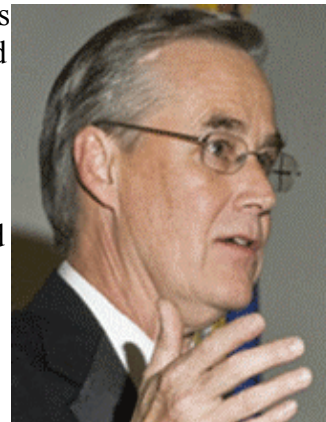


“Choosing To Care: A Journey of Discovery”

A Presentation by Dr. Richard Birkel, RCI Executive Director

While the factors that trigger caregiving responsibilities, such as the onset of illness and disability in a loved one, may be beyond our control, we must ultimately make a choice to care, and care in a particular way. The way in which we view care, the lens through which we understand the tasks at hand, and what we decide is important are things that we can and do choose. Research shows that appraisal of caregiving responsibilities and challenges is among the most powerful forces determining the level of stress and burden experienced by caregivers. Beyond this, however, caregivers who seek personal meaning in providing care open additional possibilities for personal growth and fulfillment.



Dr. Birkel's presentation summarizes what is known about successful coping with the stresses of caregiving. Research over the past three decades has shown that the stress of caregiving does not affect caregiver health and well being through a direct path, but is mediated by appraisal, social support and coping. In addition, finding meaning in care further protects the caregiver and opens up new possibilities for personal growth and fulfillment. “Choosing to Care” emphasizes the importance of:

- 1) Choosing to find personal meaning in the caregiving experience,
- 2) Choosing those with whom the caregiving journey will be taken, and
- 3) Choosing to learn specific skills that will help you master the unique challenges you face.

The overall goal of this session is to provide a framework for caregivers, organizations, and communities that emphasizes empowerment through active choice and creating personal meaning.

If you are interested in bringing this informative and inspirational presentation to your next conference or workshop, contact RCI at 229-928-1234