

Spending Time With Seniors

Since many seniors have everything they need, one of the best gifts we can give them is the gift of time. Spending time with older people will make them feel valued.

There are senior citizens who need your help no matter where you live. Be mindful of opportunities that appear in the moment. Do you see an older person struggling to get their groceries to the door? Ask if you can help. Is there someone in your community who may be delighted by a short visit or an invitation for a walk? Spend some time with them. Offer to mow their lawn or water their plants. See if they need some help washing the car. Make and share a meal with them.

Older people often find it hard to ask for help. Even something as small as giving an older adult a ride to the store or bringing them their mail makes an impact.

Many folks who live in senior care facilities have very few visitors. Seniors who live in such residences may feel lonely or out of place, which can certainly take a toll on both their mental and physical health. Loneliness can be a significant issue for older individuals, and your companionship can provide them with much-needed social interaction and emotional support.

Older folks worry about the same things anyone under the age of 65 worries about - money, friendships, and the stress of day-to-day life. One way to help is by looking for opportunities to be that obliging ear for them. Set aside at least one hour weekly to visit your elders and talk to them. It takes a relatively small amount of time. Remember that they all have lived full lives and have a lot to discuss.

Sometimes, we forget that older people like doing fun things just as much as anyone else. Whatever your passion is in life, why not see if you could turn it into an opportunity to brighten the lives of the seniors in your community? There are a lot of activities that elders can participate in, such as playing a board game or cards, puzzles, bird watching, crafting, going for a drive, etc.

Animals and pets can help reduce stress. Did you know that just stroking the soft fur of a dog, cat, or guinea pig can make people feel better? Check with the care facility to see what their policy is for pets. Seniors will feel more connected, allowing those with difficulty interacting with people to experience an important bond.

Venturing outside is valuable since seniors might not spend as much time outdoors as they should. Sunshine and fresh air are good for their health. Go to a park, enjoy a meal on the deck, and watch the sunset to soak up the beauty of nature.

Simple things like helping with mowing the lawn, vacuuming, or other household chores or projects can make a difference. If you notice that their home needs a specific repair, you could ask them if they want that task done and gently suggest calling a repair person.

Once seniors can no longer drive, it becomes more challenging for them to maintain social lives or feel independent. Many seniors would rather stay at home instead of doing routine errands. Ask them if they need help with errands such as shopping, mailing letters or packages, picking up prescriptions and medicines, or other things.

If you can provide a safe and reliable means of transportation, you may take them to the grocery store, hair salon, doctor's appointments, faith services, or anywhere else your senior friend or loved one may need to go.

Spending quality time with seniors in your community is a great way to make a meaningful connection. It's about finding a moment to make a small difference in another person's life. Let an act of charity blossom into genuine friendship.

(Sources: createthegood.aarp.org; www.ioaging.org; www.nia.nih.gov; www.pointsoflight.org)