

Instructions for a Bad Day

By Shane Koyczan

There will be bad days.

Be calm. Loosen your grip, opening each palm slowly now. Let go.

Be confident. Know that “now” is only a moment, and that if “today” is as bad as it gets, understand that by tomorrow, “today” will have ended.

Be gracious. Accept each extended hand offered, to pull you back from the “somewhere” you cannot escape.

Be diligent. Scrape the gray sky clean. Realize every dark cloud is a smoke screen meant to blind us from the Truth—and the Truth is, whether we see them or not, the Sun and Moon are still there and always there is Light.

Be forthright. Despite your instinct to say “it’s alright, I’m okay” —be honest. Say how you feel without fear or guilt, without remorse or complexity.

Be lucid in your explanation, be sterling in your oppose. If you think for one second no one knows what you’ve been going through, be accepting of the fact that you are wrong, that the long drawn and heavy breaths of despair have at times been felt by everyone—that Pain is part of the Human Condition, and that alone makes you a legion.

We hungry underdogs, we risers with dawn, we dismissers of odds, we pressers of on—we will station ourselves to the calm. We will hold ourselves to the steady, be ready player one. Life is going to come at you armed with hard times and tough choices, your voice is your weapon, your thoughts ammunition—there are no free extra men, be aware that as the instant now passes, it exists now as then. So be a mirror reflecting yourself back, and remembering the times when you thought all of this was too hard and you’d never make it through.

Remember the times you could have pressed quit—but you hit continue.

Be forgiving. Living with the burden of anger is not living. Giving your focus to wrath will leave your entire self absent of what you need. Love and hate are beasts and the one that grows is the one you feed.

Be persistent. Be the weed growing through the cracks in the cement, beautiful—because it doesn’t know it’s not supposed to grow there.

Be resolute. Declare what you accept as true in a way that envisions the resolve with which you accept it. If you are having a good day, be considerate. A simple smile could be the first-aid kit that someone has been looking for.

If you believe with absolute honesty that you are doing everything you can—do more. There will be bad days, Times when the world weighs on you for so long it leaves you looking for an easy way out. There will be moments when the drought of joy seems unending. Instances spent pretending that everything is alright when it clearly is not, check your blind spot. See that love is still there, be patient.

Every nightmare has a beginning, but every bad day has an end. Ignore what others have called you. I am calling you “friend.” Make us comprehend the urgency of your crisis. Silence left to its own devices, breeds silence. So speak and be heard. One word after the next, express yourself and put your life in the context—if you find that no one is listening, be loud. Make noise. Stand in poise and be open. Hope in these situations is not enough and you will need someone to lean on. In the unlikely event that you have no one, look again.

Everyone is blessed with the ability to Listen. The Deaf will hear you with their Eyes. The Blind will see you with their Hands. Let your Heart fill their news-stands, let them read all about it. Admit to the bad days, the impossible nights. Listen to the insights of those who have been there, but come back. They will tell you; you can stack misery, you can pack despair, you can even wear your sorrow—but come tomorrow, you must change your clothes.

Everyone knows Pain. We are not meant to carry it forever. We were never meant to hold it so closely, so be certain in the belief that what pain belongs to now will belong soon to then. That when someone asks you “how was your day,” realize that for some of us, it’s the only way we know how to say “be calm.”

Loosen your grip, opening each palm, slowly now—let go.