

Life Enrichment Center Newsletter Sept 2015

By Robert Christiansen Ashford

“Go Ahead and Scream”

These stories come from caregivers. They are for all those putting on a brave face, because we all need something to grab hold of when things seem darkest.

Many people reading this have at some level experienced the trauma you are going through and empathize completely. So, if you feel no one could possibly understand what’s happening in your life right now, read on.

And why don’t you scream it all out, even for a second or two.

The following story was told to me by my wife Nancy. Nancy’s mom Robin has Lewybody dementia with parkinsonisms. At the time, she was living in an assisted living facility in Shelby NC. Her condition had progressed to the point where she could no longer walk unassisted, even over short distances. Sometimes it required two people to help Robin get in and out of a car, but it was still necessary for Nancy to take her to medical appointments, and the Life Enrichment Center.

‘Sometimes your best is all you can give.’

“I had just driven my mom from a doctors’ visit back to the assisted living facility. I was getting her out of the car and into her wheelchair. As I tried to lift her, I asked her to help me, and she replied she was helping. Her voice clearly showed frustration, so I said to her, *‘I’m trying my best mommy,’* and she replied, *‘sometimes your best just isn’t enough.’* In my mom’s reality she *was* helping me but it didn’t make hearing it any less devastating. I know this was not my mother talking, at least not the one I recognized from growing up, but it *was* still her.”

Situations like this can take a toll. We can only stay ahead by saying things like, *‘I’m trying my best,’ ‘I love you,’ ‘it’s okay.’* We need these as much for ourselves as for our loved ones.

What you must take to heart, if for no other reason than your own sanity is this: As a caregiver you *have* to give yourself a break. *Do not forget about you.* Give yourself a little love and approval now and then, because sometimes, your best is all you *can* give.

