



Della Phillips, a successful professional voiceover artist, was living with her husband Sean and their young daughter Abi, when her parents quickly became dependent on her following her mum's heart attack. Della's life suddenly changed, sparking a difficult period for her family as she assumed the role of full-time carer.

In 2010, Della's parents Audrey and Keith, who were in their early 80s, were visiting for the holidays. Audrey experienced a massive heart attack, and Sean, a police officer, performed CPR until the ambulance arrived. Audrey received treatment in the hospital but continued to experience poor health.

"Things changed overnight for us. My parents became instantly dependent on support from Sean and I, especially my mum, who I was now taking to hospital for rehabilitation following her heart attack."

Della's father Keith was diagnosed with cancer three months after Audrey's heart attack, and following a procedure, developed a serious infection which left him in hospital.

"It felt like looking after my parents was something that was imposed on me. It was a responsibility I had taken on reactively rather than proactively."

The roles had changed and the family dynamic had shifted. Her parents were living with and depending on Della full-time. At the same time, she was struggling to maintain her marriage and raise a teenage daughter.

Having parents living with her was financially debilitating. This was compounded by debts that had incurred five years earlier when Della was unable to work due to loss of her daughter Kelly in a tragic car accident.

Della was spending most of her time caring for her parents. Sean was making up for the lost income by working long hours as a Detective Sergeant in the Metropolitan Police.

"The mental, physical and financial stress imposed on the family began to impact my relationship with Sean, as well as the difficulty of caring for a teenager who was grieving for her sister and had her own personal challenges with anxiety."



Della Phillips

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Della and Sean had to sell their house and move into rented accommodation to recover their finances. They moved her parents into a small accessible retirement apartment close by.

Her parents did start to regain some independence. However, Della's mum was now starting to become a carer for Keith who had been diagnosed with dementia and was deteriorating very quickly.

When Keith's illness became unmanageable, they managed to receive some support from professional carers. Keith passed away in February 2016 the day after Della's birthday.

"Following my father's death, my mum moved in with us, which was a really difficult period of time. She and I had verbal and physical fights while coming to terms with our grief and it just became too much."

In February 2018, Audrey had a massive stroke and was rushed to the hospital. She passed away six days later with Della by her side.

"I wanted to be with her as she hated being on her own."

“ Caring for somebody is the most loving thing you can ever do. I wanted to do it for mum and dad and I would do it again. ”

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