

End-of-Life Loved es Make Peace

by *Ma McCausland, ADC Activity Manager*
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It's especially difficult for end-of-life patients and family and loved ones. It means that at some point we must accept the inevitable with peace. Letting go when the patient is ready can be a gift of love - unwrapped but

for a number of years, we get to see the many ways we struggle with helping or holding on. When we think of our sake, as the act of dying is an unknown, we are not taught how to help others or ourselves make the best use of the time when our love for that person can be expressed in a kind and compassionate way. We show love for our loved ones by helping guide them through the last

moments upon things the dying need to say and have done with more peace to the process. The process is made easier when we need to hear these thoughts said back to them as they express their thoughts to their loved ones.

This is the need to thank others and to be thankful for how that their lives and the relationships

This is the need to acknowledge love to others and to be loved as well.

These words represent an end-of-life process that are the groundwork for the exchange and the acceptance of peace.

Good-bye. These words allow for closure and letting go; the unhindered release of loved ones. In the dying process, the dying may need to hear these words in order to give themselves peace to let go and release.

More for the living - to be a part of the process and living for a peaceful ending.

Work that transpires in the Activities Department at the hospice, one of the few hospices nationwide to feature hospice patients.

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re "life in



Connect With Others And Live Longer

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The folks at Alice's church know that she can always be counted on if a church member is sick and needs some kind of assistance. Rain or shine, she's known for her willingness to deliver meals to shut-ins, drive people to appointments, and help them with their shopping or housework.

When complimented for her good deeds, Alice always replies, "It's fun for me to help out the old folks; I don't know what they'd do without me." Alice is 93 years old.

Alice's life seems to prove what a recent University of Michigan research study suggested - older people who provide support and help to others tend to live longer than those who don't. U of M staff followed 423 older couples for five years and found that people who provided no emotional or instrumental support to others were more than twice as likely to die as the ones who regularly reached out to others.

Researchers even accounted for such things as the health of the caretaker and got the same results - regardless of their own health issues, those who reach out to and support others tend to live longer than those who don't.

Although the study didn't try to explain this link between longevity and connecting with others, what things might account for the fact that those who reach out to others may live longer? Here are some possibilities:

- ◆ Helping others often requires the caregiver to be physically active. Exercise is a known factor in overall good health and longevity.
- ◆ Helping others requires mental exertion and activity. The more we use our brains the better they tend to function as we grow older and this keeps us healthier and more able to function on our own.
- ◆ Helping others gets your juices flowing. Social connections increase the neurotransmitters in our brains which foster memory, positive feelings, and mental acuity.
- ◆ Helping others gives us a sense of purpose and meaning which keeps us energized and engaged with life.

Does reaching out to help others guarantee a longer life? Probably not, but Alice would tell you that it sure doesn't hurt.

ONE CHOICE.
ONE CHANCE