

SFG

Dear Friend,

The reason you are receiving this letter is because you are LOVED. Someone cares enough to give you this letter of encouragement. Have you been experiencing any of the following: depression, anxiety, loneliness, hearing or seeing things that are not real, high highs and low lows, or maybe you are suspicious of others? Perhaps, the doctor has told you that you have a diagnosis of some kind of mental illness, but you do not agree. Or maybe you feel afraid of such a diagnosis?

I am here to share with you that I have been there. See, I have been diagnosed with a mental illness... and probably the most stigmatized of all, schizophrenia. Still, I have found HOPE while being in recovery. Do you need hope? Do you need to feel at peace? Are you struggling?

Then, I would like to share with you some very important lessons I picked up that led to my increased wellness and recovery: FIRST, I learned that the doctor was right. Medication helped relieve a lot of my struggling. Yes, I finally concluded that meds are good and helpful for me *despite* the side effects, and it brought much needed relief when my thoughts and emotions began to stabilize. SECOND, I learned that my faith in Jesus anchored me during the most difficult times of recovery because He was not causing me to suffer; rather, I learned He wept during my suffering because God is compassionate. I believe He wants to help you as He did me. The THIRD important lesson I learned is that I could find safety and comfort from a licensed professional counselor. My counselor guided and helped me learn how to cope with my struggles in a good way. I felt understood, affirmed and comforted by someone who was for me and for my recovery.

Do you feel that your life has slowly been unraveling? If so, here is what I would say to you if you are ready to take a step towards feeling better:

1. **Receive the help you need.** This requires humility, and the desire, commitment and HOPE that your situation can change for the better. I have been there. Learn from me. See a psychiatrist/MD, counselor, and reach out to our loving God. He will not fail you. He is not angry or distant; He is compassionate and caring toward you!
2. **Understand that your journey of recovery starts now.** Be patient in working with professionals who want to help. Find someone you can connect with. Recovery is a process and journey, and there are bumps in the road. Do not lose heart. Do *not* give up. Press on, press on, and press on! If you fall, get back up and press on!
3. **Learn to trust again.** Have you been hurt by family, friends, helping professionals, the church? Your heart may be broken. Mine was. Start over, especially when reaching out to people who know how to help you i.e., psychiatrist/MD, licensed counselors, etc. Maybe you need to reconcile with someone. Learn to trust again!

You are so LOVED. Take your first step today! Do not hesitate. Now is the time to act. I have been there. And, I pray that you, like me, can find hope, peace, strength and encouragement as you move through recovery! Share your recovery journey with me by using #nomore shame in your social media!

Grace and Peace,

David Mandani

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