



## When Holiday Traditions Change

The magical thing about the holiday season is that we typically know what to expect. You and your siblings bundle up your children and pack the car to make the drive to your parents' home, after a chaotic morning at home. Your children are overly excited and you're all feeling a little sleep deprived. Yet, you make the drive because tradition is important to you and your family. Your parents always host the same holiday meal and look forward to the loud, rambunctiousness that you, your siblings, and their grandchildren bring into their home.



However, leading up to the holidays, you've noticed that Mom or Dad, or perhaps both, don't seem up for hosting. Perhaps there's been evidence of memory decline, or your parents seem overwhelmed when just you and your immediate family visit. Whether the family is getting too big for your parents to host everyone, or your siblings have moved away and aren't able to make it this year, it's sometimes difficult to handle change with grace and without holding on to what was too tightly. Instead of forcing tradition for the sake of tradition, here are five

ways to help keep the holiday spirit alive amid changing tradition.

### **Stay Connected to What's Most Important**

When you realize that holiday traditions need to change, it doesn't mean that you must give up every tradition you and your family enjoy. Discuss and choose what's most important to you, your siblings, and your parents before throwing in the towel on the holidays this year. Would your parents feel more comfortable hosting smaller groups? If so, arrange with your siblings a holiday visit schedule so that everyone can spend quality time with Mom and Dad. Keep family tradition alive amongst you and your siblings. Even if your aging parents aren't up for attending an extended family event, don't let that stop the rest of you from getting together.

### **Try Something New**

Sometimes the most difficult part of the holiday season is acknowledging that this year's traditions need to change. Talk with your aging parents about the burden they may be feeling when it comes to your usual holiday traditions. Perhaps they are overwhelmed with the thought of cooking for so many

people, even though Mom loves to cook. Try hosting a "PJ All Day" or "Ugly Holiday Sweater" event at your home, alleviating the burden of cooking for your aging parents. When traditions change, use it as an opportunity to be creative and to set new holiday traditions.

### **Evolve Holiday Traditions**

As you evaluate how the holidays will look this year, find a way to bridge what you loved into something new, but still similar. Is the gift giving getting out of hand, especially for your aging parents? Instead of buying gifts for everyone, consider a name-draw for the adults and only buy gifts for the children. Do your aging parents insist on hosting the annual holiday meal, even though it's a burden? Suggest having the meal catered, or arrange with your siblings to bring the side dishes. By replicating the parts of the holidays you most enjoy while changing how the traditions look can leave you connected to the past while still being flexible in the present.

### **Reach for Technology**

We live in a very connected world thanks to the ever-evolving world of technology. As more and more families live further and further apart, take advantage of technology to stay connected. Whether you Skype with the family that can't make it into town this year, or arrange for your aging parents to FaceTime while their out-of-town grandchildren open their gifts, technology can be a wonderful tool to stay connected to both family and tradition this time of year.

### **Communicate**

Before plane tickets are purchased and holiday plans are made, take time to communicate with your aging parents and your siblings about the expectations of the holidays this year. If you're the primary caregiver for your aging parents, be honest with your siblings about how mom or dad are doing and whether you think they're up for a large gathering. Your siblings can still come to visit, but perhaps they stay with you or at a nearby hotel. Be sure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to the holiday season, to avoid hurt feelings.

Change can be complicated, especially during the holidays. Fortunately, choosing a home care agency does not have to be complicated. At [Visiting Angels Denver](#), your loved one's care is our top priority. We strive to help your loved one maintain their independence by offering flexible senior care services fitted to meet their schedule. As you celebrate the holidays with your aging parents this season, take a moment to determine if they could benefit from the many senior services we offer at Visiting Angels. From home care services and personal care, to dementia and Alzheimer's care, our Angels are ready and available to meet the needs of your aging parents. [Give us a call](#) to set up a consultation so that we can learn more about your situation.

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