

Caregiver's Corner

March 2026

Coach Carla

Caregiving begins with caring for you.

A Note From Coach Carla



March is a good time to pause, reset, and remember something many caregivers forget: you are a person, not just a helper. This month's issue is about naming the reality of caregiving, honoring the many roles you carry, learning from a timeless role model, and speaking to yourself with more grace. My hope is that you feel seen, steadied, and strengthened as you read.

Caregiver's Corner



You are invited to join the newly launched Caregiver's Corner! I wish to have you as part of this special community of family caregivers and/or support team members. This space is all about making connections and sharing resources to move you from potential burnout to balance in your caregiving role. We are on this journey together.

This group is designed to offer conversation and resources around the issue we share - family caregiving. Do feel open to sharing ideas and asking questions. We are here to activate, believe for it, and collaborate all around family caregiving and its offshoots.

We are whole people; your whole self is welcome here. A supportive space for family caregivers who need community + practical help (and a little breathing room).

[Join Me Here](#)

Working and Caregiving? That's Two Jobs, Not One



Family caregiving is an act of love. It is also work. Real work. Heart work. Administrative work. Emotional work. Physical work. And for many people, it is happening alongside a paid job.

A recent AARP article, based on AARP and S&P Global research, names what so many caregivers already know from lived experience: trying to keep up at work while managing care at home can feel like holding two full-time roles at once. The study found that many working caregivers struggle to balance job demands with medical appointments, household responsibilities, paperwork, transportation, and the emotional labor that comes with caring for someone you love.

Did you know?

- 67 percent of family caregivers in the study said they have difficulty balancing their jobs with caregiving duties.
- 27 percent said they shifted from full-time to part-time work or reduced their hours because of caregiving.
- 16 percent said they turned down a promotion, and 16 percent said they stopped working entirely for a period of time.
- Support at work matters. Flexible schedules, leave options, and understanding leadership can make a real difference.

What stands out to me most is this: caregivers do not need more guilt. They need more support. More understanding. More room to tell the truth about what their lives actually require. If you are caring for someone and working too, please hear this clearly: you are not behind. You are carrying a lot.

Coach Carla action step: *This week, ask one simple question at work: "What caregiver support resources are available to me here?" You may find flexible scheduling options, leave programs, employee assistance resources, or benefits you have not explored yet.*

Read the full AARP article: [Report: 67% of Family Caregivers Have Difficulty Balancing Work and Life Duties](#) | AARP and S&P Global workforce report: [Working while caregiving: It's complicated](#)

The Reality of Modern Family Caregiving

Between November 1 and December 15, 189 individuals participated in the Family Caregiving Experience & Support Survey on LinkedIn. Their responses provide a meaningful snapshot of what modern family caregiving looks like today, balancing careers, financial responsibilities, and personal well-being while supporting aging loved ones.

The infographic below brings these insights to life, visually highlighting the key realities, pressures, and challenges shaping today's caregiving landscape.



The Reality of Family Caregiving Today

Carla Dancy Smith
QUEEN CAREGIVER COACH

2026

Between November 1 and December 15, 189 individuals completed the Family Caregiving Experience & Support Survey on LinkedIn. Their responses reveal what modern family caregiving truly looks like today balancing careers, finances, and personal well-being while supporting aging loved ones. This infographic highlights the key realities and challenges shaping today's caregiving landscape.

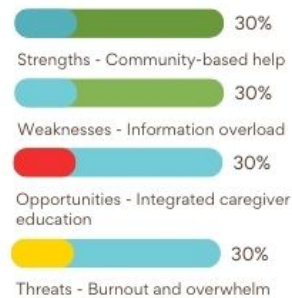
Who's Actively Caregiving?

Most are caring for parents
(many for both parents)

- 96% Actively Caregiving
- 4% Not Currently Caregiving



Caregiver Support System: A SWOT Snapshot



Caregiving + Workload reality

How Stretched Are Working Caregivers?



Working While Caregiving

- 90% Are Employed
- Human Resources

Most caregivers are balancing paid work plus an additional 2-4 unpaid care hours daily hour.

90%

Emotional + Safety Toll

Caregiving today carries real safety risks and sustained emotional strain.

- Safety Risks
- Daily Overwhelm
- Emotional Strain





Caregiver Self-Talk A-Z

Be Your Own Coach

Caregivers' Self-Talk Prompts

- A — Ask for help.
- B — Breathe first.
- C — Choose calm.
- D — Do the next thing.
- E — Ease the pressure.
- F — Forgive. Forget.
- G — Give grace.
- H — Help is available.
- I — I am enough.
- J — Joy is my birthright.
- K — Keep loving.
- L — Leave guilt behind.
- M — My needs matter.
- N — “No” is a sentence.
- O — Offer one smile.
- P — Peace be still.
- Q — Quiet is medicine.
- R — Rest is required.
- S — Small steps matter.
- T — Today is my focus.
- U — Unplug without guilt.
- V — Voice needs aloud.
- W — Worthy of rest.
- X — eXhale the pressure.

Y — Yesterday is over.
Z — Zip up the guilt.

The Many Hats We Wear as Family Caregivers



Nobody hands you a manual for family caregiving. They hand you a whole closet of hats and somehow expect you to know exactly when to wear each one. One minute you are a loving daughter, son, spouse, sister, or friend. The next minute you are a scheduler, driver, chef, nurse, advocate, accountant, and peacekeeper.

And yet, somehow, caregivers keep showing up. Not perfectly. Not effortlessly. But faithfully. That deserves to be named and honored. Here are just a few hats/roles you accept with grace:

- **The Mom and Step Mom:** You celebrate birthdays, and you wipe tears.
- **The Daughter Hat:** You are rooted in love, history, and responsibility. This hat carries memory, tenderness, and the deep desire to do right by the one who once cared for you.
- **The Nurse Hat:** You notice symptoms, manage routines, watch medications, and keep an eye on what has changed.
- **The Driver Hat:** You know the route to the doctor, the pharmacy, urgent care, and probably the best parking spots too.
- **The Scheduler Hat:** You keep up with appointments, forms, refill dates, follow-up calls, and all the moving parts.
- **The Chef Hat:** You think about what they can chew, what they should not eat, what is in the refrigerator, and what dinner can be by 6:30.
- **The House Manager Hat:** You notice what needs to be cleaned, fixed, stocked, moved, or made safer.
- **The Financial Hat:** You track bills, watch for scams, keep receipts, and try to make wise decisions under pressure.
- **The Advocate Hat:** You speak up in medical offices, ask better questions, and make sure your loved one is not overlooked.
- **The Comforter Hat:** You soothe fears, calm confusion, repeat yourself with grace, and offer reassurance when the day feels hard.
- **The Spiritual Hat:** You pray, hope, hold on, and ask God for strength that does not come from your own reserve tank.
- **The Crown:** You are a QUEEN Caregiver. You wear this hat the best.

A Queen doesn't just serve. She:

-  governs.
-  makes decisions.
-  sets standards.
-  builds systems.
-  asks for help without shame.
-  rests without apology.

The beautiful truth is the hats are proof that you are loving in many directions. Yes, the load is real. But so is the honor. So is the calling. Family caregiving is not small work. It is sacred work.

Coach Carla says: Always wear your crown.

Caregiver Role Model: Florence Nightingale



When people hear the name Florence Nightingale, they often think of a lamp. I think of leadership. I think of calm in the middle of crisis. I think of a woman who saw suffering clearly and still chose to serve with intelligence, order, and compassion.

Florence Nightingale is remembered for nursing, but her example reaches far beyond hospital walls. She observed carefully. She organized systems. She paid attention to the environment, cleanliness, rest, and detail. That is what makes

her relevant to today's family caregivers. Much of what you do each day is not just care. It is leadership in real time.

What caregivers today can learn from her

- Notice patterns. Write things down. Good notes can help you spot changes faster and speak with more confidence.
- Create calm where you can. Better lighting, cleaner spaces, and a steadier routine can support wellbeing.
- Care is both compassion and strategy. Love matters, and systems matter too.
- Advocacy is part of caregiving. Asking questions, seeking answers, and speaking up are forms of care.
- Your presence matters. Sometimes being steady, attentive, and kind is the very thing that changes the atmosphere in the room.

You may not be walking hospital corridors with a lamp in your hand. But every day you bring light into someone's world through your attention, your decisions, and your care. That is why Florence Nightingale belongs in this issue. She reminds us that caregiving can be loving, skillful, and quietly powerful all at once.

ASSESSMENT: How Balanced is Your Life...Really



Sometimes we move through life on autopilot without stopping to check in with ourselves. This quick and insightful self-assessment is designed to help you pause and reflect on four key areas of your life: mind, body, heart, and soul. In just 5–8 minutes, you'll get a clearer picture of where you're thriving and where you may need a little more care or attention.

Here's how it works:

You'll read a series of simple affirmations and choose whether each one feels "Not True for Me" or "Very True for Me."

Once you're done, you'll receive a personalized report showing whether your life currently feels balanced and aligned or if some areas may be a bit out of sync. Many people find the insights surprisingly eye-opening. If you're curious about what your results might reveal, take a few minutes to check in with yourself.

Thank you to all who responded to the survey. The information is being used by me to design solutions and offerings to the caregiver community. Data collection continues. Your voice matters.

Take the Assessment

To every family caregiver reading this: I see you. The work you do may not always be visible, but it is valuable. May this month bring you more support, more clarity, and more moments to breathe. If this issue encouraged you, share it with another caregiver who may need it too.

Connect with me on LinkedIn and visit www.carladancysmith.com for more support and resources

With care,
Coach Carla



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