



JULY 2011

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY AMERICA!

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YOUR PARENTS' INDEPENDENCE

Things to talk about with your parents or spouse. Talking about issues that we face as we age can be very difficult if not impossible, but why is that? Often-times, facing issues means having to face one's fears, loss or reality. Reality is not always pretty or easy to swallow. It may rear it's head as losing control on one's life, or losing one's independence due to physical weakness, imbalance or loss of function. This may result in the sudden loss of a spouse or the loss of your independence by having to give up the keys to one's home. The common thread with any elderly issue is "loss". So, how do you go about talk-

ing to your parents or significant other about these volatile issues? First of all, attempting to confront or demand someone to make a change in their life rarely works. It creates a hostile environment and often-times damages your relationship. The approach needs to be empathetic and compassionate. You must realize that the other person may not recognize that there is a problem or they may not see it as being important or requiring a change. Here's how I handle elderly issues as a Professional Geriatric Care Manager: **First**, as I try to remain open minded about any issue at hand and strictly listen to the worried daughter or the elderly parent affected by the

issue. **Second**, I look at the particulars surrounding the incident that has occurred. For example, your mother who lives alone, has fallen and the EMT's were called. The cause of the fall is unknown and luckily she was not injured. This is the second occurrence. **Third**, with this information in hand, I look at the level of need for concern. If left unchecked, is serious injury or death imminent? Must immediate action be taken, i.e. placement in an alternative living center, home health care, nursing home, etc. If this is not the case, I try to determine what might have precipitated the fall? Is another fall imminent? To gather information, I perform an assessment to determine if the fall has altered her mental or functional status. In this process, I do a risk analysis to see what might have caused the fall. This may involve a review of her medications to determine if new medications were initiated prior to the fall or if one has become toxic to her. I would perform a functional analysis to determine upper and lower extremity strength to determine if weakness, loss of balance or unsteady gait was a contributing factor. I then perform an environmental safety check to determine physical risk factors such as: bath tub, steps, rugs, lack of support, not using walker, etc. **Fourth**, armed with the results of my assessment, I would begin the discussion somewhat globally to key in on where she's at.

They Served Our Country. Now, Let Us Serve Them.

On the Fourth of July we honor this great country's birthday. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs celebrate this day by honoring those who have given so much to this country. During a time of war, we as a nation are enamored with gratefulness to those who serve to protect us. Veterans give their life protecting ours. We stand together on this day, not just as a nation,

 but as a family. How do you honor your great nation? Better yet, how do you honor your family? When a loved one becomes: disabled, weak, older, and are not as independent as they once were, where can they go? Do you support your family and stand by them especially when in a time of need? Ask yourself how important your independ-

ence is to you? Think about where your grand-parents, or parents, are now. Have you honored and served their wishes as you hope your future children and grandchildren will honor and serve yours?

100 years ago on July 4th, 1911

On July 4th, 1911 in America's Northeast, temperatures scorched a record 106 degrees Fahrenheit, causing massive heat waves all over that portion of the country; killing a total of 380 people according to "This Day in History". "Of the 50 states, only [Hawaii](#) and [Alaska](#) have not experienced a heat wave at one time or another."

*Heat wave strikes Northeast". A&E Television Networks, LLC. Retrieved on 15 Jun. 2011 from << <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/heat-wave-strikes-northeast>>>

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Quote of the Month

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.

~Thomas Paine

YOUR PARENT’S INDEPENDENCE, *Continued...*

The incident may have no lasting effect or importance to her and she may just slough it off. **Fifth**, This is where one has to be extremely careful in one’s approach. You can express your concern, but it will likely not be received as you intended. Why? Feelings emit reciprocal feelings, and feelings are emotions. A feeling of fear in one may emit a feeling of anger in the recipient, or vice versa. I follow a protocol of feeling her out and see what effect it has had on her. Then approach her from where she’s at. Does she share this same concern that her family has about her falling? Maybe she does or maybe not, but if she does, she probably doesn’t place the same element of importance on it that they do. After all, she wasn’t hurt this time. I start the conversation by asking her how she feels about what happened to her. I ask about the EMT’s being called and if that was a frightening situation and did it cause her to have any thoughts about the incident. This gives me insight into her perspective of the fall. Was it the fall that was scary or was it the EMT’s being called to the house that was most stressful?

Often-times that is far more traumatic than the fall, unless there was an injury of course. As she offers up her feelings about the incident, I want to give her time to get her thoughts together no matter what she says, I try not to impart my feelings on her. **Sixth**, I can now work with the information obtained through her mind’s eye. I might take her to the doctor to have a medical assessment performed along with further tests to identify contributing factors. I might bring in a caregiver in to assist her with high risk activities or I might initiate changes within the home such as: grab bars, carpet removals, walker, physical therapy, etc. If you, as the grown-up child of an aging parent follow these steps, you’ll find you can resolve most every issue in a calm and relation-saving manner. Remember, their independence is the greatest treasure they have in their lives at this point. It is very destructive to their psyche to lose that. You need to keep them safe, yes, but don’t take away that which they hold so dear.

High Blood Pressure, what does it mean?



The doctor tells you that your blood pressure is high and you must take a medication for it. Why? High blood pressure causes your heart to work a lot harder and diminishes the amount of oxygen-enriched blood that perfuses into your vital organs, thereby causing wear and tear and eventually a medical dilemma.

A word to the wise,
Take Your Medicine!



Recipe for Life...

Gather in front of you, the following ingredients:
Life’s memories, just hold onto the good ones, throw away the ones that haunt or traumatize you.
Thoughts and feelings for those you hold dear, let go of the ones that have hurt you or that you have in turn hurt.
Pride in the things you’ve accomplished, special pride for coming back from failures.
Thankfulness for the gift of health, regardless of your aches and pains, there’s always someone worse off than you.
Feelings that were bored into you and that you harbor to this day such as love, fear, anger, hostility, remorse, loneliness, pity. *Keep only the good and healthy ones*, pour out and discard the bad and ugly.
Now, into your life, pour all the good things above and hold gently.

Henry

Like most men his age, Henry had worked hard for the better part of his life; sacrificing for his family, working hard instead of flying off here and there, missing out on school plays, football games, pageants and other activities that his children participated in. To some extent, that left a hole in the heart of his children, one not healed as Henry came to the Autumn of his life. He never intended to hurt anyone, work just came first as that was what his father had instilled in him. Henry was a successful man, as measured by his wealth and public stature, but he was a lonely man as well. You see, all that he had worked for, all that he had accumulated couldn’t measure up to what his children really wanted from him; his love and attention. As Father’s Day becomes a distant thought, remember what we cherish most; not worldly goods or material things, but more so, the love of our Fathers.