
❖ Home Care Network News ❖

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With baby boomers now retiring, they may have elderly parents to think about and add to their responsibilities. Hopefully, this article will give you some ideas and tips on how to work with and help your aging parents.

Warmly, Sally Ryan

For Many Boomers, Roles With Parents Are Reversing

Cindy cares about her 82-year-old father.

She calls him every few days just to talk to him, to find out how he's doing. She talks to some of his friends to make sure her father is taking his medications. She visits when she can, even though he lives several hours away.

Sadly, Cindy learned that she needed to help take responsibility for her parents the hard way: a few years ago, her mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Cindy watched her mother slowly die, her father tenderly caring for her at the expense of his own health. She realized that the dynamic of her relationship with her parents was going to change.

"I had to wake up and realize that I am responsible for making the quality of life for my parents good and adequate, and keep their dignity intact as they age, as well," Cindy said.

Caring for aging parents is becoming more common these days as more and more seniors are living longer and striving to retain their independence. However, as seniors age, parts of their lives may become cause for concern to others, and this is where adult children need to step in.

A campaign has been launched to help adult

children communicate with their aging parents about difficult life topics. The "40-70 Rule" means that if a child is 40 or their parent is 70, it's time to begin talking about senior-care subjects.

The campaign, based on research, stems from finding that nearly one-third of adults have communication difficulties in talking to their parents about issues such as driving, finances, independence and even romance. Much of the problem comes from adults continuing the parent-child role with their parents.

Because of this obstacle, adult children may wait until an emergency or crisis happens before talking to parents. The goal with the '40-70' campaign is to provide practical ways for adult children to

talk to their parents now. A lack of communication can lead to misuse of medications, self-neglect and accidents.

For Cindy, talking to her father after her mother's death wasn't hard because she has always had a close relationship with members of her family. Her mother's death brought them even closer and helped them talk about things that they hadn't felt comfortable with before.

However, all families are diverse and different approaches work for different people.



The key is to cease being the "child" in the relationship and become a younger friend to your parents.

"You just kind of have to grow up. You can't think of them anymore as Mom and Dad so your parents don't feel like they have to maintain that strong adult relationship," Cindy said.

Asking friends of the parent to check on them periodically is a good way to be concerned about a parent without intruding.

"Having even that third person helps, just to kind of give you a different perspective," she said.

She said that an adult child might see their parent periodically and think the parent is fine, but the child might just be checking on them on a good day. With a third person involved, the likely hood of catching a glimpse of the overall picture is increased.

In the case of Cindy's mother, she often saw her mother on her good days and it wasn't until she grew worse from the tumor that she realized how sick she really was.

Medication is also a big issue when dealing with aging parents. Talking to your parents' health care providers and parents themselves to make sure the medication is understood is very important.

Cindy said during her mother's illness, her personality seemed to change and she would say things that didn't make any sense. The family thought it was a symptom of the tumor until one day someone realized that Cindy's mother had been overmedicating on one of her medications because it was the generic drug and it was taken differently than the one her doctor prescribed.

Overall, just talking to an aging parent is the best advice one can give. Having an adult friendship is the best way to make them feel good about themselves.

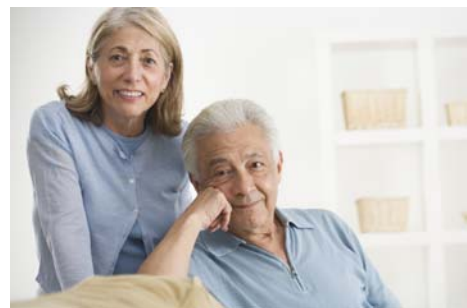
"Their bodies are changing. Try to get them feeling just as good about themselves as they possibly can so people can see them the way they've been seen the rest of their life," Cindy said.

Just as parents helped their children through the years of childhood and adolescence, so can adult children help their aging parents through their senior and final years.

"The quality of life is so important that you don't want to cheat anyone out of that quality as you reach the end," she said

Tips For Talking To Your Parents

1. **Get Started.** If you're 40 or your parents are 70, its time to begin carefully and thoughtfully observing and gathering information.
2. **Talk it Out.** Approach your parents with a conversation about your observations.
3. **Sooner is Better.** Talk now, rather than later after a crisis has occurred.
4. **Forget the Baby Talk.** Don't patronize. Remember, you are talking to an adult, not a child.
5. **Maximize Independence.** Look for solutions that optimize strengths and compensate for problems.
6. **Stay Tuned In.** Continue to observe and ask questions. Be sure they're still involved with friends.
7. **Ask for Help.** Contact your local senior center or Council on Aging.





2 Cups of Coffee



When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with an unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced 2 cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things-your family, your children, your parents, your health, your friends and your favorite passions-and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else-the small stuff. "If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

Pay attention to the **things that are critical to your happiness.**

Spend time with your children. Spend time with your parents. Visit with grandparents. Visit your brothers and sisters, cousins, & Aunts/Uncles. **Take time to get medical check-ups.**

Play another 18 holes of golf. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal. Take care of the golf balls first-the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled and said, "I'm glad you asked." The coffee just shows you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple cups of coffee with a friend."

Caregivers Holiday

With the following holidays, Caregivers are to receive time and one-half for working that day. If you choose not to have the Caregiver that day, please tell them in advance.

2008

Memorial Day	May 26
4th of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 1
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 27
Christmas	December 25

Late Caregiver Receipts

Soledad D.
Syntjche F.
Evelyn M.
Elizabeth P.

Hewit B.
Felicia T.
Martha M.
Patricia G.

Fish Out of Water

How can you tell whether the fresh fish you are buying is safe? Follow these US Food and Drug Administration tips:

- A fish's eyes should be clear and bulge a bit. Only a few fish like walleye pike have naturally cloudy eyes.
- Whole fish and filets should have firm, shiny flesh.
- Fresh whole fish should have bright red gills.
- Fish should not be slimy, darkened, around the edges, or have brown or yellowish discoloration.
- Flesh should spring back when pressed and not appear dry or mushy.
- Fish should smell fresh and mild, not fishy or ammonia-like.

Active At Any Size

Exercise is challenging enough, but when you have more than a few pounds to lose and mere walking is exhausting or painful, what do you do??

Start by looking into non-weight-bearing activities that burn calories, put less stress on your joints and help improve flexibility, says The National Women's Health Information center.

Try swimming, water workouts bicycling and rowing. Don't be hard on yourself, though.

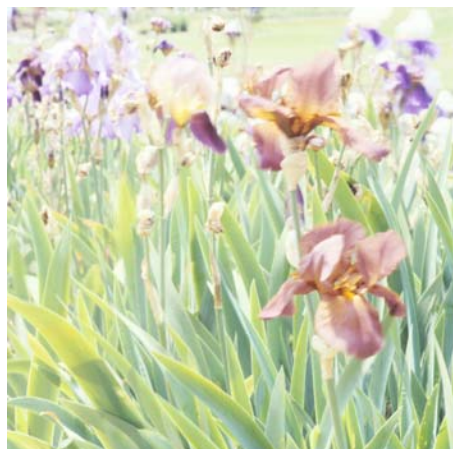
If you can't do an activity the first time. keep trying!! Moving your body—even for a short period of time—can make you healthier.

The more you move the easier it will become.

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Enjoy the warm spring sun.



No More
Snow!!!

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