

LETTER OF LIFE

A Digital Memory Preservation Project

The Letter of

Liz Bartelme

That Is How Nice People Can Be

For my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren,
and for the family members who will come after us.

"You can get through a hell of a lot."

My dear family,

Please meet Liz Bartelme:

My full name is Elizabeth Ann Loretta Gottemoeller Bartelme. Loretta was the name I chose at Confirmation for a favorite aunt. I learned later that my mother did not like that aunt very much, but by then the name was mine. My parents called me Betty, which never felt right to me. At school, when nobody could pronounce Gottemoeller, I became Gotrocks. My daughters have been known to call me Betty Spaghetti when they really want to get me, and some of my grandchildren call me Lizzo. A person can collect quite a few names over a lifetime.

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in July 1947, the youngest of four girls. My sisters were eleven, ten, and four years older than I was. By the time I was seven, the two oldest had entered religious life and become nuns, so my memories of living with them are faint. Marty, the sister closest to me in age, still seemed ancient when I was small. We had different personalities and different paths, but age has a way of changing the distance between sisters. I grew closer to all of them later. Doris, the oldest, earned a doctorate in theology and appeared on CNN as a commentator during the eras of two popes. When I had questions about faith, I could bring them to her without fear of being judged. She would simply ask, 'What is your problem with it?' That was a gift.

People are often more interesting and more capable than they first appear. They are usually worth a little patience. I learned that from my parents, from teachers and friends, from the residents and staff members I worked beside, and from the people I visit now. I have also learned that a good life can include mistakes, worry, hard days, and plenty of laughter. I have had all of those. I have been very lucky.

THE COAL FURNACE AND MY FATHER

My earliest memory comes from the first house my parents rented. I must have been two or three. The house was cold, and my father had wrapped me in a blanket near the coal furnace while he shoveled coal. I can still see the glow inside that big furnace. What stayed with me was the fire and the fact that, for that moment, I had my daddy to myself. My sisters were not there. It was just the two of us.

Both of my parents came from large farm families. Each was one of nine children, which gave me sixteen aunts, sixteen uncles, and more than ninety first cousins. I am fifth generation in this country, and farming shaped the family even when some of us left it. My father grew up raising cattle and corn. In the summer, the children often went barefoot. One day he looked down in the barn, saw where his feet were, and decided he did not want to spend the rest of his life that way. He told his father he wanted to attend college. My grandfather said he would need good grades, so Dad graduated as valedictorian. There were only nine students in the class, a detail Dad was honest enough to include. He went on to Ohio State and became an accountant.

He graduated in 1929, when jobs were scarce. While he was back on the farm, the family's telephone rang. My grandfather had been a county commissioner, so theirs was the first telephone in the area, along with the first flush toilet. The call was from Price Waterhouse. They offered Dad a temporary job in West Virginia and asked whether he could arrive Monday. It was Friday. He said yes without knowing how he would get there. He went, and from then on he was never without work.

Eventually he worked for the East Ohio Gas Company in Cleveland. I knew that he wore a suit and took the bus downtown. That was about all I knew. When Dennis and I were dating, we visited Dad at the office. Dennis noticed the corner office and the private secretary before I did. When we left, he said, 'Your dad is a bigwig.' I had no idea. We still lived in our modest brick house. We did not have air conditioning or a dishwasher, and we never had a fancy car. Dad had done well without teaching us to measure life by what we owned.

WHAT MY PARENTS DID QUIETLY

Some of the most important things my parents did were things I discovered only after I was grown. A terrible gas explosion in Cleveland killed many people. Through his work in benefits and annuities, Dad helped make sure that the surviving children could receive an education. Our family visited the Murrays several times a year, although I could never understand the connection. My parents did not play cards with them, vacation with them, or belong to the same social circle. After Dad died, the wife of their oldest son came to his funeral. She thanked my mother and explained that Dad

had encouraged her husband and helped him get through college. Until that moment, I had never known.

My mother had known loss early. Her father died of a heart attack in the fields when she was sixteen. She and her older sister were called into the principal's office and told to go home. Their mother died about a year later, so my mother had lost both parents by seventeen. She went to Cleveland and worked as a maid for the Halle family, who owned a department store. Her day involved a parade of uniforms: one to bring breakfast to the woman she called Old Lady Halle, another to get the children ready, the first uniform again to collect the tray, and a third to clean the house. She told the story with enough detail that I can still picture the changes.

The Halle family once took her west by train to help with the children. At a stop, she bought a bracelet. She wore it for the rest of her life. Because I was the youngest, she told my sisters that it would come to me. Then she looked straight at me and said that I was to wear it until I died and pass it to Cassie, my youngest daughter. That bracelet is one of my treasures because it carries her hand, her instruction, and a journey she made before I existed.

Mom always wanted a job once we were older. Dad told her that if she went to work, he would quit because somebody should be home for the children. She finally worked in a school cafeteria when I was in seventh grade. She hated it, quit after a year, and took up golf. She was a wonderful baker and a fairly ordinary cook. Her chocolate fudge cake and butterscotch pie could make an ordinary day feel like an event. A Hershey bar was a treat when I was a child, but her cake was better.

THE BRICK HOUSE IN FAIRVIEW PARK

Before the brick house, my parents had to buy a small postwar home because their landlord was selling the place they rented. They were five hundred dollars short of the down payment. Dad asked his older brother for a one month loan. His brother refused to give him 'a goddamn cent for city property.' When my mother's friends heard what had happened, three couples arrived the next day with the money. That is how nice people can be. My father disliked that little house, although I learned that only much later.

When I was three, we moved to Fairview Park on the west side of Cleveland. My parents built a brick house across the street from the high school, with Bain Park at the end of the road. As a child, I thought the park was enormous. It was probably less than half an acre, but it had a creek, rocks, and enough room for adventure. If you slipped into the water with your shoe on, you got a soaker. That was the technical term.

The houses were close together, nobody had air conditioning, and almost every mother was home. Kitchens faced the backyards with the windows open. A dozen children could move from yard to yard, and if somebody misbehaved, a mother would call out through a screen and promise to tell the right parent. We made elaborate rules for softball beside the high school's shaded brick wall, even though we were supposed to use the hot field at the other end. A boy had to hit the ball across the street for a home run; a girl only had to reach the street. If there were too few players, the batting team supplied its own catcher and pretended the catcher belonged to the other side. The police officers knew us from coaching local teams. When a cruiser appeared, everyone scattered. I was a little chubby and could not run as fast, so the officer usually stopped me and asked where the boys were hiding. We promised to stop. As soon as the cruiser left, the game resumed.

We drank from the hose when we were hot. Once we put our chewed bubblegum on the pavement and tried to stretch it as far as possible. I am sure the adults were thrilled. It was a good way to grow up. When I returned to the neighborhood decades later, the houses were still modest and the lawns were still cared for. I walked into my old all girls high school and knew the smell immediately. I could have been blindfolded and known where I was. Two of my daughters later attended the same school. One of them surprised me by putting my name on the first floor of the arts center created from the old convent. I loved that school, and that gift meant a great deal to me.

SCHOOL AND THE GIRL I DID NOT YET UNDERSTAND

Catholic classrooms could hold sixty children and one teacher. I loved school and did very well. History and geography fascinated me, and I was good at mathematics until someone put a clock on it. Timed arithmetic tests could scramble my mind. At home, I knew every flash card. In class, if I missed one answer, I lost my place and the whole column went wrong. In fourth grade, Miss Meehan sat with my mother and me after

school. At her desk, without the pressure of the classroom, I answered everything correctly. After that, the problem seemed to loosen its grip.

Miss Meehan was a first year teacher, yet she had more patience than teachers with much longer careers. A boy named Francis had been moved from one room to another because adults did not know what to do with him. Today he might have received an autism or bipolar diagnosis. Back then, children were simply labeled. When the class laughed at him after a test, he ran to the door and cried, 'Don't laugh at me.' Miss Meehan followed him into the hallway and left the rest of us sitting in complete silence. Years later I learned that she also quietly took another classmate, whose father was abusive, to lunch and shopping. She noticed what children needed before there was much language or support for it.

My best friend did not know she could not see. One snowy day I asked her to hit a stop sign with a snowball. She asked, 'What stop sign?' Until then, she had not realized that the teacher was writing on the board, and I had thought she was not very bright. Glasses changed the story. Experiences like that stayed with me. People are often judged for something that nobody has taken time to understand.

I remember Sister Noella because she gave me my only demerits. I remember Miss Meehan because she was kind. There is a lesson in which memories last.

DANCES CONFIDENCE AND GROWING UP

Teenage life included dances, boys' Catholic school games, and Bob's Big Boy afterward. We danced at the VFW hall without air conditioning until the floor was wet from everyone's sweat. We listened to local bands and piled into cars for sandwiches served by carhops. We did not have girls' sports in the form young women have them now, so the boys' schools supplied much of the weekend calendar.

I did not have much confidence. I thought I was far heavier than I was because the junior sizes did not fit my body the way they fit my friends. Looking at photographs later, I could see how mistaken I had been. At the same time, the evidence that I could lead was already there. I served as student council president and junior class president. In college I became president of the Women's Residence Association. I did not yet understand that leadership was one of my strengths.

I also smoked. I started around fourteen, as many young people did when both parents smoked, and at one point I reached two packs a day. Dad said boys on the farm had once smoked corn silk when they had no tobacco. I finally quit in September 1989. I am proud of that because stopping was not easy, and I have lived long enough to be grateful I did.

I entered Duquesne University intending to become a nurse, partly because my older sisters had been teachers and I wanted to do something different. I would have been the world's worst nurse. During my sophomore year I developed a severe case of mononucleosis and lost a semester. Returning to nursing would have required starting the year again. I switched to sociology, left college for a time, and eventually finished by attending several schools part time. I completed my degree while pregnant with my youngest child. The route was untidy, but I finished.

DENNIS AND THE FAMILY WE BUILT

Becoming a mother at twenty two was the moment I stopped feeling like a child. My parents loved us and would have helped in an emergency, but Dennis and I had our own bills, our own home, and a baby who could not wait for us to feel ready. I knew very little. My mother had never explained much about pregnancy or sex because, as she later admitted, she did not know what to say. Motherhood was frightening at times and deeply fulfilling.

It also supplied comedy. While I was nursing one daughter, her older sister watched and asked my mother whether Grandma had nipples. My mother turned bright red and said no. I corrected the record: Grandma had them because she was a woman, but she did not have milk because she did not have a baby. The child accepted the answer and ran off. My mother stared at me and asked how I could say such a thing. It was a simple question, so I gave a simple answer.

We raised four girls. One had bilateral dislocated hips before she was four months old and spent four months in a body cast. Two became insulin dependent diabetics. Those experiences were scary, and they demanded that we learn quickly. Dennis supported me, and the girls grew into women who learned to care for themselves. We paid for their education, and all four graduated from college without debt. When Dennis and I

moved into our present community, I joked that we were spending their inheritance. The girls told us we had already paid ahead.

Dennis and I have been married for fifty eight years. We have carried each other through hard periods, and we were fortunate that when one of us was low, the other could usually stand. His work required a great deal of travel. When he came home, however, he was home. He was with the children, and he waited until Sunday night, after they were in bed, to finish his expense account. We can still aggravate each other enough to want to scream. That is part of knowing another person for nearly six decades. The larger truth is that I know he loves me, and he knows I love him.

Our family has kept expanding into grandchildren, great grandchildren, new cultures, and careers I could not have imagined when I was young. One grandson designs robotic toys and uses a three dimensional printer in his garage. Another grandson married Tiffany Chen, whose Chinese family escaped Vietnam, and their daughter Skyler has brought us enormous joy. Our youngest grandson is creative and has even made his own jeans. Our two youngest granddaughters love the backstage world of theatre. Our family now knows and follows soccer, even though I learned to appreciate the game later in life. I have enjoyed watching the people in our family find lives that are their own.

I still bake, too. For one of Dennis's birthdays, I promised to make him cookies every week for a year. I did not quite reach fifty two batches, but I made about thirty five. After fifty eight years, effort counts, and there were plenty of cookies.

THE JOB THAT FOUND ME

My career began because college bills were arriving. We had saved twenty thousand dollars for our oldest daughter's education and discovered how quickly it disappeared. I had a sociology degree, years of volunteer work, and no obvious professional credential. A large Lutheran nursing home near Cleveland hired me as an activities assistant.

On my first morning, the acting department head told me we were having current events and donuts. She sent me to two wings to bring residents. Nobody explained that participation was optional, so I persuaded nearly everyone to come. I pushed two wheelchairs at once, which I later learned I was never supposed to do, and filled the

room. Two women sat quietly in the back. After lunch, we used the leftover donuts for bingo. I went to other wings and filled the room again. The same two women watched from the back.

Late that afternoon, Mrs. Gray asked to see me. I learned that she ran the home and had been one of the observers. I was sure I had managed to get fired in six hours. Instead, she said the department had no permanent director and that they thought I should take the job. I went home and Dennis asked about my first day. I told him it could not have gone better: I had been promoted, received a raise, become salaried, and no longer had to work weekends.

That accidental day changed the direction of my life. I loved older people, and I loved the work. Later I joined another community where my parents lived. A senior leader named Jim Rogerson saw an ability in me that I had not yet claimed for myself. He became my mentor even though he was younger. He encouraged me to earn my nursing home administrator's license, which required an internship, intensive study at Ohio State, national and state testing, and continuing education. He kept opening doors until I was ready to open some for myself.

THIRTY YEARS IN LONG TERM CARE

I spent more than thirty years in long term care and eventually led large communities in Ohio and Pennsylvania. One Ohio community even had an eighteen hole golf course. The jobs were demanding. They involved residents, families, staff, budgets, regulations, buildings, and the problems that appear without making appointments. I was good at the work. Saying that once would have felt like bragging. Age has made it easier to state a fact.

Leadership could be painful. Firing someone was awful, even when months of documentation showed that it had to happen. At another community, a small group of security employees voted to organize. I took the vote as proof that I was the worst leader in the world. Dennis and my boss told me to stop being ridiculous. The union later decided not to represent the group, which created another difficult conversation. That period taught me not to treat one painful development as a final verdict on my ability.

One facility in Philadelphia truly was dreadful. A nursing home should not smell bad. This one did. I would sit in the parking lot, take a breath, and prepare myself before walking inside. One morning I saw a mouse run across a resident's bed while the resident was still in it. When I told the maintenance director, he calmly said they had a terrible rodent problem and an exterminator came once a month. Once a month was plainly not enough. I stayed only three months.

Soon afterward, someone I knew asked me to lunch and offered me a position at Southampton. I had not been looking. I did not even know where the community was. Accepting meant taking a ten thousand dollar pay cut and changing a short commute into an hour each way. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. Money matters, but it cannot make a miserable job worth the years it takes from you. I worked in mission driven, nonprofit communities almost my entire career because the work felt human. You have to be happy with what you do, whether you run a retirement community or string electrical wire.

I led Southampton for ten years. When I retired, residents and staff honored me in ways I still find hard to describe. My daughters came. A resident painted a picture for me. The community raised nearly twenty thousand dollars in my honor. What moved me was that the residents believed in the place and felt that I had served them well. I cried through much of that day. It remains one of the happiest days of my life.

Living in a retirement community has kept me close to young people as well. Many dining room and bistro servers begin as freshmen in high school. By graduation, they have grown before our eyes. Our resident association gives graduating servers a scholarship and invites their parents to celebrate. I learned not to ask, 'Where are you going to college?' Some young people choose college, some choose technical training, and one young woman announced that she planned to become a tattoo artist. The better question is, 'What are you doing next?' A useful life can begin in many ways.

THE FRIENDS WHO STAY

I have been blessed with long friendships. I have known one friend since we were two, another since we were ten, and Kathy since our freshman year of college. Kathy transferred after that year, but the friendship did not end. When we were young, we did

the kind of soul searching young women do while trying to decide who they will become.

Kathy once wanted to enter the convent, but her parents would not allow it. I think she married in part because marriage was expected. She never told me she was unhappy, and she did not complain. I could still sense that parts of her life were not what she had hoped. Watching her helped me understand why a person must have some freedom to choose her own direction. When I left college, my father asked whether leaving would make me happy. I told him I did not know, but I knew I was not happy where I was. He understood the difference.

Kathy lived with brain cancer for three and a half years. At her funeral, aside from her two sisters, nobody had known her longer than I had. I could not stop crying. Her death was among the hardest losses of my life. Even now, I think about the endurance with which she carried illness and the years of friendship behind that final day.

Friendship also shows itself in promises that sound small. A woman named Peg was receiving hospice care when I asked what I could do for her. She told me, 'When I die, don't let Ted eat with just the old men.' I promised. After she died, Dennis and I made sure Ted joined us for dinner. During football season, we often ate together and watched games on Sunday. If Ohio State played, Ted and I wore our colors, sometimes quietly when the opponent was Penn State. A promise can be kept one meal at a time.

HISTORY WHILE IT IS HAPPENING

Young people sometimes imagine history as something already arranged into chapters. Living through it feels nothing like that. During the Vietnam War, I knew young men from high school who were killed. My college roommate served two tours as a nurse in Vietnam. Many service members came home to anger and mistreatment for a war they had not chosen.

The struggle for civil rights was also unfolding while I was in college. From the hills around Duquesne, we could see fire in a Black neighborhood after an explosion and unrest. In Cleveland, friends and I attended a Supremes performance at a club owned by Black and white businesspeople. When we left, police directed everyone west because riots had broken out downtown and to the east. I believed in equality, and the immediate scene was still frightening.

On September 11, 2001, I was in a meeting with other health care professionals when people began receiving messages and leaving. The conference stopped. We heard that the Twin Towers had been attacked and that a plane had struck near the Pentagon. One of my daughters lived only minutes from the Pentagon. Another worked at Penn and stayed behind during the evacuation to identify alumni who might have worked in the towers. For a while, information came in fragments and fear filled the space between them. I remember trembling.

Those days inform the way I look at the present. I worry about the country and the world, especially for my grandchildren and great grandchildren. I have lived a full life. I want them to have the chance to do the same. History also gives me reason for hope. Our parents and grandparents survived wars, depression, upheaval, and grief. My granddaughter in law's family escaped Vietnam and built a new life. Human beings can get through a hell of a lot.

FAITH PEACE AND OTHER PEOPLE

I believe in a higher power. The name matters less to me than the belief that creation has meaning and that human beings are here to work toward peace. I was raised Catholic and have asked more questions about faith as I have grown older, not fewer. Nature still makes me wonder. A tiny insect becomes food for something else, and the chain continues. I cannot look at the order of it all and believe that nothing lies behind it.

Every major religion I know asks people to be good and peaceful. One of my grandsons married a Buddhist woman who is among the gentlest people I have met. What she described in her faith sounded familiar: try to be good, live peacefully, and do not harm the people around you. No religion says, 'Let's go out and kill our neighbors.' I do not need everyone to use the same word for God to recognize goodness.

Goodness is also practical. I try to learn the name of every staff member in our community and thank them for their work. I notice residents whom other people avoid. One woman is a hoarder and can be difficult, but avoiding her does not make her less human. I visit a hospice patient whose speech is hard to understand. Some people say they cannot understand him and leave it at that. If you slow down and listen for a few

minutes, you begin to understand. That small effort tells a person he is still worth hearing.

I visit people in memory care too. A person with dementia can still surprise you with a clear memory, a joke, or a piece of the life that remains inside. You have to take the time. Other people do not become less interesting because it takes longer to reach them.

THE CAKE THAT WAS NOT RIGHT

Hospice volunteering introduced me to Carolyn, who lived to nearly one hundred and one. She was the crabbiest old lady, and I loved visiting her. She complained about the building, the food, and almost everything else. Once I woke her as she sat in her chair. She snapped that she was tired of everybody waking her up. I apologized and said I would return later. Then she opened her eyes, recognized me, and said, 'Oh, not you. It's okay.' That was Carolyn's version of affection.

She once told me about a cake she liked. I found a recipe and tried to make it, but the instructions seemed to have forgotten any liquid. The batter had to be dropped into the pan in a lump. After baking, the outside was hard enough that Dennis joked about using a chainsaw, while the center was nearly empty. I took Carolyn a piece anyway and warned her that I did not think I had done it correctly. She looked at it and said, 'Oh, honey, that ain't right.' She was absolutely correct.

Carolyn remembered the First World War and the Second World War. Beneath the complaints was nearly a century of experience. I could ask about her childhood home, her brothers, and the world she had known. That is why I kept going back. I miss her. She was a hoot.

Service is often funny. It can be a badly made cake, a football dinner, remembering a staff member's name, or sitting long enough to understand a sentence. Usually, being kind means paying attention.

WHAT AGE HAS TAUGHT ME

The first surprise about getting older is how crappy you can feel physically. You try to eat well, exercise, and take care of yourself, and then parts begin wearing out anyway. I

go to water aerobics and remain grateful for the physical and mental health I have. There is no sense pretending the body does not change. It does.

The better surprise is that emotional growth does not stop. I have met interesting people here, learned new ways of seeing things, and found enormous joy in children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. They are little pieces of clay becoming themselves. Watching that happen gives me something to look forward to.

At eighteen, I wish I had understood how unimportant some things are. A college decision can feel like the entire future when you are seventeen. Later it becomes one part of a much larger life. A first job can be wrong. A major can change. A career can begin in your forties because you pushed too many wheelchairs on your first day. You do not have to know the whole route before taking the next useful step.

I still wish I worried less. I carry tension in my shoulders and sometimes have to tell myself to push them down and breathe. Much of what I worry about is beyond my control. Worry does not make me more responsible, and letting go does not make me a bad person. I can vote, be kind, pray, and act where action is possible. Then I have to release the rest.

Do not forget history. Ask your parents and grandparents what their lives were like. Remember your ancestors. The past will not hand you an answer to every question, but it will show you that people have lived through uncertainty before. It will also keep ordinary stories from disappearing.

FOR MY CHILDREN GRANDCHILDREN AND GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

The people I most want to reach with this letter are my children and grandchildren, and then anyone in the family who reads it later. I have already made a book for the family. Think of this as another piece of the same story.

I am proudest of my four girls. They grew into responsible, moral women. Their work and their families contribute something good to the world. One daughter centered her life around raising children and supporting a husband whose career moved the family across countries. That work counts. All four know they are loved, and they know they can tell Dennis and me when they believe we are making a mistake. These days they

sometimes tell us when we should fly or take the auto train instead of driving. We may believe we can manage the trip, but keeping the peace is useful, especially when I still want to get to Florida.

I would like you to remember the people who came before you. Remember two farm children who built a life in Cleveland. Remember the friends who brought five hundred dollars when my parents needed a house. Remember a young woman changing uniforms in the Halle home and buying a bracelet on a train journey west. Remember a father who helped children receive an education and never announced it to his own family. Remember the coal furnace, the little brick house, the softball field we were not supposed to use, and the smell of a school decades later.

Remember that work can arrive by accident and still become a calling. I started in long term care because tuition bills needed paying. I stayed because older people deserved communities where they were known and cared for. The title mattered less than the residents, the staff, and the chance to make the place better. Find work you can respect. If the work makes you miserable and another path is open, have the courage to change.

Remember your friends. Keep the ones who have known you since childhood. Make new ones when life moves you. Show up after a funeral. Keep the odd promise someone gives you on hospice. Invite the person others overlook. Learn the name of the person serving your dinner.

Try not to worry so much. You will make mistakes without intending to. Admit them, learn something, and continue. I would not erase my own mistakes because many of them led me somewhere important. I left college and later finished. I entered a profession late and found the right one. I took less money and gained work I loved. A life does not have to follow a straight line to turn out well.

Believe that people can be better. I remain frightened by parts of the world, yet I still believe mankind will turn out okay. That belief is not based on everything going well. It comes from watching people lend money, educate a stranger's child, care for a sick friend, tell the truth to someone they love, and return the next day when care is difficult.

HOW I HOPE YOU REMEMBER ME

I do not need to be remembered as the smartest person in the room or as the woman with the largest title. I would like to be remembered for goodness. I hope you can say that I was not a jerk, that I tried to be a good person, and that I was kind and fun to be with.

Do not make me perfect. Remember that I worried, talked too much, digressed, laughed at my own stories, and sometimes changed the subject before I reached the point. Remember that I could lead a large community and still need Jim to fix my computer. Remember the chocolate cake, the cookies, the football games, the soccer matches, and the cake Carolyn correctly declared a failure.

Remember that I loved Dennis, our four girls, and the generations that followed. Remember that I loved older people before I became one. Remember that I believed a person who is difficult, ill, disabled, lonely, or confused is still worth knowing.

Be good to one another. Keep peace where you can. Learn your family's stories before the people who know them are gone. Do work that lets you come home with some part of yourself still available for the people you love. When worry climbs into your shoulders, push them down and breathe.

And when life becomes frightening, remember what history has already shown us: you can get through a hell of a lot. I believe you will. I believe mankind will turn out okay.

With all my love,

Liz

Elizabeth Ann Loretta Gottemoeller Bartelme