Aging Well & The Gift of Spiritual Care

Part and parcel of being human is our mortality. If we are lucky, we will grow old. As we do so, many of us face the task of caring for a loved one through their final days even as we are aging. One of the greatest gifts we can offer someone who is facing the end-of-life, is compassionate spiritual care. In doing so, we enhance their well-being towards the end of their life and allow them a better chance at aging and ultimately dying well. It is also a tremendous gift we can give ourselves. Spiritual Care is often confused with religious ritual. Spiritual care can include religion, but it transcends religion and allows our loved ones and ourselves to listen, be present, and consider what is most important to us as we journey through life. So how to we “do” spiritual care. Spiritual care is less about “doing” than “being.” Here are three keys to providing supportive spiritual and emotional care to someone facing the end-of-life:

* Silence can really be golden. When providing spiritual care support to a loved one, allowing them the opportunity to fill space with dialogue – or to choose not to – is a gift.
* Being is more important than doing. Our presence at the end of a loved one’s life, or at the time of a challenging diagnosis, is often far more valuable than any seemingly more tangible action.
* Self-care isn’t selfish. Self-care allows us to have a greater capacity for being present for our loved ones, *and* it helps us age well even as we care for others.