

Dear Survivor,

I promise that it gets better. I promise that your heart can be whole again and that your life can sparkle once more. I know you can heal because I did.

I'm very sorry about what happened to you. It wasn't okay, it wasn't your fault and I believe you. I 100% believe you. I believe you even when you doubt yourself. (That's called denial, and it's completely normal.)

Once you have gotten to a place where you are safe, the most important thing you can do is to take good care of yourself. Maybe that means snuggling with your cat, taking a nap or going for a walk. Maybe that means closing this page. It's okay if it's too much for you right now. You're allowed to take as much time as you need. Please be gentle with yourself. You have only one job right now, and that is to be kind to yourself.

The second most important thing you can do is to start getting better. It took me more than a decade to accept what happened to me, and my recovery was harder than it needed to be because I had buried things for so long. I want you to have as little pain as you can in your healing, and so I hope you can start very soon. Tell your loved ones what happened and let them support you. Find a therapist you connect with and ask for extra homework and do whatever it takes to heal. It's worth every second and every dollar.

Through my recovery, I discovered that I was stronger than I ever could have imagined. I realized that I was worthy of love and kindness. I found peace. And I built myself a shiny new life. You can too. I promise.

I wish you peace and healing.

D. M. Ditson,
Survivor and author of Wide Open