

The "Co-Caregiver" Guide

Finding Hope & Grace While Supporting a Grieving Loved One

When someone you love is struggling with deep sorrow, job loss, or digital isolation, caring for them can feel terrifying and exhausting:

"My mother won't stop talking to an AI clone of my late father..."

"My husband lost his job to AI and now he won't leave his room..."

As a spouse, parent, or adult child, you are a **"co-caregiver."** You are carrying your own heavy heart while trying to support a hurting person. This guide is designed specifically for *you*—offering practical tools, encouraging truths, and gentle boundaries for your home.

1 Truths to Hold Onto in This Season

As you walk beside your loved one, keep these three vital principles in mind:

1. Your Fear and Worry Are Completely Valid

REMEMBER

It is scary and exhausting to watch someone you love struggle through a deep season of grief, crisis, or hardship. Your worry makes sense because your love is real.

"It is okay to feel overwhelmed. Loving someone through a dark season is a heavy burden to carry."

2. You Cannot "Fix" Their Grief (And That Is Okay)

REMEMBER

You may feel like you are failing because you cannot single-handedly cure their sadness. Release that guilt.

"Grief is a personal journey they must walk. Your calling isn't to fix them, but to offer a steady, loving presence along the way."

3. You Do Not Have to Carry This Alone

REMEMBER

Your church family is here to support *you* and your entire household through prayer, pastoral care, and practical support—you don't have to face this in secret.

2 Practical Strategies You Can Use at Home

Use these simple, healthy steps to gently break digital isolation without causing major fights:

1. Invite, Don't Force

Snatching phones or hiding computers backfires—it causes major fights and drives grief into secrecy.

Try saying: "I'm going to the store for fresh air. I'd love it if you kept me company." (If they say no, accept it calmly and ask again tomorrow).

2. Talk About the Deceased Naturally

People often turn to AI clones because they worry the family has "forgotten" the person who passed away.

Try saying: "I was just thinking about how Dad loved this song." Show them their loved one's memory is safe with living people.

PART 2: HOME STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

3. Create Screen-Free Family Zones

Avoid making rules that feel like you are "punishing" your grieving loved one. Instead, establish healthy habits that the whole household practices together.

Example: Make the dinner table a phone-free zone for everyone, or put all phones in a kitchen basket during family visits to create physical space for real conversation.

4. Honor Their Value Beyond Work

If your loved one shut down after losing a job to AI or automation, they likely feel obsolete and worthless. Avoid immediately pressuring them to find new work.

Try saying: "I know you are stressed about work, but I want you to know how much we value your presence in this family. You are a wonderful parent, and no machine could ever replace that."

5. Practice Care for Yourself

You cannot pour from an empty cup. Worried family members frequently neglect their own health while focusing entirely on their hurting loved one.

Remember: Eat well, prioritize sleep, get fresh air, and spend time with friends. Taking care of your own well-being is a necessary step in helping your loved one long-term.

3 Traps to Avoid at Home (The "Don'ts")

Avoid these common traps that can accidentally deepen isolation or conflict:

✖ Don't Play Along

If a parent says an AI clone texted them, don't pretend it's real. Gently bridge to reality:

"I'm glad those words brought comfort, Mom. I miss Dad's voice too."

✖ Don't Shame or Mock

Never say "You're being ridiculous talking to a computer" or "Get over it." Shame drives grief deeper into secrecy.

✖ Don't Ignore the Problem

Do not pretend everything is fine if a loved one stops eating or leaving their room. Healthy boundaries are a true form of love.

Need Pastoral Support or a Listening Ear?

You do not have to carry this alone. Our ministry team is here to walk beside you and your family.

Pastoral Care Office
Contact Church Leadership