

Three Thinking Styles of a Caretaker Who Is Caring for Their Parent.

Day 1 - Help My Parent Recover

(Thinking Style: Give Dignity & Agency)

Introduction Block at Top of Page:

Your parent had an event (surgery, accident) rendering them temporarily unable to walk. Since there's no money to hire someone, you will help out--with everything.

A thinking style is your approach to your purpose. At first your thinking style as a caretaker is to support your parent as the person they really are, not treat them like an invalid. (You don't even like that word.) You make sure they have a say in everything you help them with.

Frame 1:

A doctor wearing a light blue surgical cap and gown and holding a clipboard and pen in their hands is talking to two people, the caretaker who is standing and the mother who is in a wheelchair. The caretaker is wearing a t-shirt with a yellow triangle logo on it. The mother is wearing a white blouse with a red scalloped collar. Doctor says her Recovery will take around 3 to 6 more Months. Both the caretaker and the mother are nodding.

Frame 2:

Minutes later the caretaker is in the car driving their mother back home. The caretaker is thinking about their next steps: visiting the physical therapist and picking up prescriptions. While driving, the caretaker asks, "Mom what would you like to do when we get home?" Mom responds, "I just want to relax. Maybe listen to some Music..."

Frame 3:

The caretaker is doing finances while the mother sits in the wheelchair in front of the living room window, sunshine, a butterfly, and green bushes outside and music in the air inside. But the caretaker notices that Mom looks depressed and suggests to her, "Mom! Let's call Tio Tico."

Frame 4:

The mom in the wheelchair is holding the tablet talking to her brother while the caretaker is standing behind the wheelchair, waving at the tablet and smiling.

Frame 5:

Tio Tico appears on the tablet screen in a green sweater, with a mustache, bald head, and big round glasses. He says, “I remember when you were 6 and broke your arm. You had a bad reaction to the pain medicine, had trouble breathing ... It was Co- something.”

Frame 6:

Caretaker is sweating, looking at the print on the side of the box of pain medicine, worried that the co-something medicine Tio Tico mentioned is the same stuff they picked up from the pharmacy. The caretaker is thinking, “We have codeine on our list of pain meds ... the doctor said to start them tonight. I’d better call and ask what to do ...”

Frame 7:

The doctor appears on the tablet screen with her lap coat on. Lines indicating thinking or urgency emanate from her brow. The doctor says, “Shortness of breath? That’s not likely with Codeine. But just to be sure, let’s switch the acetaminophen. Do you have any at home?”

Frame 8:

Mom is in her wheelchair reaching for the glass of water and pills that the caretaker is leaning over to give her. The caretaker is smiling, looking at Mom. The caretaker is thinking, “Whew! I am glad we called the doctor. I feel much better about this acetaminophen.”

Day 8 - Help My Parent Recover

(Thinking Style: Push Past Resistance)

Introduction Block at Top of Page:

On the 8th day, your thinking style changes. Your parent has spent the last four days either on the couch or in bed. They have not done any of the exercises that the physical therapist says will speed recovery. You are worried they won’t recover in the time period you had imagined. Now you want to urge your parent to do what needs doing.

A person can change thinking styles depending on context. Usually the shift happens because of a life event, but it can shift even faster. Airline passenger thinking styles can shift from flight to flight. Here your thinking style has shifted because of your reaction to the prospect that your parents' recovery might drag on.

Frame 1:

In the living room in front of the window, Mom is sitting in a big easy chair wearing a white shirt with flowers on it, pink sweatpants, blue slippers, and has a red blanket over her knees. She is clicking the TV remote at the TV, which is on and shows three lines of

light or volume coming from it. There is a tall bookcase behind her with a vase and red stretchy therapy bands on the top shelf. The next shelf has glass doors with plates and glasses behind them. There are three drawers, one over the other, beneath the glass-doors shelf. The caretaker is wearing a white t-shirt with a heart-diamond-circle logo and blue sweatpants with two red stripes up the side. The caretaker stands with their hand on the chair Mom is sitting in. The caretaker is looking at Mom, thinking, "Mom hasn't been doing her exercises. I need to change my approach." The caretaker says, "Hi Mom! Did you do your therapy stretches while I was out?" Mom responds, "No, I couldn't reach the bands on top of that cabinet."

Frame 2:

The caretaker kneels beside Mom's chair, smiling and placing the red therapy bands on the arm of the chair. The TV remote is gone. The caretaker says, "Here they are." Mom rolls her eyes and thinks, "Ugh."

Frame 3:

Mom is sitting in a wooden chair near the window next to the bookcase and has the red therapy bands across her knees. She is scratching her head, and three little black tornadoes of frustration come out of her head. There is blue sky with one cloud outside, and green bushes. The caretaker is leaning around the corner of the bookcase looking at Mom. The caretaker asks, "How are the therapy exercises going?"

Frame 4:

A closeup shows the caretaker kneeling on the left and the mom on the right still sitting on her chair. The caretaker is saying, "The therapist says to her doing the exercises will speed up your recovery. Do you like being on that sofa all day?" They wonder, "How can I get her to do the exercises?" Then they say, "Let's do the exercises together. Hey! What if I go get your favorite burger after we finish?" There is an image of a hamburger in Mom's mind, along with the word "Yumm!"

Frame 5:

The caretaker sits down in a wooden chair to the right, leaning toward Mom, and Mom is holding her left ankle up onto her own chair, with the red therapy bands draped over her knee. There are three lightning bolts of pain coming out of the ankle. Mom says, "It hurts here." The caretaker says, "That means you're doing it right. It will strengthen that muscle and your leg will take your weight again."

Frame 6:

Now they are on the floor on a red yoga mat. Mom is sitting with her legs out in front of her, with the red therapy bands around both ankles. She is lifting the left leg up, and there is sweat coming from her head and the numbers 8, 9, 10 above her. The caretaker is

kneeling at the bottom of the mat helping hold Mom's right foot so she has something to stabilize against. The caretaker says, "Come on Mom; one more set! Just 20 more lifts!"

Frame 7:

The caretaker is coming in the front door carrying a paper bag with a burger logo, and two paper soda cups with lids and straws. They are smiling broadly. "Tada! Here we are, your favorite burger. Good job doing your therapy!"

Day 17 - Help My Parent Recover

(Thinking Style: Avoid the Stew)

Introduction Block at Top of Page:

Your parent is refusing to do what it takes to recover. They are complaining about their situation. You have memories of how they have complicated other situations like this. This combination has affected you. Now your thinking style shifts again. Gone is the idea of urging them or giving them a say. Now your interior cognition has blocked your tolerance for their behavior. You want to get out of there.

A thinking style that is judged as "negative" needs support, too. Label this thinking style with words that people feel okay saying about themselves. If your org can get past the judgment, there is a lot that can be done to support this thinking style without intending to change them. For all you know, the parent has been abusive in the past. There are valid reasons to support this thinking style.

Frame 1:

Mom is still sitting in her big easy chair in front of the window, and it's still sunny outside with two butterflies. Mom is wearing a yellow striped shirt and yellow sweatpants, with the red blanket still over her knees. Now there is a red bowl with a spoon and a mostly empty water glass on a little folding table next to the easy chair. Mom has a tangle of black depression on her mind, staring across the room to her left. Mom says, "I'm afraid I'm never going to walk again. I hate this sofa and this room."

Frame 2 :

A closeup of the caretaker's face shows three black tornadoes of frustration and tired eyes. The caretaker is thinking, "Not again! I can't take it any longer."

Frame 3 :

The caretaker faces Mom, sitting in her easy chair across the living room. The caretaker chides their Mom, "You won't walk any time soon unless you strengthen your muscles. You have

to do the physical therapy.” Mom gestures with her right hand to sweep the remark away. She exclaims, “It doesn’t help!”

Frame 4:

The point of view switches to behind the easy chair looking at the caretaker, who is wearing a white t-shirt with red ribbed collar and a rainbow logo. There are three little black tornadoes of frustration coming from Mom’s head, and they are both waving their hands at each other as they argue. The caretaker says, “Of course it doesn’t help—you aren’t doing it!” Mom replies, “Because it really hurts to do it!”

Frame 5:

We see the back of the caretaker as they grab a red backpack off a low table with drawers. Three little black tornadoes of frustration come from their head. The caretaker is thinking, “That’s it! I have to get out of here.”

Frame 6:

The caretaker is walking away from the front of the house, still with the three little black tornadoes of frustration coming from their head. They are wearing the red backpack and have green headphones on. The caretaker is thinking, “I have my own stuff to take care of. This is my day off work, and I sure need it!”

Frame 7:

We can see Mom through the living room window, kneeling in her easy chair with her hands on its back, showing three red exclamations of emotion from her head. The TV is on in the background with an announcer and a graph showing. The caretaker is past the bushes and the butterfly now. We hear Mom faintly through the window crying, “What will I do for lunch?” The caretaker yells back, “I don’t know. You’ll have to figure it out.”

Frame 8:

A closeup for the caretaker looking unhappy with the green headphones on and music coming from them. The caretaker thinks, “What if she falls trying to get herself lunch? Oh, maybe I don’t care anymore.”

Day 24 - Help My Parent Recover

(Thinking Style: Give Dignity & Agency)

Introduction Block at Top of Page:

After a week of distancing yourself from your parent, your emotions subside. You see a bit of your parent's perspective. So your thinking style shifts back to letting them "have the final say,"

even though it isn't what the physical therapist wants them to do. But, you set some boundaries for yourself.

Often orgs segment their audience by role. However, one role can represent several thinking styles. By creating support for each thinking style, your org can support people in a way that is valuable to them. Creating a solution that ignores thinking styles actually harms some of those people they represent. Doing harm isn't your org's intent.

Frame 1:

The caretaker, wearing a yellow t-shirt and jeans, enters the front door, with the low table with drawers to the right with an oval pink rug in front of it. We can see the back of Mom's head, with three little black tornadoes of frustration and squinty eyes next to it.

The caretaker is thinking, "Time to change my attitude. I'll let her recover her way." They say aloud, "Good morning Mom! Beautiful day!" Mom replies, "I wouldn't know. I'm stuck inside!"

Frame 2:

The living room window is covered by pink curtains which the caretaker is opening to let the sunshine in. The caretaker is thinking, "I will accept her perspective." They say, "What if I move your chair to this window so you can feel the sunshine?"

Frame 3:

A closeup of Mom's face with her eyes looking up and left, showing little icons of what she's thinking about: a little table, a cup with a straw in it, and the TV remote. She's thinking, "I have all I need within my reach here, though."

Frame 4:

The caretaker stands beside the wheelchair, which shows some sparkles from it that indicate it is a new idea. The caretaker asks Mom, "What if we use the wheelchair, and I take you on a walk to the park?"

Frame 5:

Mom is in front of bushes with many little white jasmine flowers on them. She is thinking of jasmine and has the three sparks of a new idea as if she's already smelling the scent of the flowers. Mom asks, "Is the jasmine blooming yet?" The caretaker responds, "Let's go find out! Let me get you a hat for the sun."

Frame 6:

A street scene shows houses on each side with sidewalks, a person with a pink cap walking a dog, a cyclist with a red helmet riding a bike, the caretaker pushing her mom in

the wheelchair, and a sign for the Park at the end of the street near a crosswalk. The text reads Minutes later.

Frame 7:

Now Mom is really in front of the flowering jasmine bushes, wearing a hat, smiling, with her hands on the sides of her face and her eyes closed in joy. Mom says, "Jasmine lifts my spirits! I don't even feel the pain in my leg right now!" The caretaker responds, "Yay! The sunshine and fresh air help!"

Frame 8:

They are back at the house going up the walk to the front door. The pink curtains show through the living room window. Mom suggests, "Let's do something fresh for lunch, like a salad." The caretaker adds, "What about some jasmine tea with your lunch?" Mom responds, "Good idea! Celebrate spring time."

Frame 9:

Inside the living room Mom is back on her easy chair, leaning her elbow on the chair arm with her eyes shut and a smile. There are hearts around her head. The red therapy bands are back on the top shelf of the bookcase. There are fresh flowers in a vase on the little table beside the chair along with a stack of Mom's books about gardens. The caretaker is putting another book on the stack. The caretaker thinks, "I won't ask her about doing her exercises," then says aloud, "Look, now spring time is in here with you!" Mom replies, "I think we should do that again soon."