
LIFE TRANSITIONS

The Empty Nest Transition

Reconnecting as a couple when the kids leave and you realize you are strangers.

Boundary Agreement Resource Library

Dr. Hines Inc. | boundaryagreement.com

This guide is a coaching resource, not therapy or counseling.

Who Are We Without the Kids?

For 18+ years, your identity was 'parent.' Your schedule revolved around their schedule. Your conversations were about their lives. Your energy went to their needs. And then they leave. And you are sitting across from someone you have not had a real conversation with in years.

The empty nest is not just about missing the kids. It is about discovering whether you still have a marriage underneath the parenting.

Grieve the season.

It is okay to be sad. You raised humans and launched them. That is significant. Let yourself feel the loss before you rush to fill the space.

Rediscover each other.

You have both changed in 18 years. The person across from you is not the same person you married. Get curious. Ask questions you have not asked in a decade.

Create a new rhythm.

Your old routine revolved around kids. Build a new one. Morning coffee together. Evening walks. A weekly date. Structure creates connection.

Address what was avoided.

Many couples use the kids as a buffer. With the buffer gone, unresolved issues surface. Do not run from them. This is your chance to finally deal with them.

Dream again.

Where do you want to travel? What do you want to do with this season? Make plans that excite both of you. You have more freedom now than you have had in two decades.

Get comfortable with silence.

The house is quiet. That is not a problem to solve. Learn to be together in silence without it feeling like something is wrong.

EXERCISE: The Reconnection Questions

Take turns. No phones. Full attention.

What is something about you that has changed in the last 10 years that I might not know?

What have you always wanted to do but put off for the kids?

What is one thing you miss about our early relationship?

What is one thing you are looking forward to in this season?

What do you need from me now that the kids are gone?

If we could go anywhere together, where would you want to go?
