

When Everyday Becomes Mother's Day: Reversing Roles and Repaying Mom

Irvine, CA – One Sunday every May, sons and daughters, no matter what their age, turn the household hierarchy upside down and attempt to reciprocate everything Mom has done for them by showering her with gifts and treating her to her favorite restaurant. Those 24 hours are not much compared to the other 364 days, when Moms are seemingly superhuman juggling children, relationships, careers and other aspects of everyday life. But Mothers are indeed human, and now, as “adult children”, are we prepared to take care of mom when she can no longer care for herself?

“It shook me to the core when a stroke left my mom so helpless and vulnerable,” reveals Louise Lewis, author of “No Experts Needed: The Meaning of Life According to You!” “She was never sick a day in her life. But now she needed me, and the roles were reversed. The reality of the natural progression of life set in.”

Preparation is the key according to Lewis, “At some point, you’ve got to stop living in denial to the fact that you’ll eventually assume the role of Mother to your mother.” That’s not a lesson Lewis read about from an expert, but one learned through her own life experience.

“Once I got over the initial shock of my mom’s stroke, I didn’t seek out an expert to tell me what to do,” continues Lewis, a self-proclaimed self-growth junkie. “Instinct kicked in.” Lewis immediately flew across the country and spent three weeks at her mother’s side, helping the team of caregivers rehabilitate her mother.

Lewis insists getting on the same page with siblings when assisting a sick parent can help minimize any potential stress, “If you’re lucky enough to have brothers or sisters who can share the responsibility, then gather the troops and decide who will assume what aspect of Mom’s care.”

Lewis says even though it is important to have a heart-to-heart discussion with your mother before a sickness occurs, it is vital to continue this dialogue during the recovery stage. “I realized early on that the parent/child role-reversal was uncomfortable for Mom as well. Not only did I have to help her physical state, but I also had to help her adjust to accepting my help,” explains Lewis.

She adds that with that communication out of the way early on, you can then turn the focus to truly enjoying the time you have left with Mom. “I’ve learned from my Dad’s passing that having pointed conversations with your parents -- about what their final days may bring -- can bring you closer and create a more honest and fulfilling relationship.”

It’s preparing for those final years of Mom’s life that is the most satisfying for both of us. Lewis contends, “Imagine the sense of accomplishment for a mother when she realizes she’s raised a child who’s caring enough to put family first and return the favor. Then, as the “child caregiver” you get a rewarding feeling for taking on the responsibility of caring for a parent.”

Lewis believes this life situation is the perfect opportunity for children to genuinely show Mom how much all of her sacrifices are truly appreciated. She concludes by asking, “You know that great feeling you get on Mother’s Day when you see your mom enjoy everything you’ve done for her? If you prepare now – before something bad happens -- you are free to create that joy in your relationship everyday...for the rest of her life.”

About the Author

Louise Lewis has two decades of experience in marketing and advertising in the high-tech industry. When the dot-com bubble imploded, so did Lewis’ cozy world. Her sudden job loss led her on a journey to seek out a new meaning in her life. She discovered some core truths that can help others discover their own sense of purpose.

Born and raised in Louisiana, Lewis earned her bachelor’s degree in Communications at California State University in Fullerton. She still lives in Southern California and serves as a volunteer at Children’s Hospital of Orange County.

Lewis is the author of “No Experts Needed: The Meaning of Life According to You!” and is online at www.NoExpertsNeeded.com.

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