

Episode 50 - Solo Ageing

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, childless, ageing, families, carers, support, organisation, Age UK, Full Stop

SPEAKERS

Berenice Smith, Patricia Faulks, Sarah Lawrence, Denise Ann Jackson, Michael Hughes

Denise Ann Jackson 00:00

So, I think unfortunately, we've got to be a bit proactive here. And it's nice to think that it would all come to us but I think we've got to go out and almost build these networks and find support where it's not otherwise forthcoming

Berenice Smith 00:20

Welcome to The Full stop and our monthly podcast presented by Sarah Lawrence, Michael Hughes and me, Berenice Smith. This podcast is for you if you are a childless not by choice. We help you to craft your own story. We welcome all including those who are child free or parents so that you can learn about the challenges that face those who are not parents not by choice, and how best to support them. We can learn from each other. In this episode, we're joined by Patricia Faulks, who set up her blog, Lilley and Me in lockdowns to share the story of ageing, alone with childlessness, and the challenges that brings including how to learn the computer and how to get into zoom calls. And Denise Jackson returns to the Full Stop to talk about bias around caring and solo households. Recently, she took to Twitter to challenge UK money saving expert, Martin Lewis, to ask him to share more information about how to help solo households because it's not just families who need to save money. Patricia and Denise cover so much ground here that applies not just to childless people, but to anyone who's creating their online environment as we discuss digital exclusion. We also natter about bias and exclusion around power of attorney, the cost of living crisis, human rights and make a call for more support and more awareness. We were talking about daylight saving as you joined us Patricia and getting used to lighter evenings. I prefer darker nights but it felt like a long winter.

Denise Ann Jackson 02:18

It's nice, though, isn't it to be able to come in and just draw the curtains and put the heating on if you can afford it, obviously, candles LED or natural or whatever, and just push the world

Patricia Faulks 02:36

I think that perhaps when you're on your own as I am as well, that the dark evenings just when you get older, have quite an attraction. I don't know. It's like you sort of think, well, it's okay. Now, you know, to be on your own because I'm shutting the curtains, I'm on my own. It's great. It's alright, having dark evenings because it's, it's sort of allowing me now to to be on my own to, you know, to be okay to be on my own. Because I've shut the world out anyway. It should. What?

Denise Ann Jackson 03:14

Do you think that's changed since COVID? Did you get more used to it with the lock downs and everything? Because I finally changed my perception of being alone.

Patricia Faulks 03:22

Probably. Days Yeah. I think it had a big impact when you were on your own going through COVID Just so many words, but it felt great to begin with, and then it didn't. But yeah, we actually just, you kind of have to adjust and maybe we're still living that adjustment.

Denise Ann Jackson 03:49

I found in my instance, that I hated it, to be honest with you, because although I like my own space, and I like living on my own, I do like getting out and meeting other people and and there's a difference between withdrawing into your own space out of choice and withdrawing into your own space because somebody said you've got to, there's a world of difference. And I found that it's had a lasting impact on me I felt rather resentful about the whole thing. Well, I do understand the the logics of it, you know, keeping people apart to minimise the spread of infections or what have you understand that I just think if it ever happens again, I hope that it's handled a lot better, particularly from the point of view of people who live on their own because now I feel a bit sort of, well, I don't want to go out and do stuff that you know, perhaps I would have done in a voluntary basis before I'm like well, you know, there's plenty of couples who thought, and families, who thought that they had it bad they can go out and do that now you know, I'll have more say over what I do. You wanted to keep me imprisoned in my house. So if I want to stay in my own house and not go out and do something for the greater good then don't complained about

Patricia Faulks 05:01

No, I think that's what we discussed as probably Part B, Part of the discussion really, isn't it? A bit, you know, being without children being childless and being on your own? And ageing? You know, you do you do have this this thing, it creeps in as well. It's not till afterwards that you think what you just said, Really you think, Oh, well, you know, before I was doing stuff, and now I'm not, am I bothered? I'm not really

Denise Ann Jackson 05:33

expected, some unexpected consequences, perhaps won't become clearer. And, you know, until we're a bit further down the line as to how it's affecting people's behaviour in on a on a kind of population wide level rather than just individually. That's my theory anyway.

Patricia Faulks 05:52

I think it is becoming clear.

Michael Hughes 05:59

Before before we, before we get really into this discussion, you probably what we should know that this is good. But I thought what we've probably should do is Denise and Trish, introduce yourselves so that our listeners can get a sense of who you are. And, and then we will get back into it.

Denise Ann Jackson 06:19

Okay, you want to go first Trish because I think they know me a little bit anyway.

Patricia Faulks 06:24

Okay, well, I'm Trish forks. And I live in Lincolnshire, in the UK, which is a big, big County, but nobody's ever heard of, on the east coast. And I live with my dog Lilley. And I run a blog called just me and Lilley, which is on Twitter and social media and everything. I started that out of COVID, which we just having a brief discussion on. And that came out of COVID. I wanted to I had to do something, and I started a blog, which I've never done in my entire life. You know, I knew the basics about computer, et cetera, et cetera. And in a sense, I still only know the basics about computer, but I've learned to it. And so there's that those aren't gone along on my blog I've met. So it's been fantastic to meet so many different people. It's been amazing. I've learned the zoom, and never not zoom it. It's just wonderful. It's been marvellous, and met Michael, the other day. And Michael, very, very kindly write wrote a fantastic piece for the blog. And I don't know if he just won't believe it or what but his piece attracted more viewers than any other piece that I've ever written that tell you that. It really did you know, from the male perspective, and it was so concise. And we need more of it, though we are. But I'm childless, we couldn't have children. In those years, you weren't given any particular reason as to why it was unexplained infertility, and we were just left to get on with it really, you know, we didn't seem to have any, there didn't seem to be any supplemental support offered. And it was embarrassing, then, in those years, it was embarrassing to have to admit, particularly for the man that we were childless, and we couldn't have children. But I don't know, maybe it was you had to go. You have to launch yourself back into life and work etc. So it did get pushed to the back of, you know, any sort of narrative. And we almost forgot about it after a while. And it's since I've got older that it's really its head. And I felt I wanted to do something about it. So just me and Lily is a result.

Michael Hughes 08:43

Thanks, Trish. So, Denise, you have been on the show before but we've picked up probably new listeners since then.

Denise Ann Jackson 08:51

Yeah, it's been three years ago, it was before the pandemic I think yes, yes. And I must say, Trish, it's lovely to put a face and a voice to the name because I think I do actually follow you on on Twitter. I certainly see your updates. Brilliant work that you're doing. Yes. It's always an enjoyable read. Yeah. Unfortunately, Twitter hasn't as been misbehaving a little bit recently. And I don't think I'm getting all the notifications. And I've noticed a lot of people saying this, that they're not getting the notifications from people that they follow for for quite some time. So I'll I'll follow up again when we're finished here. I'm Denise Jackson. I live in the borough of Telford and Wrekin within the larger county of Shropshire which most of you probably know from Ironbridge, the World Heritage site down there and all the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, the bridge and all that look, that's actually about eight nine miles away from me. And I live in a small town that got incorporated into Telford and I lived here up until I was 19, went down to London and did a languages degree, worked in quite a few different sectors, both using my language and as a secretary and PA and admin, that sort of job. And I came back up here in 2006, to look after my dad who had been widowed five years earlier, I'd helped him look after mum when she

had cancer, she passed away 20 years ago this week. And he was okay for the first couple of years. And then his mobility started to go, he was in his 80s. And he had various health problems So I was what they now tend to refer to as a distant carer or a carer at distance for about three and a half years. And I was doing a 300 mile round trip on the train from London up to gates every weekend practically. And that eventually took its toll on me from a health and financial point of view. And I moved back in 2006, to look after Dad full time for the last was the end of 2006, beginning of 2007. I moved gradually over a few weeks. And I looked after him for the last 18 months of his life, which was both a privilege and something I have to say looking back now with the benefit of distance. A little bit of a, I won't actually say an ordeal, but it was a challenge. Definitely. And that was why I came onto the the podcast back 2019. I think it was to talk about the issues facing carers and former carers, specifically as they age if they haven't got much in the way of family support or a close family network. So when that's me, I'm sort of semi retired at the moment, I was working part time with the local Healthwatch for about 18 months up to November and then unfortunately, and this is something none of you will know. I was suddenly diagnosed with blood clots on both lungs. It's completely out of the blue. And it was only discovered because I was due to undergo gallbladder surgery the following week. And I thought I got a chest infection and needs to get it checked out and NHS 111 sent me down to the local hospital Princess while they were absolutely brilliant, they diagnosed it within about three or four hours. And I'm now on blood thinners and much better but still a bit nervous about what's going to happen when I have the review next month. The six month review for it so I haven't gone back to work as such. I'm lucky I've got a small occupational pension which we'll see me through, hopefully until the state pension, which I will get in September next year. But I think that's definitely an issue that needs discussing because a lot of people now both male and female are finding that their retirement age is getting further and further away their state retirement pension age, and they possibly can't get, you know, can't get into paid employment or the employment they want. And then just to add insult to injury, we did what we described as economically inactive. Well, thank you very much. I'm not very happy with that. Anyway, that's me, basically, that's where I am at the moment. And I mean, I'm an only child single never never had children. So I always say when I tweet, is I'm a lonely branch of the family tree. So that presented lots of issues for me. I often get asked, well, don't you wish you had a brother or sister? And I said, Well, yes and no, because I could have had a brother or sister or more than one who were very supportive. Or as I've seen in too many families, I could have found the carrying responsibility devolving upon me and had other family members just down the road who weren't interested and wanted me to get on with it. Or I could have had somebody who was out, you know, Michael's way out in Australia who wanting to help but wasn't in a position to be able to do so on the day to day basis, which again, would have been interesting, but not a day to day help, obviously. So when dad died, I had the additional challenge of getting back into work age nearly 50 into paid work, I should say. And one of the things that happened was that the DWP told me that carers, former carers didn't have any status. I will be treated as a job seeker as if I'd been off long term sick for 18 months, which I wasn't happy about. Because I hadn't been sick. I'd been working full time looking after dad and actually putting into practice skills that I'd already got and gaining new skills and I wasn't happy at all. So I joined the local carers Forum, which because the local carers centre here were actually very good, and they'd given me some support when I was looking after dad. And one of the things that the carers commissioner from the local authority asked me to do was to set up a group to look into the issues faced by carers and former carers around employment and financial security and well being and stuff like that, which is still actually going it was part of the local carriers partnership board until they unfortunately disbanded last year. So

we're still going we've got a meeting of our group on Thursday. Denise, I noticed you on Twitter, and, one of the reasons that we wanted to have you on the podcast again was because you tweeted, Martin Lewis. For the benefit of people who don't know Martin Lewis, and our listeners further afield than the he is a self-titled, Money Saving Expert, but actually is very active on on UK television. I don't know Michael, do you know of him?

Michael Hughes 16:19

I'm actually googling right now, while you're talking.

Berenice Smith 16:21

Okay. He's quite a quite a force of nature, I think it would be fair to say, does offer lots of advice around money saving? But Denise, you tweeted him because you wanted him to talk about solo households?

Denise Ann Jackson 16:38

Yeah, that's right. I mean, he has I'm not sure when it stopped. Now, I think it has for the time being, but he has a weekly TV show. And it's on a Tuesday night. And he's, he's covered every subject under the sun, really. And he does all you know, what the news is that's coming during the week of the you know, when anything to do with benefits changes, and you have the support for the cost of living stuff and all that. And don't get me wrong, I am a huge fan of Martin Lewis. I mean, I do quite a lot of work, both paid and volunteer with Citizens Advice, and he's a huge supporter of Citizens Advice. He's a huge supporter of people who have had mental health issues, because he's made the link that lots of people and organisations don't between financial security and mental health. So I've got a lot of time for Martin Lewis, but like everybody else, he always seems to be banging on about how it's gonna affect families and how it's going to affect couples. And there's almost never a mention of a single person and their economic situation, which can often be quite precarious in comparison with a couple when they've got two incomes coming in. So I started that I haven't had to be honest, I haven't done much much combat, but I had a lot of people like yourself, take it up. Although I have not anything specifically back from the from the show well, from the producers of the show, but I will keep banging on about that. I just think we need to raise awareness of it.

Patricia Faulks 18:24

I mean, you're absolutely right. You need of course, everything that you say there. And I think there's a point where we sort of, well, I can't speak for everybody who's childless and ageing. But there's almost this point, you're not gonna, nobody's gonna listen, just get on with it. Just deal with it. And that's not right, is it? We shouldn't be just getting on with it and dealing with it because I feel the same. You know, I feel the same you thinking when they're talking about all these extra bonuses are whatever that various people can have in the single supplements, and particularly since the energy crisis, I have no idea how to access them. And often, you know, I know I'm sort of generalising here. But often, other people on their own have got families to help them I say, right, okay, more than we do. This is what you need to outdo this alpha on them for you. And we don't have anybody and we don't know where to go. And there's almost an embarrassment about admitting the fact that I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go, where do I go? Try and found some helpline and you sit in there 20 minutes later, still waiting? You know, I think it's sometimes I think he's down to baseline again, who knows about it?

Do the NHS really know about it? I'm really aware of as a social care really aware of us as a large and growing group of people. .

Denise Ann Jackson 19:48

I can give you a good example of the NHS!

Patricia Faulks 19:53

They're not though are they? We need to be you know, having more awareness around In the NHS, so far, I've tried, I've tried knock it out, I sent a letter to our local GP Practice Management Office and never had a reply. I had a reply from some charity, literally sent it on to them. I had a reply from a charity that we met. And it became clear that lovely as she was, it was not going to be of any use. So I'm going to keep on trying, because they do talk about they just assume it's families, they just assume you've got support. Yeah. You know, where do we go for support? Where do we go?

Denise Ann Jackson 20:40

Well, you know, I've just mentioned that I had this diagnosis of pulmonary embolisms in November, they were absolutely brilliant, the same day emergency sensor at the hospital or whatever word said against them. But when I saw the doctor to get the prescription for the pixel ban, and just just to kind of discharge me from the clinic, I said to him, Well, what do I do next? And I've got to say this, I've joined your Facebook group for people who have the same condition, and there isn't a great deal of follow up. But I was I nearly fell out of my chair, because he said, Well, I don't need to do anything too energetic for the next couple of weeks. And, you know, carry on with the blood thinners and all this. And he said, apart from that, he said, Just go home and let your husband take care of you. Okay, I said I actually live on my own. And to be fair, he did have the grace to look a bit some, you know, embarrassed about what he said. And he said, Oh, yes. He said, sorry about that. He says, Yes, actually, I do. And you know, because of everything that was going on? I wasn't. I'm not that quick witted. At the best of times, I've got to say, I always think and then a witty response appears half an hour after the fact, you know, but I did wish I'd said to him, Well, can we hook up, then? You know, perhaps you can look after me? I'm sure as a consultant, you've got a better house than I have!

Michael Hughes 22:10

Did you end up getting his number them?

Denise Ann Jackson 22:12

No! I should have thought that at the time!

Michael Hughes 22:22

You missed out? He missed out.

Denise Ann Jackson 22:26

Yes, yes, he definitely did. Yeah, yeah. I'll tell myself that. Was that once an example of how it's assumed it's the default position that you've got somebody to look after you. And I thought, well, knowing you know, with my work with unpaid carers, I could have been going home and looking after a

husband who was disabled, or chronically ill himself, I could have been the carer. But there's no allowing for that sort of possibility.

Patricia Faulks 22:59

No, no, there isn't. Because they weren't really did they want to know, I mean if they find out? You know, if they find out, Oh, God, there's another great group of people here that really we ought to be tending to, you're not going to manage? Don't ask, you know, you do wonder because, according to that I've got enough to do at the moment. So you might, that doesn't help us does it. That's not healthy. You know where you're at? Right? I've got rheumatoid arthritis. And I haven't seen a rheumatologist or spoke to one for nearly two years. And I'm supposed to speak to one twice a year, and I just seem to fall off their list. You know, I don't know either that or they've gone. Okay. Don't bother with either.

Denise Ann Jackson 23:45

I just think it's a general thing actually, Trish, because I've heard so many people saying that they, you know, they're supposed to be seen on a regular basis for review or a check, and they're just not getting good at all. It's much further spaced out than it normally would be.

Patricia Faulks 24:04

But you can't help it. You know, I shouldn't go inwards on it and think, see, see, this is because I'm, I'm childless. They don't care. They're not bothered. I've got nobody to speak for me. It's his advocacy thing. Yes, who speak who speaks for us and I suppose if we bothered to look, there would be somebody somewhere. And you know, the first point of call will probably be citizen advice. But you know, I can't get there very good.

Denise Ann Jackson 24:34

I can recommend them from having worked with them and been a client of theirs as well. They helped a lot. They helped my dad and I which is how I was introduced to them with an issue that he got around council tax and poor advice that we've been given by the by the council that ended up with with dad, a winger and a man that he thought he was entitled to because of advice that they've given them that they have given him should say about council tax. I think it was called council tax benefits in those days, it then became council tax relief or something else CTR. But he was given poor advice and then was chased up for an outstanding amount. And we went to Citizens Advice, and they were extremely helpful about it. So we're always up there the other the other really good organisation who can often help

Patricia Faulks 25:27

I can't get through to them now, you know, I have I have quite a muddled brain, I think, I don't know, you know, I'll think of something and think, oh, that's the number yes, phone meme. I'll do it in a minute. Then I disappear somewhere else, something else gets in the way. I go back forgotten about that. I might go back and phone. I don't get an answer. I forgotten again. It's nothing works for me. There's nothing there. That's working for a modern brain like mine. And that's kind of why I need somebody to advocate for me.

Denise Ann Jackson 26:00

I think it really got hard. It generally got harder since COVID, that they put everything online or on the phone lines, but they seem to run the phone lines down as well. So I think it's a general frustration

Patricia Faulks 26:14

Yes, I suppose so. But it's a more of a frustration, and I will immediately go see, this is what it's like when you're childless. See, you know, I'll bring everything back to that. For me, you know, it's a very different world mine, you know, I mean, it's, it's, you know, it's all about childless? Oh, yeah. Well, you see, it's all because of that. And it's not always but you know, I think in my head, well, it's gonna have to be because that's what I want to get out there. Because it's about childlessness. You know, in all, its many forms. Because I think, you know, we, we are growing in numbers. And even if we weren't, we're still here as a group. And I just feel we need attention. We need attention outside of our own immediate people, you know, outside of our circles where we're all doing work. You know, they need to know outside of it, because I've spoken to families who've been very supportive, actually, you know, they've been really supportive and said, I've never thought of it, you think how can you not have thought of it? I never thought about it. Yeah.

Denise Ann Jackson 27:22

Oh, no, once you think about it, because I think a lot of people it's a, it's a fear factor that's involved, they're there, they're perhaps in a couple or got lots of family around them. And they don't want to think of a situation where they might find themselves without their partner or, you know, without their children close at hand. And it's quite a frightening thought, actually. I mean, if you've been single, long term, you get to deal with it. You have to you don't have any choice. But I think I mean, it's always me a little bit that it's assumed that I will always cope because I've not got any choice. I mean, a couple of things. I've heard it referred to as the curse of the competent nurse of competency, which, you know, I looked after me, Dad, therefore, if I'm ill at all, well, surely Denise is capable of looking after itself. She She helped her dad look after a mom, she looked after my dad without a great deal of input for us. So she's, she's got to be competent enough to look after itself. But he's differences in it, you know, with you, not not well, yourself.

Patricia Faulks 28:29

There's a lot of truth in that one. And I also think it's because they really don't want to know they don't want these. I mean, I know my cousin in Leicester, and we will never close we're not close by logically, but occasionally she does phone and the conversation is all about her family. Okay, naturally, you know, that. Suppose you know that that is her life. So it's all about her family I've never met, and very rarely, if ever, does she say and how are you Trish? Because you never do they say that? It's so frustrating. Well, I think it's because they don't really do they want to know, you know, do they actually want to know, I mean, I'm not gonna sit here and say, Oh, well, you know, sit back, I've got a list on the top shot. Yeah, I'm not going to do that. But I don't think they want to know that they may need to say, well, I can help you, you know, because we're the best will in the world don't always want to actually get involved.

Denise Ann Jackson 29:31

I've often thought about that. Actually, Trish that, you know, if people do they not ask because they think I'm going to present them with a whole list of demands. As you said, you know, I will you do a nice

job, do my laundry for me or whatever, or come and sit with me every night for half and that's not easy. It's just knowing that somebody would notice if I went missing for a few days, you shouldn't be doing that. I might be you know, really ill or I might have you know, colour hamster something it's not because I want somebody to take over my life or,

Patricia Faulks 30:06

I mean, that's actually you know, a conversation in itself because I go out walking with the dog. And I walk because you know, you always like you'd clear your head when you go on these lonely footpath. And I'm told I shouldn't but I like to walk in the woods in the field and on the Lincolnshire footpaths, they're lovely. But there's nobody about and there's no signal on the mobile. So supposed to do? Yeah. Am I supposed to follow somebody every time I go out and say, right, I'm on my way to tech for about half an hour, I'll be across a second field where the cows are next door. All right. And if you've not heard from me in an hour, couldn't knock. Yeah, I can't do that.

Berenice Smith 30:54

You actually came to mind. A couple of weeks ago, Tricia was thinking of you and I was out with my dog. And I checked in and had that moment of couples privilege, because I went out with my dog, it was quite remote where we were. And it was just us. And I was walking down the street. And there was this chap there. And I thought, yeah, and my dog is very placid, you know, unusually, she was a bit at this person not comfortable around them. Oh, oh. I had no signal. But I had someone waiting for me quite whether my husband would eventually notice how much time had passed. I don't know. That's debatable. That's not the conversation. But I had someone there that could probably ultimately would have thought 'Oh, it's been a couple of hours'. That's a privilege of mine. But you came to mind because I follow your walks. And I love the photographs that you have with Lilley as well. But I'm also conscious and I know Lincolnshire, it's not too far for me in Cambridgeshire. And yeah, it's quite remote, some parts of that. And I knew came to mind at that point. And I thought, oh, gosh, yes. So this moment of vulnerability you're sharing? Yeah, I, I checked in with my privilege. Because yeah, I did realise that but also probably my age as well. But to actually go out and to be alone to do the walks that you do is inspirational. But yeah, that must come with some sort of round risk as well. And you're right, how do you tell somebody that you're in a field with some cows somewhere about this geographic location, which could be anywhere?

Patricia Faulks 32:53

I could be whisked off where you could come and watch over me and take me away somewhere.

Denise Ann Jackson 33:03

And I think it's all been in our minds, hasn't it with various you know, cases that have happened recently that lady who unfortunately, you know, ran to what she was walking her dog a few weeks ago when the ladies who have been attacked you know, don't go into too much detail but he's is worrying I've got and of course, it brings about a bigger question as well that because we are on our own, should we have to give up things that other people might take for granted? No, you didn't curtail our freedom. I don't think it should. But there's a lot of political issues around it. I don't know.

Patricia Faulks 33:41

There are there are a myriad so many times I think that is I'm setting off on lonely footpaths, and I think I'd be more worried about leaving Lilley you know if I fell over and cracked my head and was unconscious or something and nobody came along the footpath and you know she's there and I are so I'd be worrying about her because she wouldn't have a clue she's a disease cartload a monkeys and so she wouldn't know what to do. She's down to be there. So I'm worried about the dog you know, I'm there flaked out, but I'm somewhere in there and worrying about the dog. Because I'm not. I mean realistically as you get older and I am quiet. You know you don't get so steady on your feet. You do silly things you tell yourself you're never going to do that you're not going to fall over you're not going to trip but you do your feet just do stuff. You know that they never did before. You know they just fall over each other like I got an art. You know what? I'm just going to trade on that foot there. When you're on the deck. That just happens and that happens when you get old nobody tells you about that. So you know I am living I am dicing with dangerousness when I embark on my walks

Michael Hughes 35:06

For me? I'm going to be practical, because that's where well, my brain goes. Thank you both for sharing this, by the way, too, because one of the things that we did for my mom, is that we got her a life alarm. So what it is, it's a little, you know, thing, that lanyard that sits around and it detects if you fall over. I'm not suggesting that you should go and get one. But what I'd like to hear your opinions on is, is that it? Would that be something that you would consider using if you went out? Or would you feel? Well, there's a certain stigma that sits around having to use one, and therefore would not use it?

Patricia Faulks 35:55

I had one I did use one, I don't use the same thing. It was called 24 hour long as AGE UK do it, don't they, Densie and various other companies. Yeah.

Denise Ann Jackson 36:08

And my dad had one and the local housing association ran it. But I don't know what the one that Dad had done think would have worked. Beyond so many yards outside the house. Yeah,

Patricia Faulks 36:20

they only work within your home

Denise Ann Jackson 36:22

Yeah. I don't know whether the one that Michaels got? Is it something like the sorry, I always tend to bring these things back to the cat collars. I know you can. Yeah, if you've got a cat with a collar radio thing on it.

Michael Hughes 36:37

It's actually got a SIM card in it. I think it actually works on any mobile network, because you're not making phone calls. And so what it does, is you programme it with three phone numbers. And this is this is where I was going to in that. It's for my mother, it's got me, my wife, my brother. And then if it does no one, if no one picks up the phone, because it actually you can talk for it. It goes straight to the to the New South Wales ambulance service. So but so that's the way it works. And it will detect if you fall over and that sort of thing.

Berenice Smith 37:21

It's going to mean that someone can set it up so that could be difficult if you don't have someone around to help you with navigate these things.

Michael Hughes 37:36

And what numbers? What numbers would would you ladies put in? You know? That's what I'm thinking?

Patricia Faulks 37:43

Well you have friends, but friends are less and my friends tend to be younger, and they've got family. So they're very dedicated to and careers. Because the older people around here, I'm sure you find the same Denise the older people around here, they're all about the grandkids. And you know, they'll go for coffees and so on with you, which I'm Yeah, into really? And talk about the grandkids. You can't get them off it. It's it's until the point I've almost given up really on that one. Yeah. Yeah. younger friends have got their families, but they are more inclusive. So I tend to sit with them, but they often live perhaps 20-30 miles away.

Denise Ann Jackson 38:35

Which isn't necessarily helpful if you need somebody to put their head around the door and just say, hey, Tracy, okay, everything all right. Yeah, that's not gonna work, is it for somebody who lives at that distance changed.

Patricia Faulks 38:47

I mean, in this neighbourhood communities seem to have changed to what I remember in back in my day. And that's, you know, that's an old person speak there. But they have changed where they really did look out for each other. And it just doesn't seem to be the same now.

Denise Ann Jackson 39:06

You know, that. That's right. And what Michael said, I mean, that's fantastic. And I think this whole thing with the the tech and the AI and all this sort of thing is going to play a more and more important part in keeping people independent as they grow old. And we've got the Independent Living centre here, which is run by the local authority in Telford and Wrekin and they've got lots of these gadgets and stuff, you know. So there is some recognition of that. But I mean, going back to Michael's point about who would you allocate as somebody as your contact or your key holder or what have you? I remember this coming up when my dad was applying for one of these alarms. And yeah, that was okay. We've got his sister who lived just down the road, and also another neighbour, I think they We were both keyholders. But we had, we had reservations about both of those because they were both quite elderly. And my auntie, as it turned out and was having memory problems, it turned out she was in the early stages of dementia. And she outlived my dad, but she was, you know, the illness started to take hold around the time that he passed away. But I also thought of myself, and I said, well hang on a minute. Because I said, Well, can't you was the organisation be somebody you know? Do you not sit in somebody to check? Unless it? Oh, no, no, it depends on you having a network of people around you. And I'm thinking, well, the people who most need this service are the ones who aren't going to have a network

around it. So it's a bit kind of, it's a bit of a gamble, really welcome to productive, whatever you want to say. Now, I don't know whether that's whether that's changed recently. But one of the things that I noted down here, it's a whole different subject, but it falls into the same sort of problematic area is things like power of attorney. I mean, I keep people keep saying to me, I've given my sister or my husband or my son or daughter power of attorney, have you got your set up? And I'm like, no, because I haven't got anybody you are with me. Now, I've, I've since found out that you can actually have that lodged with a solicitor, so I will no doubt be going down that route. But where is that the information about that? Trish? Have you ever seen any information about power of attorney that's been really easily findable, because I'm sorry, that that's on a different topic, but it does fall within the same sort of problematic area,

Patricia Faulks 41:45

Age UK have a lot of info on that, that you'd have, to me, it's difficult for you know, for every big charity, etc, to put everything out there. But always UK have quite a bit to say on that. If you want to sort of, sort of, I suppose you'd have to go on to Google somewhere, and we'll be some lawyers writing about it. The only thing is, I've got the same problem. And at the moment my power of attorney is lodged with my lawyer, but lawyers with the best will in the world. You know, I'm thinking well, I'll be dead. Well, I will. Okay. You know, we probably won't get you know, they take a big chunk.

Denise Ann Jackson 42:29

Yeah. Yeah, they really for the money, aren't they? Obviously, yeah, yeah. But then again, even if you've got, even if you've got friends who are willing to do it, you've got to be able to trust them to have your best interest in at night. Because it's like having somebody come and check that you're okay, if you've suddenly gone AWOL for a few days, or if you press your pendant alarm or what have you, you've got to be able to trust the people who are coming to your rescue. And the same with to an even greater extent with power of attorney if you're going to give somebody power over your money if you're incapacitated, or power over what happens to you health wise. And it could be something as drastic as turning off life support, couldn't it? And I mean, that works both ways. Because not only is that obviously of interest to the patient, but it's also a huge, huge responsibility to put on somebody who is not a close relative. It's a world of difference putting that on a partner that or a child or adult child than it is on a friend.

Patricia Faulks 43:39

difficult it is and everywhere rely so heavily on volunteers who are marvellous. volunteers do a fantastic job. I've been a volunteer myself, and I'm sure you probably still are. I don't think I am at the moment if I am it will be some horse charity or something to do with dogs or horses. But you know, volunteers do an amazing job. But they're not solicitors, are they? They're not lawyers, and so much.

Denise Ann Jackson 44:10

And they each bring something to it, the volunteers bring the passion and the goodwill and the sort of altruism to it was the lawyers bring the professionalism, but also the financial demands and you that they're approaching you from a different angle, aren't they?

Patricia Faulks 44:26

I feel sometimes we shoved under the carpet, you know, all we give them that, you know, always UK or doing well, I just feel that, you know, we're a group that's on the edge, we're sort of teetering on the edge of a proper full, you know, awareness and acknowledgement by the great general public. But we're not, we can't quite it's almost as if something stopping us because if we get out there as a proper group. I mean, it's quite a thing. We were stating quite a lot of facts here that do need dealing with, because really they do, dealing with where you can go to Age UK where you can go there,

Denise Ann Jackson 45:06

you know, you have to know that, that you can go to Age UK, yes.

Patricia Faulks 45:11

You have to be able to get hold of Age UK and you've got to have a certain level of intellectual intelligence to be able to do all these things.

Denise Ann Jackson 45:22

And as you say, it depends on an awareness of it in general, because I always say that any service or organisation is only as good as the awareness of it. Because if you know, there could be a really brilliant service out there. But if you don't know about it, you can't access it. And it's no use to us. So there's kind of a responsibility on us to look for stuff but also on the various agencies and organisations to promote services that they that they offer, otherwise people aren't going to be able to well use them.

Patricia Faulks 45:56

No, no, it's, it's a hard one, isn't it? Because it's, I feel as if we were shuffling forward as a group, you know, we sort of shuffling forward and getting there and everybody's working so hard to get awareness and acknowledgement of, you know, being without children being childless, etc. And, you know, as I was saying, earlier on my bit, there are different pieces of childlessness, as childlessness, when you get older, this child is just when you just found out you're going to be childless. And all the bits in between each each one needs a different piece of caring, almost.

Denise Ann Jackson 46:37

Yeah. And then there's people like me who kind of vaguely assume don't have children, but he just, you know, just let that happen. So it's, yeah, you say there's a whole spectrum out there, you know,

Patricia Faulks 46:49

we're all meeting together as childless and needing, you know, some sort of awareness. I mean, a lot of people are too embarrassed to say that their child was there. They seem ashamed to say it. I don't know why.

Denise Ann Jackson 47:04

But yeah, that seems that seems to be a general theme that I've come across. I mean, well, I can't ever say that it's affected me. Personally. I mean, I am okay with people saying, Have you got children? I'll say no, no, I hadn't actually. And, or sometimes No, at my age, it's somebody's got grandchildren. And I'll sort of say, no, no, I haven't. And so have you got children? And no, I haven't. And I'm okay with that. But what are not okay with these people kind of probing and say, you know, I've never been married.

I've never wanted children. I'm like, You know what, this this is this of yours. Business. But, you know, in general, if somebody just asked them to out of the blue.

Patricia Faulks 47:53

Well, they do though, that's reminded me that I was watching programme last night. On a Saturday night, you think that I think that's a my Saturday night and I think, look at me now. No. I'd have been completely blotto by now, back in the day. It was a comedy, a comedian, Rob Beckett? I don't know if you've heard of him? Yes, yes or no. And it was very good show. It's been televised. And I don't know it was because you've got a family who's been married not comedians to moaning about his family. And saying, You got kids here, barely accomplished, late middle aged couple on the end, whatever they were let's call them Arthur, and Joan; you've got kids, Joan? Oh, you've got no kids. And I thought, What's he going to say now? Because this is clearly not rehearsed? Well, he said, I think Arthur and Joan are the sensible ones, you know, the rest of us are all working on acting stupid. Arthur and Joan got life in front of them or something. I suppose he didn't know what else to say. But what a reasonable response because a comedian you know, nowadays, Jimmy Carr, God knows what he would have said, but it was quite a measured response and had not heard that before. I've seen that happen before into your eyes. And when you said no, we don't have any children.

Berenice Smith 49:17

Any shows are really difficult, aren't they? We know we've got the Nomo book club, but I almost find I don't go to comedy shows anymore because I find I'm just going to sit there and start pulling faces. And I find them incredibly exclusionary. What you think might be a good comedian and the start using their families as fodder and excluding some of the audience.

Denise Ann Jackson 49:50

That's often one of the main sort of sources and materialism isn't it?

Michael Hughes 49:53

There's a really good lady here in Australia called kitty Flanagan. So if you ever if you ever googling or YouTubing? She is a single, childless woman. And yeah, she uses that in her comedy quite a bit. Obviously, quite ironic.

Patricia Faulks 50:18

There are have female comedians who are openly childless. And they didn't want that. Well, Sara Milligan, she's never said he wanted them. And there's another one, of course, whose name I've now forgotten, but she talks quite openly about being a child. Which is good, you know, they are speaking about it. And, you know, being quite aggressive on the subject, what they've been asked and why, why would why will you ask me just because I'm a woman, you know, et cetera. So it's, I suppose it's, it's one it's one way of getting the subject out there, but don't quite get the money. It doesn't. You know, it's not necessarily the way forward that we all go and be comedians and stand on stage. telling jokes.

Sarah Lawrence 51:15

was gonna say ladies have been very quiet this episode listen to because it's, it's quite sobering, isn't it? What you're, you're sort of talking about where do I go? What do I do? Who do I ask? Where do I get

the help from? And it's been a real sobering listening. And I think it's kind of we were talking before treasurer way before the episode about how actually, it's quite a difficult topic, I think, for anyone that's childless? Because you are, that is you? Are, you said it, Denise, you're that you're that lonely branch on the family tree? Aren't you? Who do I go to? If you haven't got children? And who do you rely on? When you know, the shit hits the fan or something go, you know, something? happens. And I think, you know, even when we're coupled, I think there is the number of people I speak to that fear is still very real, in terms of, you know, what happens if it's me facing into this on my own as I get older, and I'll be honest with you, tech is not my strength. Now, I dread to think where it's gonna be like in 20 years time.

Denise Ann Jackson 52:15

And I think this came up such a lot during the pandemic, when people were forced to rely on zoom in teams and what have you. And I remember saying to somebody, sort of half jokingly that, I think, I think it might have been about blade UK because they've had quite a programme about some digitalization and identifying gaps, where people haven't got access to digital resources and trying to run community classes and what have you, which was difficult during the pandemic, because you had to get people on in the first place to be able to have the lessons or you had to have them, you know, people phoning them up, which didn't work terribly well, because everybody's got a different device. And it's not the same as being able to see what you know, be next to them and say that, well, you press that key or whatever, oh, no, you don't do that on a Chromebook that's on a Mac, or that's on, you know, laptop or whatever. But I remember saying, those of us who were stuck at home here, we really need access to a kind of general, IT departments. Because if you're in an organisation or in a company, you will have an IT departments or a company, you know, contracted to provide IT support. And yeah, if you're at home, say, because I was doing quite a lot of volunteer work as opposed to paid work during the pandemic trying to support other unpaid carers and former carers. If anything went wrong with my it, I was up a creek without a paddle as they it was very, very frustrating. But it comes back to to another point I was just going to make actually that one of the things I found, particularly in recent years is that one to one help is very good and word of mouth. If you can be part of a group be part of a network. Like here, we've got the what used to be the senior citizens Forum, which is now called forum 50. Plus, because there was always some vague you know, parameters about what ageing start, you started to become a senior citizen, so then decided to change the name to four and 50 plus, so that it's everybody from fifty. We even got one or two people coming up to 50. They've said, yeah, you can be an honorary member because you're going to be getting there within 18 months or what have you. And they've set up they did a phone checking scheme that they took over from the local council during the the lockdowns and And then they made a really big effort to get people out and about and meeting up face to face, as well as continuing with some of the virtual and the phone stuff will be blue, more house bound. And I go to regular one on Wednesday afternoon, just under the local community centre. 10 minutes walk from me here. And the number of things like for example, I, as a lot of people did, I acquired an air fryer, and having the foggiest idea how to use it, you know, how do you convert the cooking times over from a cooker, or microwave or whatever, to an air fryer. And I struck up a conversation with somebody who was a few months ahead of me and got one like I have didn't know how to use it. But I found out by trial and error. And that's been really, really helpful. I mean, that's just one sort of fairly trivial example. But I think quite often a lot of the knowledge I've had, and certainly with this pulmonary embolisms, it's been from a from a Facebook group who are always somebody's always coming down. So now I was

diagnosed last week, hadn't been given much help or support, anybody been through the same thing. And of course, about 20 people rush on at once and almost crushed the suffering because they don't want to share their experiences. So I think unfortunately, we've got to, we've got to be a bit proactive here. And it's nice to think that it would all come to us, but I think we've got to go out and almost build these networks and find support, where it's, it's not otherwise forthcoming, whereas it might be and we've also got to recognise that not everybody with children has a brilliant experience. No, no, it's like, yeah, it's like I was saying about having, you know, other family members when I was looking after Dad. With a lot of people, the children could have emigrated could have got married, moved to the other end of the country be looking after, same same feature. Some may be looking after the mother in law can't necessarily come back to you.

Patricia Faulks 57:14

Though, would you feel that? I don't know, probably alone on this one. But I, I'd actually like to see more integration with sometimes with childless and families. And I think there is quite a keenness on you know, on their side as well. To understand if it's just moms coming along, perhaps or just parents or father, I think there is, you know, a certain element of want so yeah, okay, be rather than just hurt. I don't know if it's just me that feels that you know, that that that could work. Yeah,

Denise Ann Jackson 57:52

yeah, I'm sure there's a lot of goodwill out there. And it again comes back to recommend the three R's isn't it recognition, recognition of recognition that people recognise that there is a need out there and that they are then given the opportunity to meet that need or to offer to meet that lead. if again, if you don't know somebody has a specific requirements you're either not going to worry about it or uncertainly not going to make any attempts to address it. That makes any sense because you don't know about it and the number of times I've had I've had a conversation with people and they've said well why didn't you let me know when I would have I would have come and helped you with that or I'd have given you a lift to that hospital appointments or something.

Patricia Faulks 59:03

I was only just gonna say on on what Berenice was saying about learning digital. Yes, I've got I've actually got to employ a company to come and help me but mine is quite serious on this MacBook is things that things are happening that shouldn't be happening on it. I think there's a little person living in there that's doing things that's what I think and and but one thing that you were on about you know, learning about that, I want to learn about how to use this damn camera because I'm hopeless with the camera. I have no idea and can I find anywhere around here to just you know, because if you ask somebody they start talking to you in jargon. Jargon you know, don't tell me jargon. I don't know so there's all these things all people have their mind you're on your own because you haven't got the family there or thornell nephew or whatever it is.

Denise Ann Jackson 59:59

It's something we've heard a lot around here, which is why Age UK have had this big push to get people, you know, brought into the digital community as it were, and, you know, able they run droppings at community centres and some sheltered housing complexes and things. And I don't know whether you've got anything?

Patricia Faulks 1:00:20

We have. We have that here, which is, which is excellent. And I think, you know, people do attend, and you wish that more people? I don't think he says, well, Tony, there's a like, No, you think why not? Because you know, it really should be a bit perhaps it will build up Age UK. So round here, they're not very good at promoting themselves. They're just quite poor at PR. They think they say pointless notice in the local library, everybody will know about it, you know, they won't.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:00:55

Yeah, I think it comes back again to promoting the services, doesn't it? Because people can't use them if they don't know that they're there. And that's a shame, because then that's frustrating for them, because they've got people volunteers trained up to lead sessions. And they don't get the number of people coming in. That, you know, that they're looking for. But apart from I don't really know what you do that because sometimes they get grants, don't they from local authorities, and what have you, grants and funding? Yeah. And they should make it I think the local authorities should make it kind of, well, they should do a lot of promotion themselves as the the the people supplying the grant. But they should also make it conditional upon the organisation that they do a certain amount of promotion so that they're actually getting to the people who need it.

Berenice Smith 1:01:48

Well, you know, I keep on telling a lot of charities, local charities, use local radio. So the press really won't cost you anything, do you not understand, you know, just send the press release a local paper, they'll use it, they won't use it, it won't cost you anything then you reach more people like us. There's a cut off point with tech, if I remember rightly it's that if you were born before 1985, I think, you had to learn how to use digital tech, if you're born after that date, and you are native to it, you're wanting to kind of whether there's, I think there's some kind of maybe exclusion goes around that, that if you are after that point, or before that point, then you don't need to know these tech things. But actually, you do. Because let's be honest, I mean, Trish, she started a blog, it's fantastic. And that's important to you, your presence on the Internet is as valuable as anyone else who's younger because it's doing a service and it's providing information. And again, your blog is a great place for people to promote events and help and support us. What you do is a great example of that and showing how exclusionary daily life is, like parking a car and using a mobile put you in the details? Oh, yeah, yeah. I sat in the car park think I have absolutely no idea! Do I have any signal on my mobile to download the app. My mum ended up with £100 fine because she didn't know how to put enter, press the enter button on the machine.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:03:10

Yeah, comes back to advocacy, doesn't it? Rarely, no one's gonna advocate for me when I get older.

Patricia Faulks 1:04:32

Well, I you know, you tend to rely as I have done in car parks. Myself, some body. Usually a chap stood at the back of me and army doc, I'll do that for you. You stand over there. am sorting and that's what I rely on, you know, because you've made a little old card at that point. And you know, somebody hopefully will come along and because they want to pay in your inner way, basically. So you know, they will help you.

Berenice Smith 1:05:04

But you're then you're not learning because they're not telling you they're doing?

Patricia Faulks 1:05:11

Yes, and then I have to look at the registration number now I've completely forgotten it, I'll have to go back to the corner and have a look.

Berenice Smith 1:05:18

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And it's it really, it's digital exclusion has a bigger effect, because it's frustrating. And also, you know, you want to know how to use, but like you say, who teaches you this.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:05:38

It is changing so quickly. I mean, that's a good point that you made about people growing up with the technology after a certain, you know, cutoff point. But I mean, I grew up with, with that without that sort of technology, obviously, because it wasn't around there. But when I hit my 20s, and we started to have word processing, and you know, WordPerfect, and all that sort of thing I remember having to use and the different the different systems and then say what you like about Bill Gates, he did bring it all together and wings, I was really so it became a little bit easier. But I mean, things change so quickly. I mean, I get so annoyed sometimes when I go into, you know, my email accounts or zoom or what have you. And all of a sudden, the format's changed, and the look of the screen has changed. And they never give you any warning about it, they just do reads. And there was one of them, I can't remember which it was, but I mean, they had such an outcry about some about the change of it, that they actually changed back. I can't remember what it was no, it was something, something with Windows, I think, but a lot of people moaned about cheat, and eventually they, they they dropped into this as an experiment and went back to the old way of doing it. So there was kind of people power there. But it, you really have got to be able to keep up with the changes, which gets harder as you get older.

Patricia Faulks 1:07:06

It does get harder. But I think one kind of good thing out of it is that we, it makes us use our brains, it makes us work. And you see the people who have got their relatives telling them how to do it. And they're not as well. Clever as we are, frankly,

Denise Ann Jackson 1:07:27

We have to rely on ourselves when as they know, they can always bring up the person who you know, Oh, can you come and help? I'm stuck with this or, you know, what does this message mean? Or whatever? Well, you've got to work.

Patricia Faulks 1:07:41

You know, we have to

Berenice Smith 1:07:43

That's a really good point. And actually, it's a lesson to people that create this stuff. And when I work with people a lot of the time and do myself with web design, it's kind of a big part of what I do. And

yeah, there's this whole thing about accessibility. And it's shocking how little accessibility there is and how very few people who develop this stuff understand because they know how to do it, it doesn't mean everybody else who uses it does!.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:08:17

I find that with British Gas; their website quite hard to navigate. And they did send me a survey the other day, and I gave them quite a low rating for it. Because it's it's kind of there's no obvious route through it. Whereas in a lot of websites, it's pretty obvious you know that you can click on this icon, click on that, but but this is one of those where it has lots of drop downs and they disappear if you don't go across the screen in quite the right order.

Berenice Smith 1:08:59

I have a hotel shower theory! If I go into a hotel shower, and I'm at risk of scalding myself, and it's a really badly designed shower. It's not me, there's just no instructions, I don't know. Is the icon to tell me where the hot where's the thing? I don't know how to get hot water or worse. I don't know how to get cold water. I digress. I'm taking you away from the subjects. What is there that people can do? Our audience are of different ages who are childless, but also we have quite a number of people who are listening who actually are parents as well. And I'm kind of wondering if there's a message that you can give to them as to what can people do who are listening to this who don't perhaps identify yet maybe is ageing or in this household, but kind of need to just maybe enable and help more and be aware, what would you say? What can they do to support you better?

Patricia Faulks 1:10:10

I think, obviously, you know, we, we promote our site, we promote the full stop podcast. And Denise, I don't know, if you have a site?

Denise Ann Jackson 1:10:30

Not personally No, I mean, I tend to retweet stuff lot from the Ageing Without Children. I'm not running anything myself at the moment. I have Twitter and Facebook and very happy to promote anything.

Patricia Faulks 1:10:51

Yeah, I think that starting there, that we have, you know, various sites to begin with. You know, when we talk about them, can they make themselves aware? Can they not just flick through? Can they actually read the contents a little bit? Because so that when I turn up and go, Oh, I don't have any children? I never thought that they could, you know, they could have some knowledge of it. Go away, read about childlessness, read about being alone, ageing, without children, whatever reason. And then come back, and come back and talk to us, you know, families or otherwise, you know, that's what I'd like to say sort of vague, putting it out there. But I would like to see them learning more about the subject. And then we can go on to the next level, right? Do we all get together and promote it to the next level? And what do we do now? Because that's what I like to do is to talk to us, like you just said, very nice. There are people here who, who are childless, but who have an interest and who are listening, you know, we need to reach them as well, I think otherwise, we are kind of talking to the converted, which we need. But I can't help you to step outside the circle a wee bit and talk to families and the people who have an interest because they do. And they could help us a lot.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:12:22

Yeah, I agree with with everything that Trish has just said. I'd also say a couple of other things, really. One is that when it comes to more sort of commercial, you know, enterprises such as, you know, going back to the financial thing about, you know, the cost of living crisis and everything, I think, you know, there's an economic strand to this, that the, say, the supermarkets, you know, who tend to package everything, larger stuff for families and everything. There's a big customer base out there of single people, childless people, people, you know, solo households, for whatever reason. I mean, they don't seem to have tapped into that too much, really. I mean, I get fed up of having to buy stuff in bulk. And I get fed up of being told to batch cook everything, you know, I don't necessarily want to do that. I just wish there was a way of being able to, you know, I suppose I'm lucky, I've got a little market down down the road here, and another big one over in Wellington that you can go and you've still got the fruit and vegetable stalls and you can buy the amount you want. But the supermarket's aren't always geared up for that not everybody's got access to different options, different sort of retail options. So I think, I think there's that I think, just general recognition, really, that there's there's not one way of living, there's not one, you know, one, two parents 2.5 children or whatever it is. That that's that's one family format, but there's plenty of others, including people who, without separating, always single estranged from partners and everything that these people are all valid in their own right, all all camps all contribute in different ways. And, you know, just just to recognise this a bit more and and I think, you know, that comes back to my you know, playing to Martin Lewis and everything. I can't understand why. Such a large group and growing group is being ignored both both ageing demographic and the trend towards more people living on their own, which those exist separately and overlapping.

Patricia Faulks 1:15:11

There is a child free as well, of course who still are on their own, you know, they still are part of ageing without children too.

Berenice Smith 1:15:21

Yes, Alli Hall's childfree by choice is very good. I was reading something the other day from the Age Alliance website, which is written by Dr. Robin Hadley, who many of us all know. He says that in the UK, the number of people ageing without children, aged over 65 years is projected to rise to above 2 million by 2030.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:16:08

I hadn't realised it was quite that many. Yeah. But that's not an insignificant number.

Berenice Smith 1:16:13

It's massive. It's huge. Yeah, I'll link it to the show notes. Because it's a really good read, written by Robin, of course, sensitively, as well as does. But when we say it's one in C estimates and one in five women, then that's a lot to then add child free. And I don't know whether those those numbers include child free or whether it's just childless. Or generally everyone falls into that category there is that is huge amount that people are missing out on this as a demographic.

Denise Ann Jackson 1:16:45

I mean, what's gonna happen to the NHS, if they suddenly have all these people, when they get older, more, tend to have more illnesses, more hospital admissions, and therefore, going to be, I hate to use the phrase sort of, but what they call Ben blocking, because they've got nowhere to go out to in the community, because there's a shortage of care. And I was gonna ask, actually, Michael, is this an issue in Australia?

Michael Hughes 1:17:55

On there, I'm glad you swapped over to me, because I was gonna say, Really, thank you both. Thank you both for doing this have been quite quiet, because my wife and I are caring for both my mother and my dad, who's now in a home. And so one of the things that I digress, I'll answer your question, Denise, one of the things that's really hitting me right now is that, you know, I'm we physically doing this with my parents. I'm listening to you guys. And you know, it is a big, and I'm not going to mince words, it's a big fear for us. And I'm, I'm lucky that you know, I mean, a couple are recognised or have privileged there. You know, so I can't imagine what I mean, all of you to think just getting on with it. But digress? Yeah, so I've been a bit triggered. I think that's the best way of explaining I've been a bit triggered with the show. But it's in a good way. A two year deal. Denise? Yes. One of the things that that is become quite obvious to me and Vicki in this time is that. So the social services that the government provides are a backup to families providing care for people. I can see I'm living that I can see that right now. And so, yeah, the big thing here is that the government have not switched on to the fact that there is this huge demographic, that will be a massive burden on the public purse. And there's no resources or no research going towards that. And yet, we have a shortage. We do have shortages of care homes. And then of course, depending on then the quality care home you get depends on what sort of, you know, wealth you have As well, we have a very, very stark contrast between the care home that my dad's in, compared to the care home that Vicki's grandmother is in. They are on opposite ends of the spectrum. And so yeah, we we have similar issues out here. But I really want to thank you too, for this conversation.

Berenice Smith 1:20:27

Thanks, very, very much. This has been enlightening. And I'm quite sure when we get feedback from this, we always do with our episodes, which we'll be happy to pass on. If people have got comments, or they want to offer any support to Denise and to Trish, then you can contact us at the podcast. Thank you for listening. We hope that you found Patricia and Denise as inspiring as we did. We'd love to hear from you on your thoughts on the issues that were raised in this episode. If you want to find out more about their work, please look in our show notes, where you can also find details of the transcript and how to donate to us via virtual coffee at KOFI. If you'd like to find out more about The Full Stop, our podcast or there's a topic that we haven't covered, then please reach out to us as we like to be as inclusive and diverse as possible. Our website is www.thefullstoppod.com where you can find links to our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You can also join our listeners list, which receive a newsletter that includes advice on mental health and our reflections as well as news from the wider childless community as ever, it's really important to let you know that you're not alone.