

PART A: Ritual for caregivers who can be present

Introduction

Make the preparations: mark if possible a day and time with the relatives to perform this ritual together. Try to find suitable symbols or texts that belong to these traditions or this person in particular. Notice jewelery, books or pictures there are in the room and if possible, ask the family for any valuable symbols. Establish a video connection.

STEP 1

Gather the symbols and place them near the patient. Always talk them through what you're doing: this restores the sense of autonomy and connection. Do this also when the dying person is unconscious or in a coma.

STEP 2

Light a candle (electric one) and tell the dying person that this is the moment of saying goodbye to live and family, even though their relatives can't be present. Be quiet for a little while.

STEP 3

Explain that in thoughts and feelings you can all be connected right now with the loved ones (if you know their names, please say them out loud). Ask if he or she can imagine them right now. Ask if there is anything that should be said and shared at this moment.

STEP 4

Read a (Bible)text, a poem or maybe a letter. Here are 2 suggestions:

I am free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following paths God made for me
I took his hand, I heard him call
Then turned, and bid farewell to all
I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to sing, to play
Tasks left undone must stay that way
I found my peace ... at close of play

And if my parting left a void
Then fill it with remembered joy
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss
Ah yes, these things I too will miss.
Be not burdened... deep with sorrow
I wish you sunshine of tomorrow
My life's been full I've savoured much
Good friends, good times
A loved one's touch
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts and peace to thee
God wanted me now
He set me free.
[anonymous]

The Life That I Have

The life that I have
Is all that I have
And the life that I have
Is yours
The love that I have
Of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.
A sleep I shall have
A rest I shall have
Yet death will be but a pause
For the peace of my years
In the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours.
Leo Marks [<https://funeralguide.co.za/condolence-poetry/>]

STEP 5

You could hold still for a moment or share what you feel when hearing/speaking these words. If permitted, you could touch the forehead of your patient as a token of blessing of caring (to bless means to wish each other well). You could read these words of blessing:

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.
May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.

STEP 6

If possible, you could play some music you've prepared beforehand.

Conclusion

When performed the ritual, you could inform the relatives and tell them what happened and how the patient responded. This is very valuable information to them. Don't hesitate to share your own feelings and impressions. After all, you're doing this as a compassionate caregiver! You can be thankful and maybe proud of what you did. We know we are!