

## Parents Are Hard To Raise S03 E92.mp3

[00:00:00] The world is becoming a dangerous place for us women. Lipstick bodyguard looks just like an innocent little lipstick but it will instantly drop any attacker to his knees so you can get away unharmed. Lipstick bodyguard. Fear no evil. Get yours today, only at lipstickbodyguard.com

**Announcer:** [00:00:24] For years we've been told how long we live is all about our genes.

[00:00:41] This week scientists say, "yeah... not so much." This week on Parents Are Hard To Raise... Five things you can do right now to overcome your genes and live to a healthy ripe old age. Plus listener e-mail.

Parents Are Hard To Raise is now available on Spotify and it's 180 million monthly subscribers.

**Diane:** [00:01:15] Welcome to Parents Are Hard To Raise helping families grow older together without losing their minds. I'm elder care expert Diane Berardi.

[00:01:24] I got an email this week from Marta from Port Clinton, Ohio. And Marta wrote, "I am my parent's caregiver. I do everything for them. I go every day to their house and bring meals that I've made for them. I do their laundry, go food shopping for them, take them to their doctors, pick up medication from the pharmacy. I fill their medication boxes. I do their banking and they just sit there and stare at each other or the TV. I try to encourage them to do things but they say they're tired and they just want to be. They don't even want to come to my house or visit their grandchildren and great grandchildren. Even though I do all of these things for them I feel like I'm failing them in some way, because they don't want to do anything. Do you have any suggestions?"

[00:02:20] Well first of all, Marta, you're not failing them. I mean you're doing so much for them. It's tough being a caregiver because you have so many things to try to get done and try to do. You are taking really good care of them. You are the planner. You make the schedule, you stick to it. You have to, you just have so many things you have to get done.

[00:02:44] So it's funny because I ran into this with my own parents this week. What I'm going to suggest is try being spontaneous with them. Now what I mean is, you know if you're taking them to the doctor that's the perfect opportunity because you already have them. There you have them captured, there in your car. So why not after the doctor say, we're going out to dinner or we're going out to lunch, and just take them. Or you know depending on the time of day maybe they used to like to bowl or go to bingo, you know take them somewhere and just do it. And try that. It isn't going to be easy and they're going to say, no I don't want to do that. You're going to say, no let's just do it. Because they are happy with their routine. They feel comfortable in their routine. You know they know what's expected what they're going to do. But we could try to break them of that and try to be spontaneous. And that'll help them as well as you. A lot of our stress and anxiety as caregivers comes from worrying about, What happens if things don't go as planned? You know what we try to plan everything, we try to plan for everything and there's things that are beyond our control. But that's what we do. And so here you know we're not being crazy, we're not being impulsive, we're just going to say, let's go to lunch or take them to your house. Say hey, you know what... You know maybe your children are gonna be there and your grandchildren say oh they've already prepared dinner for us. So we want to try to embrace that spontaneity.

[00:04:29] Why do we always have to have a reason to do something, or to go somewhere? I think we as caregivers we are programmed to nurture the expected, because we know what's going to happen. We know what the outcome is going to be. And our parents feel that way too. Our elderly parents it's tough because they're safe in that routine, in their environment and they don't want to do

something that's different. You know, especially if they get used to just being by themselves and just not going anywhere and not doing anything different and they just stay home and they just do the same things every day.

[00:05:11] What's good about unfamiliar situations is, we see what we're capable of. We see how we can handle a new experience and that's good for all of us.

[00:05:23] In the past we thought you know our brains were static. By the time we became an adult we thought you know they were physically developed as much as they could be that our personalities were shaped by our childhood experiences and our levels of intelligence was basically set. But we were wrong.

[00:05:42] We found out that our brains are very pliable. They are dynamic so they can be shaped and enriched by new experiences right into old age. And if we don't keep them supplied with new experiences we can actually harm them. So every time we have a new experience our brains grow new neurons and form new pathways of communication helping to fight against age-related neural loss.

[00:06:08] So our brains are wired to become alert to anything new. That was an evolutionary survival mechanism that developed when we had to look out for predators. So having a new thought or experience it stimulates growth in our nerve cells. It expands our brain volume and that combats brain shrinkage, hallmark to degenerative conditions that we've talked about.

[00:06:34] So we have to keep ourselves as well as our parents... You know we have to remain mentally active. We have to have to take up new things and build up our brain structure and function. And it doesn't mean only maybe doing new things. We can maybe do something in a different way. It's not like we have to go somewhere different but maybe we have to just see things differently. So how do we do that?

[00:07:01] I know my mom... I've been taking her to chemo and my husband and I've been doing that. And so we have this schedule. You know we have to we go to chemo, she goes to the lab, she goes through all these things and then we go home. And then maybe they need shopping or maybe they need something done.

[00:07:18] And so my brother was here for a week. And my mom said to me guess what. You know we went out. She there's this Mexican restaurant that she likes. And so after chemo my brother took her to this Mexican restaurant. And I'm like, Oh wow. But you wanted to go?

[00:07:37] Because I'm thinking she just wants to go home. And that's what she's been saying. But it never dawned on me, Hey let's take her... You know let's go out to lunch. Let's do something different. Let's get her out of just sitting. And it's like my mom and dad and they both just sit there you know and they do. They look at each other. It was a great idea to do that. And so we have to try to be more spontaneous. Try to embrace it.

[00:08:07] And you know what. I know it's hard, because I'm not the type of person who has this sense of adventure. And for people like me you know it can be nerve wracking to try to break habit with convention.

[00:08:20] So what we have to try to do is maybe not be so afraid to try something new or to have our parents do something new, or to take them somewhere new, or to do something different with them. But maybe if we try to say, well maybe we should fear stagnation for them and for us.

[00:08:41] So we have to be more curious and think different things so I know you were in that routine. You know you're doing so many things. But when you have them in the car try to think of something different to do. And it doesn't have to be every week and you don't have to do it all the time, but it's something that may help and they may now say, Jeeze, what are we going to do today? You know we're going into the doctor what are we going to do?

[00:09:06] And we have a lot of time. We don't realize how much time we spend doing other things, maybe watching television or looking at our cell phones. I think it's like the average person spends one hundred and hours a week looking at their cell phone, and I'm like oh my gosh, you know looking at social media. So you have a lot of time to maybe think of something new to do, to do something.

[00:09:30] And we can't wait for the perfect time, because there's never going to be a perfect time to do something spontaneous. You know we you all have had friends who were spontaneous, they just decide to go away for a week and I can never do that. But my husband loves to do that.

[00:09:47] I planned a weekend one time, when I was just like OK, I did everything, packed everything, we were ready to go. I'm like OK we're going away. He was so excited. Me? I would've been freaking out. You know, what do you mean we're going away? I got to do this. I got to do that. Do I have what I need? So...

[00:10:06] I never try new things on the menu, that's spontaneous. I go to you know it depends where I go I or the same things. So you know there's little ways to be spontaneous and to try different things and people who are, you know they're full of life and they appear to be happier. Maybe it's because they have... If you try something new on the menu maybe you don't have an expectation of what it's going to be or Hey I'm trying it new. What does it matter?

[00:10:36] So Marta, I hope that helps you. And you know that's for all of us as caregivers to try that and to see how we can enrich not only our parents lives but our own. And you know when you're more spontaneous and you know taking them out to lunch they may say, no we don't want to do that, I don't want to do that. But once they're there and you guys start enjoying yourselves and talking and laughing and having a good time you appreciate each other. And you learn things about each other that you may not ever know.

[00:11:12] I'm spending a lot more time with my parents now and I hear stories that have never heard before. There's people that I don't even know you know that existed. So it's a great time to be together. And you're doing a great job Marta. And you know what. We need the schedules, we do. And we need organization and being spontaneous doesn't mean that your impulsive or you're suddenly going to let everything go. It just means doing little, things doing new things and trying to just change things up and giving them new experiences, as well as yourself.

[00:11:49] And I'll be back to talk to you about what we learned about aging well last year. But first I want to tell you something. If you're a woman or there's a woman in your life there's something you absolutely need to know.

[00:12:04] I want to tell you about my friend Katie. Katie is a nurse and she was attacked on her way home from work. She was totally taken by surprise. And although Katie is only 5 feet tall and 106 pounds she was easily able to drop her 6 foot 4, 250-pound attacker to his knees and get away unharmed.

Katie wasn't just lucky that day. She was prepared.

In her pocketbook, a harmless looking lipstick, which really contained a powerful man stopping aerosol propellant.

It's not like it was in our grandmother's day. Today just going to and from work or to the mall can have tragic consequences. The FBI says a violent crime is committed every 15 seconds in the United States. And a forcible rape happens every five minutes. And chances are when something happens, no one will be around to help.

It looks just like a lipstick. So no one will suspect a thing. Which is important since experts say, getting the jump on your attacker is all about the element of surprise.

Inside this innocent looking lipstick is the same powerful stuff used by police and the military to disarm even the most powerful, armed aggressor. In fact, National Park rangers used the very same formula that's inside this little lipstick to stop two-thousand pound vicious grizzly bears dead in their tracks. It's like carrying a personal bodyguard with you in your purse or your pocket.

Darkness brings danger. Murderers and rapists use darkness to their advantage. We all know what it's like to be walking at night and hear footsteps coming at us from behind. Who's there? If it's somebody bad, will you be protected? Your life may depend on it.

My friend Katie's close call needs to be a wake up call for all of us. Myself included. Pick up a Lipstick Bodyguard and keep it with you always.

**Announcer:** [00:14:03] You're listening to Parents Are Hard To Raise... Now thanks to you, the number one eldercare talk show on planet Earth. Listen to this and other episodes on demand using the iHeart Radio app. iPhone users can listen on Apple podcasts and Android users on Google podcast.

**Diane:** [00:14:25] And remember there's so many ways to listen to our show. Subscribe on iHeart Radio, Roku Spotify. You can listen on your smartphone with Apple podcasts, Google podcasts. You can get us an Apple TV, Direct TV. You can even just ask Alexa to play the show for you. And please if you're listening to the show on one of these new ways, please do me a favor and help someone else learn about the show. Show them how to listen. And if you like the show please give us a five star rating.

[00:14:55] So what do we learn about aging well from Science last year. Well, we all an age well. A study published in Genetics, looked at data on 400 million people and concluded that genes don't influence longevity as much as we previously thought.

[00:15:15] The research used a massive set of Ancestry.com data to estimate that genes account for no more than 7 percent of how long one will live. The rest is a combination of lifestyle and environment, our diet, exercise, sleep and our attitude. They all greatly impact not only how long but how we will live in our later years.

[00:15:39] So here are the five things we learned last year from science about aging well.

[00:15:44] Number one. Take up ballroom dancing. And we talked about that a while ago. Learn something completely new. Of course ballroom dancing is at the top at the top of the list because it's a social activity. It provides exercise that doesn't really feel like exercise and it forces your brain to memorize new moves and make connections that aren't already in place.

[00:16:09] So you have to learn something new. You can learn a new language. That also

strengthens the brain and helps keep it healthy. What matters is doing new things or doing them differently. These things can be simple or complex. You can even get benefit from holding your fork or spoon in the hand that you don't usually eat with. I'm going to try that. It's going to be a mess but I'm going to try it.

[00:16:34] OK. Number two. Get more protein.

[00:16:37] A study from the American Geriatrics Society found that those who get enough protein had better muscle mass, so they were more likely to be active and less likely to have life limiting disabilities.

[00:16:49] Get help if you experience trauma or depression, because both those factors accelerate aging.

[00:16:57] Four: Build physical strength.

[00:17:00] It's never too late to get moving. We all keep saying that. Exercise that includes aerobics, strength training and work on balance and flexibility. Staying strong or getting strong is crucial to healthy aging. So physical fitness is also associated with better cognition. Healthy body is more likely to include a healthy brain.

[00:17:23] And, number five. Build and maintain a social network.

[00:17:27] Being connected to other people is absolutely very good for aging well. Having social connections, that's one of the social determinants of health which is a fairly new term in health care.

[00:17:42] The World Health Organization defines those social determinants as, "conditions that we are born in, grow in, live in, work and age in.

[00:17:51] So research has suggested that medical care accounts for only 10 to 20 percent of health outcomes while the other 80 to 90 percent are attributed to environment, socioeconomic factors, individual behaviors, which are altogether known as social determinants of health. And having social connections, that's one of the most important things we always talk about.

[00:18:18] Where we live. What you eat. You exercise, you move. And you have a support system. They all have a tremendous impact on your health.

[00:18:29] There's a study that is suggesting there's a new way to curb harmful medical errors. Talk more to patients and their families.

[00:18:40] We've been saying that... Families are very valuable, a very valuable part of care. But a lot of times, families are under recognized; families aren't included. So this study focused on Rounds... Intervention on Rounds.

[00:19:00] You know, so where are the doctors... The patients lying in bed and the doctors and you usually see on TV the medical students are standing around and they're talking about the patient's condition.

[00:19:11] So these medical rounds now are including the patient, the family and more nurses as well as well as interns residents and physicians. And they're talking about the patient's condition and the plan of care, and they're asking the patient and the family do you have any questions or concerns. And the doctors and other health care providers are supposed to be giving updates, go

over the treatment plan, and they're supposed to minimize medical jargon so that families and patients understand. And then they are asking for feedback from patients and families, which a lot of times they don't do. You know... Do you understand the care plan? Do you understand the medications? So a lot of times they're busy, these professionals, and they say... They just assume they tell you something and they assume you understand, they assume the patient understands, they assume the family understands.

[00:20:07] So in this particular study, they wanted to see if the having the family in on the rounds if that might make a difference. So the overall rate of medical errors-- both harmful and non harmful errors-- really didn't change. But the rate of harmful errors fell by 38 percent in the three months after the intervention was implemented. And what those harmful medical errors are, are... they could be incorrect drug doses, losing patients samples from tests, delays and consultations with specialists.

[00:20:48] So families, because you know families are included they're more likely to share their concerns. And they had nurses who were more engaged in rounds so that everybody felt like they were part of the care team. So this is a big jump for physicians because it is a big cultural change in the medical field to say you know that rounds are not just for physicians but it's about the patient and the family.

[00:21:13] I always say it is about the patient and the family and I think that's really interesting. Is it going to take a lot more time? Probably. Especially if you have my family around. But you know, hey, it's worth it. Everybody's on the same page. Everybody understands.

[00:21:33] And now engineers at the University of Wisconsin, Madison... They created a new kind of protective bandage that sends a mild electrical stimulation which dramatically is reducing the time a rat's wounds take to heal. So the technology could be especially useful for people who suffer from chronic wounds such as diabetic foot ulcers, venous ulcers, non healing surgical wounds. Those kind of wounds, a lot of times don't respond well to general bandaging procedures.

[00:22:09] So this new electrical bandage... It's powered by this small electronic chip that uses the mechanical movements of the body to generate electricity. So what they're finding is these eBandages heal wounds within three days in rats compared to 12 days with a normal control bandage.

[00:22:31] So now, moving forward researchers are going to be studying these new electrical bandages on pigskin which closely resembles human tissue.

[00:22:45] I want to thank you all for your well wishes that you keep sending to my mom. I read them to her and it just cheers her up so much it really means a lot to all of us. She loves getting them.

[00:23:00] She's like, "Do I have any fan mail today?" I mean, she really, really enjoys it and I can't thank you enough.

[00:23:08] I hope you got something out of this episode. I love getting your e-mails and questions so please keep sending them in. Thank you Marta for sending that e-mail in to me. You can reach me at [Diane@ParentsAreHardToRaise.org](mailto:Diane@ParentsAreHardToRaise.org). Or just click the green button on our home page.

[00:23:23] Parents Are Hard To Raise is a CounterThink Media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music, New York, New York. Our New York producer is Joshua Green. Our broadcast engineer is Well Gambino. And from our London studios, the melodic voice

of our announcer, Miss Dolly D. Thank you so much for listening. Till next time, May you forget everything you don't want to remember, and remember everything you don't want to forget.

[00:23:49] See you again next week.