



## Your relationship as a caregiver for a loved one

Caring for someone with a serious illness is a labor of love and a life-changing process. Even in the midst of hurt, anger and sadness, there are chances to learn, grow and heal. Recognizing those opportunities can make all the difference to you and to the person who receives your care. Focusing on the tremendous gift you are giving to another can shift your attention from the difficulties of caregiving to the rewards. It can encourage and renew you. If you are struggling, ask a member of the Helios Care team for support and guidance.

### Four things that matter most

Honest, heartfelt, well-chosen words have the power to help. These four statements are powerful at any time of life, but even more so when time is precious.

PLEASE **1** FORGIVE ME    I FORGIVE **2** YOU    THANK **3** YOU    I LOVE **4** YOU

Adapted from "The Four Things That Matter Most" by Ira Byock, M.D. © 2004 Free Press, New York.

Many life changes are associated with being a caregiver. Such changes can affect the role of your relationship with your loved one and usually include new or additional responsibilities. These kinds of changes typically aren't "welcomed," rather they often come with some resistance along with a variety of feelings, questions and frustrations. We have found that, for many people, it is easier to talk about the difficulties of being a caregiver than it is to talk about the feelings associated with the experience. Caregivers often wonder if they are alone in feeling sad, anxious, guilty and angry at times. All such feelings are a normal part of caring for someone with a serious illness.



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## Reflecting on your time together

As a caregiver, you may find yourself looking back at your relationship with the person who receives your care. Remembering the story of your life with another can help you find peace, a sense of accomplishment, meaning and purpose. Both good and bad times hold lessons. Consider sharing your thoughts and reflections with the person you are caring for or with others.

- What are your fondest memories of your life with the person you're caring for?
- What are your saddest memories of your life together?
- What are some of the defining moments of your life together?
- How has being with this person changed your life?
- What has this person taught you?
- What do you treasure the most about your time together now?
- What will you miss the most when he or she is no longer here with you?
- What strengths have you gained that will help you adjust to life without this person?

If you would like to capture your memories and reflections in a more formal way, our volunteer program would be honored to help. Volunteers will work with you to create a video, written journal or photo memory album.



Helios Care is committed to helping you make the most of this time as you care for someone else. Share your questions and concerns with us. Call us at 607.432.5525 or visit [HeliosCare.org](https://HeliosCare.org) to sign up for a Caregiver Support Group.