

January 14

Let's try this again. For the fourteenth time.

I'm sorry that you are having fights with everyone, even if those fights are only in your head at this point. If I might offer a suggestion: Perhaps the reason that you are having this conversation so often and feel as if no one is listening to you is because everyone you are talking to feels as if you are not listening to them. Perhaps the list and schedule you came up with will help - it is something new to bring to the conversation, after all. It's slightly better than "I feel like I can do this" - it is a concrete way of proving that you can.

No, I'm sorry. You do need to read my original reaction, even though I have now calmed down, and I can see that it's irrational. You need to know what your arguments sound like, and the kinds of reactions they can provoke. Keep in mind that I started this immediately, and it was my first reaction to what you said - I have since realized that it was not only unfair to you, but inflammatory, and I was going to leave it off, but you need to see what your words are doing to the people around you:

"Okay, hang on, that is totally unfair. I don't have my letters right in front of me, but I am 99.9% sure that every time I brought up my concerns about the situation with Lissa, I prefaced it with saying that it's your life, and you need to do what's best for you. I even pointed out that I understood why you're doing it, even though it's not what I would have done. I do trust you, Zoe, and I think that you're just projecting - you expect people not to trust you, and so no matter what they say otherwise, according to you, they don't. And that isn't fair! And let's not forget, I decided not to have that conversation with you in my most recent letter. I

chose to not rehash it, because I believe, as you point out in your letter, that there is nothing further to say on the matter, and rehashing it would only hurt you. I said nothing to provoke this tirade, but you're exploding at me anyway. Furthermore, worrying about you does not, by any stretch of the imagination, mean not trusting you. If your parents didn't trust you, they would be forbidding this friendship, or some such nonsense."

Do you see, Zoe? As much as the perceived loss of trust hurts you, your accusations hurt us. It's better, writing things down in a letter, because you can choose to go back and edit out anything that is said out of anger.

You say that you need someone to say that they understand why you need to do this. I ask that you reread my January 4<sup>th</sup> letter (not the bits with my crazy family, the stuff about Lissa). I did keep a copy of that one, just so I could keep track of what everyone said. I'm glad I did, because now I can quote what I said to you: "I'm glad you helped her in the end. If you hadn't, I think you never would have forgiven yourself. It's not what I would have done, sure, or even what I would have advised you to do, but it is what you would do. I know you're trying to do what's best."

It's still true. If that is not enough support for you, then... I don't know if I can be the friend you need right now. I'm sorry.

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If and when you're ready to try again, you know how to find me.