

## Daily Survival Kit

*When you are going through serious illness or grief*

*These statements were adapted from writings by Thomas McDermitt, a long-time UWMC cancer patient and skeptic.*

You do not have to agree with all these statements all the time. But it can help to speak them out loud every day, no matter how you are feeling on that day. The healing effect can be subtle, and take place over time.

- Today, I am going to try to live through this day **only**. I am not going to dwell on all my problems, or try to solve them all at once. I can do something for a few hours that would be hard to even think about doing for a few months.
- Just for today, I am willing to accept that there might be a purpose to my grieving. I am willing to accept that it can be a source of meaning and growth for myself and others, even if I may not see how. It may be that this grief will not be in vain.
- Just for today, let me remind myself that I am basically a worthwhile person. I am worth loving, even with my faults and limits. I deserve support from others to help me through my grief.
- Just for today, I want to be aware that it is all right to want too much from people. Grieving brings out the small child in all of us. And if I feel hurt when people cannot be there for me, let me remember that they have needs, frailties, and limits of their own. If they do not respond as I wish they would, it does not mean that they are rejecting me.



*Grieving brings out the small child in all of us.*

- Today I may feel the need to complain a lot. I may have little tolerance. I may cry. I may scream. That does not mean that I am less courageous or strong. All of these are ways to express my anger over this mess, and to rightly mourn my losses. Just going through this grief process shows courage.
- It is my life at stake now. Maybe today I can allow myself to be a little less concerned about the reactions and impressions of others. Maybe I can let myself feel a little less guilty or bad about what I did not get done or give. Perhaps today I can keep being gentle with myself.
- Surviving grief is hard. At times, it seems impossible. But today I believe I can deal with grief. Sorrow runs very deep, but I think I can rise again.
- Just for today, I can give grief 'the benefit of the doubt.' If I am patient and kind to myself, perhaps I will have the energy to do the hard work of grieving and thus benefit from its lessons.
- Just for today, perhaps I can take heart that we are all connected. Even now my courage (however imperfect) is a gift, an inspiration for others in their own grief work.
- It seems reasonable that there is a season for everything and a time for every purpose. Sorrow, loss, and grief have exhausted me and distorted my senses and spirit. But today, I can at least find some hope in nature's way. It seems possible to hope that this grief will ease, that a season of balance will return.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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