

## **The Invisible Care Giver**

Welcome to my newsletter, a place of healing, hope and health. My sincere wish is that you will find something here to shine light on the dark spots in your life. "Luminarium" means, "light". The warming, soothing, clarifying, healing, enlightening light of perception, awareness and growth. Turn then, like a flower toward the light.



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## **When Did You Stop Being You?**

Ever wonder when you stopped being you? Oftentimes, when people marry and become parents, their identity is cloaked in those roles. Care-givers sometimes feel that the essence of who they are, as people, has faded into the background. So absorbed are they in their roles of nurturing others that we neglect or even abuse ourselves! It is hard for people to take themselves back. It feels selfish. We're taught to feel like that. However, it isn't selfish to nurture, grow and cherish yourself. If the person raising the children is unhappy, then they are modeling unhappiness, self-sacrifice and lack of self worth to the children. Teaching them that they can expect other's needs to take a back seat to their own. This just perpetuates an unhappy situation.

### **Some Tough Questions:**

- Do you feel your partner values you as a person?
- Do your kids respect you?
- Do you feel like an extension of your partner?
- Are you too busy to care for yourself?
- Are you doing what is expected of you, but somehow you do not feel happy?
- Do you blame yourself for being unhappy?
- Does your partner respect you?
- How do your kids speak to you? Is it with respect or with demands?
- Do you long for your partner's attention?
- Do your thoughts and feelings matter to those around you?
- Does your partner ask for your opinion?
- Do you know any more, who you are?

An unhappy answer to any of the above is not uncommon.

Raising kids is hard on a couple, and on the care-giver in particular. It's common to slide into a busy state of being "less". But, it isn't good for the care-giver. It isn't good for the kids and it isn't good for the relationship. Many people resist asking these kinds of questions, afraid that they might lead to relationship trouble. The best thing you can do for your relationship is to work on it. Work on your needs so you can more effectively work on the needs of others in your care. The best role models for children are two well-adjusted parents. That doesn't mean you need to be perfect. Just striving to better the situation teaches them a lot. It took years to slide into a troubled state. Your family may not want things to change at this point. Can things be turned around now? YES! I am not saying it is your fault; it is just the way things may have evolved. Before you can change the way things are, you first need to see clearly and decide if that is the way you want things to be. It is so helpful to make these discoveries with a trained counsellor rather than friends. Friends will take sides, causing friction in the family. Complaining to your family will just stiffen resistance to change and cause resentment. An objective and supportive counsellor can help you see clearly and make changes in the most productive ways. It lightens the burden, relieves the stress and diffuses resentment that can otherwise poison relationships. It's your life; let's find a way for you to live it as fully as possible.