

To those who care for others,

You may be cracked, but not broken.

I wrote a letter to patients promising that "We will sit with them and their family. We will be honest, we will hold their hand, we will be there."

And you did. You are still there. You still care. But now the helpers need help.

My words cannot describe what you have been through. Much loss, many hands held, bad news broken. The scaffold smiles hiding tears that you bring home at the end of another long day. Many of you may describe yourself, your teams, your systems as broken. Perhaps there is a way back.

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The two most important days in a person's life are the day they were born and the day they realise why. Working in the dark means you see everything. You see the worst things but also the best things. The pandemic has explained the why to many of us. But remembering our value in this period of life is hard. The global shiver of this pandemic still trembles our confidence. Solidarity was contagious in lockdown, but some days division seems to prevail. As Winter comes and Autumn leaves, don't swallow that darkness. Not everything that weighs you down is yours to carry. Remember life happens in the cracks, in the places between here and there. Let's fill those spaces, your spaces, with something good.

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Sometimes by repairing broken things they can become unique and more beautiful. Fill the cracks with life outside of work, your family, your hobbies, with things that make you feel more like you. Fill them with time passing, with the patients who said thank you, with the families who will spend another Christmas with their mum/dad/brother/sister/son/daughter/friend thanks to you. Thanks to you all. That is your reason why. Even in the houses with empty corners and empty spaces, remember that you were there when we couldn't cure death. You held their hand, you cared. You still care.

And to those who can help repair us. To the public, the politicians, the newspaper bosses, the strong and those who feel weak. You have the power to choose the future. Many are in a hurry to return to normal. But let's be in a hurry to remember which parts of normal are worth returning to. Please turn the hands that were used to clap, into hands held out to help pull us all back on to our feet.

We are cracked, but not yet broken.

Signed,

Dr Matt Morgan