

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford, CPA, CELA*, CAP**
wanted to share this information with you.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DISCOVER MOM OR DAD NEEDS HELP?

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In this day and age many families are spread across the country with some people going months, or even years, between seeing their parents and families. What many people don't anticipate is how much can change between visits. It is not unusual for adult children to find that their aging parents are not doing as well as they thought.

If a visit to your aging parents brings up worries or concerns for you, or if you aren't sure what to do or where to start to help them, we have a few tips and suggestions that may be useful. Of course every family will be different. If you have any particular questions or concerns, we urge you to call our office, but these suggestions can get you started down the road to ensuring your parents have the help and care they need when you aren't there.

1. First and foremost, talk to your parents. Some elderly people may be in denial about how much they need help, but many recognize when they begin losing the ability to care for themselves and appreciate the opportunity to express their concerns and look for assistance.
2. Talk to your siblings. If you've noticed Mom or Dad aren't doing so well, your siblings have probably noticed something too. Talking about the situation together may help you get a clearer picture of exactly what's needed, and you may be able to plan the next steps together.
3. Contact a geriatric care manager. This is someone who can work with you and your siblings together, someone who can assess the situation, come up with a plan and supervise its execution.
4. Keep in mind that snap decisions or sweeping changes can be frightening and disruptive. Sometimes the best thing you can do is to make small, slow changes. Engaging a bill paying service, a chore service, a transportation program or a home helper to handle laundry and shopping a few hours a week can often make a huge difference.

5. Ask your parents if they have an estate plan. At the very least encourage them to execute an Advance Health Care Directive (Health Care Power of Attorney). If they do not have any powers of attorney, try to help them find an estate planner or elder attorney they can trust and feel comfortable with who can ensure they have the legal protections they need.

The transition from being the cared-for child to the care-giving adult can be discomfoting and some adult children may go overboard in regard to care and control. Even when their parents still have the ability to care for themselves, concerned children can't help but worry about what might be coming down the road. This worry can have the effect of putting adult children on edge and making their parents feel smothered.

There are certainly no easy answers in this situation. Every family will need to search for their own solution. Attorney Timothy P. Crawford knows that finding a solution is easier if you don't have to do it alone. Having a solid estate plan may not solve all the problems between parents and their children, but having a good Health Care Power of Attorney and a General Durable Planning Type Financial Power of Attorney can certainly make parents and children feel a little more secure. Furthermore, opening the lines of discussion for these two documents can clear the way for other important discussions down the road.

**“Those Who Plan Ahead Win.
Those Who Don't Plan Ahead Lose.”**

This article is for informational purpose only and is not intended as legal advice. It is recommended that you call Timothy P. Crawford for a free conference to discuss your situation in more detail. Attorney Crawford can be reached at 1-262-634-6659. Please refer to this article when you call.

*Attorney Timothy P. Crawford is a Nationally Board Certified Elder Law Attorney (**CELA**). He has been Board Certified by the National Elder Law Foundation which has been approved as the Sole Certifying Organization for Elder Law Attorneys by the American Bar Association.

Timothy P. Crawford was invited to join the Council of Advanced Practitioners (CAP**) of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (**NAELA**) in August of 2005. **CAP** is a small group of premier elder law attorneys, all of whom have been members of NAELA for at least 10 years, are certified as elder law attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation, and are AV rated by Martindale Hubbell, a service that provides an independent rating of the quality of attorneys, as one of the top attorneys in the nation.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has been selected as a **Fellow** of NAELA. **Fellow** is the highest honor bestowed by the Academy. Selection as a **Fellow** signifies that his peers recognize the lawyer as a model for others and as an exceptional lawyer and leader.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has a superb rating of 10 out of 10 with A V V O.

A V V O has awarded to Attorney Timothy P. Crawford the A V V O Client's Choice Award.

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