

Is Communal Living in the Boomer's Future?

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Let's admit it, we Boomers aren't getting any younger. We are thinking more about our future – what we want, how we will pay for it, and who will be with us to take care of things we are no longer able to do.

As we became young adults in the 60s and 70s, communal living was considered a fad, but for some of us it worked. Some of us are now pretty much "aging orphans." By that I mean we chose not to be married, chose not to have kids, our parents have passed, and we may or may not get along with our siblings (assuming we have them). As we progress along life's journey, we are starting to think about loneliness and isolation – two things that can have a major impact on our quality of life.

Is assisted living the answer for all of us? I don't think so. If given the choice, we would all much prefer to remain in our own comfortable and familiar home, but that may not be possible or realistic for some. So what are the alternatives? Perhaps communal living will make its way back in a modified form. Why not homes where each individual, or couple, had their own bedroom, sitting room and bathroom – a place where they could find peace and quiet when desired – but the kitchen, living and dining areas, laundry and such would be open to all? When you stop to consider the possibilities, this isn't such a bad concept, is it?

We could build a guest house, or a slightly separate area of the main building, that would be set aside for a caregiver couple. They would be hired by us to do those things we are no longer able to do or don't want to do. As residents of this home, we would each have the responsibility for maintaining our separate space, and for contributing to meals and other chores necessary to a functioning household.

When the time came that we were no longer able to maintain a modicum of self-sufficiency, choices would have to be made – by all residents of the household. Do we age in place (i.e. leave this world in our own beds), or do we relocate to a place where care appropriate to our needs is available?

These are not easy things to think about, but isn't it much better to at least consider the possibilities prior to having to make a quick decision? All too often, we fail to plan for our own welfare, and all too often we are quick to complain about our decision after the fact. Let's start planning for tomorrow, while we can think with a clear mind today.

Come on, Boomers. We do have choices, options, and decisions to make. Let's not wait until someone else has to make them for us. Let's start putting our plans into action and test the waters of a new design from an old concept of lifestyle. Whatever we choose, it's a sure-fire guarantee that most of us Boomers are going to find a way to make old age "cool."

Linda Thompson is founder and President of Life Path Solutions. She is the author of *Planning for Tomorrow, Your Passport to a Confident Future*, a common sense approach to life planning; and *A Caregiver's Journey, You Are Not Alone*, a survival guide for working caregivers. Linda is currently writing her next book, *The Changing Face of Today's Society*. Visit [Life Path Solutions](#) or call 480-899-8647 for more information.

Linda Thompson is a frequent East Valley Living contributor whose articles can be found in Lifestyles.