



Empty Nest: Challenge & Opportunity

It's a big transition for parents when a child leaves home to go to college or start a job. But especially when the last child moves out and the nest is suddenly empty, parents often feel a wide range of emotions, from excitement at the new freedom to sadness, loss and even uncertainty about their purpose in life. The empty nest poses both a challenge and an opportunity, so it pays to think and plan how you want to make the most of this new stage of life.

I. Underlying issues

- Loss – not only of the child, but the friends and the youthful energy
- Role change – many of us have found our identity in the daily tasks of parenting, so we wonder, "What now?"
- Confrontation with one's own aging
- A shift in the parents' relationship with each other

II. How to navigate the change and seize the opportunities

- Talk through your feelings with others who have been there
- Redefine your parenting role in new ways, from a distance, with respect for your child's increasing independence
- Pursue interests you've put on hold
- Revisit the relationship you and your partner had before kids
It's all the better if you've maintained your personal interests and a strong couple relationship throughout your life as parents! This prepares you for the empty nest and also sets a good example for your children of how to live a full and interesting life at every age.