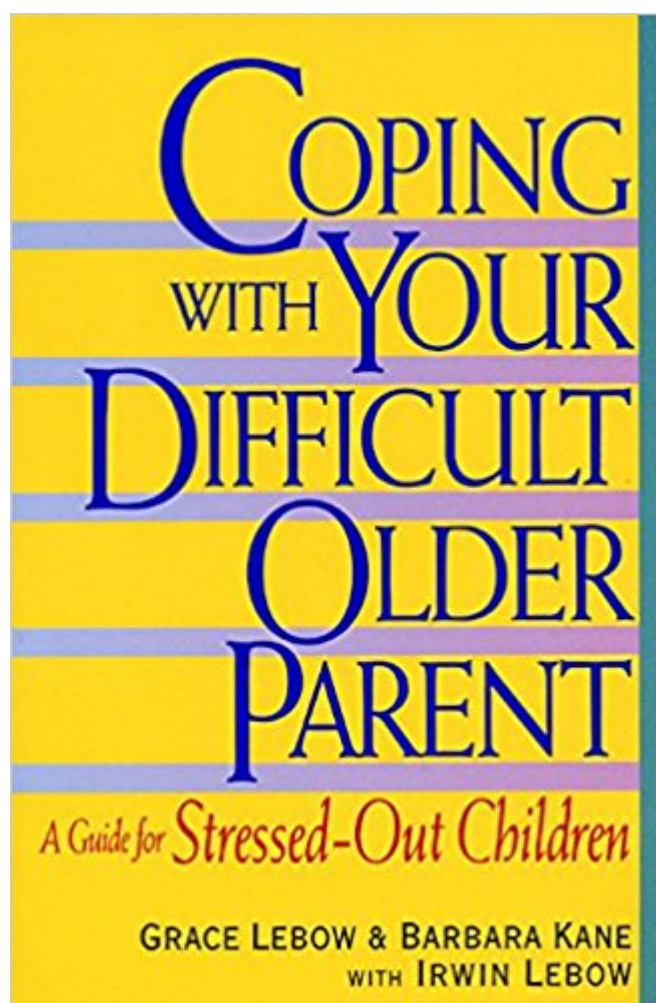


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# Coping With Your Difficult Older Parent : A Guide For Stressed-Out Children



## Synopsis

Do You Have An Aging Parent Who --Blames you for everything that goes wrong?Cannot tolerate being alone, wants you all the time?Is obsessed with health problems, real, or imagined?Make unreasonable and/or irrational demands of you?Is hostile, negative and critical? Coping with these traits in parents is an endless high-stress battle for their children. Though there's no medical definition for "difficult" parents, you know when you have one. While it's rare for adults to change their ways late in life, you can stop the vicious merry-go-round of anger, blame, guilt and frustration. For the first time, here's a common-sense guide from professionals, with more than two decades in the field, on how to smooth communications with a challenging parent. Filled with practical tips for handling contentious behaviors and sample dialogues for some of the most troubling situations, this book addresses many hard issues, including: How to tell your parent he or she cannot live with you. How to avoid the cycle of nagging and recriminations How to prevent your parent's negativity from overwhelming you. How to deal with an impaired parent who refuses to stop driving. How to assess the risk factors in deciding whether a parent is still able to live alone.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grace Lebow and Barbara Kane, the co-founders of Aging Network Services of Bethesda, Maryland, are clinical social workers and care managers, specializing in older people and their families. They created a nationwide network of similar professionals to work with geographically separated families. This is their first book. Grace Lebow and Barbara Kane, the co-founders of Aging Network Services of Bethesda, Maryland, are clinical social workers and care managers,

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A very good resource for a myriad of different issues when dealing with an abusive, cold, or otherwise difficult parent. The chapters are broken down into different personality issues, and actually offers more practical advice beyond "don't let it get to you!" Or "deal with the stress when it happens" like most other resources. The book is lightweight, succinct, and doesn't bog down with the authors patting themselves on the back with their own successes too much. The only criticism I have is the ridiculous attempt they made to replace the phrase "adult children" with their own "grownchildren" word. The word grownchildren is used frequently, and seems more like a silly attempt to coin a catchphrase than anything else. But still, an invaluable resource for anyone dealing with the decline of a less than ideal relationship.

This book hits the nail on the head. I love(d) my parents with all my heart. However, even though I'm sure they love(d) me as well, they both are challenges to me for remembering the wonderful things they have done instead of dwelling on the negative. Both of my parents had dementia which makes that all the more important. The book validates my ambivalence and has helped me understand what may have caused certain issues. I have passed the book on to someone whom I hope will be helped by adjusting their behavior and, therefore, have more honest and fulfilling relationships; especially with their children.

I just couldn't get past the part where they stressed how important it was for me to "understand" where my parent was coming from. My parent is narcissistic and incredibly self centered and has wreaked havoc in my and my siblings' lives. I now have to care for her and I needed some guidance, not guilt that if I just tried really hard to grasp what made her that way everything would fall into place. Gah!

This book fills a gap in eldercare literature in a very unique manner. The subject is a touchy one: parents who have suffered with lifelong personality disorders whose problems have been

exacerbated by aging. Often they have driven the very children on whom they depend away from them and now need their care. A person in the unenviable position of being a caregiver for such a parent is often uncomfortable even sharing what they are enduring with other people, for fear of looking as though they hate or are slandering their parent("How could their mother possibly be that bad?"). Navigating ordinary eldercare issues is challenging enough without deeply rooted personality disorders complicating matters and emotions. My own mother suffers from what I now know to be narcissistic personality disorder. She was so fearful from physical and psychological abuse doled out by her own mother, that she clung to both her brother, and myself, her only surviving relatives. Her marriage broke up, and she ended up living with and being supported by her brother. She was fearful that I would marry, or get friends, and any friendship I formed was viewed as a personal affront, and she would let me know that it was her or them--- choose one. If that didn't work she would do something calculatedly embarrassing enough that the friendship was ruined. She worked for only ten years of her life, and never planned for retirement, stating "My girl will always take care of me!" I did take care of her, because I was afraid something bad would happen, her brother had passed away, and she would be totally alone. Finally at age 89, her legs gave out and she had become totally demented---on top of the personality disorder. The hospital staff admitted her to a nursing home. I was still concerned for her, but almost guilty that finally, at age 54, I was relieved to be free to live my own life. This book just helped me survive Christmas. I am sitting here without a knot in my stomach because I read it from cover to cover right after I received it. I wanted her holidays to feel as much like home as possible, and as I had done for Thanksgiving, I prepared meals for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. When I walked in yesterday afternoon, carrying a huge styrofoam container of food to be microwaved and a decorated live Christmas tree, I heard her ripping me apart to the other residents to "never visiting" and stating that I was a "no good bum!" I would have been angry, hurt, devastated before reading this, but handled it very calmly. As I had promised the staff I came back for Christmas. Today I was a wonderful daughter....She also had no recollection of the fact that I'd even visited yesterday. For anyone going through a similar experience, the book had covered all the the things that I mentioned above, and more, and I highly recommend it. I'm just surprised my mother's picture isn't on the cover...

I am changing how I speak to my difficult father and I believe over time our situation will improve. It's a constant challenge to be EMPATHIC rather than try to argue with an irrational person. But I know this technique will save me, at least, from depression! I thank the authors for this advice.

This was one of three books I bought for a friend who is dealing with an aging and very demanding parent. While all three books were good, this one was the very best. I started reading and couldn't put it down. Three hours later I had savored the last word. So, technically, I gave my friend a now-used book, but being literally on the same page with that friend allowed me to be more helpful. Reading this book is not entirely a replacement for seeking one-on-one professional counseling, but it is certainly a good start. At the very least it can help the adult child feel they are not alone and can provide ideas for workable responses to seemingly unworkable situations.

One of the most helpful and insightful books to help you transition as your parents age. Being able to read the conversations and have some suggested replies...or ways to rephrase statements really helps to diffuse tense conversations. I appreciated the perspectives and viewpoints shared in the book. I was surprised to find myself nodding and thinking of someone specific as the various types of people were described with best suggestions on how to converse about tender subjects.

This book is very helpful to me in dealing with my 96 year old Mother who is still sharp in the mind, but is beginning to forget some things, but not anything important. She has been a difficult Mother all my life, but now I have to learn how to deal with it a nice way, because I am her in home support service, 7 days a week. She can be very demanding at times. I will be very sad and miss her when she has to leave this plane and joins God.

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