Go to Sleep!

The sleep apnea saga continue.

Bob was diagnosed back in October with severe sleep apnea (he has shallow breathing and has 52.3 episodes per hour when he wakes up to catch his breath). His equipment was ordered. With the help of the respiratory therapist, it was determined that Bob should start with the least invasive equipment–the nose pillows. These are the easiest to adjust to. I had been warned that people with Alzheimer's/Dementia do not adjust to the CPAP equipment, but I was upbeat and ready for the challenge. The equipment arrived in early November and the introductory period began.

Knowing that Bob would "fight" trying the CPAP, I tried to cajole him into wanting to give it all a try. Over the course of a week, I reminded him of these things over and over:

- This is incredibly special equipment that was ordered for him by his doctor
- I told him of other family members who wear a CPAP and are doing well due to it
- I called it a breathing machine to make it seem less foreign than calling it a CPAP
- I told him his heart would work better
- I told him how much better he is going to feel
- I told him his brain will work better and his memory will improve
- I told him that he'd be awake more in the day and we could go on more adventures
- I told him he could start by wearing it 5 minutes and work up to wearing it all night long

I also let the equipment sit by his bedside for the week before we attempted to wear it so he might get used to seeing it and accept it as something "normal".

Did any of these techniques work? Heck, no.

Bob would refuse to try. Bob would let me put it on him and then quickly wanted it off. He would wear it for 5 minutes and then pull it off. He would swat at my hand and get angry. He would say that the “colonel” spoke to him and told him that he didn’t need to wear it ever again. Bob would tell me that if I liked it so much, I could wear it. He would tell me that he sleeps great.

I spoke with the Kaiser respiratory therapist to see if there were any techniques that they could suggest. She said I had covered all bases. She was able to lower the air pressure but even with the lowest air flow setting, Bob said he couldn’t wear it. More like, wouldn’t try it.

Then along came my knee replacement surgery and I put all thoughts of getting him to wear the CPAP machine on hold. I felt I had enough going on.

Then comes this morning. Bob had slept from 8 pm to 6 am and then got up this morning and moved to his recliner. Within minutes he is nodding off & on. I sat and visited with him a bit and in between saying a few words, he would fall right back to sleep. Mid-sentence. It so painfully obvious that 10 hours of being in bed isn’t providing him much sleep.   I left him to sleep in his recliner and headed off to shower and dress.

Bob came into our bedroom looking a bit upset– he told me he thinks he is dying!!!! He goes on to explain that he couldn’t wake up and he couldn’t make his eyes stay open. He seemed very shook up. I consoled him that he wasn’t dying and that he was just sleepy. I attempted to tell him that he could start using the CPAP machine tonight and that he would get good sleep and not feel like he’s dying. Did he like that idea? Nope. He said he just needed a nap and he’d be fine. He has slept most of the day since then.

So it is one month post-knee replacement surgery for me and my focus will turn back to Bob and his sleep apnea.

Pray for a breakthrough for us. Bob’s physical health and my mental health depend on it.