



Ask an Expert The Emotional Side of Deciding Whether or Not to Move

Question: My aunt and uncle have lived in the same home for many years. It's a big house in a good neighbourhood, and I have tried to talk them into selling now and enjoying the profits from their home while they still have the health to do so. But they don't want to move, and have decided instead to adapt their home and stay as long as they can. I think they are putting off the inevitable and making a foolish financial decision. How do I convince them to downsize instead?

You can see a number of excellent reasons why your relatives should move now, and if emotions were taken out of the equation, they may agree with you. However, your aunt and uncle have made this place their home for many years, and it may be difficult for them to face a "large" change like downsizing all at once. Sometimes, even when you can show them a long list of pros and cons that point to selling their home, emotional attachment wins. In that case, it is usually better to take a softer, more incremental approach in supporting elders through the changes that come with aging.

Emotions are as Important as Rational Decisions

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" is a very appropriate saying when it comes to helping seniors consider the options available to them as they age. We apply it to ourselves at Changing Places, and recommend it for anyone supporting family or close friends through the process of making changes to their home environment because of aging.

Small Changes Can Pave the Way for Larger Changes

At Changing Places, our client is always the person who is moving, or having changes made to their home so they can age in place. We like to involve supportive family members and companions wherever they are available, and recognize the physical, emotional and sometimes financial support of key people like adult children of our clients. Sometimes our first contact with a family is for a small adaptation, like reorganizing key living spaces and decluttering. This frequently helps to build a base of trust between ourselves, our clients and the people who support them.

Accentuate the Positive Results

Another factor in the trust relationship is to help our clients look ahead to freedom from chores that have become too difficult, and a return to a more independent way of life. We want our clients to move from "surviving" to "thriving" because of the changes they make – but that doesn't always happen all at once.

In fact, because our company policy is built on caring for our clients, we see a high percentage of repeat business as people's need for support and care grows. What started out as moving a bedroom to the main floor might become a basement clearout, and then a full downsizing a year or two later. After living in a condominium for a few years, a former client or their family may call us again when they decide that assisted living would be a better fit. At each step of the process, we do only as much as our client needs to support their own happiness and health.

Our team is made up of Certified Seniors Advisors, and we are members of the Better Business Bureau. If you would like some help determining the needs of family members or close friends, encourage them to call us for a free one-hour consultation.

Call Changing Places at 250-721-4490 for a free consultation. We're always happy to hear from you!