

# THE FRONT PORCH

*All the happy happenings at Cotton Grove Estate*



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## Therapeutic Fibbing: When Experts Recommend Bending The Truth For Someone With Dementia

Honesty isn't always the best policy when it comes to someone suffering from dementia, because their brain will experience a different version of reality than your own.

Dementia damages the brain and causes progressive decline in the ability to understand and process information, so forcing someone to abandon their version of reality and join our "real world" can cause confusion, pain, anxiety, fear, and anger.

For this reason, experts often recommend a technique called **therapeutic fibbing**, which helps you step into your older adults's current reality and spare them unnecessary distress.

**Therapeutic fibbing** may take some getting used to, but remember that using white lies to validate someone's feelings when they're suffering from dementia is not at all the same as lying to them for a malicious reason.

## Telling the truth can sometimes be cruel

Most of us are taught from an early age that any kind of lying is bad. So when we hear about using **therapeutic fibbing** to bend the truth for someone with dementia, it might seem cruel at first. But always sticking to the truth is likely to cause your older adult pain and confusion.

That happens because dementia prevents people from properly processing and retaining information. Plus, having short-term memory issues means they'll probably soon forget the conversation, so it will come up again. Telling the truth each time forces them to experience fresh distress over and over again.

Is it necessary to cause them so much agitation, especially when the truth you tell them is likely to be misunderstood or quickly forgotten? Surely not.



## Therapeutic fibbing helps you step into their reality

**Therapeutic fibbing** is an effective way to step into your older adult's reality; agreeing or saying things that are not true to avoid causing someone distress and to make them feel safe and comforted is not cruel.

In many ways, this technique is similar to telling a friend that you love the thoughtful gift they gave you, even if you don't actually like it. Telling the absolute truth in that case doesn't change the situation and would only hurt your friend's feelings.

Read on for two examples that illustrate the difference between being completely truthful and using **therapeutic fibbing**. While your specific situations will be different, the same principles of gently going along with their reality and finding a distraction will still apply.





**EXAMPLE 1****Being completely truthful:**

**Your mom:** School is over. My mommy is coming to pick me up now. I need to go outside to wait for her!

**You:** You're 89-years-old. You haven't been to school in decades. And don't you remember that your mom died 25 years ago? You don't need to go outside because she's not coming to pick you up.

**Your mom:** What? What do you mean my mom is dead? No! She can't be dead!! I saw her this morning! She told me she would pick me up!!! I need to go outside to wait!!

*She becomes extremely agitated at the notion of her mother dying, begins to cry uncontrollably and starts to scream.*

**Using therapeutic fibbing:**

**Your mom:** School is over. My mommy is coming to pick me up now. I need to go outside to wait for her!

**You:** Oh yes, it's almost time to go. Your mom asked me to give you a snack first so you won't get hungry on the way home. Let's have some juice and crackers while we wait.

**Your mom:** Ok, I'll have a snack.

*You proceed to use this distraction as an opportunity to occupy her with the snack and a fun activity until she lets go of or forgets about the idea of her mother picking her up.*

**EXAMPLE 2****Being completely truthful:**

**Your spouse:** I need to go to work now. I'm already late.

**You:** What do you mean? You don't have a job. You retired 20 years ago. And remember, you have Alzheimer's now. Stop trying to go out.

**Your spouse:** Why would you say that?! You're lying and trying to keep me prisoner! Why are you trying to stop me? I'm leaving, get out of my way!

*They're angry, emotional, and banging things around.*

**Using therapeutic fibbing:**

**Your spouse:** I need to go to work now. I'm already late.

**You:** That's right, I almost forgot. Let's get your jacket, it's a bit chilly today, and make sure your lunch is packed. Here, I'll help.

*Gently lead them to get their jacket and find a pleasant distraction along the way: look out the window and start talking about the birds, stop in front of a partially completed fun activity like a puzzle, stop for a drink of water, etc. When they're engaged in something else and become distracted, they're likely to let go of the idea of going to work.*

To read more about **therapeutic fibbing** and other useful techniques that will help you navigate the aging process with your older adult, visit [www.DailyCaring.com](http://www.DailyCaring.com).



# Farm-To-Table Update: The Chickens Are Laying!

If you're a regular reader of *The Front Porch* or you follow us on social media, you may recall that we recently took the first step toward producing some of our own food with the addition of a small flock of chickens.

Self-sustainability has always been an overarching goal of our broader development plan for Cotton Grove, so we are thrilled to announce that after a couple months of TLC, our chickens have finally begun laying eggs!

The first egg was discovered by Mr. Hugh, who has become our resident chicken wrangler. He loves caring for our little flock, diligently checking on them many times throughout the day.

Upon discovering the first egg, Mr. Hugh rushed inside and announced that he couldn't wait to eat it the next morning. So, naturally, we fried it up for him just the way he likes it!





## Caregiver Spotlight: Destiny Miller

The Cotton Grove management team would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of Miss Destiny Miller.

Miss Destiny is one of the newer members of the fabulous group of women which make up our caregiving team, but we have been absolutely blown away by her work ethic and character.

Although she is just 23-years-old, she is mature beyond her years and shows a level of gratitude uncommon for her age. Indeed, Miss Destiny is an inspiration to all of the women she works with. She comes to work every day with a smile on her face and a positive attitude that is simply contagious.



"I was born and raised in this sweet small town," said Miss Destiny, a Jesup native. "I have always loved taking care of people and helping people as much as I can. Growing up, I didn't always have help, so I feel like it's my duty to give the help I can to others. I thrive by helping people."

Our precious residents are now the lucky beneficiaries of Miss Destiny's benevolent spirit.

Miss Destiny is just as dedicated to her family as she is to her job. When she's not working, her favorite thing to do is to spend as much quality time with them as possible. She is the loving mother of an adorable 2-year-old boy named Davin and has a fiancé named Colton.

Thank you so much for everything you do, Miss Destiny! You make Cotton Grove Estate an even more beautiful place!



## Farewell, Mrs. Thelma

On Valentine's Day, Mrs. Thelma Thomas went peacefully to be with her Lord and Savior in heaven. She was 97-years-old.

Mrs. Thelma was a member of our Cotton Grove family for nearly two years, and during that time, she impacted all of us greatly with her tenderness and joyful spirit.

Originally born in Appling County, Mrs. Thelma grew up in Jesup, where she graduated from Jesup High School. She went on to graduate from Georgia Teacher's College (now Georgia Southern University) in Statesboro.

After graduating from college, Mrs. Thelma moved to Patterson to begin her teaching career. She met the love of her life, James Wendell Thomas, soon after moving and they were married on November 8, 1947.

Mrs. Thelma taught first grade in Patterson for thirty years. She was the oldest living member of Patterson United Methodist Church and was actively involved in many positions at her church over the years.

She was a devoted mother and grandmother and was well known for her excellent cooking, generosity, and willingness to help others. She will be greatly missed!















## A Message From Anna

Dear family and friends,

February was an emotional month for our Cotton Grove family. While we celebrated Valentine's Day and have been enjoying the lovely weather, we also lost one of our long-time residents, Mrs. Thelma Thomas.

Yet even as we said our tearful goodbyes to this incredible woman - a true pillar of the local community - my heart felt at peace knowing that we were able to give her a beautiful final chapter, full of all the comforts she deserved and surrounded by people who loved her tremendously.

I wish we could give this to every single aging member of our community, but for now, we will have to settle for helping those that we can.

If you or someone you know would like to take a private tour of our beautiful 50-acre property to see if it would be the right fit, please contact me at the number below. I would absolutely love to hear from you!

Warmly,

Anna Pittard  
Owner, Cotton Grove Estate  
(912) 424-6422

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ANNA JONES PITTARD  
OWNER, COTTON GROVE ESTATE