



# Senior Life: Stuff Liberation

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“I love my house and my things. I will never leave!” It’s a classic lament spoken by older individuals who are confronted with the decision of moving from their current home of decades into the safety of a retirement community.

And so it was for Elsie, a feisty 98-year-old woman, who lived alone in a large two story house. She had no relatives to help her. She relied on the personal assistance she received from two special women – a caregiver who visited once a week and a trusted friend, Barbara, who also served as her power of attorney.

For a long period, Barbara tried to convince Elsie that the time had come for her to seriously consider moving from her house, which she had furnished with antique furniture and other collectibles she acquired over the years. The house had fallen into despair, as evidenced from the gaping hole in the living room ceiling that exposed the insulation, most likely caused by a water leak. Wallpaper was peeling off the walls; mold and dust filled the air as the rooms had not been thoroughly cleaned for some time.

Yet, Elsie insisted that she would remain in her beloved home amongst the treasures, even though her declining health prohibited her from climbing the steps to the bedrooms on the second floor. She compensated by setting up a bed in her living room where she slept. Barbara knew that it was only a matter of time before a crisis would force Elsie to move. During the past winter, that fear turned into reality. Elsie fell. This fall occurred at the worst possible time - when the house had lost heat. She was found on the floor by her caregiver three days later and was rushed to a nearby hospital. Thankfully she survived the fall and the lack of heat. Elsie was told that she would never walk again, but that motivated her to prove the medical team wrong. She was resilient and after a careful rehab regimen and much determination, she did regain the ability to walk again.

This incident, which could have easily ended Elsie’s life, opened the door for a new one. Now with the strong recommendation of the hospital’s social workers, who felt that Elsie could not safely return home, Barbara was able to convince Elsie that she needed to move into an environment where she would receive the proper care, better nutrition and socialization which she didn’t have at her present home. And with that incentive, Elsie moved into a nearby retirement community.

Elsie has adjusted surprisingly well to her new environment. She enjoys the attention and personal care she is now receiving from the caregivers there. A few carefully selected items were taken from her house to her new apartment in order to recreate the feeling of home for her. But most miraculously, she hasn't asked about the remaining "stuff" in her house. The antique furniture, artwork, books, dishes, and clothing she purchased decades ago are no longer of any interest to her. They appear to be a part of her past, which no longer appeal to her. There's a sense of liberation from her stuff as she has carefully surrounded herself with the best items that fill her apartment with contentment and happiness. It can truly be said that "less is more!"

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*Marlene Stocks is the owner of Senior Transition Services, a senior move management company based in Huntingdon Valley. As a certified senior move manager, Marlene and her team provide their clients and families "peace of mind" by managing every detail of the client's move, as well as their content removal needs. Senior Transition Services has proudly served 950 families in the 5 county area and South Jersey since 2008. [www.Senior-Transition-Services.com](http://www.Senior-Transition-Services.com). 215.947.5490.*