CONSCIOUS CAREGIVING:
6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON
SPIRITUALITY AND AGING,
LOS ANGELES CA

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OVERVIEW OF CAREGIVING AND CONSCIOUSNESS

• WHO are the caregivers?
• WHAT do the books say?
• HOW about the scientists?
• WHAT does spirituality have to do with it?
• HOW can we integrate more consciousness into caregiving?
• SEGUE to second half of the session: The need for a “SEA Change” on dementia
THREE BOOKS AT LOCAL INDEPENDENT STORE

HOW TO CARE FOR AGING PARENTS by Virginia Morris and LOVING SOMEONE WHO HAS DEMENTIA: HOW TO FIND HOPE WHILE COPING WITH STRESS AND GRIEF by Dr. Pauline Boss each had 3 pages or less on spirituality

THE CAREGIVING TRAP: SOLUTIONS FOR LIFE’S UNEXPECTED CHANGES by Pamela D. Wilson had ZERO pages on spirituality
KEY CONCEPTS IN UNDERSTANDING EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS

• POWER

• RECIPROCITY

• BALANCE

• COHESION

• POWER-BALANCING OPERATIONS
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY FRAMES

“SOCIAL EXCHANGE”

Main assumptions:
1) Behavior is motivated by the desire to increase gain and to avoid loss
2) Exchange relations develop in structures of mutual dependence
3) Actors engage in recurrent, mutually contingent exchanges with specific partners over time
4) Valued outcomes obey the economic law of diminishing marginal utility (or the psychological principle of satiation)

*** HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO CAREGIVING? ***

DIALECTICAL RELATIONAL THEORY

Extension of the meeting point between dynamic psychology, existential phenomenology and systems theory in understanding human relationships.

“Whether one is an aging parent, an adult child, or a child, one struggles continuously with dependence and independence, burdens of loyalty or disloyalty. Family members continuously search for support and acceptance. Whether or how it is given or received depends on how all family members can resolve the unsettled balances of their past and present relationships.” (p. 246)

WHAT CAN WE DO? BACK TO THE BOOKS! E.G.…. 

Ram Dass : “Content to be” (in Journal of Transpersonal Psychology and Polishing the Mirror published by Sounds True) 

Wendy Lustbader (read Counting on Kindness: The Dilemmas of Dependency and excerpt from Connie Goldman’s Gifts of Caregiving: Stories of Hardship, Hope and Healing)
WHAT CAN WE DO?

MANTRA: (Sa Ta Na Ma)
LOVE: Rick Hanson
TOUCH: Mindful caregiving
SELF-COMPASSION: Kristen Neff research; lovingkindness meditation

More!
NEED FOR A “SEA” CHANGE RE: DEMENTIA
S=STIMULATION  E=EXCITATION  A=ACTIVATION

Stimulation trumps:  \textit{DEPRIVATION}

Excitation trumps:  \textit{AGITATION}

Activation trumps:  \textit{DISENGAGEMENT}
DISCUSSION AND SMALL GROUPS

HOW CAN THE CONSCIOUSNESS AROUND CARING AND CAREGIVING BE BROADENED?