

# *Elder Care & Guilt Issues*

Aging is often something people want to deny, because it can mean loss. Nevertheless, eventually everyone must deal with the effects of age, and avoiding it only causes more issues. In fact, the denial of the aging process could potentially raise issues of guilt when it comes to caring for aging parents or loved ones.

Most people view life as a simple timeline. You are born, your parents raise you, you become an adult and then you raise your own family. Most people do not consider the point in life where they may have to take care of their aging parents. For some, it becomes a necessity, and it is a sudden wake-up call from a financial, emotional or practical standpoint that makes it apparent.

Many adults find themselves faced with making decisions on behalf of their parents. This often starts with small issues that later blossom into a wider range of subjects. This role reversal can result in the dredging up of old, painful issues as well as simply being a burden on the person making the decision.

As you become more involved in your parent's life, you will naturally experience emotional reactions. These reactions can include simple frustration of having to deal with them, guilt for thinking negatively, anger and several other feelings. How you deal with these issues is critical in getting through the process.

Dealing with parental issues is mentally taxing. It is important to know that being strong in dealing with these issues does not mean putting yourself on the back burner. Remember to take time out for yourself and pay attention to your own health. If things are rough, join a support group. It can make a world of difference to be able to vent to someone who knows what you are going through.

This is particularly true if you have a family member suffering from a form of dementia like Alzheimer's disease.

Guilt is often the hardest issue for people to overcome when it comes to aging loved ones. However, because growing old is a natural part of life, it is good to try and eliminate these feelings. Remember that no matter how much you love and care for your parents, you cannot stop this process. It is no one's fault, and you must live your life as well.

Elder care has become a huge issue as our population ages. Your parents will get older, and there is a high possibility that they will need help. Be prepared for your parents to become dependent on others, and be ready to handle these issues when they arrive. And remember, as you go through this process with them, care for yourself as well, and seek support when needed.