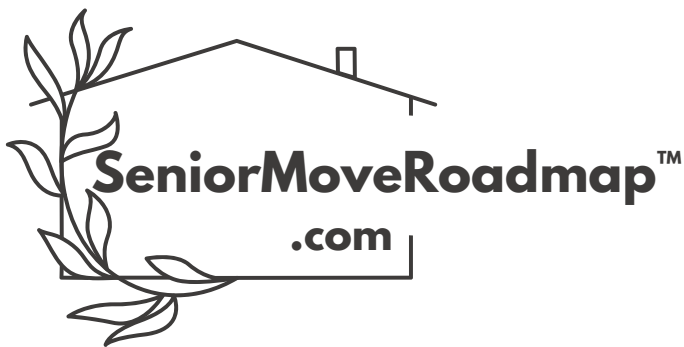


Talking with your Parent

A guide for the conversations that matter most — while there's still time to have them



Some of the most important conversations aren't about logistics at all. They're about what your parent actually wants — while they can still tell you.



Part of the Senior Move Roadmap™ system
— SeniorMoveRoadmap.com

Included Within

- How to raise the hard subjects gently — with words that open the conversation instead of shutting it down
- The questions that surface what truly matters to your parent: independence, dignity, where and how they want to live
- How to talk about medical wishes without it feeling like you're planning for the worst
- The conversation about the home — what it means to them, separate from what it's worth
- Belongings, heirlooms, and the small things that prevent big conflicts later
- What to do with their answers — how to capture them, share them, and honor them when the moment comes

Why This Guide Exists

There is a version of this process where your parent's voice is at the center of every decision — not because the family guessed right, but because someone asked, and someone listened, while there was still time.

This guide is about those conversations. The ones most families know they should have but don't quite know how to start. What does your parent actually want, if they can't live at home anymore? What matters most to them — independence, comfort, staying close to what they know? What do they want done, and not done, if they can't speak for themselves?

These aren't medical questions or legal questions. They're human ones. And they're easier to have on a Tuesday afternoon than in a hospital hallway.

Nothing in this guide will tell you what your parent should want. It gives you the words to ask, the space to listen, and a way to hold onto what they tell you so it's there when it matters.

Keep in mind: doing this perfectly isn't the goal, and you don't have to do it all at once. Starting this process — even imperfectly, even one section at a time — is itself the thing that protects your family. Begin where you can. The rest will follow.

Please Note:

These conversations don't have to happen all at once, and they don't have to go perfectly. A ten-minute talk that opens one door is worth more than a two-hour talk that never happens. Start where it feels possible. The rest will come.



Before You Sit Down

A few things worth remembering before you start any of these conversations.

This is their conversation, not yours. You're there to ask and to listen — not to steer them toward the answer you think is right. If you walk in knowing what you want them to say, they'll feel it, and the door closes. The goal is to hear what they want, even if it isn't what you'd choose for them.

They may not be ready, and that's allowed. Not every parent wants to talk about this, and not every moment is the right one. If they shut it down, don't push. Say "okay — whenever you're ready, I'm here," and mean it. Coming back later is always better than forcing it now. Sometimes the best thing you can do is plant the seed and walk away.

One conversation at a time is enough. You don't need to cover everything in one sitting. A ten-minute exchange about one topic — what matters most to them about where they live, or what they'd want in an emergency — is worth more than a two-hour conversation that overwhelms both of you. Go slowly. There will be other afternoons.

Let them lead with what they care about, not what you need to know. You may have a list of practical questions. They may want to talk about the garden, or their neighbor, or something that happened in 1978. Let them. The practical answers often come tucked inside the stories, and the willingness to listen to what they care about is what earns the trust to ask about the harder things.

It's okay if it doesn't go perfectly. The conversation may wander. They may get emotional, or you might. They may say something that surprises you or something you disagree with. All of that is fine. The point was never to conduct a perfect interview. The point was to sit with them, ask with love, and listen. That's enough.

Care Preferences

Why This Conversation Matters

Knowing what quality of life looks like to your parent helps ensure future decisions reflect their values instead of guesses made in a crisis. This conversation gives them a voice in how they want to live.

Emotions That May Come Up

- Fear of losing independence
- Anxiety about becoming a burden
- Sadness about imagining decline
- Relief that their wishes are being considered

Key Questions to Ask

- What matters most to you in daily life — independence, privacy, social activities, proximity to family, or staying close to your current community?
- If you could no longer live safely at home, what kind of environment would feel most comfortable?
- How much help with daily tasks (bathing, dressing, meals, medication) would you be okay accepting?
- Would you prefer a smaller, quieter setting or a larger, more active community?

How to Bring It Up Gently

- “Mom, I’ve been thinking about the future and I want to make sure I understand what’s most important to you.”
- “If we ever had to make choices about where you live, I want to honor what you want. Can we talk about that?”
- “You’ve always valued your independence. I’d love to know what a good day looks like for you down the road.”

What to Do Next

- Record their answers clearly
- Review and update every 1–2 years
- Share key points with siblings
- Bring these preferences when touring communities

My Thoughts / Notes

Medical Preferences

Why This Conversation Matters

Clear medical wishes prevent family conflict and unnecessary suffering during a health crisis. Knowing what “a good outcome” looks like to them brings peace of mind for everyone.

Emotions That May Come Up

- Fear of losing control over their body
- Discomfort talking about serious illness or death
- Anxiety about being kept alive artificially
- Relief from having their voice heard

Key Questions to Ask

- What does a “good outcome” look like to you if you become seriously ill?
- Are there medical treatments you would want — or definitely not want — in certain situations?
- How do you feel about life support, feeding tubes, or being placed on a ventilator?
- Who would you want making medical decisions for you if you couldn’t speak for yourself?

How to Bring It Up Gently

- “I want to make sure I’m honoring your wishes if something ever happens and you can’t speak for yourself.”
- “Talking about this is hard, but it would give me so much peace of mind to know what you want.”
- “Have you thought about what kind of care you would want if you got really sick?”

What to Do Next

- Complete or update a Medical Power of Attorney and Living Will / Advance Directive
- Store documents where at least two people can easily find them
- Consider having a family meeting to discuss

My Thoughts / Notes

The Home

Why This Conversation Matters

The family home is often both an emotional anchor and a major financial asset. Understanding your parent's wishes prevents assumptions and future family disagreements.

Emotions That May Come Up

- Strong attachment and nostalgia
- Anxiety about losing their “home base”
- Concern about fairness to children
- Fear of burdening the family with maintenance or sale

Key Questions to Ask

- What does this home mean to you — a source of memories, a financial asset, both?
- Do you have any specific wishes about what should happen to the house?
- Would you like to stay in the area, or are you open to other locations?
- Are there any modifications you've thought about to make the home safer?

How to Bring It Up Gently

- “This house has been such an important part of our family. I'd love to understand what it means to you.”
- “Have you thought about what you'd want to happen with the house down the road?”
- “I want to respect your wishes — can we talk about the home and what feels right to you?”

What to Do Next

- Document their wishes in writing
- Discuss potential home modifications for aging in place (if relevant)
- Start gathering important documents (deed, tax records, HOA info)

My Thoughts / Notes

Belongings & Heirlooms

Why This Conversation Matters

Having these conversations now prevents misunderstandings and conflict among siblings later. It also gives your parent comfort knowing their wishes will be honored.

Emotions That May Come Up

- Sentimentality and attachment to possessions
- Anxiety about things being thrown away or undervalued
- Guilt about “burdening” children with stuff
- Joy in passing meaningful items to loved ones

Key Questions to Ask

- Are there specific items (furniture, jewelry, artwork, photos, heirlooms) you want to go to certain people?
- What should happen to the rest of your belongings?
- Are there things you’d like to give away or donate while you’re still here?
- Do you have a list of who should receive what?

How to Bring It Up Gently

- “You have so many beautiful things with special meaning. Have you thought about who you’d like to have them someday?”
- “I’d love to make sure the things that matter most to you go to the right people.”
- “Would it feel good to start passing down a few special items now?”

What to Do Next

- Talk with an attorney to create or update a personal property memorandum
- Take photos of special items and note who should receive them
- Consider starting small gifts now while your parent can enjoy the reactions

My Thoughts / Notes

Pre Planning & Final Wishes

Why This Conversation Matters

Discussing funeral and burial wishes relieves an enormous burden from the family during an already emotional time. Knowing your parent's desires brings comfort and clarity.

Emotions That May Come Up

- Discomfort talking about death
- Relief from getting wishes on paper
- Anxiety about burdening children with decisions
- Peace from having control over their legacy

Key Questions to Ask

- Have you done any pre-planning for a funeral, burial, or cremation?
- Do you have a preference for burial, cremation, or other arrangements?
- Are there specific songs, readings, or people you'd like involved?
- Where is all this information kept?

How to Bring It Up Gently

- "I hope we have many more years together, but I'd feel better knowing your wishes if the time ever comes."
- "Have you thought about what kind of service or arrangements you would want?"
- "This is hard to talk about, but it would mean a lot to me to know what you prefer."

What to Do Next

- Locate or create a funeral/burial plan
- Note location of important documents (will, trust, insurance policies, etc.)
- Record them in this workbook
- Make sure at least two family members know where everything is stored

My Thoughts / Notes

Notes / Thoughts

Care Preferences

Medical Preferences

Notes / Thoughts

The Home

Belongings & Heirlooms

Pre Planning & Final Wishes

Next Steps & Add'l Resources

If you started even one of these conversations, you've done something most families never get to. Not because other families don't care — but because no one showed them how to begin.

It doesn't matter if the conversation was short, or awkward, or unfinished. What matters is that your parent's voice is now part of the plan. That changes everything that comes after.

Write down what they told you. Share it with whoever needs to know. Revisit it when things change — because they will, and the conversation isn't a one-time event. It's a thread you pick up again and again, for as long as you can.

The fact that you asked — that you sat down and listened — means your parent's wishes have a chance of being honored, not guessed at. That's a gift most families wish they'd given themselves.

Now that you've started, here's how to keep it going:

- Record their answers clearly — in the "Before It's Needed" workbook, in a note on your phone, in a letter to yourself. Anywhere that won't be lost.
- Share what you've learned with siblings and anyone else who may need to act on it someday. The worst time to compare notes is during a crisis.
- Revisit every year or two, or when something changes — a diagnosis, a fall, a move. Wishes evolve. Keep listening.
- If the conversations with your siblings are the harder ones, the companion guide *When the Family Doesn't Agree* is built for exactly that.
- The Senior Move Roadmap's seven guides walk through every stage of the transition — free at SeniorMoveRoadmap.com.



Is it Time?



Have the Conversation



Make the Plan



Understand the Costs



Choose the Right Place



Prepare the Home



Make the Move

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