Ask Your Family Doctor-Winter 2013

Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD, a.k.a. Dr. Rachael answers your questions.

December 4, 2013 By Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD

Q: I'm returning home to live with my parents, in part to help take care of them. What can I do to ease the transition for both parties?

When you find your-self back with your parents, both parties can feel as if they've journeyed back in time to a more complicated place. Here are some things to keep in mind that will help make the transition as smooth as possible:

Allow your parents to maintain some level of self-sufficiency. Why? Because if mom or dad starts to feel useless or bullied, you will see an even greater decline in their physical and mental health and well-being. This can sometimes trigger depression, so don't start treating them like they're your children.

Respect your parents' space and their rules. You're in mom and dad's home, so be mindful that they're probably attached to certain objects and ways of doing things. Instead of breezing in and trying to rearrange, redecorate or rid their rooms of things they value, find ways to make those objects and rules work for you. Yes, times have changed, but one thing should be constant: the love and respect you have for each other.

Stay active. This provides an outlet you can use to mentally escape and blow off steam when negative issues or feelings surface at home.

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