



Mind: Tough Decisions – What Do You Value Most

Body: Reducing Your Risk of a Stroke

Spirit: Who Are You?

Tough Decisions – What Do You Value Most



Last month's *Maturity Matters* Newsletter discussed how tough decisions can often involve the need to reconcile seemingly competing values. We considered the dilemma of wanting to keep a loved one safe and protected versus the deference to the individual's entitlement to self-determination. In our scenario, the 'right-to know' bumped up against the timing and 'need-to-know.' In the absence of understanding the defined preferences of the care recipient, the loving family was left to weigh the equally compelling pros and cons of the choices. Ideally, conversations take place ahead of time to explore what the loved one would want, who would make these decisions at a time of crisis or uncertainty, and how these decisions are influenced and informed.

This edition will review another real-life situation with a different dilemma – lifestyle today versus certainty for tomorrow.

Jeanne is in her early 70s. She has enjoyed a rewarding career of significant renown and is now retiring after suffering two minor strokes.

She has undergone a couple of challenging surgeries and continues to live on her own in a lovely condo in the heart of a major cosmopolitan city. Although she does not have the same strength and energy levels she once enjoyed, she currently is able to manage independently and easily drives where she needs to go.

Jeanne is frightened and uncertain. With the two previous trans ischemic attacks (TIAs), she knows that she is at risk for another stroke, and the next one could very well be a big one. How best can she prepare? Jeanne is concerned that if she doesn't secure a place now in a facility of her choice, if she suffers a bad stroke, she may be at the mercy of being 'warehoused' where she fears she might receive sub-par care. How long would she be there, and who would advocate on her behalf?

It is never easy to face personal vulnerability and our inevitable mortality. Enjoying today, while planning for the uncertainties of tomorrow will typically involve elements of compromise.

She researched care options in her community and found a private facility offering services progressing from dining room meals only all the way through to long-term and end of life care. The facility is elegant, expensive and would consume any financial legacy ear-marked for her family. Although there is a waiting list of about two years, a call confirming a vacancy could come at any time.

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Independence Now Versus Certainty and Choice Later

Jeanne faces some big questions.

Does Jeanne give up some independence, lifestyle, and legacy now for the peace of mind of certainty of her care choice for later on?

Does Jeanne continue to enjoy her current lifestyle for as long as she can and risk that another stroke will not happen – at least not before she is ready to make the transition to facility of her choice?

What if she is too late? Who will be her voice in the event she cannot advocate on her own behalf?

By not acting now, will she lose the privilege of choice?

Perhaps you have been faced with this type of a dilemma in your family. We can help our friends and loved ones tease out the implications of these decisions when we understand better the values and principles that serve as the key drivers of their decisions. Certainty, choice, independence, lifestyle, safety, risk, trust and legacy – all important considerations. Once we know the most significant values and fears, we can help to craft strategies that take care of their ‘big rocks’ first, while we fill in the spaces with the ‘secondary stones.’ Better questions do lead to better solutions!

Rhonda Latreille, MBA, CPCA
Founder & CEO
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Reducing Your Risk of a Stroke



According to Harvard Health, these 7 steps can help to reduce the risk of a stroke:

- 1) Maintain a blood pressure of 135/85 or less
- 2) Maintain a healthy weight
- 3) Exercise for 30 minutes at least 5 times a week
- 4) Quit smoking
- 5) Treat diabetes – keep your blood sugar under control
- 6) Treat atrial fibrillation
- 7) If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation (1 glass per day)

Most of all – remember the FAST test. If you suspect someone is having a stroke, ask them to smile (see if one side is drooping) see if they can raise both arms, or speak without slurring. Call 911 right away, a timely response can make a significant difference!

Spirit

“Ask yourself three questions ... and you will know who you are. Ask: what do you believe in? What do you hope for? But most important - ask: what do you love?”

Paullina Simons, The Bronze Horseman