



Who is this person? What are his hobbies, favorite pastimes? What could she spend hours doing? What items is he familiar with? By filling their lives with what makes them unique individuals, memories will flow when they enter their room because it is filled with things they love and recognize. For instance, if the person loved to fish, you might place pictures of fish on the wall, bring in fishing poles, a fishing net, and place a tackle box in the corner filled with fishing lures (hooks dulled), bobbers, string, etc.

If they loved to quilt, place a beautiful quilt on her bed or on the wall, include her sewing basket next to her favorite chair. They can no longer make quilts, but they can still feel fabrics, cut out shapes, look at patterns and talk about the memories this experience triggers. That's a treasure!!

*Pat loved to fish in her younger years and that was something to be proud of in her day. She had a picture of herself holding a 30 lb. salmon on a distinguished looking dock outside her room. When anyone entered the community she would show them the picture and talk about how big the fish was. When Pat could no longer communicate very well she would point at the picture, nod her head and her eyes showed you how proud she was of that day.*

*A lady moved into a retirement community and she explained how she hadn't moved in yet. She actually was moved in except for her favorite chair, and that was how she expressed that something significant in her life was missing.*

This shows us that every human desires to be in familiar surroundings. Make the person's room look, feel and smell like him/her. No matter what the chair looks like or smells like we need to move in their favorite chair. Frequently, we make the common mistake of buying them all new decorations and furniture. Now the room becomes someone else's because nothing is familiar to them.

Before they move take a picture of the place they find comfort, their greatness and their bedroom. Move three significant "places". Be sure to keep the end table on the same side as it has always been. Move the lamp behind the chair because it has always been there. The less change in their environment, the higher they will function. Move "their stuff", spray their favorite cologne or perfume in the room. Their smell is their identity and it will feel more like their room when it smells like them. Place everything at their eye level not yours. When they see "their stuff" it reminds them who they are.

Remember things get lost, damaged and used by other people who live here. When someone else picks up your dad's hat, he thinks it's his. So you have actually created moments of joy for two people!

*"When we bring sunshine into the lives of others, we are warmed by it ourselves."*

*Barbara Johnson*