

Eldercare Answers

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After Mom Dies - The Lessons



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What are the lessons? Where is the pain? And, why am I not happy with receiving funds from Mom's estate? Yes, there are lessons in this process that we call grief and I knew that going through this journey.

My family and I have been very busy cleaning out her house of over 60 years of "saved" or "filed" stuff. This was the very home we all grew up in - where birthdays meant parties with lots of cupcakes. This is the house where the tooth fairies left lots of quarters under our pillows, Santa Claus stuffed our stocking with oranges, nuts and small toys and the Easter Bunny hid baskets of jelly beans and chocolate. The house where we had Cub Scout meetings that caused me to leave the house because of the volume coming from 8 little boys! The same house where as a teenager I had a church teen party and over 100 or more kids tried to crash the party - what a night - what a memory. Oh, and it was the first and last party my parents hosted for us teenage kids!

Lesson 1: Always be grateful and always say "thank you."

It has been seven months since my mother's death at 91 years of age - a good, long life. A life of dignity, respect and love from all who knew her and a privilege to those who provided care for her the final few months of her life. One of the lessons I learned even from the end of mom's life is to always be grateful and, despite her deficits, she never failed to

say, "thank you."

Lesson 2: If you don't need it, get rid of it. Don't pass it to your kids.

If you don't need it - shred it. This goes for almost all the paper that comes into our homes. With computers and access to information online we really don't need those old phone bills or that receipt for the first television purchased in 1955. We don't need all those little trinkets and, as my brother calls them, "dustables" - that is unless we are collectors of something of interest or they have value. They should be given away or sold if not of interest any longer. In my own life, I am discarding stuff - so my kids don't have to do what we needed to do at mom's house! Ask yourself - do I really need this and for what? If you don't get a positive answer - shred, sell, donate or recycle!

Lesson #3 - Take pictures of your better jewelry and put names next to each piece (file with legal documents) and tell them to take all the rest to a local hospital thrift shop.

Now I see why mom still had my grandmothers' (both of them) jewelry - she didn't know what to do with each piece - so she just kept them in a suitcase for ME to deal with. Needless to say, I have been able to give some of them to family, but what do I do with the boxes and boxes of costume jewelry that I remember these three ladies wearing? Will it stay in those boxes for my daughters to deal with? No, I plan on using the rainy nights of the coming winter to sort them into piles for all the girls in the family and

truly have them gone by the anniversary of her death. What about all my stuff?

Lesson 4: When you have to disburse an estate of someone you love, find a way to make a gift to a worthy cause out of a portion of those dollars - it allows that person one last opportunity to make the world a better place. I will be doing that with a part of what I inherit.

The money issue or the inheritance - at this point, is the hardest matter for me. I am sure some of you are thinking that I am crazy: how wonderful to get some unexpected money - and that is somewhat true (because we all know Social Security won't be enough). Despite getting over the asking price for her house and the reality that her stock still has some value is amazing - I sure wish I could tell my parents what we got for the house they paid \$6,000 for! But, for me it is sad that in a few weeks all they worked for and saved for will be divided four ways and, what was the substance in material matter for these two wonderful people will be totally gone. That causes me pain; it feels like they have been erased and yet I know her handprint is on my heart and, I hope, life.

I miss my mom but I value these lessons and the more that will come as I continue to grieve. I am fortunate to work in an environment with those who understand and can support my transition from daughter to "trustee." Care Managers are here for any of you struggling with these issues as well - for it does take a "village" to successfully complete the many transitions of life.



Eldercare Services works with Seniors and their families in Walnut Creek, Lamorinda, Alameda County, San Francisco, San Ramon Valley and Marin County, CA.
Visit us on the web at www.EldercareAnswers.com for more information.

Community Classes
Walnut Creek

Alzheimer's: 101 & Alzheimer's: 102
For Families Experiencing the Challenge

3rd Friday of every month from 10 am to Noon
(Class topic alternates monthly)

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Cost for Classes:

\$10 per person/\$15 per couple or 2nd family member
Proceeds benefit the Alzheimer's Association

Class Registration:

Please call at least 3 days ahead

For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit
www.EldercareAnswers.com or call (925) 937-2018
or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com

Support Groups

When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.

Caring for An Aging Family Member

2nd Thursday of every month from 6 to 7:30 pm

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., **Walnut Creek**, CA 94595

1st Thursday of each month from 5:15 to 6:45 pm

Glen Park Library, 2825 Diamond St., **San Francisco**

Cost for Support Groups: None

Support Group Registration: Not required

More Info: (925) 937-2018 or (415) 469-8300



Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Home Care, and Care Management to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808 or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com.