Suggestions for Visiting Someone with Dementia

Dementia covers a group of symptoms such as memory problems, decreasing ability to think or reason and difficulty communicating.

People with Dementia can become muddled, anxious and frightened and may have trouble recognising people. Their behaviour can be unusual and awkward. They may find it hard to express themselves or understand people.

However, feelings remain, as does spiritual awareness. Visits can stimulate warm feelings, bring comfort and reaffirm spiritual truths.

Suggestions - things to take or do

- Take a magazine, postcard, flower catalogue
- Play a game - draughts, dominoes, ludo, etc
- Listen to a CD-familiar music, hymns or songs
- Watch a dvd of flowers, gardens, water views
- Reminisce about the past, people or places
- Look at photographs or illustrated books
- Read a passage from the Bible but it needs to be in a familiar version for them ?KJV/RSV/AV
- Read a collect or creed from Common Prayer
- Smile, and share laughter.
  If appropriate, take a soft toy for them to hold or stroke or a lavender bag to evoke memories
- The visit need not last long. It is the feelings that remain not the length of time spent. They might well forget that you came but the warmth and feelings of your care will not be forgotten.
- You may be distressed by their condition but be encouraged in that you will have lessened their isolation and loneliness by your visit.
- Departure should not be a ‘big deal’.
  Sunrise advise, “Parachute in, evaporate out”

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Suggestions - things to take or do

- Wear something bright or colourful
- Approach from the front (don’t tap on the back or shoulder)
- Introduce yourself with an explanation
- Smile and make eye contact
- Sit at the same level.
  Perhaps touch their hand if appropriate
- Speak simply, one comment at a time
- Listen and give time for answers or comments
- Be positive and reassuring.

- Avoid questions if possible or choices
  A cup of tea? (not, tea or coffee?) Be Patient.

- Accept Incorrect statements as they may be caused by memory loss or faulty logic.
  Acknowledge the emotions behind the words.

Feelings remain when facts are forgotten
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