

Breaking Through the AWKWARD ZONE™

PAWS BEFORE YOU GO

This is all about the person you are giving the plaque to – not you.

- Think back to the times you have spent with this person so you have some memories in your head
- You have 2 ears and one mouth – **prepare to listen** twice as much as you talk
- Be prepared to share a little about what's going on in your life - **just a little**
- Put your phone away and do not use it during your visit except to take a picture.

GREETING

Be genuinely happy to see them and smile.

- Greet them with “It’s so good to see you” or “I’m so happy to see you”
- Give a hug if you can – people need lots of **hugs**.
- **Watch** so see their mood. If they are happy, keep the mood happy. If they are sad, do not try to cheer them up.

WHILE YOU ARE WITH THEM.

You can start by saying - “I am so sorry. This must be very hard for you.”

- Before you give them the plaque, tell them why you picked the message on the front of the plaque.
- Read the back of the plaque to them and then give it to them. Capture the moment with a picture if you can.
- When they talk about things, **ask questions** about what they talked about.
- Share a memory with them.
- Look around or ask to see if there are specific things that they need **help** with. (ie cooking, cleaning, yard work, laundry, errands run etc..).
- For people of faith, ask them what they need prayers for.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

- Send them a text or email or note saying how good it was to see them and that you promise to **always be there for them**.
- Plan the next thing you can do for them. Be Specific. Refer to the Paws to Reflect worksheet and checklist for ideas.