

Living with Alzheimer's: Safety

"When I met Mike 50 years ago, he played the 12-string guitar. And I fell in love with him because of his 12-string guitar was just so marvelous and romantic. And he has many guitars, but he's having difficulty now."

"I've played all the time and I loved it, that's why it's so shade. It's really very nice."

"Early in 2018, Michael recognized that he was having difficulty remembering pretty much simple things. And so he had some testing done, went over the results and suspected that Alzheimer's might be present. He has a mixed diagnosis at this point of both vascular dementia and Alzheimer's."

"Little by little I started to see a decline and then all of a sudden, a bigger decline where he wasn't able to find his words, wasn't able to really converse."

"I knew that Michael needed more stimulation; and I wanted him in an adult day program."

"People get together and certainly it is difficult to understand that we have a problem, but we understand how we overcome. We can walk out knowing that we know who we are. But, just, it's in here, it's here."

"You can do it."

"How do you know?"

"Because we're watching you do it."

"I moved in with my parents January of this year and knowing that my mother and father both needed the help. I created him opportunities to have more conversation and more interaction at home."

"That was not nice."

"Well, we have to still do these. Can you put that..."

"Our day has a pattern and we try to keep to that as much as possible. On days that he goes to the day program, got to get him ready to go for the taxi. I pick him up between 1:30 and 2:00. But sometimes we have an adventure before we come home because he really does enjoy the ride and having a place to go."

"Giving up driving has probably been the biggest sacrifice for Michael, that independence that's hard. And he was pretty angry about giving it up, like very."

"A year ago Michael was recognizing coordination wise, depth perception, and the confusion on the road became too much. But I would say that he's not fighting me anymore about it."

"I think this happens in many marriages that you start to live your life in concentric circles. There's the business life, there's running your family and you get together for this period and you go about the management of your life together. Alzheimer's has made our time together more overlapping, and it's brought us together in a way that has not always been fun, that's for sure. But it's tapped into a well of emotion and remembrance and love that we've needed."

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"We have one granddaughter. She's three in a few months. Her name is River. And everyone knows that River will never know Michael as he was and as the rest of us knew him, but she loves him for who he is, for the man that she knows. And the fact that he's been ill doesn't matter to her. She loves Papa now - and that's all that matters."

"If I could tell caregivers, and this includes myself four years ago, I would tell myself to recognize Mike's courage and my own instead of seeing it as the ordeal. And I think caregivers tend to be satisfied with the small stuff, feeling that there's not enough time where that's all I can give to me, but we have to demand bigger stuff of ourselves in order to have the bigger stuff to give."