

Advice for Caregivers

Powerful Patient, 2011 Week 8

Host: Joyce Graff, <http://powerfulpatient.org>, editor@vhl.org 800-767-4845

Viki Kind, a medical ethicist and hospice volunteer who specializes in medical ethics, talks with Joyce about her book, [The Caregiver's Path To Compassionate Decision Making: Making Choices For Those Who Can't \(Home Nursing Caring\)](#). Over 5 million people in the United States have Alzheimers, and many more have lost or will lose their ability to decide through strokes, brain injuries, mental illness and developmental disabilities. One in four people will need someone else to decide for them as they face the end of their life. Many are now making or will be in the future making decisions for a loved one, or need that service ourselves.



Viki Kind

Viki's book is a guide to families and healthcare professionals who are going through the difficult process of making decisions for those who are losing or have lost their capacity to think. [The Caregiver's Path](#) is written from her experience and training addressing this growing epidemic.

To be compassionate when caregiving, Viki claims all decisions should be made from the framework of what she calls "substituted judgment," the decision of what the patient would want.

About our guest

Viki has a master's degree in Bioethics from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Her BA is in Speech Communication from California State University at Northridge. She also has specialized training in mediation and cultural negotiation from Pepperdine University and UCLA. Viki donates her time by being a hospice volunteer with Hospice of the Conejo in Thousand Oaks, California. She has also been a caregiver for four members of her family for many years.

A few of Viki's thoughts,

"I would like to teach others to respectfully understand that other people may not see the world as you do but you can find common ground, and this can connect you to one another. With such respect, it is easier to be understanding, kind and peaceful with each other. Don't assume we are all alike. Instead, ask people how a patient would want to be shown respect or comfort and then treat them as they would want to be treated."

Joyce and Viki also talk about the Brain Injury Association (www.biausa.org, www.calbia.org) as a resource for people with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and the Well Spouse Association (www.wellspouse.org) Viki's website can be found at www.kindethics.com.