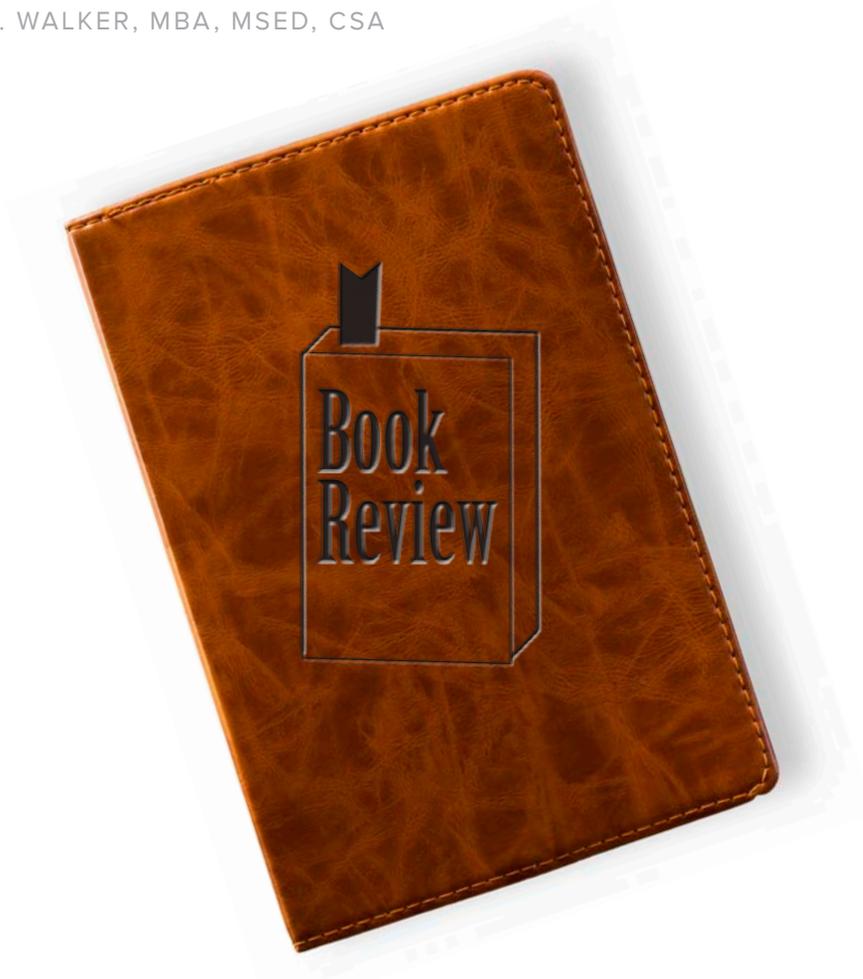


## BOOK REVIEW

# 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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to help them prepare for the growing aging population. She has served as director of the SAGE Institute, and director of geriatrics at Greenville Hospital system. Contact her at 864-313-9691, or visit [www.sagewave.net](http://www.sagewave.net).

Homepage > Blog > Home Equity > Aging in the Right Place. By Amy Ford | 6.22.2017. Aging in the Right Place. Marie shuffles cautiously across the kitchen floor, a small cup of black coffee shaking slightly in sore hands. Marie lives alone in the home she and her husband bought at the beginning of their marriage. She's sharp and still spends time with her great-grandkids and goes to church on Sundays, but physical limitations have caused her to slow down. Daily living has become more difficult, and she has had to give up taking friends to the doctor, volunteering at the local school, and driving at night. So it was no surprise to Marie when her family recently expressed how worried they are about her living alone. (More: [Aging in Place Tax Credits Get a Step Closer](#)). The Stairs Problem for Aging in Place. For one, more than 60% of the homes occupied by people 65 and older require the use of stairs to either enter the residence or get to a bedroom or bathroom. But by the time people are in their 80s, more than 4 of 10 have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Staying in these homes well into old age raises the risk of falls, which are the leading cause of injury and injury-related deaths among the elderly. In addition, a large majority of older people live in single-family homes in suburban and "In host most recent book, *Aging in the Right Place*, Stephen Golant has brought into focus the complex, multi-layered intersections of older people and their living environment in the most refreshing and innovative monograph on this topic to date. What is most impressive is the author's ability to explicate how the lived experience of individuals transitioning along different life courses is inextricably linked to an environmental realism rooted in theoretical synthesis, research knowledge, and real work application." For those aging in place, this spells out a serious need to make our bathrooms as safe as possible. Part of fall-proofing our homes should mean fall-proofing our bathrooms. "The shower can be a really dangerous place in particular because it's wet, your vision is often obscured by water, you might be frequently closing your eyes and there's not much to grab onto. And it can happen to any of us. >> RELATED " Read more stories about "Aging in the Right Place". Luckily, there are a number of things we can do to make our bathrooms safer. Chief among them is to install grab bars where needed.

"In host most recent book, *Aging in the Right Place*, Stephen Golant has brought into focus the complex, multi-layered intersections of older people and their living environment in the most refreshing and innovative monograph on this topic to date. What is most impressive is the author's ability to explicate how the lived experience of individuals transitioning along different life courses is inextricably linked to an environmental realism rooted in theoretical synthesis, research knowledge, and real work application." 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. 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 intact and their needs are met. Primary Sidebar. MENU: More on Aging in Place. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level". Research in environmental gerontology indicates the importance of the physical and social environment of housing and the neighborhood (public space), as well as its implications for aging in place.