

What If It Were Me?

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I so appreciate those of you who have taken the time out of your busy schedules to write to me and share your thoughts on my last several columns. More than just a few of you wrote to me in response to the last article, "What Would You Do If You Couldn't Practice?" One former chiropractor said, "If I thought it was hard to explain why I was doing chiropractic, it is impossible to explain why I am not." To all of you, I say thank you. You cannot know how much I have learned and am still learning from you!

For those of you who are just tuning in now, my loyal band of readers and I have been playing a little game of "what if it was me?" by trying on various situations and scenarios that might possibly happen in the future. Here's the next one.

Imagine that you are an older adult living alone who is considering a move from his/her home to a retirement type facility. Before you pack your golf clubs and snorkeling gear, I'm talking about a permanent move. You are not "coming home" again. You are thinking about giving up your home permanently to move elsewhere.

So far, you have managed to keep up with the maintenance of your home and yard, but the repairs that you used to do yourself now cost money. Your children remain close by phone, but they live in another city and have their own lives. For the most part, your social life and friendships remain intact. Still, your attendance at funerals seems more frequent, and an increasing number of friends seem limited in former activities. The neighborhood where you have lived for many years is in transition. You have been putting off making a decision but feel a kind of urgency now. You don't want to bother anyone about the situation because truthfully, you don't know how you feel about it yourself. You want someplace where you can still be active and do the things you like to do, but you want to have services and people available should you require them. What are your options, and what will they cost?

First of all, notice how your brain resists the idea of not coming home again. After all, home is where you live, where you relax, where your family is and, well, where your tools are! That's what my dad says: 'I can't move, where would I put my tools?' The word "tools" in this case may be appropriately substituted with other energy words such as garden, garage, dog, art, kitchen or other "stuff" that defines you.

In a previous column, we discussed the role of the geriatric care manager. This person is an excellent resource to supply you with options including the various types of facilities available in your community. Some of these options might include moving in with a family member (how do you feel about that?), splitting expenses with a friend or taking a look at various retirement communities. If more care is required, board and care homes and/or assisted living facilities might be considered.

Consult the yellow pages of your phone book and look under the heading "retirement." Pick a facility, make an appointment for a tour and go do it. Even if you practice in a rural area, you should be able to find out what folks do or where they go ... then go visit. You say you want to build

a geriatric practice? Here's one way to do it. Identify with the concerns of your patients and your patients will identify with you.

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