

My dear friend,

I was praying for you today and through the haze of my own tears and grief FOR YOU, I felt I should share something with you. I realize what I'm going to say might make some sense logically...but it will NOT make sense emotionally. So, before I even say this, I'm already aware there will be a conflict within you, between your mind and your heart. That's ok. As long as we're aware of it we can know to be more cautious as we attempt to navigate these stormy, unsafe waters. And so, here's what I want to say to you right now:

You **ARE** going to get through this.

It doesn't feel like it today.

And unfortunately, I can promise it won't feel like it tomorrow either.

And that SUCKS!

But...

Someday...

I promise...

You **WILL** get through this.

When that day comes, will you be the same as you are now? No, you certainly will not. Because of what you are unjustly being required to endure RIGHT NOW...you are ALREADY changed. This has had a profound and forever impact on you. You are already not the same. In some ways (the most obvious ways currently), those changes are cruel, unfair, hideous, and ugly...and NO ONE should have to bear the weight of what you are being faced with. But...

You will get through **THIS**.

As your friend, someone who cares about you, I wish more than ANYTHING that you weren't having to go through this. If I could, I would undo all of this for you; reset the clock, turn back time, fix all of this! But I can't. And I don't have answers as to why you are having to go through this. Nobody does. There just aren't good answers.

But remember, even though you are having to go through this...the key to surviving this is to know:

You are going **THROUGH** this.

This will NOT last forever.

The pain, the confusion, the questions, the misplaced sense of guilt, the anger, the shame, the gut-wrenching sorrow, the overwhelming fear...ALL of it.

It will NOT last forever.

Will it go on for FAR too long? Yup.
And it already has.

But it will not...
It WILL NOT last forever!
It yells and screams, bares its teeth, bites down hard, and threatens to last forever.
But it won't.

And the way you will get THROUGH this, is by knowing that as painful and difficult as this is right now...
It is only TEMPORARY.
And you can make it.

You CAN make it.
You WILL make it.

You **ARE** going to make it through this.

And you are NOT alone.
You have SO MANY people behind you.
Loving you.
Caring ABOUT you, and wanting to care FOR you, in ANY way you will let us.
Supporting you.

Right now, as you're just trying to figure out how to breath again, it is OK to lean back and let those of us who are behind you share our strength with you.

You are being asked to carry a burden too heavy for ANYONE to bear. But you are NOT being asked to carry it alone. You are NOT required to somehow come up with enough strength in and of yourselves. That's not possible. And that's a good thing. Because your strength will be renewed, reinvigorated, refilled, by allowing others to hold you up right now...to pour into you. That's what families...and friends...and communities are for: To help YOU get through THIS.

And **YOU...WILL**...get through this.

And when you are ready and need me to be there with you, whether in person or on the phone, to listen as you talk, cry, scream, or just sit in silence together...ANY TIME day or night, I will be here.

And I love you.
And I will love you...through this whole messy process.
(That last part didn't need to be said...it's a given.)

Your friend