



# 5 Things

Newsletter



Corley Caregiver Consulting, LLC

**Hello friends and a warm welcome if you're new here!  
I'm so glad you've joined us!**

Each month, I pull together 5 things that have helped me or taught me something new in my own caregiving journey. Often it's the little things that can make the biggest difference, speaking from personal experience.

If you have resources, routines or ideas that work for you and you'd like to share them with others, please message me. I'd love to make this more than just a one way communication. I believe we all have something to learn from each other.

Now on to our 5 Things for this month!

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**This month we're talking about 5 Things bringing me.....**

- 1. A way to recognize my limits**
- 2. A perspective on large projects**
- 3. A reminder about wound care**
- 4. An alternative to traditional caffeine**
- 5. A way to pay it forward**

## **1. A way to recognize my limits = A one word reminder**

I'm a doer. Always busy doing something because, well, there's always

something to do. Sound familiar? I highly doubt I'm alone in this. We're a busy species. Always in motion.

Caregivers, specifically, are never at a loss for things to do. Whether you're working full time and providing care or are full time hands-on with your caree, there's always a million things to do and we tend to end up in constant motion.

Then there are our calendars. Filled with all those to-do's at a level that's often completely unrealistic. (Guilty of this one too!)

As caregivers, we get advice like "don't do so much" or "you're doing too much". Well meaning and unrealistic advice, but also really vague. At least it's always felt that way to me. What does "too much" look like? It can look differently for each of us and yet it's a wide brush used universally quite often.

Earlier this month, I stumbled on a word in something I was reading. Do you ever read something in passing and you can feel it resonate instantly? That's how this was for me. Boom! Whoa!

That word was **capacity**.

I think what resonated so much for me with capacity was the visualization that comes with it. I picture a bucket or glass when I hear the word. You might think of something completely different, but we understand what it means instantly.

The official definition is "the maximum amount that something can contain". In relation to caregiving, that "something" is us. Each of us are different in our ability to contain everything that's going on in our daily lives. The emotions, tasks, worries, irritations, frustrations, stressors. No two of our stories are the same and yet we all share capacity.

I've really started to reflect this month on what my capacity is on a daily, weekly or even momentary basis. I've kept the timelines short because I feel daily and weekly overload much more than monthly or yearly. Controlling my daily and weekly capacity ultimately plays a huge part in my monthly and yearly levels. I've been more conscious of what it feels like when I'm overcapacity and try to dial in when I'm approaching that level so I can slow down.

When I think of myself as a vessel, I find it much easier to slow down and respect myself in that moment. That visualization helps me give myself the grace needed to slow down or even stop for the day. I find I'm beating myself up less for not accomplishing "all the things". It's almost like an internal dialogue that's saying "oh well, I've hit my capacity. Time to stop!"

It's been an amazingly constructive visualization for me this month. So much so that I've posted the word in places where I'll see it to help remind me and keep me on track.



I encourage you to consider your own capacity. Accept it, whatever it looks like, and move forward conscientiously to honor it because you're worth it.

## **2. A perspective on large projects = Small steps are still progress!**

Spring is officially here in the Midwest! Even though we've had a mild winter, it's so exciting when things start turning green. It also means that an entirely new set of personal projects and goals begin.

As we talked about above, we're all busy. When projects come up for me, I used to focus on the project as a whole and then immediately get overwhelmed with "how in the world and I going to do it among everything else I need/want/have to do!?"

Those big projects not only involve time, but energy. Both are such a highly valued commodity. Sometimes finding the time can be lightyears easier than finding the energy.

Since we moved to country 2 1/2 years ago, so many of the projects we've done have required physical labor and time. Very few have been quick tasks. While I'd love to have them done in a day, that's not realistic by any means. I've had to learn a new mindset and mantra - small steps are still progress!

I've learned that while finishing a project is a huge relief, having a sense of progress over the long haul has proven to be just as valuable. Because I can't do it all at once start to finish, small steps will just have to do! I approach each large project knowing I'll need to invest a set amount of time, but knowing I'm chipping away at it within the constraints set by my other responsibilities relieves the weight of having it hanging over me.

I'll share a personal example from my life right now.

We burn wood as a primary source of winter heat. I recently connected with a neighbor who gave us permission to help ourselves to whatever wood we wanted from her woods. That's a huge bonus for us both financially and logistically. It's a big job, there's no denying it. I'll be chainsawing it, moving it across a creek and then moving it closer to our storage sheds. Add to that the fact that I'm trying to beat the clock on all the vegetation leafing out this Spring.

If I look at the entire project, it's overwhelming. Instead, I choose to chip away at it. Every week, I block 2-3 hours to chip away at it. My Dad volunteers his time and help, but we limit our time so we don't overdo it. It's physical work, but I chalk it up to my exercise routine and being a steward of the land we own and appreciate.

At the end of every work session each week, I obviously know we still have a lot ahead of us, but I feel satisfied that we can say we worked on it again. I can see our progress and know we're that much closer to having it finished.

So the next time you have a big project hanging over you, consider chipping away at it in small chunks and see if by approaching it from a different perspective you don't alleviate some of its weight over you.

### **3. A reminder about wound care = Don't trust scabs!**

Unless you know me personally, you likely don't know that my husband is a disabled military Veteran and amputee. He lost his leg below the knee in 1998 as the result of a traumatic injury in the military.

Because he only has one sound limb remaining, we remain vigilant about its overall health. If his shoes create irritation, we jump to a solution ASAP before it has a chance to create a bigger problem. He's not diabetic, but amputees often have issues with their remaining limb due to all the stress it takes compensating for the amputated side.

Last month, he developed a small sore on one of his toes. We immediately

started cleaning and bandaging it and it was healing nicely. Everything looked great...until this week I happened to notice the toe was discolored overall. A closer look at the remaining scab (which looked like it was healed) found a small amount of infection underneath (hence the angry color!).

So we jumped into high gear and have been treating it accordingly again.

I share this as a word of warning: don't trust scabs! Remain vigilant until the scab is gone and you can see pink, healed skin!

#### **4. An alternative to traditional caffeine = Mushroom coffee**

I recently received a recommendation from a subscriber and fellow caregiver (thanks Mary!) about an alternative to traditional caffeine she'd discovered that has worked wonders for her. She had been advised to limit or remove traditional caffeine from her diet and she was in need of an alternative for those mornings when she was needed a little kick to get moving.

What she found was Four Sigmatic Mushroom Coffee. It contains cordyceps mushrooms which stimulate the brain like traditional caffeine without the crash that often comes with it. She's been using it for the past month or so and reports she's now a super fan!

I'm pretty caffeine sensitive and really hate the crash that comes with drinking caffeine, especially after noon, so I had to give it a try. I tried it the other day when I was running late in the morning and had to skip my morning coffee at home.

It's a mild tasting instant coffee you add to a cup of hot water. If you didn't know mushrooms were in it, you'd never know by tasting it. I noticed the "caffeine" effect was slower to set in than traditional coffee, but once it did, it lasted for several hours and I never felt a crash as it wore off.

Given the health benefits of mushrooms, and the fact that many people can't tolerate traditional caffeine due to health or medication concerns, I thought this would be a good piece of information to share. As always, research it for yourself and consult your physician first if you have specific health considerations.

I hope it offers you a healthy alternative!



## 5. A Way to Pay it Forward....To Myself

I'm writing this section while sitting in my pjs listening to my coffee pot getting down to business. The house is quiet. A fire is kicking off in the wood stove. My dog is asleep in his chair across the room from me. I'm surrounded by quiet all except for the morning sounds of our house. It's a slow start to the day and one of my favorite things.

I make a point to do this especially on the weekends to recharge and feel a different morning routine at least one day a week. It ranks up there with waking up without an alarm clock. (Decadent when you live by one all week long.)

I found this quote a few years ago and it has really stuck with me. (There seems to be a theme of that in this month's newsletter, doesn't there?)



I just love that! We always think of paying it forward to someone else, but rarely ourselves.

I especially love that the “something” can be anything! It can be a decision, a daily practice, a boundary you set in place, a to-do you delegate or delete all together, a walk you take for your mental and physical health.

It can be something you start doing (starting one day a week at a slower pace) or stop doing (Realizing you don't have to do everything on your own and ask for help).

It can have a short term impact (sleeping in today so you're ready for a full day tomorrow) or a long term one (ending a toxic relationship).

It might require bravery, presence of mind to recognize it, courage, a free spirit, commitment, or giving ourselves permission. It can be small and quiet or bold and life changing.

The importance is in seeing the value of paying it forward to your future self. What can you do today to make things better for yourself tomorrow?

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That's a wrap for this month, friends.

If one piece of information here supports, empowers, or makes you feel less alone in your caregiving journey, I am beyond thrilled.

As you implement any of the ideas, please share that with me. I'd love to hear from you! I certainly don't have all the answers, but together we get stronger and smarter.

If you know someone who would enjoy this newsletter, please share it! The more the merrier!

Also, if I can support you in your own caregiving journey, please message me.

I'd love to hear your story.

I'm always here to remind you that you are not alone and you can do difficult things.

Wishing you peace in all that is and strength to keep you moving forward.

Barbara Corley, CCC  
Certified Caregiver Consultant  
hello@corleycaregiverconsulting.com



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