



HOSPICE MESSAGES OF HOPE

Caregiving – A Journey of Love

Thank you for allowing OSF Hospice to accompany you on this journey of caring for your loved one. We are here to support you and answer your questions. Caregiving means respect for who you are... and the one you are caring for. RESPECT is a way you honor your loved one as well as yourself.

R: Realize this may be a time harder than any other in your life. A time that challenges you. It can be a time of hard work and extreme emotional pain. But also a time of great love. It is part of your life's journey. Seize the moments you can. Focus on what matters. Holding hands? Playing a favorite song? Looking through a picture album? Recalling a treasured memory? It may seem these things are not enough because all we really want to do is fix the situation. But do not discount them. These are all powerful actions.

E: Educate yourself. The more you understand the task at hand, the more control you will feel at a time when everything feels out of control. Reach out and speak up about your needs. It will help make your life easier. You may feel scattered and forgetful. This is normal. You are grieving. Keep a notebook handy so you can write down what you might otherwise forget. Keep post-it notes where you think they will be helpful. Ask a family member to help you remember details or give you a reminder.

S: Self-Care. You will have more energy for caregiving if you remember to take care of yourself. Seasoned health professionals know that they cannot give their very best unless they practice self-care. Self-care can be as simple as stepping outside and taking some deep breaths or having a cup of tea or coffee by yourself. Please factor it into your day. Many times it is in these moments of stepping away when you understand the journey.

P: Possibly you do not feel prepared for the tasks at hand. Do not feel you are lacking. This feeling is inherent in the role of caregiver. Remember, you have a hospice team that wants to support you. See the possibilities. Remember to take one day at a time. Joy can be in the moment although it may not seem like it at the time. Simply know you are the only one who can give your loved one exactly what they need. It is your touch... your voice... that soothes and gives comfort.

E: What is essential on this journey? Remember to prioritize. This will balance caregiving tasks. Establish a routine. This will help you focus on the day. Does your loved one have certain issues that need addressed? What about you? It may be helpful for you to ask your loved one what they want you to do after death. This may be too painful for either of you to talk about, and that's all right. You are looking for what is essential... and your loved one will communicate their needs at this point.

C: Connect with others. You may feel you can do this alone. By reaching out, you allow others to express their needs, and it will enable you to give more of yourself. Not everyone is a hands-on helper, but maybe a particular person is good at running errands. Not everyone is a good listener, but perhaps can cook a meal. Make a list of errands or jobs others can do. Let individuals pick what they feel comfortable doing.

T: Trust what your gut tells you. Your past experiences have led you to this moment. Many times you will know instinctively what is needed... what to do... what to say. Please hold on to hope through this journey as the grief you experience today will help you grieve tomorrow.

OSF Home Care Services is here to support you and wants to meet you wherever you are in your grief journey.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call (800) 673-5288 or visit our website at www.osfhomecare.org.



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