

Expectations of care vs. my ability.

My 74 year old mother showed up on my doorstep 2 years ago, homeless, after my only sibling, kicked her out of her house. Literally, clothes in bags.

Because my sister's husband demanded it (for very troubling and selfish reasons, not because mom is awful). Mom is sweet and easy to be around.

However, I'm a single mom, for the last 28 years. My eldest is in his senior of high school.

I don't like living with mom. She's got poor hygiene, a hoarder, and has no personal life. She put a lot of pressure on me to be her whole entire world.

She never paid rent or helped with the bills. It's a small house - just two bedrooms, so I had to share my bed with her.

I never consented to give up my personal life or home to her. We began to battle over her hoarding and excessive needs for attention. I had a rich and full life before she arrived on my doorstep.

I had an opportunity to move away - and I did! Leaving her in my house, rent free. I've been carrying two rents for the last two years to give her freedom and me space.

But she got sick.... Her chronic COPD from 50 years of smoking finally caught up with her.

Hospitalized - I jumped on a flight to be with her. Now, she's released to me. I bring her meds, assay her to the toilet, wipe and powder her bum, make her low salt meals and hourly tea, take her vitals, monitor her oxygen use, oversee her medical visits.

Meanwhile; I remote work as an independent contractor. That means no PTO, no FMLA. It's the most incredibly intense, demanding time of my entire career! I've really done so well for myself with this move!

Mom's care is crashing that all down. I've been living out of hospital rooms, or being full time nurse.

My son is remote schooling - missing out on his senior year. My work pressure is unreal. I'm getting full blown panic attacks, the first one almost put me in the ER! I've been threatened with being fired for being so absent.

I am stretched so thin. My jaw is permanent tight from gritting my teeth. I feel nauseous, I can't eat. I've lost 10 pounds in the last week. I'm sleeping in my son's bed and he's taken the couch because I can't rest next to Mom with her oxygen compressor and sleep apnea.

I was so close to tasting freedom... now I am saddled with an adult dependent. It's not fair. I resent her. She did not plan or prepare for old age and dumped herself on me. I love her, but I never consented to any of this.

Is it cruel of me to want to put her in an AL? Am I being selfish? Some people tell me I should quit my job to take care of her and just live off my savings... That doesn't see fair. I'm 46, it's not like these kinds of career opportunities are going to be bountiful much longer. I'm aging out the workforce. I don't want to have to take a menial job again just so I can be mom's nurse. Thinking about being in poverty, working full time and a son's college to pay for puts me in terror.

It seems the whole world is telling me to sacrifice my dreams and ambitions to care for her. I ran away from home at 17 and chose to sleep in abandoned houses and beg for people's leftovers on the street corner, 6 months pregnant - to get away from the violent abusive man she chose to marry. I worked so hard to claw myself out of the hole my childhood put me in.

I'm pissed, sad, exhausted, resentful, developing panic disorder, sacrificing my career momentum and my son's education/college ambitions. My house is sitting empty and my gardens untended 3,000 miles away. I feel trapped. And - I love her, and want her to be well.

She's acting like a helpless child. Maybe it's disorientation from her illnesses. Am I forced to wipe her ass and make her tea and never leave my house for more than 2 hours until she dies? That

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could be decades from now, or 6 months. I just dunno.

Sorry so long!!! Help! Eldest daughter suffocating under the weight of Mom's poor life decisions....

Care Decisions

Long-distance Caregiving

Mental Health

[Scampie1](#)

Feb 23, 2026

Your first duty is to yourself and making sure that you stay gainfully employed. Next, look at your son. He should be enjoying his last year of high school, hanging out with friends and getting ready for graduation.

Why did you feel the need to hijack your entire life to move you and your son away from your secure home. Secondly, why did you leave your home and decide to rent another place?

Start putting in your hours for work and work to maintain your position. People can be selfish and are not seeing the full picture of this situation. All those people telling you to quit your job is giving you poor advice and will harm you in the long run. Jobs are hard to come by these days.

Call APS and explain to them that you are not financially able to maintain two households. Mom goes to a home, period.

Get back to your life. Take it from someone who has had their entire life up ended by poor planning.

Listen to the wise people here.

[Qwood2](#)

Feb 22, 2026

Superwoman, I feel your pain and live your reality. Do what your heart ❤️, moves you to do and not what your brain says to do. You will find that life will be easier.

[waytomisery](#)

Feb 22, 2026

Did you actually read the distress this single mother is in ???

No one has to capitulate, surrender and ruin their own life, children's lives, financial stability, mental and physical health to be a care slave, and especially not for a woman who did not provide a safe home for her child and that child had to run away from home.

Some of us are responsible and want to provide for our children and some want to be martyrs and post disturbing guilt trips on others to perpetuate the misery loves company.

[Animallovers](#)

Feb 22, 2026

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It certainly is Not cruel to put her into AL! I put my mother into MC and it has been the best thing for both of us! I wasn't even living with her before that but helping her from two hours away when she was in IL. We had to hire in home help for her there and finally she needed the help 24/7. She still relied on me "to be her entire world".

Now that she is in MC she is getting the care she needs from people who chose to take on a job caring for people with her needs and even people more needy. They also get to go home after work and are not trying to do it 24/7 alone. They can offer a whole team of support to address her needs. This enables them to give her far better care than I ever could. I can visit her and take her out as I wish, basically I can be her daughter again and enjoy her even though there will always be the stress of overseeing her general care and the stress of watching someone I love in decline when I know she will never be the mother I once knew. She is much happier now and, while she still has her clingy moments, she understands when I say I need time for myself.

You need to focus on your life and your son's life. He will be off at college soon and you will miss the little time you have with him before that happens if you continue to concentrate on her. He is missing out on a very important year with his friends before they each disperse to the winds to find their own lives.

Finding a care facility would improve all your lives. If you don't find somewhere soon then you risk all your family relationships eroding as the resentment builds. Please don't destroy three lives when all three of you have the opportunity to be happier and healthier! You certainly should not feel guilty for seeking a better future for all of you!

I wish all of you happiness at this time of change in all your lives.

[Jennytrying](#)

Feb 22, 2026

It sounds like your sister and husband put up with the same issues you're having now, hence they had enough.

It's time you and your sister join forces and put your mother in a facility that accepts low income residents. Once you do you both need to visit her and be apart of her life just not her caregiver.

[Jennyjenjen](#)

Feb 22, 2026

This was posted February 16. I hope that you have already returned home and that your son is back in school.

Your number one priority should be your son, as others below have said.

It sounds like your mom suffered a bunch of misfortunes. And I personally do believe most children are morally obligated to help their parents. But you can't help your mom if you are unemployed or homeless or having problems with your son. You have to keep your own life in order or you will lose your ability to help others, and also yourself.

From reading these forums, I believe the correct order would be to call 911 and, once she is at the hospital, tell the social worker that mom can't go home cause unsafe discharge and then get out of there. Cause if you stick around they will just pressure you.

Please let us know how you are doing.

[Grandma1954](#)

Feb 22, 2026

[AgingCare](#)

You can not sustain this way of life...and you know it.

You begin looking for a facility for her or for a Senior Housing opening for her.

If she is hospitalized again you talk to the Social Worker right from the start and you tell them that she can not be released to home. You can no longer SAFELY care for her and she can not SAFELY live alone.

They can not discharge her to home or to you given that information.

They can help with the process of Medicaid if she is not yet on Medicaid.

They can begin helping to find an open bed someplace. (will it be the best place, probably not but she will be cared for)

[emccartt](#)

Feb 22, 2026

You are an amazing person. Get out! You have nothing to regret. You made the right decision at age 17. Good luck and best wishes.

[waytomisery](#)

Feb 21, 2026

AL exists for the very reasons you speak about . This is a career and life ruining situation for you and your son .

No you should not upend your career, finances , life or your son's life .

Mom goes to AL and you and your son return to your jobs, life and school .

You tell Mom ,

"I'm sorry Mom , but I can no longer provide the level of care you need and you will have to live in assisted living "

Don't feel guilty either . You did not cause Mom's problems or cause her to be old and in need of care .

BTW does Mom have funds for assisted living ?

[puptrnr](#)

Feb 19, 2026

Please prioritize your son and yourself first and follow some of this good advice! He should be in school!

You can and deserve to have a great life and not sacrifice yourself and your future any longer.

Find a good therapist because you need some support and tell your mother that she has 30 days to find alternative living arrangements (you can help her do that).

Your sister was insightful 2 years ago to draw a boundary with your mom and not allow her to continue impose herself on her family. You must find the strength to do the same.

[CaringWifeAZ](#)

Feb 18, 2026

AgingCare

No, you don't have to be Superwoman.

You say you never consented to give up your personal life or home to her, yet you have - twice. YOU are allowing this to happen.

And, I think you are right, at 46, you are at your peak earning and career building years. It will NOT be so easy to jump back in to the workforce 10 or 20 years from now. Because, that's how long you will likely need to sacrifice to take care of a woman who made her own poor decisions.

Who are these people who are telling you to sacrifice your dreams and ambitions to care for her? Is this just a voice from within? If any person tells you that, you need to cut them out of your life. They are not healthy for you!

It is not selfish to find an assisted living for your mother. Even better, a care community which adapts to her changing needs and can easily transition her to skilled nursing or memory care. It is the caring thing for a daughter to do. And it is the smart thing to do for YOU. You matter too. Your life is still ahead of you. Your mother does not have many options, because she did not plan for her own life. Her job was to raise you. Your job is not to raise her.

Your job is to raise your son! He is your priority! He should not be the sacrifice.

[Sendhelp](#)

Feb 18, 2026

Denial is not a river in Egypt.

[Patathome01](#)

Feb 18, 2026

Your needs and job come first. Place your mother into a facility to free you up. Please keep your job and get your son back to school with his peers.

[lealonn1](#)

Feb 18, 2026

You are sacrificing your life and your sons life to take care of a woman you had to run away from, pregnant, at 17, for the dreadful choices SHE made. I see nothing about her running after you to help you out of that scary situation you felt forced into!

Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing care is not some house of horrors. Please get mother placed immediately so you can return yourself and your son to some semblance of a normal life again. You can be the daughter again as a visitor to mom instead of the panicked servant you've become due to her bad life choices. It's okay to hold up the white flag of surrender and say ENOUGH now. It's also okay to love yourself and your son and recognize the importance of your wellbeing OVER your mother's.

Please get mom placed now. It's time.

Best of luck.

[Understanding70](#)

Feb 18, 2026

AgingCare

First, make an appointment with your doctor, if you have not, and get his/her help. At the same time, call mother's doctor, and make an appointment for a complete examination and discussion for her well-being and safety. All of you need this.

Begin now to work out the safety, health, and well-being of you and all your family. With the doctor's help, I hope you can find a care facility that is suitable. You all need this.

[Tiger8](#)

Feb 18, 2026

Yes, you clearly have pulled yourself up from poor choices that your Mom has made, and that is so great! Definitely congratulations to you for that accomplishment. It was very loving of you to take her in when she was on your doorstep. She needed you and you have been there for her. I know when we are stressed to the limits (as you clearly are), that it is easier to give up, quit, or feel resentment. But, please remember that you said she is not awful and is sweet. This great life you have is thanks to her. She housed you, fed you, wiped your ass, ect... when you could not do it for yourself.

She will not live forever. I think you just need some help and breaks to care for yourself. I hope you are saving for your old age, because your kids see how you feel about caring for yourself mom, and they will probably feel the same about you. If you show up on their doorstep one day in need, I hope they can find a way to make it all work out for you. ??? I don't want you to lose all you have worked for, but I also would hate to see another Mom sent to a nursing home.

Some may be ok. If you can afford a good one, but many are simply terrible.

best of luck to you.

[Slartibartfast](#)

Feb 18, 2026

"She housed you, fed you, wiped your ass, ect... when you could not do it for yourself." That's called the BARE MINIMUM when you have a child. And she had to do it for her own child while homeless, thanks to sweet old mom.

Spare us the histrionics over "throwing mom in a home". Its not an animal shelter, they don't put your parent to sleep after you drop them off. They get housed, fed, and their ass wiped. Something you apparently put a lot of stake in.

[Oedgar23](#)

Feb 16, 2026

Several elements of your story are the same as mine. I have a whole lot of posts on here if you have time to look at them. My caregiving duties are now over. My mother passed in August. But the whole process just about put me in the ground. I'm still recovering. Save yourself and your child and do whatever you can to get out from under this.

[Fawnby](#)

Feb 16, 2026

AgingCare

You owe mom nothing. Fifty years of smoking and who knows what else? caused her to lose her health. Since the 1960s we've all been advised that smoking is a health hazard but mom did it anyway and let the chips fall where they may! She didn't care who she inconvenienced by getting sick. Somebody would step in and take care of her....and that's you.

Just because somebody wants you to pay for their stupid life decisions doesn't mean you have to do it. Especially when she exposed you to a horrid stepdad who abused you.

Take the advice others have given you and get her out of your bed (truly weird!) and your house. You deserve your dreams and ambitions, and I believe you can get back to them once you get this albatross off your neck and into a facility. Do whatever you have to do to make that happen, which shouldn't be all that complicated. Don't concern yourself with the details, just get her out of your house and let her or sis call APS. Everyone on this forum will be pulling for you - including me.

[MG8522](#)

Feb 16, 2026

Move her out, to a nursing home or assisted living or whatever is appropriate for her level of need.

Why should your son be remote learning, missing out on his senior year, a special time that he'll never get back? Your first duty is to him, not to your mother's poor life decisions.

Call Adult Protective Services and tell them that you are returning to your home in one week in order to preserve your job and your son's education, and that they will need to place her or otherwise take over her care. Then book your plane reservation. After your son's graduation, decide whether you want to stay in your newer home, or move back to the original one. Then sell the other and move forward with restoring the full life that you, and your son, deserve.

[JustAnon](#)

Feb 16, 2026

"She's got poor hygiene, a hoarder, and has no personal life. She put a lot of pressure on me to be her whole entire world."

She is not a sweet person. She is a horrible person. You should not be caring for her at all. Put her in a care home and visit as little as you want to. The reason that sibling kicked her out was because she is impossible to live with. That was a good decision. Time to do the right thing and get her placed before the week is out. Also, get therapy and look into journaling. Your mom was not a good mom and didn't protect you as a kid. Time to start self parenting.

[southernwave](#)

Feb 16, 2026

Absolutely not. This is ridiculous and you have every right to get out.

But you are the only one who can rescue yourself and you child.

Your mom has to go to assisted living or section 8 housing or council flat or whatever it is in your area.

Now you can see why your sister had enough. A needy elder will suck you dry and spit out your bones.

[Daughterof1930](#)

Feb 16, 2026

I cannot fathom your criticism of your sister abandoning care of your mother when you're now desperate to do the same. You state she and her husband did it "not because mom is awful" then go on to describe all the ways the situation with mom is awful. Maybe time for an apology to sister. Meanwhile, there is nothing and nobody forcing you to uproot your life and do all this, you're choosing it, and just like your smart sister, you're can choose differently. I hope you do so before your child totally resents you and grandma. As it is, you're a burned out caregiver, risking your financial security, that's no good for anyone involved. Change this whole living arrangement and go home. Mom can have others caring for her, as your sister came to see

[funkygrandma59](#)

Feb 16, 2026

OMG!!! Just stop the madness already!!! The whole world is NOT telling you to throw away your life and career for your mom. Just the opposite actually. More people will tell you to get your mom placed ASAP and get on with raising your children, and enjoying your career and life.

And if mom doesn't have any money she'll have to apply for Medicaid and move into a Medicaid facility.

You say at the beginning of your post that your "mom is sweet and easy to be around" yet a few sentences down you say that she's a hoarder, has poor hygiene, has no personal life and wants you to be her everything. That doesn't sound all that sweet or easy to be around to me, does it you?

You are going to have to be the "bad guy" here and get the ball rolling to get your mom placed in the appropriate facility, if you're not wanting to be the one who dies before your mom does from stress related issues. You deserve so much better as do your children and your job.

Call your area agency on aging or senior services in your area to see if they can assist you getting the ball rolling.

I wish you well in finding the right Medicaid facility for your mom, and getting on with living and enjoying your life.

[olddude](#)

Feb 16, 2026

"Mom is sweet and easy to be around.

AgingCare

However, I'm a single mom, for the last 28 years.
I don't like living with mom. She's got poor hygiene, a hoarder, and has no personal life. She put a lot of pressure on me to be her whole entire world.
She never paid rent or helped with the bills."

Your mom doesn't sound all that sweet or easy to be around.

[lealonn1](#)

Feb 18, 2026

Bingo. Thank you. Oftentimes we delude ourselves into making these statements w/o thinking.

[Dawn88](#)

Feb 16, 2026

Get Mom placed NOW, before you end up dying before she does.

There's nothing wrong with Assisted Living, it's not an asylum or prison. Mom gets a room of her own, with housekeeping, food and laundry services. No work for Mom at all, just how she likes it. She clearly enjoys using you as an unpaid (and overly generous) care slave the last 2 years. She can suck the blood out of the AL staff who provide her services. I do believe in AL they will not be wiping any behinds, so that means Mom needs a higher level of care, like Memory Care or Skilled Nursing, due to her "helplessness."

Time to get Mom OUT. If you die from the stress of work and dealing with helpless Mom 24/7, she will have to go to a facility anyway. Your son isn't going to house Mom, pay her way, or provide her toileting, is he? Would you even expect him to be an unpaid 24/7 slave himself?

Mom will need much more care, as she continues to suck the blood out of you and destroy your happiness. You continue to spoil her daily, with tea and toileting. Why should she even TRY to do anything? "Sweet and easy to be around?" No wonder your sister got her out. Mom is a total parasite at this point, especially with no income.

Get Mom placed in a facility (on Medicaid) and stop suffocating under the stress of your career, combined with 24/7 unpaid slavery. If you don't, figure this ridiculous situation of treating Mom like a newborn baby could easily go on another 10 years.

Find an Elder lawyer to help you make the arrangements to place Mom and do the Medi-Cal application. It will be money well spent, and you obviously can afford it.

Remember, if you die first, Mom goes into a facility anyway. Stop the madness, get her into a SNF and start focusing on your own life, before "helpless Mom" takes another day away from you. You've wasted enough time and money the last 2 years.

Would you expect your son to be your unpaid 24/7 caregiver down the road? Who gets your "sweet" Mom next if you don't survive her??
See an Elder lawyer pronto.

[Slartibartfast](#)

Feb 16, 2026

I think we need to start where you started: "My 74 year old mother showed up on my doorstep 2 years ago, homeless, after my only sibling, kicked her out of her house. Literally, clothes in bags. Because my sister's husband demanded it (for very troubling and selfish reasons, not because mom is awful). Mom is sweet and easy to be around." I think this really covers your whole issue. You believe your sister and her husband were selfish and now you think you're selfish for wanting the same thing. I humbly suggest that you work on forgiving BOTH of you for doing what needs to be done.

What is wrong with assisted living?! A place where she would get the care she needs, be clean and safe, get help with toileting and bathing and medication is amazing. It's a long way better than what you got as a pregnant teenager.

I'm not asking you to hate your mom. She's got mental illness (hoarding at least) and didn't have the backbone to put her own daughter before an abusive man. She's not perfect. You can love her anyway. But the real question is why are you allowing her to abuse you to this day? And why are you passing this cycle on to your own child. Because you're letting her mental illness and medical needs take you away from your own child. You're doing exactly what she did, putting someone above the needs of your child and allowing your child to be harmed emotionally because of it.

Forgive your sister for putting her own family's needs first. Forgive your mom for failing to do that. And then maybe you can forgive yourself for breaking this awful cycle and putting your needs and your child's needs first.

[Suzy23](#)

Feb 16, 2026

Your mom doesn't sound "sweet and easy to be around" to me— poor hygiene, a hoarder, with no personal life and zero ability to care for herself?!?

I also find it questionable that you are aging out of the workforce at 46.

You say you feel "the world" is telling you that you have to make these sacrifices? No. Maybe some part of you, or your mom, or your sibling are saying it out of misplaced guilt or misplaced sense of responsibility or lack of boundaries, or fear, but not the world.

You have already given way more than you should have in my view and let it go on for far too long. But it's not too late to get your life back!

The majority of your time, attention, and care should be channeled to yourself and your son. Make a plan and extricate yourself from all direct care of your mother. There are dozens or hundreds of posts explaining the practical steps of how to do this.

You do NOT have to sacrifice yourself, your plans, your own mental health, etc for her. Nor should she want you to do so if she were a good mother with all her faculties.

You had the courage to escape what seemed like a trap caused by her once before. You can do it again.

[Qwood2](#)

Feb 22, 2026

Wow... never give advice to a person when there's so much hate for yourself. How selfish of an answer so quickly given without thought about how that's the person who carried her for 9 months.

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