

My Father

As I write this column, my father is in the final phase of his life. It is sad to see someone you love give up more and more. Sad to see that he is short of breath and drowsy, and nauseous from the drugs. And to watch as he waits for death. It's nice however, to be able to be there for him at this time.

But that is where my MPN comes into play again. The travel time to my father, door to door, almost 3 hours, with a combination of walking and trains. I can no longer drive this distance because of my concentration and that makes me feel powerless. I can't just stop by to see how he is. At 88 he is not interested in learning how to make videocalls, so we communicate by telephone. And so it's hard to determine how he's really doing. I have the feeling he sometimes keeps things to himself.

And of course, there is no way of knowing how long this last phase will last – the GP talked about weeks to months – so I want to be there as much as possible, but I also have to take my own energy balance into account. I have to maintain it. Not only for now, but also for later when the house has to be cleared out.

It's a diabolical dilemma.

The advantage of being unable to work full time is it is easier for me to organize my own time. In addition, my family can cope without me for a while. Which gives me all the space I need to be with him.

But on the other hand, caring for him also costs me quite a bit, both practically and emotionally.

Of course, everyone experiences this in their life. Parents go to heaven one day. But it's times like these that make me realize that I'm sick and that fact can frustrate me so much.

I will obviously miss him as a father, but also as someone who cares for me. The times has he taken me to the hospital for instance.

But I have fond memories which is comforting. And as long as I can, I will make new memories.

Emilie Rozendaal, July 2022