

## BOOK REVIEW

# Aging in the Right Place

## Author: Stephen M. Golant, Ph.D.

BY ERIKA T. WALKER, MBA, MSED, CSA



**D**id you ever feel you were in the right place at the right time? As an aging industry consultant, I believe it is part of my job to make sure I am up to date on research and trends facing older adults and the business of aging. Reading *Aging in the Right Place* will broaden the knowledge of both inexperienced and experienced industry professionals. Surprisingly, however, the benefits of reading this book became even more evident and meaningful in my personal life.

As I was reading, my eighty-seven-year-old widowed father was transitioning into his “next home.”

Needless to say, my family was filled with concern, emotion, and confusion as we sought the right location for our Dad who had lived in his three-story, five-bedroom home in the suburbs of a mid-size Tennessee town for forty years. How could we help him find peace and belonging as well as the right care in a new living situation?

Researching and replicating best practices since 2002, I know about senior living options (CCRCs, Independent Living, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing), live-at-home caregiver support services, and industry trends such as aging in place, aging in community, the

greenhouse movement, co-housing, the village concepts, and so on. If you want to know what these concepts are—how they work, and what are the new directions in these arenas—you will find that information in *Aging in the Right Place*. However, this book is so much more.

With a central theme of “aging successfully,” author Stephen Golant, Ph.D., has done an excellent job of realigning the confusing world of finding the right living and care support situation for older adults by introducing the concepts of *residential comfort* and *residential mastery*. What are these concepts and why are they so useful? The bottom line is they bring the decision right back to where it should be—the older adult who is the customer, the client, the person who is most influenced by this living arrangement.

As my family was helping my father make a decision on where to live, I constantly assessed the book's two broad categories. *Residential Comfort* captures whether older people feel that their residential settings are pleasurable, comfortable, enjoyable, and memorable places as well as free of hassles (p. 27). This category clarifies whether older adults believe they are experiencing the good life and are actively engaged in life. *Residential Mastery* captures whether older people occupy residential settings in which they feel competent and in control. They report feeling influential, dominant, autonomous, secure, powerful, strong, encouraged, confident and unafraid (p. 29). Further details on both categories are carried throughout the book.

Finding a living arrangement and support care that closely fulfills both of these categories, whether at home in a place they have lived for many years or in a senior living housing location, truly facilitates aging successfully. Keeping these concepts in mind, my family helped my dad move to an assisted living in his current hometown where he is connected with his friends, church, grandchildren (thirty miles away), activities, socialization, in a pleasant atmosphere with an apartment-like setting. Is it perfect? No. Does the current living situation allow him to experience *residential comfort* and *residential normalcy*? Yes, as much as possible. Will his current living situation be the same forever? I hope so, but if not, we will find him a new location and support systems where he can find the closest thing to *residential comfort* and *residential normalcy*.

Stephen M. Golant, whose Ph.D. is in social geography and social gerontology, is a professor of geography at the University of Florida (Gainesville) and previously was an associate professor at the University of Chicago. He has been conducting research on the

housing, mobility, transportation, and long-term care needs of older adult populations for most of his academic career. With decades of professional experience in the field as well as personal experience as a family caregiver, this exceptional and cohesive text is essential for gerontology, long-term care, health care, housing, planning, and public service professionals, practitioners, and academics.

Expansive in its coverage, *Aging in the Right Place* examines the current role of family assistance, private sector housing and care initiatives, and government programs, along with the potential of smart home technologies, innovative planning, and long-term care solutions. It is the most up-to-date and comprehensive resource covering the impact of residential and care settings in older adults. Providing a complete overview of current living arrangements and residential options for older adults, this book also offers a unique perspective on the often overlooked emotional challenges aging adults face when their residential needs must be evaluated.

Yet, the book tries to cut through the marketing hype of all these aging-in-place and moving options. Often, they are offered solutions that are poorly implemented or do not respond to the totality of their unmet needs. Stephen Golant's approach allows for solutions to meet the needs of older adults and their families, helping them remain active, healthy, and independent no matter where they are. As Dr. Golant states, “Achieving Residential Normalcy is a difficult balancing act....and there are many pathways to aging successfully.” Despite their best coping efforts, older Americans must often settle for the least imperfect places to live, with a balance of both desirable and undesirable qualities.

I strongly recommend *Aging in the Right Place* as a professional resource on the most recent trends in living arrangements, aging issues, and caregiving, as well as instruction on a very valuable method for decision-making. As stated in this review, it has already provided me with great value, both professionally and personally. •CSA



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Read more about how aging in place compares to assisted living. This may make a good argument for aging in place if you can work out the logistics. This is where costs come in. A part-time home health aide may be far less expensive than an assisted living facility, but if round-the-clock supervision becomes necessary, it is no savings. Discuss with a doctor how chronic conditions like diabetes, osteoporosis, or emphysema could make self-care a challenge in the future. At a certain point, an assisted living community where there is security, provided meals, and other amenities may be more cost-effective. Learn more about if Inogen is the right oxygen concentrator provider for you or a loved one. read more. Categories. Expansive in its coverage, *Aging in the Right Place* examines the current role of family assistance, private sector housing and care initiatives, and government programs along with the potential of smart home technologies and innovative planning and long-term care solutions. Yet the book tries to cut through the marketing hype of all these aging in place and moving options--older people often must settle for the least imperfect places to live. They are offered solutions that are poorly implemented or do not respond to the totality of their unmet needs. To understand whether older people feel th Aging in place is a term used to describe a person living in the residence of their choice, for as long as they are able, as they age. This includes being able to have any services (or other support) they might need over time as their needs change. To be clear: the act of aging in place takes place during a period of time in an elderly person's life where they can have the things that they need in their daily life, while maintaining their quality of life. The reason this distinction is important is because many people think aging in place will fix the problems they have in their lives. It also will help you provide the level of care that is right for them, and show your respect to them by ensuring their dignity is kept in tact and their needs are met. Primary Sidebar. MENU: More on Aging in Place. Learn what "aging in place" means logistically and how you or your aging loved ones can live safely and independently at home for as long as possible. Nearly every county in the United States has a network of services that allow older adults to stay in their home. Most of them are available to any senior, regardless of income or assets. Traditional services include delivered meals, visiting nurses, transportation services and senior centers that offer outings and social engagement. In some communities, a network of service providers "handypersons, landscapers, house cleaners, dog walkers, etc." provide services to seniors at lower-than-market prices.