Sparks relight corners of Grandma's memory

Terry Gibb

Dear Ms. Farrell:

In a recent column, you wrote about getting grandma to write the story of her life. There is a wonderful book on the subject, called "How to Write the Story of Your Life," by Frank P. Thomas (published by Writer's Digest Books in Cincinnati, 1984).

The book gives plenty of "memory sparkers" to get you started, and holds your hand all the way through. I only wish that the book was published before my grandmother died.

A second help is one of the "Grandmother Remembers" books. It poses questions and leaves blanks for the older person (or anyone else) to fill in. My mother filled out one for my children and we all enjoy reading it.

Mrs. V.A.N., Plymouth, Mich.,

Dear Mrs. N.:

Thank you for the information on the books. For those who would like to get one or both of these books, they can be purchased through or ordered from most bookstores.

Dear Jo:

Last summer I was in a hurry to clean the outside of my upstairs windows. I had made arrangements with a home service to have them done, but when they didn't arrive, I decided to go ahead and do the job myself.

To make a long story short, I did not stabilize the ladder properly, and due to my impatience, I fell and fractured my ankle. I had many months in the hospital to contemplate my foolhardiness.

I am 74 years old and should have known better. Even though my ankle has healed, I still have, and probably always will have, swelling and discomfort.

Please warn your older readers to stay away from ladders. Even if they are careful and not impatient as I was, they are a danger to an older person's well-being.

Miss L., Toronto

Dear Miss L.:

Climbing ladders at any age can be dangerous. It is admirable to be independent at an older age, but when it comes to this dangerous activity, I agree with you — it is something to be avoided.

Dear Jo:

What is the best exercise for a person over age 65?

Mr. A.C., Victoria,

Dear Mr. C.:

Walking is probably the safest and best exercise for older persons. It is easy to do and inexpensive. To get the most out of this exercise, one should develop a definite planned routine — i.e. walking at the same time each day, for a specific period of time.

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