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Advice for the Sandwich Generation

By admin

It seemed there was nothing her father couldn't do when Margaret was growing up. He was the most capable person she knew. Widowed by the time he was 55, he lived an independent and full life, never relying on Margaret for anything other than her company.

Four years ago, however, Margaret began noticing changes. Subtle memory slips gradually became more troubling signs, alerting her that her father's behavior was more than typical ageing. Their family doctor confirmed that he was in the early stages of dementia. He advised her that the disease could progress rapidly and urged her to talk to her father about becoming his Power of Attorney (POA) while he could still make decisions. In this role, she would oversee his legal, financial and health affairs.

Margaret's father had taught her that the solution to any overwhelming problem could be found through careful planning, so she contacted her financial advisor for guidance. It turns out that he had faced a similar situation with his own mother a few years earlier. The experience, plus his perspective on life-stage planning, provided a level of expertise that gave Margaret a renewed sense of control.

He assured Margaret that she'd done the right thing to get her father diagnosed and to become his POA. He explained the scope of this role to her and suggested that she speak with trusted healthcare and

legal professionals. From there, they worked together to establish the role that Margaret would play as the guardian of her father's financial future.

The biggest question revolved around Margaret's father's financial resources. Did he have enough to support himself? If not, how would this impact Margaret's financial goals? Some of the key questions her financial advisor asked as they formulated a plan included:

1. What was the current cost of care for her father? How might that change over time?
2. Did he have extended healthcare benefits?
3. Did he have a pension or other retirement assets?
4. Did he have any survivor benefits from his late wife?
5. Was he eligible for government benefits?
6. Was Margaret or any other family member positioned to lend financial support?

Exploring these questions with her financial advisor gave Margaret a better view of the potential cost of her father's future care. Just as importantly, the process helped Margaret to refine her own financial goals.

Fortunately, her father had saved and invested wisely for years. He'd also ensured that he had ample health and insurance benefits to cover his evolving needs, so it seemed unlikely that Margaret would be required to assume financial responsibility for his care. Margaret was fortunate, but this isn't always the case for caregivers.

If becoming a caregiver for your aging parents is a real possibility, start the conversation as early as possible before their health and financial situations become urgent. This first step will empower you throughout the process. Secondly, find a trusted financial advisor who can help you ask the right questions and develop a plan that positions everyone for the financial futures that each person deserves.

Contact our office today [1] to learn more.

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