

Just This Once Can Become Every time (continued)

The first request may be small. Once the caregiver agrees, however, the client may reasonably believe that the same favor will be provided again. Another caregiver who follows the established rules may then be viewed as uncooperative.

What began as kindness can create confusion, inconsistency, and conflict.

Money Requires Special Care

Caregivers must be especially careful whenever money, checks, credit cards, purchases, or financial information are involved.

If shopping or another financial task is authorized, follow the required procedure. Keep receipts, return the correct change, and document the transaction as directed. Never combine a client's purchase with your own or assume that a small difference does not matter.

Do not borrow from a client, lend money to a client, use a client's rewards points, accept a personal payment, or participate in the client's financial decisions.

Even when both people have good intentions, informal financial arrangements can lead to misunderstanding. A client may forget what was agreed upon. A family member

may question a transaction. The caregiver may then have no way to demonstrate what actually occurred.

Clear procedures protect everyone.

Gifts Can Create Difficulties

Clients and families sometimes want to express appreciation by offering money, jewelry, household items, or other gifts. The offer may be sincere, but accepting a gift can create the appearance that the caregiver received special treatment or used the relationship for personal benefit.

A simple expression of gratitude may be acceptable, but anything of meaningful value should be discussed with the office before it is accepted.

Caregivers should never ask for gifts, hint that they need something, or accept an item that makes them uncomfortable. If uncertain, thank the client and explain that you must check with the office.

Do Not Promise What You Cannot Authorize

A caregiver should not promise to work additional hours, change the schedule, add tasks, or continue working privately for the client. Those decisions must be coordinated through the office.

Statements such as “I am sure it will be fine” can create expectations that the office may not be able to meet. A

better response is: “Let me contact the office so they can determine how we should handle that.”

That answer is not unhelpful. It is professional.

Kindness and Boundaries Can Work Together

Saying no to an unauthorized request does not mean rejecting the client. It means providing help in a way that is safe, consistent, and appropriate.

When a client asks for something outside the normal assignment:

1. Listen respectfully.
2. Do not argue or make the client feel embarrassed.
3. Explain that you need to contact the office.
4. Do not promise that the request will be approved.
5. Follow the instructions you receive.

A strong professional relationship is built on compassion, trust, and clear expectations. Caregivers can be warm, friendly, and genuinely concerned about a client without becoming personally or financially involved.

If a request begins with “Just this once,” pause before agreeing. One favor can become a pattern, but one call to the office can prevent a much larger problem.