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80% of Caregivers Report Strain on Their Marriages

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Caring.com and the 'marriage doctors' share tips on how to keep love alive while caring for aging parents

SAN MATEO, Calif., Feb. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- Eighty percent of baby boomers caring for an aging parent say that it has put a strain on their marriage. This insight is one of many garnered from a new research study conducted by Caring.com to measure the impact of caregiving on spousal relationships.

The Caring.com study of baby boomers caring for aging parents uncovered the following:

- 80% of baby boomers reported strains on their relationships.
- 46% of baby boomers stated that caregiving damaged their romantic relationships.
- 25% of divorced baby boomers said caregiving played a major role in their divorce.
- Baby boomers who are working full-time, are providing financial assistance to aging parents, and/or have aging parents living with them are at the greatest risk of marital strain.

The new insights on how stress affects marriage among caregivers have also been used to develop resources for those caring for an aging parent, including how to detect signs of stress in their marriages, as well as marriage tips to help caregiving couples make it work. The new content is supported by the "marriage doctors," Drs. Charles and Elizabeth Schmitz, authors of the award-winning book *Golden Anniversaries: The Seven Secrets of Successful Marriage*.

"Raising children is a challenge, but caring for aging parents can be an even greater challenge," said Dr. Elizabeth Schmitz. "The time spent caring for an aging parent can take a serious toll on the caregiver's relationship with their spouse. By providing relationship tips and pointing out warning signs, Caring.com is helping to nurture caregivers in a meaningful way by helping them keep their relationships strong."

Drs. Charles and Elizabeth Schmitz have worked with married couples for more than 25 years and have interviewed thousands of couples around the world to discover the secrets of successful marriages and to understand how to keep love alive during challenging times. With Valentine's Day right around the corner, Caring.com is working with the "marriage doctors" to offer helpful tips on how to infuse a little nurturing and romance back into a relationship.

"Our study of successfully married couples over more than two decades reveals that caring for aging parents is yet another challenge they are capable of dealing with, because the strength of their relationship carries them through the good times and the bad," said Dr. Charles Schmitz.

Following are some helpful tips from the "marriage doctors" for coping with the challenges of caring for aging parents while maintaining and strengthening your marriage:

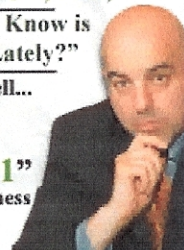
1. Talk openly with each other about feelings, emotions, and stresses as they relate to your care of aging parents.
2. Make a concerted effort every day to keep the flame of your love affair

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with each other alive.

3. Approach all financial challenges with teamwork and open communication.
4. Don't blame each other when things get tough, since casting blame never solved a problem.
5. Don't wallow in self-pity; it's a wasted emotion.
6. Enhance your love relationship by providing each other occasional time for privacy and solitude.
7. Remember that the simple things matter in marriage, and they need to be practiced each day.

"The relationship between husband and wife trumps everything else. If they continue to strengthen their relationship with each other, their marriage will survive the enormous challenges associated with caring for aging parents," said Dr. Charles Schmitz.

Caregivers can find marriage tips, information on how stress affects marriage, or to chat with other caregivers about their caregiving journey on Caring.com.

Methodology

The Caring.com Marriage Stress Survey was conducted January 8-15, 2009, by Caring.com. More than 300 respondents completed the online survey. Survey results and demographics can be found at Caring.com.

About Drs. Charles and Elizabeth Schmitz

For the past 25 years, Drs. Charles and Elizabeth Schmitz have been referred to as the "marriage doctors"--a term given them by one of their early workshop participants. The doctors are experienced public speakers and educators and have delivered more than 1,000 presentations, speeches, and workshops to widely diverse audiences, as intimate as 20 people and as many as 10,000. They have conducted hundreds of interviews with television, radio, and print media, receiving some 60 national, state, and regional awards for their work. They have published nearly 350 professional articles, manuscripts, books, and scholarly papers; worked with foreign governments; and interviewed couples throughout the world. Their latest book, *Golden Anniversaries: The Seven Secrets of Successful Marriage*, won the Mom's Choice Awards 2009 Gold Medal for Most Outstanding Relationships and Marriage Book and the INDIE Book Awards Gold Medal for Best 2008 Relationship Book. Dr. Charles Schmitz is Dean of the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and is a longtime professor of counseling and family therapy. Through their company, *Successful Marriage Reflections, LLC*, the "marriage doctors" are committed to sharing what they have learned from their 25 years of research and their own 42 years of marriage together. Their goal is to help reduce the high divorce rate in America and the resultant terrible costs in human tragedy and emotional devastation associated with marriages and relationships that fail.

About Caring.com

Caring.com is a community and content website that provides people who are caring for aging parents with time-saving information to help them make better decisions. Founded in 2007 by a team of people who have taken care of their own aging parents, Caring.com is a free resource to users and is supported by advertisers. Caring.com is backed by leading venture investors DCM and Split Rock Partners. Caring.com is headquartered in San Mateo, California, and can be reached at <http://www.caring.com>.

SOURCE Caring.com

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