

Ma, Ma

During my many years as a physician, I have seen an ongoing erosion of love by children for their aging parents. Recently, however, I experienced a situation that renewed my faith in adult children.

On a cold, wintery night, the phone rang in my home around ten o'clock. A friend of the family said that her 83-year old mother had had four episodes of vomiting throughout the day. Concerned, I made a house call to this lovely-furnished condo in a nearby town. As I walked through the door, two anxious daughters greeted me. There was fear in their eyes. They hurriedly led to me a beautifully decorated bedroom, where their frail mother was cuddled up like a newborn. In spite of her illness, she took the time to greet me ever so warmly.

When I asked her how she felt, she said, "I feel nauseous, vomited a few time, but otherwise I am all right. My lovely daughters, however, are overly concerned." Upon examination, her tongue was dry and she had a tender spot on the lower abdomen. When I told the daughters that their mother should be admitted to the hospital, tears came to their eyes and they cried out, "Ma, ma!" My heart just melted and tears also came to my eyes.

Here I saw such love, devotion, and caring for a mother from her children that even a veteran physician like me was moved. One after the other, they shouted, "Does she really have to go to the hospital, does she?" As they walked nervously around the bedroom, they wanted reassurance from me that their mother was going to be all right. I told them that she was going to be fine. How could I not save this frail, wonderful, gracious, elegant lady who has such caring daughters!

I immediately phoned the police to send an ambulance quickly. One daughter, with trembling, cold hands, held onto my sweating palms for support and reassurance. In a matter of minutes, the bell rang. Two strapping policemen appeared at the door. After I explained the situation to them, they called for an ambulance, which arrived quickly. During this entire episode, the daughters, while kissing their mother on her forehead, kept calling out, "Ma, ma, we love you."

When I informed the ambulance driver of the hospital, she replied that she wasn't assigned to that hospital and didn't even know how to get there. After telling the driver that we would go along, and after the pleading of the two daughters, the ambulance driver agreed to go. The policemen applauded, I kissed the driver, and we were off!

Upon arrival, I ordered the appropriate tests, studies, fluids, and antibiotics. A femoral hernia was found. With surgery, the patient made a full recovery. Fortunately, there was no gangrene of the bowel. If everyone had not acted quickly, gangrene would have developed with bad consequences. Not surprisingly, the devoted daughters took turns staying at their mother's bedside at the hospital, day and night, and later on, at home.

I shall never forget such a demonstration of love from daughters for their mother. I hope this true story will serve as a model for children as their parents age.

Submitted by
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