

Name: _____ Class: _____

Moving Home

By Heidi Stemple
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In this memoir, Heidi Stemple discusses the difficult decision her family had to make when her father was diagnosed with cancer. As you read, take notes on how the family decides whether or not to move.

- [1] I have no stories of family drama in my childhood. My parents were hippies and we lived with a barn-full of artisans¹ who created the most amazing silver, leather, and pottery items. My younger brothers and I had fields to explore and a pool tucked behind one of the barns. We had our own pottery wheels and the potters baked our pots in the kiln² with theirs. My mom was a writer and my dad a professor who loved birds. I grew up and moved away.



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My family was different. Not bad, but different.

My children are twelve years apart, and we lived in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on a cul-de-sac³ next to our best friends, the Napiers.

Everything was fine until crisis struck. Back at home, my dad was diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly, there was too much distance between my family and my parents.

I called my brothers — both equally far away. Someone needed to go home. I wanted it to be me. Both my brothers agreed that they were not able to pack up and relocate and loved the idea that I was willing — and ready — to do so. My husband agreed. Then we needed to talk to our daughters. They were reluctant of course. They didn't want to leave their home.

- [5] So, as a family, we sat down to write a pros-and-cons list of moving. At first, the list was hard to figure out. I knew what my kids would gain by moving — their grandparents, full-time. Plus a hometown on a farm, surrounded by family and art and education. But my kids were dubious.⁴ All they could add to the list weighted the con side.

For a week, we worked on that list. As the days went by, the cons all got crossed out, replaced by counterparts on the pro side. Changing schools, for example, had originally begun as a con, but as we talked it out, it started to look like an adventure. Leaving the beach, which we would miss, but rarely went to anyway, got turned into mountains and changing seasons. Pro, pro. In the end, nothing on the con side survived except leaving the Napiers. But Nana and Papa outweighed everything else.

1. workers who create things mostly by hand
2. an oven used for drying and baking pottery
3. a street that is closed at one end
4. **Dubious (adjective):** doubting

As we packed up and moved — my youngest and me first, then my elder daughter, then my husband with all our belongings in a big truck, we knew that it was family that was bringing us home, and the decision was right because we had made it as a family. No stories, especially true ones, have a perfect happily-ever-after. Though this story ends well, we do still miss the Napiers.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement best expresses the main idea of the text?
 - A. It's important to make decisions that will affect a whole group as a group.
 - B. Eventually, parents need to be taken care of by their children.
 - C. Life-threatening events can help people realize what is important.
 - D. It's impossible to make everyone happy when making decisions for a family.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to part A?
 - A. "Everything was fine until crisis struck. Back at home, my dad was diagnosed with cancer." (Paragraph 3)
 - B. "I called my brothers - both equally far away. Someone needed to go home. I wanted it to be me." (Paragraph 4)
 - C. "But my kids were dubious. All they could add to the list weighted the con side." (Paragraph 5)
 - D. "we knew that it was family that was bringing us home, and the decision was right because we had made it as a family." (Paragraph 7)

3. Which statement best captures the author's point of view about moving in the text?
 - A. She is reluctant to go home because she has a life in South Carolina.
 - B. She decides to return home and that nothing will stop her.
 - C. She wants to move home, but also wants to consider her family's feelings.
 - D. She wants to move home, but knows that her husband will not agree.

4. PART B: Which paragraph from the text best supports the answer to part A?
 - A. Paragraph 2
 - B. Paragraph 3
 - C. Paragraph 4
 - D. Paragraph 5

5. Describe the connection between the pros-and-cons list and the decision to move? Use evidence from the text in your response.

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. When the narrator's father is diagnosed with cancer, her family decides to put family first and move to support him. What can we learn from tragedy? How do you think the family can help each other through the difficult time ahead? Describe a time when your family came together when faced with a tragedy.
2. In the text, it is important to the narrator that they make the decision to move as a family. What do you think would have happened if the narrator had made the decision for her family? Describe a time when you and your family decided on something together.
3. The narrator and her family make a list of pros and cons and change it frequently while making the decision to move. How is the family changed by love? What are the narrator and her family giving up to move closer to her parents? Describe a time when you put the needs of your family before your own.