Part VII
Happiness

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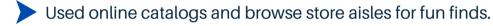
✳ Even if they cannot respond lovingly in a manner that rekindles your spirit, believe that your gesture does matter.

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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.

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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.