

GET A GRIP Susan!

My first career was in the restaurant business. I started as a hostess and then a food server, a cocktail waitress, and a bartender. I worked quickly into a management position. I wasn't very tolerant of lazy workers, crazy explanations, and lame excuses. In 1979 at an employee Christmas party, I was given a gift of a bright yellow apron emblazoned with big letters which read **"GET A GRIP"**.

It was a statement I made frequently in response to any craziness by my staff. I would say GET A GRIP and my employee would recognize my displeasure and frustration with their behavior. What did it mean? Cut it out. Wise up. Stop with the lame excuses. Don't lie to me. Get real. Stop goofing off. Just GET A GRIP!

I have come to realize that that is how I was then and how I am now. I like people with good common sense and a certain level of maturity. I'm not good with people who ask for advice and then not take it. I'm not good with people that have lame excuses for their bad behavior. I am not tolerant of people that make the same mistakes over and over. I am extremely intolerant of people that exaggerate every story or just blatantly lie. I am frustrated by people that don't accept responsibility for their actions. Given a chance, I would tell people with any of these rotten (as I see them!) behaviors to GET A GRIP!

So now the joke is on me. As his dementia progresses, Bob has become more and more delusional, super confused, and constantly mixed up. His lack of short-term memory causes him to repeatedly ask the same questions over and over. Bob's lack of long-term memory causes him to not know much of his or our personal history. He sees my suggestions and corrections as my being bossy. Bob's lack of common sense has him making odd comments. His lack of filter has him telling unacceptable

jokes and asking inappropriate questions. Bob tells the same crazy made-up story over and over. He tells lies and thinks they are truths. He recreates history. So many times a day, I find myself thinking, "BOB GET A GRIP"!

But thankfully I don't say it. Bob can't GET A GRIP. Bob can't control his behavior or change his comportment. Unlike my ex-employees, it is not his fault. Bob has no idea that his behavior is something that I consider to be annoying. It's just his disease. It's out of his (or my) control.

So as Bob moves further and further away from the Bob he once was, I must rewire my own old way of thinking and tell myself to GET A GRIP.

Old Habits die hard.





Old Ox Pacific Beach 1979 and today in my kitchen!