

## Parents Are Hard To Raise Episode 138 Show Transcript

Alexa 0:00

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Announcer 0:37

This week on Parents Are Hard To Raise psychologist Dr. Lina Aldana helps us pick up the pieces and begin moving forward again. Join 180 million monthly subscribers who can now listen to Parents Are Hard To Raise on Spotify.

Diane Berardi 1:05

Welcome to Parents Are Hard To Raise, helping families grow older together without losing their minds. I'm elder care expert Diane Berardi.

There's one thing I've come to learn about hosting a national radio show, your life plays out in the open for all to see. For people like me who are naturally shy, that can be a bit uncomfortable. But the benefits of having an extended family in 169 countries to help you over life's rough spots... That's something I'm so grateful for every day. Thank you all so much for your support.

The last time our guest expert was here with us, it was just after my mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. As longtime listeners know, my mom passed away this past September, and the outpouring of love and support I got from listeners around the world overwhelmed me. I'm so fortunate to have you guys as my extended family.

I know that there are so many of you who are going through what my family is going through now. My mom and I were very close. We spoke every day, sometimes even more than that. Her passing has left a pretty big hole in my life. As is the case with just about every family caregiver I've ever known. There's no right or wrong way to feel when someone you love dies. Most people just go numb inside, and then day by day they move through the stages of grieving and return to daily life. But for caregivers, it's different. They often grieve twice.

It's common for caregivers to go through what's called anticipatory grief. Unlike the grief and mourning that happens after someone has passed, this anticipatory grief begins even before the person has died. When someone we care for has a terminal disease, an injury or condition that permanently changes their personality, like Alzheimer's disease, the grief caregivers feel may come even before their loved one is gone.

Caregivers often suffer anxiety, dread or sadness as they wait for their loved one to pass. Many also feel a sense of guilt, anger, bitterness, even resentment, as we're forced to come to terms with the fact that we can't change the outcome. Grief is a natural, universal emotion. It's part of what makes us human. Because grief is intense and uncomfortable, we often try to find ways to avoid the immensity of the emotion through distraction and busyness. And getting back to life as usual, is often a good way to heal the pain of loss.

But for caregivers, the sense of loss is so profound caregiving was part of normal life. Now the abrupt change in roles is confounding and many caregivers feel as if they've lost their identity. Often caregivers were forced to make changes in their own lives, changing where to live, the added financial concerns, altering of relationships. Now all that is changed, leaving them confronted with the fear of not knowing what lies ahead. Maybe that's why caregiver grief lasts such a long time. Recent research has shown caregiver grieving can last a year or more. And it's why I've asked our resident psychologist, Dr. Lena Aldana to help walk us through one of life's toughest times. Dr. Rodin is a licensed psychologist and clinical director at Pirelli clinical and forensic psychology, and is our go to expert for issues like these. Lina, welcome back to Parents Are Hard To Raise.

Dr Lina Aldana 4:49

Thank you for having me. I really appreciate that. And, and I'm very sorry to hear about your mom. I spoke to you a little while ago and I neglected to ask you, so I'm sorry.

Diane Berardi 5:01

Oh no, that's okay. You know, I, as many caregivers, I did go through that anticipatory grief, you know, dreading what was going to happen and then trying my best to try to figure out how to avoid it happening, and now that it has happened, you know people will say, Well, how are you? And I can't say. I can't put my finger on how I am. You know, your emotions are up and down. They're all over the place. Is that normal?

Dr Lina Aldana 5:39

Yes. And and it's that time of year on top of everything else. Yeah. Last year. She was getting sick and this is the holidays. So you have all these anniversaries happening. So absolutely normal to not know how you feel or to feel a bunch of different feelings. It's part of the process. When you lose a loved one, it's very hard to come to terms with that, even if you knew it was coming.

Diane Berardi 6:04

Yeah, it's... and you know, you were prepared. I mean, in the fact that you knew, you know, it was coming, but there isn't anything that prepares you, Really.

Dr Lina Aldana 6:17

Absolutely. And it's a loss. And it leaves a gap. And then you have to deal with that. So it's a reality that we all confront at some point, but we're never really ready for, even if we know this is what's going to happen. And this is what I'm going to do next and is going to handle it. Your emotions are your emotions and they're tied to that person, to tie to your memories to your environment. There's so many things that are going to affect the way you feel when you are losing a loved one and when you do lose a loved one.

Diane Berardi 6:51

Yeah, and I think part of me now... You know, my brother and sister are not in the same state, so... And I said to my dad, and you know, of course now my caregiving continues, because I have my dad and so I kind of didn't have a break. And, you know, I had said to him, you know, it's a little... Not that my brother and sister didn't lose their mom, but they, they've weren't through that day to day stuff, you know, or as close to the situation. And part of me gets mad at them and I'm saying

Why Am I mad at them, but I am there, I guess cuz they can... I mean, they have to feel the grief. Right? But they're going on with their lives.

Dr Lina Aldana 7:44

Yeah. And it's different and it's different for them is and you know, even if you live nearby, or everybody's gonna have a different experience. You know, how when you talk to your siblings, and they remember things, the same event differently. Because you take in the moment differently? Your relationships with the people that you love, with your parents, with your children, they're also going to be different even if you're in the same unit. And now with you and your mom and your sibs, you know, they were or they are away, so it's even more different. And in many ways, they were protected from the more difficult things because you were carrying that weight. So yes, of course, you can feel upset about that. You're entitled.

Diane Berardi 8:27

I know. And then I feel guilty, cuz I'm like, why do I...

Dr Lina Aldana 8:30

Yeah! That too. [laughing] that does come along with that.

Diane Berardi 8:35

And then I think they kind of... And I don't know if I read into it. And I'm like, I think they feel guilty because then they kind of... I'm not the type I really, you know, I kind of keep things in and I'm not the type to complain. But then I get to a certain point where... and it's so hard with my dad because he's, he's lost, you know. But he wants to remain in the home and, you know, he doesn't see, you know, he has very bad... he's legally blind. So and he's very bad rheumatoid arthritis and he, the poor guy can't walk, you know, he just walks very slow. And he but he wants to be by himself, you know, take care of himself.

Dr Lina Aldana 9:22

Independent.

Diane Berardi 9:22

Yeah. And you know, and I'm like, Ahhh!

Dr Lina Aldana 9:30

But you're not sharing and it's funny, you said that I was going to ask you, you know, sometimes we feel all those feelings and have all these thoughts that can sometimes be resentful, and that's where the anger is in the guilt and it'll get it gets bunched in together. But if we're not talking about it, it's a hard topic to talk about, you know, it's hard to say to your sibling, hey, I wish you were here. You know, I'm like, really carry this and I need assistance. But sometimes it's harder... it's easier I mean, for things to go unsaid, but that it creates this atmosphere that at some point, you know, will have to be confronted because it doesn't go away.

Diane Berardi 10:12

Yeah, and then I think if I do say anything, I kind of say, Oh gosh, you know, my dad he, for some reason he'll... and my dad says, I'll say dad you have you know, you we wanted to him to come live

with me or live with one of my siblings. "No, no, I can do my..." You know, we said well, what about the laundry? What about washing dishes? You know, clothes and... "I can do it. I can do it." And he says he can but he doesn't. [laughing]

So, there's the thing.

And if we say, "But you're not doing it."

"Well, I can." You know He's of sound mind. I mean, you know, I mean, he's a little forgetful, but so I can't, you know, it's a tough situation and I find and I think especially now because I guess the holidays and everybody's busy and I find if I say things to my brother and sister like I get there and there's a sink full of dishes like every fork and knife is in the sink you know. And he'll say to me, "I meant to do those dishes. But I guess I didn't."

You know, and if I say that to my brother and sister, they're like, they I think they feel I sense they might feel guilty and so they kind of... "Well, what can I do?" That type of thing. "He's gonna have to, we're gonna have he's gonna have to get someone to live with him. You know what I mean?"

Dr Lina Aldana 11:47

So it's like, let's fix it. Somebody has to fix it.

Diane Berardi 11:51

Yeah. So I don't know. How do we go on from here, this grieving? Is this all part of grieving?

Dr Lina Aldana 12:00

You know, grieving is such a complicated process and everybody goes through it. And you know, there are many similarities, but there are also a lot of differences because everybody is different. And there are many experiences, but there are the stages, right, the regular stages that most people go through, which is, you know, initially you're denying once you know, when you first hear about it, or when you know, it's going to happen. There's the anger, the bargaining, the depression, and eventually the acceptance. Right? And there's so much turmoil that goes with all of that.

But, um, any last lot, it doesn't, it can be prolonged, and I think with grief, grief and bereavement. The issue really is where the question really is. How well can you function with it? How long is it lasting? And is it interfering with your ability to manage your day to day.

Diane Berardi 12:58

Huh, yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 12:59

So you know, yes, it is stressful. Yes, it is very sad. It can be very depressing. You can find yourself feeling truly angry one moment because you thought of something and then a little while later you're crying because you remember something else. And that's normal. But then how long is that period? And then is this interfering with your ability to focus, with your ability to think with your ability to do your job, with your sleep, with your ability to take care of yourself, you know, how, where is it happening in your life? And you know, initially it may interfere with some things

because it is very shocking, even when you know, it's coming. But when a long time has passed, and it's not quite away. Yeah. And it's, it's getting in the way of things is getting in the way of self care, getting in the way of eating you're disheveled and your mood is low and then is turning into something else, right and then we're looking at is it becoming depression, or is it a depression already? You know that... So those are the things Things that sort of need to be teased out. For you it's been very recent.

Diane Berardi 14:06

Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 14:06

You knew it was coming. But it's also been very recent. So you, and I think you have a lot of support. So it's, it's all okay. If anything, I would say, you know, and with your dad is the question for him would be, Was he able to do the dishes before? Was he able to take better care of himself in the home before? Or no. You know, is that behavior normal? Or is it abnormal at this point? So those are the things to look out for.

Diane Berardi 14:37

Yeah.

Yeah. And, you know, you know, and it's so hard because my mom did everything. And, you know, you don't realize it because, you know, they they were the two of them and they were going on now when she couldn't do anything when she got sick, and then she couldn't do anything. He was doing stuff. And, but she would prompt him to do things, you know. So he was still doing them. But now I think he kind of, if he doesn't have to go anywhere, you know if he doesn't have a doctor's appointment or anything, he doesn't get dressed. You know, he just kind of sits and he'll say, "Oh, I didn't get to that, or Oh, yeah, I didn't get to. I have all this paperwork to do." And he'll have, you know, a lot of it's junk mail, but he has his paperwork. [laughing] But he kind of just yeah, and sometimes, you know, I'm there and I'm, I'm like, I have to I say, "Dad, next time I come... because I, he, he does... Initially he didn't want to go to the store with me. He would just say you go, you know, I'd help them with a list, but now he wants to go to get out, which is a good, good, yes. But then he'll say Oh, it's Because he doesn't walk well, you know, he'll say, "oh, it was too much for me." Like it takes him a long time. You know, for me maybe shopping for him would take an hour, it takes maybe three with him. [laughing]

Dr Lina Aldana 16:13

Because he can't ambulate

Diane Berardi 16:13

Yeah, he can't and he holds on... you know, I have a carriage. I say hold on to the carriage because he doesn't want to use a cane. You know, it's like, "I don't need a cane." And but then I spend more time apologizing. He's banging into everybody. [laughing] But, uh, yeah, so... and then I try to always be cheerful for him. So and then I get mad because I'm like, "I can't even be sad." [laughing]

Dr Lina Aldana 16:17

You know, it's funny because we try to protect the people that we love. And here's the other part of the topic, the loneliness piece. I think that sometimes if I ourselves lonely or, or socially isolated. Because it especially when you're the caregiver because it feels like other people don't get it. They haven't done this, you know, kind of like with your siblings, they don't understand or they haven't been here and I'm carrying this burden. But the other part of it is because you also want to protect people, right?

Diane Berardi 16:54

Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 17:21

Um, you don't want to say something that will upset them further because you know, you're upset. So you want to be you try to be mindful of that. But to be frank, sometimes if you kind of validate or acknowledge the experience, it can be so free for both you and the other person. Because I'm sure your dad is feeling lost.

Diane Berardi 17:48

Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 17:48

And lonely and scared. He's just lost his partner. That's not easy. You just lost your mom. That is not easy. And sometimes things go unsaid because We're afraid to say it out loud. Now it's real. Right? But, but sometimes we need each other. And, and, and it's hard to reach out. It's scary. I don't know why we're humans are funny sometimes. But, but we need it. And he might not engage. He may say, "No, no, I'm okay." You know, I'm the tough guy. But, you know, a good embrace, "Dad, I know you're strong. But guess what, I miss her." You know, that might just be enough. Yeah, they don't acknowledge it. Because it's hard.

Diane Berardi 18:37

You know, she was on hospice for a very short time. And the chaplain, you know, I had the chaplain call him because I thought maybe he would open up, you know, to, you know, it's a man and, you know, he might feel more comfortable than opening up to me, you know, or because I think he feels he might have to be strong for me. You know, so but he said, "Oh no, I don't need that." You know, because and I understand the chaplain had a call and say Is it okay if I come? You know, I guess we can't just show up, Cuz I'm like, "Just show up." [laughing] I'm like it's... Don't call him because he's gonna say no, just show up. But they can't do that you know? And he said, First he said, "Oh, I told him I'm fine." And I don't know my father was telling him all kinds of stories and then he said to me, "How do I know it was the really the chaplain?" [laughing]

It's just crazy. But we're going to continue talking with Dr. Lina Aldana. But first, if you're a woman, or there's a woman in your life, there's something you absolutely need to know.

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 21:58

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Alexa 22:25

Getting the latest episode of Parents Are Hard To Raise. Here it is from iHeart Radio.

Announcer 22:30

It's as simple as that.

Diane Berardi 22:32

You're right Dolly. There's so many really cool new ways to listen to our show. It's hard to keep track. You can join the 180 million listeners on Spotify. You can listen in your car at the gym, or pretty much anywhere on your smartphone with Apple podcasts and Google podcasts. You can get us on Apple TV, direct tv, Roku. And like Dolly said, you can even ask Alexa to play the show for you. It's great because you don't have to be tied to a radio anymore. You can listen when you want where you want for as long as you want. And if you're listening to the show one of these new ways,

please do me a big favor, share this new technology and help someone else learn about the show and show them a new way to listen.

So Lina... you were talking about loneliness. What do we do? How do we... you find that you don't want to be around other people, but then you should. Right? [Laughing]

Dr Lina Aldana 23:37

Yeah. [laughing]

Or I mean, you don't. You obviously you need time alone. You need space. You need to be able to think and you know, remember, and we need privacy for that. But if you find yourself isolating, avoiding people, alone most of the time and feeling pretty down or miserable. And, and not seeking help not talking about your feelings or your thoughts. That may be a time when the light bulb should go off and say okay, maybe I need to talk to somebody, maybe a friend or talk to my husband or call my daughter, whoever, just to say, "Hey, I was just thinking about this or remember when..." and sort of start that conversation. Because it's hard, it can be a very lonely road, and you can get stuck in your thoughts. And then it creates it can create a lot of negativity, a lot of sadness. And, and you don't know all the details. And I'm kind of putting you on the spot again, but you mentioned your siblings, and you said, I think they may feel this way or I think this may be going on and they probably feel the same way or they probably think the same way but you're not sure, because you're not talking about it. You're just guessing, you're you're making assumptions. And and you're feeling left out.

Diane Berardi 25:09

Oh, yeah. And I get I kind of, you know, I'm like geeze they can kind of keep going on with their lives. But I'm not. You know, I mean I am but I still have my dad. You know, it's like it's a you know in they're home and it's different. You know and then I say, "Well they're not here so how could you get mad at them?" but you.

Dr Lina Aldana 25:40

Of course you can and here's the other reality, and I think sometimes we don't also want to talk about this. We also get mad at the person who passed away, because they left. Because maybe you know when it sudden, it's sudden or when it's something like an illness that is prolonged, it's different, but when you feel like, "Well, you didn't take care of herself well enough. Now I'm alone." Now, and you can become angry at them. And that's also normal.

Diane Berardi 26:12

Yeah, yeah. I think my dad, I, you know, I think, you know, my dad kept saying he, because my mom had pancreatic cancer and she couldn't eat, you know, she, she just couldn't and he kept. My dad kept saying if she would only eat, you know, and he kept and then he kept saying they starved her. You know, she was on hospice, but she couldn't eat, you know, and there was a point she couldn't swallow. And he kept saying, we have to feed her. And he could because

Dr Lina Aldana 26:43

That would solve everything. That would be so much simpler. Right? That's the wish.

Diane Berardi 26:47

Yes. And I, you know, I told him, you know, Dad this is part of this is the body the body knows, you know, it's not hungry. It's can't eat. I said, She can't choke. You know, we can't. As I said, she's not hungry. "Well, we can try soup." [laughing]

Yeah, so it's I don't know it. Yeah, It's so tough for people and I find that I have no and I'm usually a very easygoing, calm kind of person. And I usually I'm the middle child, so I usually try to have everything run smoothly. And, and, but I noticed even I'm very I have no patience for anyone for anything or anyone and then I'm saying, that's not like me.

Dr Lina Aldana 27:46

But there's reasons to be irritable.

You're going through a huge change, right? loss is a huge change. It's a big adjustment. There's an empty space that you're dealing with.

Diane Berardi 27:59

Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 27:59

Not easy.

Diane Berardi 28:01

No. And the holidays, it makes it tough. Yeah,

Dr Lina Aldana 28:04

Absolutely. It's, you it is never a good time. But it's this time of year is just going to bring up a lot of this stuff.

Diane Berardi 28:13

It does. Yeah. And it makes it hard to, you know, there, there's that empty chair, you know, and, and it's no fun. Yeah. It's my mother. And you know, you don't realize, I guess because, you know, you're you're living your life and, you know, you're with your mother and father, but we did. I didn't realize how much my mother really I guess she equal, you know, equalized my dad. I don't know how to, you know, humanized him more. I don't know how to say that. You know what I mean? [laughing]

Dr Lina Aldana 28:52

Yeah... [laughing]

Diane Berardi 28:56

I guess, I mean, when I look at him now, you know, I'll say Dad You know, we go to the store, say, dad, well, what do you feel like eating this week? "I don't know." And I, and then I think and I'm like, you know, my mom, she went shopping, she cooked, she made whatever, she put it in front of him, he ate it.. He didn't have to make any decisions. And now he kind of, you know, and then, you know, and everyone says to me, well, you have to make the decisions for him. Well, you know, it's

just, it's hard. Yeah, I guess it's hard for people to because if you have another, you know, first of all, you're dealing with the loss of one parent. And then if you have another one, and then you kind of feel like you don't have the time yourself to...

Dr Lina Aldana 29:45

To feel. To think about it. Yeah, to get through it. Because you're so busy still taking care of someone else. And yeah. And so this is this is when finding People who, you know your own time and people who or one person who you can talk to, and express those feelings that will be important. This is why support groups exist for grief. Here in where I live, where I have "Good Grief," which is for families, and especially is geared towards them, especially children whose parents or ones, but it also provides a lot of support for the families, like a big, big thing, I think in Morristown, I think is based out of there. But um, but it's very good. Because it has programs, it has the group component, it has all sorts of things where you can socialize with people who've been there.

And it's helpful. and it's not easy, right? Then you meet someone or you hear a story and you're like, Oh, I can relate to that.

Diane Berardi 30:54

Yeah. How would you have any ideas on getting like, for instance, My dad, I think maybe he would benefit from that. But how do I how do you get him to agree to that? Or? [laughing]

Dr Lina Aldana 31:11

[lasughing] That is tricky. Because even if you take him and say, hey, let's go sit down for a chat together like as a family because you know, you there are support groups like that where you can go with another family member. And maybe that he doesn't join. May be the he just kind of sits and listens, or he refuses.

But sometimes you don't have to actively participate to get something out of it.

Diane Berardi 31:35

Right. He could just listen.

Dr Lina Aldana 31:37

But if he refuses to listen, or walks out, and that's that.

Diane Berardi 31:42

Yeah. You know, I don't know, maybe if I said, Yeah, I'll go with you. You know, maybe we could go together. I don't know. I could, because he can't. He can't drive himself. So... yeah.

I would have to take a more Yeah, so I guess I guess we each have to, you know, it's kind of an individual thing. We each have to figure out what would help you know, what would help me, you know, who can I talk to or find a solution that, you know, if I'm, if I was down before something that may be helped me?

Dr Lina Aldana 32:27

Yes. And I guess, you know, grief is normal. Right? Not pathologize degrees, not yet, right? Because it's still very fresh. It becomes, quote, pathological and problematic, right? And then we're looking, like I said before is to depression, when time has passed, and it hasn't gotten better or it's getting worse. And it's not interfering with your ability to function in several areas of your life. Right?

Diane Berardi 32:57  
Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 32:57  
It's not become something else. You're not getting over it. But all the things that you're talking about their normal, and they do get better over time and the fact that you are mindful and aware, it's a very good thing. Because you are paying attention and you're noticing the differences, and you're being thoughtful. And as time passes you and you often just conversational, so I think you'll maybe think about what can I do differently? Is there something that I used to enjoy, maybe I can go back and do that.

You know, remember we're entering the winter so it's going to be darker. It's Bleaker. It's already depressing right? So that doesn't help. Right The holidays are coming. It's going your first set of holidays without her, right? So you know, there's going to be things that are going to activate all those feelings that are the feel so bad, but they are normal. And next year even if you are feeling better next year, you're gonna have your first anniversary of this so then you're gonna sort of, you know, have a wave of that.

But as time passes, you are going to continue to have anniversaries, but it won't feel as bad because now you know that she's not going to be sitting in that chair. You can remember her but now it's not so painful. It's not so fresh. Right? Time does heal. But when it doesn't when three years have passed and you are feeling just as badly as day one, then that's something else.

Diane Berardi 34:22  
Okay, yeah.

Lina How can people reach you?

Dr Lina Aldana 34:29  
Reach me directly?

Diane Berardi 34:30  
Yeah.

Dr Lina Aldana 34:31  
I guess the best way would be our website. Let's see if I remember it. [laughing] correctly. And not give it all wrong.

I believe [www.gpirelli.com](http://www.gpirelli.com).

Diane Berardi 34:52

That's fine. And we will have that on our website, as well. So we'll have that.

Thank you. So much Lina. Thank you.

Parents Are Hard To Raise family. I love getting your emails and questions so please keep sending them You can reach me at Diana Parents Are Hard To Raise.org or just click the green button on our homepage. Parents Are Hard To Raise as a counter sync 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. And Valentine's Day is coming. LipstickBodyguards make a great gift. See you again next week.