

Taking the Keys from Mom and Dad: Top Eleven Tips for Living without a Car

“Honey, I’m thinking of getting rid of my car.”

My heart skipped a beat as my mind raced and I blurted back at Dad, “**Really?**”

“Yeah, I think it’s time to give up driving. I’m afraid I’m gonna hurt someone.”

“Gosh Dad. I had no idea.”

I knew Dad was slowing down because recently he asked me to run a few errands, which was totally out of the ordinary. But I was shocked by this announcement.

“Well, if you want me to take you to Car Max or anything, just let me know. I can do that,” I said.

“Oh, I think I’ll get your brother to do that with me,” he offered. I guess that’s more of a son than daughter chore. I’ll stick with picking up prescriptions and food and let my brother do the car sale.

That was a couple weeks ago. Car Max wouldn’t give him what he thought was fair so he opted to have a grandson sell it online and within days his car was gone.

This is life changing. I can’t quite wrap my mind around the fact that Dad can no longer jump in the car and go whenever he wants, ever. In the quick sale of his car, he became dependent, and I find this terribly sad. He can no longer take his friends and relatives to their doctor appointments, visit them in the hospital, or do other kind gestures he was so good about. He can’t pick me up so we can meet my sister for lunch. He can no longer stop by and visit me while I’m working. He can’t tote his grandkids around. He can’t jump in the car and head to the store or pick up a quick meal which he did so often.

My family is fortunate that Dad was wise enough to know when to give up the keys and did so with grace. I know this isn’t the case with many boomers having to take the keys away from Mom or Dad. I’ve been in that boat too and it was no fun. My MIL had macular degeneration and we had to take her keys away before she was ready to give up her independence. No fun! We felt like rats.

While grappling with the fact that the only way Dad can get anywhere, is to have one of his children or friends pick him up, I came up with a list of things to do to help fellow boomers in similar situations learn how to cope. Here’s my list of the **Top Ten Ways to Embrace Living without a Car.**

Top Eleven Ways to Embrace Living without a Car

1. Notify family members and friends and alert them about your loved one's life change.
2. Talk to the local cab companies and share those numbers and drivers with your parent.
3. Check with your local Department on Aging to see if they offer transportation for the elderly.
4. Research to learn if there are services for the elderly that can take them to nearby adult day care.
5. Locate local food stores and pharmacies who deliver.
6. Work with siblings and friends and learn when they are available to drive your loved one.
7. Give your car-less parent a list of when people are available to run errands with him.
8. Plan ahead and set dates for taking them on out of the ordinary outings like the movies, a show, or even a Sunday drive. Give them something to look forward to.
9. Talk with neighbors who may be able to pick up food or prescriptions while they run their errands.
10. Make sure your loved one has a cell phone on their body that they know how to use in the event of an emergency while out and about alone.
11. Create a nice area outside their home so they can sit outside and enjoy the elements. Fresh air is vital.

By using this list and communicating with your loved one, they should be able to relax knowing that there are others who love and care about their new life transition.

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