

You don't have to know what to say.



THE FRIDGE SHEET



from What to Say to Someone With Cancer · Ellen Shilling, Stage IV Survivor

SAY

- "I heard. I'm so sorry. I love you. No need to reply."
- "I don't know what to say — but I'm here."
- "You don't have to be strong with me. Ever."
- "This is so unfair. I hate that this is happening to you."
- "Whatever you're feeling makes complete sense."
- "Do you want to talk about it, or be distracted from it?"
- "That's really hard." (then stay — no fixing)
- "Come if you're up for it. Cancel at the door. I'll never be offended."
- "Thinking of you tomorrow. No reply needed." (scan eves, forever)
- "I'm not going anywhere."

RETIRE

- "Let me know if you need anything."
- "You're so strong. You're such a fighter."
- "Everything happens for a reason." / "It's God's plan." / "Your faith will carry you."
- "At least..." (anything)
- "My aunt had that, and..."
- "Have you tried...?"
- "You look great!" / "You don't even look sick!"
- "You'll be fine! Stay positive!"
- "What caused it?"
- "I didn't want to bother you."

DO

- Send the Show-Up Line today — sent beats perfect.
- Set a recurring reminder named after them. Six months, minimum.
- Offer specifics: concrete + scheduled + easy out. "Porch or fridge?"
- Learn their treatment's name and rhythm; calendar the big days.
- Delivery cards · spaced meal train · stock the freezer before hard stretches.
- Claim the obvious zone without asking: lawn, bins, porch, snow.
- Give a standing slot — childcare, rides, errands — shaped like the burden.
- Text on a rhythm with nothing owed back. An emoji is a complete answer.
- Keep going after the bell: scan-eve texts, anniversaries, "how are you actually?"
- Support the family and the caregiver: carry, don't condole — and ask them the you-question.

Week six matters more than day one. Month four matters more than week six.

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