

Bob DeMarco lays down his life

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By [Debra Bendis](#)

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"I have a life that is rich in experience, and is now rich in spirit." This is how Bob DeMarco [opened the new year on his blog](#). At 61, DeMarco is sole caretaker of his 96-year-old mom, Dotty.

At one time he was an institutional salesman of derivatives, futures, options and mortgages; at another time he was chief executive of a small software company. He was once married and is now divorced. But [according to Jane Gross](#), DeMarco always knew he would drop it all to care for his mother when the time came.

That time came eight years ago. Dotty has advanced AD. (Twenty-five percent or more of the population aged 70 or older have dementia or are at risk of developing dementia in the near future. Seventy to 80 percent of all dementia cases will be attributable to AD.) As a full-time caretaker, Bob doesn't have much of a life; he seldom gets out, doesn't date and makes no plans that don't include his mother.

What he does do is blog, at [Alzheimer's Reading Room](#). Here he hosts what he calls the number one source of life news for the entire Alzheimer's community. Our goal is to Educate, sometimes Entertain, and Empower Alzheimers caregivers and their families worldwide.

He also corresponds with the thousands of readers who e-mail him.

In that [first post of 2012](#), DeMarco responded to this comment posted on another blog:

I think it is insane to even consider--sacrificing the rest of our life in its entirety--work; marriage; friendship; any other leisure pursuits EVER--to care for an elder who needs round-the-clock care.

"I have a life that is rich in experience," DeMarco declared, "and is now rich in spirit." The statement and the post are a testimony to an inexhaustible love for his mother, to the commitment he's made to give himself to this work and to the way that decision and work continually change and shape him.

I recommend the post to others who agree that it is insane--or frightening, or financially impossible, unfair or unrealistic--to do the kind of work Bob DeMarco is doing. Yet at the same time we feel a tug because we've been taught, especially by Henri Nouwen in *Return to Daybreak*, that the most humbling work is the work that brings us out of ourselves and closer to God.

DeMarco hasn't given his entire life for Dotty. He experienced a lot of life before he came to care for her, and he will likely experience more when his time as caregiver ends. Yet I think of John 15:13: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." I'm thinking suddenly that this verse suggests not necessarily *dying* for one's friend, but putting aside oneself and one's world in order to be with another person day to day in this most radical way.