



December 2007

Caregiver Tip of the Month

— When A Parent Passes Away —

When one of your parents passes away, your surviving parent will be alone, often for the first time in a very long time. If your parents enjoyed a long and loving relationship, your surviving mother or father may experience a deep, pervasive loneliness despite your best efforts to cheer them up.

Grieving is a normal process of disengaging from their comfortable past, and preparing to move on with their life as a single adult. Regardless of how close you are to your surviving parent, you will never be an adequate replacement for the loved one the lost. Your role is simply to be there for them, to help them through the process, to act as their advisor **IF** they ask for advice, to be the shoulder they can cry on, and to give a reassuring hug whenever appropriate.

The grieving process usually lasts six to twelve months. If it is still going on after a year, and your parent shows few signs of rejoining the world, professional help may be appropriate. Professional help may also be needed if your parent shows signs of pervasive depression during the first twelve months. There is nothing wrong with that. And, it is important that your parent understands the fact that no one will think any less of them for seeking professional help during their extraordinarily difficult recovery period.

Here are a variety of things your mother or father can do for a successful transition:

Find an activity they enjoy, preferably one they like to do and ideally gives them the opportunity to meet a lot of people and make new friends. For example: join a church group, women's club, or poker group; take adult classes in a subject they may have put off earlier in their life; and/or join an exercise group.

If they like animals, volunteer at a local animal shelter. If they don't have a pet, getting a dog or cat could be a great source of companionship.

Help others through community service. Volunteer work can give them a source of pride, helping them feel better about themselves, and can develop enduring friendships.

The important thing is that they do something constructive. Sitting around doing nothing will not make things better. Both you and they should take things one day at a time and stay committed to moving on with their life.

Many marketers prey on surviving spouses, especially during the early days and weeks following the death of their loved one. They scour obituaries to find their targets ...

easy marks (victims) who can be convinced to buy things they would never buy during less stressful times.

To stop these predators, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) has created a **Deceased Do Not Contact** list. When a deceased person has been registered with that list, the person's name, address, phone number and e-mail address is placed on a special do not contact file. All DMA members are required to permanently eliminate these individuals from all of their mailing, email, and telemarketing lists. However, be patient; it can take about 3 months before the number of phone calls and mail decreases.

Register online for the **Deceased Do Not Contact** list for only \$1.00. To register, simply click on [Deceased Do Not Contact](#).

Find Eldercare for Your Loved Ones

We have partnered with [ElderCarelink](#) to help you find the right local eldercare services for your loved one. [ElderCarelink](#) has established a nationwide network of carefully screened eldercare providers and facilities. We are pleased to bring this referral service to you free of charge.

Within minutes of completing a brief [Needs Survey](#), you will receive a detailed email report that list eldercare providers in your area who match your specific requirements. Last year alone, over 100,000 families utilized this service in their search for high-quality senior care.

We look forward to our family helping yours. Take a minute now to complete the [Needs Survey](#) and find the community that meets your family's needs. [Let us assist you.](#)

Our visitors ask ...

Q. My husband and I now live in separate homes. He is nearly 78 and has pretty severe symptoms of senile dementia. He lives alone in my former residence, but I may need to move back in with him soon. He is retired. Because of my professional career, I cannot become his full time caregiver. He resists treatment of any kind and denies that he has memory problems, insisting that what he doesn't remember is unimportant. (For example, he keeps asking the same questions over and over even though I have answered them again and again.) I spend quite a bit of time with him but I think moving back in with him will adversely impact my health. Is there any support for spouses of those with dementia?

A. Because Alzheimer's disease is not that much different from other forms of dementia, I suggest that you start with the Alzheimer's Association. Their [In My Community page](#) allows you to "... learn about programs and services available in your area, including support groups and educational workshops."

Daily Living Solutions

— products for seniors and the elderly —

As we grow older, it often becomes difficult to use many everyday products because of arthritis, disability or other conditions. If you or a loved one needs a little help – or a lot – here are practical and affordable solutions that make life a little easier – solutions that help people continue living independently in their own home. To help you find what you need, everything is sorted into convenient categories in our [Solutions for Seniors](#) section.

You will also find, usually at a substantial discount, hundreds of medical equipment items, home health care products for the elderly, disability assistive devices, and more.

Whether you are looking for yourself or a loved one, [Solutions for Seniors](#) offers a wide variety of products, supplies and accessories – raised toilet seats, safety rails, incontinence supplies, large-handle eating utensils, pain relief, diabetic supplies, pill splitters and crushers, big-button hearing-amplified telephones, canes, walkers, rollators, wheelchairs – and much more.

Caregiving – Finding the money for care at home

A variety of resources can help pay for care at home. We discuss these resources in some detail in our article [10 tips to help you find money \(and free resources\) for care at home](#).

More Caregiver Tips

Caring for an elderly loved one presents tough challenges. Whether it starts with a sudden crisis or a series of unsettling warning signs, you are often not sure of the next step. Or even the first step. Regardless of where you are in your caregiving journey, here are some helpful tips.

- 1. Be flexible.** Caring for an elderly loved one rarely follows a predictable pattern. Expect the unexpected. Be ready to "go with the flow." Don't let unpredictability stress you out. Take it one day at a time, or if necessary, one minute at a time.
- 2. Know your limits.** You can't do everything. And, you can't be everything. Do what you can. Don't let what you can't do bother you.
- 3. Don't try to do everything at once.** You can't. If you try, you will quickly learn how easy it is to become overwhelmed. Instead, prioritize what needs to be done. Then, if at all possible, tackle the most important thing. And, finish it before starting

on the next most important thing.

4. Pat yourself on the back every once in a while. You are doing what others aren't, can't or won't do.

5. Take some personal time off. Respite care - a welcome timeout for family caregivers and their families - is a service that provides temporary professional care to a child or adult with a disability, or with a chronic or terminal illness. Respite can take place in out-of-home settings as well as in-home for any length of time, depending on the family's needs and available resources. Many assisted living facilities and nursing homes offer respite care.

6. Take care of yourself. Your family needs you, and the person you are caring for needs you. If you don't take care of yourself, you may not be able to look after your loved ones.

7. Plan Ahead. Who will fill your shoes if you become ill or have an accident? Being a good caregiver should include plans to have your loved one cared for if you can't. You need to be ready for someone else to step and fill your caregiving shoes, even temporarily. Otherwise, all the work and effort you have been making could be for naught if you suddenly can't do the job, for whatever reason.

Start by asking yourself, "If I were beginning my caregiving duties today, what would I need to know?" To help you get started, take another look at page 2 of our article [Elder Care - First Steps](#). Then, put all of the information together in a binder or a pocket folder. Finally, think about who would be stepping in for you. Let them know what you've prepared and where they can find it in an emergency.

Recommended Reading and Videos

Many excellent books and videos can help guide you through the caregiving process. For our recommendations, including a brief description of each one, [click here](#).

15% Off Sympathy Baskets

Fruit & Gourmet Baskets & More! Nationwide Delivery, 100% Guarantee

Sympathy Gift And Gourmet

Gourmet gift baskets filled with comfort foods for those grieving.

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