



How to Connect with Your Aging Father

With Father's Day this month, you may find that you have your Dad on the brain. Fathers, or those who have a father role in the lives of others, are an important part of our childhood and adulthood. These men are often strong figures who have spent their lives fixing problems for those they love. When you find yourself at a point in life when your Dad is no longer that strong and untouchable man, due to failing physical or cognitive health, it can be emotional for you and your family.

You may be struggling finding ways to connect with your aging father. If you are, take heart. You are not alone. Aging men are some of the hardest folks to connect with for family members and senior care professionals alike. In the hopes of fostering a connection this month with your father, check out a few of our tried and true ideas to get you started.



Go outside

Many men spent plenty of time in their youth – either at work or at play – in the outdoors. Take advantage of nice weather this month to spend time outside with your father. Take a walk, rock in rocking chairs, bring a favorite game to a patio table, or even grill dinner. The fresh air is good for both of you and a change of venue is often just what is needed to start up a new conversation.

Take a drive

Push your change of venue even farther by jumping in the car to take a drive together. Even if your father is in a wheelchair, a caregiver would be happy to help safely transfer your dad into your car. Once you are in the car, you can head for a specific destination or just hit the road and see where it takes you. Drive through old neighborhoods, park at a drive-in style restaurant, watch a movie at the drive-in theater, drive through a newly constructed development, or take a ride around a local forest preserve. There seems to be more meaningful conversations held in a car with the windows down than in the living room and you will both love the no pressure situation that driving features.

Look through old magazines

Reminiscence is a wonderful way to connect with adults of all cognitive levels, including those with advanced stages of memory loss. Simply grab a few old magazines from your local library, or pull a few from your dad's home, and chat about what you see. Try to find articles that feature plenty of photos of things that your dad may enjoy – old cars, Veteran or Armed Forces paraphernalia, construction, fishing, etc. – and just talk about what you see or read. If your conversation starts with a photo of an old car and finishes with your Dad talking about his favorite baseball team, just go with it. Allow him to lead the conversation where he takes it, and simply enjoy the ride.

Try an old hobby, in a new way

Speaking of hobbies, be sure to include some of your dad's favorite past times in your visits. If your dad can no longer go fishing, simply look through fishing photos or an old tackle box. Ask him for tips on how to catch fish and about some of his old fishing tales. For a dad who can no longer build complex projects, simply hammer nails into wood, sand a block of wood, match nuts and bolts, or stain a pre-built project together. Find new ways to tap into the love he had for his favorite hobbies, and you will both benefit from the interaction.

Your dad wants to spend time with you, but he may be a man of fewer words now that he is aging. Go in prepared with a few ideas on how to connect in a new way, and you both might surprise each other. If you are still stumped about how to have a meaningful time with your dad, involve his [Visiting Angels](#) caregiver in the conversation. We spend our careers working with seniors of all ages, abilities, and preferences; we would be honored to brainstorm some ideas with you.

Curious about other ways to connect with seniors who experience different challenges? [Check out our Family Resource Center](#) for insightful vidoes, caregiver tips and other important resources.

Visiting Angels of Wayzata, MN

952-935-0789

angels@angelsmn.com

www.visitingangels.com/Wayzata

www.facebook.com/visitingangels.wayzata