

The Money Talk



Since the majority of people grew up with parents who took care of them financially, it can be unsettling to begin to consider, or even take responsibility for their fiscal well-being.

For your own financial and emotional health, you should know where your parents stand and how you may need to help them. The first step is to sit down and diplomatically open the conversation. Here are a few questions to start the ball rolling.

1. **Can we talk?** Money topics can be notoriously taboo, so if your parents have kept you in the dark until now, they may not be eager to open up. They might also assume that you will support them in the future and are too nervous or embarrassed to admit it.

Set up the talk in advance, picking a time when you can be thoughtful and will not be rushed. If you have siblings, mention it to them first and include them.

2. **Do you feel prepared?** If your parents are still working, ask about their retirement expectations. Be sure to express interest, not judgment, which could push them into a defensive stance.

Find out whether they have determined how much money they will need and how they will support themselves once they stop working. Many big brokerages and fund companies offer online retirement calculators; you can even help them with this, if they are willing. Also, ask about their plans for long term care, should it become necessary.

3. **Where is your paperwork?** Your parents should have in place at least a will and documents naming people to make medical and financial decisions on their behalf, should they become unable. Ask to digitize their paperwork.

Suggest that your parents assemble a list of accounts and emergency contacts for their advisors, accountants, and lawyers. Getting organized is key. Depending on your relationship, your parents may even want to give you access to their accounts.

This will not be the easiest talk you have had, but it is essential for both their financial security and your own peace of mind.