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10 Things Nobody Tells You When You Age - Whether you are the one who is aging or you are caring for a spouse, sibling, or best friend, Elaine will enlighten you with a virtual roadmap of the key information you need to get your proverbial “ducks in a row.” She will outline the critical eldercare practices to engage, provide crucial decision-making indicators, clarify common misconceptions, and simply equip you with information and resources so you can reduce the stress of aging and illness through awareness and sound decision-making.

Adjusting to Life with Aging Parents – Juggling your own family, job and responsibilities becomes a real balancing act when you also find yourself faced with caring for aging parents, grand-parents or in-laws. This talk will provide the crucial decision-making information families may not be aware of, suggest ways to have difficult conversations, provide hard-to-find resources, and simply equip and empower children with direction, goals, and relevant materials that you can utilize to find the right options for your family.

***Both the “10 Things” and the “Adjusting to Life...” classes are the 101 classes*

How to Advocate for Your Own Healthcare – at the doctor’s office, the hospital and the rehab center - As our healthcare system continues to evolve, it has never been more important to become an advocate for yourself as well as for your loved ones, who may no longer be able to advocate for themselves. This class will outline specific suggestions and items to note, including critical need-to-know information, pertinent questions to ask and specific rights you may not realize you have, to help ensure the best experiences while navigating your own health care.

Successful Caregiving – Seeing the Forest When You’re Stuck in the Trees – Whether you are caring for a parent or a spouse, success as a caregiver comes as much from a certain mindset as it does from effective techniques. Emotions such as frustration, anger, embarrassment, exhaustion and guilt are the most common areas that caregivers struggle on an on-going basis. We will share 11 strategies that will help you to establish attainable goals, find appropriate focus for your unique situation and direct you to meaningful and pertinent strategies for success.

Tackling the Dreaded “Difficult Conversations” that Ultimately Make Life Easier! - Successful estate planning effectively covers all the big ticket items essential for traditional life planning. Oddly, it is in the often perceived ‘less important’ decisions that go unspoken that produce much of the stress families will face down the road. Understanding the critical importance of proactive ‘difficult conversations’ we all should tackle with our loved ones is another key component of life planning you should consider. This session will outline why these difficult conversations make your life easier, the topics you should address, and some graceful and effective methods for starting and completing these conversations.



****Some Real Answers to those Age-old Questions on Old Age** – Sometimes we just want the bare minimum of critical information to process because we are already on overload! This class addresses:

1. What if I have to take care of my parents? ...or my Spouse?
2. What if it's "just me?"
3. How do I have those uncomfortable conversations?
4. How do we know when it's time to bring in some help or make a change?
5. How do we pick a caregiver/ homecare agency?
6. How do we know what to look for when picking assisted living or a "nursing home?"
7. How does hospice work and when is it time to engage that service?

****This class is a hybrid of the 10 things... class and the *Successful Caregiving* class.**

Adjusting to Community Living - Thinking about moving? Whether it's to independent, assisted or memory care, it's good to know what to expect. Moving by choice is always a much easier process than moving by necessity. However, because often we want to stay 'at home' as long as possible, the move typically becomes necessitated by struggles with activities of daily living, safety issues, poor health, memory issues or monetary restrictions. When more than one of these factors determines the move, the change becomes a bit more challenging. Emotions run high. Getting your expectations in sync with some of the unspoken details of daily life can make the transition into a community life easier. This is particularly important when we are deciding if or when to place a loved one into memory care. Join us to learn tips for a truly successful assimilation into new surroundings!

What is your "PLAN B?" - As a caregiver, could you, in a few minutes or less, relay every piece of information needed for someone else to step in and care for your loved one if you were being taken to the hospital in an ambulance? Could you identify all that was needed to step into your home after a serious medical situation and have someone take care of you? We all NEED a back-up plan, most especially if we are alone, or a caregiver for someone. Creating a checklist of legal, practical, and functional items to have prepared can make an emergency a difficult situation vs. a crisis! While uncomfortable to consider, this preparation will make all the difference in successfully handling an unexpected or emergency situation.

Effective Long-Distance Caregiving - It's hard enough to be a caregiver when we live in the same household or same city, that's truth! Surprisingly, we can still be effective as a long-distance caregiver with the right tools in place. Navigating what, where and how of long-distance caregiving takes a special commitment, a specific checklist of to-do items, and some helpful tools to help advocate and support loved ones who live out of your area. Join us for a new perspective on caregiving as well as an itemized worksheet for success.

The Keys to Moving Forward – What do we do when we're stuck? We're aging and we're aware. We're not prepared. We KNOW we have to take things in our own hands, but we're frozen. Locked. Immobile. We're not sure of everything needed and if we're able to make all those decisions on our own. This class outlines the critical items to consider. A gentle walk through some of the roadblocks that may be impeding your ability to move forward may help you outline your next steps. Identifying the critical items you need to consider as well as the Identifying an accountability partner to work with you, is also a smart way to help you move forward. Resources and brainstorming will be an active part of this class.

DEMENTIA CLASSES – Tools for Living With Dementia

Dementia? NOW WHAT? If you're someone supporting a loved one who's found themselves in the situation of being identified as having dementia, followed by the familiar "Adios! We'll see you in 6 months or next year" scenario, we can help. Learn 20 facts about this journey that nobody sits down and tells you. Becoming aware of what to expect and understanding why certain changes are happening, and how they affect everyday life, will be incredibly transformative to your role as a care partner.

Communication, Conversation and Tackling Everyday Tasks - With a little insight as to how someone with dementia might see or understand normal daily activities, a few little tweaks to our approach can provide both progress and completion for a variety of daily struggles, including dressing and bathing. Adjustment to the way WE communicate can and will make all the difference to someone who is unable to adapt the way they respond as their communication skills change. Adjusting our caregiving style can help with a more positive daily environment, better 'success' when trying to accomplish tasks and an overall enriched quality of life.

Understanding the Physiology of What's Happening in the Brain - Living with people who are living with dementia (PLWD), we see both consistency and irregularities in their daily routines, habits, awareness, and moods. We also notice changes in both physical and cognitive skills that seem to come and go at times. Join us to find out WHY this is happening and how the brain is changing to effect the changes you both are experiencing. Not only will you walk away with a better grasp of this disease and what your loved one is experiencing, you will also understand options and choices you can make for more successful and more positive daily interactions.

The Magic of A Positive Physical Approach™ - A common symptom of Alzheimer's is change in personality and behavior. Our loved one is experiencing brain change – and those changes are erratic. As the disease progresses their perception of the world changes and now, we need to learn how to adapt our responses to these changes. Learning and experiencing how tweaking our approach to someone experiencing normal routine differently than they once did, provides us opportunities to adjust our routines and habits to meet them where they are, using the capabilities they still have.

Connecting With Our Care Partner – Elaine will share specific tools you can utilize in everyday situations (including challenging situations) to accomplish daily tasks including:

- What your loved one is experiencing in their journey with this disease
- Understanding the importance of the role you play in your loved one's journey with dementia
- Skills to do things 'with' our loved one vs. us doing thing 'to' them or 'for' them for more successful outcomes
- How to approach different scenarios keeping a neutral playing field
- Several different positive approaches to communicating the same information when something isn't working as we'd like it to

Managing Challenging Situations – People with dementia can get a bad rap. They're difficult, argumentative, disagreeable, challenging, or worse – combative! And because daily interactions can be erratic, we don't always know what to expect! We hope for the best but must be prepared for the worst! Understanding the factors you are unable to change, and adjusting the areas we have the ability to change, is the magic formula to minimizing 'difficult behaviors.' Learning how to 'control' better is not an option. Learning how to adapt and adjust better is the KEY to both managing and minimizing challenging situations.

Normal Aging Vs. Not Normal Aging – We all forget things occasionally, or struggle to find the right words. And yes, we all lose our keys occasionally. When we do these things, we tend to get a little panicky sometimes, especially if Alzheimer's or some other form of Dementia runs in the family. Is this normal, or are we getting close to that dreaded 'mild cognitive impairment' diagnosis? Join in to learn the difference between what is normal as we age, and what is not!

Keeping Our Relationships Intact When Dementia Is In The Picture – People who have friends who are experiencing some memory challenges don't always know what to do, what to say, or how to act. Spouses don't know what to do or say with friends and even with family sometimes. Sometimes it's just easier to close the door and wish it would all just go away. Join us to learn the significant things you can share without fearing you're compromising anyone's dignity. We'll outline options for friends to consider that also keep respect of privacy intact, while showing that we are here and ready and willing to stay connected and still be friends. Elaine will offer tools for better connection, engagement and dignity, no matter what side of the relationship you are on!