

When You Think You Can't Do It

I'm tempted to give you my husband's cell phone number, so you can verify that I am not lying when I tell you that every morning and night of my first year of teaching I said, and I quote, "I cannot do this."

Yesterday, after I covered the computer monitor with an old, pink pillowcase and gave the room one last look, I said to myself, "I just finished my second year of teaching." You could hold that footage against the flag-planting summit of an Everest climb and not be any less moved in your spirit.

"If you can just make it through your first two years of teaching," they said—all those teacher friends of mine. "If you can just make it through your first two years."

Earlier in the afternoon I had been grading finals in my mother-in-law's hospital room. I had to move out of the way when the physical therapist came in. He made her exercise that brand new knee and take her walker for a spin around the nurse's station.

Not two feet from my mother-in-law's bed was a very large, laminated poster hung on the bathroom door.

It promised her that she could go home as soon as she could accomplish that checklist. When I got to the hospital in the afternoon, not 24 hours after her surgery, I noticed someone had taken a red, dry erase pen and checked off several of those tasks.

Every health care worker who came in the room (and you know that is a lot, if you've ever stayed in a hospital) exclaimed about those check marks.

“Look at that! You’re getting there,” they said.

And don’t you know I was looking at the red pen in my hand and comparing it to the red dry erase marker.

All those days of year one and all those days of year two, when I thought I might not ever be a good teacher—I was doing it. I was teaching something. (In year three? Watch out. I am experience walking.)

Some students who came in and worked hard day after day, they’ll open up their mail and see an “A.” That mark will belong to them.

And that mark will belong to me.

My mother-in-law goes home from the hospital today. She’ll leave walking on a new knee, because she’ll have proven to the doctor she can do it.

So if you’re in the thick of it and saying to yourself, “I cannot do this,” I’m going to quote a famous preacher who also shares a bathroom sink with me.

“God sees. God rewards.” —Matthew Fitzwater

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

If you’re the one who keeps showing up every day and sticking with it, you need to know God sees your perseverance.

Reward is in your future.

Keep at it, because I have suspicions God has a large poster hanging in front of you, and he keeps checking off the hard things you’re accomplishing until that day when you’ll get to go home.

You're doing it. You're getting there.

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