



Empty Nester Checklist:
by Jodi Seidler

The finale of being a strong and successful single parent is when we segue from solo parenting to the sans-child art of empty nesting. All the juggling acts of finances, balancing work, homework and play dates comes to an end as we send our child off to college. As much as that can sting, it also creates a new phase for us! HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP:

1. Letting Go is Part of Life.

Just know that teenagers try and separate from their parents in ways that might astound us and make us sad. We might even utter words our parents used, like "You don't appreciate all I have done for you". The truth is - they do, it's just part of the dance of moving away and starting their own life.

2. Make Plans for your New Life.

Just as we have to set up our kids for their own new life, we must do the same for ourselves. As adults, we've had to begin a new life after divorce and now we begin OUR life; and it can be scary. Time to let friends know you are more available to go out, plan get-aways and ways to meet new people.

3. Keep a Journal to Ease the Way.

Empty Nesters have to be careful not to email, text or call our kids TOO much. There are a lot of feelings flying around, and its good to express them (in an appropriate manner). Journal writing is great for cathartic reasons, but also allows us to feel our feelings without making our children feel responsible for our feelings in missing them.

4. Plan for those College Emergencies.

If you're afraid your child might get into trouble with their newfound freedom, there are a few things you can do to oversee their world. Giving them a low limit credit card (which you pay for) is a good way to establish their own credit and it has a hidden blessing of seeing what they spend their money on. It can be emergency money or used as an allowance.

5. Thank Yourself for the Job you Did.

Treating yourself during this transition is very important as well. Go to more movies (matinees or first show of the day are less money). Take yourself on a date, a day trip or spa or to dinner; remember you succeeded in raising a child on your own. Congratulations!