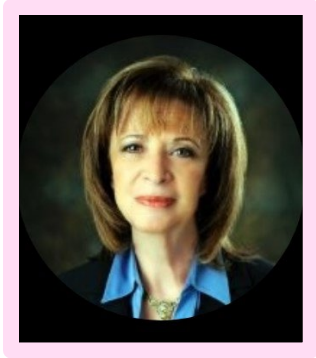


# *Senior Living at Home*

## *An Interior Designer's Personal Story*

---



**Article By:**  
**NATALIE WEINSTEIN,**  
**Allied ASID**

Natalie Weinstein, Allied ASID, is an accredited designer, acknowledged business leader, entrepreneur, author, media personality and motivational speaker. Her interior design firm, **Natalie Weinstein Design Associates**, has been creating lifestyle changes in homes and public spaces, decorating for countless clients since 1973.

For questions, call 631-862-6198 or email us [info@natalieweinstein.com](mailto:info@natalieweinstein.com).  
Website:  
<https://www.natalieweinstein.com/>

*Natalie's Mission is to "provide her clients with homes & offices that nurture, empower and create an environment for a better life through good designs highlighting the clients own 'best taste'."*

Visiting my Dad in Florida was always inspirational. Still living at home until his death at 100, with the help of a caring aide, he regaled me with stories of our family history and showed me how much a sense of humor contributes to longevity.

Although he was a fiercely independent spirit, Dad had to make accommodations. He'd say, "I've outlived every appliance in this house but my old body does me in every day." Dad's home became an adjustment to his new lifestyles so that he could continue to live his life as he chose – at home.

These accommodations might be of help to you or your parents so I offer them up from my personal experience. Because his health and safety were of utmost importance, I replaced the carpets that retained odor and were tripping hazards with an easy maintenance "wood look" sheet vinyl throughout. His walker which was helpful before for balance was replaced by a walker with a seat so that should he feel unable to stand or continue walking, he could rest safely.

Dad's favorite recliner was replaced by a motorized one that elevated him to a standing position. He had grown to love it so much, he equipped that he wanted his coffin large enough to accommodate it!

The master bath was not too far from his bed location but I thought about moving the bed closer for easier access and decided against it. Change is difficult at any age, but at his advanced age, it could be very dangerous. Keeping a safer walk pattern he had become used to at night was my alternative. He had clear path and the ability to hold on to substantial pieces of furniture should he need.

Eyesight and hearing issues arose along with some confusion. Since Dad went to sleep much earlier, he would awaken to go to the bathroom a few hours later and return thinking it was morning! I solved the problem with a digital clock that had large numbers and a red dot signaling P.M. when lit.

## An Interior Designer's Personal Story

Checking the dot, he not only knew what time it was, but whether it was morning or evening. Alongside this helpful aid was a telephone with a special amplifier as well as his life alert mechanism. I purchased a yearly membership for him several years ago and continued it even though he had help full time. He wore a wristwatch type unit with a Velcro band that was sewed together to avoid removal so if he should fall, or need help, he was never alone.



Accommodations were also provided for Barbara, his aide. Fortunately there was a separate bedroom for her as well as a second bathroom. Her space had Dad's old recliner, a comfortable bed, closet, drawer space and a T.V. for her personal use.

**LEFT IMAGE: Guest Bedroom -** A bedroom that has open area around bed for wheelchair or walker including seating for occupant and guest or caregiver.

Barbara called Dad, “easy maintenance” and she spent lots of time with him when not attending to his physical needs, laughing at his jokes and watching T.V. with him – but she needed downtime and a place to relax, as do all caregivers. My visits with Dad were always happy and nostalgic. As an only child living a good distance away, I naturally worried about him, but I knew he was where he needed and wanted to be. He was safe, loved, respected and well cared for. As many people are living longer today, the challenge for them and their caregivers is ever present.



Planning is important. Facing reality is critical. Every day is a new day and accommodations have to be made. As in every stage of life, our homes can help or hurt us physically and emotionally. For some like my Dad, his home would always be his castle.

**LEFT IMAGE: Bathroom -** A conversation to a handicapped bath required enlarging the space, custom vanity and special floor drain in shower.

## An Interior Designer's Personal Story

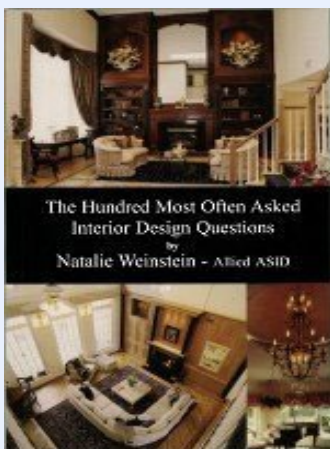
Note – Some senior amenities are covered by Medicare and other insurance. Home health care policies are available and less costly at a younger age and should be explored for future activation if desired or needed.

### Hints for keeping your home safe at any age:

- Make sure there are no tripping hazards.
- See that walk areas are well lit and uncluttered.
- Check fire smoke and CO2 detectors frequently.
- Think about home access in an emergency, especially if someone lives alone. (Lock box, life alert, etc.)
- As a caregiver: create your own special place to relax and recharge.
- If possible, sleep in a separate room with an intercom or other system, so you can maintain your own health and wellbeing.
- Get help if necessary to clean, organize and make your home presentable for visitors.

### A Final Word:

If you are an unpaid caregiver who might be holding down a full or part time job as well as being responsible for your entire household, you are not alone. There are approximately 22.9 million American households just like yours. Seek help to reduce your own stress. Many professionals are available and interior designers, like myself, can assist by finding space and safety solutions to make aging in place more enjoyable for everyone.



**Book by  
Natalie  
Weinstein:  
The Hundred  
Most Often  
Asked Interior  
Design  
Questions**

*Easy decorating reference guide that refers to space planning, furniture, styles, color, lighting, fabrics, upholstery, floor coverings, art and accessories and more.*