

Worksheet 1: Starting the Conversation

Step 1: What's Your Goal?

- Understand their feelings about the house
- Explore their vision for the future
- Raise concerns gently (safety, finances, health)
- Just start small to plant the seed

Write your goal in one sentence:

Step 2: Pick an Approach

Choose one or combine a couple.

- **Gentle Question:**

1. “Have you ever thought about what you’d like the next chapter of life to look like?”
2. “What would make life easier or more comfortable for you right now?”

- **Practical Nudge:**

3. “Hey, have you noticed how hard it is to get up and down those stairs lately?”
4. “I’ve been thinking about the yard work and how much harder it’s gotten to keep up with everything.”

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- **Memory Trigger:**

5. “Remember when Grandma had to move? What worked well for her, and what didn’t?”
6. “I was just thinking about the Johnson’s next door and how they downsized last year. They seem so much happier now. What do you think made that work for them?”

- **Lighthearted Entry:**

7. “Mom, if you ever go missing, I’m checking under the stacks of magazines first.”
8. “Dad, we might need to start charging the boxes the spare room rent.”

My opening line will be:

Pro Tip: “If the first approach feels awkward, have a backup line ready, you don’t have to get it perfect the first time.”

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Step 3: Anticipate Their Response Style (Part 1)

Which one sounds most like your parent? Check all that apply.

Direct & Practical

Example: “What’s your point? Are you saying I can’t handle things anymore?”

How to handle: Be brief, clear, and respectful. Stick to one point at a time.

Notes:

Emotional

Example: “You want to take my home away. Don’t you know how much this means to me?”

How to Handle: Acknowledge feelings first, then gently return to the topic.

Notes:

Avoider

Example: “Let’s talk about this later... Did you see the game last night?”

How to handle: Don’t push too hard. Revisit the subject later.

Notes:

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Storyteller

Example: “This reminds me of when Uncle Joe moved out of his farmhouse...”

How to handle: Listen patiently, then guide the story back.

Notes:

Step 3: Anticipate Their Response Style (Part 2)

Role-Play Practice:

If my parent says:

I will take a breath, stay calm, and respond with:

If the conversation gets tense, I will gently say:

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My Plan to Stay Calm and Kind:

Pro Tip:

“Write your role-play in your own handwriting, it sticks better when you practice it.”

Step 4: Plan Your First Small Step

- Look at one closet together
- Sort a small stack of papers “just in case”
- Bring up finances or future care gently
- Ask which items matter most to them

My first step will be:

Wrap-Up: My Conversation Plan

My Opening Line:

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Likely Response From My Parent:

How I Will Respond Calmly:

My First Small Step After the Conversation:

Pro Tip:

“Keep it small and manageable. The goal isn’t to finish the downsizing in one talk, it’s to open the door to ongoing conversations.”