

The Client

Earl had frontotemporal dementia, a particularly vicious form of dementia, and it hit him with the full brunt of its symptoms. Affecting the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, the disorder wreaks havoc on personality, behavior, and language. It can manifest as inappropriate actions, lack of inhibition and empathy, inability to perceive danger, a decline in hygiene, speech loss, and changes in eating habits.

In Earl's case, it manifested as all of the above.

The Challenge

Frontotemporal dementia is devastating no matter who it hits. But for Earl, it was particularly challenging.

An award-winning, internationally recognized businessman, Earl spent decades building and running a successful global company. He was wealthy. Accustomed to getting his way. And determined to stay involved in the company he founded.

But Earl's world was falling apart. Unbeknownst to him, his brain was compromised. He stepped blithely into traffic. He made racist and sexist comments to his employees. He shoved, pushed, and grabbed his colleagues.

He made faces at potential clients and stuffed food in his pockets at lunch meetings.



Worst of all, he would defecate in his pants and spend an oblivious day working at his desk in his own feces.

Earl's family wanted to keep him safe. Earl's company wanted to keep him away from the business. And Earl needed 24-hour home care that he could accept—which was the biggest challenge of all.

The Solution

It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child. We discovered that it took a village to help Earl.

When we started working with Earl and his family, we quickly realized that nothing would improve until the conflict between Earl's second wife and his son was addressed. We referred the family to a local attorney/RN/mediator named Carolyn Rosenblatt of Aging Parents.



Carolyn made sure critical documents were in order, determined Earl's competency, and helped de-escalate the tension in the family. She worked with Earl's wife, son, and company, and put together a plan for everyone to execute.

Earl's "village" also included Dr. Glenn Cooney. Told by his company that he needed his doctor's permission to return to work, Earl insisted on showing up at Dr. Cooney's office daily—sometimes three times a day, in fact—trying to get a note of clearance. Dr. Cooney stayed calm and patient, never lost his temper, and left Earl's dignity intact.

Another contributor to Earl's treatment was Lynn Goehner, a Geriatric Care Manager and owner of Eldercare Specialists, whose expertise in frontotemporal dementia proved instrumental. Lynn conducted Earl's assessment, helped develop his care plan, took him to doctors appointments, and worked with the family to provide extensive care oversight. Together, we also developed creative solutions for dealing with Earl's more difficult behaviors, and activities that gave Earl a sense of dignity and meaning.

We discovered that allowing Earl his own space provided a sense of autonomy. Instead of reminding him that we were there to care for him, we explained that we were helping with his pets—a much more palatable arrangement for this independent man. We learned that although Earl would repeatedly fire his Memory Care Professional, the MCP simply needed to walk out the door, wait 15 minutes for Earl to forget the issue, and reenter as though nothing had happened. We also developed a "dictionary" that helped our team communicate with Earl despite his impacted language skills. For example, "Do we have something from the top?" meant, "Do we have any ice cream?" "Get me the ABCs," meant Earl was looking for his phone book. And "my spaces" translated as "my reading glasses."

The Outcome

The Bay Area dementia care community united to help Earl and his family. We worked as a team to devise a strategy to solve Earl's challenges. Earl accepted—even embraced—his home care, lived with dignity, and developed warm relationships with his Memory Care Professionals from Tender Rose and Care Managers from Eldercare Specialists. To us, to the other members of Earl's "village," and most importantly to Earl, that was a huge success.

If someone you know with dementia is refusing care, needs medical help or has no quality of life, call us. We'll help you find a solution.

Call (415) 340-3990 or visit www.TenderRose.com

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