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📄 Welcome to a Community Where Kindness Is King



Nicholas Pollak / September 2, 2011 /

OP-ED (<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/category/op-ed>)

[img]560|left|Nicholas D. Pollak||no_popup[/img]I recently was asked to visit with an 87- year-old man whom I had seen a year ago. At that time, I was asked whether he was physically able to continue to look after himself.

I had been led to believe I would be seeing an old man incapable of putting together a coherent thought, someone who would be combative, too.

None of that was true.

A year ago he was alert, in quite good physical health except for a swollen knee. He was cooking and cleaning, keeping himself and his house clean. Further, he was in a relationship with an 88-year-old woman who drove him around. Through his son's interference, the gentleman recently had lost his driver's license.

Everything had been going well until his girlfriend died during hip replacement surgery. I was asked to revisit because his stepdaughter had been unable to reach him by telephone. Turns out his girlfriend had died two months before. He had not told his stepdaughter because he did not have long distance telephone service.

When I arrived, I was amazed again at his resilience. His girlfriend's son was helping him once a week to the grocery store, and happily he still was preparing his own meals.

A Model for All of Us

In every sense he is irascible and simply does not understand what it means to give up. His house is clean, he does his own laundry and the occasional odd repair job.

The only concern was transportation. He felt isolated because he was not permitted to drive and was dependant upon one person to drive him.

If he could be more transportation independent, he would feel better. No, he was not pushing to have his license reinstated.

Instead, he had in mind an adult tricycle to trike to a local store a mile away and also to trike to his favorite restaurant.

When I took him to the restaurant, I was amazed by the reception the staff gave him. They had not seen him in a while. He told them he had no means of traveling. The general manager of the restaurant gave him his phone number and said to call when he wanted to eat. He would come and get him, drive him to the restaurant and drive him back.

I took the manager aside. Did he mean what he said? He smiled. Absolutely. He had known this elderly gentleman for 12 years of eating at his restaurant. He was considered family by everyone.

The gentleman took the manager's phone number. As far as I know, he has been eating every week at his favorite restaurant.

Your Choice, Dad

stepdaughter made inquiries and found the kind of trike that would work for him. She found two. But her stepfather is not on the internet. She mailed a package with her findings. It would have been easy for her to pick one. But she wanted to make sure that he would choose what he wanted. Otherwise, he might have believed she was interfering in his life.

He picked the trike he liked and has been riding it ever since. The trike has restored his independence. Finally he and his stepdaughter and he have agreed to a schedule of phone and Skype calls. His stepdaughter calls every morning. They have agreed if she cannot reach him within an hour, she would immediately send a paramedic. (The Fire Dept is obliging, perhaps because he is a retired firefighter.) But they have not yet been called.

Hillary Clinton once wrote, "It takes a village." In this case all it took was one kind restaurant manager, a concerned stepdaughter and a helpful girlfriend's son to maintain a quality of life.

One last thought. What would it take for each one of us to keep a lookout for an elderly person on our block and check on him once a week?

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone, 310.204.3321 or by email at nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net (<mailto:nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net>). See my website at www.hypnotherapy4you.net (<http://www.hypnotherapy4you.net/>)



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