

Role Reversal: How to Take Care of Yourself and Your Aging Parents

Iris Waichler

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Role Reversal is an informative and empathetic guide on how to best care for aging parents.

Seasoned social worker Iris Waichler uses personal and occupational wisdom in *Role Reversal* to offer much-needed guidance on an underrepresented and increasingly important subject. With its useful resources and warm professionalism, *Role Reversal* is an essential read for adults thrust into the role of caregiver for their parents.

Role Reversal serves as a comprehensive and concise guide, with resources to aid in dealing with such delicate and overwhelming topics as choosing housing and determining when to take away an aging parent's license. Waichler's background as a social worker results in in-depth understanding of topics like respecting one's parent while also intervening to maintain their health and safety.

Part one uses Waichler's experiences with her terminally ill mother and as her father's caregiver to frame her compilation of resources and publications from healthcare organizations and individuals. Part two focuses solely on sources on some overlooked facets of assisting elderly parents, like estate planning and preventing identity theft.

Waichler's personal approach to the subject is humanizing and contextualizes the plethora of useful resources she packs in. By starting with her father's childhood, she emphasizes that the dignity of aging parents should be recognized and understood, as should the fine line between maintaining dignity and doing what is best as a caregiver.

One poignant moment captures this theme: While hospitalized, Waichler's father continuously becomes confused and pulls out his catheter, causing major blood loss and internal injury. After several incidents, he is restrained to his bed for his own safety. Waichler and her family are heartbroken at treating their father "like a caged animal" as he begs for the restraints to be taken off. She bravely reveals such agonizing details as an example of the difficulties of the caregiver role, as well as its supreme importance to the well-being of the elderly.

While most would likely prefer to put off dealing with the intricacies of the changing parent-child role as parents age, Waichler presents it as a challenging but rewarding experience. Despite the moments of grief and tragedy, she shows that this stage of life can also include moments of pride and togetherness.

This subject matter is intensely emotional and overwhelming, though it paradoxically requires a great deal of organization and a clear head. Waichler handles this issue excellently by offering concise resources like checklists to reference when choosing a nursing home. In its e-book form, the format is utilized to its full potential, with included hyperlinks to specific resources and websites that go more in-depth in an easily navigable way.

Iris Waichler's *Role Reversal* is an informative and empathetic guide on how to best care for aging parents.

PAIGE VAN DE WINKLE (December 22, 2016)

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