

Inspirational Books Column for MyFamilyCaregiver.com

Written By Melissa Pilgrim

Overall Column Introduction...

Wouldn't it be great if there was a crystal ball you could peer into each morning, letting you know just what to be prepared for throughout the day? Anyone could use the help of knowing that, but when someone is caring for another daily (or depending on someone else's care themselves), getting any kind of help, advice, or direction to prepare for the "always unpredictable" can be appreciated. That is why each month we will feature an inspirational book here that will help encourage and inspire you in your caregiving journey. Happy Reading!

Better Than Chocolate: 50 Proven Ways to Feel Happier

Written by Siimon Reynolds, Illustrations by Jenny Kostecki

With Easter approaching, thoughts of big, yummy, chocolate bunnies sitting in colorful, toy-filled baskets (or even pretty candy dishes in bite-size bliss) come to mind... but what if you could get something this Easter that's even better than chocolate? You can, if you pick up this great little book! It's filled with quick-to-read, one page only chapters that each offer a way for you to feel happier in your life (which is great for either those who are receiving care or busy caregivers who may not have a lot of time). And even better—it's illustrated throughout with fun, colorful pictures that help to bring a smile to your face as you read along discovering ways to bring more cheer to yourself and others.

Just some of the 50 insightful tips include (by chapter headings, so they are easy to refer to again and again for quick reminders later): ask uplifting questions... clarify your values... change your breathing... seek internal goals... become a self-actualizer... balance alone time and time with others... get some sunlight... get in the flow. There are too many great ones to list in a review, but the first chapter alone is a wonderful example of what to expect from this wise little book of happiness hints.

Chapter 1: make a happiness list. That's it. Just jot down a list of all the things that make you—not anyone else—happy. They can be things like taking a walk (alone or with your dog), soaking in the tub, gardening, working on cars, listening to music or rain, smiling (by yourself or at others), kissing (yes, this is a suggestion in the book too!), holding a small baby, or whatever makes *you* feel instantly happy and brings you true joy. This list is just for you, so make it as long or short as you want. And do it alone. After all, only *you* know what makes you happy!

Then, after you feel you've got a nice "happiness list" ready, look at your "to do" calendar and find a way to schedule at least one of these activities into your day—every day. Sound impossible? Then you might need to add to your list to make sure you have both long and short activities to be able to schedule. For instance, some of them can (and should) take awhile, such as going for a walk at the beach, and you may only have time to do that once or twice a week in your busy schedule. But if you have really short ones included too, such as smiling more to strangers, you can be sure to do them even on your busiest days. (And you can do this one

almost anywhere, like while on the bus to work or running an errand at the store. And smiles are contagious, so just think what it may start to spread!)

Sound too simple? It's actually not, for unfortunately a lot of people struggle to find even one moment of true happiness in their daily lives. But with practice, doing this or any of the other 49 tips mentioned in the book can help anyone start to do that. There are 50 ways, and one of them is sure to get you started. Enjoy!