GUILT – It's OK

Guilt is an umbrella term for a range of rather uncomfortable worries and emotions that may include regret, anxiety, resentment, anger, and fear of not being perfect or in control.
Guilt is the punishment you inflict upon yourself for the "crime" of having human limitations.

Guilt can be destructive if:

- It impedes our progress and inhibits our own destinies in life.
- It clouds our judgement.
- It consumes you.
- You spend a great deal of time berating yourself when you perceive you have failed, rather than focusing on what we have achieved.

Guilt can be positive if:

- It propels you forward
- Motivates you to do better
- Focuses you to "pay attention" to your body and mind.
- It acts as a warning sign to take care of yourself.

Coping well with feelings of guilt:

- Recognize the feelings of guilt
  - Identify the negative feelings you are experiencing. Name the situations that you feel guilty about.
- Look for the causes of guilt
  - Guilt can occur when there is a mismatch between the "ideal" you and the real you.
  - Guilt can occur when you have unrealistic expectations.
- Take Action
  - Make changes in your life to reduce feelings of guilt
  - Reframe your thinking from "should, must" to "I choose to.."
- Ask for Help
  - Do not feel ashamed for asking or accepting help
- Adjust your expectations
  - Change our actions to align with our values.
  - Change our expectations to match the situation
- Revisit the "ideal you"
  - Be gentle to yourself.
  - Make moment to moment decisions that will create your legacy
- Self-Care
  - You are important. You have needs.
  - Make time for yourself-it will make you a happier and healthier person and caregiver.

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Instead of Saying….	Tell Yourself….
I should have done better	I did the best I could under the circumstances.
I should be a perfect caregiver	I'm human with limitations and flaws No one is perfect.
I'm a rotten person for acting inappropriately	I am not the same as my act. If my act was a poor one, that does not make me a rotten person.
I'm an awful person for thinking these thoughts	Thoughts are not deeds. Having a thought that I deplore simply means I'm human.
I should never get angry	I can work to minimize my anger responses and accept myself if I do lose my temper from time to time.
I should put aside my own needs to attend exclusively to my family member	I do not have to sacrifice myself as a martyr to provide care.
I should feel guilty when I make mistakes or behave less than nobly. Guilt is a form of atonement.	Mistakes are neither sins or crimes, but rather a normal part of human learning. Guilt does not undo or make amends, so it is wasting my emotional resources.