

Identity Theft: Rediscovering Ourselves After Stroke **By Debra E. Meyerson, PhD with Danny Zuckerman**

Chapter 8: Lean On

1. Beyond your own prioritization of self-care as a carepartner, it's important to recognize that “supporters need support, too—encourage those in the ‘outer rings’ of your support network to help anyone who is closer in.” (p. 101)
 - a. Who are the people in your own outer rings on whom you rely for support?
 - b. How does it feel for you to ask for help?
 - c. What has the response been from family members and friends if you have requested their help or support?
 - d. What makes it easier to ask for help?
 - e. Has your support network changed over time?
 - i. If so, how?
 - f. Do you have any unmet support needs at this time?
 - i. If so, can you think of any possible ways these needs might be met?

2. The question “How can I help?” may unwittingly add to a survivor’s burden. Debra writes that making a specific care suggestion “both shows thoughtful support and saves them the energy and discomfort of making a response and finding things to ask for.” (p. 97)
 - a. Can you think of concrete ways someone could help you or your survivor at this time? For example, providing you and your family with a meal? Helping clean your home or walk a pet?
 - b. How can you/someone share this list with your support network?
 - c. If your network lives far apart, are there meaningful ways that they can offer support from a distance?
 - d. How can you show gratitude to those who have helped you after your survivor’s stroke?

3. Consider the questions “How are you doing?” and “How are you doing

today?"

- a. What is the difference between them?
 - b. Why might a carepartner or a survivor prefer to be asked, "How are you doing today?"
 - i. Do you have a preference?
 - c. How ARE you doing today?
4. Debra writes, "Immediately after my stroke, I avoided most social interactions, so even some close friends didn't see me for a while...some, either out of discomfort or an intentional desire to not treat me as just a stroke survivor, didn't even acknowledge the situation. This is isolating." (p.96)
- a. Is it important to you for people to acknowledge that you as a carepartner have gone through something life changing?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - b. Is it important to you for people to acknowledge that your survivor has gone through something life changing?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - c. Have you had people acknowledge your carepartner role or your survivor's stroke in ways that were particularly meaningful?
 - i. What made them stand out?
 - d. Have you had people say something about your survivor's stroke or your carepartner role that you found upsetting?
 - i. If so, what was said and why was it upsetting or hurtful?
 - ii. Did you attempt to explain your reaction to the person in the moment or at another time?
 - e. Can you think of several ways to help people understand the types of interactions that may be more helpful to you and your survivor?