

# Kari Berit

*Speaker. Author. Caregiving Expert.*

[www.KariBerit.net](http://www.KariBerit.net)

## **The Unexpected Caregiver**

Tag—You're it! That's how you may feel when a parent or loved one suddenly needs your help. You're thrown into a new role that is demanding and time consuming and should have been expected. So now what? Kari Berit is here to help. She has been delivering upbeat, practical, and solutions-orientated presentations for more than 30 years. So-called "elephant" issues, family baggage, caregiver stress, and connecting with parents are just some of the issues Kari tackles. Come ready to laugh and learn. Your questions and stories welcome.

## **Making Friends with Aging**

How do we care for our elders if we do not understand the aging process or simply want to avoid it? Do we know how to behave as we get older? What happens to our bodies? Our minds? What is normal and what is dementia? What can we control and what do we need to just accept? Who will take care of us as our needs increase?

Kari Berit will show you how to care for an aging loved one with more confidence. She will also teach you how to use her S.A.N.E. model for self care—feeling Supported, Appreciated, Not Guilty and Energized.

This presentation includes key components of an Age-Friendly Health System: What matters in caring for elders; understanding medications for elders, grasping the differences in mental health (also known as mentation) and appreciating the importance of mobility in long-term health.

## **Help! I'm Turning into My Mother!**

As you're blow-drying your hair, you notice arm jiggle. Taking a closer look, you notice back fat. If that weren't bad enough, your mother is hanging out in your mirror. How do these aging changes happen? Is it a gradual process and what can we control? For better or for worse, our mothers' DNA is part of us, but it does not have to confine us. Learn what to expect as we age, how to embrace these changes and laugh off the rest. Aging is not a disease; it is a great teacher of life.

## **Caring for the Professional Caregiver**

Professional caregivers take care of residents, support residents' families and coordinate care with a team of health care professionals. After their shift, they take care of their own families. How do they care for themselves? How can they stay calm and employ healthy communication when dealing with sometimes cranky people? Armed with facts and humor, we'll explore the needs of professional caregivers. Participants will leave with a toolkit of knowledge for use the very next day.

### **When Family Can't Take Care of Family: Getting to S.A.N.E.**

86% of caregivers care for a relative. Typical family caregivers give and give until they simply run dry. We feel we *have to* or that we have no choice—they're family. While some consciously choose to give care, others simply fall into the role. It doesn't matter if you are currently in the midst of giving care or just beginning, whether you have chosen this role or it fell into your lap, this presentation teaches you how to be a S.A.N.E. caregiver —Supported, Appreciated, Not guilty, and Energized. As our aging population explodes, this may be one of the most important presentations you attend this year.

### **Forget Less; Remember More**

Ever forget where you put your car keys? That's normal. Forgetting what car keys are...not normal. What is the difference between normal aging and memory loss? Arm yourself with the facts about your brain and reduce your worries. We'll explore how the human brain works and what it needs to stay healthy. And you'll try Aerobics of the Mind and discover how fun, simple activities can help you think more clearly and forget less. **(Half-day workshop can include an introduction to dementia/Alzheimer's Disease: Gain a better understanding of normal aging vs. aging with disease. Rather than worry about getting Alzheimer's Disease, learn how to take care of your brain and how to interact with someone who has dementia.)**

### **“What Did You Say?” Team Building & Communication**

Communication is key in building a team that respects each other, works well & recognizes each other's talents...but it's not a skill that comes naturally. To become an effective communicator, we need to look at our own communication style and how we interact with others. We also benefit from learning assertive communication techniques, enabling us to avoid emotional outbursts caused by defensive communication. Communicate in ways that make a huge difference in your team!

### **Professional Caregivers: “Building a Tool Kit to Better Connect”**

Professional caregivers need to know how to connect with those they care for—quickly, showing genuine interest and on a time line—while providing assistance with daily tasks. These short interactions are a challenge, let alone adding a dementia component to the mix. In the day-to-day care, communication can become defensive and hurtful. Family and loved ones can come across as unappreciative. And those you care for can be just plain cranky. Learn tools that will bring you more joy and less stress on the job.

## About Kari Berit

Kari Berit, passionate, authentic, down-to-earth, and fun. She connects immediately with her audiences. “She was talking about me,” “I feel like I’ve known her forever,” and “I feel energized after hearing her” are just a few of the participant comments that follow her keynotes.

Ms Berit has spent her career helping people and institutions manage transitions and embrace the unfamiliar. Her expertise lies in aging and caregiving, two journeys in our lives for which we are poorly prepared. She is the author of two books, *The Unexpected Caregiver* and *Mental Fitness Guide*, both published by Attainment, and also hosts the weekly Unexpected Caregiver radio show. She contributes regular columns and articles on aging and caregiving topics and consults on peer-to-peer run caregiver support groups.

For 30 years, Ms Berit has been addressing industry associations, private business groups, financial companies and religious organizations, helping professionals from a multitude of backgrounds and age groups move effectively through their aging and caregiving life changes, and understand how to better serve their clientele. As a speaker, audience evaluations regularly call out her wit and high energy; a radio show that interviewed her told listeners to expect “bubbly, effervescent fun.”

Her audiences laugh – and sometimes shed a tear or two – but just as importantly, they come away with information that they can apply immediately and to good effect. In particular, they learn effective strategies for starting and managing the crucial conversations between parents and their adult children when caregiving issues come to the fore – conversations that often must first address the often emotion-laden intergenerational baggage Boomers and their parents have worked hard to ignore for decades.

Kari Berit has both studied and lived what she speaks and writes about. Key elements in her background include:

- M.S. in Continuing and Vocational Education from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- B.A. in Psychology and International Health Care from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.
- 13 years as a resident manager, director, dementia-care specialist and assisted-living manager in Minnesota senior housing facilities.
- 30 years teaching and directing programs for older adults in settings ranging from community meetings to national conferences, classrooms to churches.
- Past Board Member, National Board of Directors, Good Samaritan Society