

A letter to Oregonians and Washingtonians,

May we remember that while this time is uncertain, challenging and painful, it is also finite. May we remember that our wins and losses are now united. We are rooting for hope. For a cure. For the end. For a new beginning. Together.

To the essential workers, the police officers, the firefighters, the service workers. Our backbone. Thank you. Thank you for delivering our letters. And our diapers. And our pizza. Thank you for shelving our grocery stores. For securing our streets. For maintaining our homes. Our sanitation. Our sanity.

To those at home with small children and no childcare. May you find the silver linings in each new day and simultaneously give yourself permission to lose it every once in a while. We are human and screen time is inevitable.

To the expectant mothers and those who have just given birth. May you be reminded of the splendor created in the midst of catastrophe. May your strength and hope be an example to us all. May this time be just a blip on the radar of a beautiful new life.

To the small business owners. To the restaurants and bars. To estheticians and local boutiques. To the cleaning services. And the dentists. To the event planners and the spin instructors. To those who have laid off their staff. Who have lost their life savings. Who are pivoting on their dreams. Who are making new plans. Who are heartbroken. May you find the grit to keep going. To climb up once again and cook, create and cultivate an exquisite new path out of darkness.

To the brides with no weddings. To the teachers with no classes. To the students with no lessons. To the seniors with no prom. To the graduates with no commencement. This is agonizing. It's unfair. It's not what you planned. It's a damn good story for your grandkids. You will have better days. More parties. Even bigger reasons to dance. Hold tight. Keep your head up. Have faith.

To the sick and the vulnerable. We're cheering for you. Praying for you. Staying inside for you. We see the numbers. But we also see the strength. We see fighters. To those we have lost and their families. No words can fill the holes. Our hearts are broken open for you.

And to the front line. To the doctors and the nurses. To the anesthesiologists. The residents. The medical workers. We quite literally owe you our lives. And the lives of our loved ones. Thank you for reminding us what sacrifice looks like.

Finally, may we all remember that the human spirit is stronger than fear. It's not bound by history or rhetoric. Not by political divisiveness or posturing. It will overcome. And when the rain stops. And the doors open. And the streets fill. And the children play, let us remember these days. The days when the human spirit triumphed over fear and loss. When together, we were stronger.

-Victoria Venturi, March 29, 2020