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# Struggles And Joys: QVC Hosts Share Experiences As Their Elderly Parents' Caretakers.



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In life, we go through countless different chapters. For adults with elderly parents, this can include having to take on the role of caretaker. Anyone who has ever been in this position understands how challenging this responsibility can be, especially when you're still taking care of little ones of your own. It can feel isolating, but it's important to remember that you aren't alone.

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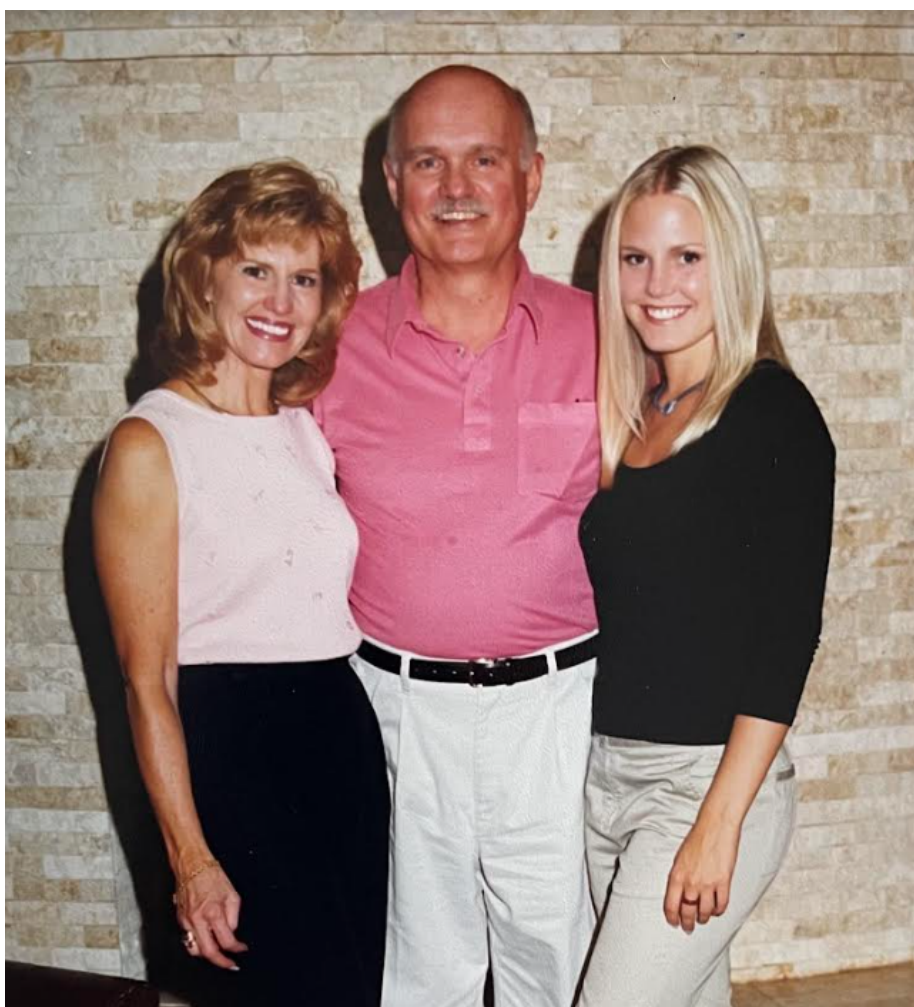
InspireMore spoke with QVC hosts Terri Conn and Shawn Killinger, who understand firsthand what it's like to have so much on your plate. Their stories serve as reminders that while this time of life is difficult and overwhelming, there is also joy.

### Terri Conn

We can never really know where our lives will take us. Before Terri Conn became a QVC host, she was an actor. For most of her career, she starred in soap operas, earning her a nomination for a Daytime Emmy. These roles allowed her to have a more typical 9-to-5 job that many actors don't get.

But when she didn't have any work and was pregnant with one of her kids, she knew she needed to make a change. At first, she turned to real estate, something her mom was able to help with because of her own experience in the industry.

Terry still auditioned for acting roles, but that changed, too, when the opportunity arose for her to work for QVC. The transition from being an actor with lines to going live in front of millions was a bit of a hurdle, but it's one that she has not only overcome but grown to love. Best of all, it's given her the opportunity to better connect and help her family.



Terri Con

As an only child, Terri has always been close with her parents. So when her dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2019, she jumped at the chance to go to Scotland with them. Her dad had traveled there once before, but this time, he wanted them to all go together.

"We had this amazing, dream vacation and now, five years later, I realized that it really was the last time that he would have been able to travel because it has gone downhill

so much since then," Terri told InspireMore.

Not long after this vacation, Terri insisted that her parents move into their Pennsylvania home. Although Mom was hesitant, in part because of the colder weather, Terri was able to win her over — and both of them couldn't be happier about that.

"Almost daily, my mom and I look at each other and we say, 'I'm so glad we did this,'" Terri said.



Terri Con

Being totally transparent, Terri shared that it's not easy to balance work, kids, parents, and everything else in her life — in fact, she says she is "still learning that I'm not actually very good at it." Still, in the year since her parents moved in, she's finding that

life is better when you have a community you can count on.

"I've really leaned on my husband, mom, and even the girls a lot," Terri said. "I guess what I've learned is how to lean on others and make it a village instead of being the ultimate multitasker because none of us are built that way."

That's why, when it comes to giving advice to others in similar situations, she emphasizes the importance of not taking on all of the work yourself.

"Get comfortable leaning on others and break up the work as evenly as you can because we all have different types of responsibilities," Terri said. "And I think, especially in this country, we view multitasking as this great virtue ... and I think we need to pull back a little bit from that because multitasking is a lie. I learned that in real estate, you can't do everything equally good at the same time — something's going to suffer, so if you don't ask for help or learn to say no, it's going to catch up to you in the end."

## **Shawn Killinger**

From anchoring the local news in Orlando to appearing on a national reality show, Shawn's parents have always been her biggest cheerleaders. So now you could say, she's trying to return the favor.

Three years ago, Shawn's dad passed away from cancer, prompting her 84-year-old mom to move in with her, her husband, and their 6-year-old daughter.



"It's really hard, Shawn Killinger says. Not only to juggle the sheer volume of demands and care needs as a Mom, wife, daughter, and now caregiver...but my relationship with my mom — it's a natural part of life — but it's sobering because these chapters bring shadows..."

Although it hasn't been easy to watch her mom's health decline, it's been a joy to see her 6-year-old bond so deeply with her Nana, whom she loves very much.

"Honestly, there's just not a lot of real joy left in my mom's life, and her life is pretty limited to our house," Shawn said. "And so my daughter is like a beaming light of joy in her life — so that's great."



Shawn Killinger

Shawn's own relationship with her mom has also grown deeper during this time.

"I think I have an even more tender heart for her, more than ever, because I see how deeply she struggles," Shawn said.

Through the ups and downs of her mom's health, something that helps Shawn is her belief that God has a bigger plan. Plus, she's grateful to not be doing this alone. In fact, Shawn's husband will often take her Mom to doctor's appointments.

While everyone's caretaking situations will be different, one piece of advice Shawn has that can be applied to anyone has to do with avoiding burnout.

"The only way I know how to get through it is to take it each day by day — to just figure that day out," Shawn shared. "Because if I look at the greater landscape of a week, two weeks, or a month, I would probably be in the fetal position in a corner."

Shawn also emphasized that taking a step back can help you view your situation in a better, more hopeful light.

"It's really important to maintain perspective," she said. "I have a family, I have an amazing daughter, and, God willing, I have a full life ahead of me. And if I can do this for my mom, and usher her into her final stages and everything, then I feel like it's a gift for us both."

No matter what chapter of life you're currently in, it's also comforting to be reminded that the struggles you face are not as uncommon as they may feel at times.

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