



A story of moving into care

Max was 79 and living alone at home when he had a fall. Breaking several bones in his knee he went from hospital to rehabilitation and from there was referred to an aged care facility.

Max wasn't the least bit willing to see the end of his independence. He argued with his son that he was perfectly fine to go back home, despite needing a wheelchair to get around. Max's son pointed out that the house was not set up for a wheelchair and the costs to renovate it were more than Max could afford.

As Max prepared to make the move from his beloved house to the aged care facility, he spoke to his neighbour Doug about it.

Doug had been ill for months and would be joining Max at the residential soon. As the two blokes talked about it, Max realised that Doug didn't have the same worries about the move that Max did. Doug knew that the time had come and had accepted it months ago. Doug had been giving away his most treasured possessions and sold the rest.

Max wanted to take everything with him and hated the idea that he might have a 'shrunk' existence. Whilst Doug was relieved that he would have someone to help take care of him, Max felt resentful of the loss of his independence. Doug looked forward to making new friends and expanding his social activities. Being unwell for some time meant that he couldn't get out much.

Living in an aged care facility would provide Doug with regular contact with others and more things to do. Max was less enthusiastic. He was worried about feeling crowded and didn't want to have to talk to people all the time. He liked his privacy and his space.

As Max watched his son load just a few of his precious possessions into the car he felt enormous grief at the loss of his house, garden, his beloved ute and the life that he had before his fall. He felt angry that the fall had happened and ruined his future. As he was helped into the car he felt bitterness and a deep sense of loss.

Doug watched Max go with a mixture of excitement and impatience. He couldn't wait to start his new life. The house had been a weight on his shoulders for years and he had long ago said goodbye to his vegie patch as his illness worsened.

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He knew that life would be different but he also looked upon the change as an opportunity to make new friends and live a more comfortable existence. He hoped that Max would one day feel the same way.

How you can help yourself adjust

- Realise that how you cope with this change is all about your attitude towards it.
- Even though you may like being self sufficient, being dependent on others is not a sign of weakness.
- Depending on carers can be a welcome relief as the pressure is lifted from having to deal with limitations on your own.
- Being in close proximity to others may be challenging but isolating yourself is not a solution. Finding a balance is critical.
- Getting the balance right between dependency and independence will take time. Recognise that many of the residents are in a similar situation facing similar issues as you.
- You can still develop new individual goals and aspirations. You have freedom to make choices and act on them.
- As a group, your fellow residents have many opportunities to share with each other and support each other. Building up trust in new friends is vital to a happy life.
- Waiting for the move can be harder than the reality. Thinking and worrying about a change is often worse than when it finally happens.
- If you feel like having a talk about your future, call the TOMNET Professional Support Team.

You will have good and bad days but speaking to other men or a member of the TOMNET Professional Support Team is one step towards being heard and supported.

The TOMNET Centre

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Open:

Monday - Thursday 8:30am - 4:00pm

FOR IMMEDIATE HELP, call:

Lifeline 13 11 14

Talk to us. We understand.

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