



# Oh Momma Mia, Oh Momma Mia!

**Q**

Dear Adia,

I am a 46 year old self described “momma’s boy” living in Manhattan Beach. I have a wife and three beautiful daughters ages 7, 9, 14. Life is good and a bit crazy! Recently the pressure has multiplied with the failing health of my mother Margie who lives alone in my boyhood home located in Rancho Palos Verdes. She used to be independent, active, and even helped us with the kids weekly. Recently we have seen a change in her moods and energy. My dad died 4 years ago and my mom broke her hip last year (falling in home), and as result, she no longer wants to drive. We try to visit frequently but my wife and I know it’s not enough. I love my mom but I feel helpless. What can we do to reverse this downward spiral?

Warmest regards, Momma’s Boy

**A**

Dear Momma’s Boy,

Aging is inevitable, but getting older doesn’t mean getting sick. The body naturally declines with the lack of physical activity, increased refinement of processed foods and as a result, worsening of our diet. Just because an older adult has retired at the age of 65 doesn’t mean they “retired from living.” Aging simply means that they have to work harder at maintaining an optimal level of functioning - a “new” level than when he or she was 20, 30, 40 or 50 years of age. That said, there is a lot you can do to ensure the aging process of your mother go as smoothly as possible and help identify her “new” optimal level of functioning. By doing so, you can reduce the risk of injury, neglect, accidents and equally important, give you peace-of-mind knowing mom is safe and not home alone.

**1. Know as much as possible** about the things she can do alone versus the things she needs assistance or can no longer do alone. Start with a list of her daily chores (AKA “activities of daily living”) such as meal preparation, medication reminder, housekeeping, bathing / incontinence, dressing, and transportation. From this list, determine the degree of assistance she needs to do each task. If she needs help for more than 2 lifeline tasks, you must strongly consider hiring a caregiver or care companion. If not, you run the risk of her leaving the burner on if she tries to cook for herself, forgetting to take her life-sustaining medication, or falling while bathing. Who will help her in these situations?

**2. Where there is smoke, there’s fire** means that if something looks or sounds bad, something is wrong – don’t ignore it and pretend it will go away. Accepting the fact that mom needs support to keep her safe is the first step towards ensuring she lives an easier and more enjoyable life at home. The second step is to find the right caregiver or care companion for her.

**3. Hire Professional Caregiver** – Don’t impose on your friends, neighbors or spouse to care for your mom, the best and most reliable solution is to hire professional caregiver(s) whose job duty is to make your mom’s life easier. A professional caregiver will drive your mom to appointments, prepare her meals, clean her house, remind her to take her medications, assist her with a sponge bath or full bath and/or dressing, run errands, as well as ensure her daily experience at home is safe, happy and comfortable. Consider whether mom needs a live-in caregiver or a live-out caregiver.

Don’t make this decision in the midst of a crisis - it’s hard to think straight while seeing red! Prepare now by creating a short term and long term care-plan of action. Empower your mom by including her in the decision making process of accepting help (when, where, how and why). It will make a significant difference!

Yours Truly, Adia LLC



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