

loss of control

As we age we may well find ourselves recipients of well-meaning but patronising advice. Younger friends or adult children start reminding us to lock the door or take care on a slippery path. I have been guilty of doing this myself to older relatives, with the best of intentions, worrying about someone's safety.

Some older people report that, when being visited by their children, they feel like they are being assessed or checked up on. Psychologist Sarb Johal, interviewed on national radio recently, says elderly parents may notice meaningful looks being exchanged when they find it hard to remember a word. This puts them on edge. Some may even invite their children over less often as a way of managing their anxiety around that.

It is natural to want to retain control of our lives. I'm increasingly aware of the tricky balance between control and caring. Soon it may be my turn to be on the receiving end of patronising remarks and attitudes, or pressure to move to a rest home for my safety.

Many older adults face a progression of increasingly hard-to-handle losses: loss of energy, loss of mobility, loss of hearing, loss of financial independence, loss of mind. These losses can

gradually chip away at their sense of freedom and be a significant blow to self-esteem. When people offer to assist them, it may challenge their identity as an independent adult and remind them of their advancing age. The ageing process brings new emotions to the surface and we need to navigate these with care.

In English we talk about caring or caregiving, which means showing concern for, or kindness to, others. In Maori communities, the term used most often is manaakitanga. This term has its basis in the word mana which denotes respect. Manaakitanga aims to raise the person's mana, acknowledging the mana of others as having equal or greater importance than our own, through the expression of aroha, care, and mutual respect.

Disrespect is almost inherent when taking control from another person, even with the best of intentions. Yet taking a measure of control cannot be avoided when supporting people with dementia. How carefully we have to tread if we are to be respectful, enabling people who may not be of sound mind to both retain their mana and remain safe.

Loss of independence can create tremendous frustration, feelings of uselessness, and sadness. People may feel angry that they can no longer manage on their own and take their anger or depression out on their loved ones. Others feel ashamed, refusing help from family and friends, because they think they will be a burden. Some become overwhelmed and begin to expect close friends and family to be always available for them, becoming overly dependent.

As a less-than-healthy coping mechanism, some older people begin exercising the only control they have left: micromanaging everything and



by Ruth Gerzon

everyone in their immediate environment. They often target the one person they hope won't leave them – their spouse or carer.

Understanding the effects of loss and fears of the future helps carers cope and find ways to empower and reassure the loved ones they support. It takes time for us to acknowledge our losses, our disability or loss of independence. It is okay to feel sad and frustrated at times without putting ourselves down for not being able to do what we used to do. Losing independence is a common experience as people age, not a sign of personal failure.

We need support to retain our mana as we age. A key to this is to avoid patronising older people. No one likes to be talked down to, especially if they've been living decades longer than the person they're conversing with. Even if we're talking to someone who experiences dementia, we need to avoid infantilising them by speaking to them the way we would speak to a child.

It's only too easy to take over, even when

it isn't necessary, because it is the most efficient option. It can be frustrating waiting for Dad to pick out his own clothes or for Mum to decide what she would like to eat for dinner, but it is important to ensure they have control over as many decisions as possible.

If people swooped in and made decisions for you, even with the best of intentions, you would probably wind up feeling like a spectator, instead of a participant, in your own life. By balancing someone's safety with the desire to be involved in their own decisions, we may establish more peaceful relationships.

If you know a bit about medical matters, or have a good knowledge of advocacy Eastern Bay Villages would like to hear from you. We are bringing together a group of advocates for seniors and kaumatua to ensure they can access good support.

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AUGUST	FRI 10	SAT 11	SUN 12	TUE 14	WED 15
ANT-MAN AND THE WASP (LAST DAYS) PG 118 MIN	4:45PM	4:45PM	4:15PM	4:45PM	4:45PM
BOOK CLUB (SENIOR MORNING TEA) M 104 MIN					11:00AM
C'EST LA VIE! (LAST DAYS) M 116 MIN	3:00PM	3:30PM	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:00PM
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3: A MONSTER VACATION PG 97 MIN	3:40PM	11:15AM 3:40PM	10:20AM 2:40PM	3:40PM	1:15PM
INCREDIBLES 2 PG 125 MIN	12:30PM 5:30PM	1:00PM 5:50PM	10:00AM 2:25PM	12:30PM 5:30PM	12:30PM 3:10PM
JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM (LAST DAYS) M 128 MIN	2:15PM 7:15PM	2:15PM 7:15PM	11:00AM 6:45PM	2:15PM 7:15PM	11:45AM 7:15PM
MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN PG 114 MIN	11:00AM 1:20PM 5:40PM 7:45PM	11:00AM 1:20PM 5:40PM 8:00PM	10:00AM 12:20PM 4:40PM 7:00PM	11:00AM 1:20PM 5:40PM 7:45PM	12:30AM 3:20PM 5:40PM 7:45PM
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE - FALLOUT M 147 MIN	11:00AM 1:50PM 4:40PM 7:30PM	11:00AM 1:50PM 4:40PM 7:30PM	10:10AM 1:00PM 3:50PM 6:45PM	11:00AM 1:50PM 4:40PM 7:30PM	11:00AM 1:50PM 4:40PM 7:30PM
SHOW DOGS PG 102 MIN		11:00AM	12:30PM		
THE EQUALIZER 2 (LAST DAYS) R16 121 MIN	8:00PM	8:00PM	7:00PM	8:00PM	8:00PM
THE LEISURE SEEKER (LAST DAYS) M 112 MIN	12:30PM 5:30PM	1:15PM 5:45PM	12:15PM 4:45PM	12:30PM 5:30PM	5:30PM
THE SPY WHO DUMPED ME R16 117 MIN	11:45AM 3:10PM 8:00PM	11:45AM 3:30PM 8:15PM	1:45PM 4:50PM 7:10PM	11:45AM 3:10PM 8:00PM	2:20PM 5:40PM 8:00PM

hot potato

There are many versions of the baked potato. Here are some of our favourites.

Alternatively, use whatever you have in the cupboard that would be tasty.

Baked Potatoes

1 washed potato per person

For the fillings

Baked beans, spaghetti or creamed corn

Or

Mix together

½ red capsicum, deseeded and diced

2 diced tomatoes

1 spring onion diced

¼ cup grated cheese

Or

A tin of fish mixed with sour cream, mayonnaise or salad dressing

Preheat oven to 220 degrees. Prick each



by Budget Advisory Service

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potato several times with a fork. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, or until the potato is soft. Remove from the oven and cut a deep cross into the top of the potato. With a cloth hold the potato at the base, press gently up to open out the top of the potato. Spoon in the filling

Serve with a grilled sausage and a salad or vegetables.

Information about this column can be found in more detail at the Budget Advisory Service, phone 07 3071390