

CHALLENGES TO NAVIGATE

- You are not a therapist, a caseworker, a fixer of everything, a fairy godmother, She Who Has Answers To Everything, a bank roll, or a chauffeur (unless you want to be, and there are auto insurance requirements for that). You are that much harder to define thing called a Friend.
- Trust and connection take time to build. Patience is of the essence.
- Find TRUE ways to affirm them. It has to be true or they will discount it. Look for where they are succeeding or qualities you can see growing in them.

"Wow, you really worked hard there."

"It strikes me that you are a true Survivor, and that you do not give up."

"I can tell you are really committed to"

- Don't sidestep going to painful places. Acknowledge their pain without minimizing it, discounting it or giving platitudes. Saying something genuine like, "I can't even imagine how hard that was for you. I am so sorry," goes a long, long way.
- Gently guide your conversation during your visits. Conversations can run away from you at times, or head in unhelpful directions.
- Don't run too far ahead of where your friend is. Sometimes you will see potential in her that she cannot see yet or you see where she needs to go in her efforts, but she does not yet.
- Don't criticize or pull out unhealthy supports that are in place until new ones have been established to take their place. That support may be the only one they have.
- Be aware of your own biases and/or agendas that come up in this relationship. A good way to put it is that you do not need to project your story onto your Friend's story.
- Love, grace, humor and acceptance go a long way in relationships and cover a multitude of sins. If this week did not go so hot, forgive yourself, and try again next week. Each of us, (and this program as well), are works in progress. We will learn, adapt and regroup as needed! We will all collaborate to get there!