

### 5 Attributes of a Great Institutional Alzheimer's Caregiver

When I was visiting with my husband in the memory loss unit last week, I paid special attention to the best attributes for a great Alzheimer's caregiver. It is worth sharing these with you and institutions who employ caregivers. Society will benefit from the services of great caregivers.

**Attribute #1:** An individual who is not motivated by rewards of status, remuneration, or recognition. Greatest inspiration and reward comes from contributing to the overall success of the health care team or group efforts.

**Attribute #2:** Unattached to outcome but rather uncovers the potential in others and likes to encourage greatness in everyone on the team.

**Attribute #3:** A highly developed sense of commitment to teamwork. Likes to work for and with people as self-fulfillment comes from personal interactions.

**Attribute #4:** A desire to change and/or broaden perspectives in the workplace. When given a problem, the individual considers a system's approach solution.

**Attribute #5:** Strong organizational skills that allow the individual to deal with problem and adversity effectively.

In summary, empathy and teamwork is at the very core of all these attributes. Achieving these attributes may not be easy, yet when you witness a caregiver that is a natural in the care to an individual living with Alzheimer's or someone with another form of dementia – it is truly a joy to see.

Facilities who hire professional caregivers (RNs, LPNs, CNAs, Care Partners, or A&A) should keep this list of attributes and match them with all applicants. Furthermore, they also could train their staff to demonstrate these attributes. Although many are not naturally gifted with these traits, management could pay a closer attention to team formation in order to give their customers/patients the best possible experience. An Alzheimer's Friendly Workforce™ is always a wonder for visitors to experience and a gift for the population they serve.

Reference: Seich, S. (2000). *3 Sides of You: Unlocking the way you think, work, and love*. Alabama:ANSIR Publishing Corporation.



**About the author:**

Ethelle G. Lord, former president of the Maine Gerontological Society of Maine, runs Alzheimer's coaching and consulting business RememberingforYou.com. Dr. Lord has a Doctorate of Management in Organizational Leadership from the University of Phoenix. Her 10-year experience with Alzheimer's originated with her husband who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in Jan. 2003. In that decade the need for a change in perspective with regards to providing individual and institutional care for individuals living with Alzheimer's became urgent throughout the world. She is married to Maj. Larry S. Potter, USAF retired, and lives in Mapleton. Dr. Lord is available for presentations, training, and Alzheimer's coaching/consulting.