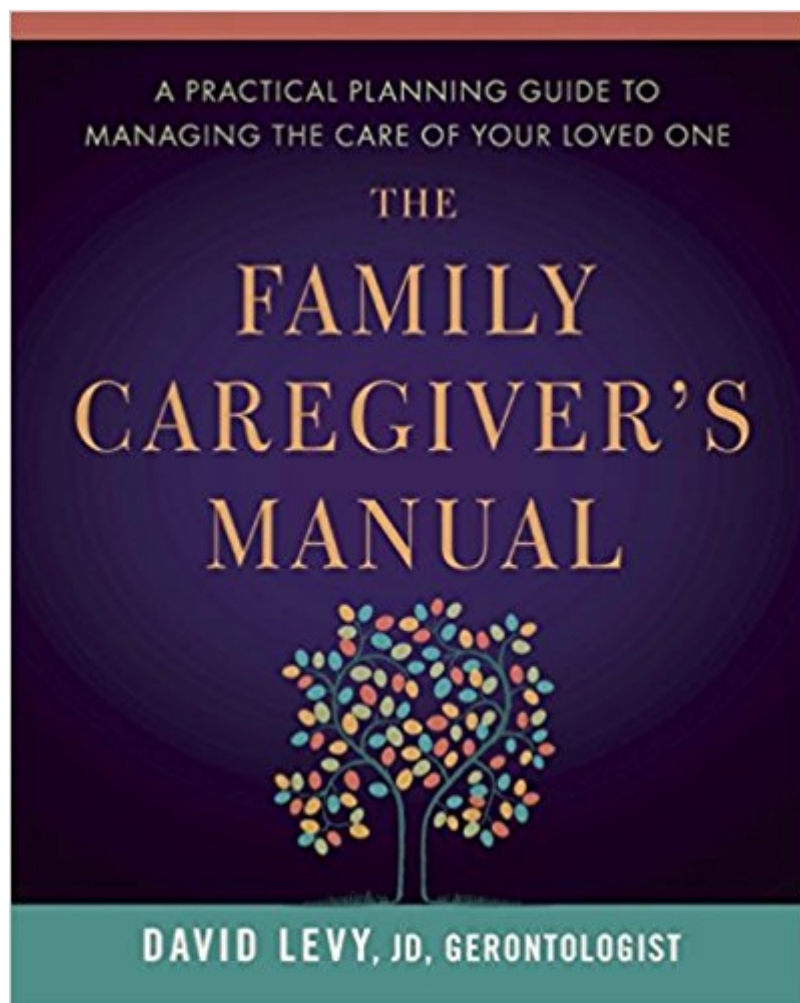




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# The Family Caregiver's Manual: A Practical Planning Guide To Managing The Care Of Your Loved One



## Synopsis

Family caregiving expert David Levy sets forth how to evaluate priorities, understand options, and face bedrock issues (legal, financial, emotional, social), so caregivers can make wise and informed decisions for their loved ones, while gaining peace of mind from knowing they did the best they could under the circumstances. Drawing from over twenty-five years of experience, Levy provides caregivers with a model for effective planning and problem-solving, focusing on the nonclinical aspects of caregiving, which are often neglected by medical professionals: Caring for young and old victims of disability, illness, and chronic disorders Finding ways to make our healthcare system work Assembling core information about a loved one's life Developing a realistic view of how much care a loved one needs today and may need tomorrow, and understanding that continuum of care Locating resources that can make a difference in making sure a loved one's care-needs are met Finding a good family caregiver support group Overcoming the roadblocks the caregiver's feelings of distress and failure can create Taking a practical approach to that overused phrase "Take care of yourself."

David Levy, JD is a gerontologist and a recognized family caregiver expert. Levy holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence and is a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator in family caregiving and a certified Family Conflict Dynamics Profiler. He facilitates weekly family caregiver support groups and counsels family caregivers, both pro bono and privately.

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## Customer Reviews

I've known David Levy for quite sometime and am confident in saying he is clearly the subject-matter expert in family caregiving dynamics. The information on these pages will be

transformative to those who read it and need the skills and suggestions offered. I highly recommend this book.

—Scott Greenberg, CEO Comforcare Senior Services and author, *Oh My God I'm Getting Older And So Is My Mom*

—David Levy has been doing caregiving since before that term was in vogue. This book can be a lifesaver and is certain to engender a higher quality of life for all who will be touched by this knowledge.

—Scott M. Solkoff, Esq., Founder of Solkoff Legal, Florida bar board-certified specialist in elder law; . . . a valuable tool that can assist and support unpaid family caregivers in their efforts to provide an improved quality of life for their loved ones while they maintain balance in their own lives. Educating family caregivers allows them to be better prepared to face the myriad of issues that arise in caregiving.

—Charles T. Corley, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

David J Levy, JD, CCE is a gerontologist and a recognized family caregiver expert. Levy holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence and is a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator in family caregiving and a certified Family Conflict Dynamics Profiler. He is the author of teaching texts and digital tools for nonclinical family caregiving, and he facilitates weekly family caregiver support groups and counsels family caregivers, both pro bono and privately. Levy consults to professionals on complicated caregiving issues arising from aging, chronic illness, dysfunctional family dynamics, and disability, and is an expert witness. He engages with leading firms in healthcare and insurance on post-acute patient homecare strategies that integrate family caregivers into effective home care management and on workplace strategies for productivity losses caused by working family caregivers. Levy has founded a number of companies, including AdultCare (1990), the first national company devoted exclusively to the support, education, and well-being of informal family caregivers with a loved one covered through long-term care insurance. He helped design the first proprietary caregiver-specific software solution support program. Levy was instrumental in the creation of the first masters-level program for geriatric care management. He has designed nonclinical family caregiver training programs and teaches train the trainer intensives. He is founder and chairman of the American Association for Caregiver Education (AACE), a fifteen-year-old nonprofit organization devoted to creating education, teaching, and training modalities for family and professional caregivers. Levy founded two consulting practices: Family Caregiver Advocacy Group, for personal caregiving support, and CaregiverReality, Inc. for support of businesses and corporations. In 2013 he created and hosted the nationally acclaimed CaregiverReality Hour, a live-streaming radio program reaching a worldwide audience. Mr. Levy is currently working on a new collection of

web-based caregiver tools and direct services. "

This manual is an absolute must for any family member who is even thinking about becoming a caregiver. If you are already in that situation, I can't tell you how much pressure it will relieve by organizing, structuring and documenting the process. The author lays out scenarios and then recommends courses of action for the hypothetical people in the scenarios. He also has an extensive section on making lists, collecting the information you will need, both by speaking to the person you will be caring for and also by assembling their documents. He also discusses writing out the caregiver's job description. Wow. That is an eye opener! I saw that as particularly helpful where some members of families will be way more involved than others. Responsibilities can be discussed and shared, and he talks about how to go about that process. This book not only speaks to the mechanics of caregiving but also addresses the intricate psychological frameworks that are constructed in these relationships. Importantly, one message that pervades the book is not to lose track of yourself. The author says to remember that acting as a caregiver is something you do and not who you are. Sometimes, for me, that was truly the heart of the matter and had to be addressed before the caregiving relationship was truly positive and effective. As a caregiver myself, I highly recommend this manual.

Chances are if you are reading this review you are a caregiver looking for answers to questions you cannot quite formulate. Or perhaps you are looking for a way to help a friend or family member who is struggling with being a caregiver and feeling overwhelmed and inadequate in this new role. Author David Levy brings an unusual depth and breadth of knowledge and experience to this book. A degree from law school has given him a professional understanding of laws important in care giving. In addition to a legal education, he is also a gerontologist and family caregiver expert. His expertise comes from both academic training and practical experience leading caregiver support groups and being a caregiver himself for more than a decade. "The Manual" is a practical book full of information essential for people getting "on the job training" across the full spectrum of care from a parent caring for an autistic child to the care of an elderly person by a spouse or adult child. Early chapters of the book define care giving roles, explain the reasons planning matters, and provide suggestions for caregivers who need help for themselves as the level of care becomes more intensive. I especially recommend the suggestions for finding the right support group, hiring someone to provide at home care, and explaining how the caregiver's role changes when someone else is providing the

care. The book sets out the need for a plan, what documentation will be necessary to gather before the need for it arises, and guidance in creating and writing a plan. There is a list of additional resources including some specific to Florida and many national organizations as well. At the end of the book is The Family Caregiver Questionnaire with questions and blank spaces to write answers and to organize information as it is gathered to create the caregiver plan. You may feel that this is one more task to complete when your schedule is already overloaded. I know from personal experience that the checklists and writing the plan work and are worth the effort. Using *The Manual* has helped me make better decisions and gives me peace of mind that I have made my decisions with the help of a professional. I recommend *The Family Caregiver's Manual* for anyone at any stage of being a family caregiver.

Excellent information on all aspects of caregiving. I especially appreciated the larger type and the examples of people facing the various challenges and situations in caring for their loved ones. The manual provides answers to questions about what to do for them, for ourselves and specifically how and where to get outside help. It has become our family's bible.

You should not be without this tool! Practical and useful information to help you survive being a caregiver. Highly recommended.

It does not meet my needs.

Packaging was great. Looking forward to reading and using the knowledge this book can give to me.

Gerontologist David Levy, JD, understands the challenges of the family caregiver. His book offers the type of organized and thorough information the conscientious caregiver yearns for, thoughtfully arranged in one volume. The writing is conversational and the book is inviting and easy to read. In addition to practical guidance, Levy offers caregivers compassion and insights, acknowledging their needs and the issues that can get in their way. This is a most helpful guide. Deborah Shouse, former family caregiver, and author of *Connecting in the Land of Dementia: Creative Activities to Explore Together*

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