



Brooklyn, 35 Houston, TX

Stage 1B Breast Cancer

Dear Brooklyn,

A I know you're terrified right now, and it's okay to feel that way.

There are a few things I want to tell you that may help you through your new diagnosis.

First, you CAN ask questions and speak up for yourself with your doctor. In the whirlwind of diagnosis and treatment, it'll feel like everything is out of your hands, but your voice matters and is the most important one in the room. If something doesn't feel right, or if you don't understand what's happening, ask. Don't be afraid to demand clarity. You will quickly learn how to advocate for yourself this way. It's also okay to not be okay. You'll feel like you have to be strong all the time, but the truth is, strength doesn't mean being stoic. It means allowing yourself to feel everything—fear, anger, sadness—and trusting that those emotions are part of your healing. Don't hide from them. It's okay to cry, to be vulnerable, to lean on others. This doesn't make you weak, it makes you human.

The fear of recurrence will hang over you, but it won't control you forever. It's normal to fear the "what-ifs," but you'll learn to take it day by day.

The fear may never fully go away, but you'll find ways to manage it.

Above all, remember to take care of yourself—mentally, emotionally, and physically. This journey is exhausting, and you'll forget to rest, to recharge, to care for your mental health, but don't! Healing isn't just about your physical body; it's about all of you. Take time for yourself, even when it feels selfish. You'll thank me later.

Lastly, trust me when I say that you'll be okay.

You're stronger than you think, and you'll come out of this with a deeper understanding of yourself. Your journey is not over, and the future is so bright, filled with love, community, and more joy. Some friends will go, but you will make so many more incredible new ones. Just keep going. Also, spoiler alert because I can't help myself, our boyfriend proposes on that "You Finished Chemo Trip," so make sure to bring cute outfits!

Love,

Your 4-year surviving older self –

Brooklyn