

KENDALL GAZETTE

December 3, 2020

Ask Helen from The Palace



Helen Shaham, Palace Founder

Question:

Dear Helen,

After 55 years of marriage to my high-school sweetheart I started to notice that something is wrong with my wife. The sharp woman I married and known for a good part of my life, was no longer "there." She started forgetting... repeating the same story over & over... putting the car keys in the refrigerator... But when she asked me WHO I AM, I was alarmed.

The doctors said she has Alzheimer's. There is no cure. Actually, it only gets worse. They said she will get more confused, depressed, fearful, suspicious, and anxious. And there is nothing I can do for her.

They recommended that I place her in a good Memory Care Community and that I should start paying attention to my own health problems.

But one thing they didn't know: that over the years we promised each other that we will always stick together. Therefore, following the doctors' advice was not a realistic option.

So I took her back home and continued to take care of her as best I could.

And then I had a stroke. Now what?

Please help me.

Sincerely,
Charles

Answer:

Dear Charles,

I feel for you. My mother also suffered from Alzheimer's when she was in her 80's.

It's hard to tell when it started but once you encounter certain behaviors you know. Both my husband and I, and we realized that we have to find a Memory Care Community that will help us share the burden.

Charles, your situation is even more complicated. On one hand you need help to care for your wife, and on the other hand you have medical problems too.

AND you also have a life... which up to now were non-existent because you were your wife's full-time caretaker.

So, my advice to you is to look for a community that encompasses Memory Care AND Independent Living AND Assisted Living, **all under one roof.**

This setup will be perfect for you. You can live in the Independent Living (or in the Assisted Living depending on your needs) and your wife will be in the Memory Care. This arrangement will give you the peace of mind that your wife is well taken care of, and you keep your promise of "we will always stick together."

Just by going through one corridor (you won't need to drive) you can visit her any time you wish AND stay with her as long as you want AND join her for dinner (or lunch or breakfast) whenever you feel like it.

This will give you space to take back your life.

I recommend that you ask around and contact a counselor in one of these communities. They will give you the information you need and guide you to the solution that best fits your needs.

Thank you for reaching out to me and asking for advice. This tragic situation is quite common (about 32% of people over age 85 have it) but unfortunately many people feel ashamed to bring it up and look for available solutions.

To better understand your present and future situation, please visit the following link:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-alzheimers-disease-following-a-couple-from-diagnosis-to-the-final-stages/>

I COMMEND YOU FOR TAKING THE FIRST STEP!

Sincerely,
Helen

*Helen Shaham and her husband Jacob have been developing & operating **The Palace Senior Living Communities in South Florida since 1980.***

The Palace's award-winning services & communities serve over 1,500 residents and over 1,100 team members. The communities offer a full continuum of care and include independent and assisted living, memory care, nursing & rehabilitation, home health and pharmacy services in Miami-Dade & Broward Counties. More information can be found on the company's website, www.ThePalace.org or by calling 305-271-2220.