



# THE NUMBER ONE FEAR OF GOING TO ASSISTED LIVING

By Janice Martin, Senior Advisor / Family Liaison

I have worked with thousands of people who know in their hearts that they need assisted living and yet they resist. They are lonely and isolated in their homes, experiencing frequent falls, are not eating well, not taking their medications properly – and yet they resist. There are many reasons for this including the undeniable expense and the feeling of being overwhelmed of where to begin after years in one house. But there is one reason that overrides all others with few exceptions. It is the fear of losing their independence. These are people who have lived a long and successful life making decisions for themselves and others. Sometimes those decisions had good results, and others perhaps not as good. But as Frank Sinatra sings, “I did it my way”.

In most cases, the harder life becomes, the more firmly they dig in. And, as people age there are more and more people telling them what they “should” do. Their children, their neighbors, their doctor all have very strong opinions. I have a saying that has proven to be consistently true without a single exception: “The greater the need, the greater the resistance.” As more and more people are telling you what to do and your abilities are becoming less and less manageable, the only thing remaining is the power to say “no.” And to prove will all your might that you can do this on your own.

But what does independence mean? It generally means the ability to make our own decisions. The ability to come and go as we choose. The ability to have a voice in the care we wish to receive or deny. But independence comes with a cost. In order to remain in your home, you must pay for food as well as have the ability to get to the store to shop for it and prepare it yourself or have someone prepare it for you, the cost of utilities, and perhaps a mortgage or rent. There is also the cost of NOT receiving good nutrition and care. Of not performing good hygiene. The cost of personal care and the upkeep of the home and yard. Cleaning the house, cutting the grass, trimming the bushes, doing laundry, taking out the trash, replacing the batteries in the smoke detector, changing the lightbulbs and the filter in the refrigerator. There is also the cost of isolation. There is no denying that it is exhausting. When you are 80-some years old, struggling physically, perhaps alone, it is stressful.

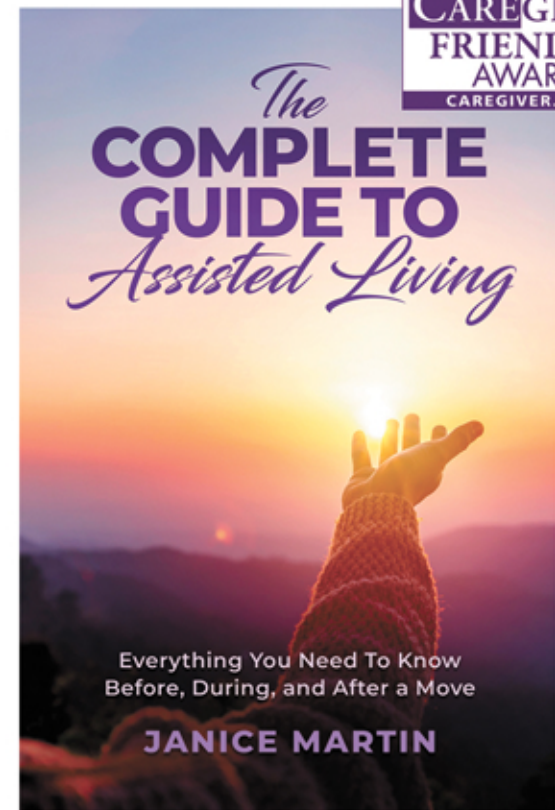


Is that truly independent? I encourage you to consider that a move to assisted living and thereby releasing these responsibilities to others allows you to save the mental and physical exhaustion and to instead use that energy to enjoy the things that bring you peace and happiness!

People living in assisted living are free to come and go as they wish, whenever they wish. They can still have their car and drive. They can volunteer, go on vacation (how about a cruise?), spend the holidays with family, eat when and where they want, go shopping, listen to music or dance at the square, and be included in decisions for their care. They can make new friends, play games, and enjoy entertainment without leaving the property,

Yes, there is a significant cost for assisted living and the first response is that many believe they can stay in their own home and bring in care. But in-home care is expensive. Home care agencies require a four hour minimum. That’s four hours at a time; not 2 hours in the morning and 2 at night. And most are between \$25 to \$30 an hour. Basically, at least \$100 for just four hours out of 24 hours in a day. What about the other 20 hours in the day?

There are studio and one bedroom apartments with moderate care fees available in The Villages. When breaking down the cost, the reality is that it can be about \$6.60 an hour. For everything 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 30 days a month, 365 days a year. Someone to provide the food and prepare all your meals, cover the cost of utilities, make sure you take your medicine at the right time, do your laundry, clean your apartment, provide maintenance, offer transportation if needed, help with showering and making sure there is help if you need it. Indeed, many seniors truly cannot afford the cost of paying privately for assisted living. However, there may be some financial assistance options available worth investigating.



*Independence does have a cost, but it doesn't mean freedom.*

Janice Martin, president of Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc is available to help guide individuals through difficult decisions related to a move to assisted living. She is an educator on senior living options, a community resource liaison, and senior advocate. She is also the author of the #1 bestselling and award winning book, “*The Complete Guide to Assisted Living: Everything You Need to Know Before, During, and After a Move*”. The book is available on Amazon.com in eBook and paperback.

For more information or for a free consultation, please call 352-477-1866 or email [SeniorLiaisonCFL@gmail.com](mailto:SeniorLiaisonCFL@gmail.com).



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