



faith . discipline . patience

Does it seem like your mom or dad is struggling to keep up with their own affairs?

For those with parents living into their ninth and tenth decade it is not uncommon to be faced with issues of age-related reduced abilities. They may struggle to pay bills on time or maybe you noticed dad had a hard time figuring out how much to tip the waiter at a restaurant.

So, if you suspect your parent is slowing down to the point of needing help, how do you broach the topic?

One way is to ask “if something were to happen to you, whom should we contact to assist you taking care of your affairs”? Your parent may let you know the person’s name, or they may avoid answering. The second outcome could be due to lack of planning or that they don’t want to talk with you about it at that moment.

Don’t be discouraged if your first attempt to discuss the topic comes up short. Remember, you might have planned this conversation for a long time but to them it may come as a complete and maybe even uncomfortable surprise.

Even so, I encourage you to push forward however uncomfortable. “Mom, I love you and I want to make sure life will be handled the way you wish.”

You may not get far right away. That’s ok. You can revisit the topic in weeks and months ahead.

Remind your parent that no one is looking to take over, that they will continue to be in control. It’s more a matter of introducing a copilot when it comes to certain tasks.

Beyond DNR and other medical instructions it is also helpful to know if your aging parent has a specific desire of where to receive rehab, or maybe to where they’d prefer to move if the old house becomes too much.

“Remember grandpa was at a home for many years. If you couldn’t live at home where would you want to be?”

In the above questions, rather than resistance, you may get forthcoming answers. You won’t know until you go there. You’re both adults, show empathy and find a way to talk. It is far better to have the conversation now than after something forces you to have to make quick decisions.

Good luck.

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