

International Institute for Humanistic Studies

Caregiving

by *Elizabeth Bugental, Ph.D.*, I.I.H.S. Advisory Board Member

What I have learned in the last few years, and particularly since last February when my husband, Jim, had his stroke.

That everything I already knew but chose not to look at too carefully or too often has become loud and visible and in my face. Namely:

My life can change in a matter of minutes.

The only thing that really matters is being with the person(s) I love; everything else is negotiable.

I need my friends and family, especially when I'm confused, tired, feeling overwhelmed.

I need information, even when I can't hear it in the moment. I can always come back and study it when I can breathe a little more easily.

I have to learn how to ask.

I have to learn how to rest before I am exhausted, how to relax before I am strung out.

I need someone(s) who is non-judgmental and won't preach to me when I want to gripe or complain or feel sorry for myself.

I need to laugh.

I need to cry.

I need to have a small tantrum once in awhile.

I need to savor the precious moments with my loved one and not be so busy taking care of him that I don't stop to see him and be grateful for my time with him.

I need to be quiet and completely alone for some time every day.

From Awakening to Aging Seminar, 2/8/04

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