

Comforting and Chaotic Waves by Sandra Perdew

I liken my caregiving journey to a walk along the ocean's edge. I get good solid footing enjoying the water and the warmth of the sand, gathering shared memories with my loved one as we journey through life together. 52 years thus far.

On good days, I may come across some wonderful treasures -- seashells (memories) of differing colors and shapes which bring sunshine and smiles to my day. Then a wave comes in, sometimes unexpectedly, washing away my sure-footing, and the shells which were bringing such delight, disappear.

If the waves keep coming too quickly, I become overwhelmed, fatigued, and begin to lose the joy of our life spent together. Some days my walk is a continual battle of waves versus courage and strength, as I struggle to keep standing. Sometimes, a mighty forceful wave knocks me down, catching me off-guard, leaving me wondering how I ever will get up again. A new day dawns and I am still standing, ready to take on what's in store for my hubby and me.

There are times I'm able to laugh at the situation as I get knocked down. Other times I feel I am losing hope, as if I'll drown, and the tears flow. On those days, my world feels out of control. I must be careful to not let my shells be replaced by sharp jagged-edged stones of fear, defeat, bitterness or despair.

The grief of treasured shells being broken, never more to be whole and complete, is a continual reminder that life is fragile. I need to keep walking the path no matter what. To give up means I would miss the treasures in each day.

Like the ocean shoreline, my journey of caring for my beloved hubby is ever-changing, my footing less sure, my days a bit more-stormy. Even so, they still possess some wonderful moments. I still look for the treasured shells along the way. They're a little harder to find now. Near impossible sometimes. But that won't stop me from looking. Because when I see a glimpse of the hubby I once knew, those moments of clarity are extra special. They're a gift, a memory to tuck away and hold onto, to treasure for a lifetime.