

DOCTOR'S VISIT #2

(Three weeks later. NURSE and MRS. P are talking)

NURSE

Good morning. It's good to see you. Where's your daughter?

MRS. P

Oh, I left her in the car. We surely have come a long way together. I still have these shooting pains in my face, but it's no longer a ten. I would rate it as a seven. The medication the doctor prescribed is really helping. And so much has changed in my life.

NURSE

Yes?

MRS. P.

I have a schedule like the energizer bunny. Mondays I go to the SPCA and I walk the dogs. My first dog was Rusty, but Rusty got adopted. Then it was Spot. Spot was a rambunctious one. But Sue, she's the behaviorist there, taught me how to handle him. I wish she would do that for Harold.

NURSE

Is Harold your dog?

MRS. P.

No, that's my husband. So of course Spot was adopted. Next week they'll give me a new dog to walk.

Tuesday's I go to the Soup Kitchen. I serve the folks that come there. Now those folks are brave. Like we talked about when I first came in, there are lots of ways to be brave.

Thursday's I go to this group, Senior Moments. Believe it or not, I'm not the oldest one there. We do plays for folks in

nursing homes, and even for counselors working with the elderly, like us (smiles). My daughter can't believe I'm doing all these things on my own.

NURSE

So tell me, if you were talking to a friend with pain what would you tell them.

MRS. P

First I'd send them to you and I'd tell them to fill out that chart. I learned that I have the most pain when I am sitting with only my thoughts. I learned I needed to get out, do stuff. And, getting old has nothing to do with pain.

NURSE

And how are you doing with the medication.

MRS. P.

Well, I knew you'd ask and I've been dreading it, you have been so kind and helpful. (Face tenses up) I've been cutting my pills in half.

NURSE

That's not what I wanted to hear.

MRS. P.

Oh, I knew I shouldn't have told you.

NURSE

No, that's what you should have told me.

MRS. P.

I told you a long time ago that my mom had trouble with drugs. It killed her in fact. Drugs spell trouble. So I am weaning myself off them.

NURSE

Let me explain why that's not such a good idea. Cutting a pill and taking a portion can be dangerous. I don't mean to frighten you but the medication is meant to be taken as is, unless the druggist tells you that you can cut them. Sometimes when you cut the pill you get the entire dose at once instead of over time. This is one way you CAN get into trouble with your medicines.

MRS. P.

Yes, but becoming an addict is worse trouble.

NURSE

People who are truly in physical pain and following doctor's orders almost never become addicts. And the pain clinic is the best place to not be an addict. The medicine that you are on isn't one that is addicting or habit forming so you don't need to worry. You can get into more trouble by taking over the counter medicine. It is great that your pain has gone from a 9 to a 7 but wouldn't it be better to get the level to a 2 or 3? If you can work with the doctor for a few months and take the medicine like he suggests, chances are your pain will be much better controlled. Then we can talk about weaning you off of it completely. Otherwise your pain will never go away.

MRS. P.

I guess it wasn't so bad telling you about this.

Thanks for not jumping down my throat. I can promise you that I will do my best to work with you and the doctor and try not to play doctor myself.