

# How to Brighten Someone's Day



When someone has a serious illness, friends and relatives often want to step in and provide assistance, but don't always know how. At times, they struggle with what to do or say. Palliative care experts asked patients to share their thoughts on acts of kindness and support they would find meaningful. Try a few of their simple suggestions to make your own friend or loved one's day brighter.

- Call and then come by for 20 minutes when you can. Sickness may require rest, but not at the expense of communication.
- Cook my family dinner. Call ahead and offer choices. Bring food in disposable containers I don't need to wash or return.
- Bake sweets and bring them frozen so I can eat them when my appetite improves. I can offer these to visitors, which makes me feel like a good host or hostess.
- Offer help for a specific time and date. If you just say, "Call me anytime you need me," I won't know when you're available or what you want to do, and probably won't ask.
- Provide minor house repairs.
- Offer the gift of massage, manicure or pedicure.
- Ask my family "What needs to be done?" rather than "What can I do?"
- Wash windows.
- Bring my favorite beverages and healthy snacks, include non-alcoholic and caffeine-free options.
- Bring nature to my bedside, such as fall leaves, spring flowers or snow.
- Help chauffeur my children, caregivers or other relatives.

- Take me for a drive.
- Help with holidays and birthdays. Offer to pick up special gifts or cards for me. Make holidays festive by decorating my surroundings.
- Ask me whom I might want to see and bring them for a visit. When it seems my life consists of asking favors, I may hesitate to approach a friend on my own.
- Take photos or movies of my family at sports or social events I can't attend. This helps me enjoy occasions I've been forced to miss.
- Help care for my pets.
- Run errands, such as buying groceries or picking up dry cleaning.
- Mow the lawn or take care of the garden.
- Allow me to feel sad or afraid. Sometimes it helps to cry with a friend.
- Watch TV with me, and allow my family to spend some time alone.
- Tell me about yourself and your life. It helps me stay connected to the outside world. And, it gives me something to share with my friends and family.
- Tell me how great I look considering what I'm going through. I know I look sick, but I still need to feel attractive.
- Write and send frequent notes or cards.
- Bring magazines or books and read to me. Describe what is funny in life.

*#caringforthe goodlife*