

Dear 2005 Me (a pre-mama mamagigi),

I know that right now you are aching to be a mother and most times it feels like it will never happen, and that no one understands the hole in your heart.

I know that right now your daydreams and even your night dreams are filled with hopes of sharing your life with a child. And with these dreams come snippets of a happiness like nothing you have felt before. I know that when you wake up, the gleeful butterflies will slow to an uneasiness in your gut as you remember it is not yet your time and it was just a dream. And even though you have never truly known the happiness in being a mom, you know it exists because in those dreamy moments it teases and taunts you, giving just a taste of its blissfulness. And I know that in your most lonely and angry and restless-with-the-waiting moments, it seems like that happiness will never find you in a permanent way.

I know that so far your journey has been long. I also know that now, as you wait for your phone to ring and your life to change with “Hello?” you are asking yourself all sorts of questions about when and if and why not and how-come-it-hasn’t-happened-yet. It’s okay. You’re human and this is natural. But please do not let these questions haunt you and eat at your soul.

I know that you wake each morning and the first thought in your mind, even before you have silenced the alarm clock, is whether today will be the day. I also know that, in the dark of night, when another day has passed with no news of a child to fill your arms, you drift to sleep, slowly and painfully, tears of helplessness wetting your pillow and stuffing your nose.

I know that you struggle with the insensitivity of some of those around you. Although this insensitivity is infuriating, try to find comfort in knowing it will teach you to always try to be gentle to others — for you know not what they endure, deep in their core, at night when the lights are low.

I also know that you mark each passing day in the calendar of your mind, making hopeful promises that motherhood might arrive by Memorial Day. Then Mother’s Day. Then your birthday. As these dates come and go, you begin to hope for July 4. You find yourself anticipating such holidays and social events with the notion you will have a little one to share them with. I wish I could convince you to simply enjoy these days for what they are. But I won’t

try, because although it hurts so very much and you so desperately want these milestones to come, sometimes we just have to hurt.

I know that sometimes the passing days marked by a dull routine of work, then home, then work, then home are too much to bear. And I know that sometimes you must leave your desk and find a bathroom stall to quietly cry away the moments you cannot handle any other way.

I know that you have prepared a nursery with every detail a top priority. I know that walking by the room and its still rocking chair and empty crib do not hurt as much as if the room was still an office chock-full of papers, with a computer, file cabinet and desk. Instead, it is chock-full of hope. Because having a room with baby accouterment means surely a baby will come. After all, forever leaving this room unoccupied would be an evil trick by the universe. One you know you don't deserve. I know how once in a while you go in there and sit in the creaky rocker, and try to feel the energy of the baby you hope will one day be there to keep you awake in the wee hours of the night. It's okay to do that. Sit, look around, take it all in. You have made a loving home — a womb of your own — for a child that will come. I promise.

I know that as seemingly everyone around you is giving unsolicited advice about being patient, relaxing and going to a movie “because it will be the last one for a long time,” you want to tell them where *they* should really go. Because you cannot believe they don't understand that movies are the very last thing on your mind. You squelch the urge to scream that they have no idea what it's like to have something so personal as becoming a mother depend on so many circumstances you are not part of. You want to tell them they take for granted these gifts that have come easier to them.

I also understand that you wish these people could simply acknowledge your heartache and sit silently with you for a moment. That this would be so much more helpful than following their “I know” with “but” and some sort of look-on-the-bright-side language.

I know, gigi, I know.

I know that in the dark and lonely moments when there is nothing to do but hear the silence of all the telephones around you, you will question whether your profile is open enough, whether your letter — to a brave, still unnamed woman who will choose you to share in her child — is good enough, caring enough, real enough, strong enough, soft enough.

I also know that when you reach out to your social worker to ask whether your profile has been shown and to talk about the wait that seems so unbearably long and sometimes even disorienting, you will not like the answer you receive. You will not like being told to be patient because the right baby will find you. I know that these sentiments are hollow to you and instead seem more appropriate for a bad bumper sticker or stale fortune cookie.

Yet somewhere, deep in your mind, you know there is some truth in her counsel: The wait is the wait is the wait. You cannot change it. I understand that this powerlessness is the hardest part for you. I know you don't want to admit there actually is nothing else you can do, that your own motherhood really is out of your hands. Yet part of your brain keeps trying to remind you of these things. (Yes, this is a corner of your brain you are not especially fond of these days.)

I know how thrilled you are at becoming a mother through adoption. After all, your husband was adopted and choosing this avenue for parenthood has always been in your master plan. I also know that when you were writing that master plan on the cocktail napkin in your mind, you just didn't count on the waiting and powerlessness of it all. It's not like you to want to wait, after all.

It's like when you were a kid, and you begged and pleaded to cut your long hair into that little chopped pixie of a do, and your mother warned you about rushing such things. Rather than listen, you hurried into your neighbor-beautician's chair. Or that time when you used some of your Christmas shopping money to buy paper dolls for yourself. That didn't go over well with mom, did it? Well, those were supposed to be lessons where you learned about instant gratification.

So, gigi of 2005, try to remember those lessons because they are important. I know, I know. The waiting is not easy. But this is not hair and paper dolls we're talking about.

I know you have had to make a hard, numbed-over place inside yourself to hide behind when someone seems ready to say something ignorant, weird, thoughtless or hurtful.

It's like when people apologize to you as you excitedly share the news you are adopting a baby. I know that you just wanted these people to smile a heartfelt smile and say, "Congratulations." Not because they feel it's the right thing to do but because in learning of your news of impending parenthood, they sincerely want to offer their best wishes. Because, after all, you are on your way to being a mother! I know you ache at not being considered a parent-to-be.

I know you don't understand when people express concern or even disgust about how your child won't look like you, as if this is what parenthood and familyhood is all about. I'm sorry to tell you that isn't resolved in 2007: You still won't understand why people say such things to other people. Frankly, you still won't understand how folks can feel that way in the first place, but to each his or her own. Just know that matchy-matchy still doesn't matter to you. Never has, never will.

I know all of these things gigi, because I am you. I am sorry you hurt right now and feel like there is no end to the pain. I know you question whether your phone will ever ring and your heart will ever feel full from all the boo-boo kissing you are so desperate to do.

But I am two years wiser than you — and there are things I can tell you, things you should know, things that might ease your wait, your pain. The most important part of my message can be summed up in six words:

Your wait will be worth it.

Gigi, you will become mamagigi and there is nothing else like it. *Nothing*. Your heart will fill in ways you never knew it could. Your smile will be wider, deeper, brighter. Your laughs will be heartier, louder, snortier. Your love will be boundless.

And that stale fortune cookie about things always working out and the right baby finding the right family? Well, let me put it this way: As long as you have waited (which, by the way, isn't so long in the scheme of things), the 2007 You would double it, triple it and more — without a second thought — if it means the child that makes you a mother is this little girl Maeve.

She is so wonderful, so perfect in all her babyiness and sassiness and smartness and silliness and tenderness and juiciness and outgoingness — yes, you are making up words in the future — that you will wait however long it is you must wait — for *her*.

I promise you, gigi, your phone really does ring and this little one really does exist. She really does arrive. She really does make your life so much deeper, full of meaning in ways you didn't realize were lacking.

And when she reaches over and gently pats your arm tonight, then your chest, then your shoulder, and with each tender toddler touch she coos, “Mo-mmy” ... “Mo-mmy” ... “Mo-mmy,”

as if she is just confirming who you are, you will smile in your soul and answer “Yes” ... “Yes” ... “Yes” every time.

I promise you, mamagigi-to-be, she is worth a million more forms and fingerprints, hundreds of home visits, countless more seconds, minutes, hours, days and months spent waiting, and all the tears your eyes can silently shed in the dark of night. *I promise.*

Knowing Maeve, loving Maeve, mothering Maeve — these are rewards worth waiting for.

So hang on, gigi, and dig deep. Believe in yourself and know you are good enough. Know your letter is heartfelt and real enough that a courageous woman will choose you. And you will meet her and thank her and love her, and need her to be part of your life forever.

And the daughter she will share with you?

Well, she is simply beyond all of your wildest daydreams and nightdreams.

I promise.

Love,

2007 You

Written by Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan of www.mamagigi.wordpress.com