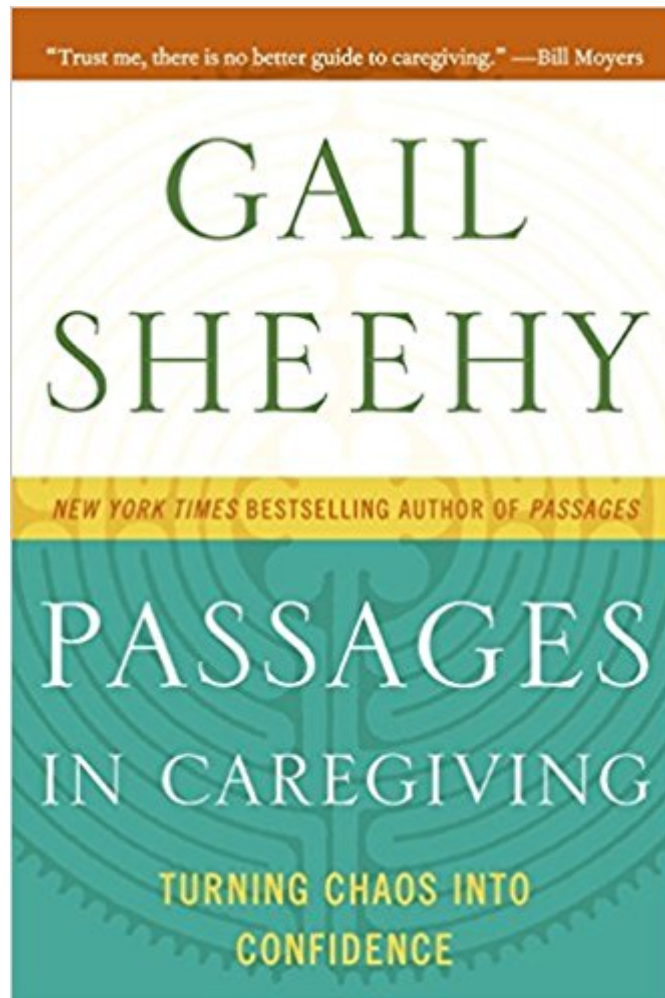




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# Passages In Caregiving: Turning Chaos Into Confidence



## Synopsis

“One of those rare books that can drastically lighten even the heaviest of loads.” —Rosalynn Carter  
“Trust me: there is no better guide to caregiving.” —Bill Moyers  
Gail Sheehy, author of the groundbreaking *Passages* “which was a New York Times bestseller for more than three years” now brings us *Passages in Caregiving*. In this essential guide, the acclaimed expert on the now aging Baby Boomer generation outlines nine crucial steps for effective, successful family caregiving, turning chaos into confidence during this most crucial of life stages.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Like the 44 million other Americans caring for an ill or elderly person in their homes, prolific writer Sheehy looked after her late husband Clay Felker while he battled cancer for more than a decade. Having already chronicled almost every stage in baby boomer life (most notably in 1976's *Passages*), Sheehy offers an empathetic, well-researched guide to an unfamiliar, often scary role to which boomers are being initiated, outlining eight stages of caregiving from "Shock and Mobilization" to "The Long Good-Bye." Along with doctors and nurses, home caregivers have become the backbone of the (admittedly broken) U.S. health-care system, and an increasingly important part of a patient's decision-making team. As such, Sheehy contends, caregivers are in desperate need of knowledge and support, and this resourceful manifesto provides it, including practical steps to take, strategies for each point of care, likely obstacles for both patient and caregiver, and a lucid explanation of what's to come: "My intention is to illuminate the challenges and rewards inherent in the caregiving passage—to identify universal patterns in the chaos and give

the journey a form that makes sense." Sheehy achieves her goal ably, providing a steady beacon during a time of great sadness and overwhelming responsibility. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Thrust into the daunting and unexpected role of caregiver when her husband, editor Clay Felker, was diagnosed with cancer, Sheehy was dismayed to find herself lost in the labyrinthine, illogical, and often contradictory world of health care. When second opinions gave way to thirds, and innumerable insurance forms were completed only to have the claims rejected, Sheehy realized she needed answers, assistance, and attitude. For a tenacious reporter like Sheehy, getting answers was second nature but finding competent help and learning how to put things into perspective werenâ™t as easy. Sheehy reports on her interviews with professionals in traditional and alternative medicine, registered nurses and home health aides, and diverse individuals who also found themselves overwhelmed by caring for an ailing loved one, and she distills the process into eight stages, from the shock of the first diagnosis to the delicacy of saying good-bye, bringing her inimitable, analytical approach to a situation no one wants to face. Supportive and reassuring, Sheehy provides encouraging and practical information for both patient and caregiver in one of the most comprehensive and trustworthy resources a family can ask for when facing one of lifeâ™s most disheartening challenges. --Carol Haggas --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If a person only bought one book regarding the caregiver's journey, this is the best book to purchase. Gail Sheehy knows of what she writes, having served her husband, as his primary caregiver, throughout his long debilitating illness. The book is replete with personal examples of challenges, struggles, joys, and all of the realities that the huge impact a serious illness has on financial resources and assets. Many lists of resources available for various serious health concerns are included in this well researched work. This is the most helpful book related to care giving that I have ever purchased. Having served as the primary caregiver for my husband, as he continues the PD journey of over 20 years, I relate personally to the message Sheehy expresses so aptly. I learned of this book through a Parkinson's support group. This is a resource one can return to many times for information and encouragement. I have shared this book with other friends who are also involved in caring for a loved one.

Passages in Caregiving is a very informative book for people in caregiving positions. The author's

personal history is a bit lengthy, but necessary for the reader to understand the reason for this book being written. The book will resonate with anyone who is or has been a caregiver.

Excellent book detailing the various stages and issues around difficult and/or terminal health issues for caregivers & loved ones. Also full of specific resource references and samples from real people's experiences. Another great and helpful book by Gail Sheehy.

Anyone who knows someone or who is in a position of caregiving should read this book.....it is excellent.....it is so much more than just her experience....the guy who gave it the poor rating for that issue was an idiot, and obviously didn't read the whole book.....a must read for everyone who has aging parents.

For the way the emotional journey was told, I would give it five stars. As a caregiving guide, I would give it three stars. I was the primary caregiver for two family members (one for five years and the other for seven years) and I cried often as I read about the author's feelings and thought processes regarding her seventeen journey as her husband's caregiver. One of the most useful parts for me were "Protect Yourself From Patient Backlash" (p.184) that explains, scientifically, why a patient may act hostile and and ungrateful; this helped me not feel so hurt in retrospect by the behavior I witnessed. "Palliative Care Versus Hospice" was also very informative (p.319). Being wealthy, Ms. Sheehy had access to people such as elder law attorneys and geriatric care managers as well as the means with which she could hire a staff to care for her husband around the clock. Many of us are not that fortunate to have access to such assistance. She explained how Medicare doesn't cover long-term care, and how some people spend down their assets in order to qualify for Medicaid. She implies that there is a six month deadline (p.282) when on hospice to die. I know from personal experience that is not true (both my terminally ill family members were on hospice). When a doctor gives "a six months or less to live" prognosis it qualifies a patient to get hospice. The doctor will do a re-evaluation every six months which allows the patient to be "re-certified" and continue to get hospice care if needed. I personally knew cancer patients who were on hospice for a couple of years before passing away. There is no "death deadline" while on hospice. The love story between her and her husband is beautiful and moving. It actually helped me move forward in my grieving process. Just keep in mind that some of her caregiving guide's suggestions are impossible, for those who are not wealthy, to implement.

As we age, our bodies will change. Sometimes its physical, sometimes mental. This can happen at any time too...one need not be old to have some debilitating thing occur. It can happen to a spouse, a parent, a child, even yourself. Suddenly the world is turned upside down for the person afflicted, and for those that suddenly find themselves in the position of the caregiver. It is scary to be in either position. The person afflicted has to deal with the loss of certain abilities which will usually have a negative effect on their physical capabilities, memory and thought processes, and self image. The person suddenly in the caregiver role can become overwhelmed by the changes occurring in their 'charge', and of all the tasks now thrust upon them. Gail went through all of this as she suddenly had to become caregiver for her husband. She fortunately had the abilities to record the 'stages' of her travels in her caregiver role, and put them down in this book so that others like myself will have some idea of what to expect and ways to deal with them. The caregiver needs to remember there is help out there for them, and should actively seek this help. Caregiving cannot be done alone. Michael P.

Have given this one to two different friends who are in care-giving roles. They both found it helpful, and now they don't feel so alone.

One day many of us will be caregivers. Sometimes this happens gradually and others suddenly. Regardless, it is a life defining change to what you do day by day and how you react to this change. Ms. Sheehy draws from her own experience of primary care giver for her husband over a 9 year battle with cancer. It doesn't have to be cancer, it can be any debilitating situation. As she tells her story, she incorporates the stories of many others who are going thru similar high stress times. She provides scores of resources that are available nation-wide. She lets you know that upsetting things that you feel and you hear are not unique. She gives scores of tips on situations, how to handle them and where to get help. Bottom line: you cannot play God and you cannot do this alone. Read this book with highlighter and post-it notes by your side.

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