## **Executive Summary For Reviewers**

Below please find the executive summary to the book. The book has chapters on framing the caregiver experience, the goals and tools that will be helpful overall.

After the framing of the caregiver experience, the book has 6 themes each with representative games. Each chapter begins with a history of the game (just for fun) and then presents a case study or illustrative story, the learning, the key learning review, questions to consider and next steps.

Following the executive summary, there is a brief summary of each chapter in a theme and the key learnings from those chapters.

### **Winning Strategies for Family Caregiving: Lessons from Family Game Night**

**Purpose:** This book aims to provide family caregivers with practical strategies and emotional support, using the familiar and joyful framework of family game nights to navigate the complexities and challenges of caregiving.

### **Key Points**

**Introduction to Family Caregiving:**

* Being a family caregiver is one of the most challenging roles one can undertake.
* Responsibilities may emerge gradually or suddenly due to a health crisis or accident.
* The tasks, emotions, and challenges faced in caregiving are often complex and demanding.

**The Family Caregiving Game:**

* The book uses the metaphor of a family game night to make the caregiving journey more relatable and enjoyable.
* The goal is to complete the caregiving journey with a high quality of life for both the caregiver and the loved one, while maintaining family relationships and resources.

**Foundational Rules of Caregiving:**

1. **Play Nice on the Playground:** Focus on cooperation and kindness in all interactions.
2. **Build Bridges, Not Walls:** Foster open communication and collaboration rather than creating barriers.
3. **Avoid Family Demons:** Address and manage long-standing family issues to prevent them from interfering with caregiving.

**Caregiving Strategies:**

* The book provides key strategies for effectively managing caregiving responsibilities, such as team selection, game plan development, and progress tracking.
* These strategies are explored through six thematic game categories:

 **1. Harsh Reality:** Accepting and addressing the reality of the caregiving situation.

 **2. Talk the Talk:** Improving family communication and participation.

 **3. Family Dynamics:** Addressing family relationship challenges and issues.

 **4. Health Matters:** Understanding the health challenges and choices you may face.

 **5. Money Matters:** Negotiating the financial and legal elements of care.

 **6. Taking Care:** Caring for family relationships and the well-being of caregivers.

**Conclusion:**

* Whether engaging with this book individually or with fellow caregivers in a family game night format, it is designed to provide valuable insights and practical strategies.
* The ultimate goal is to equip family caregivers with the tools needed to navigate the caregiving journey successfully, balancing the challenges with moments of joy and connection.

### **Intended Audience**

This book is tailored for family caregivers who are looking for guidance, strategies, and a supportive framework to manage their caregiving responsibilities effectively while maintaining their own well-being and family dynamics.

**Brief Bios of Authors**

**Darra Wray, MBA, CST** is a business professional with an MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA and more than 30 years of practical business and finance experience. Darra also has over 40 years of personal experience as a family caregiver and patient advocate. Darra became a Certified Senior Adviser (CSA) in 2018 and founded My Care Companions to develop resources, services, and tools for family caregivers. In 2019, she launched the My Data Diary+® family information software solution and formed LEARN - Lifelong Education and Aging Resource Network, Inc. an Idaho-based non-profit with a mission to help people navigate the joys and challenges of aging and caregiving.

**Anne Kenny, MD,** is a geriatric physician and Founder of Together in Dementia. She is a professor emerita at the University of Connecticut Health Center. Anne is the author of Making Tough Decisions about End-of-Life Care in Dementia and has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles on issues in aging. In her work as a dementia coach and consultant, she supports families and care partners to modify their approach to dementia so that they can find joy, connection, and calm in their caregiving journey.

**Dee Childers, MA-MFT, CMC** is a Care Manager specializing in care for older adults. She founded Life Changes Elder Care Consulting, LLC to assist those needing guidance and support after navigating care for her own parents. Dee has a BS in Psychology from the University of Utah and a MS in Marriage and Family Therapy from the Phillips Graduate Institute. She is a NACCM Certified Care Manager (CMC), an Advanced Professional member of the Aging Life Care Association™, and a certified Elder Mediator.

**Section Summaries**

**Harsh Reality:** Accepting and addressing the reality of the caregiving situation.

Taboo - Some topics are considered off-limits. We’re all familiar with them—those conversations or scenarios we instinctively want to avoid. However, burying our heads in the sand, whispering in secluded corners, or turning a blind eye to these issues seldom results in the healthy, peaceful resolutions we desire. Ignoring a situation for too long can escalate it into a crisis, where decisions are often far from ideal. Embracing healthy communication is essential for addressing such taboo subjects effectively.

Key Learnings for Taboo

* The cost of avoiding conversations or situations because of discomfort or fear that you will make matters uncomfortable can result in crisis or unwanted outcomes.
* It is worth developing communication skills to address the most difficult aspects of our lives.
* Remember that we do not need to do this alone - we can garner the assistance of coaches, therapists, counselors, and experts. We must come to the taboo subjects with courage and openness.
* If we address the more uncomfortable issues, we often find that the improved outcome is far better than the fear, worry and upset we harbored while avoiding addressing the situation.

Jeopardy - Most Jeopardy contestants prepare for the show by studying general trivia and the show itself. They take practice tests, watch reruns of the show, review online archives of previous game boards, read the encyclopedia, and review details in their strongest subjects. But, even the strongest contestants can be impacted by expectation bias in their preparation. They might prepare too much for a category that never comes up on their game boards, or they may overlook preparing for a category that they think has already appeared so many times it will not be featured.

Family caregivers can be plagued by a similar expectation bias. They prepare for what they expect will happen and overlook considering and preparing for other possible scenarios.

Key Learning for Jeopardy

* Aging gracefully and caregiving successfully require that you are prepared for the expected AND for the unexpected.
* Develop a plan and a backup plan (and maybe even a backup plan for your backup plan).
* Stay flexible and think creatively when faced with unexpected challenges.

### Blindman’s Buff - Unseen Challenges in Caregiving. Much like the game Blindman’s Buff, caregiving can leave us feeling blindfolded and jostled by circumstances, stories, diagnoses, or processes. It often seems as if the other participants are making things more difficult for us. However, there are ways to prepare for the disorienting aspects of caregiving.

Key Learning for Blindman’s Buff

* When presented with any new situation on your caregiving journey, seek knowledge about the situation to avoid being surprised and to begin planning.
* Utilize the resources of those who have gone before you or respected others. This can be in the form of books, blogs, podcasts, direct questions, and support groups.
* If you can pay for professional advice, consider a financial or estate planner for the financial picture of care, an eldercare attorney for advice on Medicare’s rules, regulations, and application, and an aging life (geriatric) care manager to help with coordination of care and resources.
* Lean into your rational self rather than your emotional self when you are dealing with the surprises that caregiving can bring.
* Be curious and skeptical when gathering information to help you in understanding care needs.

Would you Rather? - Making decisions can be challenging, especially when none of the available options seem ideal. This difficulty amplifies when you're making decisions on behalf of others. Caregivers, in particular, often face situations where there are no clearly preferred choices, making the decision-making process even more complex and stressful.

Key Learnings from Would you Rather?

* Having tools and strategies to help in addressing the multiple decisions we face in caring for another can ease much of the questions and guilt of “Am I doing too much/Am I not doing enough”. Basic principles for decision making include individual well-being and respect for personal autonomy. With this in mind, begin with your values and the values of the individual for whom you are making decisions.
* If you are making a decision for someone else, include them in the decision when possible. If you wonder if someone is still able to make their own decisions, use the MacArthur Competence Assessment Tools. With this tool, you can relax knowing that you have helped preserve your family members' independence. If they have lost capacity to make that decision, you can find comfort in knowing that you are stepping into an area that needs help, whether your family member understands or cannot is due to the damage done by dementia or another illness.
* When making difficult decisions for yourself, remain curious about both scenarios. Look for the challenges and for the potential for growth and learning. Realize that there is no ‘right’ answer, but a balance of your values. Basing the decision in values may make the choices easier to differentiate a path forward when choosing between two unfavorable options.

**Talk the Talk:** Improving family communication and participation.

Scavenger Hunt - The ability to successfully navigate crisis situations and the everyday business of life depends largely on our readiness to respond. It is a good idea to start gathering information and documents beginning with your initial support activities so that you have the information and documents you will need to help you manage the business of life for the loved one in your care. And, as you gather and organize documents for your loved one, take the opportunity to gather the same information and documents for yourself and the other members of your own household.

Key Learnings for Scavenger Hunt

The cost of not having the information and documents you need, when and where you need them, can be very high both financially and emotionally. And, having the right information, in the right place, and at the right time will save you time, money, and frustration. It could even save your life. So, start the scavenger hunt now for the documents that you need and invite your care companions to join you in the search!

Solitaire: Don’t do this alone. caregiving often feels like a game of solitaire. We often begin playing alone, using skill and concentration. And, like the game of solitaire, caregiving requires an almost endless supply of patience. Some of the early games of solitaire were thought to have a fortune telling aspect - if the game was played through, it portend the player’s desire coming true. In caregiving, the wish of our team is that you will not play solitaire for long, but see that building a support network is far more likely to have your desires be realized.

Key Learning from Solitaire

* Caregiving is not a solo activity; it takes a team of other supportive individuals who are willing to assist.
* Caregiving is a collaborative process with problem identification, solution options, specific activities related to their strengths, and being able to perform their commitments to the team.
* Caregiving can be very complex and demanding at times.
* Respite for the caregiver is essential for maintaining their own health and wellbeing.

**Charades:** Clear communication

 Have you wished you had more information about someone's preferences? It can be done.  And it does not take a parlor game.  There are a host of resources that can help with beginning the conversation, but we should step back and understand why we might want to have a deeper conversation.

Key Learning from Charades

* Personal preferences are crucial in guiding healthcare and lifestyle decisions.
* By understanding another person's choices, caregivers can improve their engagement, health outcomes, and reduce unnecessary medical interventions.
* It's essential to have conversations about care wishes, and strategies such as using conversation guides and games can facilitate these discussions.
* Despite the high percentage of Americans recognizing the importance of discussing end-of-life care, many have not yet had the conversation, underscoring a significant gap that needs addressing.

Telephone: Shared Understanding

In the game, a message is given to the first person in a line of people and then they are instructed to pass the message on by whispering it in the ear of the next person in line. The message goes from person to person until it reaches the end of the line, and that person announces the message to the group. In most cases, the message that is announced to the group is significantly different from the message that was originally given to the first person in the line.

In the game of life, we must, therefore, practice strategies that confirm shared understanding and avoid miscommunication.

Key Learning from Telephone

* Communication difficulties are common for a host of reasons. We come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, genders, personality types and coping strategies. Set an intention that clear communication is your goal, and you are more likely to be able to separate from some of your background to focus on communication.
* Strive to make sure you are communicating with the primary source. Check to see if you are bringing what you’ve heard from someone else or your own assumption into the conversation. Ask questions, with kindness and thoughtfulness, to clarify any assumptions you may hold.
* To maximize potential for communication, strive to allow only one speaker at a time, aim for dialogue rather than discussion, and strive to make space for the others' opinion (i.e., suspend your judgments of the other opinions). Once everyone’s voice has been heard, then is the time to continue the dialogue to understand how the varied opinions and insights can complement each other.
* There are several common types of communication breakdown. Watch for non-verbal cues that communication is failing and slow or stop the conversation to check for miscommunication that may derail the conversation. A common obstacle is the intent-impact model, in which what was intended by the communication and the impact that communication has. The ‘triggers’ can be from a host of ‘background stories’ that are impossible to predict. When this happens, one person in the conversation needs to stop the conversation, clarify and reset to the intention and likely apologize for the miscommunication.
* Realize that communication has a myriad of factors that can benefit clear messages: emotions, attitude, tolerance, learning and practice. Have courage to keep working toward improved communication skills.

**Family Dynamics:** Addressing family relationship challenges and issues.

Trouble: Family Dynamics

Much like the game of Parchessi, family dynamics go back in time and are family systems are deeply ingrained.

Key Learnings

* Many families have dysfunctional characteristics. These family dynamics are likely to be exacerbated in times of stress. There are common scenarios that impact stress such as illness, death, a change in family formulation due to birth, marriage, death, or a move, unpredictable behaviors (associated with substance abuse, mental illness or cognitive loss), world situations that can affect family life (e.g. pandemic).
* Being able to identify some of the key dysfunctional characteristics allows one to separate the emotional reaction with awareness so that a new response to the situation can occur. Common dysfunctional behaviors include excessive criticism, deflecting away from concern at hand to an attack on your personal character, physical or verbal abuse, just to name a few.
* Many people will ‘choose’ a family, to develop or learn better family dynamics. Strategies such as healthy communication, understanding other’s triggers, being true to yourself and spending time to improve your familial relationship can assist in improving family dysfunction during times of stress.

Tug of War: Differing opinions

Tug of war is a sport where two teams compete against each other by pulling on opposite ends of a rope. The goal is to bring the rope to a certain length in one direction, while also resisting the force of the other team's pull. The phrase "tug of war" means "the decisive contest" or an actual struggle or tussle, according to the Oxford dictionary. Caregiving may be exhausting if you find yourself in this tug of war - where you are pulling against an opposite action.

Key Learning from Tug of War

* Tug of War disputes can be common in caregiving, but they don’t have to be. Remember that many will have opinions on what the best way forward is and that their intentions are likely for the best care as well. Avoid old family resentments, realize each of us does not have the same capacity (whether in time, finances or personality) to contribute care, but the goal can remain to communicate openly and honestly.
* Common situations that bring up disagreement include resistance to the need for care. Step back, gather information about what is needed, listen to the individual’s position, move slowly in directions that can be agreed upon. Remember that it is often not a crisis, and a slow, gentle approach may be more beneficial.
* Staying home or moving to some type of supportive care environment can bring about complex discussions. Ease the way by gathering as much information on what is specifically needed now, soon and in the distant future. Use the information to develop plans and map out strategies and priorities. Is socialization the top priority or autonomy? Discussion will be varied.
* Financial decisions can be the most heated tugs of them all. Communication skills and understanding that money can bring out some of the most deeply held and often not discussed or divulged issues can be two secret weapons in minimizing a tug of war about financial decisions. Use as much compassion and empathy for these discussions - most of us do not have an idea how triggered we become when discussing money.

Family Feud: Navigating disagreements

The game pits two families against each other to come up with the most common answers to survey questions. They may guess until either win or choose incorrectly on three turns and the baton is passed to the other family. Successful participant families work efficiently and work together. They actually do not feud! A point to remember when considering the role of family in caregiving. Though the title suggests a fight, clear heads and teamwork prevail.

Key Learning from Family Feud

* When it comes to the care of aging parents, siblings might have different views and approaches. It's important to prioritize the well-being of your family member and keep their interests at the forefront, despite any disagreements or conflicting opinions.
* Resentment between siblings who are caregivers may occur if one sibling is providing most of the in-person care or financial support, leading them to feel that other family members are not contributing equally.
* To avoid family conflicts related to elderly parents, it is essential to communicate with your siblings and aging parents. Discuss your concerns and come up with a plan together. Utilizing outside resources can assist your family in prioritizing the well-being of your family member. A skilled mediator can intervene and avoid disagreements between siblings.

Hide and Seek: Involving far-away family

In caregiving, hide and seek is about finding those that may seem to be in hiding to help with care or, if you are the one caring from afar, how to seek the solutions that allow your caregiving to be useful, productive and meaningful from a distance.

Key Learnings from Hide and Seek

* Family and friends that live far from the person requiring help may not think to step forward to help - it is ok to ask them for help.
* There are multiple tasks and responsibilities that can be provided without being physically in the place of care. Brainstorming ideas and supporting ideas may be helped by thinking systematically, as a geriatric case manager might, to ensure that you have explored all areas that you could find support.
* Respite Care is vital in keeping the stamina for long-term caregiving. Asking for research into or direct respite support from a distant family member should always be considered.

**Health Matters:** Understanding the health challenges and choices you may face

Dominos: One issue can lead to another

The domino effect, also known as a chain reaction, is the consequence of one event setting off a sequence of related events. This term has been used as a metaphor to represent how toppling over one single domino can cause an array of indistinguishable dominos to fall in succession. It typically refers to a pattern where each action triggers another until it reaches its destination.

Key Learning from Dominos

* Engaging with the healthcare system is not without its unintended consequences. Tests, procedures, and medications may lead to further tests, procedures, and medications. Be proactive and ask for the outcome that is expected and for warnings about what may be an unintended consequence. Be informed before you decide to allow the dominos to fall.
* On a positive note, begin to allow ‘good’ habits to cascade into further ‘good’ habits. Consider adding more fruit and vegetables to your diet. Begin walking. Who knows what good consequences may result.

Chutes and Ladders: The decline and recovery cycle

The goal of this chapter is to prepare you, so that you can understand the cycle of health chutes and ladders that many older adults experience so that you can assist them to better manage and understand the slide and the climb of healthcare highs and lows.

Key Learning from Chutes and Ladders

* Avoid the chutes of the healthcare system by being prepared
* Use all your resources to address questions and concerns when you or a family member is in the hospital - nurses, physicians, primary care clinician, social workers, ombudsman.
* Hospitalizations may be the signal that physical and functional reserves are wearing thin. It may be time to step back and evaluate the health situation from a holistic perspective. Is it time to reevaluate goals of care, consider alternatives to aggressive therapy or obtain a hospice evaluation?

Operation: Being a care advocate

While the focus of the game of operation is on the surgeon, our interpretation is to explore what the individual or the caregiver can do to best prepare for medical encounters or procedures so that they can advocate effectively for the loved one in their care.

Key Learning from Operation

* Prepare for your encounters with the medical system. Have your documentation up to date and at hand - whether that be stored in a filing system, phone, or spreadsheet.
* Be an active participant in your care. Your values and preferences should be center stage as you receive advice and counsel from the medical community.
* Have your team support you in your encounters with the medical system. Bring extra help to listen, question, and scribe.
* For medical procedures, prepare your mind - using guided imagery and positive self-talk. Prepare your body with exercise, nutrition, lung strengthening, and cessation of nicotine (in any form). Your questions to the medical community should continue to guide your care in a way that is suited to your needs and desires.
* Make sure your team is prepared to advocate for you to ensure you get the care that has been prescribed and that choices made for you are aligned with your values, preferences, and / or documented health care directives.

Twenty Questions: Personal values and advance directives

To win in the caregiving game of 20 questions, your goal is to clearly understand your loved one’s foundational values and preferences so you can answer questions and make decisions as they would if they were able to do so for themselves.

Key Learning from Twenty Questions

* Most individuals would like family members to be their surrogate decision maker, yet ⅓ of the time, family does not know or understand the decisions that individual would make
* Making surrogate decisions for another is stressful due to lack of knowledge about many or most aspects of caregiving (physical, medical, emotional) and available resources.
* Stress is increased by the desire to do well by the individual you are caring for
* Aligned values makes caregiving easier
* Knowing the desires of the individual you care for markedly decreases stress and anxiety around caregiving.
* Having discussions about life (and death) goals makes surrogate decision making easier.
* Support (friends, clergy, therapists) around the role of surrogate decision maker can help make the process of making decisions for someone else less stressful

**Money Matters:** Negotiating the financial and legal elements of care.

I Dissent: Care support agreements

Caregiving can present many challenges that can lead to disagreement and dissension between members of the care team. It is important to identify and work through these areas of conflict and disagreement in the best interest of your long-term relationships

Key Learning from I Dissent

* Family caregiving is stressful and emotional and creates fertile ground for family conflict, and the greatest sources of conflict tend to be around the allocation of time and money.
* In order to avoid unnecessary conflict it is best to develop a plan with your family members in advance to clearly align on the Who, What, Where, and How of the caregiving responsibilities.
* Working through these questions independently or in collaboration with professional advisors will help you avoid unnecessary dissension and preserve your long term family relationships.

Life: Funding long-term care

Much like the Game of Life, a “Happy Old Age” is often linked to having sufficient assets to support you in your retirement and old age. The chapter that follows explores various assets that can be used to help support the costs of long-term care.

Key Learning from Life

* More than half of Americans turning 65 will develop a disability serious enough to require some kind of long-term support services.
* On average, an American turning 65 in 2016 will incur $138,000 in future long term care costs with families paying about half of that out of pocket the remainder covered by a combination of public programs and private insurance.
* Common personal resources utilized to pay for long-term care include income, savings, investments, reverse (retirement) mortgages, long-term care insurance, life insurance, and family support.
* There is a widely held mis-perception that Medicare will cover the costs of long-term care in a nursing home or assisted living facility. Medicare only covers the costs of a skilled nursing facility for a maximum of 100 days following a 3-day qualifying in-patient hospital stay while you are in need of medical care services that can only be safely and effectively performed or supervised by medical professionals or technical personnel.
* Public programs available to help with the costs of long-term care include Medicare (limited skilled nursing care and certain home health services), Medicaid, and Veterans Administration benefits.
* Navigating the long-term care landscape is complicated, and you should consult with your medical, financial, legal and insurance professionals to understand options available to you to pay for long-term care.

Risk: Benefits and Risks of Aging in Place

Risk became one of the most popular board games in history, inspiring other popular games such as Axis & Allies and Settlers of Catan. While war games don’t generate the same interest they once did, we can certainly apply the lessons about strategy, planning, offense, and defense that we learned playing Risk to preparing for the challenges we might face in our quest to age safely in the comfort of our own home.

Key Learning from Risk

* Most people want to age in place, but aging in place may not be possible or appropriate for everyone.
* The risks of aging in place that need to be considered, monitored, and managed include falls and accidents, social isolation and loneliness, access to healthcare, cognitive decline, and financial stress.
* The main factors to consider when planning to remain in your home are safety and accessibility, social supports and assistance, and financial resources.
* Home modifications and technology enhancements can improve the safety and accessibility of the home and extend the amount of time someone can safely and successfully remain in their home.
* Social supports will be needed to continue to age well in place once mobility and transportation become an issue.
* It is not always less expensive to age in place; once care and support requirements are needed throughout the day, it may be less expensive to live in a senior community than remain in your home. And, it may be difficult to find the care you need to remain safely in your home due to the direct care workforce shortage.
* It is important to remain adaptable in your desire to age in place as your support needs and financial circumstances change.

Monopoly: Estate planning

Not unlike the battle over ownership rights of Monopoly, battles over money and the distribution of assets are common when clear estate plans have not been developed. These battles are even more challenging when dealing with blended families and other complex family structures, and they can result in permanent damage to family relationships.

Key Learning from Monopoly

* Preparing your estate plans requires the expertise of several professionals including your Estate Planning Attorney, Financial Advisor, Accountant, and Insurance Agent. By consulting with these professionals, you can ensure that your estate plans are comprehensive and tailored to your unique needs.
* Various estate planning documents including wills, trusts, power of attorney, advance health care directives, and beneficiary designations should be considered to ensure that your wishes are carried out after your incapacity or death.
* Creating an estate plan allows you to have control over the distribution of your assets, may allow you to avoiding probate, can protect your assets, allows you to plan for incapacity, and minimizes taxes.
* Investing the time to create estate planning documents will provide peace of mind for yourself and your loved ones and help preserve family relationships.

**Taking Care:** Caring for family relationships and the well-being of caregivers.

Twister: Impacts of care on the caregiver

Like in Twister, in the game of caregiving, the caregivers are the game pieces, they often feel pulled in many directions and twisted like a pretzel, and they want to stay in the game without falling down!

Key Learning from Twister

* Many individuals neglect themselves when taking on the care of another, to the point that physical, mental, and financial well-being suffers.
* The solutions are to treat self-care with as much importance as the task of caring for another.

The Blame Game: Avoiding shame and blame

It is not uncommon to have another find fault with or hold us responsible for an outcome. To be blamed often will send us into a sense that we have done something wrong and worse yet, that there is something wrong with us. Before taking on the blame, take a moment to review whether you have, in fact, made a mistake or done something wrong.

Key Learning from The Blame Game

* Blaming, though an unhealthy and unproductive habit, is a common response to stressful situations. Blaming can stem from a myriad of underlying states of being such as fear of being rejected, low self-esteem, insecurity, lack of trust, or when trying to maintain control.
* Differentiate the emotions that being blamed trigger in you - guilt may be productive to change behavior and remedy the situation where shame (the sense that we are flawed and unworthy) is not real (as we are all worthy by virtue of being alive), and is an unhealthy and destructive response.
* When being blamed, we have agency to make choices, take responsibility, and control our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The individual that is laying blame may not be correct and their interpretation should be challenged for validity and alternatives.
* The Karpman Drama (Victim) Triangle is a social model that conceptualizes the common victim/persecutor/rescuer roles that are common in unhealthy conflict reactions. Understanding the triangle, looking for our contribution, and choosing to step out of the triangle and adopt healthy communication and boundaries for the relationship can shift the dynamics to a more productive and balanced relationship.

Sorry!: The power of an apology

At times, things do not go as we plan.  We may make a mistake or make a comment that did not land well.  We may have overstepped boundaries - whether intentionally with anger in the moment or unintentionally.

Why is it a good idea to apologize when this occurs?   An apology can help to mend the relationship and put you back in a place of integrity with yourself.  By acknowledging your actions (or inaction), you accept responsibility for the mistake.  This can begin to rebuild trust that may be lost in the relationship and improve chances for communication or a good working relationship. The negative atmosphere that can follow a mistake may be cleared by acknowledgement.

Key Learning from Sorry

* Apologizing can be one of the most difficult actions for many due to many aspects of being human.  We don’t like to acknowledge we may be wrong as this may bring up feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment.
* Leaving a situation without an apology may markedly and adversely affect a relationship.
* When making an apology, several strategies can make the apology more effective and result in the outcome that an apology is meant to provide - mending or supporting a relationship.
* Apologies are best when sincere, focusing on your own personal actions and less on the circumstances surrounding the situation, confirming the harm that may have occurred to the other and some type of corrective action.

Trivial Pursuit: Finding quality information and resources

In an age when so much information is readily available on the internet and when the concern about paying for care seems an ever-present worry, it can be tempting to take the “Do It Yourself” approach to navigating the caregiving journey for yourself and your loved ones. It is important to remember that good advice can be priceless.

Key Learning from Trivial Pursuit

* Navigating responsibilities and resources as a family caregiver is challenging and complex, and it is easy to make mistakes that cost time and money – two of the most valuable resources to any family caregiver.
* There are a myriad of community resources and care economy professionals who have the expertise and specialty training to assist you with your caregiving needs.
* Good advice from a qualified resource can save you time, money, and endless frustration.
* When engaging with a care professional, make sure they have the appropriate education, experience, license, or certification to provide the services you are seeking.