



STAGES of SENIOR CARE

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Making the Best Decisions

by Paul and Lori Hogan

Chapter 2: Tips: How Parents Should Talk to Adult Children

- **Be assertive . . .** You may be patronized, put down, or abused, even by family members. Assertiveness involves figuring out what you need in a specific situation and stating that clearly so that the other person can't fail to understand.
- **. . . but not aggressive.** Negative, personal attacks on the other person may make you feel good temporarily, but it will probably enforce the other person's negative perception of you.
- **Be selective.** Save your assertive behavior for situations in which it is most important. In some circumstances, it may be easier to walk away or go along.
- **Optimize your energy.** Look for places and times in which you are most effective in getting what you need out of conversations. If you are more on your toes in the morning, arrange to meet then.
- **Recognize possible barriers.** If you have trouble hearing, get a hearing aid. If you are forgetful, make lists.
- **Avoid sounding overly dependent.** Seek social contact with people who encourage you to do things for yourself. Avoid spending lots of time in situations where everything is done for you.
- **Raise the issue.** Everyone knows there are important, unspoken issues, and everyone tends to shy away from them. So brave it and raise the subject yourself. Tell your son that you want to talk about your will or your power of attorney.
- **Defend without defensiveness.** If your daughter wants you to give up your car keys, calmly offer to take a driving test. Or, offer a compromise: you'll drive less and not at all at night.
- **Look for points of agreement.** Even if you disagree with 90 percent of what your children are saying, find points of agreement. That's a good starting point for resolution, and it demonstrates that you are capable of listening and evaluating.

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