



What If Grandma Says She'll Only Move Feet First?

“When I finally leave this home, I’ll be carried out feet first.” She said it with iron-will conviction, and she fairly dared her family to challenge her. Ninety-five year-old Peggy was not going to leave the home where she had raised her children, celebrated family holidays for decades, and cared for her husband.

Peggy’s tenacity and spunk was admirable. Her real situation, however, was not so good. Peggy’s frailty and poor health required her son to make weekly and sometimes daily trips to assist her. She had sustained two falls recently. The daily climb up her steep steps was a dangerous challenge. A change was needed, and soon. During our years of providing home sale services to seniors and their families, at SASH we understand why older adults resist the sale of their home. Through our experience, we have found that it helps to use these guidelines when talking with an aging loved one about “moving” and “selling the home”.

First, wrap each sentence with kindness. For the senior, leaving the home after so many years can be as sad as a death in the family. It helps to take off the “business” hat and put on the “friend” hat. When the home sale discussion becomes difficult, break it up with stories, smiles, understanding, and affirmations of their independence.

Second, show respect for the home, no matter its condition. The drapes may be fifty years old, and perhaps the interior has never been updated. Pets sometimes cause unpleasant odors. Even in a state of deferred maintenance, the home is still their treasure. When talking about the cleaning and repairs needed to ready the home for sale, use kind language and keep in mind what it is: home.

Third, gently lay out the events that are requiring the move, such as health, finances, convenience, location of family, mobility, isolation, etc. It’s not a speech. Rather, it’s a conversation promoting a pro-active, independent, healthy lifestyle. Independence can mean being free of a large home to care for. Better health can mean more social opportunities. No matter what, it’s important that the senior feel a part of the decision-making process instead of “pushed along”. Keep them informed, and talk together about the best pathways to care and independence.

Finally, allow plenty of time for the senior to process the changes. In today’s age, we are used to instant results, quick decisions, and tight schedules that are organized in our smartphone. This pace can be way too fast for our aging seniors. With the exception of urgent situations requiring a quick sale, most senior home transitions can take a few months or even years to complete. Be patient, as lengthy and inconvenient as it might seem. Their dignity is worth the slower pace.



Call SASH to find out more about how you can make this a simple and enjoyable experience for your aging loved one.

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