

Do's and Don'ts When Calling on The Sick

— *The Reverend Dr. Richard A. Wing, Senior Minister*

1. Don't ask, "How are you?" Hey! They're sick and don't feel good! Instead ask, "How's the day today?" — They will tell you.
2. It is ok to say, "You know I have nothing to say that can help. I just wanted to come and let you know I love you and I care about you."
3. Humor can be helpful and inappropriate. Let the patient lead to laughter, not you.
4. Silence is golden; trust it and don't kill it.
5. Good care is like a good speech: be sincere, be brief, and be gone.
6. You communicate as much care to a sleeping patient by leaving a note as by talking with them. A note lets them know you went to the trouble to be with them.
7. Don't give advice. The fact that your Uncle had the same thing they do doesn't help.
8. You are not there to "cheer them up", but to be present.
9. Don't ask a lot of questions. Let them tell you anything or nothing about their illness.
10. Never say, "I know how you feel." That is always a lie. You might like to know, but you don't.
11. Remember the Book of Job: His friends came to him in his pain, trouble, and losses. They did well for a week. They sat quietly and wept with Job. The silence was too uncomfortable, so they became theologians and therapists. That is when they ceased to be a comfort, and became a case study in poor care.
12. Good care has to do with being, not doing.