

It Could Be Worse

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The most difficult aspect of caring for an aging soul is that we are totally helpless; we do not know what to do. We know of brain disease and the inevitable death, hopefully with dignity, yet we soon realize ignorance is not a plan. Diagnoses: advancing Alzheimer's disease.



Soon, a cane, then a walker, kept you mobile. Tanya, our medically challenged daughter, and I supported you, focused on the physical things like fixing meals, assisting in the restroom, and more each day. Then everything changed: your knees gave out. After your fall, broken wrist, and increasingly bone-on-bone knee pain, we focused on your urgent need for new knees and advancing Alzheimer's monitoring. Tanya and I could still keep up with the daily care, now with limited help from home health care... that is until!!!

Until rapid leg pain shut down my left leg; soon, the unanticipated back surgery removed me from your active caregivers list, at least physically. Helplessness again. My transition from helpful to spectator was abrupt and total helplessness. Now I learn caring is also emotional, a care partner with 61 years of experience just caring as we always have.

Today you completed the requisite EKG and blood panel before next month's proposed knee replacement surgery. No longer, the medical team promises, will knee pain prevent you from walking, visiting the restroom without help, or being bound by that wheelchair. Soon, with rehabilitation and pain sacrifice, you may well be mobile again, to deal with a slow memory, puzzles that take longer, and whatever your version of Alzheimer's brings — a second chance at the quality of life.

There is real hope. You are determined and strong, battling both Alzheimer's, complete with its next surprises, and totally useless knees. Even at 83, the surgeons believed two surgeries would liberate you from movement limitations, freeing you to deal head-on with the most common brain diseases. Nothing now can prevent you from the quality of life you created in our home.



With our care partnership and reenergized strength, let's forget what we can no longer do and focus together on what we can. We both grieve each other's ills while we're still alive; now is the time to employ that 61-year-long caring and laugh at stupid jokes. Reminisce deeply, immerse ourselves in a faded photo album, and cherish each smile for what it is: giving between us, supporting, and being the primary caregiver to each other. Your smile, honest laugh, tickle, poke, and tease bring a true quality of life to all. Let's take this second chance and live without expectation; love life as it is and create our own happiness bubble. It may be helpless, yet it could be worse.

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Photos by gempresphotos

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