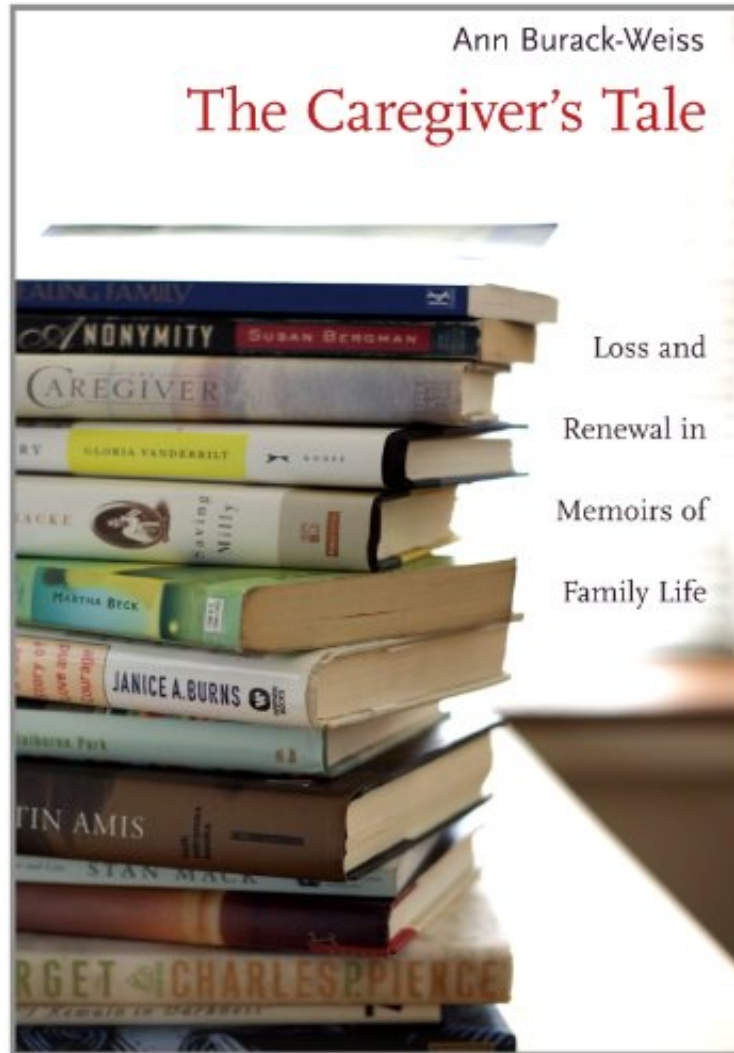


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The Caregiver's Tale: Loss and Renewal in Memoirs of Family Life

Ann Burack-Weiss

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Ann Burack-Weiss : The Caregiver's Tale: Loss and Renewal in Memoirs of Family Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Caregiver's Tale: Loss and Renewal in Memoirs of Family Life:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. PART OF THE TALE, Marion D. Cohen, author of Still the End: Memoir of a Nursing Home Wife, and of Dirty DetailsBy Marion D. CohenIt makes a lot of sense to have, in one place, a list (although not complete, but is any list ever complete?) of caregiver memoirs. Although there are sites online where such lists exist, this is more complete and goes into more detail. Many caregiving situations are considered and many caregiving relationships, and there are many interesting passages in the Introduction.The main

reason I'm rating it 4 rather than 5 stars is the emphasis on the "positive and life-enhancing" (as the author writes elsewhere) aspects of the caregiving experience. There are, I believe, "positive and life-enhancing" aspects to pretty much EVERY situation, but those, at least to me and to many of the authors of the memoirs profiled in this book, are not at all the main aspects. For me -- forced into the situations that prompted me to write my two caregiving memoirs -- the reactions to finding myself a caregiver (for 26 years) were on the order of "What?! Society really expects this of its citizens" and, increasingly, "I want out". On the back cover of the book appears: "Contrary to the common belief that caregiving is nothing more than a stressful situation to be endured, memoirs describe a life-transforming experience... The Caregiver's Tale offers insight and comfort to individuals caring for a loved one..." I don't like that! Billing this book in that way might make it more palatable to some, but it's far from an accurate picture of its subject. Throughout my horrendous and unfair experiences, I survived and thrived (I wrote, published, landed a fulltime mathprof position, and had a new baby -- not in that chronological order), and did indeed learn much. As, again, I hope I learn from all that life has to offer. HOWEVER, after "nights, lifting, and toilet", and the "dire straits" imposed on our family by society and its laws and policies, and especially after the verbal and financial abuse by my unwell spouse brought on by multiple sclerosis, I did not consider him a "loved one". And yes, for many years the situation was "nothing more than" stressful, and I couldn't wait to not have to "endure" it. And math is my first passion (besides my family); I wonder how much more math research I would have done if I hadn't been so busy being a well spouse and writing about it. This book can be helpful to many readers and/or professionals, but I'd say take some of its "message" with a grain of salt. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ann Burack-Weiss' work on caregiving and aging in literature is indispensable. By Michele Wallace This book is absolutely stunning. A great learning experience. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Care, Caregiving and the Literature of Loss By Ted Bowman This is a wonderful example of bibliotherapy. The author drew on dozens of medical memoirs and related writing to discuss care and caregiving in families with members facing medical challenges. She extends traditional definitions of caregivers by examples from the many volumes she read and reviewed for their insights on care in families. I highly recommend this book.

Ann Burack-Weiss explores a rich variety of published memoirs by authors who cared for ill or disabled family members. Contrary to the common belief that caregiving is nothing more than a stressful situation to be endured, memoirs describe a life transforming experience-self-discovery, a reordering of one's priorities, and a changed view of the world. The Caregiver's Tale offers insight and comfort to individuals caring for a loved one and is a valuable resource for all health care professionals. Identifying common themes, Burack-Weiss describes how the illness career and social meaning of cancer, dementia, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and chemical dependence affect the caregiving experience. She applies the same method to an examination of family roles: parents caring for ailing children, couples and siblings caring for one another, and adult children caring for aging parents. Jamaica Kincaid, Sue Miller, Paul Monette, Kenzaburo O, and Philip Roth are among the many authors who share their caregiving stories. Burack-Weiss provides an annotated bibliography of the more than one hundred memoirs and an accompanying chart to help readers locate those of greatest interest to them.

Readable and well researched... The Caregiver's Tale: Loss and Renewal in Memoirs of Family Life is a useful book. (Delese Wear, PhD Journal of the American Medical Association) A unique and useful contribution to the knowledge of the family caregiver experience... A useful educational tool. (Nicole A. Graves Journal of Marriage and Family) A unique and valuable contribution to the social work literature and offers a deeply human view of... of caregiving. (Michelle Estile The New Social Worker Online) About the Author Ann Burack-Weiss, a licensed clinical social worker, has taught two generations of students at the Columbia University School of Social Work. She is the coauthor of Gerontological Social Work Supervision and Social Work Practice with the Frail Elderly and Their Families: The Auxiliary Function Model. Ann Burack-Weiss, DSW is Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University's School of Social Work. She also maintains a private practice and is a frequent contributor to The New York Times. She has co-authored three books: First Encounters between Elders and Agencies, Gerontological Social Work Supervision, and Social Work Practice with the Frail Elderly and Their Families.