

**Dotsie Bregel,  
Founder and CEO of  
The National Association of Baby Boomer Women  
(NABBW)**



**[www.nabbw.com](http://www.nabbw.com)**

**And**

**Boomer Women Speak (BWS)  
[www.boomerwomenspeak.com](http://www.boomerwomenspeak.com)**

***Presents***

**How to Avoid 14 Common Eldercare Pitfalls**

***With***

**Barbara Friesner**

Sponsored by:




**ELATIONS<sup>®</sup>**  
Healthier Joints  
ONLY 30 CALORIES!

The delicious drink with  
Glucosamine,  
Chondroitin & more!

**MORE  
ABSORBABLE  
THAN PILLS**

Click [www.elations.com](http://www.elations.com) for more info!



**CREDIT ALERT!**

**8 Credit Card Secrets Revealed** Get credit card smart with Ken & Daria Dolan's new report: "8 Secrets Your Credit Card Company Doesn't Want You to Know." Learn how to erase debt, stay out of debt, get the best card deals, avoid hidden fees, slash your interest rate & more.

▶ [Click here to download and print your FREE copy!](#)

Dolans

Click <http://www.dolans.com/order/?sid=PK1294> or more info!



Menopause sees 6,000 new faces each day.

And here are 4 reasons they can start smiling again...

Me Again<sup>™</sup>  
wellness for menopause  
and beyond  
Available at **CVS**

<http://www.meagainonline.com> for more info!

**How to Avoid 14 Common Eldercare Pitfalls**  
**With**  
**Barbara Friesner**

**Dotsie:** Hello and welcome to the call. The format for the call is simply that I will interview our guest, **Barbara Friesner**, who will be the first guest in our series, **Caring for Elderly Loved Ones**. When we finish the interview, we'll open up the lines for questions.

For those of you who don't know me, I am **Dotsie Bregel**, and I am the founder of the **National Association of Baby Boomer Women** which can be found at [www.NABBW.com](http://www.NABBW.com) and also [www.boomerwomenspeak.com](http://www.boomerwomenspeak.com) the number one sites on major search engines for baby boomer women. I'm passionate about educating and empowering boomer women which happens to be my generation. Since launching [www.boomerwomenspeak.com](http://www.boomerwomenspeak.com) over five years ago, I've become the "go-to" person for people who are interested in learning more about boomer women and I really have a mission of embracing all women and providing them with the means to soar.

Our sites are proudly sponsored by [www.dolans.com](http://www.dolans.com). If you are interested in excellent financial information that will encourage you to live a more financially responsible midlife, we recommend that you visit their site at [www.dolans.com](http://www.dolans.com). We are also sponsored by **Elations** which is a daily drink supplement that offers relief from joint aches and pains. It is an alternative to taking large pills, and you can find them at [www.elations.com](http://www.elations.com).

If you are not a member of the [NABBW](http://www.NABBW.com), the fee to join is typically \$75.00; but if you are on the call and you're a guest of Barbara's, I'd like to invite you to join for \$50.00 and you can email me at [dots@nabbw.com](mailto:dots@nabbw.com) and I'll send you the reduced link to join. This teleseminar is one of many that are archived in our **Members Only** area at [www.nabbw.com](http://www.nabbw.com). All of the past teleseminars are free to you when you join, and they are also transcribed; so if you don't like listening to them while working online, you can print them and read them at your convenience

Okay, let's get started by allowing me to introduce Barbara Friesner. She is the author of **The Ultimate Caregivers Survival Guide** and she is the country's leading generational coach and expert on issues affecting seniors and their families. She started **Age Wise Living** as the result of over twenty-five years as the care manager for her grandmother and now her mother. She provides generational coaching and educational programs to support and educate families so they can resolve their eldercare issues by choice and not by crisis. In addition to being the eldercare expert for the [National Association of Baby Boomer Women](http://www.National Association of Baby Boomer Women), every month Barbara publishes her highly regarded newsletter and she has also been published in national magazines and newspapers, and featured on television and radio across the country. She is a professional speaker and most

recently, was the keynote speaker for the *National Association of Geriatric Care Managers* annual convention that was held in Orlando, Florida and I think that was just last month. She is also an adjunct professor at Cornell University. She received her MBA from Boston University. So welcome to the call, Barbara.

**Barbara:** Thank you Dotsie, I'm thrilled to be here.

**Dotsie:** Good. I just wanted to know if you'd to tell them a little bit about your book/workbook and the CD that you have available from your site.

**Barbara:** Well, the workbook is really terrific, if I do say so myself; which of course I do; because a lot of times you get a book about a subject and you read about it, but then you have to figure out how to actually do it. And what's so great about this book is that it is actually a workbook so you don't just learn what to do with *The Ultimate Caregivers Survival Guide* as a workbook, you really do it. It has examples, and it has samples, and forms to fill out, and things like that so it walks you step-by-step through the process. And so it really is so helpful for people to actually use it. It's spiral-bound so it lays flat, and it also has a CD in the back of it of all of the forms because there are also forms for taking your loved one to the doctors, and it has a doctor's appointment form and all kinds of forms, so it's really terrific book.

And then by the way, anybody on this call who buys *The Ultimate Caregivers Survival Guide*, I'm also going to give them for free, a box set of three CD's of the *Age Wise Living* expert series. That's three CD's, one with an elder law expert, one an interview with a personal financial planning expert, and one with a family relationship expert, and it's really terrific. It talks about with elder law, for example, why an elder law attorney, when do you go, what do you have to bring with you, what do you get out of the meeting, what are the most common mistakes, how do you get your loved one to talk about it. All of those kinds of things; so it is really a terrific set. And then if your aging loved one has dementia, then *The Ultimate Caregivers Survival Guide* workbook really is not appropriate, because someone with dementia is really past the reason and logic we use in the workbook. So if your aging loved one has dementia, then I also have a CD called, "*Is it Simple Forgetfulness or the Real Thing?*" And it's a great CD. It really takes people through from figuring out—first of all, what is dementia; and is that Alzheimer's; what is it...and other causes of forgetfulness and it really takes you through the process of helping a loved one with dementia. So that's called, "*Is it Simple Forgetfulness or the Real Thing?*" And they can get that on my Web site as well which is, [www.AgeWiseLiving.com](http://www.AgeWiseLiving.com).

**Dotsie:** Okay so I just want to say actually last year when we surveyed our members, we gave them, oh I want to say like twenty-five topics and said, which are the most important to you at this point and time in your life and what do you need more educational opportunities about. And we came up with 12 topics and that is how we got our editorial calendars for this year. One of the 12 was, of

course, this whole issue of eldercare and for some reason, I put it in this month. Wouldn't you know that my—I have a loved one who has been in the hospital for three weeks right now who is in his fourth year of Alzheimer's.

So we've done lots of running back and forth to the hospital and trying to find out what our next step is. And then in addition to that, my dad fell last week and hurt his knee and needs someone with him for 24-hours. So I'm like, oh my gosh this is such perfect timing. And I have to tell you that I listened to Barbara's CD while driving around and back and forth last week, about the "simple forgetfulness," about the "***Is it Simple Forgetfulness or the Real Thing?***" and I have to tell you that it was most helpful. Some of it we have already lived through and I wish I had already listened to it prior to that, but some of it is exactly what we are facing right now. So it just kind of interesting that this timing is as it is.

We're all finished with the introductions now so we're going to just jump right in. So Barbara we've got quite a few things; actually 14 to get through in about forty minutes, and then we'll open up for some questions. My first question is not knowing, understanding, and/or respecting the importance of emotions and generational experiences definitely has an effect in how we correspond with our elderly; whether they are our parents or an aunt or uncle or a neighbor or just someone that we love. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Barbara:** Absolutely, and a lot of people really want to help their aging parents or other aging loved ones and like many baby boomers, they just dive right in. Unfortunately, they don't always know how to approach a topic so they crash into a wall of resistance. So it's really important that when you begin to talk to your aging loved one, it's really important to know that this is a process, and if you follow the process, there's really no reason why you can't be successful. But there are, as you say, there are 14 pitfalls that you definitely want to avoid and one of them is not knowing, understanding, or respecting the importance of their emotions, or their generational experiences. And most people think that because they come from the same family, we must think and feel the same way. You know, after all, these are our parents, they raised us, so we must all be on the same page. Unfortunately, that's just not true. And the fact is that generational perspective and emotions matter a lot. As baby boomers, our parent's generation is very different from ours in understanding and respecting how *they* view the world generationally, and how *they* feel about it emotionally is really critical to your success.

There are two of them. First, looking at the emotional issues and thinking about what are some of the emotional issues that seniors are facing. They are facing things like aging, illness, they're living longer so they are getting—where many might not have lived long enough to get sick, they are now getting sick and in many cases, they are getting more sick and they are getting sicker for longer periods of time. So their illnesses are very emotional in dealing with that. Death of spouse, of a spouse, death of friends; fear of losing control and independence;

that's a huge one, fear of dependency, or not having anyone to depend on, and just being angry and overwhelmed. While the issues and decisions that they're going to have to make really are very practical in nature; where are they going to live, are they going to be driving; the kinds of decisions they have to make are very practical, for them, this is a very emotional time. What might have been no big deal ten years ago is a very big deal to them now. And with these major issues, when anyone, no matter what their age are, when anyone is emotional and overwhelmed, they tend to move slower, and be more cautious, or they are more emotionally volatile. They either withdraw, or are quicker to flare up, and explode. And so looking at it from an emotional standpoint, you look at your mother, your father, your loved one and you say to yourself, you know this is someone who has always been very practical my whole life; why is this a big deal? Well, it's a big deal because they are a lot of emotional things.

And then the second part of it is the generational issue. And every generation's collective generational experience has a huge impact on our attitudes. And because our parents lived through the depression, they're often called "The Depression Era Generation," and money, of course, is very important to them. But those who are in their mid to upper 80's, while they're commonly called the "The Depression Era Generation," they're formative years were actually at the end of the Victorian era, which is why I call them Vicky-D's for *Victorian Depression Era*. So many of them were in their late teens and early twenties when *The Depression* hit, but they were formed by the standards of the Victorian era. And those standards most influence the issues that most of us are dealing with, with them today. For example, they are very private. That was a generation that didn't talk about personal things. You didn't talk about money, you didn't talk about health, not to professionals, and certainly not with their children. And so if you're uncomfortable talking to them about their money or their health, imagine how they feel, because in their generation, they just didn't do it. They are also as a generation very proud, very self-sufficient. This is a generation many of them are first or second generations coming here to the United States, and so they made it on their own. You went out there and you created what you built, you created the American Dream. But what that means is that they may not ask for help, they may not admit they need it, and they may not be very gracious about accepting it. Let me add one more thing. It is also a generation that has very strictly defined male and female roles. So the men were bread winners, the professionals; they handled the money. The women were homemakers and mothers and took care of extended family members. And as a result, they expect their daughters to be care providers but often turn to the son for professional advice. And in most cases, they are most receptive to a man's opinion, especially a doctor's, and more comfortable with male professionals. So in general, it may be easier to discuss health and taking over the finances with the mother, but not the house. And in general, it's easier to discuss moving with the man, but not the finances. So really keeping in mind their generational perspective and emotional, where they are coming from emotionally, has huge impact.

**Dotsie:** You know while you were speaking I was just thinking about these past few weeks and I'll have to say that when my dad fell the other day, the first thing I said was, "Alright dad, let's go to the ER." I mean you know you said boomers jump in and they just want a fix and get it done. And he was like, "Now wait a minute, honey...let me just sit here and think about this for a minute." He needed to collect his thoughts because he was thinking oh boy, what did I do now. But my first thought was okay, off to the emergency room, let's see what's going on and get it taken care of. And that was not his first thought.

And then the other thing that I think is interesting is that you say, talk about them being self-sufficient. Boomers at midlife, I think, are learning that it is okay to ask for help; but I'll tell you, I don't think this generation has ever really felt that this was okay. They have wanted to do it all for themselves and they pretty much have. So when they have to have somebody with them 24 hours—I know in my dad's case he is just so disappointed in himself that he just can't quite do what he needs to do to be there by himself. So it's so true. There are a lot of generational differences that we need to take into consideration because our generation is kind of like the fixers, and let's just get it done, and they kind of think things through, and want to follow the procedures they are use to. So that's really interesting, Barbara.

What about when we think that our concern for them is reason enough for a change. Like we might see something they're going through and again, we jump in and say, okay time for a change. What are we going to do? How do we address that?

**Barbara:** Well concern is good and anticipating potential problems is great; but before you do anything, it is also important to ask yourself if your concern *requires* change. And if so, does it require change now? If the answer to the question is yes, then please do proceed, but many times we're concerned—"Gee, you know, mom's getting older, maybe she shouldn't live on her own anymore." She's fine, she's healthy, she's living independently, she's driving, she's fine, no problem. But because we're concerned, we think well we better move her into an assisted living now because that way I won't have to worry about her. And the fact is that, you know, it's like—wait a second, back up here for a minute, because does the concern require change? And if not, then rather than jumping in with both feet, it's better to start talking with your aging loved one about your concern for their future, for their need to prepare, but not the need for them to change now. So, mom is fine; she doesn't have to move, so now is the perfect time to talk to her and say, you know, and I know you're in great shape mom, and I'm not suggesting any moves today, but have you ever thought about where you would want to live when the house gets too much for you? That kind of thing.

**Dotsie:** And I can certainly relate to this because one of the things we're going through right now is "waiting list." And we should have known better. I mean, you

can't just get into a place immediately, so that's one of the reasons we need to talk about this before it is an issue. We had to get on a waiting list and sometimes they are three months and sometimes, they are two-three years. So talking about—I think you used the term like taking care of things by choice and not by crisis; and that, I think, is huge and we're learning that right now because we're saying, "oh my gosh!" My dad is going to get better this time around, but what's going to happen when he doesn't? Or he won't? So, we have to use this opportunity to start talking about this stuff.

**Barbara:** Absolutely and you're so right about waiting list and things like that because so often people do wait to call me as a generational coach. They wait to call me for my help until there is a crisis. And at that point, you're absolutely right. You know, maybe the place that is going to be the ideal place has a waiting list and that's not going to be an option, or the money isn't there and it's not available. So really it is important to be concerned and anticipating, but it doesn't necessarily mean that just because you're concerned about them for the future means that they have to change today.

**Dotsie:** And then the other thing is that sometimes they might have to move twice because you didn't plan ahead. You know, the ideal place isn't available but another one is, and so anyway. Okay, let's talk about the term, "parenting the parent."

**Barbara:** That's one that makes me absolutely nuts because I hear people use it so much like, "Oh now that my parents aren't in good shape I've having to parent my parent" and that makes me crazy. The reason that makes me crazy is because if one of you is the parent, then by definition, the other one is the child. And the problem with that is that then it is very easy to start treating the other person like a child, or even subconsciously talking to them as if they're children, what would be a verbal pat on the head which understandably, anybody resents. No one likes being condescending to. And when you think in terms of parenting the parent, "Now come on mom, it's time for us to go, come on," you know, she's already feeling very emotional, she's already feeling very stressed, NOW you're going to talk to her like a parent, treating her like a child. It drives me nuts. So rather than approaching this conversation with your aging loved one as parenting the parent, it is better to approach it and to think about it always as collaboration. And the key to successful collaboration with your aging loved one is to create and maintain an adult-to-adult relationship. You're their kids and you know, that's fine, but in a situation like this it's two adults because by the time you are a baby boomer, you are an adult; it's time to start having an adult-adult relationship and it really changes the dynamic and makes it so much easier to work with them.

**Dotsie:** I like the collaboration piece; that's good. I know myself I have friends who have used this term, you know, now I'm parenting my parent. And even though we may feel that way, it's probably not a good way to look at it. Actually, I have to say something kind of just on the side here that I believe is happening



with baby boomers is that we are getting these wake up calls. And it's like oh my gosh, this is going to happen to us one day. I think it is good for us to consider that, and then consider how we would want to be treated if we were in that situation, because I think that can really help us help our parents, or our loved ones. The other thing that I think it is doing is moving us to purchase like the long-term care insurance, because we are seeing how incredibly expensive it is to take care of a loved one whether it is in a home, or 24-hour care; inside their home or putting them inside a retirement community. So anyway, I think it is a huge awakening for us.

**Barbara:** And I don't sell long-term care insurance, and I don't have any connection to it, but I'll tell you, it is such a—it will save your life later on because it is so expensive.

**Dotsie:** I know and it is something actually that my husband and I have purchased and we are looking at our parents right now and saying, "You know, they had the means to do this, why didn't they do it?" I just don't even think they knew about it. I don't know. I don't know why they didn't do it, but it certainly makes sense.

**Barbara:** Well, for a lot of them they didn't do it because either they didn't know about it, because it really is something that's quite new, or in some cases, health wise by the time they did find out about it, in many cases, their health didn't allow them to do it. Or it's not that it didn't allow them to do it, it's just absorbingly expensive which is why I baby boomers all the time—look into it, really consider it. And people say, "Well, I'm really rich so I don't need to do it," and I think I wish I were in that position. But my feeling is that who knows what your situation will be in twenty years? Why not have the long-term care insurance and leave the money that you have to your kids? So I really recommend it.

**Dotsie:** And you know I think something that is really sad about this generation is that they were so hard working for their money, and their pensions. And they had these pensions, and they thought they would be leaving these pensions to their children, or living comfortably, and hopefully leaving something to their children. And what has happened is that because they are living longer, their pensions are being wiped out just to take care of themselves. And it's so unfortunate. Okay, let's talk about addressing the symptoms rather than the cause.

**Barbara:** And we see this in medicine all the time where your leg hurts so they drug or cut off the leg, and then your arm hurts so they drug or cut off your arm, and eventually—you know, someone says that maybe we should look at the root cause is; and they find out they were addressing the symptoms, rather than the cause. And the same thing often happens when family members try to get involved with their aging loved ones. Especially when they are trying to help from a distance and they are not around to connect the dots. So they hear a symptom;

for example, you father has a couple of fender-benders and you hear that and that's all you know, so the first thing is take away the car. But before you do, ask if the problem is the driving or is there a root-cause? Could there be another problem? For example, is he having problems with his eyes? Is he having problems with the ability to turn his head and that kind of thing.

Ultimately, you might have to take away the car; that is possible, but just simply taking it away before you look at the root cause of the problem and saying, "Wait a second, there's really something more here to it," in other words, before doing anything investigate and analyze all the symptoms until you find the root cause, and then address that. For example, possibly buying your dad glasses; otherwise you spend a lot of time and emotional capital, and really end up no better off, or even in some cases worse off, than where you started; so it's really important, and some ways of doing that is talk to your siblings. They may tell you one thing, and they may tell the siblings another thing, and tell somebody else another thing, and it is not until you really put it all together and say wait a second, now I'm seeing a clearer picture of really a different problem than what we thought it was.

**Dotsie:** Okay, you also talk about the differences in men and women and you mention it a little in the generational experiences, but how important it is for us to realize that men and women really are different, especially when we are trying to help them solve issues.

**Barbara:** Yeah and it's kind of funny, but it's true; they really are, especially when it comes to communication styles and not just with the elderly. Men and women of all ages communicate differently. Women communicate more socially and we tend to do more chit-chatting before, during, and after the basic information whereas men tend to be more direct. They just want to get to the point. *Just the facts, ma'am.* And so, men talking with men, and women talking with women, is generally easier because they have the same communication styles. Trouble sometimes come when sons needs to talk to their mothers, or daughters need to talk to their fathers because the son is very to the point, and he's talking to mother, so he gets right to the point. And she needs more of the chit-chatting. Daughters do more of the chit-chatting; they're talking to their father and he's going nuts because he's just like just get to the point. And so, I'm not saying you shouldn't talk, but what I am saying is that you really need to think about who you're talking to. So if you're talking to your mom, daughter-to-mother is one thing, son-to-father is another but if the son is talking to the mother, the daughter talking to the father, you need to adapt your communication style to them because you are the one who is trying to improve the communication. So you really need to think if you are a daughter and you are talking to your father, you need to get to the facts and get to the point a lot more clearly, and a lot more quickly. And the son needs to do more chit-chatting.

**Dotsie:** Okay, very good. Good point. Okay. Let's see...we tend to think that we can make anybody want to change, especially when we see something from the outside. Can you address that a little bit; just that we think we change make anyone want to change?

**Barbara:** Yes, and this is a really huge pitfall because no one can make anyone want to change. You can't do it with your kids, you can't do it with your spouse, and with them you have more leverage. So if you're really trying to make you aged loved one do something, it's not surprising you'll get the same result. You'll get a "no." The fact is what *you* think someone should do doesn't really matter. ***What only matters is that the person making the change wants to make the change.*** So just because I think you ought to do something doesn't mean you're going to do it until you figure out for yourself why that's something that you want to do.

**Dotsie:** So how do you address that? Like if you see something that needs to be changed, like dad shouldn't be driving anymore, how do you get around to that conversation and hopefully, move it in a safe direction?

**Barbara:** Well you ask questions. You ask the kind of questions that will help them discover their reason for doing something. This is a really huge thing and it's something that I do a lot of in my book but I'm going to try to describe it. What is important is that you are asking the questions. For example, you mentioned the driving. Dad needs to not be driving. Ask him the kind of questions that will get him to realize that, and I'm just using these as examples. Perhaps if he is someone who feels very strongly about his image and his standing in the community say, "Dad, you know if something happened and you had an accident, imagine what the neighbors would say? What do you think the neighbors would say?" Or say, "I know you're really concerned about mom and I love that you drive mom around and take her on all of her errands and I know she really appreciates it, but if you had an accident, Dad; and something happened to mom, how would you feel for the rest of your life?"

**Dotsie:** And what about—also like I know one of the ways we've talked to dad about certain things is when he tells us like one of his siblings or somebody from one of his generation, friend, or whatever, has something going on with them; like just say one of his friends just sold their last car. "Oh gosh, he just sold his last car so he's not driving anymore. How are you doing with driving these days?" You know, that kind of thing. Kind of taking a little clue from what's going on with other people in their generation. We've done that with my dad a little bit.

**Barbara:** And that's a really good thing to do. Think in terms of what kind of an answer you are hoping to get. You know, if it's just a general conversation asking about what do you think about that, or how do you think you're doing, just be prepared for him to say, "I'm fine." And leave it at that. So rather than asking that, say, "What is he doing? What is this friend doing to get around? What kinds of

resources has he come up with? How is he getting to the doctor,” Ask those kinds of questions so that he can start thinking in terms of there is a life after the car.

**Dotsie:** Yes, because you know they have to be thinking about this stuff themselves. I know a pitfall is when we don’t ask for input from our aging loved ones, or we don’t even listen when their input is offered. What can we do about that?

**Barbara:** Well sometimes we get so caught up in wanting to help that we don’t think to ask them what they want or even if they have any good ideas about what a good solution would be. And your aging loved one, so long as they are of sound mind, they are the ultimate decision maker and the person who will determine whether there is going to be success or failure. So rather than just announce the solution, to include them in the process, emphasize the desire to help and not take over control, otherwise, you are going to be the one who gets excluded. Ask them the kinds of questions we were just talking about. What are some of the other options for you to get to the senior center? What are some of the other options for you to get to the doctor if you can’t drive, and let them offer their input. But a lot of times what we do because we are so gun ho and really caring, is we sort of present a solution.

**Dotsie:** I can totally see that. I’ve seen that happen just these last couple of weeks while we’ve been in this mix with caring for our loved ones. But we, ah, we’re just like, oh gosh, this is what we need to do; and then we go to them and say okay, this is what’s going to happen, and it’s just like a confused look, like wait a minute.

**Barbara:** And a lot of times they know that’s what is going to happen, they know. But better to say, “Okay, what—where do we go from here, dad? You’re not going to be able to drive for at least a few months. Because of this, you’re just not going to be able to, so what have you thought about this? What are some of your options? How can we help you?” That kind of thing.

**Dotsie:** I love that, “Where do we go from here, Dad?” I think that’s a good one. Okay, what about getting sucked into old behaviors and I can kind of relate to this just because there are five kids. My dad has five children. He certainly looks to different ones of us for different things. And I think a lot of it has to do with who we were as kids and who we’ve been as adults. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Barbara:** Yes, and this is a big one. Remember before I mentioned an adult-adult relationship, the collaboration between adults. And for them to think of us as adults, we actually have to behave as adults. Years ago, I use to think—I was a big shot; I was a corporate executive, and I had a really impressive job, if I do say so myself. I was a big shot. When I walked into rooms and I said things,

people would listened to me. I would go to my parent's house and to this day, I believe they had a magic threshold. Because whenever I crossed that threshold in their house, I would revert back to my childhood. And my parents knew all of the buttons to push. I don't think they were pushing them on purpose, but they would say something and it would never fail to get a reaction from me. And it was the reaction that I had since I was a kid. People who act like children are treated like children, and so it's really important to think in terms of not getting sucked into old behaviors.

So to successfully talk to your parents, it's really important to identify your buttons. What is it that mom or dad will say that always gets a rise out of you? And then to really, you know, to think about that ahead of time and when it happens, stay really focused, and when it happens, in your mind instead of letting the emotion as you start feeling the emotion arise, say to yourself, wait a second, there was one of my buttons, and I'm not going to react to it. You know, whatever it is, you need to say to yourself to not react to it so that you can stay focused on what you're trying to accomplish, and why; and you really have to make a conscious decision to modify your own behavior to achieve your goals.

**Dotsie:** Yeah, and I would have to say that I remember a time when my mom was dying, and she—I was always very frank and honest with my mother; I never beat around any bushes or anything like that. And so as a result, she was the same with me. And so I felt like she was harder on me when she was dying. I remember one day, and I still feel guilty for it, just kind of standing up for myself and saying, "Mom, why am I the one you take this stuff out on?" That type of thing and I never should have done it; she was so sick. But it was just this relationship that we had, and we had for years.

**Barbara:** And she was doing it because she knew you would love her no matter what. You were the person she could do that with, so you need to forgive yourself on that.

**Dotsie:** I should forgive myself but anyway—it is that old behavior thing.

**Barbara:** It is that old behavior thing, and it is also something you said earlier; and that is that when you have siblings, everybody has the role that they've played since childhood. This is the smart one, this is the funny one, this is the troublemaker, this is the angel, this is the devil, whatever it is. And that's really, you know, it's one of those things that can also create problems between siblings. It is so important for siblings to work together on this and not let—if you're all working together toward a common goal, and they need to turn to your brother for a generational standpoint, for financial information or somebody else, if you're all working together, then you can sort of accept that and say, "You know what, if it gets the job done, I'm not going to react to it."

**Dotsie:** Right. Right. We have to look at what we're going after here, I guess. What the purpose is. Okay, you mention a couple of things that are pitfalls like thinking once is enough, and then you also talk about not being flexible. We're running out of time so can you kind of tie those two together at all?

**Barbara:** Okay, well thinking once is enough, for example, thinking you can close the sale in one conversation, that why I talk so much about how important it is for you to start early, because you can't necessarily close the sale in one conversation. Remember I said earlier they are very emotional. This is a very emotional time for them, and to go in and talk about major life issues, and major changes in their life, not driving, moving, giving up one thing or another, is a very emotional thing. So really it is important to not think you can go in; I've got fifteen minutes, I've got a weekend; you fly in, you have this much to cover, and thinking you're going to close it all in one conversation cause that's how much time you have. The fact is that it's real important to slow down and remember that as difficult as this may be for you, this is far more difficult for them and again, that is why it is so important to start early, and also to remember that it is a process, and it the old saying, "How do you eat an elephant?" One bite at a time. So that's really important.

Also not being flexible; thinking that there is only one solution. This goes back to talking about not asking for your parents input, and not asking for other people's input. You know, often times we have a solution that worked for our friend Jane, and so if it worked for her, it works for me. That's fine. That's fine. Mom should move into an assisted living; that sounds like a good thing. And really, not thinking in terms of other solutions that may really be good. Their solution, your parents solution, they may have come up with a really terrific solution that is really good, it's just not the one you thought of, so it's really important not to fall in love with your solution but to really be opened minded about it. And also thinking that the solution has to be all or nothing; a lot of times you can get a lot further if again, starting earlier, you're able to do a little bit at a time so it's not, "You have to move into an assisted living," or that's the only solution. Maybe they can have "in-home" care for a few hours every day, or maybe there are steps you can take in between—give up the house and move into a senior building, or an independent living building or something like that.

So really, not being flexible and thinking that there are other solutions, other people can have solutions, thinking it has to be all or nothing, and also thinking that solutions are etched in stone. What's really important for you and what's really important for your loved one is to realize this solution is only for today, and it is only for as long as it works. And when it stops working, and I recommend that you say let's revisit this in a month, let's revisit this every month, because that way you can revisit it and say, "oh it worked, great" so let's talk about it next month and there's no surprise about revisiting it, and to say that its not working anymore and we have to take a look at some changes.

**Dotsie:** And that's so good because we're in a situation and we are having to make decisions *now*. You know, I've heard you talk before, I've read all of your articles that you put on the site and I just think, ah! You know, in some ways we're prepared but in a few others, we are just aren't prepared. But let's see...I have like a quarter of and you have like four pitfalls that you haven't touched on which we can do, but let's just see if anybody has a question right now so we can make sure we get a couple of questions in. Does anybody have a question?

**Caller No. 1:** Hi, this is Lynn. In California.

**Dotsie:** Hi Lynn in California.

**Caller No. 1:** Barbara, I love what you are saying about the adult-adult relationship. And I have something to offer people who are in the care giving situation, and that is the process of journaling, journaling to relieve stress. And I have a system for doing it and I'm happy to share with people. They can go to my Web site at [www.writeradvice.com](http://www.writeradvice.com) or they can just email me at [LGood7334@comcast.net](mailto:LGood7334@comcast.net) and that mail is also upon the Web site. I would be happy to send them the information about that. It is a wonderful process.

**Dotsie:** Okay, Lynn, thanks for that. If somebody didn't get that information, they can email me and I can give them that information. Why don't you send me the information, Lynn, and then if I hear from somebody I can forward it to them in case they weren't able to catch it today.

**Caller No. 1:** Thank you so much.

**Dotsie:** Yes. And you know what, that's a good point; journaling. One of the things that we haven't gotten to yet is *not* taking care of ourselves, as one of the pitfalls. We will get to that. Does anyone else have a question or a comment before we mention the last few pitfalls?

**Caller 2:** I have a comment. My name is Laura and I'm from Minnesota and I also speak on aging. One of the things I ran across just recently while speaking was an older gentleman sitting in the crowd and he kept bringing up the word pride. His poor daughter was sitting right next to him. And he said, "No, kids don't understand we are proud people. And if you can keep in mind our pride, it will make it much easier." And so I just kind of came up with a little synopsis regarding pride and that is "Preserve, Respect, Independent, Dignity Everyday." And if you can keep that in mind when you're dealing with your parents, I just think it will make it so much easier. It was so important when I was going through it with my own, and there are days when it's tuff. You just want to check it off your list of things to do.

**Dotsie:** Okay, great. And feel free to email that to me if you want, just in case anybody didn't get that. Thank you! Let's talk about not researching the

alternatives, Barbara, before presenting. Tell us a little bit about what a pitfall that is.

**Barbara:** Well this goes back to the example we talked about taking away the car, and if you don't look at alternatives, what to do if you take away the car—I'm not saying you shouldn't do it. In many cases, that is the right thing to do, but before you do it, you need to look at the alternatives. Because you don't want to leave them just stranded. You don't want to do that for a lot of reasons. One because they need to get out for groceries and to do all the doctors appointments and things like that, they need to have socialization so many times they use the car to drive to the senior center; but it is important to think in terms of how can we still have them have the life they have, but give them alternatives. Maybe you do "Meals on Wheels" instead of them having to go out for the groceries, or you have things delivered online. Maybe the senior centers; most senior centers have a bus that will pick them up, maybe they can carpool. But really looking at alternatives. Maybe you can get a taxi and have vouchers for the cab; you can get someone to drive and everybody shares in on the gas. But really looking at alternatives before you just pull a pin out of, or pull the leg out of the stool, you need to know what you are going to prop it up with as an alternative.

**Dotsie:** Okay, very good. Actually I write for a couple of magazines for baby boomers, and I just did one on some of the solutions before you take away the keys, and what happens when you do take away the keys. So I mentioned several of those things you mentioned. How about one of the pitfalls is not enlisting, or accepting help?

**Barbara:** Yeah, a lot of times siblings often times get so invested in being the one taking care of mom or dad that they don't think in terms of getting help from siblings, or they may not have a sibling to help take care of it so they think they have to be the only one. Or in some cases, their siblings just don't so it "right." I have a sister who just does things more slowly than I do them. And I'm a real *Type A* personality and she is way more laid back, and she is going to live a whole lot longer than I do. But it makes me nuts because there would be things that she would be helping me with my mother, we would be working together, and she would take forever to do something, and it just made me crazy. Eventually, I would take everything back.

And so what is important is to enlist the help from other people, but to think in terms of what kind of help you give them. If I was having my sister do something that needed to be done right away, it made me crazy. Instead I gave her, because I was the primary caregiver, I gave her—I asked her to buy clothes for mother. So whenever she got the clothes were fine; it didn't matter. But thinking in terms of enlisting help, and also thinking in terms of—remember I mentioned earlier about how different the son, mother, and daughter, and father, and things like that. Sometimes they are going to hear something better from a son versus a daughter. So it's important to think in terms of who are they going to hear the



information from best? Who cares if they get the financial information from your brother, if they accept it, even if you have to call them and say, "Look, just tell them this," if they take it from him, then its fine. That's all you are really trying to accomplish anyway; and also to look outside, to look at outside options, you know, outside of the family.

**Dotsie:** Yes, great point, because sometimes there are friends of the family who are interested and willing and are really capable and want to help; do a 3-hour shift, or drive someone somewhere, or something like that. I'm hoping that as boomer women, we are getting better at asking for help and we realize we don't have to be superwoman who does it all. Okay, so does anybody have any questions at this point? We have just a few more minutes.

Okay, it looks like we are doing a good job here, Barb, let's go to not knowing when to hold them, when to fold them, and when to walk away.

**Barbara:** Basic reality is that if you parents are of sound mind, there is no dementia, there is no mental illness, or any form of dementia or anything like that, they really have the right to do what they want to do. And so it is important to remember that you are there to help them *want* to do what is in their best interest. But if they don't want to do something, they really don't have to. So sometimes, and again...and again and again I say, start early; because sometimes it's better to say, you know what, it's not going to work today, so I'm better to fold my cards and walk away, and we can start again tomorrow rather than us get into a head-on-head combat which is only going to create problems in the long run. It's better to say you know what, time out. I'm going to go to the bathroom, I'm going to take a walk around the block, I'll come back tomorrow, I'll come back next week or whatever. So really knowing when you are hitting a brick wall, to know, you know what, this is the time for us to put it down and pick it up later on.

**Dotsie:** Okay, but let me ask though, because I'm sure there often comes a time when you see the writing on the wall, and you know it's time to make a change whether it is to downsize, maybe both parents are still living, one is becoming sicker or whatever the case may be, and you hate to see the other one left in the home alone. So let's downsize while they are both still with us and you try and make your point, but they just don't listen. We can't really do anything about that but it's sad because we are the ones who are usually affected by it. Do you know what I am saying?

**Barbara:** Absolutely I do but there are ways that you can do it and that is some of the things we were talking about here, and some of the things that I go into great detail in my book because that's the thing. When you stand there and you know there's going to be a time, whether it's this year or five years from now, you know this is something that they need to look at. So it is really important to approach it in a way that gets them to want to do it. One of the things that I talk

about is having them fill out a form that I call, “What do I want for the third-half of my life?”

**Dotsie:** Oh I’ve seen that on your site I think, right?

**Barbara:** Yes, yes. And with them, fill it out, and it’s just a fun form, you fill it out and you do one and they do one; they’re not so easy to do and we don’t have enough time for me to get into much detail about it, but you talk about what are some of the things that you want in the future? Maybe they say that I want to be safe, or that I want to live in my own home, or that I’ve always wanted to sing great opera, or I always wanted to get my high school degree or my college degree. And as you’re looking at all of those things with them, then you can start making some together; start thinking in terms of how could you make that happen? It’s not a “to-do” list so just because they say they want to sing great opera but they don’t have a great voice, doesn’t mean they are going to sing great opera. But just think in terms of getting these things down and saying you know mom, there’s a place up near the college that when you live in this particular senior complex, you actually can go to college for free. And you can go to all of their concerts, and all of their classes, so you know, that might be a place to take a look at and I wonder if there are other places. And suddenly it opens another world to them. So this is a way again, we talked about not asking what they think and not listening to them, this is a great way to get them ***to want to do it. To see that there is a reason for change.*** People willingly change when they get something they don’t already have; they get to keep something that they really want, they’re willing to make changes if they get to get something that they want, or to keep something they want. And so to be able to have them look at it and say, here’s a way for you to get something you want and all it requires is that you move—and I’m way over simplifying.

**Dotsie:** Right...I understand. And it’s interesting that we have to make them realize sometimes that change is good because if you look at a person who is staying at home with one care giver, really kind of cut off from the world, who doesn’t want to move, and they are a people person, and if you can just kind of get them to see all of the beauty that will be around them when they move into a place with other people who are doing the same things they’re doing, or not doing some of the things they use to do, and can do new things together, that’s a good change. So somehow we have to be clear in making that point that just because it is a change doesn’t mean that---you know...

**Barbara:** But what we don’t want to do is give them all of the reasons why we think it is a good thing. What we want to do is help them see or come up with their *own* reasons why it’s a good thing. And that’s the process I’m talking about. At the end you may come to the same conclusion; ideally you will. But the important thing is that just you telling them all the great things about it, they’re not going to feel it and make a change until it’s their reason for wanting to change.

**Dotsie:** Right, and I can understand that. I mean we should be able to understand that with changes we have to make, or need to make. Nobody is telling us what to do. We have to come to the conclusion on our own and it's the same with them. Okay, how about the last pitfall which is when we just don't take care of ourselves.

**Barbara:** Yeah, and that's a huge one; especially women. We are so good, so wonderful at taking care of other people. We take care of our kids, we take care of our parents, we take care of our spouses, we take care of our bosses, we take care of our friends; we always put ourselves last. Or just about everybody always puts themselves last. But the important thing to remember is if you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to take care of anyone else. And so we really owe it to ourselves and to everyone else in our lives to take care of ourselves so that we are not only there for ourselves, but for them as well. So that's a huge one.

**Dotsie:** Okay, Barbara you've done a great job and tell us your Web site again.

**Barbara:** [www.AgeWiseLiving.com](http://www.AgeWiseLiving.com), and let me say that all of the information that we've been talking about in a lot more detail is in my book, *The Ultimate Caregivers Survival Guide* and they get that through the "Shop" page on my Web site at [www.AgeWiseLiving.com](http://www.AgeWiseLiving.com).

**Dotsie:** Okay and you also have some of those great forms on your site; which—tell them a little bit more about what is on your site in addition to your products, what else? What other information do you have there?

**Barbara:** A lot of great stuff. I do a monthly newsletter, it's free, so go to the site and sign up for it, and also while you're on the site, there's five years worth of old newsletters on there, so all of the archived newsletters, so a lot of information is on there. So you can look at all of that, sign up for my newsletter while you're there. Also, I do a monthly teleseminar. The next one is this Wednesday night and it's free. The archived ones are on my Web site and very shortly, you'll going to be able to download them as podcasts, but in the meantime, you can listen to them on my Web site. I think there is a year and a half worth of teleseminars there, plus a lot of resources and a lot of information; so it's a really good site. I'm very proud of it because I feel very strongly about having a place that when someone is really stressed out as a caregiver, the last thing they need is for somebody to tease them that you could have this information and then, they can't find it. So all of that is there for anybody who goes to it.

**Dotsie:** Okay and also, as you know, Barbara is one of the experts with the NABBW. So if you go to [www.nabbw.com](http://www.nabbw.com), on the homepage you'll look on the left-hand side and you'll see our experts, and Barbara is out Eldercare Expert. If you click on that link, you'll see her bio, and you'll also see her article that she

has up for this month; but beneath that, you'll see tons of other articles that are helpful if you are in an eldercare situation. Does anybody have a question?

Okay, I think we've done a good job here, so thank you so much Barbara and I look forward to corresponding with you online.

**Barbara:** Thank you Dotsie.

**Dotsie:** Thank you and have a great day.