

Senior Advice: Even if it's not the time to move, now's the time to decide

by Doug Mayberry

Q: My 63-year-old husband died of a heart attack two years ago. We've always lived in the same city where we were born. Soon after we married, we bought a large, two-story home and raised three wonderful children in it. Now, my children, who live in various parts of the country, are strongly encouraging me to sell out and move near one of them. I can't decide whether I want to do so, as I have many friends, my doctors and my church near. My health is reasonably good, but I have had to give up driving and am a little wobbly. Is it time to make a move?

A: Are you prepared to take a positive attitude should you elect to move? Do you believe moving near members of your family would be the right thing to do? If so, which family would be the most appropriate? Who has the time and willingness to become your primary caretaker? Would one family be easier to live with than the other two? Are there grandchildren who would be great company?

Do you have the energy, capability and reasons to live with a family member? Perhaps it's time to move to a community near a family member, where you can be active and find new friends. Would the sale of your home give you the opportunity and money to continue to live alone?

Only you can answer these questions. There will be trade-offs regardless of whether you elect to move now or later. Usually your families are the ones who will be the most responsible caretakers, should you need them.

Now is the time to make your decision. It is easier to make plans and move forward while you are in reasonable health and anticipating you may need help in the future. Moving forward now and establishing a new lifestyle while it's easier, and having family support, is a better option should an emergency occur.

Q: My husband retired a few months ago, and I believe our marriage is going downhill. We have been married for 36 years, and over the years, of course, have had our ups and downs. None of these disagreements were serious enough for us to consider divorce. However, we are not getting along well now. My husband is extremely restless and he is angry about almost everything I do. What are my options?

A: First, tell him you have made a complete physical appointment for him. This may become a wake-up call for him. His attitude may be a health issue worrying him, and he is taking his anger out on the person he loves the most, you! There may also be psychological reasons why he has changed. Men have a difficult time giving up their work routine, office bonding and learning to live with their partners 24 hours a day. Some experts believe spending too much time together can expose major differences and tensions after a major lifestyle change such as retirement. Some partners don't realistically anticipate how different their lives will be in retirement.

Honest and open communication between the two of you is now extremely important. At an appropriate time, ask him to sit with you at the kitchen table to talk about your relationship. Your routine probably hasn't changed nearly as much as his has. Tell him you sense he is unhappy. Ask him specifically about his feelings. Then share yours. If he says he doesn't want to talk about it, your next step is to write him a letter and tell him about your concerns.

Ask him to respond in writing why he is so unhappy. Don't lay a guilt trip on him or yourself. You both need to get your feelings out on the table before you can resolve your differences.

Anticipating retirement changes is helpful, but he may have not done so. He may even believe changing partners would solve his problem, which would be unlikely. Your long-term commitment is worth the effort to continue it. Try to make your marriage work before considering anything else. Remember, you married each other because of who your partner was, not for what you wanted them to be.

Doug Mayberry lives in a retirement community in Southern California. Send your questions to him at deardoug@msn.com or write to him at P.O. Box 2649, Carlsbad, CA 92018.

Â© Copley News Service

Senior Advice: Even if it's not the time to move, now's the time to decide by Doug Mayberry