



Relating to Your Parents Post-College (a few tips for the road)

The relationship between you and your parents is transitioning (as it should).*

- You'll be moving from dependence to healthy interdependence.
- Both you and your parents will likely have adjustments to make, in expectations and also practically.
- The transition takes time.

A few questions to consider...

- What do I want the relationship to look like?
- How do I maintain the good aspects of our relationship?
- How can I improve the relationship?

Communication is a significant part of your relationship with your parents.

- Though there's not necessarily a "right" or "wrong" when it comes to the frequency or form you use, you'll want to pay attention to your motivations. Why am I contacting them or not right now? Are my communication facilitating a successful transition and moving the relationship in a good direction?
- Keep parents in the loop of more major decisions and less so with minor ones.
- If possible, share something with your parents that they did right or how what they've taught you is helping you (whether that be in the area of work, finances, relationships, or spiritually). Learning and hearing about how their investment is bearing fruit in your life out in the "real world" may be the most meaningful relationship-builder you can offer.

**In certain circumstances, the healthiest position for you may mean not having a close relationship with your parents or one parent in particular. Healthy boundaries may be necessary (or necessary for time), especially in situations of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or if a parent struggles with addiction or mental-illness. Only you and God know the healthiest plan for relating to your parents. For the purposes of this resource we are going to assume that you are working towards a relationship with your parents (or guardian). We also hold out hope for any relationship, no matter how damaged. God can heal and restore even the most broken places.*

Other ideas for moving towards healthy, interdependent relationships with your parents...

- This shift does not necessarily involve a sit-down, "have-it-out" confrontation. Do your best to maintain healthy patterns, communicate respect along the way and keep moving forward.
- Asking for your parents' input (where appropriate) about major decisions will communicate respect and again serve to mature the connection between two adults.
- Report successes that you have when they occur.
- Get family-related loans paid off efficiently. The financial tie can sometimes keep other aspects of the new relational context from maturing.
- Holidays may look differently now that you've graduated and possibly moved far away. Continue to communicate your plans and realize that some expectations may have to change.
- If you're living at home for a time, be clear about everyone's expectations and (in most cases) be moving towards finding your own living situation. Anticipate positive opportunities to strengthen the relationship as well as challenges that may cause tension.
- If you want to be treated as an adult, it's important to live, act and function as one. This may mean avoiding financial dependence, offering to help or serve your parents, or taking responsibility for your actions.
- Forgive your parents. If you were raised by humans, they have messed up in some way in raising you. Trust that they did the best they knew how based on the way they were raised. Choose forgiveness and healing.* Likely, this will also be a process.
- Pray and trust the Lord to move all of you towards a God-honoring, appropriate relationship between mutually respected, accepted and loved adults.

**For more resources on forgiveness and inner-healing, talk to the EXIT team or Isaiah Prayer team at Calvary.*

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