

Alzheimer's Association Listenline

Yvette Nicole Brown - Transcript

Glynn Washington: Yvette Nicole Brown was living in LA. She had a nice role on the TV show The Community. Every Sunday she would take the time to call back home to East Cleveland, Ohio and talk to her dad.

Yvette Nicole Brown: My dad's always been a very deep thinker and you know, he's someone that has practiced every religion there is, he's into health and fitness and you know, uh, just about every Sunday for hours, I would call him and we would talk and I've been trying to get my dad to move to LA for years

Glynn: But her dad was a Cleveland guy at heart and just couldn't make the leave. Then he started misplacing things a lot. He was even getting lost on his way to family events.

Yvette: When he started to forget things and he, he started to become afraid of what was happening. One day I said, dad, what do you think about moving to LA? Well, Yvette I think I might need to do that. Okay, bye.

and just hung up the phone and immediately started planning it because my thought is I got the yes, so let me just figure out what I can do.

Glynn: Yvette left LA and got on the first plane to Cleveland, but once she walked into his apartment, she could not believe her eyes.

Yvette: When I walked in and saw him, he was unto death.

He was almost catatonic. He had lost all this weight. He wasn't eating. Um, he, he was angry and he was scared and he was, um, surly at times and just not my dad, like 100% on my dad. Like there were moments when he would go to sleep and I would just sit in the living room and just weep. And I mean, like the ugly cry that Oprah talks about.

I would just cry because it was such a heavy load and I was by myself and I didn't know what I was doing because I hadn't researched Alzheimer's and dementia. I didn't know what was happening. I knew what it was, but I didn't know what it does. I didn't know what I was facing. I didn't know what to research, you know?

Um, if I had had the information before I went to get my dad, it would've changed everything because I would have been better prepared for what I was going to find.

Glynn: Getting a diagnosis of Alzheimer's is important. But, the earlier, the better.

Yvette: You want to know before you need it. You want to find out what's going on with them early enough so that they can be a part of the decision-making process for the rest of their lives.

When the time clicks in where they're unable to be an active participant in those decisions.

Glynn: When she finally got them home with her in LA, she started to see the signs of her old dad.

Yvette: Um, it was a week. I didn't, I didn't time it, but he started, you know, rejoining conversations and he started watching TV and started just engaging more.

Sometimes he says stuff that's so funny and so like insightful about his condition that I go, did we fix it? Did we solve it? like he's so like, he's so back to the guy, you know, some days, some moments that is just amazing.

Glynn: Of course, every day is different. There are the tough ones, but then there are the moments when the two connect like old times.

Yvette: Some days he's great and it's wonderful, and he won't need me as much. And there's other days where I know I'm going to be at his foot of his bed all day, you know, talking to him and making him feel safe, but it's okay and it's going to be okay because he has me and I have him and were going to make memories that I will remember for him.

And we're going to have a good life. And for the last, you know, six, almost seven years in December, we have, we've had a great time together and it is an honor. And on really good days he'll say to me, you know, thanks for coming to get me. Cause some days he remembers that I came to get him. You know, and, and that makes me happy that he understands that I saw his need and filled it because that's what he did for me my whole life.

Glynn: That was Yvette Nicole Brown on her father's journey with Alzheimer's. When something feels different, it could be Alzheimer's. Now is the time to talk. To hear more stories, we now return you to the Alzheimer's Association Listenline menu.