

Your Kids Don't Want your Stuff

by Kirsten Sharpe, The REALTOR for SENIORS™



Its sounds harsh, but it's true. Your kids don't want your stuff. The heavy wood dining room table where the family gathered for holidays, or the wedding silver you carefully stored all these years, are not of interest to a younger generation. If dishes and glasses can't survive the dishwasher, and are only used a few times a year, younger people don't want them. Sofas that were once custom ordered with fabric that matched the drapes and the wallpaper, are no longer the style of today's homeowners. The antiques you once treasured, seem to have no appeal to younger adults. As you downsize and declutter, this makes it challenging to gift your possessions to family, or even to sell them to strangers.

With the onset of modular furniture and chain store furnishings, items are no longer built to last. While this could be a negative, it did bring down the price point of home furnishings, and made them more accessible to more buyers. With lower costs, homeowners can change their décor every few years by changing color palettes, furniture, wall art, and rugs.

So what do you do with the contents of your house, which you don't want to take with you when you move, because you are downsizing? My advice is this: gift to family and friends what you can. But don't make them take things out of your own guilt of not wanting to discard them. Let's turn this scenario around: when you were in your twenties or thirties, did you want your parents' belongings, as you tried to develop your own taste, while setting up your household?

Offer some special mementos to your kids, give them a deadline of when to pick them up, and when they don't come to get them, don't exert pressure. This isn't a personal affront. They are not rejecting you. They just want to make their own choices in how to arrange their space. They are walking a fine line between saying no to your furnishings or collectibles, and not upsetting you. Give them an out by saying you'd like for them to have something, but if they don't want it, that it's OK. I'm sure you don't want them to take things to their house so as not to upset you, and then place them in the trash or on the curb without you noticing.

After gifting what is appropriate, try to sell items (via the internet, a garage sale, consignment store or auctioneer). Then donate items that are in good shape so someone else can benefit from them. My favorite local donation spot is Resale to the Rescue, at 905 W. McKinley Avenue in Mishawaka. They are an upscale not-for-profit resale store that financially assists local animal welfare organizations. You can feel good that your donations are helping our local animals that don't yet have a forever home. And lastly, be ready to discard. Just because you own something now, doesn't mean you have to own it forever. Be diligent about throwing things

out with the weekly trash, or if you have too much, have a dumpster delivered and just get it over with. You can never recoup the money you spent, no matter how long you hold onto clothes, furniture, dishes or collectibles.

You will truly feel better when you've let go of material goods. You won't believe me until you do it, and then you'll say "Wow, this feels great; I should have done this years ago". Decluttering your physical environment also declutters you mentally and emotionally. I promise, you'll be glad you did it.

Note: Of all the educational articles I've written, this one resonated the most with my clients (and their adult children), when it was first published in the spring of 2019. For that reason, I chose to re-print it in order to help more families who are facing the daunting task of downsizing, and who may have missed the article last year. I hope I've provided inspiration and guidance, and be sure to start decluttering promptly.

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