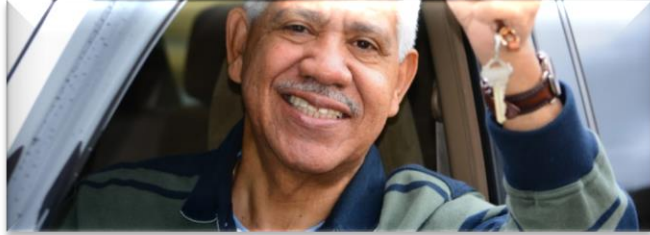


Naomi's Clinical Article:
Give Me My Keys!



Charles Bickworth's lips tighten in rage. He hisses: "You better give me my car keys!" His 200-pound body lurches forward, his voice menacing, he shouts at Janice, his 65 year old daughter. Hands clenched, he strikes hard. "Dad that hurt!" Janice cries in pain.

"You stole my car keys! Give them back, thief!"

88-year-old Charles reaches for his cane, threatening Janice.

"Dad," Janice pleads, "the doctor said you'll have an accident if you drive. You can't see enough to drive. I don't want you to get killed, or kill someone else." Janice's voice breaks into uncontrollable tears.

"I know what I can do and what I can't do."

Charles pounds the carpet with his cane, emphasizing each word. Janice, at her wits end shouts in despair, "Dad! You cannot drive anymore! Period!"

Her voice cracks, as she rushes to the phone. "Doctor, I can't handle my father. He won't take his medication. He insists on driving. I promised never to put him in a Home. Oh God! What do I do?"

(Validation theory)

Arguing with Charles will become a losing battle. His manhood is threatened. Driving means control. Each day, he loses control: his potency; his eyesight, his ability to think, to reason, to be independent. The more he loses, the more vehemently he denies the loss.

Charles never learned to deal with loss.

His self-defense was denial. Throughout his life, he submerged his emotions. He blamed the outside world. He had to save face when things went wrong. When he lost his job, he blamed the boss for discrimination. When he lost his keen eyesight, he insisted he had 20/20 vision. Charles is terrified of losing his identity, of death.

(Validation Techniques)

Empathize with his need to control.

Validation Worker: (Reminiscing) "Mr. Bickworth, you had an important job. What work did you do?"

Charles: "I was manager of Gates department store. I had 36 employees under me."

V.W.: A lot of people depended on you.

Charles: "Damn right! And they listened to me. Not like her." (He motions to his daughter.)

VW: (Exploring, using non-threatening words) "What do you want her to do?"

Charles: "GIVE ME MY CAR KEYS!"

VW: (Empathizing with his need to be independent) "Driving is important to you? (Reminiscing)
How old were you when you learned to drive?"

Charles: (His voice full of pride) "14 years old. I drove the company's truck. I was a good driver.
Never had an accident. You can ask anybody."

VW and Charles reminisce for the next four weeks, 2 times per week. Gradually, Charles begins to trust the worker, who listens and explores with empathy.

VW: One month later: (Imagining the opposite) "Is there any time in your life when you couldn't drive?"

Charles: (thinking back) "Yeah! I forgot about that. In the War, I got shot in the leg, and couldn't drive for 3 months."

VW: "What did you do?"

Charles: "My Sargent...his name was Tom...something- gave me a desk job. I checked ammunitions."

VW: "If you couldn't drive today, what would you do?"

Charles: "I don't know."

VW: "They need someone to check people in at the Senior Center. Could you help out?"

Charles: "Maybe I could. I write pretty well."

VW: "Let's try."

Charles need to be important and in control, slowly becomes met in the next six months. He is able to give his car keys to his daughter without a fight. Charles remained in his own home, with his daughter, until his death at age 90.