

COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

Enhancing the quality of life of the older adult and supporting their friends, families and caregivers.

Kathryn Kilpatrick

www.connectionsincommunication.com

SPRING 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1

Thank you for your support and continued interest in the Communication Connection quarterly newsletter which began in 2002.

Look for each issue to feature a different theme.

Many of you have shared that you forward it to others. This new format will make it easier for you to make copies or post it for others to read.

CAREGIVER RESOURCES from COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

- Training programs
- Support groups
- Geriatric consulting services
- Communication strategies
- Visitation ideas
- Products including an activity kit of 7 products for \$70

This newsletter is dedicated in celebration and honor of my mother, Florence Mitchell, and the gift she was to my life. On January 15, 2005 she passed away peacefully surrounded by her family.

SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS

BECAUSE YOU CARE

What to do when you do not know what to do.

Life changing things happen all the time to people we care about. Hundreds of activities are done automatically as part of the daily routine. Then something major happens and it may be a temporary or a permanent change – a minor or a major one.

Life goes on no matter what, but when we care we want to help. This handy guide was developed to help you maximize what you have to offer.

Quantity discounts available

Meaningful giveaway

Excellent fundraising idea

Helpful resource for participants of one of your programs

Practical resource for support and visitation groups

\$12 plus postage and handling

For ordering details contact

kathy@connectionsincommunication.com

Connecting Across the Miles

My mom lived in Massachusetts and we had a special connection in spite of the distance. She often came to visit me in Ohio, I went home quite often and we took some great trips together over the years. She proofread most of my publications, then in her mid 70's she began to have some difficulties with her hearing, then vision and eventually developed memory problems. As she became more frail and moved to assisted living for 2 1/2 years, my trips home were more frequent and I learned so much from her through these changes. Here are a few ideas that helped to maximize the connection and time spent together.

- When it was hard for her to follow the phone conversations, I put a fax machine in her apartment so I could send her pages to proof but also notes of what was happening. More recently I frequently just sent postcards with a short note when the long pieces of information were not as appropriate.
- When she was in Rehab for a broken hip, my family in Massachusetts brought over her phone with amplification so we could talk more easily.
- When memory problems continued to occur, we modified her favorite pastime, playing Scrabble. She still enjoyed the challenge and changes were needed along the way. We stopped keeping score, looked up words, made a cheat sheet of 2 and 3 letter words and even offered her help when she could not come up with a word easily. What was most important was maintaining her dignity and enjoying the time we spent together.

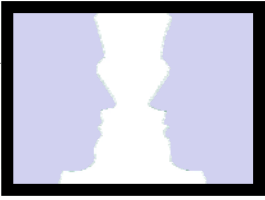
Rosalynn Carter wrote:

“ There are four kinds of people in the world: Those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.”

SOME SUGGESTIONS from *Because You Care*

Help the caregiver create a wish list. This book provides ideas that can be done if you have just a little time, want to offer your expertise, belong to a group or prefer to make a monetary contribution.

- Ask permission before you visit.
- Schedule a time that is convenient for them. Be sensitive to their fatigue level. Do not stay if they are not feeling up to a visit when you get there.
- Encourage them to add things to their wish list as needs or circumstances change.
- If you bring a meal, ask them if they would like some company.



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What to do when you do not know what to do...

BECAUSE YOU CARE

Listen

Be present

Encourage

Hold a hand

Give a hug

Ask permission

Day of Renewal

It is a wise caregiver who understands that you must first take care of yourself so that you can continue to take care of others.

**Offered by
Joanna Chernauskas,
co-author of
Because You Care
and founder of
Gifts of Grace.**

If you are interested in more information or inviting her to lead a Day of Renewal for Caregivers, please contact her at giftsofgrace@cox.net

Whatever you may do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it.

GHANDI

Little Things Mean A Lot

When circumstances evolve in the caregiving arena, it is often the quick and more routine tasks that do not even make it on the to-do-list. The days are not long enough or caregiver's energy is not sufficient to do it all.

Supporters of caregivers have their own busy lives and want to help, but often are not sure they can spare enough time.

- Perhaps you can incorporate one or two of the things during your visit.
- If they have a list of errands that need to be done, you could call ahead and then do one or two of them while you are out doing other things.

*No act of kindness,
no matter how small,
is ever wasted.*

AESOP

More than Money

Close proximity to family and friends is no longer common, and people who do live nearby may have such hectic schedules that they do not have time to help as much as they would like.

Helping with expenses by hiring someone to provide certain services may be one of the options you prefer.

*What do we live for if
not to make life less difficult
for each other?*

GEORGE ELIOT

Personal Assistant

When a family is dealing with life-changing situations, unfamiliar issues that have to be handled often arise. All the medical and insurance details coupled with daily care-giving can be overwhelming. If they have minimal knowledge in those areas it becomes difficult to know where to even begin. Perhaps your expertise will help to relieve some of the worry as you guide them through the process.

*Use what talents you possess:
the woods would be very silent
if no birds sang
except those that sang best.*

HENRY VAN DYKE

Many Hands Make Light Work

The needs of an older adult who has become increasingly more frail may present a long-term need. When a group can chip in to share the responsibilities, the ability to assist them can be extended over a longer period of time. One of the many advantages of group involvement is that it is often easier to locate a back-up person.

*The family with an old person in it
possesses a jewel.*

CHINESE SAYING

**KATHRYN KILPATRICK
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