

Catholic Caregivers

'Caregiving is pro-life!'

Should Mom or Dad Move In?

Sometimes honesty hurts, but in the long run, it may cause the least amount of pain for you and your parent if you're seriously considering having Mom or Dad move in with you.

Any discussion about this new living arrangement needs to begin with two key questions. First: Have other possibilities been considered? And second: Is this something *both* generations want?

If you're considering having your mother or father move into your family home, remember that adjusting to such an arrangement takes a commitment by your parent, by you, and by your family. Often the emotions each felt before the move—worry, stress, guilt, anger, jealousy and so on—aren't eliminated by the new arrangement; unfortunately, they're intensified.

Sometimes the move just isn't right, for a variety of reasons. It's nobody's fault that Dad is a late riser and you have a house full of young children who are up at the crack of dawn every day.

It's nobody's fault that your house is already too small and simply couldn't accommodate one more person.

Remember that adjusting to such an arrangement takes a commitment by your parent, by you, and by your family.

It's nobody's fault that you were recently promoted at work and right now your new duties leave you little time for anything else.

It's nobody's fault that you and your parent get along better with a little more space—physical and emotional—between you, and that living under the same roof will bring up old issues and attitudes toward one another that neither wants.

Is it because I'll feel so guilty if I don't? It's better for both of you to be honest from the beginning. The hurt from hearing "this won't work" is less painful than the hurt of living in a situation that could possibly tear the family apart.

Sit and talk with your Mom before the need arises

St. John the Caregiver, pray for us.

for any move, a move anywhere. How does she feel about the idea? She may appreciate the offer, but not want to accept that plan. Maybe she likes the idea of being with other seniors in a community setting. Maybe the thought of moving in with you, even though she loves you dearly, would be her last choice not her first. Or maybe this discussion would be very comforting to her.

You need to ask yourself: Why do I want to do this? Is it because I have to? Is it because I'll feel so guilty if I don't?

You need to ask yourself: Why do I want to do this? Is it because I *have* to? Is it because I'll feel so guilty if I don't? Is it because my parent or siblings or other family members are in some way forcing me to do it?

Or do I want to do this? Is it an opportunity for my children to get to know my parent better? Is it a chance for me, in some way, to give something back to my mother or father? Is it an opportunity for both of us to spend time together, time that is passing so quickly?

When the daily grind begins to take its toll—and having anyone of any age move into a household can stir things up—you need to have that basic reason to fall back on.

Yes, today you're tired but . . . Yes, today was a hard day but . . . Yes, tempers flared today but . . . You know why you agreed to do this. You know why this is good not just for your parent but for you. □

***Most Holy Spirit, guide me
on my journey as a caregiver.
Each step of the way I need you.
I don't know how long this trip
will last. Please give me comfort
and rest when I'm done. Amen.***

From "The Little Book of Caregiver Prayers"

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