

1. I will understand that I can't care for anyone else if I also don't care for myself. I will keep an image in my mind of putting the oxygen mask on myself first.
2. I will remember that the only person I can change is myself. I cannot change my loved one who is ill, nor my family members.
3. I will find opportunities to laugh, daily. These might come in movies, jokes, television, or with friends who can see the humor in my situation and remind me to do the same.
4. I will get away from my caregiving duties on a regular basis, even if it is just to walk around the block. But I will also find ways to have lunch with a friend, go to a movie, window shop, breathe in fresh air, watch the sunset, or eat a hot fudge sundae.
5. I will visit a support group, either online or in person in my community, so that I know that I am not alone. If a support group isn't right for me, I will find a friend to talk to, call my family consultant, or attend a workshop. (Find support group at www.caregiveroc.org)
6. I will learn as much as I can about my loved one's illness so I can better care for him or her with understanding. I will learn techniques that will make caregiving easier for both of us.
7. I will say "yes" when people offer to help. I will make a list of things they can do and post it on the refrigerator, so that when those offers come, I'll be ready. When there are not offers, I will ask for help, even though it might be hard to do so.
8. I will use community resources—such as Meals on Wheels, paratransit, adult day services programs, and volunteer respite programs—to help make my caregiving duties easier.
9. I will find something I really like to do and make sure I find time to do it on a regular basis. Just because I am a caregiver, doesn't mean I have to give up everything that is meaningful to me. I will read, knit, garden, scrapbook, do genealogy or woodworking for a designated period of time every week.
10. I will remember that I am loved and appreciated, even when my loved one can't tell me that. I will honor the nurturing, responsibility, caring and support that I provide to my loved one as a gift I give.

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For additional resources, contact:

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