Gestures in Communication

by YVONNE BANKS

Gestures to Use When You Don't Know What to Say

It can be very difficult to communicate with a loved one who has a condition like COPD. You may have trouble knowing what to say when you see them suffering.

You want to be there with them, but it can be awkward not knowing what to say; sometimes it's difficult to express ourselves.

Gestures in Communication: Help Convey Your Message

There are simple gestures we may use that express more than any well-meaning word. The thing about humans is that we have so many ways to express ourselves. We even do it unintentionally. Even when a person is speaking untrue words, gestures and facial expressions might give him or her away. Gestures can convey a powerful message.

Here are a few gestures for communication that will help to express your feelings:

- *Smiling.* When you smile, you show you care and have positive intentions. It allows you to be vulnerable to a person. The warmth in a smile can brighten your loved one's day.
- *Positive touch.* Patting someone on the arm or giving them a hug shows you are there for them.
- *Preparing a meal.* This shows that you took time to prepare something for them and that you are showing love by making sure they have food to eat.
- *Be a good listener.* It may take some time to listen to someone with COPD, especially if they become winded easily. Showing the person that you are intently listening demonstrates respect and caring.

- *Maintain eye contact.* Shut your cell phone off and keep your eyes on your loved one when communicating. This shows that you are conveying concern and you are there for them.
- *Exhibit courtesy.* Try holding the door for the person or let them serve themselves first. Do a chore for them before they have a chance to. Show that you are putting them before you. This shows much caring on your part.
- *Do not respond.* You may just need to keep your opinion to yourself. Even if the person is pushing your buttons, you should let it slide. Just let them believe they are right, and you will be showing you care.

By showing how much you care, you may not need to find the words you cannot express. By practicing some of the gestures mentioned, you will be showing that you respect, honor, and support your loved one.