

Ask Miriam...

Individuals and families in the community are faced with challenging issues and concerns regarding their social, emotional and psychological health. Through the cooperation of **The Jewish World**, Jewish Family Services will offer responses.

Q. Dear Miriam,

My mother moved to be near me about two years ago. She lives in her own apartment, but her needs are increasing. I have two siblings, but they don't want to hear about mom's needs or the changes that I see on an almost daily basis. While I am happy to have mom here, caregiving is becoming a burden for me and I find myself feeling angry and resentful towards my siblings. They are coming to visit, a fairly rare occurrence, and I would like to know how to let them know how I feel?

I do not want to upset my mom.

Resentful Sibling

A. Dear Resentful Sibling,

In almost every family one child, often the daughter, assumes the burden of care for an elderly family member. There are a couple of issues here. The first is that you need to bring in help for you in your care giving responsibilities. You can talk with someone from Jewish Family Services who can help you assess what you need and find the resources. You may also want to speak with someone about the upcoming visit so you can plan how you will handle the situation. Most importantly, speak with someone about your feelings so they can help you cope and find ways to take care of yourself.

In general, you will need to let your siblings know that you need their help. Be prepared with specific ways in which they can help such as: coming to stay when you want to go away on vacation or helping to cover respite care; taking the time to be aware of her medical issues; if mom is able taking her to visit with them; and visiting with mom on a regular basis.

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Q. Dear Miriam,

Our father is in his own house, but will be soon moving into an assisted living facility. The house is full of stuff and my brother is coming to help clean out the house so we can put it on the market. Our time is limited and we don't want to go through everything so we thought we could have an estate sale and let their staff price the good things and get rid of the other things.

If we get our father involved, we are worried it won't happen. We would like to move him and then clean out the house.

My children have expressed their upset at this plan saying that they want some things from the house to remind them of grandma and grandpa.

What should we do?

Stuck With the Clean-up

A. Dear Stuck With the Clean-up,

You can turn a tough situation into a valuable one with a little effort. Your father needs to be part of this project. You need to keep him on task, but let him choose what he wants to take with him. Most assisted living facilities allow people to bring items, both furniture and personal belongings, with them.

Let the grandchildren go to the house and work with their grandfather to pick out meaningful items. While it is painful, your father should be pleased that there will be a legacy as represented by the items the grandchildren take. Each item has a story, which should be preserved.

You and your brother might also want to pick out some items that have meaning to you rather than only seeing a big chore ahead.

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Miriam Adler, A.C.S.W., C.S.W., is assistant director of J.F.S. She answers most frequently asked questions. Please send questions to "Ask Miriam," c/o Jewish Family Services of NENY, 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY 12208 or e-mail madler@jfsneny.org or call 518-482-8856.