

Krushan

Krushan, a middle aged British Asian Hindu, is largely bedbound and cared for at home by his wife Dhanashree. He is awaiting a visit from his older brother Abhijeet.

My brother is arriving from India, so the house is spotless; my pillows have been plumped and our snacks are plentiful. He's not been here since the changes have been made to the house which have helped me move around more easily. It's impressive, how much help is available. I just wish I'd known earlier. Everything has somehow seemed like a challenge, where life can only be made easier if you put the work in first.

My wife has asked that nobody comes today, including my carers. I heard her whispering to them as they left last night. It's not easy for her. She gets upset about some of the things that are being said by the neighbours and at the temple. About my children not doing all that should be done by the children of sick fathers. About all the help that we are getting. When the ramp was put in half the street seemed to come out to watch. And I know she doesn't want Abhijeet to see the carers here in our house.

I tell her that there are always those looking to pass judgement, from whatever community you're from. That after spending months getting flustered trying to keep track of all the different appointments and the endless telephone conversations, she deserves some assistance now that I'm settled at home. And she does look less tired. Even with the endless stream of visitors.

But still she insists that we shouldn't tell my brother. That he will say – as he will – that this is something that the family must take care of. That these people do not understand Ayurvedic medicine or what is required to allow me to attend the temple with peace of mind. That by handing myself over to them I am accepting their death warrant. He will remind us how it reflects on the family. That it will soon be time to find my daughter Garima a husband. That people talk.