

Dear Reader,

Having been the primary caregiver to my mother in her battle with lung cancer, I understand the multitude of tasks and emotions you cope with regularly. I hope that this booklet will help you navigate the maze.

While my main memory of the experience is the feeling of total exhaustion, I know that I made it through with the support of friends who cared about us both.

These tips will show you ways to ask for, and receive, the support you need. They come from personal experience and from hundreds of caregivers who attended the support groups I facilitated after Mom's death.

People around the world are using these booklets in the following ways:

- *As a "thank you" to customers*
- *As an incentive for completing a survey*
- *As a give away at health fairs and trade shows*
- *As a way of keeping in touch*
- *As a gift to say "I am thinking of you"*

However this booklet found its way to you, it is perfect. And perhaps you will pass it on to someone else who needs it or, better yet, purchase your own as a gift to them.

We can all use a little help from our friends when it comes to coping with the emotions of caregiving.

Please let me know how Life Preservers can assist you in staying afloat and about your experience with using the tips in this booklet.

*All is well,
Ann Leach*



DISCOVERING BURIED TREASURE: FINDING INFORMATION

Read about your loved one's condition so that you will be well prepared to talk to doctors and others on the medical team. Keep a notebook to record questions that you have for them, and the answers they give you.

Seek out a second opinion for an initial diagnosis or invasive procedure. Ask the doctor, "If this were your mother/father, husband/wife, son or daughter, what would you do?"

Set up a separate space for the legal, financial and informational materials you receive regarding your loved one's care. Maintain a portable file system so you can carry copies with you.

Keep dimes and quarters on hand for copy machines. You'll be copying a lot of information from insurance companies and others, so that loose change will come in handy!

Record patient behaviors and feelings in order to give the medical team a complete picture of their comfort or discontent. It is possible that this information can help them know when to increase pain medication, address anxiety issues or determine a treatment schedule.

Identify a helpful caring professional who can be your "go to" person for answers to questions you may have. This person can explain unfamiliar medical terms, give guidance on area resources and address your concerns.