

# **CAREGIVER 'S BILL OF RIGHTS**

by Audrey W. Chase

As caregivers, we have needs too. Sometimes with all we have to do, we forget to take some time to smell the roses. We need to take time for ourselves in order to maintain our own physical health and emotional equilibrium. If you can't do these things for yourself; consider, who will care for you if you become ill? Who will care for the elderly person in your care? Here is a reminder to post in a prominent place, the refrigerator door or some place you see frequently.

## **I HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

Take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It gives me the capability of taking better care of my elder.

Seek help from others, even though my elder may object. I recognize the limit of my own endurance and strength.

Maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person for whom I care. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person and I have the right to do some things for myself

Get angry, be depressed and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

Reject any attempt by my elder to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.

Receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance for what I do, from my elders and my family, as long as I offer these qualities in return.

Take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my elder.

Protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my elder no longer needs help.

Courtesy of Jim Schuster, Elder Law Attorney. 24330 Lahser, Southfield, MI 248.356.3500