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Accepting Your Parents' Limitations

Watching our parents become less able to care for themselves is one of life's greatest challenges. Adult children often feel awkward and ill-equipped to assume the caretaker role.

Although this shift in roles may be uncomfortable and frightening, it also can provide opportunities for connection and growth. What to do...

Accept your conflicting emotions and those of your parents. Aging brings up a complicated tangle of feelings in both parents and children. Along with love and appreciation, we also are likely to feel, at various times, resentment, sadness, fear, frustration, guilt, anger and impatience.

Underlying all these emotions is the issue of loss. The parent fears losing independence and, with it, self-confidence, power and control. Adult children not only suffer by witnessing their parents' pain but also must cope with their own losses. They lose the image of a parent who always can be counted on to take care of things. Instead, the "buck stops" with the adult child.

Simply recognizing these feelings can keep us from being blindsided and overwhelmed by them.

Begin discussion early. If you bring up aging and health issues before a crisis hits, it makes communication and planning easier. Introduce the topic in a friendly, low-key way.

Example: "I just wrote out my health-care proxy and power of attorney. This is really important to me. If I can't speak for myself, I want doctors to know that my husband will speak for me. Who would you want to speak for you if you couldn't speak for yourself?"

Other questions you might ask: "If it became hard to take care of the house, what other options would you consider? How would you feel about live-in help? What

about retirement communities or assisted-living facilities"... "Could we put together a list of your doctors' names and phone numbers, and the medications you're taking?"

I'd feel better having that information in case you ever got sick or had an accident."

Caution: Don't raise more than one issue at a time. Trying to tackle too much at once can lead to stress and defensiveness. If your parent doesn't want to discuss the issue, back off and talk about something else. Raise the topic again on another occasion.

Determine if you need to get actively involved. If a parent is already declining, you need to be more assertive. Signs that you should get actively involved include...

Trouble with everyday tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, paying bills.

- Neglecting personal care (wearing the same clothes every day, bathing less often).
- Health changes, such as weight loss, lack of energy, difficulty walking.
- Frequent confusion, memory lapses, trouble with problem-solving, getting lost in familiar areas.
- Safety concerns, such as the stove being left on or medications in disarray.

Involve your parent in decisions. Most parents dig in their heels when their children tell them what to do. Statements such as "I think you should see a doctor" or "I don't think you should drive anymore" threaten their



(Continued on page 4)



Let's Talk

Dr. Jerry Shapiro

Hello September, back to work and back to school. My only question to you our customers is where has the year gone. In this month's article I will be speaking about immunizations (focusing on flu shots) along with more of our new items we found in Atlanta.

Once again it is time to plan for your flu shots and to consider Shingles, Whooping Cough and Pneumonia Vaccines. We will be offering a special price on Flu Vaccine @ \$23.00 per dose. At Uptown there is rarely a wait since all of us are trained to give a safe and quick shot. To expedite things even more you can call us or send us a message at info@uptowndrugs.com and we will fax or e-mail you the form so that you can have it filled out before coming in.

This year we, once again, will be having a drawing for those who get their flu shots here. The prize being a \$50 gift certificate for Mendocino Farms. This will be drawn at the end of October. For those of you who work in an office of 10 or more people we will gladly come to your office to administer the shots at no extra charge.

In last month's issue I wrote about several of our purchases made by JoAnn and Emily. In this month's issue I will let you know about several more of our purchases beginning with OkaB sandals that are manufactured in the USA very comfortable and stylish. They range from \$25 to \$45 per pair. Many of you have already purchased several different styles to match your mood and/or clothing. We now have a line of children's furniture where we have samples that can be ordered thru the catalogue and drop shipped directly to any address in the continental USA. Come in and take a look. We found a line of fun kitchen gift ware that will make the perfect gift when invited over to dinner at a friend's or just for yourself. New items are coming in every day, come in and check it out.

Supplements for Sore Muscles

You ask, "can any supplements help minimize or relieve muscle soreness from exercise?"

First, understand that a sore muscle is an injured muscle. When you push a muscle past its capacity, its cell membranes rupture...substances from within the cells pour into the bloodstream, triggering an inflammatory response... and inflammation causes pain. If you are always very sore after exercise—too sore to do normal daily activities—you may be pushing yourself too hard or working out incorrectly. If that is the case, a better approach than taking supplements is to reduce the intensity and/or duration of your workouts and ask a professional trainer to review your technique. Also, always stretch and rehydrate immediately after exercising.



That said, if you are prone to occasional soreness—for instance, after an especially challenging day of bicycling or a new exercise class that works your muscles in unaccustomed ways—supplements may provide some relief. Important: Ask your naturopathic physician whether any or all of the following supplements are appropriate for you and

discuss whether the typical dosages should be modified. To use as needed for post-workout muscle soreness, consider...

- Turmeric, a spice whose active ingredient, curcumin, has powerful anti-inflammatory effects. Studies suggest that turmeric eases other inflammation-related discomforts, such as arthritis, morning stiffness and minor sprains—so although there isn't much research on whether turmeric relieves acute muscle soreness, it makes sense that it might...and anecdotally people say that it helps. Typical dosage: 400 mg of curcumin three times daily (as used in arthritis studies).
- Fish oil, another anti-inflammatory. Use high quality manufactured fish oil. Typical dosage: 2,000 mg daily (minimum).
- Vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps tissues heal. Typical dosage: 1,000 mg daily. Even more effective: A combination product, such as Emergen-C (original formula), www.EmergenC.com, that replenishes vitamin C as well as the electrolytes and B vitamins lost during exercise.
- Arnica-Profen Pain Relieving Cream is a homeopathic pain relieving cream that is used topically, which allows for immediate absorption into various regional areas of pain. The Ibuprofen found in Arnica-Profen is the same proven ingredient found in leading national brands, and contains the highest concentration of Ibuprofen available in a cream.



Hints from JoAnn

Stop Stinky Kitchen Smells. There's no masking it: when it comes to unpleasant household odors, the stinkiness wafting from the trash can is tops. Here are some shortcuts to stamping out stink in five

areas of the kitchen:

Foul Fridge: Wipe out the refrigerator with a solution of half water and half white vinegar before putting groceries away. This is a great way not only to clean, but also combat odors associated with food. A bowl of fresh coffee grounds will also help reduce odors in the refrigerator or the pantry.

Easy Trash Can Odor Fix: Try new GLAD ForceFlex OdorShield Bags with Febreze Freshness. The odor neutralization technology is embedded throughout an inner

layer in the bag to neutralize odors—not just mask them, leaving behind a fresh scent while offering stretchable strength to help prevent rips and messy clean-ups.

Microwave Meal-time Meltdowns: Pour about an inch of vanilla extract in a bowl and bring it to a boil in the microwave. As soon as the vanilla reaches a boil, turn the microwave off. Leave the bowl in the microwave overnight without opening the door. Any microwave odor problems will vanish by morning.

Ghastly Garbage Disposal: Put the plug in the sink and fill it with about three inches of warm water along with a handful of baking soda. Turn the disposal on and immediately pull the plug. The suction created—coupled with the baking soda—cleans out trapped food and sends it down the drain.

Scorched Supper Stench: To help clear the smell of burned food, fill a pan with water and bring it to a boil. Drop in a sliced lemon or about a 1/4 cup of lemon juice and allow to simmer on the stove.

Uptown Drug & Gift Shop carries a large selection of stuffed animals and rag dolls.



These sweet stuffed animals and dolls make wonderful gifts for newborns and children.



Though nothing cures a cold, some home remedies do help:

hot drinks, especially chicken soup, can increase the flow of nasal secretions. Tea with honey temporarily relieves a sore throat. Saltwater gargles (1/4 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water) are also helpful, as are homemade saline nose drops (same formula as the gargle).



Best order to pay debts

If you are overburdened with debt, you may have to choose which debts to pay first. Start with those that can land you in jail if left un-paid, such as taxes and child support. Next, figure out which have the worst terms. Compare interest rates and whether there are tax benefits (mortgage interest can be deducted, for example). Then decide which debts will hurt the least if they must go unpaid. Walking away from unsecured debt, such as hospital or credit card bills, will hurt your credit score but probably won't result in you losing any assets, such as a home. If you owe more on your home than it is worth, defaulting on your mortgage can make sense in some cases, even though it will heavily damage your credit score and you will lose the home. Consult the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (www.NFCC.org) for advice.



(Continued from page 1)

independence.

Unless your parent is in immediate danger, give him/her as much latitude as possible. Present options. Encourage mutual brainstorming and problem-solving.

Example: "I notice you've lost a lot of weight. What do you think might be going on? Who do you think could help with this?"

Also, try to express your concerns, rather than giving orders.

Examples: "I get so worried when you drive. I'm afraid that something might happen to you."... "As a favor to me, would you go to see the doctor? It would really put my mind at ease."

Stay calm and connected. Strive to show empathy, affection and respect. Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, can help you maintain your composure.

When family members come to loggerheads, it's usually because both sides are trying to prove they're right. When you catch yourself raising your voice or getting impatient, stop trying to force your point. Instead, acknowledge what the other person is saying.

Example: "I really want to understand your point of view. Let's start again. Tell me what you're worried about."

Often, a parent may be more receptive to the idea of accepting assistance when it comes from someone other than a son or daughter. If your parent resists your help, consider asking your parent's close friend, sibling (your aunt or uncle), clergy person or doctor to initiate the conversation.

Listen compassionately. When our parents say things that sound negative, the temptation is to try to talk them out of those feelings. We may think we're helping them, but we're actually protecting ourselves from feeling guilty or sad—and probably making our parents feel worse.

Example: On her first day as a resident at an assisted-living facility, Margaret said, "I hate this place. I'd rather be dead." Her daughter replied, "Cheer up, Mom, you'll love it here. Look how they've painted the walls bright yellow. You love yellow." This kind of exchange is patronizing—it's likely to make the parent feel even more helpless and childlike.

Instead of dismissing your parents' feelings, acknowledge them. Then point out their strengths.

Example: "I know this change is hard. It's going to take time to get used to. But you've worked through new situations before. I know you'll be able to work through this one."

Get support. A large network of public and private agencies and programs exists to help seniors and their families with caregiving assistance and emotional support.

To locate publicly funded and community programs, start with Eldercare Locator, a free national service of the Administration on Aging. The service links those who need assistance with state and local area agencies on aging and community-based organizations that serve older adults and their caregivers. For information and referral to community-based services, contact the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or visit www.eldercare.gov.

If your parent has been hospitalized, the hospital social worker can help guide you toward resources. You may want to consider hiring a professional geriatric care manager (GCM)—a nurse, social worker, gerontologist or other specialist who can help you navigate options and create an action plan. Contact the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (www.caremanager.org).

Make Older Relatives Comfortable at Family Gatherings

There are several things you can do to make the oldest members of your extended family more comfortable at family get-togethers. First, offer to drive them to your home if they need assistance. Grandchildren who recently obtained their driver's licenses may be willing to help—which can lead to intergenerational bonding. Also, seat older people with physical challenges appropriately—for instance, place someone with hearing loss close to a person who can repeat parts of conversations to him/her. And, ask older adults about their life experiences so that they feel included in conversations. Consider bringing out old photograph albums for everyone to review and discuss together—another bonding experience.

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