

Becky Speaks . . .

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF CAREGIVING

Senior Speak...

Life in the Alps - Hello...hello...hello

There is also this thing Mom has been doing since she moved in. I call it “echo-speak” for lack of a better term. It is not at any particular time, but she will end a sentence with a word, and then repeat it 4 to 6 times in a row, fading it softer each time, but still emphasizing all the syllables. For example she will say, “ I have to go put on my socks...socks... socks... socks... socks.” Or “It is time for bed... bed... bed... bed.” *No joke.*

She has read a carton in the supermarket and focus on a word, and she would bring it to my attention by reading the packaging out loud, and she will repeat the last word of the sentence numerous times. I cringe when it happens. I really do try to ignore it, and wonder if I should call it to her attention, but I don't want to make her self-conscious if she doesn't realize that she is doing it. Often it pertains to her things, as in articles of clothing and such, but it isn't always consistently that way. I wonder what is causing that new habit? Sometimes she will repeat the whole sentence as in “It's time for the Yankees. It's time for the Yankees. It's time for the Yankees.” Each time she says it, it is a slight bit softer. I wait for it to trail off to silence. Sometimes I interrupt her train of thought to distract her from doing it, and she doesn't hear the first part of what I am saying, so I have to repeat my self... *Ah, she is forcing “echo-speak” on me too. Trickery!!*

Mom uses words the wrong way. For example she gives inanimate objects power over her, and she refers to people as a ‘thing’. It drives me crazy.

An example would be when I get home from work at night and she is complaining about a jar “This stupid thing will not open for me!” another would be “Look at these stupid pants...they have static cling!” In case you have not guessed, “stupid” is one of her favorite words.

“Look at all these stupid people!” ***Boy, if I had a dollar for every time I heard that.*** Last week she said it in church. She was referring to the people wearing short sleeve shirts and shorts or lightweight clothing. That was because SHE was chilly. It is a beautiful fall day, and it was 75 degrees at the time when we left the house, and she was doing this “fake shiver” that she does to make a point. Her blood must be thin. (*It is probably because she used to sit practically inside a gas heater in her kitchen!*) I wonder sometimes how she can let this stuff fall out of her mouth! I did my best to ignore it, and then I snap at the bait. “Stop doing that! It is neither cold out nor in here!”

The other day in the car when we were driving to the bank, it was quiet except for the radio. She broke the peace by saying: “How does Kevin's brother spell his name? Is it C-r-a-i-g?” I said “Yes” wondering what in the lord's name brought that to her mind. I never said “*Why do you ask?*” because it didn't matter, and I most likely would not like the reason anyway. So she didn't miss a beat, and said “That is such a stupid name!”

I couldn't believe my ears, and I couldn't resist slamming her back to reality, so I said, “It is no more stupid than Rita or Patricia. Why would you make a statement like that?”

Her answer, “I think it is stupid, and I am entitled to my opinion.” So, I said, “Yes you are, but it is better that you keep most of your opinions to yourself.” She turned her head and we rode the rest of the way to the bank in silence. *Sheesh!*

Then other times she refers to people as inanimate, for example: “Look at that fat thing over there!” or “This thing just walked in the way of where I was going!” The best is when she combines them: “Check out that stupid thing over there with the pipe.” It simply grates on my nerves yet no matter how many times I correct her, or play dumb and make her clarify her statement into proper terms, she doesn’t get it.

She went to lunch with her Sr. Group the other day, so when I got home I asked how it was. She said, “Oh please! What a stupid group of weirdo’s they were.” I asked her to please explain what she meant, but nothing that she said indicated that anyone was stupid or weird. The conversation centered mostly on the food that was served, that she “hated and wouldn’t eat. What a waste of time and money.” Hate is another word which my mother uses way too loosely.