

A Place for Mom, Part III

Last month I wrote about the process of getting my mother admitted to a nursing and retirement community and the emotional toll that it took on my sister and me. I have been absolutely delighted in the transition and the positive attitude that my mother has taken throughout this change in her lifestyle. On the first day as we entered her room for the first time, my mom was introduced to her room-mate, another older adult without much in the way of social skills in hospitality. My mother noticed this woman's attitude and immediately told me to get her a private room; that she didn't think that the woman in the other bed would make a good room-mate for her. After a few days, mom told me to take her name off the private room list and that she felt that the room-mate needed her since she seldom had any friends or relatives come to visit. Now, that sounds like the mother that raised me!

As she adjusted to a more scheduled life, she found that the routine was to her liking. She attends Catholic mass each morning and joins the group for coffee following the service. Although she doesn't care to play BINGO nor engage in sing-a-longs, she's tried them out and been a good sport about joining in on the community's activity programs. During a recent care conference, the nursing staff asked me what types of activities she enjoyed. They were excited to learn that she was a knitter and a quilter since they had women who volunteered their time to help the residents engage in these activities and crafts that they were so skilled at doing in the past.

Perhaps the most rewarding byproduct of this transition has been my mom's increase in socialization with people in her peer group. She has developed a renewed interest in her appearance asking to visit the beauty salon each week and has requested new clothes to wear. The staff gets her out of her wheelchair each day and assists her in walking with her walker – a device that she discarded months ago. She now talks about the need to get up and get moving every day.

Even though she finds it difficult to hear others, she has developed a few new friendships in this new environment. She has been quick to tell me that the place wasn't like home, but it was a good place for her at this point in her life. My sister, her former care-giver, has also benefitted from this positive transition in that now she has become a daughter once more and has discarded the role of care-giver.

I have spent countless hours counseling others about the benefits of senior living communities – the increased socialization and the decrease in loneliness, not to mention the nutritional benefit of eating three wholesome meals each day. Now I've experienced these benefits on a personal level on behalf of someone I love. If you have a loved one that might benefit from joining a

senior living community and aren't sure what to do give me a call or send me an email. I'll be happy to help you think through the steps you need to take.

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