

## Unbearable mom <sup>[1]</sup>

Hi Alice,

I've recently moved back home with my parents and I'm struggling! While I know this is the best option for me financially, I can't help wishing I could just leave.

My Mum doesn't work right now, so she's constantly at home. I'm studying part time from home, and working 20 to 24 hours per week. I feel like I never have time to myself! It has come to the extent that I now feel paralyzed in my bedroom, unable to even get up because I don't want to see her. I don't think this is helped by the fact she has always been very pushy, and had ambitions for me that I could never fulfill. She constantly acts as though I am a disappointment and I feel helpless and totally unmotivated to work, and now even get out of bed, in this environment.

On top of this, during an argument a few weeks ago, I said something along the lines of, 'you don't own me, you don't have the right to run my life' and my Mum said, that she does in fact, own me, I am her daughter and I belong to her, and she will always be in control of my life. She treats me like a child. I can't go anywhere without demanding questions: where are you going, who with, what time will you be back, why, how, what, etc. She comes into my room without knocking, no matter what I'm doing, or what state of dress I am in. I am 23, and completely stuck. I see no other option for my mental health than to move out again and seriously reduce the amount of contact I have with her. But I can't afford to.

Can you please give some suggestions as to how I can make this more bearable? Thank you.

### **Answer**

Dear Reader,

As you've experienced, moving back home may feel like both a blessing and a curse. Particularly during hard financial times, living at home may help you save money and get back on your feet. However, it may also lead to rising tension between you and your family members — especially if you're used to having all the freedom in the world. Fortunately, there are ways to improve communication between you and your parent(s), as well as ways to make living at home more bearable.

First and foremost, learning how to talk with a parent in a constructive manner might help cool down the situation. Though it may seem like your parent won't come around and see things from your point of view, a little patience and persistence in communicating with them might go a long way. Here are a few ideas to try:

- **Consider what you want from the conversation.** It might help to brainstorm what your goals are for the conversation. Is it for them to understand your experiences? To try and create a plan for how to make this living situation work moving forward? Is it as simple as letting them know you're putting a lock on the door to your room? Having clear goals may help you plan what you're going to say.
- **Ask your parent to set aside time to talk.** Ideally, this won't occur after a specific event that really irked you. If they seem reluctant, emphasize how much you value having a frank and respectful discussion.
- **Explain how you're impacted by your parent's scrutiny.** It may be helpful for your parent to know how their hawkish behavior makes you feel. Consider explaining why it stresses you out, and maybe propose working on potential solutions together. This could be one way to open up the issue for discussion.
- **Work on establishing boundaries.** As an adult, you have the right to decide which aspects of your life you'd like to remain private. Perhaps you can communicate to your parent why having these boundaries might be helpful for you and for your relationship with them.
- **Approach the conversation calmly and maturely.** How you handle your parent's restrictions and reactions may be interpreted as a sign of your maturity and show that you don't need to be parented like a child anymore.
- **Pick your battles.** Focus on trying to change the things that matter to you most. Find ways to let your parent know that you can live with certain situations, but that others feel invasive.
- **Don't forget to communicate that you're thankful for all your parent does for you.** Though this may be difficult, they might appreciate that you recognize that their actions could be out of love and concern.
- **Put it in writing.** If you feel that an in-person conversation is too difficult, perhaps you can organize your thoughts in a letter or email.

Secondly, consider finding a positive outlet to help you cope. Fortunately, there are a myriad of ways to make living at home more bearable. Perhaps you can join a book club, recreational sports team, religious group, or volunteer organization. Going to places where there are regular meetings gets you out of the house and may make it easier to make friends. You might also consider studying at a cafe or library if that could help you focus more.

Finally, as this seems to be having an impact on your mental health, it might be helpful for you to

Speak with a trusted friend, family member, mentor, or mental health professional. These individuals may be able to help you determine additional ideas for how to best communicate with your parent, as well as offer you support so you can continue to be successful. They can also help you work on developing a financial plan so that you can move out when you're ready. For additional information about how to speak with your parents and communicate with others, consider checking out the [Communication Concerns](#) [2] category in the [Go Ask Alice! Emotional Health](#) [3] archives and the [Talking With Parents](#) [4] category in the [Relationships](#) [5] archives.

It might help to remember that parents often have ideas on how to best support you even as you transition in their eyes from child to adult. Hopefully, as you continue to build your communication, your parent will ease up. In the meantime, living at home may be a time to save up, refocus your goals, and recharge. Best of luck!

Alice!

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