

# DENIAL: The Single Biggest Obstacle to Safety and Quality of Life for the Elderly



**Carole Seigworth**

I've given up on several of my prospects and families very recently. I "gave up" because I know that, despite working with them a long time on their need to move a parent or parents into a senior living community, they're in denial. They don't deny that senior living is the best alternative for the ones they love—but they deny the fact that their elderly parents are no longer capable of making the best decision for themselves. They deny the fact that they must now assume the role of decision-maker and the parents are the ones who lack judgment. When one parent is still capable but the other's capacity is diminished, it only adds more complications. They may lack judgment out of ignorance about how their lives could improve, because of dementia, because they think home is the last bastion for keeping their independence, because they don't realize it's time to spend the money they've been saving for a rainy day. Well, it's starting to sprinkle...and the rain is about to pour down on them like the "toad-strangler" rains we heard of as kids in Western Pennsylvania.

I have a passion for the senior living industry and for the people I interact with every day. They fascinate me—each in his or her own way. So, when I've worked with compassion and caring to help them choose the right senior living community to meet their needs, the right choice has been made clear, and the next step is to JUST DO IT, it disappoints me personally when they're paralyzed with anxiety about taking over the decision from the less-than-competent parents to make it happen. The much easier route for the kids emotionally is to not do anything—which is no solution, of course. It just maintains the status quo. Nothing improves, there's no greater safety or better quality of life for the parents, the adult kids rest no easier at night and still are filled with fright when the phone rings at an odd hour. They keep running to the parents' home to rescue them or handle the crisis—or keep building their frequent flier miles from far away places to start the problem-solving process all over again.

*Listen to Carole Seigworth, Director of Marketing at The Forum at Deer Creek, with Anita Finley on Saturday, August 21 from 7:30-8:00AM on WSBR 740AM and on the web at [www.wsbradio.com](http://www.wsbradio.com).*

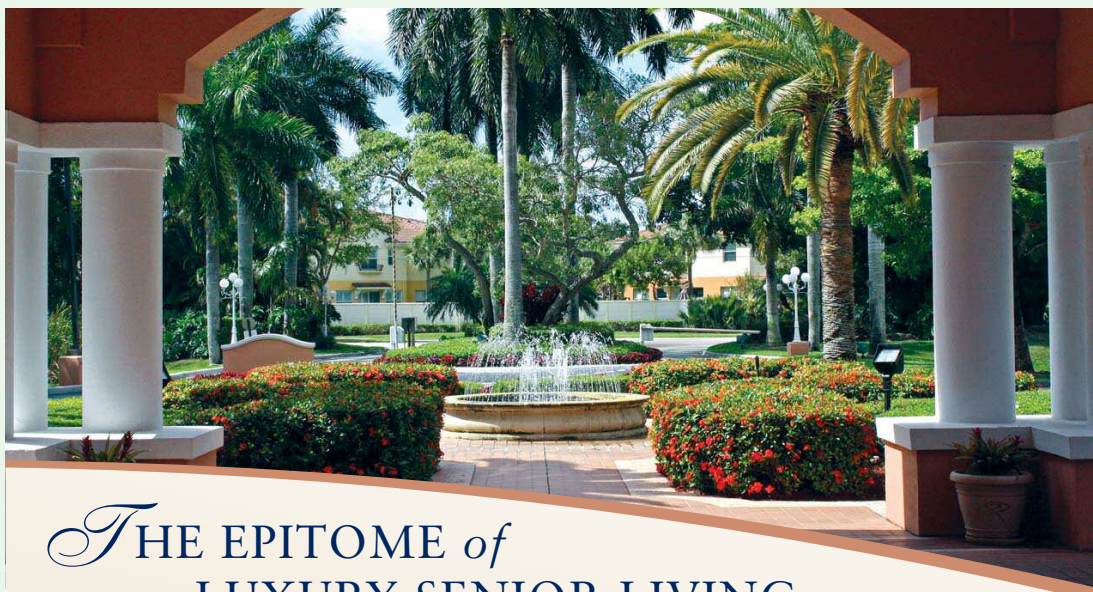
Sometimes, I can actually see their shame at not being able to act and take the direction they know they should. But I can't make them do what I know they should. I can't step over the line from being a professional resource to a peer. If I could, I'd tell them they're making a serious mistake. They're ignoring the obvious benefits and they're actually gambling with their parents' lives. The inevitable is going to happen. Their parents will keep getting older, sicker,

frailer, more demented, less well-nourished, lonelier, more isolated, more needy. The next crisis is just around the corner.

I tell them I know how it feels to be in their shoes, having a Mom who lives in independent living and who had a major health scare not that long ago. I also tell them I've never felt more secure and my Mom's never felt more secure than among her peers who have experienced first-hand the losses that come with aging and among health care professionals whom she also has come to know both as care givers and friends.

Don't abandon your new role in your family. It may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable to take over these decisions—but step up and make the necessary changes happen! If you need encouragement, advice and resources to help you through these really rough spots in the road of life, we are happy to help. Even if you waived before; you get another chance to make the right decision. Call us.

*For more information on the difference an Independent Full Service community like The Forum at Deer Creek (or another Five-Star Senior Living community near you) can make in your life, call Carole Seigworth, Director of Marketing at (954) 698-6269, Ext. 223.*



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