THRIVE EMERGE

LOVE

This is a piece that I wrote for my oldest daughter following a conversation we had had about a relationship that had recently ended.

Becky – Sometimes as a parent, you are reminded by your children how far along the journey we have all come together. Last night was one of those times. You, a young woman grappling with complex, difficult adult issues for the first time; me a dad, getting a little more tired and achy than I used to be, but grateful that some of the wear and tear has come along with a deeper sense and broader perspective of life than I used to have. I know I'm not always right, and I know that instead of a crystal ball to see the future, all I have – all we have – is a little flicker of light somewhere way off in the darkness; but I'm glad we are a team, and even though your heart has to bear the greatest weight of this loss, I know that we will see this through together.

So here you are, looking smack in the face at one of God's most wonderful, awesome, awful, confusing, frustrating, joyful, painful and ultimately blessed gifts – love. Love tender, love tearful, love snuggled in close, love distant and worried, love deep and animal and sexual, love light and playful, love so connected you wondered how you ever lived without it, love so jumbled and unknown and chaotic that your heart aches inside your chest and your thoughts spin endlessly and the best you can muster at the end of the day is a good cry into your pillow and hoping that the next day will dawn a little brighter.

There is no "making sense" of this part of our souls. We can think about it, we can make decisions about who and when and what. But a true understanding lies somewhere deeper and darker and more hidden, buried in the rich soil of our hearts, its secrets given up slowly, cautiously, and only to those brave enough to hold steady and strong in the face of their own doubts and fears. Whispers, scents and glimpses are all you can hope for at times. Hold on to them, believe in them. Take every opportunity to wrestle with your heart. Let its doors open too far and close too tightly until slowly, with painstaking practice, you come to know that place in the center, that place where your heart has grown strong and sure enough to accept life's tide of joyfulness and loss. Only then can you look back and understand the preciousness of every moment spent dancing with love.

Whatever you might experience this day, keep these words close to you. You are a brave soul who has struggled and survived before. I am confident that you will do so again. Take extra care while your heart is tender. Mix your moments of quiet solitude with an equal measure of joining with friends and family. Your heart needs both to heal. Trust deeply in your soul's wisdom – it has chosen a path for you that you are bound to follow, no matter how painful in the moment. Trust that in time, sorrow always gives way to acceptance and understanding and forgiveness. And trust the ancient, complex rhythms of your heart – it is a slow and measured magic that heals our wounds and opens us to the miracles of love.

Take care, my beautiful child. I love you. Poppy