

ADOPTING YOUR PARENTS

What to Know Before Taking the Plunge

Additional Unpublished Chapter

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The Story of Granny M

One story that is close to my heart is one that clearly shows how the uninitiated do not know what is involved in taking care of an elderly person until they do it themselves!

In a rather large family of 6 children only one child accepted responsibility for Granny M, their ailing mother, and brought her to live with them in their home. They set aside a spare room for her, and she stayed with them for many years, until she started to fall a lot - they had tiled floors throughout their home and she injured herself quite badly.

She also started wandering about at night, slipping in the bathroom. In addition to this, her memory was fading and she started hallucinating about dead relatives who she believed were still alive!

She was in her 80s at that stage and her daughter Greta and son-in-law William were already in their sixties and battling to cope with her.

So they decided to place her in a retirement home. They approached Greta's remaining siblings to help but none were willing to contribute towards her living and accommodation costs. Most were also retired by then, living on a meagre income and felt they could not put any money forward. Eventually the widow of one of the brothers came forward to pay a rather large sum towards her upkeep at the home.

Other members of the family were shaking their heads, saying how bad it was that their mother was being put in a home, criticizing the decision.

Greta and William found a very nice place that they felt would suit her needs. I got to see the room and it was very bright and roomy. Unlike most of the assisted living homes at that time, Granny M had an en-suite toilet and hand basin which at her time of life was great. Like many elderly people who reach the point where they can no longer safely enjoy the independence they've been used to, she fought being there and kept very much to herself.

Once Greta and William were sure she had settled down. They went away for 3 months to visit their daughter who lives in Europe. Before they left, they made sure that their own 5 children who lived in the same town, would visit their grandmother at least once a week and bring her supplies of cookies, juice and chocolate. Greta's remaining siblings also agreed to visit frequently.

Unbeknown to the couple, while they were away, Pam (one of their nieces) who lived in another province happened to be in town on business and went to visit Granny M. She was one of the many who were upset to hear about Granny M being in a home, and was also one of those unwilling to contribute financially towards her care.

Pam went home and told her husband that she wanted to bring Granny M home to live with them, and that she was sure that taking care of her would not be a problem.

I might add here, that this family were farmers, and all the adults started work on the farm at 4.00am in the morning.

So without a word to anyone, she drove through the next day, packed up Granny M's room, loaded her into the truck, and took her to live with them.

The very first night, they were woken by this old dear walking around talking to herself.

The same thing happened every night for a month, and then one night they heard a noise and upon investigation found her half way down their driveway with her suitcase in hand, saying she was going to meet her brother, Henry.

Henry had been dead for 40 years!

In addition to her wandering mind, Granny M had not been well, and had developed diarrhea - probably due to the unusual food, routines and surroundings.

Eventually, Pam and her husband realized that they could not cope. Instead of taking her back to the home, they drove her a good few miles to the nearest hospital and left her there!

While this was unfolding, the message got through to Greta and William who were getting ready to return home after their holiday. They had paid for Granny M's board and lodging in advance and were aghast to hear that she had been taken away without any notice or consideration of the arrangements that had been put in place.

Needless to say they were very angry. Upon arriving back in the country, they immediately contacted Pam, only to hear the latest part of the story; that she had given up and left her grandmother in the hospital.

They got home, grabbed the car keys and traveled nonstop, found the hospital and when they entered the ward, they saw a hardly recognizable Granny M lying in a general ward. She did not recognize them and was rambling on like a crazy person.

Her son-in-law, William, did not even sign her out. He threw back the bedclothes only to find that she was lying in her urine and excrement. He just scooped Granny M into his arms and took her out to their car and traveled home.

While in the car, they phoned ahead to see whether they could get her back into the retirement home. Luckily another room had become available. They then phoned Granny M's doctor to make sure he was waiting for them when they arrived.

When the doctor examined her, he found that she was so dehydrated that they had to put her on a drip. He told them that if they had not taken her home when they did she would have died, as she had not eaten in days!

This story is a lesson for ALL of us.

We cannot know what someone in different circumstances is going through. In this case, almost everybody in the family was criticizing how Greta and William were caring for Granny M, when in fact, they knew exactly what they were doing. They had been struggling for months until they could no longer cope, and had only placed her in a home when it was clear that they were not able to care for her properly.

As this story illustrates, Pam became aware very quickly just what Greta and William had been going through with Granny M, although by then she had made the fatal mistake of thinking she knew best with very little knowledge of the situation.

This story had a happy ending. Dear old Granny M lived for many years after this incident and settled down to life in this home. She eventually died at the age of 98!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melanie Ambrose has spent her life studying human nature, body language and the mind. She has a thirst for knowledge and self help books are her number one read.

After having cared for her elderly parents for many years and having come into contact with, and having swapped stories with many other children who had also adopted their parents, she felt there was a gap in the market for books of this nature. This is her first book.

Melanie lives in beautiful Canada with her husband David and their “SPCA special” Kappy.



For more, order the ebook, or paperback version:
www.AdoptingYourParents.com

“This book is a must read for anyone considering taking care of their parents.”

“Adopting Your Parents, is not meant to persuade you one way or the other. It simply and eloquently brings up issues to consider that will help you make the right decision for both you and your parents. I highly recommend this book.”

“Even though I have a PhD in Family and Geriatric Care- they don’t really prepare you for what is to come.”

“Readers will find “Adopting Your Parents: What To Know Before Taking the Plunge” easy to read and understand. Ms. Ambrose is passionate, caring and wants to share her experiences. We all have conflicting views on what we want to do about our elderly and frail parents, but are you up for it- really up for it? She will touch your heart and soul in providing her experiences and feelings. We really need to look at reality and I think Ms. Ambrose will give it to you in a caring way.”