their son in law, daughter in law or even their own children because they are no longer able to care for themselves.

Physical abuse can be defined as the use of physical force that can result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. This type of abuse 'may include but is not limited to such acts of violence as striking (with or without an object), hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, and burning.' It is not hard to lose our temper about even the most trivial of issues and for some people it is easy to take out their anger and frustration on those who are not physically able to defend themselves, who are under their control and therefore have no recourse to outside help. There are many Margaret Smiths out there who have to hide in a world of their own to try and forget the abuse they are required to endure everyday. It is not just in the home that this abuse takes place. In many Nursing homes the residents are mistreated and neglected by their carers as well. A twist of the arm to get a patient to comply with the attendant or using a bit of force while holding the patients face to get them to swallow their medication is not unheard of. If we were to be a fly on the wall in some homes, who knows what atrocities we would be witness to behind closed doors.

In the UK people may say that it is the system that fails these elderly people who are abused but in my mind it is society who should take responsibility. Sometimes we see injustice and look the other way because it is not convenient for us to get involved. It may due to the fact that we know the people who are participants of this kind of cruelty and are embarrassed to address the issue. But what kind of justification is that? Maybe we need to stop behaving like ostriches by burying our head in the sand and take on a little bit of accountability. People spend most of their lives caring and providing for their children and what a reward it is for them that at the end all that they should be subjected to humiliation, degradation and suffering. How we treat our parents or elders will directly or indirectly be imbibed into our children. How we treat them is the way we ourselves are likely to be treated when we are no longer in control of our faculties or are unable to look after ourselves. You must have heard of the saying 'what goes around comes around'...

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