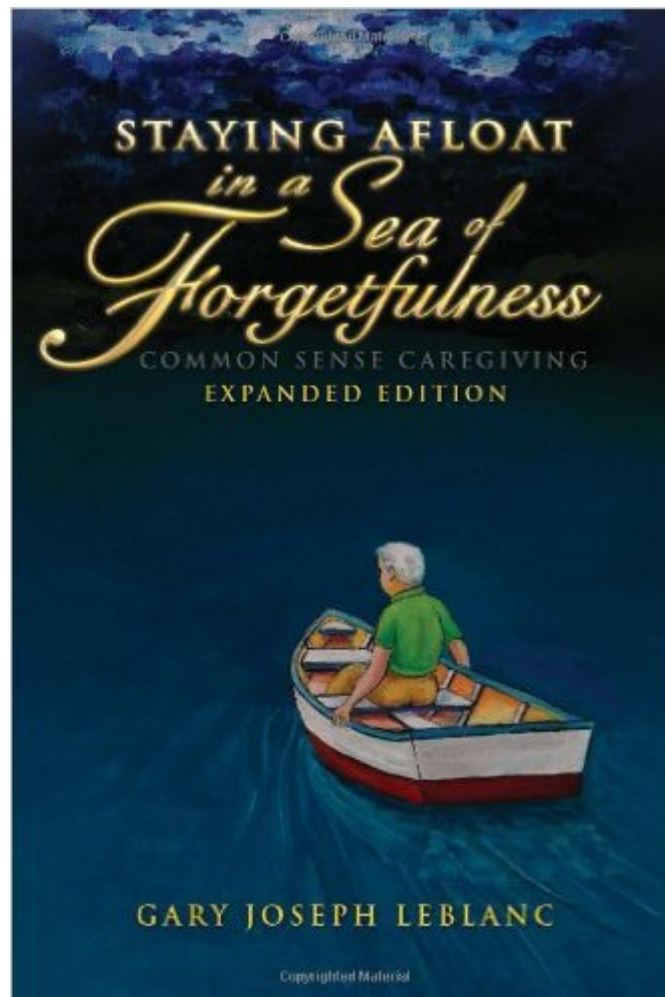


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# Staying Afloat In A Sea Of Forgetfulness: Common Sense Caregiving Expanded Edition



## Synopsis

When my father was first diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I read everything I could get my hands on about the disease. Right off the bat I could tell if it was written by a physician, pharmaceutical company or even a nursing home. When caregivers are looking for help, the last thing they need is medical text so complex they already forgot what they read by the time it's laid back down. This is what got me started on writing about common sense caregiving, which turned into a weekly column and now into this book. My goal is to make this book as "caregiver friendly" as possible. Sharing my triumphs and hardships from my plus three-thousand day campaign in dealing with the disease of Alzheimer's and the world of memory-impairment.

## Book Information

Paperback: 332 pages

Publisher: Xlibris; Expanded edition (July 5, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1462877052

ISBN-13: 978-1462877058

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (97 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #513,072 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #94 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Aging > Medical Conditions & Diseases](#) #308 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Dementia](#) #97148 in [Books > Textbooks](#)

## Customer Reviews

My name is Rick Phelps. I have EOAD. Was diagnosed early last year. I can no longer read. I can, but cannot understand what I have read after three paragraphs or so. My wife reads important things to me. We are lucky enough to know Gary. And his book is nothing short of great. He covers so many topics. It's not only a great read, but its an excellant reference book, to go back to over and over again. Gary and I met through a FB site, Memory People. Which I started last November. I have said many times every once in a while someone will come along who will change the way we look at this horrible disease we call Alzheimer's...Gary is one of those people. We are better just by knowing him. His book is a must read.

Gary Le Blanc knows what he's talking about. He lived it. Caring for his Dad for ten years, making

that loving commitment to see things through, come what may. As a caregiver of a loved one with dementia, you are thrown into a raging sea of chaos and information, and expected to sink or swim. You are usually exhausted, adrift and feeling very isolated. Suddenly you are caring for one whose every minute must be monitored, or they might wander off. You must learn to slow down, take each moment as it comes, and be ready for rough waters. And yet you must project a positive attitude, because people with dementia are very sensitive. *Staying Afloat In A Sea of Forgetfulness* is full of common sense that only a caregiver could write. Every dementia patient is different, but there are common experiences that make the caregiver feel calmer. If you read nothing else, read this. The book is designed as a series of articles. I refer to it often. Ruthie R

Gary LeBlanc's indispensable vade mecum for caregivers and all who relate of necessity or otherwise to Alzheimer's patients and those with similar conditions is truly a Godsend. In plain English he has covered virtually every contingency you will face as you go down the long, long road of caring both for the patient and for your own state of mind as mounting difficulties arise. When he says that "Routine" is key in all of an Alzheimer's caregiver-patient relationship, he knows precisely what that means and how it works because he saw to the needs of his own father through eight years of the disease. Having found nothing whatsoever of use in the literature, he became determined to provide caregivers and all concerned with the insight he found he had to have to perform this very human task. The result is his straightforward and, here and there, inspiring - "Staying Afloat in a Sea of Forgetfulness." Robt. F.S. Ballentine May 22, 2010

Gary captures the endless challenges and unfailing patience needed to care for a loved one with Alzheimer's. This book can also help anyone caring for an ageing loved one because it discusses legal obligations, administering meds, therapy, keeping a routine, dealing with the loss of the loved one and much more. An easy to read book and a great ongoing reference book.

This book by columnist Gary Joseph LeBlanc documents his 3,000-plus days as the primary caregiver for his father, who had Alzheimer's. It's a common-sense approach to caregiving he calls, *STAYING AFLOAT IN A SEA OF FORGETFULNESS*. Gary's father died of Alzheimer's, but other diseases such as Parkinson's or conditions like veterans' post traumatic stress disorder also involve memory impairment and behavioral problems that test the most patient loving caregivers. He says, "When caregivers are looking for help, the last thing they need is medical text so complex they already forget what they read by the time it's laid back down." You won't have this problem with

Gary's book. The chapters are short; the text, in large-size font, and the language, caregiver-friendly. Gary originally wrote a column for his local newspaper about the daily ups and downs in taking care of his father. He chose 65 of those articles to form his step-by-step book to help others who are companions of those entering into the "murky waters" of mental impairment and a debilitating disease. His goal was to make this book an easy read. He does that, but he also adds layers of insight, empathy and wisdom from recognizing that point when a caregiver becomes burned out and needs respite to describing the ongoing grieving process that begins as the loved one "whittles away to a twig" until actual death and thereafter. All through the book Gary inserts associated poems and pearls of wisdom. One is by Gary himself: Have you ever been cruising through your day when you suddenly hear lyrics from a song that stick with you for awhile? Well, this Beatle song came on the radio and I heard them singing, 'I get by with a little help from my friends.' It got me thinking; through a campaign of caregiving, you need to always be grateful for all the little things people do to try to help.

This book does indeed have good stuff. However there is a lot here that was less informative and more chatty than I was looking for. Also because I had been subscribing to the author's email newsletters I was disappointed to find I had read most of the book already! For someone newly diagnosed with Alzheimer's or with a loved one newly diagnosed, this book can shed light on what to expect. But please remember (as the author himself will remind you) this is one person's experience and not everyone will go through it the same way. This is a fast read, so you'll get an overview quickly. But this is not a book to keep on the shelf as a "reference" for later if that is what you are after.

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