

Please Pay Rent to Your Parents

During the nearly forty years of my professional life, I have often met independent, working adult children who are living with their parents but who do not pay them rent for their living accommodations. They do not even think about it and neither do their parents.

I am amazed of the parents who feel they should not charge their working adult children for staying in the home with them. These adult children sometimes are even making more money than their parents. The home turns out to be a luxurious hotel with well trained and experienced concierge—the mom or dad. Tasty meals are cooked and on time by a dedicated over-worked executive chef—mom or dad. They are served like royalty in a palace. There is the laundry facility with standard built-in free maid service. The cable and telephone are standard free services that come with live telephone-message-taking-personnel. The house-cleaning service is gratis. The late-night-turn-off-the-lights service is standard feature by the homeowners. The trimming and cleaning of the yard is a gift to these adult children by a hard-working-painful-back-and-perspiring-gardener—dad.

Is this for real? Yes it is. There are few parents who do manage to get some funds from their adult working children by asking them to pay a particular bill in the home. In some instances, this might appear to be equitable but in other cases it is minuscule. Parents should sit down and look at the bills, consumption, and income to intelligently decide on the method to be used.

No adult working child is to live at home with parents without being “charged” a reasonable fee. Parents, when your child becomes an adult, you cease “parenting” them. You moved from parenting to mentoring. Parents give unsolicited advice. Mentors give solicited advice. As mentors you treat your children just like independent responsible adults. The amount of their income has nothing to do with the principle. So stop parenting them by thinking you should not charge them for living in the home with you.

Far too many children are taking advantage of their parents’ kindness and generosity. Adult working children should consider living with their parents as a privilege and not a requirement. Yes, your parents may charge you less than the amount you would have to pay if you were living alone. However, you are to be a responsible adult by not taking for granted the generosity of your parents.

Parents, the age of your offspring does not really does not matter when it comes to responsibility and accountability. Some children start working full-time from age 18-20. Others start working after completing a college degree at a later age. It does not matter the age. What is important is that you are to treat them like adults. Adults have responsibilities. Do not enable them to be lazy, dependent, uncaring, or irresponsible. If your adult children who are living at home refuse to seek a job, do not coddle them. Inform them that being an adult calls for taking care of themselves and you are not responsible for taking care of them in any way. Give your not-working-adult-child a time limit to find a job. It is my view that adult children should not be living at home after age 26; and if they do live at home, they are to be treated like independent adults. No adult child should view the home of their childhood years as a place to throw down the anchor and settle in. Parents, you are to raise you children to get them out of the house, not to keep them there.

GUIDELINES:

Here are a few suggestive guidelines for parents with adult working children and for the children themselves:

1. Parents, long before your adult children begin full-time work, discuss with them your expectations about living accommodations, fees, and their responsibilities living with you if they choose to. Put all the cards on the table.

2. Set rental fee fairly. The fee should be within a reasonable range depending on the salary of the child and amenities. There will need to be openness and honesty on both sides to accomplish this.
3. Let the child know that there is no free service. Everything, including preparing of meals, washing of clothes, etc., is no longer required by parents to do for independent adult children, even when they are living with them. If the child wishes to engage the parents for these things, they are to be negotiated with a price tag to it.
4. Have an understanding regarding boundaries around relationships, opposite sex visitations, etc. Remember your child is an adult.
5. Parents, respect your adult child's rights to create his or her own world. Their choices of activities, times to come home, etc. are their own. However, if you are unable to support or agree on the lifestyle of your child, then you should ask her to move out. Constantly questioning the adult child by saying: "Where have you been?" is not healthy. Many parent-child relationships get better when they live apart.
6. Adult working child, if your lifestyle or behavior conflicts with those of your parents, or their expectations are different, then it is imperative that, without argument, you seek your own dwelling place. Be responsible.
7. Adult working child, from the moment you start working full-time or even part-time, remember to start saving to live alone. Do not give the excuse to stay with mom and dad is to build your own home, but you take many years doing so. Get to work now.
8. Parents, examine your own need to constantly be in control of your child's life. This is not healthy. They are adults. Let them go. Holding on to them might be a sign of your own immaturity, insecurity, or emotional problems. You may need help to declutter your home of your adult children. Do not be a hoarder of adult children.

Gone are the days when mature, self-supporting, independent adults are only married folks. It seems as though the percentage of twenty-somethings and thirty-somethings who are happily not married is increasing. Parents, be proud of your working adult children. Show them your love by charging them rent or where needed, by kicking them out of the home to live on their own.

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