

# Confessions of a Dutiful Daughter

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By Mary Peters, MS, RG, Certified Geriatric Care Manager

Fifty-two year old Carolyn hated to admit that she was overwhelmed. She often felt on the verge of tears. Her near-perfect life had become a roller coaster. Standing in front of the mirror, she took stock. Working, while managing her family, had come easily. Lately, however, her family complained about her unavailability.

The transition to mayhem started when her mother, Eva, suffered a broken hip at home. While Eva was in the hospital and rehab, Carolyn struggled to visit her before and after work. The visits rarely went well. Her mother hated rehab and would indignantly refuse physical therapy. She wondered how they could possibly manage without help at home. Deeply loving her mother had still not made for an easy relationship. Mainly because she and her mom shared an undesirable trait: Each wanted to control everything.

Her usually helpful husband, now traveling for work, had adamantly ruled out Eva living with them. Her long distance brother was obviously no assistance. She asked herself: Who will help me? What would be her daily plan? She'd get up at 5:30 a.m., and with Bill away, she'd do the necessities and drive the children to school. She'd go to Eva's to get her up, dressed and fed. And, she'd still be at work for meetings she really couldn't miss. Reality sunk in: Who am I kidding? Something had to give.

She related her concern to a colleague who told her about a local agency that provides specializes in eldercare and care management. It was available through the company's *Share The Care* program. All she had to do was call them.

Carolyn spoke with a certified geriatric care manager, related their issues and she felt a burden lifting. They set a time for an assessment of her mother's needs for a smooth transition back to home.

They both wanted to provide her mother with security, comfort, safety and to help restore her independence. The care manager would help manage Eva's medications and assure doctor's appointments were attended while Carolyn worked.

An excellent caregiver suited to her mother's strong-will now provides personal assistance, help around the house and meal preparation. The caregiver reminds Eva to take her meds correctly and even shops for groceries. They play cards and create photo albums to pass the afternoons.

After a few weeks, she called to say how grateful she is that the caregiver is in their lives. She arrives at work on time, got her promotion and she hasn't missed a single soccer match or school program. She makes it to Yoga and Pilates, her book club and church on time. She added that the peace of mind is the best part.

Her only regret is that she didn't call the care manager sooner.

*Care For Life, Inc., is a locally owned eldercare agency specializing in certified geriatric care management and non-medical homecare. Those interested in hear, call (843) 852-9090 and talk with Sheryl O'Neal, its Eldercare Advisor.*