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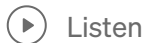
How To Keep Your 20-Something From Roosting In Your Empty Nest



Lucie Frost · Follow

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Your kid came home for quarantine.

He is surviving on Hot Pockets and whatever Uber Eats provides. He leaves his dirty plates under the bed and empty boxes in the freezer. He keeps the living room blinds drawn so he can watch reruns of WrestleMania without glare — at high volume.

When you ask him to turn down the TV or take out the trash, he complies, while wordlessly making clear that you have *imposed* upon him.

You love him, but you worry he will stay forever.

What. The. Fuck. Are. You. Going. To. Do?

Here's what:

1. Remind yourself that your son is not a chick, but a fledgling. Fledglings belong *out* of the nest. You're respecting the rules of nature, dammit!

2. Immediately cancel Netflix.

- Son: *Mom! What happened to Netflix!*

Mom: *Oh, I cancelled it.*

Son: *What the heck?*

Mom: *Sorry sweetie. We're cutting expenses.*

Son: *But MOM?!?*

3. Turn up the thermostat — no lower than 76 if you can stand it.

- Son: *Mom, I can barely breathe in here.*

Mom: *Hmmm. Why don't you go outside and get some fresh air?*

4. You'll be hot, so take off your bra. And shower often, then walk around the house in just your towel.

- Son: *Ewwww.*

Mom: *What? You see more of me in my bathing suit.*

Son: *That's different. This is ewwwww.*

Mom: *Hmmm.*

5. Go on NextDoor. Find the internet provider everyone complains about. That's who you'll want to switch to.

- Son: *Mom, the WiFi here is crap.*

Mom: *Oh really?*

6. Wake him up early and often.

- Mom: *We're going to the Farmer's Market. Go with?*

7. Sniff him whenever he comes in the house.

- Son: *What are you DOING?*
Mom: *Just making sure.*
Son: *But I'm an ADULT. I can drink if I want.*
Mom: *But not the weed, sweetie. This is Texas.*

8. Always call it “the” weed. In fact, put a “the” in front of *all* the words. The Snapchat. The football. The Call of Duty.

- Son (under his breath): *Weed, just weed.*

9. Encourage him (often!) to play Animal Crossing.

- Mom: *We could play together and trade things!*
Son: *Mom, it's Minecraft for old people.*
Mom: *But I think you'd love it.*

10. If he hasn't left for a friend's couch after 1–9, you have no choice. You'll have to have “the talk.”

- Mom:
So have you seen anyone special? Girls, I mean.
Not to presume anything. You might be into guys, which would be fine. You know we love you and don't care who you're into.
Is it a bad time to ask if it's girls or guys?
Or I guess “neither” is a choice these days. What do you call that — non-binary? Those terms are always so confusing for me.
You could be in to both, and that would be just fine with us, honey. Is that still called bi?
And what does fluid mean?
I don't mean to be stupid, but there are just so many choices these days that I can't keep up with them. But you know whatever you choose, we love you. You're our son, and we will love you whether you're gay, or straight, or the fluid thing, or the pan thing.

Oh gosh, I'm rambling.

Anyhoo, are you seeing anyone special?

Bye, bye birdie.

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Written by Lucie Frost

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Lucie is a former employment lawyer, now ha-ha writer, in Central Texas. You can find her on all the socials (@lucieHfrost) or at her website: luciefrost.com

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