



19 Red Flags Tell You It's Time To Get Help For Your Aging Parents

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You've downloaded this book because you are thinking it may be time to get some help for an aging parent or someone else that you love.

But you hesitate...

I get it. You don't want to be pushy or bossy.

Maybe you aren't really sure it's time to get help.

The subject is uncomfortable...

But if you downloaded this book it is because deep down you know that something needs to change. You are worried and you care.

Go through the book and see how many Red Flags you notice.

Does your parent have family living close by (within 20 minutes)?

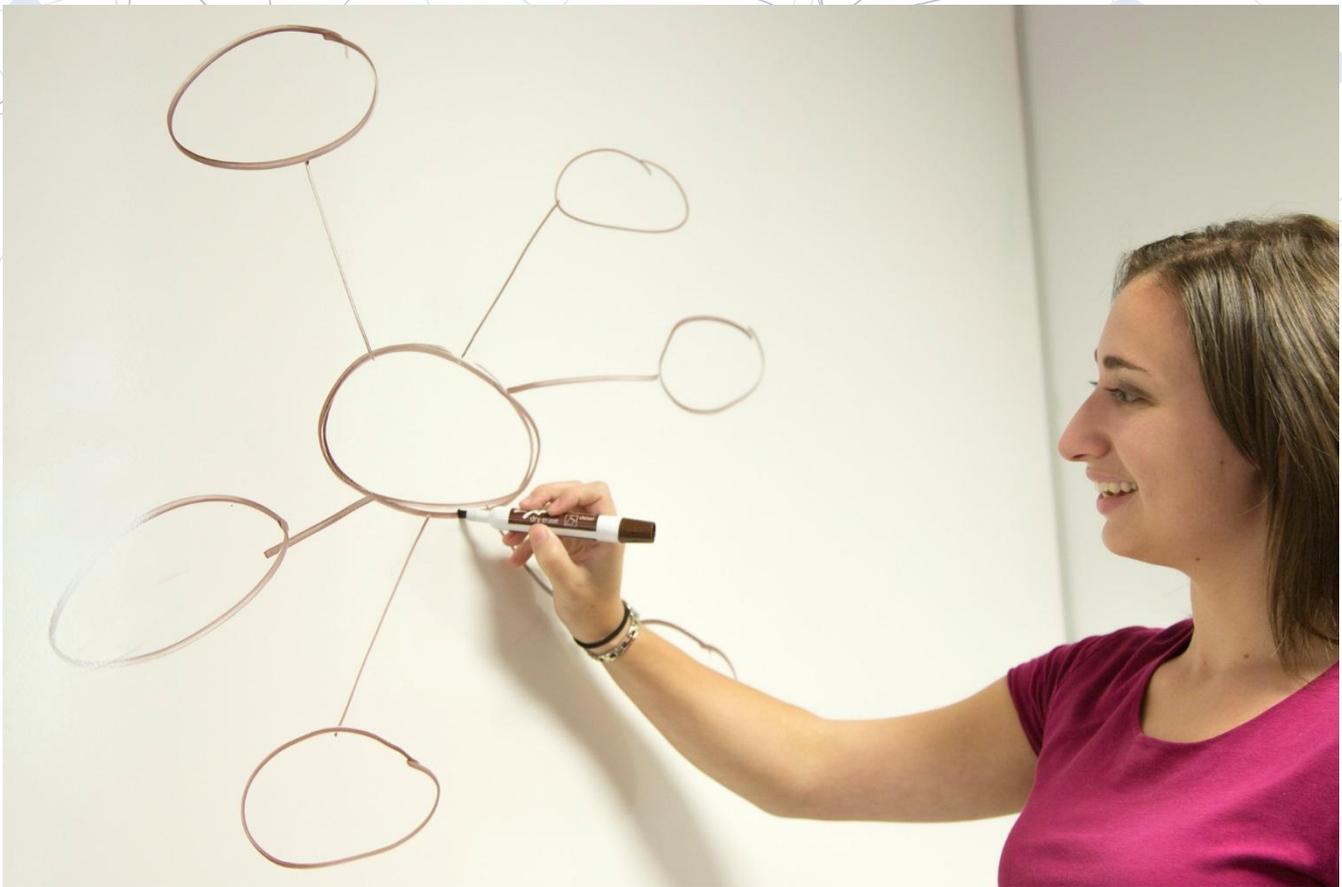
This is critical. It is not fair for a parent to expect adult children with jobs and families to travel many miles to care for them when problems arise. This is a **Red Flag**.



Chances are you have your own family and maybe even a job. When parents begin to need more assistance their children will need more help. Often an aging parent, especially one who has lost a spouse will become depressed and worry that they will be all alone. They want to know that you care for them.

The problem is they may be calling you 5 or even 10 times a day with what you consider small, insignificant problems. It's driving you crazy!

Traveling back and forth can wear you down. If you find yourself getting short tempered with your parent you may need to look at some options for getting the help you both need.



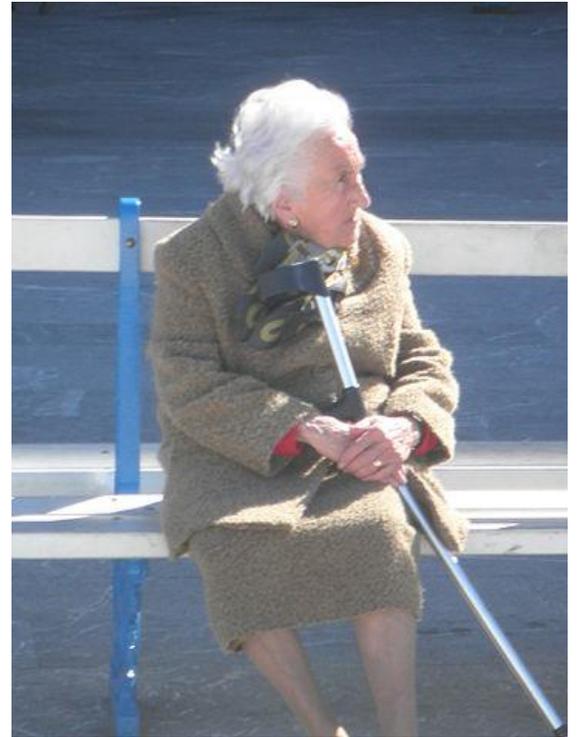
How many family members are willing and able to help in a crisis? You need to have a plan in the event of a crisis. Who is going to help? If nobody is stepping up this is another **Red Flag**.

The truth is you probably already know who you can count on and who you cannot. Make a list of everything you can think of that will need to be taken care of in an emergency.

- If mom goes to the hospital, who will take shifts to sit with her to make sure she is well cared for?*
- Who will take care of her dog, pick up the mail, make sure bills are paid, find and hire help if needed and so on? The list may be quite extensive.*

Now That The Crisis Has Passed

How many family members are willing and able to help on an ongoing basis? Be real on this question. If a parent is going to stay at home they have to be able to do everything themselves or you have to have a team in place to help. Remember it takes a village to care for an aging parent. Trying to do this alone is a recipe for stress. Ask yourself: Are they on medication and will they need reminders to take their medication? Who will help clean the house and do laundry? Do they need help with cooking? Who will be able to do this? How about paying bills and managing their finances? Not enough help for all of the duties - **Red Flag!**



Can and should your parent still be driving? Are you worried about their driving?

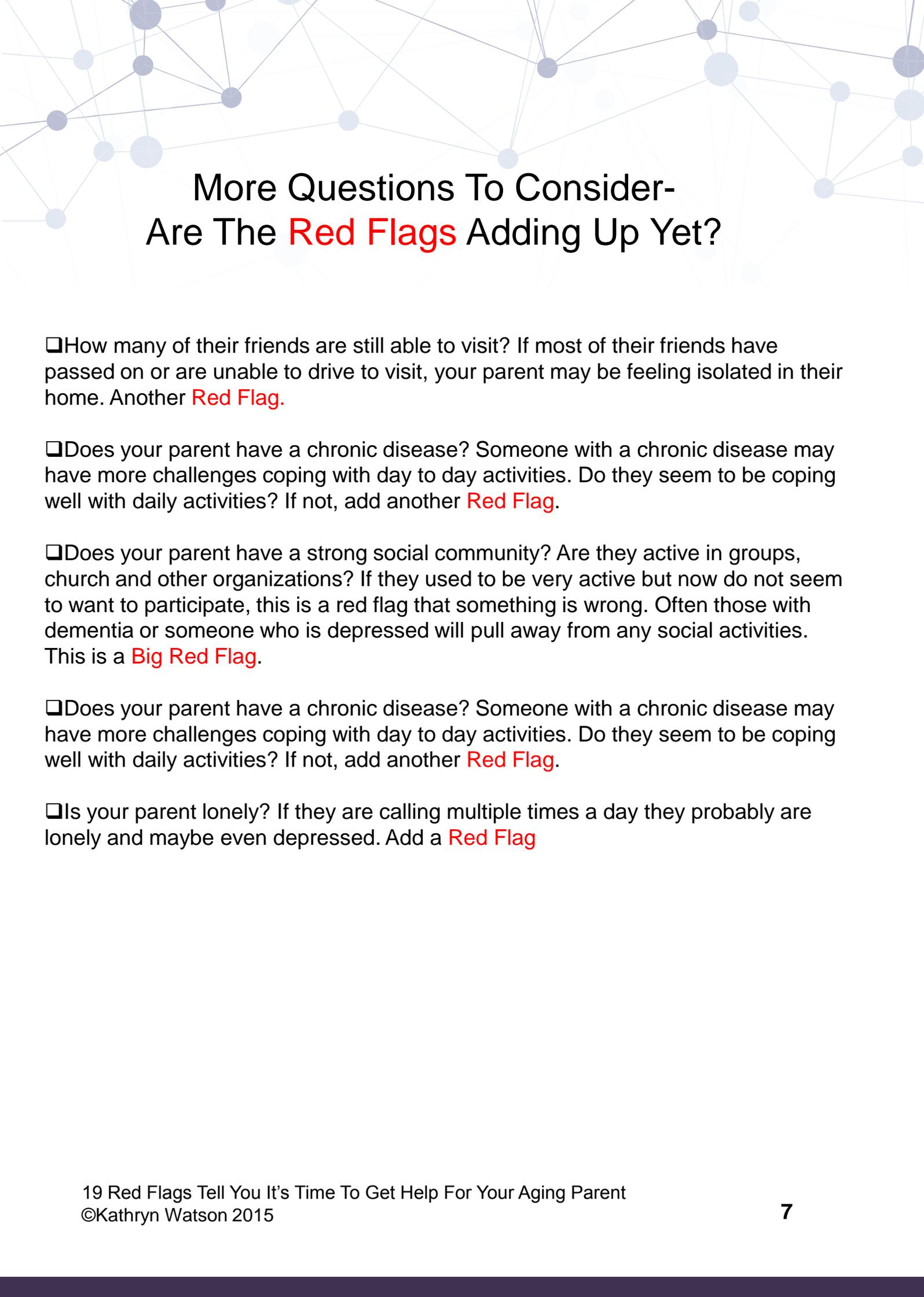


Don't wait until something happens; you will regret this forever! How would you feel if you knew your parent should not be driving yet you did nothing and they caused the death of an innocent person?

We all like to believe these things won't happen to us, but isn't it better to be prepared?

When your parent is no longer able to drive would they need transportation for grocery shopping and other things like salon visits, visiting friends, etc.?

Who will take them to their doctor's appointments? Make sure you have commitments from those who say they will help that they really will help! If you are not sure who you can count on this is a **Red Flag**.

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More Questions To Consider- Are The **Red Flags** Adding Up Yet?

How many of their friends are still able to visit? If most of their friends have passed on or are unable to drive to visit, your parent may be feeling isolated in their home. Another **Red Flag**.

Does your parent have a chronic disease? Someone with a chronic disease may have more challenges coping with day to day activities. Do they seem to be coping well with daily activities? If not, add another **Red Flag**.

Does your parent have a strong social community? Are they active in groups, church and other organizations? If they used to be very active but now do not seem to want to participate, this is a red flag that something is wrong. Often those with dementia or someone who is depressed will pull away from any social activities. This is a **Big Red Flag**.

Does your parent have a chronic disease? Someone with a chronic disease may have more challenges coping with day to day activities. Do they seem to be coping well with daily activities? If not, add another **Red Flag**.

Is your parent lonely? If they are calling multiple times a day they probably are lonely and maybe even depressed. Add a **Red Flag**

Has Your Parent Recently Lost Something Of Value

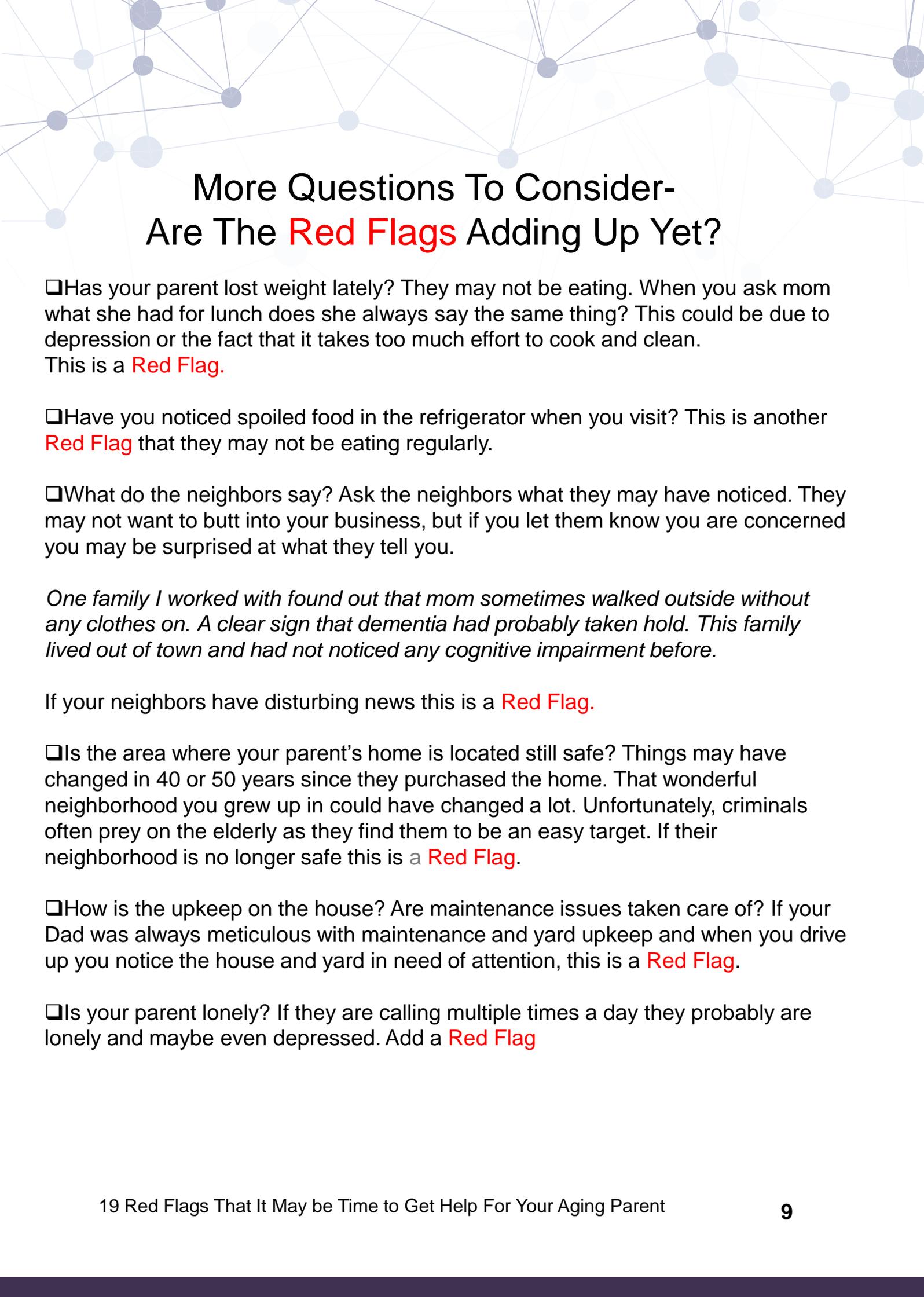
Missing jewelry or other valuables that later turn up in unusual places are cause for concern.

My mother-in-law once lost several very valuable pieces of jewelry, reported it as stolen to the police and months later found it in a sock in her dresser drawer.



Have you found items in unusual places? Ice cream in the cabinet or underwear in the freezer? These are all signs that your parent could have some form of dementia.

This is a **Big Red Flag**.

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More Questions To Consider- Are The **Red Flags** Adding Up Yet?

Has your parent lost weight lately? They may not be eating. When you ask mom what she had for lunch does she always say the same thing? This could be due to depression or the fact that it takes too much effort to cook and clean.

This is a **Red Flag**.

Have you noticed spoiled food in the refrigerator when you visit? This is another **Red Flag** that they may not be eating regularly.

What do the neighbors say? Ask the neighbors what they may have noticed. They may not want to butt into your business, but if you let them know you are concerned you may be surprised at what they tell you.

One family I worked with found out that mom sometimes walked outside without any clothes on. A clear sign that dementia had probably taken hold. This family lived out of town and had not noticed any cognitive impairment before.

If your neighbors have disturbing news this is a **Red Flag**.

Is the area where your parent's home is located still safe? Things may have changed in 40 or 50 years since they purchased the home. That wonderful neighborhood you grew up in could have changed a lot. Unfortunately, criminals often prey on the elderly as they find them to be an easy target. If their neighborhood is no longer safe this is a **Red Flag**.

How is the upkeep on the house? Are maintenance issues taken care of? If your Dad was always meticulous with maintenance and yard upkeep and when you drive up you notice the house and yard in need of attention, this is a **Red Flag**.

Is your parent lonely? If they are calling multiple times a day they probably are lonely and maybe even depressed. Add a **Red Flag**



❑ How much help does your parent really need? Help with cooking and cleaning? Doctor appointments? Grocery shopping? Dressing and grooming? If you ask, your parent will probably tell you that of course they can do these things themselves. Don't ask but rather observe. Let your parent go about their daily routine when you are visiting without your help. Notice how long it takes to get dressed, fix breakfast, clean the house or go to the grocery store. Just pay attention. Problems in this area? Add another **Red Flag**.

❑ Do they need help with the management of their medications? If your parent is taking multiple medications, it is important that they are taking them at the right time. It is easy to get confused and forget whether you took your pills or not. Add a **Red Flag** if you think your parent is having problems managing their medications.

❑ Have you noticed that your parent may not be bathing? This could be due to dementia or they may have a fear of falling in the shower. Add another **Red Flag**.

After a few falls my mother admitted to me she was terribly afraid of falling in the shower alone. She was proud and didn't want someone to bathe her. The solution- Home Care to be there in case something happened.



Making these decisions isn't easy. But making them before a major crisis hits is important.

When we are in a crisis we simply cannot make the best decisions. Dr. Amy Arnsten of Yale Medical School stated that ***stressful situations*** in which the individual has ***no control*** were found to ***activate an enzyme*** in the brain called Protein Kinase C, which ***impairs*** the ***short term memory*** and other functions in the prefrontal cortex, the executive decision part of the brain.

PKC affects a part of the brain that allows abstract reasoning, using working memory that is constantly updated.



Like many today, Kathryn Watson was thrust into the world of Eldercare with little knowledge or understanding of the industry.

The challenges she overcame led her write [Help! My Parents Are Aging](#) and [Help! I Can't Do This Alone](#) and to create a web directory for Houston families. [Find Houston Senior Care](#) offers both resources and information to help you navigate the elder care world.

Kathryn Offers Help as an Independent Elder Care Advisor in Houston, Texas. [Find Out More](#)