

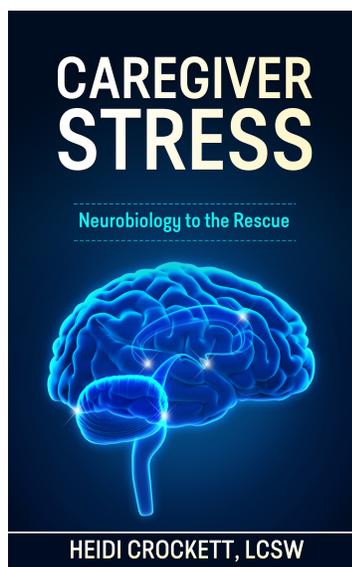
Heidi Crockett is the author of [Caregiver Stress: Neurobiology to the Rescue](#), which was written in memory of her husband. Out of her love for caregivers, she lectures on [brain health](#), [stress reduction](#), and intimacy. Her book simplifies cutting-edge research on relational neuroscience. The book is a do-it-yourself workbook and encourages caregivers to engage in self-care *before it is too late*.

Heidi's take in her own words:

*I first met Teepa at Largo Medical Center on January 13, 2016. I was rapt, listening and typing notes frantically because of the many similarities between what we present. One thing I especially like about her Positive Approach philosophy is its emphasis on the importance of the present-moment relationship between the caregiver and the person with dementia. I'm AASECT-certified with post-graduate training in sexual health and always try to bring in [the importance of intimacy](#) in my brain health talks. Teepa's Positive Approach highlights the same [intimacy](#) focus found in many of my presentations; that is, **the priceless value of caring, positive connection between people**.*



Good connection has innumerable positive effects. I teach that when there is intimacy, the two hearts begin to entrain, then the hormone, respiratory, and immune systems align. How we relate to each other affects us physically. I think it is because we can't see relationship as an external, physical object, that we tend to underestimate its impact on us. By understanding mirror neurons and other brain health facts the impact of relationship becomes more visible.



From my professional social work experience and personal experience caregiving my husband with a brain tumor, I believe caregivers underestimate the impact of the caregiving relationship on their physical and mental health. I see and have experienced firsthand how caregivers are ignored by the healthcare system. From this societal message, it makes sense that caregivers learn to ignore themselves. By ignoring their needs, eventually caregivers become sick with high blood pressure or other health problems long-term. For me, this is unacceptable!

*Sadly, the healthcare system focuses on disease, not relationship, and this is what I love so much about Teepa's approach. Let's focus on **the relationship** with the person with dementia and on the relationship with the caregiver. Similar to Teepa, I share this belief: that brain health education combined with greater self-awareness will improve the healthcare system and the health of both caregiver and care receiver.*