

# Communicating with your returning young adult



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## *THANKSGIVING BREAK*

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*“One of my college sons gets a ride home for Thanksgiving. He steps just far enough into our home to drop his dirty laundry in a large unkempt pile on the floor. He is barely across the threshold when his high school friends pull into our driveway. Before my husband and I have laid eyes on our son, he shouts “I’ll be back, see you later. It will probably be really late.” and walks back through the door he entered, let’s call it, 45 seconds earlier. Despite months of missing my college kids, it took only minutes for my frustration to surface last year. I held fast to our fantasy weekend as our real one unfolded.”*

*-Lisa Heffernan*

Adults: "We're looking forward to you coming home."

Kid: "Me too."



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**No More Nagging**

**no more looking over my shoulder**

**No more curfew**

**No more imposed schedule**

**Now I can Sleep In**





**Now she will pick up  
after herself**

**Now she will be respectful**

Now she will  
appreciate spending  
time with us

## Leading a conversation establishing a more adult/adult relationship:

“I’m glad to see you home, and happy you have found some snacks in the fridge. I don’t mind making them available to you, but I’d like you to put regular effort into leaving the kitchen crumb-free and food items returned to their place when you are done. I know we have limited time and I don’t want to use it

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**Sets a request / agreement / follow up format**  
up a dialogue you can return to in your effort?”

## **Shifting communication style to adult /adult:**

- 1) Make sure there's a clear conversation about expectations early on.
- 2) Demonstrate the change by not adding daily reminders.
- 3) Give it some time to work.
- 4) Follow up conversation when things break down.
- 5) Repercussions if there's no follow-through.

# School Break Conflicts

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## 1) Family Time

- Let them know in advance. Make them aware of any family plans that have been made and whether you want them to attend, and then give them leeway to plan their own time.
- Vary the kinds of activities you do together.
- Mix family and friends.

## 2) House vs. hotel

# School break conflicts

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1) Family Time

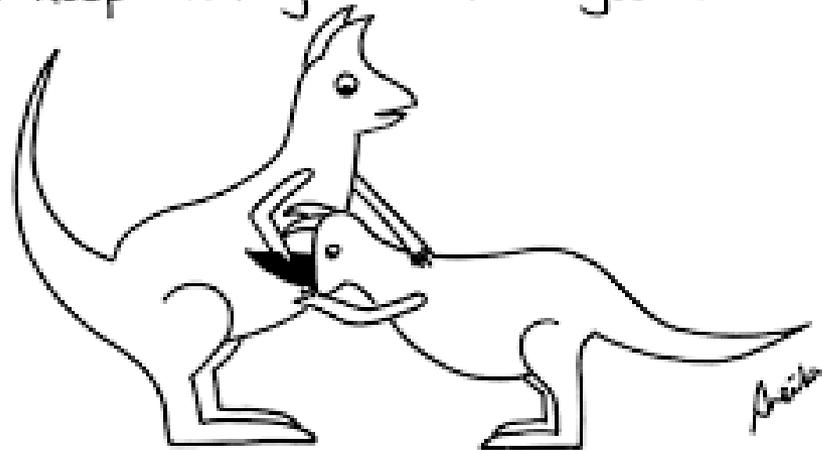
**2) House vs. hotel**

“I see you brought home your laundry. I’ll assume you can take care of this on your own.”

“I’d be delighted to cook and have dinner together, but I’ll need help restocking the fridge. I’d like to leave a shopping list and some money on the table tonight, could you pick those items up by 5:30 tomorrow so I have enough food for dinner for all of us.”

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#),  
30 percent of young adults ages 18 to 34 live with their parents.

Joey, you're an adult now so you can't  
just keep moving back into your old room.



# Home-Indefinitely Conflicts

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## 1. House Rules

- Written contract
- Bring it up, ideally, as soon as they ask to move back in
- Short-term or with check-in clauses, to add or change things that aren't working

# Items to consider in a written contract

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How much board or rent is reasonable, or if your child has limited income what s/he can do in the home in return for you helping them with money or board.

In what order would you expect him/her to assume responsibility for his expenses. First gas, then insurance, then phone bill... etc?

Who will shop for groceries?

Who will do the cooking, laundry, dishes and other house-hold chores?

Are you willing to lend him/her the car and under what conditions?

What expectations you have for his/her friends being in your house?

What are the conditions for respecting each other's privacy, noise level etc.?

Drugs / smoking / alcohol (particularly when there are minor kids still in the house)

Overnight guest policy

Condition of the bedroom: wet towels, stale food, smells

# Home-Indefinitely Conflicts

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## 1. House Rules

- To insure a contract's success:
  - 1) Make sure expectations are crystal clear
  - 2) Re-evaluation periods are set
  - 3) Be prepared for renegotiation or recourses
  - 4) Can begin a contract at any time

# Home-Indefinitely Conflicts

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1. House Rules

**2. Curfew**

3. Privacy

- Room, Prying, Boundaries

# Home-Indefinitely Conflicts

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1) House Rules

2) Curfew

3) **Privacy**

- Room, Prying, Boundaries

# Advice

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## DON'T

- Unless:
  - 1) You believe your adult child's safety is at risk.
  - 2) You obtain permission to provide advice.

<http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu/category/young-children/>

# Communication

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**Don't use your financial support to control your adult kids.**

**Don't overlook your adult child's romantic partners at family get-togethers.**

**Don't tolerate verbal abuse or bullying.**



**“Dear Andy: How have you been?  
Your mother and I are fine. We miss you.  
Please sign off your computer and come  
downstairs for something to eat. Love, Dad.”**

# Setting Boundaries without Setting Off Fireworks

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When you want to call attention to a behavior that you want to see changed, use just a few sentences about what you see and what you'd like to see instead.

If you are getting the passive ignoring treatment, you can end with “If I don’t hear from you, I will assume we are in agreement”.

Responding to name calling and talking back:

“We need to learn to problem solve better. I can’t try to work on this though when you speak to me in that tone (using that language, etc.) We can either come back to this conversation later when we are less heated, or if you prefer, write two sentences about what you see and what you want to see instead.”

# Factors that contribute to success

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The boomerang kid pays rent or contributes to the household in a tangible way. (About half make a payment of rent.)

The boomerang kid gets along with Mom. (the relationship with the father seems to be less a factor.)

The return is temporary and a one-time event. (Children who repeatedly boomerang find that relations with their parents lessens each time.)

The parents are in a long-term marriage.

The return is a safety net while the boomerang kid makes a transition based on a clear-cut need.

The boomerang kid is cheerful and good company. (Mothers, especially, like the company of the young person and see the benefit of the return to the nest.

- Mary Bold, Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas

# *Thank you*

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