

Caring for the Elderly

In this lesson, you will read about parent-sitting and discuss whether or not it is a grown child's responsibility to care for an aging parent.

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Is the number of senior citizens getting bigger or smaller in your family?
2. What are the advantages of people living to an older age?
3. What are the disadvantages of people living longer?
4. Do you think "quality of life" is better now than it was 50 years ago?
5. How are most elderly people taken care of in your community?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. nursing home | a) older people |
| _____ 2. parent-sitter | b) the usual food and drink that a person consumes |
| _____ 3. guilty | c) people who are between the ages of 40–60 |
| _____ 4. Alzheimer's | d) being unable to see |
| _____ 5. diet | e) a person who takes care of one or both of their parents |
| _____ 6. blindness | f) a special hospital where older people live until they die |
| _____ 7. middle-aged | g) in the wrong, feeling as if one has done something wrong |
| _____ 8. duty | h) feeling very bad or embarrassed about something one has done |
| _____ 9. ashamed | i) a responsibility or obligation |
| _____ 10. elderly | j) a disease that causes a person to lose their memory and ability to move |



Reading

1. Senior citizens are the fastest-growing population in the world. The improvements in health care and **diet** are helping people to have longer and better lives. Some seniors are able to live normal lives and care for themselves until a very old age. Many seniors need caretakers at some point in their lives. More and more **middle-aged** adults are responsible for taking care of their aging parents. These people are often called "**parent-sitters**."
2. Parent-sitters often have their **elderly** parents move in with them. The parent-sitters usually have busy lives raising their own children, going to school, or working full-time jobs. It is especially difficult to take care of a parent who suffers from an illness or disability, such as **blindness, Alzheimer's**, or arthritis.
3. Sometimes a parent-sitter will decide to put a parent in a **nursing home**. This usually happens when the parent becomes very ill and requires 24-hour care. This decision is very difficult and often leaves the child feeling **guilty** and **ashamed**. Many people feel it is the oldest child's **duty** to take care of an aging parent. However, it is usually the child who lives closest to the parent who ends up taking on most of the responsibility.
4. Nowadays, people are often living into their 90s. The children of these seniors may be seniors themselves. The choice of caring for aging parents at home or putting parents in a nursing home is a very difficult one. Finding a nursing home that has space for an aging parent is also difficult. Many seniors spend weeks, months, or even years waiting for a room to become available.

"One person caring about another represents life's greatest value."

—Jim Rohn

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What group of people is the fastest-growing population in the world?
2. Why are people living longer lives?
3. Who are the parent-sitters?
4. Why is it difficult for parent-sitters to take care of their parents?
5. Why is it a difficult decision for a child to put a parent into a nursing home?

Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using a word from the vocabulary list on page 1. You may need to change the word form.

1. John took \$25 from his sister's purse.
Now he feels _____ and _____ .
2. Susan's mother is 90 years old. She has _____
disease and can't remember very much anymore.
3. My friend only eats fruits and vegetables. She has a very healthy _____ .
4. My grandmother lives in a _____ .
Nurses take care of her because she has become ill.
5. People who are 50 years old are called _____ .

Discuss

Work with a partner or in small groups.
Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think it is wrong to
put a parent into a nursing home?
2. Who is responsible for caring for the elderly?
3. Do you think that only the oldest child in a family
is responsible for caring for the elderly parent?
4. What do you think is the best
way to care for the elderly?
5. Is it good that people are living longer lives?

Debate

Below are two topics to debate in small groups or pairs. Your teacher will tell you if you will be debating for or against the idea. You will have ten minutes to prepare your arguments.

TOPIC #1

Adult children are always responsible
for taking care of an elderly parent at home.

TOPIC #2

Elderly parents who cannot take care of themselves
should live in a nursing home.

Writing

Choose one of the questions from the Discuss section above.
Then write a paragraph in your notebook stating your own opinion.

Useful Expressions and Transitions for Debating

Agreeing and Disagreeing

- That doesn't take away from the fact that...
- That's beside the point.
- With all due respect...
- I agree with you there.
- I agree with ---- (name).
- I see your point, but...
- That may be true, but...
- We're going to have to agree to disagree.
- I get/see where you're coming from, but...
- I'm afraid I disagree entirely.
- I'm afraid I'd have to disagree.
- I agree to some extent, but...
- I disagree with you there.
- Pardon me for disagreeing, but...

Interrupting / Asking to Contribute

- I hate to interrupt, but...
- If I may come in here...
- I'd like to add something.
- Would you like to contribute something?
- I'd like to raise a point.
- If I could speak for a moment...
- I'd like to cut in here.
- You haven't answered my question.

Persuading

- Can you see where I'm coming from?
- I challenge you to give this a try/chance.
- I want you to see it my way.
- Put yourself in my shoes.
- Am I getting through to you?

Expressing an Opinion

- In my honest opinion...
- It is my belief that...
- From my experience...
- From where I look at it...
- From my point of view...

Clarifying / Rephrasing

- Let's be clear here...
- I think you misunderstood what I said.
- What I said was... (repeat a point that was misunderstood or confused)
- What I meant to say was... (rephrase something in a way that is clearer)
- In other words...
- What I was trying to say before I was interrupted is that...

Summarizing / Concluding

- So let me get this straight. You think...
- To conclude...
- I'd just like to summarize by saying...
- Finally, I'd like to reiterate that...
- It's time to take stock of what we've heard today.
- Both sides have some valid points.
- The stronger argument/team today is...