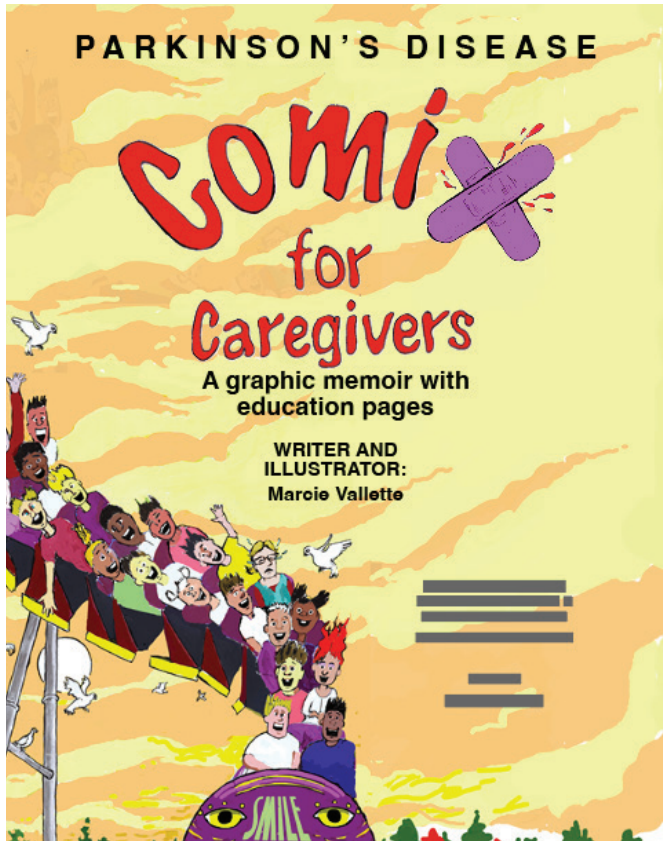


PARKINSON'S DISEASE: Comix for Caregivers

By MARCIE VALLETTE
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This is a book for caregivers of Parkinson's Disease, by the caregiver of a spouse who had Parkinson's Disease.

What a shock it was when my husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. We, as most people, knew it as a movement disorder, and we recognized the motor symptoms of Parkinson's Disease: tiny handwriting, quick footsteps, stooped posture, loss of balance, slowness of movement, tremors, and possible need for assistive devices. We studied up on treatments and medications for this disease. After the initial shock of the diagnosis wore off, we adapted to these motor symptoms.

But the more surprising experiences for me were the non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. In addition, some of the meds that kept my husband able to move also had side effects, including non-motor side effects. These consisted of major changes in mood, behaviors, and personality. Not all people with Parkinson's get the non-motor symptoms, But quite a few do.

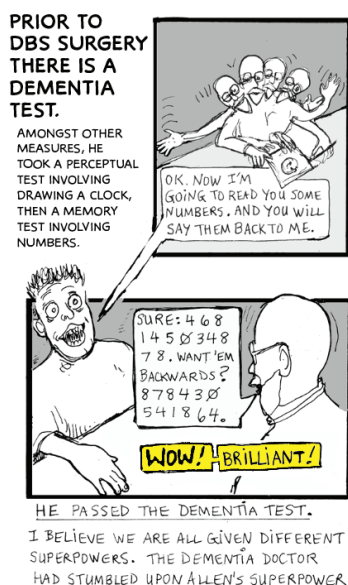
I found the non-motor symptoms far more challenging than the motor symptoms. I felt stressed and isolated. No one really understood. I didn't know how to get the help I needed.

When I joined an online caregiver group I learned I was not alone in my experiences. There are a lot of us out there, with our loved ones in the later stages. Many caregivers are feeling isolated and stressed.

Parkinson's Disease - Comix for Caregivers will take you through my story, from my husband's diagnosis, through the phases of caregiving, DBS surgery, dealing with side effects, and to the nursing home. It also includes "game" pages to help you learn some vocabulary that you, as a caregiver, will need to have some working knowledge of, as you advance through the caregiving process.

Know that you are not alone.

Marcie Vallette, BFA, MEd, LPN



Available soon on Amazon.

My website: www.vallette.net for more information

Please email me if you would like to see a copy for your store or other venue. mvallette@hotmail.com

SPECIFICS

Title: Parkinson's Disease - Comix for Caregivers.

Subtitle: A graphic memoir with education pages.

Writing, illustrations and layout: Marcie Vallette, 2024

Editor: Patsy McCarter

Humor consultant: Robert Waldo Brunelle JR.

Size: 8.5 x 11," 140 pages, 60# paper, color, paperback, glossy cover.

Genre/style and contents: Memoir, graphic novel, education, self-help, mindfulness meditation. The story takes place over 16 years, from the diagnosis to the death of my husband, Allen Moulton. A caregiver for a person with Parkinson's will end up needing to learn a new vocabulary, so this book is interspersed with educational pages for caregivers.

Layout and basic tone of the book - Graphic novel style, with comic style illustrations and some pages of writing and games. Education pages are done in workbook style and include crosswords, word-find games, "Jeopardy" games and more. Paper is non-glossy, and erasable if you use pencil for the games. The layout overall and drawings are fun and accessible, and bring a playful feeling to this serious subject.

Rated PG-13: There is little or no "gross" imagery. No sexually explicit material, a brief mention of porn addiction as a side effect of Parkinson's meds, brief mentions of incontinence. The "F Bomb" is in there a couple of times. Illustrations of surgeries

are stylized. Some violent content is depicted in dreams and imaginings that I had. I did include graphic descriptions of my husband's psychotic episodes.

Intended audience: My audience is other caregivers of Parkinson's and anyone who may be interested in caregiving for Parkinson's. **People with Parkinson's should not read this, it could be depressing for them.**

My goal: My goal is to share what I have learned. I include failures and triumphs, mistakes I made, coping and not coping, and a lot of in-between. I want to present caregiving for Parkinson's in an honest and accessible way. This is a book I am hoping a caregiver can pick up and put down, and look forward to reading, and feel entertained and comforted by. The last page is "crib notes," a single-page basic info sheet for caregiving for Parkinson's.

This book does not give legal, medical or financial advice. The main advice-giving in this book is to "please consult with experts only." All factual information in my book is double checked via the Mayo Clinic website.

About Marcie Vallette: Marcie is a writer, illustrator and Nurse. She is owned by a cat named Zinnia and a few chickens. She lives in Northern Vermont and shows her artwork regionally. She also wrote and illustrated "Exit Interview: A Guide to End-of-Life Conversation and Preparation."

Please contact me if you are interested in this book. mvallette@hotmail.com

CONTENTS

THE BOOK INCLUDES OUR STORY.

Early years: The diagnosis • Telling the family • Happy times, the first five years • Traveling.

Allen's decline: The advent of dyskinesias • Losing jobs • Side effects including punding • Spiritual searching.

Caregiver stress: including anger, fear, depression, my caregiver story, how I handled it or didn't handle it • Prayer and meditation practice helped and sometimes didn't help with emotional regulation • Various therapies for both of us.

Major decline: Multiple surgeries • Falling • The start of changed behaviors • Obsessive behaviors • No more driving • Taking over finances • Looking for nursing homes • Behaviors/psychotic events and coping • Finding a nursing home and finding the right medications (it's individual and constantly changing).

More lessons: Managing Medicaid • Digging out of debt • Our foreclosure (big message: start protecting your assets early on in the disease) • Nursing home life.

EDUCATIONAL PAGES ARE INTERSPERSED WITH OUR STORY.

Vocabulary and concepts: Beginner vocab includes symptoms, dopamine and meds • Advanced vocab including punding, obsessions, bureaucratic issues, case management, eldercare attorneys, Medicaid, more meds.

How to travel with a Person with Parkinson's Disease.

When to go to the ER.

Practical Parkinson's know-how: How to un-clog a toilet • Assistive devices • How to actually help a caregiver, tear out page for friends and family • Identify your supports.

Surgeries: What is retinal detachment (not specific to Parkinson's but pertinent to my own story).

Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery (DBS), our experience, diagram, basic explanation.

Good information! Motor symptoms & non-Motor symptoms information. Including hallucinations, delusions, capgras syndrome.

.Acronyms related to Parkinson's Disease, useful for online chats & support groups.

What to do immediately after diagnosis.

Bizarre yet common experiences of a caregiver of Parkinson's Bingo game.

References and resources.

Allen's final message to the world, his hope to end school violence.

Crib notes (basics and best practices for caregivers).

