



Caregiving 101 in the dark of the morn

As a country boy I came to love nature and outdoors. Over the years, my go-to places became sacred spots where I tried to make sense of difficult situations – to comfort my mind – renew my spirit., whether a stream, lake or the woods. So, after meeting dementia face to face and evolving into a new person, I must admit that the old person hasn't disappeared completely. I still feel the calls to those wonderful places where I receive my care. The woods softly beckon – especially this time of year.

A while back, one morning well before daylight, I slipped out of bed. My love stirred and then with one eye open she asked: “What are you doing up so early?”

“I'm going hunting.”

“You've been hunting every day and we eat deer meat every night.” Now, that wasn't true; must be the dementia, I told myself.

“Not so my dear – and 5:30am is not the time for a discussion. Besides, I need some woods-time.” And off to the kitchen I went.

Shortly, I returned to the bedroom to tell her the table was set, her cereal was waiting, to push the button on the coffee-maker and that the newspaper was in. ... and to say goodbye. I was expecting a cool maybe even snappy response.

She had drifted back asleep. I tapped her gently and said: “I am leaving now.”

“Where are you going?”

“I told you, I am going hunting.”

Then came the response I never expected. “Oh really, well, have a nice day and enjoy your time in the woods.” She even gave me a kiss goodbye.” I couldn't believe what had just happened.

I came home refreshed and ready to return to being the caregiver.

Dementia has its light side too. Be on the lookout and enjoy it when it pops up.