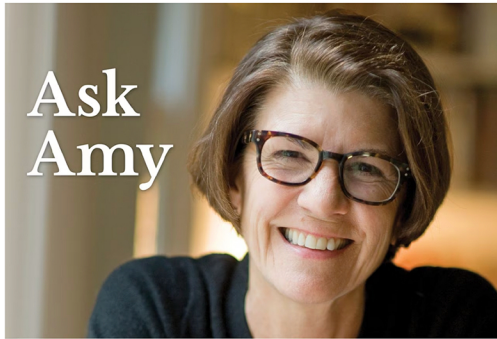


# Ask Amy: Demanding, aging mom is spiking stress level for her kids

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Amy Dickinson writes the syndicated Ask Amy column. Tribune Content Agency

By [Amy Dickinson](#)

**Dear Amy:** I'm halfway through a two-week visit with my 89-year-old mom, and my stress level is through the roof.

On the one hand, I know that her life isn't easy due to numerous health issues, including memory and vision loss – plus the death of my dad just over a year ago.

On the other hand, and my siblings would all agree, she makes everything so much harder than it has to be, for herself and for everyone around her.

The criticisms, complaints, put-downs, constant demands and need to control everything makes it so hard to find the patience and compassion I should have.

It doesn't take very long when trying to do anything with her before I'm stressed out and frustrated at the way she treats me and what I'm being put through while trying to help her.

And I hate myself for it.

I can hear the whine of an unhappy child in the grumbling of the adult I'm supposed to be, and by nightfall it's not just one day's worth of issues I'm trying to let go of, but decades of conflict, misunderstandings, and bad behavior on both our parts.

She's 89. She's sick. She's alone. She's struggling to cope.

She's my mom.

Why can't I be more tolerant?

– Intolerant Caregiver

**Dear Intolerant:** The reason you can't be more tolerant when providing care to your mother is because providing care for an ill and challenging parent is a huge and heartbreaking experience.

This is one reason that qualified, experienced and reliable professional caregivers are worth their weight in gold. Caregivers outside the family are not triggered by a lifetime of memories of their client. They also go home at the end of their shift. Adult children caregivers remain emotionally engaged, even when they're not physically present.

I hope that you and your siblings can support one another through this time. Sharing, venting, and comparing notes will help you all to provide your mother with the compassionate care that she needs.

You might also benefit from reading "The Conscious Caregiver: A Mindful Approach to Caring for Your Loved One Without Losing Yourself," by Linda Abbit (2017, Adams Media).