

# Lost and Found

Category: Loss

written by R. Lynn Barnett | July 13, 2025

My husband and I took care of my mom for five years, when she had Alzheimer's. She could get lost walking out the door, which is why I was always her shadow. But I felt lost too: whom was I dealing with, hour by hour, day by day, due to the changes in her Alzheimer's-riddled brain. I felt lost and confused by our new puzzling reality.

One thing that helped me cope was humor. Sometimes my mother would say something funny, like when she wanted to tell someone that she had pounded the pavement after college, looking for an accounting job in New York City. But what she said was, "I walked the streets of New York City, if you know what I mean." Yes, my mom might have been a sweet talker, but she wasn't a street walker!

I started jotting down my mother's comments and expressions: the funny, the not-so funny, and everything in-between. The more I wrote, the less lost I felt, but at the time, I couldn't tell you why. Writing just felt cathartic.

These anecdotes coalesced into a book: *My Mother Has Alzheimer's and My Dog Has Tapeworms: A Caregiver's Tale*. When I 'd give speeches about the book, other caregivers would tell me how they could relate to my experiences. My writing helped other people, which in turn, helped me. We all walked the same walk. Lost, and then found.

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