



The Help Box: The Best Idea I Can't Remember Having

Richard Taylor, PhD

RICHARD TAYLOR, PhD, is a retired psychologist who lives with and writes about Alzheimer's disease (AD). Richard has agreed to maintain frequent E-mail contact with *ALC* to provide us with a diary of his impressions, struggles, and conquests. Richard Taylor's reflections on AD follow.

About a year ago a caregiver who lived several states away from a loved one asked me for a suggestion on how his Mom could stay in the present moment with him when he was

talking to her on the phone. Apparently my response to him was to suggest creating The Help Box.

This is his response to my suggestion.

Dear Richard,

I heard you speak in Cincinnati last fall. My mom has Alzheimer's and lives in Wisconsin, whereas I live in Ohio. I stood up and asked you how I could get her back on track when she becomes very mixed up. She does not remember who is dead or alive, or where she is, and so forth. You suggested making her a help box. *What a great*

help this is. I have 10 letters in her help box all on different colors of paper. The yellow letter tells about her family—who is here and who is gone. The green letter explains where she is and why she is living where she is. The blue letter explains the disease she has, and on and on. When I talk to her on the phone and she is very mixed up, I just pick the appropriate letter for her to read, and say, Mom, read your yellow letter. It has helped so much.

Thank you for all that you do!

—Chris and Mom

My response: Wow!

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Facts & Stats



Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) and Prehypertension

66% of people aged 65 and older have high blood pressure.

90% is a person's chance of developing hypertension after age 55.

0 is the number of symptoms of high blood pressure. (Nearly 1/3 of those with hypertension do not know they have it.)

140/90 mm Hg or higher is a blood pressure reading that is considered a risk for stroke, heart attack, and other complications. (Immediate evaluation by a physician is recommended.)

Sources: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the American Heart Association.