

Both Melvin and now John did the chores on the farm differently from one another, which makes Melvin grumble in a good natured fashion.

For his part, John struggles to establish his independence under his father's watchful eye. The key to harmony on the farm, Melvin said, is communication.

Melvin tells of a time when he was upset with his son because his own silent interpretation of John's actions, while John was becoming increasingly distant. John thought his father thought something totally different, and vice versa...which turned into assumptions.

Which is why communication is key!

Melvin and John also are careful to keep the provisions of the detailed contract they drew up when Melvin

sold the farm to John.

Knowing that they would continue to share some property, facilities and equipment, they avoided any unintentional unfairness by spelling out rights and responsibilities for both families. It is an agreement that they continue to review and update regularly.

Melvin and Esther still have two younger children they are raising, as well as a 23-year-old unmarried daughter who works in a store in the town nearby. She pays a small amount of rent to her parents, and continues to help with the household chores. Melvin and Esther respect their daughter and her right to make her own decisions, but they also expect her to observe household rules and to have the courtesy to keep them informed about her plans.

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