

**Dear Friend,**

**As you know, I have recently been diagnosed with breast cancer.**

**They tell me I am probably in shock — and because you care about me, you may be, too. They tell me I am starting into a process of grief, with all the anger, pain and confusion that can involve — and you may be, too. They tell me I will be on a steep learning curve here for a while, about the disease, about the medical system and about myself — and you may be, too.**

**You matter to me and so I hope we can find a way to stay connected. It may not be easy. The following suggestions have been provided to help us both. Please look them over.**

- **Please, try not to avoid me, even if that is hard (and I'll try not to shut you out).**
- **If you want to know what to do for me, please ask.**
- **Please, don't wait for me to call you (or even to return your calls), just drop another line, or leave a phone message, to let me know you care.**
- **I may want to talk about this thing more than you will want to hear about it (or the other way around) — let's just be as honest as we can be with each other.**
- **Please don't tell me not to worry or judge me for what you might think are "negative thoughts" — I am going to need to feel what I feel and process this in the ways that make sense to me.**
- **As much as I care about you, I'm likely going to be pretty self-absorbed, so please make sure you have someone else to talk to at times about what *you* are feeling.**

**This is a scary time for me. I want to handle it all well, but I probably won't do it perfectly. Perhaps you have similar intentions and concerns. Let's just do our best to deal gently and honestly with one another. I really am glad you are there.**