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*I Need
My Space*

It's natural to want and need your own space and some freedom to Be yourself. Taking advantage of these tiny moments with related feelings of care and love is not selfish – they are about essential self care.

Ruthie Moriarty and Alan Sanson

This feeling, which comes from deep inside, is like a cry for help and is one that all care-givers come across sooner or later. In this article we focus particularly on you, the care-giver, who is supporting someone close to you.

You may feel you're out of control, running on autopilot, with no time to do anything properly. You may feel under pressure, which may come from someone else or more often is coming from you. It's a physical and emotional whirlwind.

There are many levels of care-giving, yet all have a common root - **the need to put someone else's needs before your own**. This is a precious thing to offer and yet, over time, can be draining and sometimes demoralising.

Your life may be invaded by specialists, doctors, appointments, treatments. You may be the sole care-giver, or care workers may be living with you for up

to 24 hours a day. With your brain working overtime, focussing on the person you are caring for, worry and anxiety are your constant companions.

In this article we do not go to research papers for evidence, we offer you ideas from Ruthie's real-life experiences and from care-givers we have met in our energy work. Ruthie's year following her son Rob's life changing accident is available in her book "[Go On My Son, Give it Some Welly](#)."

A quote from Ruthie "If I started to cry, I felt I'd never stop. I had to be strong, had to keep going - if I stopped then everything would fall apart. I had to learn to **surrender**, an invaluable piece of advice I was given by a dear friend." Surrender is such a powerfully emotive word yet it is really more about letting go than giving up. It's about not holding on so tightly.



HEAVY ENERGIES

Physical and emotional heavy energies can build up and sit within you. If, as a care-giver, you do not find a way to nurture yourself and replenish your own energies, you can [quickly] burnout and be unable to continue to cope or to care. It is vital to bring new, lighter, flexible, dynamic energy into your mind and body.

Two raw and heavy emotions often felt by care-givers are **guilt and fear**. Guilty of feeling you are not doing enough, not knowing what to do, that the other person is suffering and that you are not. The fear is that you will make it worse or you will get it wrong. The person you are caring for may manipulate, intentionally or not, the fear and guilt you feel. Or you may *feel* that is what is happening.

Deep down you may feel trapped, overwhelmed, tired, a need to get-away and guilty that you feel like this. That your capacity is constantly at full, whilst you are running on empty. This may feel like an inner scream of "I need my space!" or a quiet "But what about me?"

LIGHTER ENERGIES

Care-givers have told us and we, ourselves, have found that the best way to introduce these new fresher, lighter energies into your being is to start with tiny steps.

If it is safe for you to do so, (or if someone else is there to briefly help) then disengage even for a minute from your caring role to **Be You**. Vital seconds of freedom to give you that tiny bit of space to help restore yourself.

The only person who can give you this piece of space is you. It may feel very challenging at first, as it takes a mental shift to tell yourself that you can do it, that you have to do it for your well being. It takes patience with yourself, practice and a few days of doing this new thing to build it into a habit – aim to give

yourself that small bit of time each day. A wonderful, new, positive habit will appear.

One way to feel this is wonderfully summarised in this quote from a care-giver: "I'm not asking for much, just an inch of physical/emotional space around me. That, for a short time, minutes or even just seconds, nothing can penetrate, nothing can touch me and I touch nothing. I am 'unplugged.' I disappear, become invisible. And it works."

We have both had to learn how to do this. Ruthie sings either out loud if she can, or even in her head, focussing on the music and the words/sounds. Alan goes to an open door or window and, with total calm, lets his eyes and ears expand to the world outside.

QIKI IDEAS

We offer you a few practical ideas, as often it is easier to start with something rather than with a blank piece of paper. Firstly, some amazing stories from people we have met.

The power of physically being absorbed. Someone in a group told us that he had said to himself after the session... "I realised I actually gave myself time to be myself. It was unexpected and wonderful to know I can do that."

The power of spontaneity and music. We've always used music with our groups and, on one occasion, the Blue Danube started playing. A couple immediately and instinctively got up and waltzed around the room. So beautiful. Later, the lady came over to us and said "That is the first time we have danced in 10 years since my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's – thank you." It still makes us tingle to share her experience.

The power of being absorbed in your mind. A lady at a care support group once asked what we did, she said "ooh that sounds like being mindful I have tried that and can't do it." We responded with a simple question: "What do you love to do?" She thought,



then in intricate detail told us (and showed us with her hands) how she decorates cakes with her delicate hand-made flowers of icing. After a few minutes she returned and said "Oh my word I just did it didn't I." We all smiled.

The power of giving yourself permission. Take a little time to [watch one of the very short movies](#) we have produced for you of nature in slow motion. You may also enjoy some lovely, gentle, caring-for-yourself [Qiki Feel-Moves](#). Feel-Moves are our way of expressing that all things within you start with a feeling, which causes you to move (or to be emotionally moved) and that movement creates a different feeling. When you watch or play along with any of these movies, aim to feel your feelings.



• **Clearing the fog** - Or clearing anything which is stopping you seeing/feeling beyond your immediate situation. See the clear blue sky, which is always there. Feel the expanse and freedom it offers you.



• **An Angel's touch** - Or the touch of a loved one...such gentleness, the softest touch, with such love. Give yourself permission to receive such unconditional love.



• **Self hug** - Care-givers can often feel very alone and isolated, this feelmove is a beautiful way to soothe yourself and to physically offer yourself a moment of care.

The power and beauty of your own affirmations. Take a minute every now and then to write your own positive affirmation(s), maybe produce a string of them like Ruthie's.



Writing your own affirmation is much more powerful for you than reading those from other people - as they will come from your heart, are personal and very meaningful to you. When you have some on your string, allow them to fall open. You'll be amazed at how appropriate the one is for you which shows itself at that moment. If you find it hard to write them for yourself, try to imagine what you would say/advise someone else in a situation like yours.

If you've been taking these small moments for creating your space we are sure you will think of ideas to add to your pot of ways to lighten your energies. Then, if other people suggest ideas, you may find you are more open to accepting such opportunities to step away for a short time, from your role as a care-giver. Maybe an outing or activity that, had you not started this process of self awareness, you may never have noticed nor dared to take.

With a positive mind, do something you love that absorbs you. Listen to your intuition, your inner you. It may not always be possible to do it physically at the moment you **need** it, at these times do it in your mind. Or sometimes if it's possible you may have to step out of the room just for a few moments.

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Learn more about authors Ruthie Moriarty and Alan Sanson by visiting www.qikigong.co.uk