



Senior Care Corner Podcast Transcript How to Give Your Loved One the Gift of Social Media

Barry: Hello and welcome to **Senior Care Corner**. I'm Barry

Kathy: and I'm Kathy. Thanks for joining us!

Barry: You'll find us online at <http://seniorcarecorner.com> with solutions and information for families and others who care for and about senior adults. Well, Kathy I think we've got another great episode today, in our feature segment we want to expand on what we've discussed in an earlier blog post and press release regarding our promotion of giving the gift of social media to our senior loved ones. Certainly we'll get into a lot more on that and talk about some things we'll do later but first I think you've got some news items for us.

Kathy: Indeed I do. Our first news item today talks about the census; more Americans are living past the age of 90. The latest United States census data recently revealed that the number of Americans living past the age of 90 has tripled since 1980. This trend is expected to increase the demand for healthcare and challenge the Medicare and Social Security Programs. Over a century ago, only a 100,000 people reached the age of 90, but by 2050 it's projected that one in every ten older Americans will be over 90 years. The analysts believe that Americans increased longevity can be attributed to better nutrition, advances in medical care, and a reduction in heart disease and stroke. The future goal for this aging group will be to reduce disabilities so that the longer they live the more healthy and live more fully their lives can be.

Barry: And that's something that I think everybody really needs to keep in mind when dealing with their loved ones and even ourselves in planning what we need financially as we grow older. We need to plan to live longer than our grandparents lived in many cases, just to be ready.

Kathy: Well, that brings up a good point and our second news item. We're going to talk about how to avoid retirement pitfalls and actually start planning for that retirement. As the first aging baby boomers reach their full retirement age this year, the economy has forced changes in their retirement planning. Conditions such as increasing healthcare costs, including prescription drugs, the dropping of their property values, and the devaluation in their retirement savings plans finances for retirement have become obstacles for our seniors.

The recent Pew research center survey found that 80% of the 79 million boomers are dissatisfied with their current finances heading towards their retirement. 66% state that they don't have enough money to retire as their greatest worry right now. Can our senior's finances catch up to their retirement dreams? Recommendations for boomers to improve their financial situation include limiting their current spending and put more money into their retirement savings. The IRS currently allows additional contributions if you're above 50 years of age. Another suggestion is to investigate supplemental insurance coverage for health costs not covered currently by Medicare. Another suggestion if a boomer is still working is looking into the benefit



of delaying their social security benefits past age 62. Most experts recommend not delaying this benefit past 70 years. Instead of cashing out the 401K plans out of fear of the market changes, experts recommended to diversify your plan instead. Consult with a financial planner who can help you to determine the best course for you and your senior to face retirement and live your dream.

Barry: This is something that families may want to discuss, although I realize traditionally it has been hard for especially older adults to discuss with their children their finances. So it may be a touchy subject but one that may benefit everybody to make sure that your parents or grandparents have what they because often they won't tell you they don't.

Kathy: I think it's very important also to remember as we come together as families for whatever purpose we're coming together; reunions, weddings, family events. We need to really take that opportunity and talk amongst ourselves about what's going on, how they are set for retirement, and what we can all do together to plan to make things the best that they can be.

Barry: Very good, I like that.

Kathy: So that brings us up to our third news item. And that's talking about traveling tips for seniors. As the holidays approach, many caregivers are planning to travel with their seniors to get together with family or enjoy a winter destination. Some of you may be actually planning trips for your seniors to travel alone to get them with family. It can be an enjoyable holiday gift that you might want to give your loved one. If your senior will be traveling alone to visit you, grandchildren or friends, their safety is definitely a concern.

To be sure the details are complete, plan ahead with thorough research. Pick the most direct route with the least amount of stopovers, no matter which mode of transportation you use. If you're flying, be sure that your senior is enrolled in a frequent flyer program to get access to benefits. Request special services such as preferred seating, early boarding, wheelchair transport, as well as any dietary needs if meals are provided, as well as personal assistance if they are traveling alone; these services have to be arranged at the time of your reservation not when you arrive at the airport. Get your senior's documentation ready in advance. If a passport is needed or it needs to be updated, allow for enough time for processing this. Carry with you, and make sure that they have with them, copies of prescriptions and statements from their doctor about their medical needs. Keep a copy of all travel documents, Medicare and insurance cards, advance directives, and ID for yourself if they travel alone. Put a copy in their carry-on luggage for them and then send one to the family at the destination point to be sure that everyone has the essential necessary information in case of an emergency.

Help your senior who travels alone stay connected by giving them a cell phone loaded with all the important numbers they may need or a calling card to use with the numbers written down for them. Be sure that they know how to use the calling card if they need it. When traveling alone, be sure that your seniors pack light enough to allow them to handle their own items. Put



medications together in carry-on cases along with the prescriptions keeping them in a marked container; not combining them in boxes for daily doses, as this might pose a security risk depending on where they are traveling. Secure their money to avoid being a target for thieves. Don't put their wallet in the back pocket and keep their personal items between their feet or closely guarded. Explain the security procedures to your senior who may not have been traveling much lately so that they'll be able to get through airport security smoothly, especially if they have a medical device or a physical disability that would require special treatment. Remind them to wear comfortable, easy to put on shoes since flying requires them to remove them and get them back on by themselves at security checkpoints. Finally, be sure the family that they are visiting without you have been briefed on their needs and likes and schedules to help make their visit more enjoyable once they actually get to their destination. You can enjoy your travel adventures with good planning.

Barry: Well Kathy, that was much longer than our usual news item but I think everybody will agree that it's very helpful information, especially as we get into the season where many people are traveling to visit family.

Kathy: Yes, sometimes we don't think about the little details, we're so worried about getting the flight reservations. So it's important to remember all the details that can make that a smooth adventure.

Barry: Well, now it's time for our feature segment. In this episode what we want to do is expand on our recent blog post (<http://seniorcarecorner.com/give-grandma-the-gift-of-social-media-this-christmas>) and the press release some of the media picked up on with a little more discussion on giving the gift of social media. And really, we want to talk about more than we can put into a blog post about giving the gift to our senior loved ones. There are several steps, which if done together can be a shared family experience in itself that goes beyond social media. Those steps as we see them and really, these are to be tailored to each person's situation but first, getting your loved one to agree what can be done with social media. But they want to do, that they want to do it.

Getting the right devices for your loved one, arranging for internet access so that they can connect to the social network they want to use, selecting and setting up social networks to be used, discussing and reinforcing privacy issues and habits; an increasingly important item that I think too many people overlook; and last but certainly not least, practicing informing the social media habit with your loved one. We want to go through each of these and talk a little bit about them and then talk a little bit more about what we're going to do ourselves to help you with this.

But first we want to talk about getting loved ones to agree to join social media. Social media is not something into which we want to force loved ones. First of all, we don't get our parents or grandparents they want to do anyway but joining the social networking world is something that if they don't want to do it, they probably not going to form the habit, they aren't going to enjoy it,



and they may actually feel negatively about you for trying to force them to do something.

Kathy: So one way you might be able to convince them or show them that it's something that they might be interested in doing is actually sitting down with them and showing them what social media means.

Barry: Yes. And for many people it might not be difficult at all because they've heard about it from family or friends, and maybe even tried it themselves with a neighbor or seen their grandchildren doing it. But for others, it may be a challenge because they're not used to working with technology; they've heard a lot of scams going on- on the internet and things. So this is where a lot of working with them directly can help to reassure them to show them that what they're doing is something that will benefit them and also that there are ways that they can stay out of trouble.

One big thing is to explain to them the benefits of getting onto social media, often you'll be reinforcing what they've already heard from others. And those benefits as we see them, and we've heard from others, include getting closer to family and friends, especially those who are distant such as grandchildren and children, bringing that bond closer together again; sharing pictures and videos with family and friends, I mean after all YouTube and Facebook along with some other picture sharing sites have for many taken the place of sending pictures and tapes from family member to family member, it makes it a lot quicker, lot more convenient and with everything taken on digital cameras and video cameras today, it's certainly a lot easier than changing something to a different medium and sending it around. It might not take the place though of viewing all those vacation pictures and videos at holiday gatherings, sorry about that folks you might still have to do that. With the TV taking the place of slide and movie projectors, hopefully it'll be a little more fun because everybody can pitch in; it's not just one person in the family holding the camera, but now with smartphones, so many people have that video camera. And they may have their own movies of trips and special occasions to show themselves.

Another benefit is the ability to stay up with community news and activities, especially those who are living in their own homes, keeping abreast of what is going on in the community can help them stay a part of that community and keep that socialization that's so important for all of us.

And last and certainly not least, for many people is finding out about sales, coupons, and other discounts that might be offered by retailers through their social media sites. I mean there are so many things now, so many companies out there advertising their product, doing things to bring in new buyers with Facebook pages and other places you can go to actually save some money, you don't want to miss out on those.

Kathy: I think another great benefit the opportunity that you'll have to spend quality time together. Often times we think, "I'll go and visit Grandma, but what are we going to talk about?" This would be a great event that you can share together, remember getting your senior



to feel comfortable and capable with technology may mean a time commitment but one that could be very enjoyable for everyone.

Barry: Absolutely Kathy! The next step in the process we've got is making sure that your loved one has the right device or devices for accessing their social media. Of course they may have the right device at home already and may even surf the net, a lot of people do that. If so, then this is a major step that's already covered. But for many people, having the right device can be a key. If it's not something that your loved one feels comfortable using or is able to use well, then again, they aren't going to develop the habit, they're not going to get the benefit from social media.

Kathy: The right tool for the right job, so to speak?

Barry: Absolutely! I mean there are many devices out there that can be used to access social networking sites. Options include a personal computer, whether it's a desktop or notebook computer, a netbook or the smaller personal computers that starting coming into vogue a few years ago; they are still around but many are being phased out now in favor of the tablet computers, which is the next option, that's the iPad and other similar devices that are very mobile and people are using more and more to access their information, the internet, and social networking sites. Many people access the social networks from smartphones, whether it's an iPhone, an Android phone, or any of many others, there are a multitude of options out there with different ways of entering data, different size screens, and different systems. There are also senior specific devices such as the Telekin computer and others that are designed with the need of seniors in mind whether it's a more simplified system for somebody who isn't familiar with technology or the internet, or special touch interface, or larger viewing screen, but there are many things out there that are readily available and you may find the right thing for you and your loved one from any of these categories.

There are a number of factors that you may consider in choosing the right device. First, and probably not most important but I know it is very important for some people, is cost. Not only the cost of the device upfront and they can range tremendously in price but also the cost of maintaining a device. Especially if you are using a smartphone, you want to consider not just the upfront cost, many phone companies give these away for free or for a small nominal amount, but the cost of maintaining a data service; so it should all go together when you're doing that.

Next factor is the screen size. Is it appropriate for your loved one? Can they readily see the information there? As many of us, who aren't seniors, are learning that eyesight does often go for people as we age. That's something to make sure that we consider.

Likewise, the keyboard for typing; many devices have keyboards that aren't very well suited for don't have the most nimble of fingers and again if it's not easy to use, it probably won't be used. You want to get your loved one out there interacting, corresponding with you and with others so



you want them to be able to type and feel comfortable doing it.

For those who travel a lot, whether it's in the neighborhood, in town, or around the globe; they want to take it with them, and often people will; make sure that it's mobile. That may bring you down to a smart phone or a tablet computer or other device that's readily able to take around with them.

One more thing to consider is how your loved one will be connected to the internet. Is there Wi-Fi where they live, at home or in a senior living facility? Do they have a mobile connection through a cell phone company? Again cost and devices vary significantly, but most all cell phone companies offer smart phones and tablet computers. Do they like a device a family or friend is using?

Kathy: Don't forget Barry, another good point when you're considering what device to select is to let your senior actually see it and use it and touch it to see if they can move their fingers and can use the keyboard and can see it. Let them be a part of the decision with you, don't just select one while they aren't there.

Barry: And that goes back to, of course Kathy, making sure they want to do this. If it is something that you force on them, they may say "oh great" and really gush the way a grandparent can do when they get a gift and sometimes put it away because it just isn't usable.

One thing that you may find helpful is to take them to one of the big box stores or a cell phone store and let them see all the devices that are out there. Let them try the devices you don't have.

Once you have the device, the next step we'll be talking about is arranging for internet access. Again, if they already have internet access you have this step addressed and no added cost to joining and becoming active on social networks. That's a great thing.

But this is another aspect that you want to make sure is convenient if your loved one is to really enjoy social networking. Again, find out how they plan on using it and make sure that the internet access suites that. Some of the places to look, there may be available Wi-Fi in your loved one's home already, whether they have it set up, maybe you've set it up for them so they can surf the internet. Maybe it's readily available if they want to set it up from their cable company or their phone company if that's where they get their internet service. One thing that is easy to do at times is to utilize the Wi-Fi from a neighbor's service. So many neighborhood's have people, if you look at the different connections available, you'll see many of them because neighbor's have Wi-Fi available. That's something that some people jump on, but we don't suggest that; certainly be sure to ask first if you want to use a neighbor's connection. And if it's a friend, often they'll let you do that. But they may have security reasons for not doing so. That's an opportunity there that should be considered.

If your loved one is living in a senior living facility, such as assisted living or nursing home, does it have Wi-Fi? Because a growing number of them do, primarily for staff purposes, but they also



make it available to residents. There is a security there because there is a sharing of personal information on there. You'll have to learn about that and find out what their rules are for accessing the information.

A growing number of communities have community wide Wi-Fi, in order to make the internet accessible to more people. Some places it's in place already; it's being implemented in many areas, not just the big cities but sometimes in the suburbs and a growing number in more rural areas. So look for it there as well. Keeping in mind that they might be special privacy concerns with accessing that and things that you want to do to make sure that any information shared is done safely.

Not to be overlooked of course is the cell phone system. Keep in mind that many systems now have data caps in their plans. Data caps should not be an issue for those that are simply using Facebook or another social media platform but there may be monitoring of usage needed if videos are downloaded, because some videos and other streaming services such as music can very quickly use up those caps. Again, it's something to keep in mind, maybe show your loved one how to monitor that and help them monitor it so that they don't incur additional, and often very steep, charges.

When it comes to selecting and setting up the social networks to be used, you've really got to look at what's out there. There are many social networks, including specialty networks for communities and various organizations that may appeal to your loved one. By far the most popular social network is Facebook. Studies after study shows that it is by far the most accessed. There are others out there that are growing. And we don't know what's going to happen over time; after all Facebook hasn't even been around for 10 years yet.

A key to selecting the right social network for your loved one is to find out what their objectives are of getting on in the first place. When you talked about the benefits of doing so, which of those benefits most appealed to them? Do they want to do it in order to link up with family? The key there is to look up which social networks are being used by the family members; again here Facebook is the most popular with a broad range of community. You may find that if somebody wants to keep up with you, keep up with grandchildren; Facebook is the place to be. But again, find out where everybody is; find out from those what might be appropriate. Also find out what networks are popular with their friends or contain information about community activities that are important to your loved ones. That's some place they may want to be as well in order to get those benefits. Which social networks are popular with the stores or companies your loved ones uses or may want to follow for discounts or other information? Again I'd hate to harp on Facebook but Facebook is an answer to many of those things. Many companies are out there, many people are out there and that may be a good starter social network for a lot of people. If there are specialty networks out there that provide needs that they have, look at those. But if you're on Facebook, if other loved ones are on Facebook that may be the place to start. But again that should be something that meets the specific needs.



Once you select the social network, you need to set up access. That starts with setting up user names and passwords. Do they want to use their own names or some other identifier? Specific user names may not be available, in that case there is some variation needed. User name is a key not just because it tells people who your loved one is when they're out there on the social network, but in many cases it's how they log into the social network to begin with, so it's something that they need to be able to remember.

At least as important, and in many ways more so than the user name, is the password. All of these social networks have a password to limit access, to make sure that the person using the network is indeed the one who's intended to. What that means is that passwords need to be something that's readily guessable by a hacker or even someone who knows your loved one in the community. Ideally, something that is remembered by them, but it's often typically written down and kept in a safe place as well.

Kathy: Having that information in mind, a password is really not something that you want to set up for them. It should be something that they can personally relate to so that they'll be able to remember it.

Barry: Yes, but not something that would be easily remembered or easily picked out by somebody else. So many people will look at a favored dog name or street they lived on or something because they can remember that, but that's something a hacker may try if they are familiar at all with the person. You don't want it to be too easy but you so difficult that your loved one doesn't remember it either. Just like us with our own passwords, we want to make sure it's something we can remember and not trip up later.

Once you've got access set up, you want to go ahead and bookmark their social network pages or set up apps depending on the device they're using so they can get back there in the future.

Kathy: Don't forget that you need to show them how to access these bookmarks and apps. Don't just assume that because they are listed in a drop down under bookmarks that they know how to even retrieve them just because they are there.

Barry: Now this next area is something that we really cannot over-emphasize. I think many people realize it already, but privacy settings are evermore critical and growing all the time, because let's face it, there are people out there actively looking for our information, actively looking for ways to be malicious. Senior adults are often the targets because they are seen as more vulnerable. So it's something that we really need to dig in on here.

Looking at privacy settings can be difficult because they change frequently for some networks, especially with Facebook. Now, the privacy setting that's important for your loved one should be based on the information that they may want to share and with whom it may be shared. So, you'll walk through the settings of the social network, discussing each one, not just setting it for them, but working with them to set what's right for them. And then setting it based on your



discussion. For choices that are made with each post or update, as some social networks do, especially Facebook now or at least, as we're doing this, it may change by the time you listen to it. You might want to set up a little cheat sheet for your loved one for use when making posts, at least until a privacy habit is formed. Be sure to update that cheat sheet when the network changes their privacy settings or practices so that your loved one stays current.

One important privacy setting that is often overlooked is access to the device itself. We often have our device whether it's a smart phone, tablet with its browser and app remembers our login settings to make it convenient for us to use sites and social networks. When you pull up the Facebook app on your smart phone, does it already have your login information there so that you can get in there quickly?

If your senior loved one lives in a senior living facility or it's someone who's prone to leaving portable devices sitting around in public places; the device should require a password in order to get access, for someone to start up that cell phone or that tablet computer. You may want to require a password, and this isn't just senior loved ones. How many of us have left a cell phone in a fast food restaurant or some place else we've been? It's one easy way for somebody to get access to your information without you knowing about it.

It's not just for social networks, but even more so for banking and other websites with sensitive personal or financial information is accessible. If it's a device that may get accessed even by accident by those other than the person whose phone or device it is, take that extra step and set a password for accessing the device itself.

Now the last step in the process we've talked about here of social networks is practicing and forming a habit. This is the easiest step and the most fun. Just talking about becoming accustomed to using the social networking site and developing social media habits. Especially safe social media habits using the access and privacy information you've set up already. It can help to involve those with who your loved one will be in regular contact, especially family members. In this way, your loved one and the family members can start forming communications habit.

And again, going through all of these provide a real experience that you can have with your loved one and here you can bring family and friends into that experience of working with them and developing that social media habit.

Last couple of points here, one thing is this, to stay in contact yourself. After all you'll probably find yourself benefiting from regular contact with your loved one. And it will give your loved one reason to keep up the social media habit.

Kathy: Another thing to remember, Barry, when we're talking about setting them up on social media is remember that some of the senior's are not tech savvy as we are. And let them know and reassure them that they aren't going to break anything if they use their computer, or if they use the internet. They aren't going to crash the internet if they push the wrong button, so just



allay their fears and let them know that this could be a fun thing and not all nervous and upset it, so that they will actually use it.

Barry: Good point Kathy, thanks. Last thing we want to say is again, talking about privacy. Make sure that you implement those privacy settings but don't forget to revisit your procedures with your loved ones when social networks make changes to their privacy settings to make sure that they aren't unwittingly sharing information with people who will use it maliciously.

But the bottom line here is we don't want to scare you or scare them but really, HAVE FUN. And we'll be talking more about the gift of social media coming up. And we've gotten some requests and I think in the coming weeks we might even put together a webinar talking about accessing to make it available for everybody so please stay tuned.

Kathy: That sounds great!

Barry: Alright, Kathy, before we wrap it up you've got a quick tip for us?

Kathy: I do, I'll try to make it quick. The tips for staying healthy during the holidays for you and your senior: you've worked hard all year long trying to stay healthy and sometimes it's difficult to stay on track during the holidays when there are so many temptations around. We tend to stay in the house, we decrease our activity, and we eat. We want to enjoy our holidays, so here are some tips to enjoy and stay healthy.

The first tip is to eat your favorite traditional holiday foods, but watch your portion sizes and don't take second helpings. Look for ways in each family recipe to incorporate healthier ingredients. Limit the high calorie toppings that we tend to overdo on like gravy and butter and things like that, and just enjoy the taste of the food.

And after dinner, take a walk with the family and enjoy some family time.

Barry: Well thank you Kathy. That is a great tip and very timely. We want to thank you for joining us here at Senior Care Corner. We realize this episode has been longer than usual but we hope you found it informative. We want to leave you with a couple of thoughts.

First, when you are looking for gifts in this holiday season, don't forget the caregivers in your senior loved ones life. Those are those, whether it's other family members or paid caregivers who are putting part of their time into making sure that your senior loved ones life is a little bit better. You may want to look for gifts and other aids at our Senior Care Corner bookstore. There are a lot of good things out there and certainly a lot of places as well, but doing that helps out Senior Care Corner a little bit as well.

Another thing we'd like to remind you about is to "like" our Facebook page at Senior Care Corner on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/SeniorCareCorner>). That will keep you in touch with everything that we share.



Until next time, we appreciate you joining us and hope you'll have a great day.