

Caregiving towards Building Confidence and Relationships

I first experienced being a caregiver at the age of 14. I remembered clearly it was my long awaited school holiday but I was told to care for my grandmother while proper care arrangement was being arranged.

Back then, I struggled internally because I was not particularly close to my grandmother. However, I took up the role as I was not given a choice. With limited resources, I struggled with my caregiving duties such as assisting my grandmother to bathe and change her clothes, preparing meals, and cooking barley water daily etc. At times, my grandmother and I experienced huge frustration and confusion due to unfamiliarity with each other's style of managing things. Fortunately, we managed to overcome the challenges with understanding and patience.

Despite the challenges, I recalled fondly some of the warm and positive moments I experienced during the journey. For example, I still remember those light-hearted and funny moments when my grandmother taught me how to cook the barley water, the surprise when my grandfather fried six eggs at one go for me, and the period when I had chicken rice daily for lunch etc. I was so well fed then that I put on weight during that period of caregiving!

Upon reflection, my unexpected caregiving journey may have disrupted my holiday plans, and the caregiving had not been smooth and easy, but it had definitely given me some surprising gifts in life. It built up my confidence in caregiving which I later tapped on while caring for my mother. The experience had also created opportunities for me to foster a closer relationship with my grandparents, creating precious memories which I treasure immensely especially now that they had passed on.

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