

Gentle Words for Hard Times

Gentle words for a card, a message, or a note left on the table.

In my hardest year, I received many messages. Some I still remember word for word. Not because they were beautiful, but because they asked nothing of me. These are the kinds of words that helped.

What to gently avoid

“Everything happens for a reason” — in pain, this sounds like the pain was deserved.

“Stay strong” — they have been strong for too long. Let them be tired.

“At least...” — any sentence that starts this way makes the pain smaller than it is.

“I know exactly how you feel” — even similar pain is never the same. Say “I can only imagine” instead.

“How are you?” without room for a real answer — try “No need to answer, I’m just thinking of you.”

The words don't have to be perfect. Most people remember only one thing: that you reached out.

Print the next pages, cut along the dashed lines, and write a few words of your own on the back.

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*I don't have the
right words. I just
wanted you to know
I'm thinking of you.*

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*I can't fix this. But
I'm here, and I'm not
going anywhere.*

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*No need to reply.
This is just a hug in
words.*

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*You don't have to be
okay with me.*

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*There is no timeline
for this. Take all the
time you need.*

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*You've been strong
for so long. You're
allowed to rest.*

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*Small steps still
count. So do the
days you can't take
any.*

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~

*Just because you
matter.*

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