

How To Convince Your Parents It's Time to Move

"This is my home and I'm not leaving. I can take care of myself and that's that," says your mother emphatically, when you quietly suggest that you want to take her to visit an Assisted Living Community. Now what do you do? The signs have been creeping up for weeks. Your Mom left the burner on for two days, and there are unused medications still on the counter.

How many times has that scenario played out in families all over the country? When it occurs, everyone is frustrated and at first maybe nothing happens. It takes a frightening incident or two to convince everyone that a change must be made.

Any change will involve the differing attitudes and values of the parents. Also important is the relationship you have with your folks, the one you had as a child and the one you have now. Asking a parent to let go of control in his life will understandably be tough. From independence to dependence is an emotional journey that may bring out fear, anger and depression. The bottom line is, what will be best for the parent.

There's no sure-fire way to say exactly what will work for everyone, but here are some ideas to consider when trying to convince your parents it's time to make a change.

1. Plan for the future. Know in advance that it will take several "little discussions" to get parents used to even hearing about a move. Even if your parent doesn't seem to hear you, they do take in a little bit of information. Many people need time to intellectually and emotionally process thoughts.
2. Present the plan for the move in an optimistic, honest, adult-adult manner. Go over logical reasons for the move.
3. Use your best sales technique in pointing out the disadvantages of staying in the house and the advantages of a move. Name some of the perks, like safety and companionship. Talk about the benefits of not having to maintain a home and yard.
4. Be very patient with a stubborn parent. After all, he's dealing with a huge change in his life. Keep going over and over the practical reasons for a move. Remember to ASK and not DEMAND.
5. Give your parent some options to choose from, such as, "Dad, would you rather be in "Place A" closer to uncle Bill or in "Place B" with a view of the mountains?" Let it be their idea as much as possible.
6. Use some humor, if appropriate. Make the move sound like an adventure.
7. Ask for professional advice from your parent's doctors. Our parents often place more value on what their doctor says than what their family says.
8. Enlist the help of your parents trusted friends such as a minister, rabbi, attorney, neighbor or other family member, in the decision to move. Ask them to be of support and to offer encouragement for the move.
9. Talk to your parent about having choices. Talk to them about the option of moving elsewhere if they don't like it.
10. Ensure your parent that special personal items will be included in the move and everything else will be carefully taken care of. Even though you may be arranging for the physical move of your parent, they are likely feeling as if they must make all of the decisions about the process. There is little you can do about all of the worries your parent has about moving. It's human nature to worry about things that will never happen.

Remember to take things as slowly as you possibly can. You are accustomed to moving at a faster pace than your parents. They have lived in their home for perhaps fifty years or longer. They need time to reminisce, to talk and to process thoughts. If you turn their life on end and move too quickly, you'll find that there are emotional ramifications that are longer-lasting than if you take the time up-front to work through things.