Chapter 1 - The Dance of Caregiving

I call the tension between activity and reflection, "the Dance of Caregiving," a dance between the caregiver's needs and those of the one in need. The chapter is an introduction to exploring something we do every day: to reflect on our experiences. The question that emerges is a simple one: Are you ready to being a journey and pilgrimage of self-care, healing and transformation?

In your reading of this chapter, insights about your personal experiences may have emerged. The following questions may assist you to remember them. At your own pace, give yourself a moment of leisure to reflect on each question below.

1.	Are there any insights that come to mind after reading the introduction?

The dance between the caregiver's needs and those of the one in need is explored. The chapter is an introduction to exploring something we do every day: to reflect on our experiences.

What comes to mind when you hear the word reflection? What is your daily practice?				

"Transformation is about interior changes, about listening to one's Soul, about learning from one's experiences, commonly called a change of heart. It is not a static event but one that is dynamic and implies movement. Transformation is being on a hero's journey where one gains insight and a psychological awareness about one's inner reorientation and self-redefinition that needs to occur for the change to work." William Bridges as referenced in.

and to listen to those inner promptings something you find easy or difficult?

The dance of caregiving is living in the tension of not only being present to the needs of the other, but simultaneously recognizing, at least from a distance, what is happening within oneself. Does the very act and responsibility of caregiving distract or deaden these interior and exterior stirrings that embellish the good work that you do? The task of *The Soul of Caregiving* is to address these questions. The irony is, that while caregivers are hardwired in their training to listen, evaluate, and problem solve, these same skills are not applied to their own self-care.

4.	Can you recall one of your earliest experiences as a caregiver? Who was involved? How old were you?

I was surprised to discover that my perspective about caregiving was broadened and enriched by Edward's work *The Soul of Caregiving*. This book takes its readers on a deeply reflective journey, and as such needs to be read slowly or as Edward has quoted "bit by bit." His sense of humor around a lot of the subject matter, added a lightheartedness and entry or permission to explore one's personal and professional life as a caregiver.

—Winifred Stump, BSN, RN, MS, CPPS, CHSP, System Director, Safety Programs, Catholic Health Initiatives Enterprise Risk Management Group

A Companion for Your Journey			

The Soul of Caregiving is a most meaningful work not only for those who are caregivers in the healthcare industry but for all those who willingly give themselves in many caregiving ways to make others feel better. The work is pleasantly and surprisingly engaging leading me and I hope other readers to pause and reflect on our special calling as a caregiver, of the sacred and transformative work that we do, and how we can build compassion resilience with self-care.

—Dr Tom Royer, MD. CEO and Partner, Royer-Maddox-Herron Advisors