



When a Loved One Is Near Death

Most of us fear death to some degree. Some people view death as a transition into a better world or as a release from suffering. Others struggle against death because of grief, fear or unfinished business. The greatest gift you can give your loved one is to help with the process of letting go. The following suggestions may be helpful. Take a few moments and add your own thoughts to each suggestion.

- 1** If your dying loved one wants to talk, listen without judging, with total acceptance. Avoid pretending that he or she isn't really going to die.
- 2** Offer to help take care of unfinished business. This may include making a will, writing a letter, seeing a friend for the last time or resolving a disagreement.
- 3** Help your loved one relax. Listen to music, meditate, read aloud or use any relaxation techniques that work for you.
- 4** Treat your loved one with respect, even if he or she appears unable to respond. Assume that your loved one understands everything that's being said.
- 5** Talk to your loved one, sharing photos, pleasant memories and accomplishments. If appropriate, offer praise and thanks for what your relationship has meant to you.
- 6** Gently massage your loved one. Work on the hands, arms, shoulders, legs and feet. Notice the response and stop if the massage seems painful.
- 7** Take care of your loved one's physical needs. He or she will appreciate receiving food and liquids from you rather than from a nurse. If your loved one can't drink from a glass, use an eyedropper.
- 8** Let your loved one know that everything is taken care of and it's all right to let go.
- 9** Acknowledge your loved one's spiritual needs as well as your own. Offer to pray or meditate with your loved one.

Relaxation techniques to use:

Memories or photos to share:

Affirming statements to share:

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