

Caring for My Family Is My Main Responsibility

Alice Liu

BEFORE YOU READ: Think about the noun, *responsibility*. Try using it in several sentences to describe your responsibilities. Try using the adjective form as well: *responsible*. What are you responsible for?

Introduction

In my life, my main responsibility has been to care for my family: my parents, my brothers and sisters, my child, and now my grandson. I love my family and care for all of them. I also had three jobs when I was living in China. After I moved to America, I had two jobs to support my family.

My Father

In 1995, my father became very sick. He left the U.S., where he and my mother were living with my sister, to come back to China, where I was still living. It was hard to find a hospital for him to get treatment in China because the hospitals there didn't want to accept very sick people. I had to ask my classmate for help and provide money and gifts before my father could get into the hospital.

I spent a lot of time and money helping my father in the hospital. I had to ask my boss for my pay in advance. I didn't have enough time to help my 11-year-old son with his schoolwork for several months. His grade for the final exam was a tiny bit too low to go to the best middle school. I blame myself for this even now.

My Mother

I came to the United States in 2006. In 2011, my mother suddenly became very sick. She needed intensive home care for the rest of her life. My brother and sisters in the U.S. didn't want to help, so I took leave from work to take care of her by



myself – 24 hours a day, for 11 days. Finally, my brother agreed to help so that I could go back to work. My husband had just lost his job, and I couldn't afford to lose my job too. My brother and I shared responsibility for her round-the-clock care for the last year of her life. I remember the last time my mother messaged me. She said, "You are a good daughter. I am happy that I have you."

My Sister

One day, six years ago, my sister told me her right hand was numb. She couldn't hold a knife to cut things. I made an appointment for her to visit a



neurologist. After she had an MRI scan, the doctor explained that my sister had Parkinson's disease. My sister knew how bad this disease was because her previous job was taking care of older women with Parkinson's. She understood very well that she would get weaker by the day. She was very upset and melancholy. I helped her be less distressed. I tried to relieve her pain. I encouraged her to do exercises, I massaged her, cooked for her, and fed her. I wished I could keep her with us longer.

My Grandson

Currently, I take care of my grandson with special needs. I have learned everything I can about autism to help him be the best he can be. Right now, I am looking for speech therapy and other therapies for him. I research every day to know how children with autism behave, what their challenges are, and how to find the best way to help them to learn and grow. Every time he gets upset, I need to figure out his problem and help him relax and have more fun.

Conclusion

For my whole life, I have spent my time and money to take care of my family. I care for them because I want them to feel happy and loved. I balance these things with a full-time job and continuing my English class.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. How does the author navigate and use information as she cares for her family?
2. Describe the structure of this essay. How do the distinct parts help the author tell her story?

Alice Liu is a student at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA. She came to the United States 17 years ago because she loves American culture and she wanted better opportunities for her family.



Photos are of Alice Liu with her grandson (above), with her mother (on the previous page), and with her sister.