

# *Tips for The Toughest Transitions*

by Chris Vasiliadis

As much as many of us don't like to discuss it, death is a part of living. In a world where many things are uncertain, we know for sure that we each will die someday.

You may be a caregiver for someone, or know someone who is a caregiver. These people are true heroes - making multiple sacrifices and changes to care for their loved ones.

However, many do so in a way that compromises or risks compromising their own health.

It doesn't have to be that way.

If you find yourself in a caregiver situation, or know someone who is, please share the following tips with them.

**1. Consider pre-planning funeral arrangements.** Pre-planning yours or someone else's funeral ahead of time relieves one of the many burdens and emotional decisions that take place during grieving time in the hours and days after someone's passing. You can even pre-pay for the funeral, locking into current rates, which can ease a financial burden down the road.

**2. Near the end, pre-plan on a small scale.** We were told ~5 days before my grandmother passed that she was in the process of dying. Hospice began 2 days later, and at that point, my mother and aunt began planning services, deciding who would do the eulogy, readings, bring up the gifts, etc. We also began assembling pictures for collages and the video memorial. Again, making these decisions before she passed, along with delegating, made things run smoother when the day happened.

**3. Keep taking actions that make you feel good.** I'm reminded of a business owner colleague, whose husband, out of the blue one day, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Throughout his care and surgeries in and out of the hospital, rehab and home, my colleague maintained her ritual of swimming every morning at her health club. She found this routine gave her a necessary alone time and a way to re-center herself from a frequently chaotic and emotional roller-coaster situation. Further, swimming first thing in the morning furnished the energy and mental capacity for handling whatever new developments arose each day, both in her husband's care, and in continuing to run her business.

**4. Stay in touch with friends/socialize.** Regularly get out of the house and see your friends. I can remember this being essential for my father-in-law, who was the caregiver of my mother-in-law. The local Greek club, or Kafeneio, was his weekly well-being break.

**5. Accept help from others (or request help).** It is not a sign of weakness to accept or ask for help. It's a gracious act that contributes to your strength and keeps you connected with others. It can be anything from accepting a casserole or other meal, offers to tend your lawn, clean your house, do laundry, pick up or babysit the kids, take care of dry cleaning, or groceries.

**6. Stay present.** No one wants to watch someone they love become more ill, die, or to ultimately attend their services. The process of dealing with this transition becomes a little less challenging when you stay present to what's happening. Don't fight it: accept what's occurring, observe and notice your feelings about it, without judgment, and simply accept them. Fighting what's happening or denying what we're feeling only causes additional stress and pain. Staying present allows you to move through this difficult process more quickly, and ultimately, more peacefully.

Chris is a Certified Wellness Coach who happens to be living well with Multiple Sclerosis. Through her coaching and training firm, Priority Wellness (<http://www.prioritywellness.com>), she helps individuals in a life or work transition navigate the process to achieve the best possible outcome, while maintaining their well-being. She also works with stressed out and depleted people who are ready to increase their energy and decrease their stress, so they can perform better and be more relaxed at work, life and the things they love. Chris can be heard twice a month on her internet radio show, Energizing You, on [blogtalkradio.com](http://blogtalkradio.com). She is currently co-authoring a book on women business owners who have experienced a personal crisis while running their business. Chris can be contacted at [chris@prioritywellness.com](mailto:chris@prioritywellness.com) or 781-791-7642.