



**Making your Parents' Move  
A Comfort Move**

## Tips for Adult Children and Family Friends Helping Older Adults Move

### Keep your "Eyes on the Prize."

It's not unusual for an older mover, especially one who has lived in the same home for many years, to be overwhelmed at the task of moving. Often this move represents "one more loss" in an unhappy journey. Your parent may be stymied, depressed and arbitrary in decision-making, confused or angry. Your siblings may be less than helpful with the burdens of packing or the disposition of material items. Remind yourself every day that Mom/Dad's emotional comfort through this transition is "the prize." The rest is just stuff.

### Slow Down.

Keep sorting sessions brief (two or three hours at the most). Constant decision-making is emotionally exhausting. Accept that some days you will accomplish far less than you had hoped. It is fine for you to be directed toward your goal, but help your parent say "good-bye" to things by listening to the stories (again) and honoring their memories

*Bonus tip:* Senior move managers use green dots to mark items going to the new home, but you may want to use gold stars or similar happy (and removable) stickers to put on the "must-have" belongings. Keep it positive: acknowledge without argument which items are treasured (even though it's clear Grandma's antique breakfront won't fit in that studio apartment.)

See [Make a Floor Plan](#) below.

### Stop. Look. Listen.

Your parents' priorities may be different from yours. If books are very special to your Mom, she may need to know what will happen to them before she is willing to focus on other issues. Dad may prefer that old, worn out recliner to a newer chair in better condition. Do not assign your values or attach disparaging descriptions to belongings they value and want to keep.

### Make a Floor Plan.

Make a scale model of the new home and "play house" with pieces cut to size. As your parent identifies items to keep, put the pieces on the floor plan. When it becomes evident that keeping the dining table means the sofa won't fit, you have only made the options clear. Your parent is making the decision.

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#### Do, do, do what they've done, done, done before.

Your parent is experiencing a lot of change. It's comforting to know some things will stay the same. Replicate their old environment as much as possible. Taking lots of pictures will help you easily recreate the look and feel of the former home. Then make a photo collage or burn a CD to give your parent a tangible record of a cherished past.

#### Accept their Gifts Graciously.

Mom or Dad may want to give you things, including some you are not especially happy to receive. Take them anyway. Store them in your closet if you must, but accept these gifts graciously. Knowing that cherished items are with family and friends can bring comfort and peace of mind.

#### It's Your Presence - not Your Packing - that Matters.

Be realistic about how much time you can devote to the project. On average, it takes 40-60 hours to sort, pack and unpack a typical 3-bedroom home for a move into a typical 1-bedroom apartment (not including time to acquire and assemble packing materials.)

If your time is limited, use it to help your parents prepare emotionally for the move, and contact Comfort Moves for professional help.

And when the job is done, we go away. Your parents will love what you've done to help them make an efficient, worry-free and comfortable move into a lovely new home.

Often our first call is from an adult son or daughter, or a grandchild seeking help beyond what the family and friends can reasonably provide. Comfort Moves' family-friendly service frees you to spend your time giving your parents the loving emotional support only you can give.



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