

ANNESTASIS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Annestasis Podcast Episode 14 - A Children's Effective Partnership Through Relocating Their Mother

Podcast Description: The Wilkinson family is no stranger to relocation. These two sisters along with two other siblings watched their mother navigate a real estate career and move from their childhood home into several other spaces. As adults, they were charting their own paths and moved to various places in and outside the US. Listen to the process of moving their mother into her most joyful space leveraging a team approach with other trusted professionals.

Podcast Transcript:

Stacey Sade: Hello, my friends. This is Stacey Saed with the Annestasis podcast where we talk about life transformations that happen during and after a relocation. And we are so excited today because we've got not one guest, but two amazing women who I've just had the pleasure of spending, gosh, a week with. Was it a week?

Mary Grace Hennessy: It was a week.

Stacey Sade: Oh, my goodness. Okay, so let me introduce tea Mary Grace Hennessy and her sister, Elizabeth Wilkinson. These are beautiful women, and we have just had the pleasure and the joy of helping their mom move into a beautiful retirement facility and, just well appointed, gorgeous home. The reason that I wanted to talk to them, the reason that I think it will be interesting hearing their story is because they are one of the many people like us that are going through a journey with our parents. And it's not a one and done. It's a longer tale than that. And I can't wait for you to meet them and to hear their story. And after this break, I will be quiet and let them talk. So we'll be back in just a minute and we will hear more about the sisters and the move for their mother.

Stacey Sade: Okay, guys, welcome back. We are going to be talking to Mary, Grace, and Elizabeth about the journey that their mom has been on for several years that I had the pleasure of seeing, kind of the end result. And we just want to hear about, talk to me and tell our listeners about what that journey was like for you guys. When did it start and where, you know, how did we get here today?

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah, yeah. It's been quite, quite the journey. It's Mary Grace speaking, by the way. And we are two sisters of a group of four, their four siblings. And it was the four of us coming together, really, and deciding, back in October, that it was time for us to have the conversation with mom about really seriously considering moving into an independent living facility. And, you know, it's a hard thing. It's not something that our mother ever wanted, per se, but we realized that she was in a place where having a community with her was going to help enrich her life in a way that really isn't going to happen. But we grew up, in midtown in a big house. It was the corner of Cornwall. Midtown is a really beautiful neighborhood. And what's amazing about that neighborhood is now that mom is moving into this retirement community, there are so many of our old neighbors that are there. I mean, it is such a welcoming place for her, which is part of why, when we went to first visit it in October, we walked in and she knew three people that were like, hey, Peggy, you know, it's so good to see you. And, so that really was what made us really start the journey. I love that.

Stacey Sade: I love, and I want to just pause right there. I mean, really and truly, that is not everyone's story. Having four siblings operating in one accord for the betterment of their parents, that's a true gift. And as you shared, Mary M. Grace, the journey started back in. It's a historic neighborhood in the city of Memphis. That is beautiful. But what you shared very briefly was that there was community there. So at the beginning of this journey, which ended up where we are now, community was essential.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Essential, yes.

Stacey Sade: And the siblings acting together was essential. So if you start at Midtown, kind of what did the journey, what were some of the stop places there? You know, Elizabeth, we mentioned when she was your roommate.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Yes.

Stacey Sade: So there was, you know, if we leave Midtown, where do we go from there?

Mary Grace Hennessy: Well, it went from midtown to, she was in chickasaw gardens for a little while.

Stacey Sade: Another beautiful neighborhood.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Another beautiful neighborhood. Memphis. And then, over off a highland, in a condo that was there. And then back in with Elizabeth over at Clanlow, which is a neighborhood. It's like a sub neighborhood inside of midtown, off of Central Avenue. And each one of those moves I could tell you a whole crazy story about.

Stacey Sade: So we're gonna not, very excited.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah.

Stacey Sade: But did her world get bigger with each move, or did it shrink?

Elizabeth Wilkinson: I would say it got smaller.

Stacey Sade: It got smaller.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: It did. And I mean, I think more so with the last move, you know, she worked. She was still driving.

Stacey Sade: She was in real estate. She was in real estate. She was around town.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Oh, all over.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: All over. And with the last move, it coincided with her no longer driving.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: So I think that was really hard. It was a hard move.

Stacey Sade: and it shrunk her.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: It really shrunk her, her universe. And, you know, I'd been saying for a couple of years, hey, y'all, I think we've got to make a change with mother, you know, and it's very hard when they're not in town for concentrated periods. But they came in town for my wedding, and when we were all there together and everybody could see and really spend some time.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah, it took, it took about four days of us watching what was going on, and we're like, oh, yeah, no, it's time we gotta have this talk.

Stacey Sade: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. I also experience what you do as far as strong, independent mother and pushback on this thing. What would you say, in your mind are some of the biggest, resistant points for moving into such a lovely, well appointed community space?

Mary Grace Hennessy: I think that the mental process of realizing this is my last stop.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Is very scary. It was very scary to my mother, and, I don't think that was a step they wanted to take. and there's also the stuff. Right. There is so much. I mean, the stuff, you know, all of, all of her accouterments of the house. And, there's a lot of cherished things, you know, a gold, a goblet that we used for toasting and, you know, a fireplace, you know, holder that was a gift from, you know, mother's first mother in law. So, you know, it's just all these prized possessions, if you will, that are a part of how mom identified with herself.

Stacey Sade: That. There you go right there. The identification with the things that represented a life. So it's not like in your mom's condominium. She was, correct me if I'm wrong, she was entertaining for 25 anymore.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: No, exactly. But she still didn't want to let go.

Stacey Sade: She didn't want to let go. And again, you are singing my song. We are singing the same song, and it's what a lot of people are bumping up. So it's so needs to be held and honored. the fact that those things were a part of a life, that when the things are let go of the reality, it's like a cold splash of water in the face. You're not gonna be having. You're not gonna be hosting 25 people anymore.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Right.

Stacey Sade: That needs to be taken on in bite sized chunks of it does.

Mary Grace Hennessy: And it is something that you've got to process in whatever way you can. But yes, letting go of the dining room table and the sideboard and those things are hard. and for us, we realized doing that process of what stays, what goes, what's going to make it to the next location was something that we knew would be a lot. harder if mother had to sit with us and process every item and what's going to stay and what's going to go. So, in both, we went through two cycles to get to the point where we were able to move. One was a, ah, staging process where we got the condo ready for sale.

Stacey Sade: That level of decluttering depersonalization is what we call it.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Exactly. And m we had mom go visit with some friends for a few days while we did that first, cycle of change. And yes, we put away a few more clothes than we were supposed to, but for the most part, mom didn't miss much of anything. Once it was gone, it was kind of out of sight, out of mind. And, then the next cycle happened when we moved, to the new place this last week and mom went to visit our other sister who's up in Philadelphia. so Maggie got to be the host for a week while we worked on getting, mom's items, into their new location. And I have to say she was spectacularly, happy with where we landed. I think she was honestly blown away by what she saw when she arrived home to her new home. And everything was already set and put away, in large part thanks to you and your team, who just did such an amazing job of thank you. You know, getting the bed put in place, getting the china put where it needed to be put that came along for the journey. Getting the clothes put away, and in their rightful place. Getting the books situated in just the perfect way in the bookshelf.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: And, her lots and lots of knickknacks.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yes. Her lots and lots.

Stacey Sade: Beautiful things. Her beautiful things.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yes.

Stacey Sade: Well, something that I saw you guys do that I thought was, and I would love to find out kind of what you were thinking, but you also employed the wisdom of a family friend. And I love that because sometimes parents can hear things a little bit better from someone that is not one of their offspring. And I loved the wisdom that, her realtor slash friend slash contractor slash designer, Mark Duke, with Ware Jones Realty, what he offered the situation, it seemed like he was able to say things maybe that I couldn't say. You couldn't say, but he was able to say, nope, we're not doing that.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah.

Stacey Sade: And that was listened to. Am I correct in that?

Elizabeth Wilkinson: You're exactly correct.

Stacey Sade: Yeah. I mean, he could be the heavy.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: You know, she really wanted some chairs, extra chairs. The dining room chairs.

Stacey Sade: Yes, yes.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: And he was like, Peggy, they're just not going to fit and even though we said it, you know, Mark said it, she really heard it.

Stacey Sade: Yes. And that is lovely. How did you guys decide, or was there a thought process behind it about who was going to do what? There's a brother involved here. Poor Alan. We just. So Alan's lifting heavy things. Poor Allen. And anything that involved a

screwdriver. But did you guys have a conversation about who was doing what or did it just naturally happen? Because you guys just have a great relationship.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: We've worked together at five different companies.

Stacey Sade: Oh, I did not know this.

Mary Grace Hennessy: And all four of us. So Paulette's back. Go back to the 1980s, and you would see all four of us working together on the same day there on a few occasions.

Stacey Sade: Say no more. That in and of itself creates a team building situation that you cannot replicate. a beautiful french restaurant that was, It's legendary in Memphis. It's a true icon. So if all four siblings are doing something there.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Well, and we all attribute our wonderful work ethic to George Falls and Dawn Eshwick.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yes.

Stacey Sade: That's wonderful. That's perfect. Well, yes, I just vote yes to that. Well, that's wonderful. And it really speaks to the fact that you guys had. You were able to toss things back and forth to each other and knew that the other person had it. There's nothing more frustrating in my world is to toss a ball out there or a task, and then it just hit the ground.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah.

Stacey Sade: Because whoever I'm tossing it to didn't necessarily. I don't know. Well, with me, they didn't read my mind, which is, you know, and I'm about to.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Oh, that happens.

Mary Grace Hennessy: So. And part of it was, I mean, administratively, and there is a lot of admin. I don't want to underscore. Just. I don't want to understate just how much administrative logistics there are in terms of everything from the living will to the 14 different pieces of paperwork that the new facility needs to the sign off from the doctor.

And there's a lot of paperwork and logistics that go into getting your parent ready to go into a facility like this. and then it's also just all the administration of Comcast and the mail and all of the different credit cards and everything else that's going on logistically that mom needs just a little bit more help with now.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: which reminds me, I don't think we've turned off the utilities.

Stacey Sade: Well, after we get off this show, we'll, you know, one more thing is gonna pop into the mind. Well, I tell you what, it is a testament to your mom and a testament, to the example and the person that she is, that she has four advocates in her corner in the world in which I live. That is very rare and very beautiful. and I loved being a part of her journey. What we witnessed is that we were given, an opportunity to create home where somebody didn't necessarily have home. And one of the things that you did, that I beg people to do, and not only did you do it, you did it beautifully, which is remove the person from the situation. It is and will always look like moving, looks like a train wreck. At some point, everyone, including myself, is going to look at this and go, well, we're never going to get this done. I mean, there's just that moment that you think, well, we gave it our best shot, which is not going to work out. And not having that level of stress on the person actually making the boot. You gave her a beautiful gift. My gosh, she had a reveal. I hope, as a mother, that I am given that opportunity one day, just to be able to walk into something and have it totally set up. And I too.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Me too.

Stacey Sade: I mean, champagne chilled in the refrigerator. Good to go. Gorgeous. Well, I love that. Is there anything that I've missed in the journey of your mom's that you would like to share about this story? Before we kind of switch gears?

Mary Grace Hennessy: I wanna talk about now that she's there. I mean, she's been there now for a couple of days. She got there on Tuesday. it's Thursday, so it's only been two days. But literally at two in the afternoon, we're working with the retirement facility where she is. And they asked, oh, do you want help arranging dinner? And before an hour had passed, I ended up with my mother at a table for six, you know, three of whom were

people that she has known and, you know, didn't even realize. Didn't even realize, you know, they were there. And, you know, every time I spent the first night with her there, I haven't gone down in the elevator without us running into three or four people and, like, arranging, oh, you can ride with me to church on Sunday. And you can. I mean, the amount of. It's just such the right place for her to be. It's just not even funny.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: the community is so important at this age, and I think that. I think mom could live another 15 years. And you want it to be rich. You know, you really want her to have things to look forward to. Having something to look forward to is so key. And the list of activities, and they're interesting things I'm looking at saying, I wish I had time, to come do some of this stuff. Interesting speakers, movies, you, know.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah, there's a. There's a session on the Korean war this afternoon that she's going to. That, you know, there's like a lecture series that they're doing, and it is.

Mary Grace Hennessy: It's. It's just. It's a gift of.

Stacey Sade: It is hard to communicate to anyone who has got it firmly established in my mind that. That my last move is going to be a step up from a hospital room. I know that that's what's in the mind, because that was all that was available to them when they're parents. Yes, but the game has changed.

Mary Grace Hennessy: It has.

Stacey Sade: It really has. It's truly a community space, that is more life giving.

Mary Grace Hennessy: And one of the, folks that was at dinner with us that first night said to me, she leaned over and she says, you know, it really is a community where we all are here together for each other through the hard times that are gonna, you know, we're all gonna have deaths of friends that are gonna happen, and we're all gonna die together, and. But we're here together as a beautiful community. It was just, very powerful. The way she said all of that.

Stacey Sade: To me, it means the world. we moved to gentlemen in that same area, back from assisted living back into independent. And I can't tell you how many people, and I barely knew him. I encountered on the way that when they found out he was coming back, how much joy there was, it was like one of their buddies was coming back, and they were thrilled. And he, too met with so much joy and so much community. that's really the story. The bottom line is that it's not an easy journey. It was a four part journey from your mom, from midtown to where she is now. Am I correct? Four or five. Four or five. So there were steps of going through a, ah, really challenging time, which is a move. And now there is this opportunity for a new life. It's not going to make her any younger, but it may mean that the years that she feels better, I really think she will. Oh, I love that. I love that. Well, we're going to take a quick break, and then when we come back, I would love. You guys are professionals. You've worked five places together. I would love to hear just a little bit about maybe a relocation or two or three or eight that were as meaningful to you and what that looked like in your life as well. So we're going to come back in just a few minutes. We're going to be visiting with Mary Grace Hennessy and Elizabeth Wilkinson. This is Stacey with the Anestasis podcast.

Mary Grace Hennessy: This is a journey.

Stacey Sade: Let me take you on a journey. There will still be the journey when.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: You leave this planet. Leave it in a better shape than you found it, right? And that's kind of how we live.

Stacey Sade: Watch the journey on the Kazuki network. Okay, guys, we are back. We have unpacked the story of Miss Peggy and her new life, and she is probably living it much better than we are as we speak. we're excited about her, but you guys also are women who are professionals, and you have also had your journeys. Since this podcast is all about honoring the journey of new life after relocation, do you have any story, personally or two that you would like to share? on this topic, I have a.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Couple of moves I've moved many times. and I would say I'll pick two that I think were my biggest moves. One was when I finished graduate school, I was

living in Washington, DC, and I moved to San Francisco. It was 1996, and I decided I didn't want to pursue my. What I'd gotten my master's in, which was forensic science, and. Oh, wow.

Stacey Sade: Okay.

Mary Grace Hennessy: And I was done with the blood and the guts and the gore of forensic science and found a job, on the Internet. This is 1996. So when I told my parents I was moving across country to, work for a job that I found on the Internet, they thought I was bonkers.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: no, when she said she was going out for the interview, we thought she was bonkers. Yeah, we're scared she was gonna be like.

Stacey Sade: Cause it's not even a real thing. You're essentially talking about something that's not even real at the time.

Mary Grace Hennessy: But I relocated to San Francisco, and that move was. I just. I, can't tell you how happy I am that I just took the leap and, and moved to San Francisco and got to be a part of, you know, the world of, you know, it was the start of the Internet, really. and the experience of being in the city at that time. I think looking back, I know San Francisco's going through some challenges right now, but I freaking loved living in that city so much. And, there were far fewer things to move then than as I continued to accumulate a life of things. and so my last move was with my husband and I, we just moved into a new house. And it was because, we had started a software company together, and, we had just taken our a round of funding, and so we moved into a, ah, new home that was around the corner and is a beautiful home. And it's where we live now with our 14 and 16 year old child. And it's also where my husband is hanging out with, my kids right now while I'm here for a few weeks helping, subtle, mom.

Stacey Sade: So that's wonderful. Well, thank goodness to San Francisco, because, I mean, your life's calling now is in that world.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yeah. Yeah. So we. And we have a. We have our. We're on the next venture after that one. that we exited. it was a company called Smash Fly, and we exited in 2019. And, yeah, we're on our next venture now, which is called Grace blocks. And, it is a software company that helps you build stellar systems quickly, and we're having a blast.

Stacey Sade: I'm so glad. That's amazing. And what about you, Elizabeth? You've got an interesting story to tell.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Yes. So, in Memphis, I worked at a place called serves Shelby Residential and vocational services. I was there for, I think, from 92 to 96 or four and a half years. And, I had a good friend that owned an educational consulting company that she trained pharmaceutical companies on the computer. And she came down and she saw that I computerized the whole program and that I brought computers from home, wired them together, taught myself everything to manage these two programs. And, she was like, you can make a lot more money if you come work for me up in Philadelphia. So I decided to do it, and that's how I ended up in technology. So I went to work for her, and she was a friend that I'd known since I was two and a half, so.

Stacey Sade: Wonderful. A local connection. But you took the leap from. From here.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Yes. And I moved to Philly. And, was one of those things where I. My, sister had just had a baby, so I went down to New Orleans to help her with the baby they had. I packed everything up, and the truck was not supposed to get to Philadelphia for, like, two weeks, and it came early, so I don't know anybody in Philadelphia except my boss. And she and her boyfriend had to unpack my place. And so when I got there, it was a big reveal. They had placed all the furniture. Wow. It was crazy. But, I mean, she called me up saying, the truck has just arrived. And I'm like, I'm so sorry.

Stacey Sade: That is incredible. But I'm in New Orleans. What a boss and what a friend. Okay, you did receive that beautiful gift.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: I did.

Stacey Sade: Having someone place everything, how did that help you? It, was started in your world.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: It was cute because when I got there, all the decisions were made and the apartment was small, so, like, they had made all the right decisions. And, you know, it was great because I was in a completely new place, but it all felt very familiar because all my stuff was there and it was so easy that I wasn't focused on all that when I got up there those first few days and could get out and get to work and meet all my new colleagues and, you know, my new neighbors and learn about the city.

Stacey Sade: That is so important. You are singing a song that I sing all the time. Moving, relocating up, picking, up our things, and moving across is treated like calling a plumber. It's treated like it is a matter of function, and it's not. It is life altering. It is life giving or nothing. And in that relocation piece, I say it all the time. Companies will spend a huge amount of money to get somebody from point a to point b, but they leave them in boxes. And I have often said, my gosh, spend a little bit more and have someone who cares unpack them so that they can get there with all their faculties and actually go to work. But if somebody for two months is thinking about that arduous process in addition to trying to learn something new in a new city, it's like you've cut someone off at the knees.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: You really have.

Mary Grace Hennessy: You're so right. And I think about this in the terms of the software world. When we do implementations of new technology and everyone's focused on the go live, right, we got them live. And it's like, well, that's really. And, I'll equate the go live in the world of moving to. We got the boxes to the new place. Okay, we're done. Really, we just, now we get to begin. That's really like, you've just set the foundation so you can get started well.

Stacey Sade: In your company is the difference. I mean, if we compare apples to apples, to a major company that's got a, that's got a process, I'm in the middle of it now that there is no human aftercare. Once you sign up for it, you're just like, okay, there it is. And hopefully

you guys can figure it out. Figure it out. And the truth is, without that caring extra step, it's just, it's not useful.

Mary Grace Hennessy: Yes.

Elizabeth Wilkinson: Oh, it's not.

Stacey Sade: We're not useful. The computers aren't useful. It is so imperative. Well, this is. These are my takeaways from listening to your beautiful stories. And you wouldn't think after we spent so much time together that this would be like, yeah, yeah, yeah. They're telling me something already heard. I'm learning brand new things on a deeper level, just about hearing about this one area of your life. And so I thank you. Thank you to Mary Grace Hennessy, and thank you to Elizabeth Wilkinson. Not only for trusting Anestasis with some of the most important moments in your mom's life, but also, with your stories, which I think are more precious than anything. You will inspire others as you share, you know, your vulnerability around this subject. And I'm so grateful for your time. I'm so grateful for your new friendship. And I, must tell you that in the world that I live and the work that Anestasis does, I know we've done it right, that when the project is over, it's almost a tearful experience. It's almost tearful because you think, is this it? because it's just we've built a bond. And so I'm grateful for it. Thank you for listening to the Anestasis podcast, where we honor and listen to stories of life transformations through relocations. We'll be back soon with more episodes. So you guys tune in, subscribe. We're, on LinkedIn. I don't know. We've got a website. These things are on YouTube. It's magical. So please follow us.

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