

# Joy in Caregiving

Still Here: A caregiver series

**TY:** I questioned a lot. I was angry a lot. I cried a lot. And then, the peace came. And the peace only came when I started to accept that this was our new reality, and I couldn't change what was, but I could change how I saw things.

**BAILEY:** Sadness is an important emotion, and I feel it's totally valid and normal to feel sad. And I don't think anybody should hide from that. But you'll get to that point where you're so tired of feeling sad. At least I did. That I was like, I would rather feel anything else than this. Okay, let's try happiness.

**JACQUELYN:** She would like, see a flower. She would be like, "It's so pretty." And I would look at it and I would be like, "It is so pretty!" We were genuinely happy because we weren't measuring our lives by the circumstance, but by like the moments.

**RACHAEL:** Things are tough or things are going to get tough. But on the other side of that coin, things are really light and your loved one is now at home with you or spending more time with you. It can be so beautiful if you look through that lens.

**JESSICA:** Don't forget to have fun and, and live. Just because you have an Alzheimer's diagnosis and you're now the caregiver does not mean that life is over. In fact, there's so much new life to live.

**CARLOS:** It feels great to laugh with my dad, especially if I connect. If I can get my dad to laugh at something that I feel is funny to the point where we're both having our sides hurt from laughing so much, it's a good day.

**MARIA:** And I put on 80s music, and even though she could no longer speak, she still could sing the songs. And they were like from her heyday of her college years. And so, we'd go do that and go through the drive-through and listen to the music and like, it was just like a little ritual of ours.

**TY:** And I began to join groups, and all they would talk about was just how their loved ones were going to die. And just, the gloom and the doom of the diagnosis. And I just made a decision one day to say, I'm not going to live like this. We're going to find joy in this journey.

**CARLOS:** Savor the moment of life, having self-compassion, realizing that life is really short.

**BAILEY:** It's not weak to have emotions, and it's not wrong to not enjoy the circumstances of your life. And it's okay to like, you know, feel a little sorry for yourself every now and then, but it's how we like, move on from that, and it's how we live our life knowing how we feel that really matters.

**RACHAEL:** He used to tell me that all the time, to look for the light. If you don't look for it, it's not always going to make itself visible to you. And it just sort of became the way I looked at him and his disease, is that, there's still good in here. And through the hollering in the facility or through the bizarre behaviors, it's my job, as your daughter, to look for that good. For you and for me.

**JACQUELYN:** Strategically choosing joy. I think my mom taught me that too.

**TY:** And I'm going to choose joy every single time. Even when it hurts, even when it crushes me, and even when it breaks me, there's still joy on the other side. And I always look for that, that joy.