

Bea Victor *As we are*

Growing older raises questions

**Beatrice Victor***For The Staten Island
Advance*

From the moment when we are born to the days when the skin is growing wrinkled, the hair is turning gray, the step is a little uncertain and that short-term memory is driving us crazy, decisions are being made. Either by us or for us. It is a tough time!

Sure, there have been many difficult times during our lives when we had to search our hearts and souls for the right answer and hope we had made the right choice. At first the decisions were made by our parents or circumstances. What sort of an education could we receive? Would it depend on our parent's finances and /or the location of our home?

If we grew up during the volatile times of wars, did we feel an obligation to sign up? When and how did we make the decision to marry, have children, or not? A big responsibility!

Suddenly, we are faced with another

decision: Do we leave the comfortable home that has cradled us for so many years and search for another environment to assist us, as we grow into our older ages?

A very difficult task for some, easier for others. Why should an older person wish to even consider such a move?

There are many reasons, but let's just consider one or two.

Perhaps the individual has lost a spouse of many years. Maybe the children are settled miles away, even in a far-away state or country. Paying the bills has become difficult and even though the computer allows one of the children to pay the bills, it is an imposition.

Then there is the safety factor. If the older person is unsteady on his/her feet, living alone in a large home, there is always a chance that he or she could fall, causing major injuries. Children of seniors worry about just such a situation. Driving or not may be a factor to consider. Or not.

Or perhaps loneliness may be the reason why an individual may prefer

to be with others who have similar concerns and interests.

It is a big step to take, so how does one decide what is the best decision to make? Where do you start? If you have a computer you can search "senior living Staten Island" and check out the results. If you are a member of the YMCA or the JCC, the social workers can be of help. Are you a member of a synagogue or church? Know a social worker in any of the hospitals? Ask her or him.

Go for interviews, ask questions. For example, one excellent such residence, The Esplanade Lifestyle, allows an individual to rent an apartment for a month to get a sense of what life could be like for a resident. During that period the person can enjoy the lifestyle — no cooking or cleaning. There are also many activities such as cards, exercise, trips, movies, arts/crafts, games, pleasant and helpful staff.

Feel free to discuss the cost of such living. Just remember, nothing is perfect, but it may be much better than the present situation.