



## **Tough... Tough Times... Tough Decisions: Easing the Transition to Aged Care for All the Family**

**Rita Merienne**

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*With the voice of a friend, Merienne shares lessons learned from caring for her father.*

*Tough... Tough Times... Tough Decisions: Easing the Transition to Aged Care for All the Family*, by Rita Merienne, helps families, particularly adult children, make a healthy transition for elderly members. This topic is powerful and relevant. The elderly population is growing, and care options are expanding. It's a trying, important time that almost no one feels prepared for. With the voice of a friend, Merienne shares lessons learned from caring for her father.

The book provides straightforward wisdom on fundamental topics such as adapting to new roles, caring for loved ones who are far away, grief (even before a death), establishing a new normal, and dealing with guilt and frustration. In all these topics, Merienne's goal is to equip caregivers with the knowledge and skills to make an emotionally healthy as well as physically healthy transition for their loved ones.

While the practical guidance and encouragement offered here are vital, the most valuable aspect of this book is that it gives family and caregivers confidence in their abilities to make good decisions and to do the right thing. It's comforting to know that even though a decision is hard, it can still be the right choice. By sharing her own struggles and doubts, Merienne helps free others who are going through similar experiences.

Each brief chapter (there are twenty-nine chapters in fewer than 170 pages) contains affirmations and a list of "If I only knew..." statements, which summarize the information and make it easy to digest and use—something valuable during such a stressful time. Merienne truly understands the strain of caregiving, and has kept that in mind as she crafted this book.

Each chapter also suggests essential oils from Young Living Essential Oils. The book has a very brief introduction about how to use the oils, but many people will need more background to understand the purpose and power of essential oils. Additionally, the cover, title, and back cover don't suggest that essential oils will be a key component of the book.

The cover is bright, but the featured photo is a bit grainy. The interior layout is basic but clear. The back matter lists the author's Aged Care with Ease programs and classes, but listing some additional, accessible-any-time resources (such as financial aid organization, advocacy groups, and extensive checklists) could be helpful for those who pick up this book when tough choices are frighteningly imminent.

*Tough... Tough Times... Tough Decisions* shows how love and loss go alongside each other.

MELISSA WUSKE (March 2, 2015)

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