

Helping Hands

A mother, wishing to encourage her son's progress at the piano, bought tickets to a performance by the great Polish pianist Ignace Paderewski. When the evening arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and eyed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage. Soon the mother found a friend to talk to, and the boy slipped away.

At eight o'clock, the lights in the auditorium began to dim, the spotlights came on, and only then did they notice the boy - up on the piano bench, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." His mother gasped in shock and embarrassment but, before she could retrieve her son, the master himself appeared on the stage and quickly moved to the keyboard.

He whispered gently to the boy, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side and improvised a delightful obligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerized with their blended and beautiful music.

In all our lives, we receive helping hands - some we notice, some we don't. Equally we ourselves have countless opportunities to provide helping hands - sometimes we would like our assistance to be noticed, sometimes we don't. Little of what we all achieve is without learning from others and without support from others and what we receive we should hand out.

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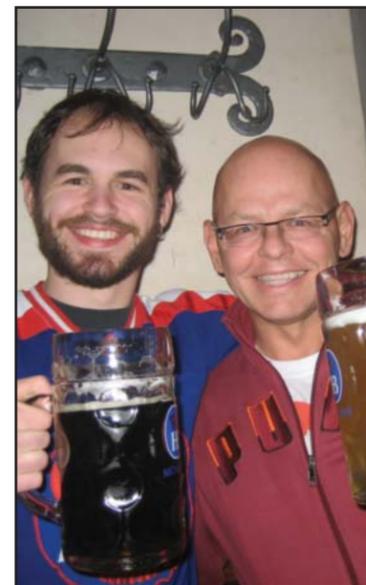
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"Hofbrauhaus; Munich, Germany"

Moments in time for the Memory Bank!

My son Carey (21) and I had the opportunity to take a bus tour through Europe for 11 days in which we played 6 games of hockey against Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. This was a trip of a lifetime.

If you knew you had 6 months to live, what would you do?

Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman starred in *The Bucket List*. It's a wonderful movie about two terminally ill men who escape from a cancer ward and head off on a road trip with a wish list of to-dos before they die. Take a minute to ponder what you would do in this situation. What is on your Bucket List?

Here are some suggestions for creating your Bucket List:

1. Make a list of things you have always wanted to do.
2. Make a plan and enjoy the process. Planning is not optional. It is generally accepted as being a requirement by most of the experts in the field of setting and achieving goals.
3. Review your list often to make sure you still want to do them.
4. Document and share your goals. If life is worth living, it ought to be worth writing about so commit your goals and planning steps to writing. Writing the stuff down is a proven technique for turning goals into reality. Sharing them with others helps to cement your commitment to the goals and to bring others into the process.

5. Don't get obsessed with big "retail" goals. Ensure your goals are consistent with who you are. For example, introverts and extroverts alike can enjoy a certain travel destination like say the Eiffel Tower, yet experience it quite differently.

The bottom line is that you should find meaning and happiness in everything you do. Don't get hung up on trying to compete with Nicholson and Freeman to get through their Hollywood list before your bucket tips.



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What's important to you

Summer 2012

How Can I Improve my Sleep?

Do you follow a regular sleep schedule? Experts say that you should go to bed at the same time each night and, more importantly, get up at the same time each morning, even on weekends. Follow a bedtime routine: A regular pattern of activities - such as walking at a relaxed pace, listening to soft music, brushing teeth, washing your face, and setting the alarm can set the mood for sleep. This routine should be followed every night, at home or away.

Make the environment conducive to sleep: The bedroom should be kept dark and quiet and not too warm or too cold. If noises disturb sleep, wearing ear plugs, using a white-noise machine or a fan, or installing heavy curtains in the bedroom (to block out outside noises) may help. Use the bedroom primarily for sleeping: The bedroom should not be used for eating, watching television, paying bills, or most other activities associated with wakefulness.

Avoid substances that interfere with sleep: Food and beverages that contain alcohol or caffeine (such as coffee, tea, cola drinks, and chocolate) can interfere with sleep, as can appetite suppressants and diuretics. These substances should not be consumed, especially near bedtime. Quitting smoking may help. Drinking a large amount of alcohol in the evening causes early morning awakenings.

Use pillows: Pillows between the knees or under the waist can make one more comfortable. For people with back problems, lying on your side with a large pillow between the knees may be helpful.

Get up: When falling asleep is difficult, getting up and doing something else in another room may be more effective than lying in bed and trying harder and harder to fall asleep.

Doug's comment – I have woken up at 3 am on some occasions, which has given me the opportunity to sit up and read for a while or say a prayer of gratitude for all my blessings.

Exercise regularly: Exercise will help you fall asleep naturally. If you are having trouble sleeping, when was the last time you had a work out and broke a sweat?

Eat a snack: Hunger can interfere with going to sleep. A light snack, especially if warm, can help.

Communicating Effectively With Healthcare Providers

As the baby boom population ages, family caregivers play a major role in ensuring that their loved ones receive the healthcare that they need. This role may include initiating care, accompanying them to appointments, asking necessary questions or coordinating the many healthcare practitioners involved.

As the primary caregiver, your experience and knowledge is invaluable to healthcare practitioners, many of who will not know the person and his or her needs as well as you do. Therefore, it is important to know how to communicate effectively with the healthcare team. Below are some tips to help you in this role:

- Ensure you are familiar with each member of the healthcare team involved in your family member's care, and their responsibilities.

- Be sure they understand your role. If the care recipient is not willing or able to take instruction, ensure they give permission for you to be kept informed.
- Before an office visit or telephone call or prior to the home support worker arriving, prepare a list of questions to ask or information you want to give them. You will save time and you won't be distracted trying to remember what you want to ask. Be concise and focus on the issues.
- If you need information or have questions, don't wait for the healthcare provider to contact you. Be proactive and give them a call, then follow-up if you don't hear back from them. Keep in mind that although the person you are caring for may be your number one priority, the case manager, doctor or home support worker has many other clients.
- Clarify instructions. If you are not sure you understand or don't know the meaning of technical terms, ask again until you are satisfied.
- Some doctors have specific hours when they take calls. Find out when this is and call during those times or leave a message with the secretary in the morning for the doctor to return your call.
- When communicating with healthcare providers, being clear and direct is important. Hinting or hoping they read your mind does not make good use of anybody's time.
- Appoint one family member as the main contact with healthcare professionals when possible. The appointed person can clearly communicate with the rest of the family.

- Keep records of your loved one's behaviours, such as sleeping, eating, emotions, symptoms, medication habits, etc. The more detailed information you have, the easier it is for your doctor or home support worker to give your family member the best treatment.
- Separate your anger and sense of frustration about your inability to help your family member from your feelings about the healthcare practitioners. Remember, you are on the same side.

Article By Barbara Small - Family Caregivers' Network Society, reprinted with permission from Senior Living Magazine, www.seniorlivingmag.com

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