L'Antr' Aidant

Semer • S'allier • Humaniser

Reconstructing your identity as a caregiver

In a relationship, what defines you?
What characterizes you?
What are your comfort zones?

A relationship is like a house you build. To have a house in which you feel comfortable in, you have to invest time, energy and invest yourself emotionally to make it a cosy nest despite the bad weather. You also need to adapt by thinking about the changes you want to make to solidify the foundations (the alliance with your loved one).

The type of relationship with the person being helped differs from one person to another and from one relationship to another. There may be certain challenges of adaptation that, for some people, could be more serious than for others. Your caregiving relationship will be different if you're accompanying a friend, neighbor, relative, nephew, child, sibling, life partner, etc.

Knowing your identity will help you define the color, shape and type of the relationship between you and the person you're helping.

When you're a caregiver, you often lose sight of your identity because of the many roles you have to take on, the many unforeseen events you have to deal with, and the changes in your loved one's autonomy.

It's possible to take on several roles, to feel responsible for care, financial management, moral support, transportation, medication administration, the other person's happiness and success, and so on. It's easy to lose sight of the person you used to be.

> *I feel like my mother's mother, our roles have been reversed. Her illness prevents her from continuing to be the pillar of the family. I miss the days when I was the one who could phone her to comfort me.*

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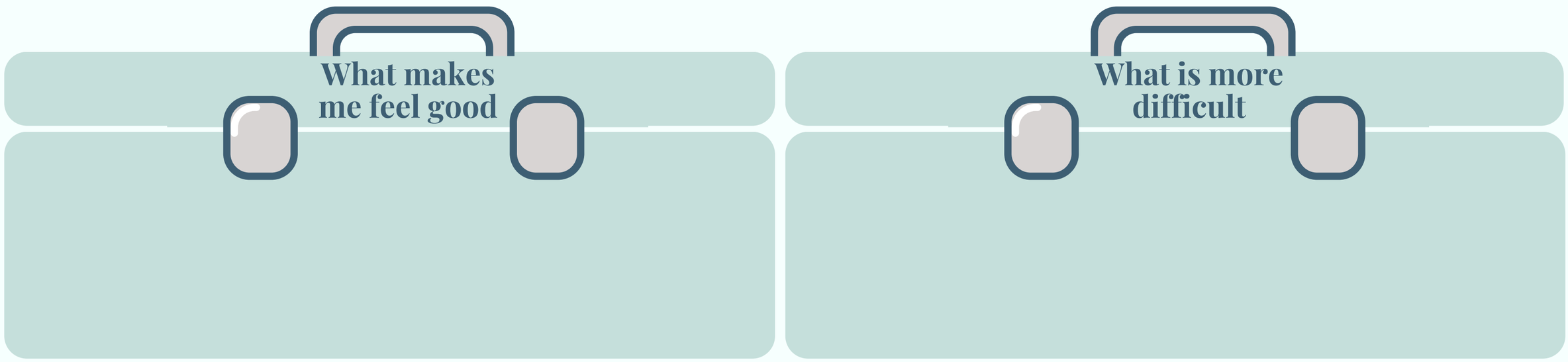
A few tools to (re)build yourself

1. Taking the time to imagine your dream home helps define the relationship you want with your loved one and the role you want to play.
2. Determining together the objective to be achieved, for example: "We want to relive moments of complicity."
3. Identifying your felt energy level by coloring the battery pictogram.



4. Identify your energy level by coloring the battery pictogram.
5. Taking the time to identify the emotions flowing inside you.
6. Reflecting on the possible obstacles you might encounter in reaching your desired relationship (your dream home) and getting ready for it.

All the reflections above can help you decide what actions you might take redefine your role in the relationship.

Why is it important to redefine the caregiver relationship?

- To know the limits and to respect them.
- To allow modulate commitment.
- To create a space with kindness.
- To define comfort in mutual support.
- To redefine or rebuild our help and support network.

"Dare to share this moment of reflection, the results can be astonishing!"

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