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Wednesday, February 12, 2004

Dear Kate,

As I told you already during our first session, it is not uncommon for me to send a "therapeutic letter" to remind you of the steps you have taken and assist you during the week. You may also remind yourself of some of the work we did during the therapy sessions.

I also want to tell you again that you are welcome to show this letter to your uncle and aunt if you want, or to anybody else that you care for if you so desire. If you prefer you can also keep this letter "just for you". You do not have to answer to this letter, but if you want to please feel welcome to do so.

There are so many questions that stayed with me after you left, so I hope you don't mind me asking some.

I was really touched by your story and I was really impressed by the courage you have shown so far, and the commitment that has been yours toward "feeling better". You have even responded with enthusiasm to being maybe a future member of the psychotherapy group "escaping ties". This tells a lot about you.

I was really curious about how you managed to keep hope alive when you say you have about 80% of only bad memories of your past?

How did you keep the hope alive? Do you know something about that?

Was there a little voice within your soul whispering, that you deserved better, that life did not have to be that way after all, that you did not deserve to live under this turmoil?

If you heard the whisper of hope, in the midst of your pain, as I imagine you did, what else was hope whispering to your ears? How often were you listening to hope? How often did sadness give you a break from its grips?

I was also curious, you said, in the past you have had about 80% of bad memories, what would you say about right now? Where are you at? How much of the time now will create bad memories in the future and how much of the time will create good ones?

Is it better, worse or the same now as the day before you came to therapy?

Do you have any predictions about the future? In other words three months from now, or even 6 months from now how much of your time will create good memories and how much of your time will create bad memories?

Kate, I also wanted to say to you, you talk a lot about feeling confused. I do not want to dismiss your experience. However, I have heard you talking about what you feel with much clarity, much precision, even when you talk about your confusion. The feelings you feel make a lot of sense to me: the anger and the rage, the pain and the turmoil, the regrets, the loneliness, the feelings of being unloved, unwelcome, unwanted, unprotected, uncared for, the hopelessness, the fear, the concerns, the overwhelming sense of responsibilities. This all made so much sense to me that you would feel these feelings. This is just so amazing to me to see that you have survived all that. The drugs, the violence, the constant insecurity of not knowing what the next day would look like, the physical violence, and finally the rape. I hope you do not think that it is wrong to feel that way.

You are feeling just what there is to feel.

I am so curious and intrigued by how you survived all that, day after day, breath after breath, step after step?

How do you wake up every day and move forward? What are the thoughts that kept you moving?

What are the strengths that whisper into your ears "It is worth to go on! You can do it! You are perfect just the way you are Kate! Drugs and alcohol will not mess your life any longer!"

Finally, There are a few things you told me last Tuesday that I want to put on paper just for the record. I would like for you to keep reminding yourself of these thoughts, because they are good thoughts. You said with a clear and loud voice "I am going to do something with my life! I know that! I am going to feel better!"

Tell me Kate: Who would be the least surprised to hear these statements? Vanessa, your sister Tracy, or your sister Marie, your uncle, your aunt, or even yourself? Tell me: who would be the least surprised and who would be the most surprised to hear that you are going to do something with your life and to survive the pain and the tragedies you have endured?

I find myself really eager to continue to assist you in climbing this new path (somewhat awkward for you) leading to more happiness and peace within your soul, and learning to leave the trauma just where it belong: in the past.

Sincerely

Take care, Kate, I care.

Fabienne Kuenzli, Ph.D.
(Licensed Marriage and Family therapist)