

How to Talk to Parents About Care: The 40/70 Rule

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WHAT IS THE 40/70 RULE?

When your parents are around 70 and you're around 40, it's time to start the conversation about care — not finish it, start it. Before the fall. Before the diagnosis. Families who talk early plan calmly; families who wait plan in crisis.

A GOOD FIRST SENTENCE

"I've been thinking about the future. I want to know what matters most to you."

SOURCES

AARP · National Institute on Aging · Family Caregiver Alliance

FOUR CONVERSATIONS, FOUR OPENERS

1. STARTING THE CONVERSATION

"I noticed _____. How are you feeling about things at home?"

2. THE DRIVING CONVERSATION

"What would you miss most if you couldn't drive? Help me understand."

3. WHEN THEY SAY "I'M FINE"

"It sounds like this feels like giving something up."

4. GETTING FAMILY ON THE SAME PAGE

"How do we make this work for all of us?"

THE STRUCTURE BEHIND EVERY HARD TALK

WHAT

Name the specific thing you noticed. One detail, not a list.

SO WHAT

Label the feeling underneath it before you argue the facts. ("It sounds like..." — Chris Voss)

NOW WHAT

Offer one small, low-commitment next step. Expect 3–4 conversations, not one.

BONUS: THE FOUR SENTENCES

"Please forgive me. · I forgive you. · Thank you. · I love you."

Ira Byock, The Four Things That Matter Most — say one this week, before you need it.

VOICES BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Jefferson Fisher (The Next Conversation) · Chris Voss (Never Split the Difference) · Vanessa Van Edwards (Cues)

Be brave enough to say what love is asking you to say. We help families have this exact conversation — and, when it's time, we help you carry the "now what." Free in-home assessment.

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