



## Going Home for the Holidays

Sometimes students approach going home for the holidays with mixed feelings--excitement, confusion, even dread. For many it will be the first time being back with the family for an extended period since arriving at college. Questions emerge on the way home... Will my folks expect me to follow the same rules and curfews as if I'm still living at home? Will my room still be my room or has it been "given away" or taken over for another purpose? How will my brothers and sisters treat me? Have they taken over my place and space with Mom and Dad? Will I feel a member of the family or will it all be different and I'll feel like an outsider? WHERE IS HOME NOW? ...the place I grew up or the University of Miami? Another big question is--How much do I really want to tell them about my life at college?

All of these questions are normal and part of the process of development that everyone experiences as they mature and change their relationship with their parents. Being in the college age group means that you are going through a normal life cycle change and have three tasks to accomplish in order to move successfully to the next stage of life.

One of the hardest of these tasks is changing the relationship with parents to a more adult-to-adult relationship. Sometimes college students are not ready to do this yet, so if things are fine for you the way they are right now, the time is not right to make changes. "If it ain't broke don't fix it!" However, most students are ready to begin this process sometime in their college years. Even if students are ready, sometimes parents are not. **Know that seeing one's children growing up, leaving, and changing is often very threatening to parents especially with a first or last child.**

A lot of parents react to this by trying to hold on tighter and keep things the same with parents making demands and children doing what the parents want. Sometimes win-lose power struggles emerge around this stage.

Be aware that parental tasks for this time of life include letting children be more adult and turning their interest back to their mates or friends. If this is not going so well, parents may refocus more on their children, turning to them for support. Students are pulling away and parents are pulling them in for support and again win-lose struggles may emerge.

Sometimes all parties need help in accomplishing this change to adult-to-adult relationships. So here is one positive way to begin your preparation as you go home for the holidays. Keep a win-win attitude toward making these changes and know they do not occur overnight. Take the initiative soon after you get home and ask parents to sit down and talk about how things have changed and how this holiday time together can be great for everyone.

Courtesy Stetson University [Hatter Health Beat](#)