

EMPTY NEST

SUPPORT SERVICES



Home for the Holidays



“Dream your dreams. Help others feel at ease when they walk through your door but do not abandon yourself.”

~ Natalie Caine

Parents are making shopping lists from special recipes and re-arranging colors in the house for the holidays.

I have a list below that might help everyone prepare for this transition.

Children will come back from college, work, travel, or their own homes, and some won't be able to make it. Winter break for college children can last for three to four weeks. Changes in life circumstances such as divorces, financial problems or illness, might make this holiday different than the ones before.

Some children have other commitments and can't be with you, but you can still put candles and flowers around the house. Enjoy the beauty of your sacred home. Cook the foods you love and have fun reading new recipes. Plan a day out of the house where you can be around others if your family isn't coming to visit. Maybe volunteer at a shelter, serve a meal to others, or ask if you can read to children at your local library or school. Meaning can add inspiration.

A little email or short chat on the phone before the children arrive sets the tone for the holidays and acknowledges the changes in all of your roles.

Here are some things you might wish to share with your children before they return home:

1. I am so excited to see you.
2. I know you have been on your own and without an authority figure.
3. I have discovered a new freer routine for me.
4. We all are changing our roles and awkward in the practices.
5. You and your friends must be so excited to be with each other again.
6. Grandma, Grandpa and your brother and sister can't wait to see you and they know you need time to veg out, sleep, and see friends.
7. Hopefully you will have time to schedule your doctor appointments and other things you want to get done while you are here.
8. Ok good news...no curfew
9. Ok bad news...park the car on the street since you come home later and we have to get out the door before you.
10. Keep the night noise of talking on your phone and playing music to a quiet tone.

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~ Testimonials ~

Natalie understood what I was talking about and assigned names to feelings I had been unable to identify. What a relief it was to know what I was feeling had already been studied, identified and named! She knew the answers.

She comforted me by explaining that my frustration about addressing and solving my issue was due to a cultural lack of teaching and understanding about these things and she offered me some new plans for changing my thinking.

Natalie was specific in her direction and gave me a homework assignment. She gave me some new language and ideas that I could Google for more comprehensive enlightenment.

She was kind and soft, yet intelligent and wise from experience. I'm very glad she's come into my life.

~ M.A. Sinnhuber, Pittsburgh, PA

Hi Natalie,

Thank you so much for speaking to me yesterday. What a wonderful service this is for women like me, going through "empty nest syndrome!" Speaking to you on the phone was as though we were in a room together talking like "old friends." You gave me some wonderful advice to take with me through this rough journey in life. I hope, like so many other women that I find the strength from deep within. Again, thank you for giving me the empowerment and hope that I so needed. It's nice to know that I am not alone. I look forward to reading your newsletters and speaking to you again.

~ Patricia

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11. Turn out the lights.
12. Do your own laundry.
13. Put the dishes in the dishwasher.
14. Don't hog the remote.
15. If you don't see it in the refrigerator write down what you want before you or I go to the market. It is not funny to put those empty milk cartons back in the frig.
16. I know your plans will change like not coming home for a meal, so text us or call to give us a heads up.
17. Please don't leave the gas tank on empty.
18. Print this email and read it before you walk in the door or don't worry there will be a copy on your bed. No, I did not change your room or rent it out.
19. Let me hug and kiss you and fuss over you. Yes, I know you aren't a child anymore, but I am still your mom.
20. I will lower my expectations on how the holidays used to be. I won't let the little things ruin our time together. Let's just clear the air in seconds rather than long talks if something does come up.

Emotions rise and fall during the holidays. All our losses seem to emerge. Tears drop and tissues fill the car. Music stirs up memories. We feel pressure from television and magazine ads about how we're supposed to look, decorate, shop, or be.

My reminder list will be:

- a) Get up, dressed and out the door for a quiet morning walk.
- b) Take deep breaths when I feel anxious or angry.
- c) Ask for help.
- d) Listen.
- e) Shift my perception in the moment.
- f) HAVE FUN.
- g) STAY CURIOUS.

May the holidays bring you inward reflection and outer connections that add meaning to your life. May you dance and sing and make a fool of yourself if it brings a smile.

Natalie

What's New

Natalie offers Private Consultations in person and on the phone (800-446-3310)

GATHERING FOR EMPTY NESTERS: A RETREAT

February 1-3, 2008 Los Angeles Weekend Retreat to sit with other empty nesters and explore what's next for you in a safe, small setting.

CONVERSATIONS WITH NATALIE

Live interview with prominent editor and author, Jane Isay who wrote *Walking on Eggshells*, *Relationship with our Adult Children*

February 1-3, 2008, I am offering a weekend GATHERING FOR EMPTY NEST WOMEN in Los Angeles. Email natalie@emptynestsupport.com or call 800-446-3310 for information.

- *The Gathering is a safe place to add value and friendships to your life. When we get away from our ordinary day-to-day life and sit with women on a journey, we feel the emergence of new parts of ourselves that have been dormant.*
- *Each of us is unique. Our stories are sacred. Our needs are individual, but each of us is sitting in a common circumstance... empty nest... a major life transition filled with challenges and joys.*
- *How do you grow a healthy relationship with your adult children?*
- *Children come back just when you find your new routine and passions, so then what?*
- *How do you gather tools for change? This stage of life is filled with complexities and paradoxes as well as real life issues that include, menopause, disappointments, losses, dreams, acceptance, aging parents, health concerns, friendships, partnering, travel alone, sparks of life, depletion, finances, loneliness, expectations, body image and vitality.*
- *We know what to expect when we are expecting, but after talking with parents across the country for five years, as well as living life as an empty nester, we definitely don't know what to expect when our identities and roles as parents change in an instant.*
- *Learning to attend to yourself again and quieting the voices that dampen your inspirations is part of the empty nest. Great day, sad day, stuck day, angry day are all normal in the emptiness.*
- *Each of us has fears and questions about what to do next. Is it normal to not do things as well as you use to? Is it normal to feel like you have been kicked out of the best "job" you ever had, while simultaneously feeling, "Thank goodness he/she is gone?" We wonder why dreams didn't come true.*
- *What's next for you?*



I am very excited about gathering. I look forward to answering your questions and hearing from you. Space is limited to 12.