



Self-Care for the Caregiver

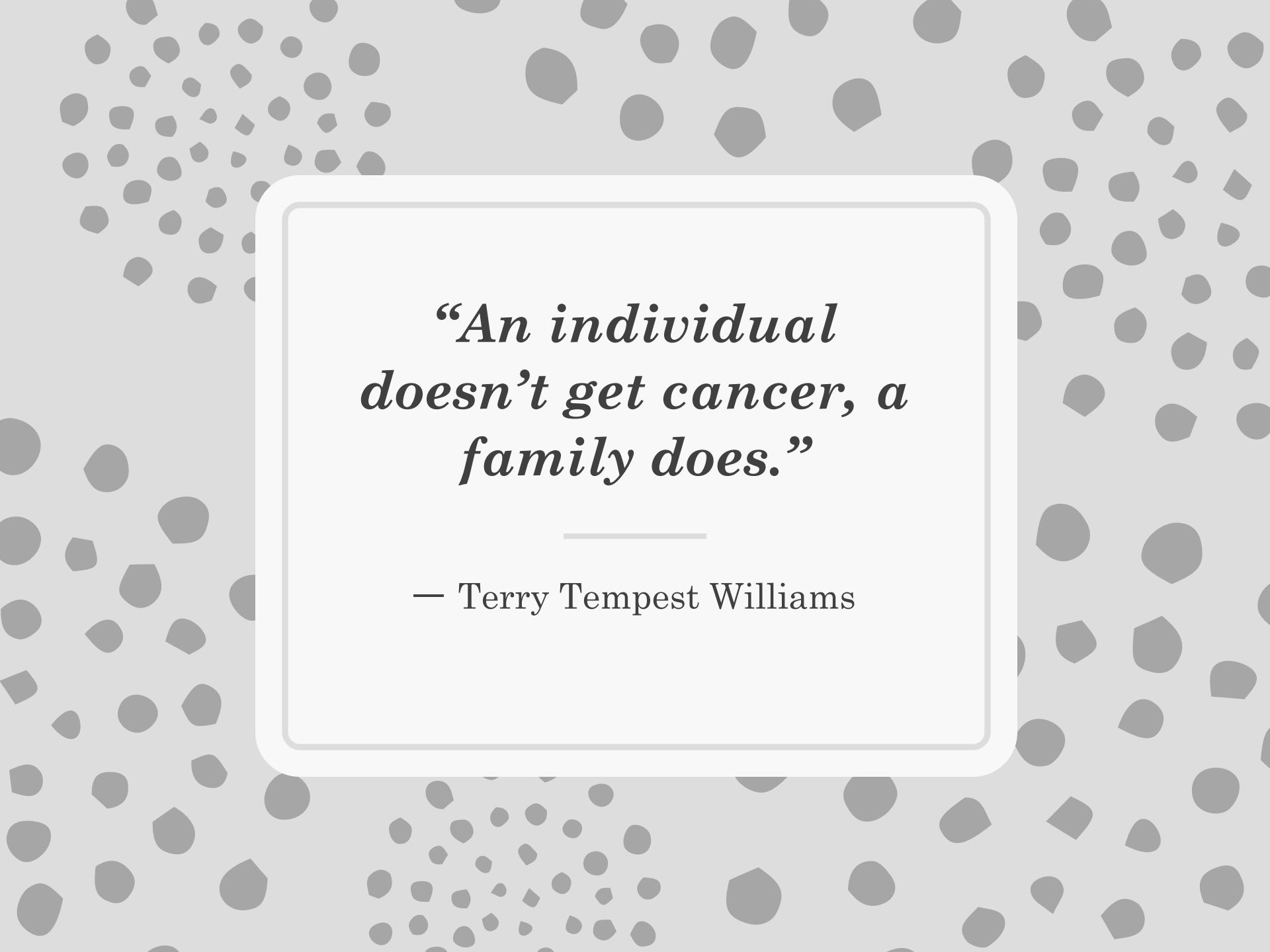
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*“An individual
doesn’t get cancer, a
family does.”*

— Terry Tempest Williams



Self-Care for Caregivers

- Role Changes
- The New Normal
- Emotions
- Grief
- Compassion Fatigue
- Communication and Intimacy
- Looking ahead
- Getting Help
- Resources





Role Changes

- Financial
- Household stability
- Partner/Lover to Caregiver
- Parent or child to Caregiver

The New Normal

Undergoing treatment

Loss of control

Changes in personal freedom

The need to ask for help

Worry and embarrassment about hair loss, fatigue, or even the diagnosis itself

Being unable to maintain normal sexual function

Receiving sympathy

Taking orders from a doctor

A need to be more patient

Sleeplessness

Depression and Anxiety

Disruption of daily routine

Visits to the doctor

Worrying loved ones

A decrease in income

Changes in the pace of life

Social isolation

Disruption of work and financial distress

Being called a cancer patient



Emotions

*You are likely to come out of this experience as a different person who is **stronger, wiser, and more realistic.***



- Caregivers feel many of the same emotions that people with cancer do
- When the patient received treatment, caregivers experienced more distress than the patient



A word cloud of emotions. The words are arranged in a roughly vertical stack, with varying sizes and colors. The colors range from light teal to dark blue. The words are: guilt, sadness, loss, fear, grief, impatience, stress, anxiety, isolation, resentment, confusion, and anger.

guilt
sadness loss
fear grief impatience
isolation stress anxiety
resentment
confusion
anger

Grief



Anticipatory



Inhibited



Delayed

Risks to Well-Being

Tired and a bit burnt-out

- Guilt
- Feeling “done”

Tough Topics

- Grief
- Death

Social

- Hard to relate to others
- Talking about it too much or too little
- Isolation

What now?



Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Fatigue

- Physical
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Social



Compassion Fatigue Prevention

Ask for Help

- People want to help
- Give specific tasks
- Support network.

Strengthen your Resilience

- Embrace change
- Believe in yourself

Mindfulness

- Keep your mind from getting “carried away”
- Return again and again to the present moment

Self-Care Plan

- Schedule into your routine
- Authentic and Sustainable



Examples of Self-Care

- Color in a coloring book, draw, paint
- Control what you can to minimize feeling overwhelmed
- Attend a support group
- Seek individual counseling
- Get out of your house, even if you just sit outside for 5 minutes
- Do a puzzle
- Take an exercise class
- Pray or meditate
- Eat/prepare healthy food





Control What You Can

- Stay present
- Stay away from the “shoulds, coulds and what ifs”
- Diet and exercise
- Make a do-able and realistic to-do list.



Barriers to Caring for the Caregiver

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation...”

-Audre Lorde

- Feels selfish
- Hard to find the time
- “Extra time”
- Can’t think of what to do
- Choosing a difficult activity



Communication

- Openness about emotions
- Make a plan for the future
- Same page
- Intimacy



“How are you doing?”

- Positive thinking
- Isolation
- Expectations of self and expectations from others

Intimacy

- Physical intimacy and connectedness
- Sexual Functioning
- Appointments and Intimacy



Looking Ahead

Medical Decisions

Life-sustaining treatments
DNR (do-not-resuscitate orders)

Legal Decisions

Rights and Responsibilities
Power of Attorney
Living will
Legal/financial documents
Property

End of Life Care

Funeral/burial arrangements
Donations and flowers



Getting Help



- Delegate tasks to people who want and are able to help
- Assign someone to be responsible for communication with loved ones such as send out updates, manage visiting times, and delegate tasks
- Apps and websites for scheduling

Resources

Support groups:

Cancer Lifeline www.cancerlifeline.org (800) 255-5505

Us Too UsToo.org 877-978-7866

For Caregivers:

Family Caregiver Alliance www.caregiver.org

Help for Cancer Caregivers www.helpforcancercaregivers.org

My Cancer Circle www.mycancercircle.lotsahelpinghands.com

Cancer Care www.cancercare.org

Communication and Scheduling meal trains and/or tasks with Loved Ones:

Sign up Genius www.signupgenius.com

Lotsa Helping Hands www.lotsahelpinghands.com

CaringBridge www.caringbridge.com

Meal Train www.mealtrain.com

Resources

Transportation:

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance www.seattlecca.org/travel-assistance-for-patients

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery (800) 227-2345

www.cancer.org/treatment/support-programs-and-services/road-to-recovery.html

DSHS Caregiver Resources:

www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/caregiver-resources

Emotional Support:

www.cancerlifeline.org

www.psychologytoday.com

www.caring.com

www.self-compassion.org

www.insicknessinhealth.blogspot.com/search/label/Caregiver

www.cancerhopenetwork.org

www.cancercare.org

Questions

