

What Do I Do Now?

A poem for parents and carers new to autism

By: Kate Laine-Toner

First things first: take a deep breath;
everything is going to be alright.
You will get through this.

Be gentle with yourself; you are doing the best that you can.
Keep hold of your own interests, dreams and desires.
Look after yourself first; you cannot pour from an empty cup.

As far as possible, be on good terms with the people around you.
Avoid those who are judgmental and ignorant; they are poison to the spirit.

Remain strong in the face of adversity, the noise and drama;
you can survive anything life throws at you!
Take time to recover when life is hard, but never give up.

Speak your truth calmly and clearly.
Trust your gut instinct; it is always right.
Listen to others, even to those who seem very different from you;
they too have their story and may touch your heart.

Remember that comparison is the thief of joy.
Do not compare your child or your family with others;
only you know what is best for yourself.
Celebrate successes no matter how small they may seem.

Be yourself; you are a gift to the universe.
Do not hoard your knowledge; share it freely and
listen with care to the stories of others in your shoes.

If friends abandon you, make new ones that understand.
Hold them close; for there is safety in numbers,
and great comfort to be found in shared experiences.

Carry those who are weak as others will do the same for you.
Ask not what others can do for you, but what you can do for them;
joy comes from helping those in need.

Do not distress yourself with unfounded worries.
Arm yourself with the light of knowledge; fear blooms in the dark.
Do not suffer in silence; share your troubles:
'a problem shared is a problem halved'.

Despite disappointments and broken dreams,
the world is full of beauty and wonder.
There is still happiness to be found –
in laughter, friendship and simple pleasures.