

More information is available through our website:

www. quakeragingresources.org

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

John Yungblut, *On Hallowing One's Diminishments*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 292

<http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/>

<http://www.aarpdriversafety.org/default.aspx>

<http://www.fianationalnetwork.org/>

Caring.com -Find Your Local Agency on Aging Directory:

<http://www.caring.com/local/area-agency-on-aging>



Aging Resources Consultation Help



of the Religious Society of Friends

www. quakeragingresources.org

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Conversations About Driving



Q: *Am I ready to offer assistance as part of my religious community?*

Am I equally willing to accept graciously the help of others?

Am I open to counsel and advice?

“Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without due pride or guilt.”

Quaker Faith and Practice, Britain Yearly Meeting 1994

Discerning when it is time to relinquish responsibilities may be more difficult when faced with our need to accept help, and the issue over whether one is able to drive safely is among the most difficult conversations to initiate with aging loved ones. In a 2008 survey, 36% of family members surveyed said they had trouble talking to an older family member about giving up driving—more people than had trouble asking about preferences for funeral plans.

Age itself does not determine one’s ability to drive safely. Older drivers are more likely to self-regulate than other age groups, for example limiting their own driving to daytime or local streets, and are statistically more cautious. However, older adults are also at higher risk for physical conditions that impede one’s ability to drive safely, and are more likely to be taking prescription drugs that can have a negative effect on driving skills. Giving up driving may be necessary, but it is often understandably difficult for people to take this step.

Even if you have a lifestyle that does not make you dependent on driving, imagine not being able to take the bus, walk or bicycle to the store, the park, a loved one’s home, or Meeting. Imagine that you need to call someone every time you need to get to a doctor appointment or pick up a few groceries. Giving up one’s mode of transportation means becoming more dependent upon others for help. This may well be why some people resist giving up driving, even when it has become uncomfortable or risky.

What can we do to help ourselves or others make this transition?

- Don’t wait until driving is a problem. Think and talk about what one would do if driving were no longer a possibility.
- If concerned about a loved one, consider a professional evaluation by a social worker or doctor to help determine whether it is safe for him/her to drive.
- Be honest about your concern while also offering alternatives—be ready with information about county transportation, individual help, or volunteer services available.
- Embrace public transportation and shared rides—it’s better for the environment anyway. If you live in a place where this is difficult, consider whether this will be a good environment for you “down the road.”
- Advocate for better public transportation systems.
- Establish car pools or bus companions for getting to Meeting—why not do it for everyone, not just those who no longer drive?
- Consider partnering with other local faith groups to provide ready teams for transporting people who can no longer drive to medical appointments, for groceries, and other services. See www.faithinaction.org for examples of such programs.

Resources

