

Grits and Grit

Category: Grit

written by R. Lynn Barnett | January 4, 2025

My husband and I took care of my Alzheimer's-ridden mom for five years, and as any caregiver knows, we all have had to develop "true grit." "Grit" to me is inner mettle and perseverance.

Any disease is difficult to deal with, but with Alzheimer's, you're often dealing with an ungrateful stranger, due to the changes in the brain. The "stranger" part didn't bother me as much as the "ungrateful" part did.

I've helped strangers along the way, and they've helped me, and we all appreciated the efforts of others. But when my mom had Alzheimer's, her insults would fly, and so would I. My "flight" would be to go for a walk to get a grip, if Hubby were watching her. When she'd criticize my cooking, as in, "The grits were too gritty," I just had to grin and bear it. "True grit" indeed.

I knew it was the disease talking and not really my mom. And if I forgot, my husband would remind me. My "real" mom would never insult anyone about anything, let alone me. When I'd ask her if she wanted chicken salad for lunch or grilled cheese, two of her favorites, she'd sometimes tell me to "drop dead and go someplace warm." The first time she said this, I was appalled, but by the tenth time, I told her I better bring sunscreen and a hat.

As I write this, it's early morning, time for breakfast. Grits anyone?

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