ashamed to ask for and accept help.**

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Ethelinn Block is the primary caregiver for her father, who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease. Only five years ago, he ran a successful chain of photography studios. Today, the simple act of getting out of bed and taking a shower is overwhelming.

Ethelinn’s daily demonstration of love and quiet heroism is typical of the 30 million men and women who currently provide care for the elderly and disabled. But regretfully, caregiving takes a toll.

When people become caregivers, they expect to make sacrifices. Their health shouldn’t be among them.

“What caregivers must realize,” says Gail Hunt, executive director of the Bethesda, Maryland-based National Alliance for Caregiving, “is that if they take the time to nurture themselves, they’ll have the physical and emotional stamina to provide care for their loved ones. Of course, finding that time may require some help, but caregivers shouldn’t hesitate to tap their available resources—family members, friends and com-

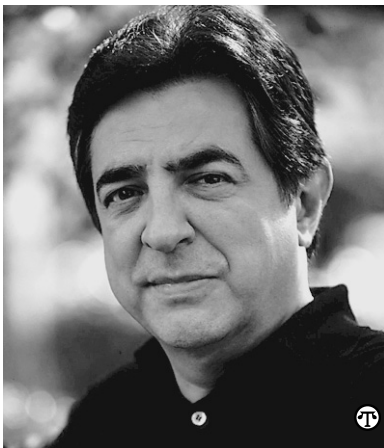


Photo: Jaimie Trueblood

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**Award-winning actor Joe Mantegna hosts *AND THOU SHALT HONOR...Caring for Our Aging Parents, Spouses, and Friends*.**

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munity services—for an occasional hand with day-to-day tasks.

Ethelinn’s story, among other inspiring caregiving stories, is told in the PBS broadcast *AND THOU SHALT HONOR...Caring for Our Parents, Spouses, and Friends*. Hosted by award-winning actor Joe Mantegna, the documentary premieres on Wednesday, October 9 at 9 p.m. The documentary, and its companion book *AND THOU SHALT HONOR: The Caregivers Companion*, published by Rodale Books (October 2002), offer these suggestions for caregivers.

- Begin enlisting the aid of others by contacting community agencies and finding out about the services they provide. Log on to [www.thoushalthonor.org/res](http://www.thoushalthonor.org/res) where you will find a database of more than

40,000 community service organizations, as well as links to national organizations, Web sites and other sources of information.

- Schedule a family meeting and invite any relatives who could be involved in making decisions or providing care for your loved ones. A family meeting allows all those who want a say in a loved one’s care, including the loved one, to gather for a frank discussion of the person’s circumstances and needs. Attendees have equal opportunity to express their opinions, and everyone can work together to determine what needs to be done and who will be responsible for doing it. If the meeting achieves its purpose, the group will pull together to support the primary caregiver and ease the physical and emotional demands of giving care.

- Find ways to involve your spouse, children and even close friends in the caregiving process. Even if you assume primary responsibility for the loved one’s care, other family members and close friends may offer to pitch in too. Take them up on their offers to shop for groceries, prepare a meal, wash your car or just sit with your loved one while you take a much needed break.

Whether you became a caregiver by choice or by circumstance, you have stood by the care recipient out of love and respect for that person. You owe that same love and respect to yourself—and the best way to express it is to look after your own health. You will find that you are even better prepared—physically and emotionally—to nurture others.

