- Be honest and unafraid. What kind of presence might you want from a companion if you were dying?

- Your presence is the most important thing. You’re valuable just being there. Don’t feel you have to do something.

- Stay present, open, available. Go slow. Be aware of yourself.

- Keep yourself equal with your dying companion – no separation, no sympathy, no hovering above. Keep your heart lower than theirs.

- Ask before touching. Don’t spend the night.

- Listen with your whole heart, without judging, fixing, evaluating or reassuring.

- Be willing to talk about dying. Be receptive to the patient’s process. Don’t avoid.

- Allow the dying person’s end of life journey to unfold as it does, not as you want or hope it to.

- Be aware of your own needs and agendas – to be helpful, to talk, to do tasks, to bring things, to be planning your own death. Let those things be there, but try not to act on them. Hold them aside.

- Address an unconscious dying person directly and with caring attention. Be ultra sensitive to their presence even if they seem unaware, asleep, in a coma, or in the background.

- Sometimes unexpected and uncomfortable things occur. A calm presence and a faith in your ability to face the unknown with equanimity and strength helps during times like these.