**Leaving Home ...**

There comes a time in all of our lives when we need to close one chapter and begin the next, and moving out of your parents' home is one such time. It is not always easy for both parents and children, but it is something that must be done to allow for growth and independence.

There are several reasons a child decides to leave their parents' home - for college, to get married, or sometimes, it is just time. On the other hand, there are a few reasons that keep a person in their parents' home longer than they would expect or want to. Lack of income and furthering one's education are two of the main reasons.

There is no set age for moving out of your parents' home and, as such, sometimes you will just have to use wisdom, according to psychiatrist Dr Anthony Allen.

This wisdom should be encouraged by parents because once the child is in the home, parents can offer to give assistance, which, of course, the child will not refuse. However, it is important that the child gain their wings and develop a sense of independence. Independence helps to build resilience.

The children should also remember to not burn the bridges behind them after they have left home, and should always try to have a safety net.

Even in your wisdom, you should realize when you have grown in a direction differing from the one that your parents believe you should take. According to Allen, a difference in world views and lifestyle is also reasonable. This does not mean you do not love or respect your parents, but it is the respect that you have for them and their views that would cause you to leave their home.

Then there is family dysfunction - when parents become too involved in their children's lives. It is sometimes a type of coping mechanism, as noted by Allen. In some cases, with a split or problems between parents, one parent, in a compensatory way, becomes too close to the child. The child becomes their confidant and go-between. In situations like that, one might need to find a way to leave the home and have more autonomy over their lives. There are a few situations where parents find it difficult to cut the ties, dropping in too frequently at the child's new home. As Allen states, there are situations where parents may even follow the child to another country.

There are cases where the parents are excessively controlling and critical of the child. They tend to be negative and completely intrusive in the child's life, not allowing them autonomy over their own life. They will go as far as to check their rooms, phones, etc, stifling their growth and choice. In some of these instances, the child moves out before they are even financially equipped to do so, to escape the reins put on them.

Sexual, physical and emotional abuse are examples of extreme family dysfunctions. Sometimes children might opt to run away, but the best thing to do is to seek help from the appropriate avenues. Later, completely remove oneself from the situation altogether - emotionally through counselling.

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