

Part VII Happiness



20. Connect To Your Religious Or Spiritual Practice

When you feel lost or have lost hope, your inner guidance system will help you find your way. Reboot and reconnect to your spirituality, your source of strength and direction!

1. If you engage with a faith community, reach out and seek support. There will likely be other caregivers who would appreciate the opportunity to receive and provide help.
2. Explore and identify your current beliefs concerning God or a higher power. What practices are a fit for you at this time in your life? For example, prayer, meditation, journaling, asking for guidance, or attending a house of worship?

List the practices that resonate with you.



3. How have your beliefs or practices changed as you have progressed on your caregiving journey?

4. To get grounded in your new experience, take a moment to reflect on how your new role and responsibilities have impacted your life. Keep in mind these steps to help you process change:

1. The first step in change is becoming aware of your situation.
2. The second step is acceptance of where you are.
3. The third step is reflecting on your current beliefs.
4. The fourth step is taking action.



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5. Consider a new practice, routine, or even deeper personal reflection to help you achieve the inner peace you desire.

- ✿ When you are overwhelmed, continually stressed, or must make a difficult decision, you may choose prayer, talking to your soul or spiritual mentors, or checking in with your intuition.
- ✿ Those moments making you crazy and bothering you may be trying to teach you something important. Stop and listen. Tap into your heart and your guidance system.

6. If the concept of spiritual practice is new, consider studying a specific belief system that calls to you. Explore books, online websites, podcasts, workshops, group or personal coaching, audio tapes, and video learning, or consult a religious or spiritual counselor. What are some topics you would like to understand better?



7. What have you learned from your loved one about their faith and practices, and how can you assist your loved one in implementing them?



8. Who can support you or share your spiritual journey?

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21. Express Love

*Love is the greatest gift we will give or receive.
Give love lavishly! Receive love abundantly!*

1. Make a concerted and intentional effort to love yourself and others. Each morning, decide that giving and receiving love is a priority and approach caregiving as an act of love. Ask yourself:

- ▶ How can I experience love with the person I am caring for?

- ▶ How can I give and receive love today?

2. Focus on your errands and caregiving tasks as an act of love.

Acknowledge and express your love often.

3. Take time to connect physically with your loved one.

- ✿ What is appealing to that individual? Holding hands, a shoulder or back rub, sharing a hug, sitting close together on the sofa, a pet on your lap, or even a toy animal or baby doll is comforting.

- ✿ Even if they cannot respond lovingly in a manner that rekindles your spirit, believe that your gesture does matter.

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4. Exchange gifts. I loved buying Mom small presents. They were always unexpected and brightened her day.

- ▶ Used online catalogs and browse store aisles for fun finds.
- ▶ Organize your care community to come up with a creative project.
- ▶ Suggest ideas that would make your loved one happy.
- ▶
- ▶

5. Spending quality focused time. Mom and I usually took photographs to record our time together and revisit the experience at any time in the future. How can you spend quality, focused time with your loved one?

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6. A short video or audio message where the individual can see your face and hear the inflections in your voice will make your words even more powerful. Remember phone calls. Many seniors still love getting greeting cards and letters through the mail.

7. Remember to express your love, caring, and appreciation in person with your loved one. Even short in-person visits are appreciated and will lift someone's spirits.

8. In your gratitude journal, write down the people who make a positive difference. You might also send them a letter (an actual letter that you put in the mail) letting them know how much they mean to you.