



How to Encourage HOPE in Someone

You're right, this sucks. When people need support they often don't need problem-solvers but listeners. They've usually run through all the scenarios and solutions in their head already. They just can't do it. What they're looking for instead is simple acknowledgement and empathy. Be that person first and foremost.

You don't walk this path alone. I'm here if you need me. When a person's feeling low, and especially if **depression* is involved, one of the feelings many people experience is an overwhelming sense of loneliness — that no one can understand what they're going through. That they are all alone. A reminder from you that, indeed, they're not alone and they are loved can be invaluable. It also reminds them of the reality — that people in their life *do* love them and are there for them if they need them.

** If you suspect the person you are supporting has reached a point of overwhelm where Anxiety and Depression are present, please keep them safe and encourage and support them to seek professional help. It is possible that they don't even know they have Depression. And if they do suspect it they may not want to acknowledge it. There is plenty of information online about Depression.*

I believe in you... You're awesome! Often when a person is low and needs support it can be easy for their self-esteem to be affected. When someone is losing, or has lost, hope — that's a sign that they've lost belief in themselves, and they may feel like nothing they do is, or will be, right or good enough. Their self-esteem is in bits. That's why it's so powerful to reaffirm that you believe in them. You believe in their ability to once again experience hope, to be the person they once were — or even more. That they are still an awesome person, if even if they're not feeling that way at the moment.

How can I help? What can I do for you? One part of the way many people experience low times is that they have little motivation to do things that need to get done. Offer your support and direct assistance in getting something done for them. It might be picking up a prescription, a few groceries from the store, or simply getting the mail. Offer this help only if you're willing to do what is asked of you.

I'm here if you want to talk (walk, go shopping, get a bit to eat, etc.). This is more of a direct suggestion, choosing something that you know your friend or loved one is going to be interested in doing. Maybe they just want to talk (and need you to simply listen). Maybe they need a nudge to get up, get changed, and go out and just *do* something — anything. You can be that person to help them get moving.

I know it's hard to see this right now, but it's only temporary... Things will change. You won't feel this way forever. Look to that day. When a person's feeling down, sometimes they lose all perspective. It can feel like an endless black hole from which there's no way to climb out. Saying something along these lines reminds them that all of our emotions and moods are *not* permanent, even if they feel like they are.

*Who can you support with this Cheat Sheet today?
Please pass it on.*