

## Lessons Learned from a Caregiver

1. Make your spouse your number one priority, while still taking good care of yourself. Everything else can wait.
2. Take notes at every appointment and archive all medical documents.
3. Express gratitude to your medical team, and your family and friends. Reach out to them if you need help, and to share what is going on.
4. Follow your gut if something doesn't feel right, and call 911 or the clinic. Acting quickly could save their life.
5. Listen to the doctors. They are the experts, but do not be afraid to speak up and be an advocate for you and your spouse. Ask questions.
6. Seek support and take advantage of the resources offered to you as a caregiver including mediation, support groups, and spiritual help. These can benefit you in ways you may not realize.
7. Stay positive and always have hope. We can't control the disease, but we can control how we handle it.
8. Every person's journey is different, so try not to compare yourself to others.
9. Listen to your spouse and be sensitive of their needs. Don't try to push them too fast or too soon if they are not ready to eat much or exercise yet. It will come.
10. Do encourage them to get outside when they are ready, even if just for a drive or to sit outside. Nature can be very therapeutic.