

## A Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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Are you a Senior? Are you living with a Senior? Do you have a loved one who is a Senior? Do you know a Senior in your neighbourhood? Do you expect to be a Senior someday?

Care giving is a part of life that we will all face in some shape or form at some point. As we realize that we may be put in the position of giving care, it's important to take stock of yourself, your temperament and your own limitations.

In researching this article, I came across the following Caregiver's Bill of Rights. The author is unknown but the message is so appropriate and insightful to all engaged in this struggle. Not everyone is cut out to be a Caregiver. They give and give and give, expecting nothing in return. But Family Caregivers have rights too. Please take the time to read the following and open your heart to the caregivers in your life and if you are a caregiver, give yourself permission to be human and TAKE CARE.

### THE CAREGIVER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

"I HAVE THE RIGHT... to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to seek help from others even though my relatives may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to reject any attempts by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, and/or depression.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do from my loved one, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer needs my full-time help.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... to expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting Caregivers.

I HAVE THE RIGHT... TO BE MYSELF"