

Rita Roth video transcript

My name is Rita Roth, and I live in sunny Westcliff-on-Sea.

I'm a very sociable person, and I love people.

I was in the shipping industry. Because it was all male dominated, I was genuinely the only woman. I realised it was sink or swim. So, I woke up pretty quickly. And that changed my life.

I've done other things along the way. At a young age, I, when I was in my teens, I started volunteering. And as I withdrew from the shipping industry very slowly, so I replaced it with the care industry. I also started fundraising for them as well, which I've carried on doing, but just for the local Jewish Care resource centre which is a community centre and sheltered housing, and Haven's Hospices, which is our local hospice—because I feel very passionate about the hospice movement.

And then when my mother needed care, they came to my rescue. We used the homecare team. I called them my angels. They were amazing, and allowed my mum to stay in her flat for that much longer.

It was obvious she needed to go into residential care. I opted to come to Rosetrees, because it wasn't about my convenience (and believe me, the journey is horrendous), it was about care for my mum. And my goodness me, they went over and above. They were outstanding.

And it didn't just stop to my my mum (and I'm going to get quite tearful), it also extended to me. And when days were hard, they were magnificent.

I'd been asked to make several decisions along the way in the last 18 months. When they ask you "would you change the DNR—the instructions for resuscitation?" And I stood one day in that corridor crying my eyes out; they're asking me to murder my mother, but the support network was incredible—and is still ongoing.

And when people ring me and say "are you alright?" The answer is yes, because I knew it was going to happen, so I was prepared as much as one can ever be prepared. Yes I cried when it happened. I wouldn't be human if I didn't. But she knew that she wasn't living in the true sense of the word. She had enough. And quite honestly, at 93 1/2 years, with all her massive problems, she was right—it was enough!

We are all masters of our own destiny. That's my philosophy. Go for it.