

IMAGINING A WORLD WITHOUT YOU

The COVID world tapped, sapped, and mapped your lives personally and professionally. You are to be lauded for your continuous resiliency, resourcefulness, and responsiveness. Clearly your world view embraced history as a guidepost not as a hitching post as you remained committed and commissioned. In other word, you were being resilient and successfully adapting to difficult or challenging circumstances.

I cannot imagine a world without YOU!

The foundation of your resiliency is an ultimate love story.

Love always has an array of objects in mind and the most intimate object is you. For without loving yourself, it is impossible to give to others what you have yet to give to yourself.

To love ourselves unconditionally is to acknowledge our strengths as well as our flaws and failures. You don't have to be perfect to be faithful. I often think of this as walking with humble confidence. It keeps our hearts soft, our minds alert, and our souls stirred to the nurturing power of love.

I believe that this perspective challenges each one of us to be open to new ideas, relationships, opportunities, and perspectives. This means going beyond conclusion to intentional curiosity hearing both the fears and concerns. It's a mindset that powers us through the murky waters of pain to the promise of the "new thing." It springs up now: a new way of listening, a new way of being fully present, new way of engagement. And know that the new thing awaits even if what you have now is a great thing!

I cannot imagine a world without YOU!

There were times that you were exhausted and yet you provided and responded to the needs of others while you yourselves had personal challenges. Being resilient is not: being stubbornly independent, hiding your exhaustion, and never being depleted or defeated. African American women are frequently told that we are so "strong!" This is what one would say to an ox. You must learn to set boundaries that are clear that you bounce back to bounce forward. Bouncing back without consideration of the cost of sacrifice does not make you resilient but someone's personal basketball. People who create conditions that have you only bouncing back and calling you strong and resilient is an exploitation of your resiliency rather than exploring and exalting your resiliency. These people find you valuable but do not necessarily value you.

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If you are like me, there are days that I feel like a run on sentence that would make any grammarian scream. This self-inflicted pace appears hostile to any suggestion to insert a comma while viewing the period as a predator.

And yet there it is, the *pause* that beckons you to take a breath, that nudges you, and speaks to you in a still quiet voice. You know that moment when you feel overwhelmed and there it is again, the *pause* where you gain perspective, you hear the laughter of a child, receive the blessings amid chaos, and yes, even experience contentment.

The power of the *pause* is your superpower acknowledging that while you are a *player* in the game, you will not be *played* by the game. Therefore, the next time you find yourself *tired and tried*, take a *pause*. *Pause* to be grace-filled, love-filled, and peace-filled.

REcharging could mean reimagining, reconnecting, repositioning, re-engaging, and relinquishing. You see, I have come to realize that whatever the “re” is, it begins with **ME**. The new norm operates with a lot more ambiguity and complexity. Adaptability and flexibility will no longer be something we simply give a wink less we sink into chaos and despair.

You are awesome, loving, powerful, humble, authentic, kind-hearted, accomplished, persistent, astonishing, trustworthy, steadfast, playful, helpful, and aspiring. Simply put, you are influencers who profoundly impact our community and the world.

I just cannot imagine a world without YOU!

You have chosen to stay engaged in this often complicated and complex thing called **LIFE**. In other words, a person who has decided to keep on stepping with grace, mercy, thoughtfulness, discernment, and most of all with purpose. For you know and have known that the ***job you were hired to do can be distinctively different than the work that you are called to do.***©

The fact of life is that one day we will be them and those people. For me, I pray and hope that I encounter someone like you.

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