

# What Comes After an Empty Nest?



**A**s children, you are full of enthusiasm and you grow up imagining what your life will be as an adult. Early on, you start preparing yourself for someday starting a family of your own. You look forward to the future chapters of your life.

For most, you reach the goal set out to settle down and get married. Then, you have children. You get excited when they graduate from grade school then elementary school. However, as high school approaches you begin to feel a sense of loss, sadness and even grief. As parents, you begin to think about your purpose. For the past 18 years you were the provider, the nurturer and giver.

It is expectable and understandable to experience some sadness and loss. After all, your life is beginning to shift and a new chapter is beginning. Do not look at it as though you are losing something in your life. Think of it as you get to create a bigger life for yourself.

This is the time when you can gain so much more in your life. The fact is, once you are a parent that gift is never taken away. You will always be the provider and nurturer. The one thing you must keep in mind is that the definition of that just shifted a little. Your children may not be at home with you the majority of the time, but that does not mean you are going to stop providing and caring for them. Now you are at the

phase of your life where you get to have a mature and adult relationship with your child. That can be very exciting. You now have the opportunity to get to know your child on a completely different level.

Not only do you get to know your child in a different way, but you also have the opportunity to get to know yourself again. Remember, you spent 18 years of your life focusing on your child while doing a great job of raising them. Now, you have more time to explore the 'new you'.

Here are a couple of tips to help you create a new and exciting chapter in your life.

**Begin exploring what you want to add to your life.** It could be that you always wanted to learn the piano, play tennis, or run a triathlon. If you are married, or in a relationship, make this time a new awakening for the both of you.

**Reconnect with old friends or make new friends.** Take those classes you always wanted to take. Volunteer your time for a project that you are passionate about. Create a project that can make a lasting difference in your community.

Take the time to envision how you want this new chapter in your life to look. Remember, you get to write the chapters and it is up to you write the ending of your book as well.