

Acceptance

By Lynn Butler, Support Coordinator, Central Region

Acceptance is a person's recognition of and assent to the reality of an often negative or uncomfortable situation, without attempting to change or protest it. How often as caregivers are we able to simply accept the situation in which we find ourselves, without fighting or trying to change it?

As caregivers there are so many things we'd like to do, but sometimes it proves impossible. We cannot make a person healthy again or take away cancer, Parkinson's, memory loss, MS, heart disease, pain, or anxiety. Much as we may want to, we often cannot make other family members offer to help us in our caregiving or see that they are missing out on opportunities to make memories, heal old wounds, or simply help out during a stressful time. It is sometimes impossible to make those we care for listen to good advice, eat a nutritious diet to manage their diabetes, exercise to help with mobility, move to a more suitable residence, accept home care support, or get their affairs in order.

So, how can we change in order to accept these things that prove to be beyond our control? How can we continue giving care to loved ones who argue or resist at every step along the way? How do we forgive family who will not see what is happening or who just walk away because they cannot deal with the sadness or frustration of a situation?

The first thing we must do is to accept the situation for what it is, right now, at this exact moment. It is what it is and there is no use in

denying, blaming, or being angry. These emotions only prolong our frustration and delay our healing. As soon as you are able to recognize and accept the facts as they are, things will fall into place.

This does not mean it will suddenly or magically get easier or better. What it will mean is that you get to a place where you can stop arguing with your loved one, family, or friends because you have made the conscious decision to allow what is happening to happen.

You might think this is giving in or losing control, but in actuality you will gain control because, instead of fighting everything and

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Zig Ziglar, author and motivational speaker

everyone, you can now manage your situation and let go of those things you simply cannot control and manage more effectively those things over which you do

have some amount of control. This can bring about real peace of mind.

Here is where the 3 C's of life—Choices, Chances, and Changes—come in. “You must make a choice to take a chance or your life will never change.” Truer words were never spoken.

Once you make the decision to accept your situation, to be there to walk alongside your loved one, communicating with them, showing your love and affection and helping as much as possible to make each day the best it can be, you will feel liberated. It is said that all change begins with acceptance.