

**Entry Title:** Mountains

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**Entry:**

I walked into the hospital for the second time that week, embraced by empty hallways and the smell of coffee beans. The same lady greets me, smiling warmly and asking how I am. I tell her I'm good and I ask how she's doing in return. The lady tells me she's getting there and thanks me for asking.

Yet some days, I hate that such a heavy question is asked out of formality. Some days I want to tell her "I'm glad you asked, because I'm not having a very good time." I know none of the people who ask me are therapists, but when they do it's mainly rhetorical. Mostly, they don't care how I am. They want to know I'm doing well enough to continue their day without problem. So, I practice my responses to sound convincing enough.

Except today, I'm glad you asked. In all honesty, I'm close to falling apart. We do so well with pretending we're alright, we hold back mountains worth of issues with a single thread. Waiting for the right person to allow us room to cut the thread and finally feel the avalanche fall.

Something I've realised over the years is not everyone needs advice. Some people just want to know they're heard. Some people want to be seen, to know they matter. Therefore, I'm learning to listen a lot more than I talk. I'm trying to be more truthful when people ask how I am. I'm learning to be more cautious with people's mountain sized emotions.

My mountains are big, with tall peaks and rough edges. I used to try and cut them away, scooping the snow off with my bare hands. No matter how much I scooped, the rain, hail and snow kept pelting away. It became tiring, so tiring. Then one day I collapsed into the snow and let it bury me. I felt the cold go through my fingertips and toes, running through my veins and headed straight for my heart.

I wasn't suffocating, but as I lied under the snow, I learned to breathe again. It reminded me, falling only provides reason to stand; it taught me that the snow isn't my home. As I dug my way out from beneath, the sun was beaming. Why was the sun holding its rays? Was it to see me shine?

I realised my only option is to climb my mountains. I acknowledge the sharp cliffs and slippery rocks; it's unassailable walls. However, I won't traverse them alone. I'll climb my mountains with people I can trust; people I know won't drop me off the edge.

Sometimes, that question in the right tone of voice, with a smile, reminds me that I'll be alright. That question reminds me I don't have to endure the winding trails and big drops of my mountains alone. It reminds me that summer will eventually come and melt the snow.

So, how am I? Good, thanks for asking.