

# Dotty's Ten Tips for Communicating with a Person Living with Dementia

- 1 You know what makes me feel safe, secure, and happy? A smile.
- 2 Did you ever consider this? When you get tense and uptight it makes me feel tense and uptight.
- 3 Instead of getting all bent out of shape when I do something that seems perfectly normal to me, and perfectly nutty to you, why not just smile at me? It will take the edge off the situation all the way around.
- 4 Please try to understand and remember it is my short term memory, my right now memory, that is gone -- don't talk so fast, or use so many words.
- 5 You know what I am going to say if you go off into long winded explanations on why we should do something? I am going to say No, because I can never be certain if you are asking me to do something I like, or drink a bottle of castor oil. So I'll just say No to be safe.
- 6 Slow down. And don't sneak up on me and start talking. Did I tell you I like smiles?
- 7 Make sure you have my attention before you start blabbering away. What is going to happen if you start blabbering away and you don't have my attention, or confuse me? I am going to say No - count on it.
- 8 My attention span and ability to pay attention are not as good as they once were, please make eye contact with me before you start talking. A nice smile always gets my attention. Did I mention that before?
- 9 Sometimes you talk to me like I am a child or an idiot. How would you like it if I did that to you? Go to your room and think about this. Don't come back and tell me you are sorry, I won't know what you are talking about. Just stop doing it and we will get along very well, and probably better than you think.
10. You talk too much -- instead try taking my hand and leading the way. I need a guide not a person to nag me all the time.