

Insights for Caregivers

Anyone can become a Healing Companion by simply reversing old ways of thinking:

•**"It's too draining. I come away exhausted."** *Joy in the Evening* reverses this kind of thinking. You will find creative tools for using poetry, spiritual and transformational storytelling, movement exercises, singing, dance, spiritual dialogue, contemplation on nature, prayer and meditation. And when you leave your elder's room, you may come away feeling exhilarated and fulfilled.

•**"My elder feels useless, helpless and bored, and I can't help her."** *Joy in the Evening* will show you ways to reawaken meaning and the will to live. You will be able to create healing moments that bring peace and hope into both of your lives.

•**"My elder is clear minded and content. He or she doesn't need any further intellectual or spiritual stimulation."** The fact is that your elder needs closeness with someone who can relate to his or her spiritual and emotional journey. Your elder may want to tell you how he or she finds peace. She may want you to listen to intimate feelings with compassion. When you do this, your elder's journey will be less lonely.

•**"My mother screams, has nightmares, and is unable to understand what I say to her."** Your mother has a spark of wellness within her in spite of her traumas. This spark exists in spite of her behavior. You too have that spark. As you learn to focus on inner wellness instead of dis-ease, you will not be as overcome by your mother's emotional and physical disturbances.

•**"My aunt doesn't say anything. She doesn't look at me or acknowledge me when I stroke her hand. I feel depressed when she doesn't respond, and don't know what to do."** You don't have to do anything. Your presence is enough. Reassure your aunt that you are happy being with her, and that you don't need to talk. Then connect to the peace within you and know that by your intention, this peace can touch her and create a healing atmosphere in the room.

•**"My mother is in so much physical and emotional agony that it is too painful to watch her go through this."** You can learn how to help focus your mother's attention on something outside of her suffering. You can also do this for yourself. In this way, you and your mother will not be victims. You will engage in moments of awe when you discover that underneath suffering, you may be touched by joy.

... **An old woman once said:** "I don't mind dying, but without a warm person by my side?" Healing Companions® are that warm person. As we age, we do not have to be so alone. We can have consolation, love, and joy in the evening of our lives.