



Dear Friends,

Welcome to my inaugural newsletter, the first in a series where I offer my thoughts about searching for the light to see the world more clearly.

This newsletter's topic is about living with adult children who left the nest and returned—the challenges, the accommodations we make, and guidelines for playing fair. With Covid, high home prices, and expensive mortgages, this has happened to many I know. According to the US Census report in 2023, about 23 million young adults—18 to 29-- are living with family, nearly 45% of the age group, slightly down from Covid when the figure was at 50%. The number one reason for moving home was to save money a Bloomberg News and Harris poll conducted in August 2023 reported.

Although some returnees were Millennials, the bulk of the offspring coming home after university, grad school and/or initial jobs were Generation Z, generally considered to be those born between 1996 and the early to mid-2000s. This is an anxious generation. According to Spring Health, a mental care healthcare network for the workplace,

"The newest generation entering the U.S. workforce is experiencing an unprecedented wave of real-world stressors that are impacting their mental well-being. These include:

- The COVID-19 pandemic, now approaching its third year, has mandated long periods of isolation
- The threat of gun violence in the classroom
- Higher personal debt accrued in college loans
- An unstable economy and threat of recession that serves as a barrier to entry and/or growth potential in the professional field of choice of the potential triggers that can help explain why America's young adults are most likely of all generations to report poor mental health." (Fisse)

Given this background now also aggravated by political uncertainty in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and at home in the US, it is no wonder that so many Zers have come home to roost. For parents who thought they were empty nesters and anticipated some "me" time, this can be a mixed experience. The Zers' anxiety can be a concern and their need to zone out of personal contact in favor of screen relationships can be disconcerting.

ParentMap offers some advice to parents whose adult children move back in on important issues to discuss and agree on at the outset. The first consideration is the timeline. How long will the residence be? Six months? A year? Until he/she/they find a responsible job? Will there be a review after a certain time period?

The next question is about financials and assistance. Will the new resident pay for his share or some of it in terms of rent, utilities, food, etc, or contribute in sweat equity by taking out the garbage and walking the dog, and sharing the cooking? As the resident becomes more secure do you have a plan to revisit what constitutes an appropriate contribution to the household?

Expectations are also an important area to discuss. Will you socialize together and if so, when and how often? Do you want to know where your housemate is and when he/she/they can be expected home? What about loud music and TVs when one of you is trying to sleep? Cleaning? Visitors? Do you share the marketing and errands or do each of you go her own way? What kind of behavior do you expect from each other when you are together? Do the screens go off and is conversation encouraged? How much privacy do each of you need and what are the areas in which you are comfortable sharing?

Once these questions have been discussed and resolved, there will still be times when issues arise that need to be aired and you should establish from the outset a way to do this that is friendly and respectful of one another and is not rigid and controlling. Especially with Zers, it is important to offer them outlets to communicate their worries to professionals and to their social circles which tend to be communicating often online.

Despite the challenges, having a child return to the nest as an adult can be a rich experience for parents—a front-row seat as your offspring moves in and through the early stages of adulthood, coping with romantic life, career, identity, and building his/her future. But it shouldn't be forever.

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