

Encouraging words

238 words and 92 messages. Updated 10 October 2026. Free to print and share in a classroom.

Someone close to you: a hard time or setback

Text message

I've been thinking about you all day. You don't have to reply or be okay. I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere.

Card

I'm so sorry this is happening. I can't fix it, but I can be there: for a walk, a meal, or just sitting together without talking. Whenever you want any of those, say so.

Say it

This is really hard, and you don't have to pretend otherwise with me. What would help most this week? I'm happy to do the boring practical stuff.

Someone close to you: effort or progress

Text message

I noticed how much you've been putting into this, even on the days it felt like nothing was moving. It's showing. I'm proud of you.

Card

I've loved watching you work at this. The progress is real, and so is the effort behind it. I hope you can see how far you've come.

Say it

You've been so patient with this, even through the slow, frustrating weeks. I see it, and I wanted you to know.

Someone close to you: an achievement or milestone

Text message

You did it! I'm so happy for you. I hope you get to celebrate properly tonight.

Card

Congratulations. I've seen some of what went into this, and I'm so proud of you. I hope you take the time to enjoy it.

Say it

I just want to say how proud I am of you. Not because it worked out, but because of how you went about it.

Someone close to you: uncertainty or a next step

Text message

Thinking of you today. Whatever happens, you've prepared well and you're more capable than you're giving yourself credit for. Call me after?

Card

Big changes are scary, even good ones. You don't have to have it all figured out yet. I'm cheering for you, and I'm a phone call away whenever you want to think out loud.

Say it

It's okay not to know yet. You've handled hard decisions before. Want to talk it through?

Someone close to you: contribution or belonging

Text message

I don't say it enough: my life is better with you in it. Thank you for being exactly who you are.

Card

Thank you for all the things you do for me, the big ones and the ones you think I don't notice. I notice. I'm lucky to have you.

Say it

You know you don't have to earn your place with us, right? We love having you around, full stop.

A colleague or teammate: a hard time or setback

Text message

Sorry to hear things are rough at the moment. No need to reply. If it helps, I'm happy to cover the Thursday call this week.

Work email

I wanted to say I'm sorry you're dealing with this. If it would take something off your plate, I could pick up the reporting for a while; say the word and I'll sort it out with our manager. No need to reply otherwise.

Say it

That sounded like a tough meeting. Do you want to grab a coffee, or would you rather be left alone for a bit? Either is fine.

A colleague or teammate: effort or progress

Work email

I wanted to recognize the work you've put into the migration. You kept it moving through two scope changes and still documented every decision. That care is why the rest of us could keep up.

Text message

Just read the latest draft. The summary is really clear; it makes the whole thing easy to follow. Nice work.

Say it

The way you've been chipping away at that backlog hasn't gone unnoticed. Thank you for sticking with it.

A colleague or teammate: an achievement or milestone

Work email

Congratulations on the launch. You held the plan together across three teams and made the hard calls early, and it showed today. Well deserved.

Text message

Huge congrats on the promotion. Nobody who has worked with you is surprised. Enjoy it.

Card

Congratulations on reaching this milestone. Your skill, steadiness and generosity with your time have made this team better. We're glad to celebrate with you.

A colleague or teammate: uncertainty or a next step

Text message

Good luck with the presentation today. You know this material better than anyone in that room.

Work email

I know the reorganization leaves a lot unclear right now. For what it's worth, the way you've handled change before makes me confident you'll find your footing. If you want to think through options, I'm around.

Say it

It's a big step, and it's normal to feel unsure. You've prepared for this, and you can adjust as you go.

A colleague or teammate: contribution or belonging

Work email

Thank you for the time you spent helping the new starters this month. Several of them mentioned how much easier you made their first weeks. That kind of support doesn't show up in a dashboard, but it matters.

Text message

Thanks for jumping in yesterday. You made a stressful afternoon a lot calmer.

Say it

I really value having you on this team. Your questions make our work better.

A learner: a hard time or setback

Say it

That didn't go the way you hoped, and it's okay to feel disappointed. One test doesn't decide what you're capable of. Let's look at what to try next.

Card

Hard weeks happen to everyone who is learning something new. You've kept coming back to it, and that matters more than any single result. I'm here whenever you want help with what comes next.

Text message

Rough day, I know. Rest tonight. Tomorrow we'll go through it together, one question at a time.

A learner: effort or progress

Say it

Look at this compared with your first attempt. You tried a different method when the first one didn't work, and it paid off.

Card

Your hard work this term has really shown. You asked good questions, practiced when it was boring, and your writing is clearer because of it. Keep going.

Text message

Your practice is paying off. That last piece was your best yet.

A learner: an achievement or milestone

Card

Congratulations on passing! You prepared carefully and kept practicing when it got hard. I hope you're proud of yourself.

Say it

Well done. Remember how hard this felt at the start? You worked out how to do it, and now it's yours.

Text message

Congratulations on finishing the course! All that steady work paid off.

A learner: uncertainty or a next step

Say it

You don't need to know everything before you begin. Start with the first question, take your time, and use what you already know.

Card

Good luck as you start this new chapter. You'll have questions, and that's how learning works. You've already shown you can figure things out.

Text message

Big day tomorrow. Get some sleep. You've practiced this, and you're ready to give it a go.

A learner: contribution or belonging

Say it

Your question today helped the whole class understand it better. Thank you for asking.

Card

Thank you for the kindness you show your classmates. You make this a place where people feel safe to try.

Text message

Thanks for helping Sam with the project. That was generous of you.

Yourself: a hard time or setback

Note to yourself

This is hard, and I'm allowed to find it hard. I don't have to solve everything today. One small thing, then rest.

Note to yourself

I've come through difficult days before. I can ask for help, and asking is not failing.

Note to yourself

Today I'll be as patient with myself as I would be with a friend going through this.

Yourself: effort or progress

Note to yourself

I'm further along than I was a month ago, even if it doesn't feel like it. Small steps still count.

Note to yourself

I kept going on a day I wanted to stop. That's worth noticing.

Note to yourself

Progress isn't a straight line. A slow week doesn't erase the work I've already done.

Yourself: an achievement or milestone

Note to yourself

I did this. I'm going to let myself enjoy it before I move on to the next thing.

Note to yourself

I prepared, I went in, and it worked. I'll remember this the next time I doubt myself.

Note to yourself

This took real effort, and I'm proud of how I handled it.

Yourself: uncertainty or a next step

Note to yourself

I don't need to know how it all turns out. I only need to decide what to do today, and I can do that.

Note to yourself

Feeling nervous means this matters to me. I've prepared, and I can adjust as I go.

Note to yourself

I can make a good decision with what I know today. If things change, I can choose again.

Yourself: contribution or belonging

Note to yourself

I matter for who I am, not only for what I do for other people.

Note to yourself

I'm allowed to take up space here. My voice adds something.

Note to yourself

I help people because I care, not because I have to earn my place.

Get well messages

For an illness, an operation or an injury: warmth and practical help, without predicting how it will go.

Card

Thinking of you and sending so much love. Rest as much as you need, and don't worry about replying to anyone, me included.

Text message

Sorry you're unwell. I'm going to the store on Saturday. Can I drop anything off for you?

Card

Wishing you a gentle recovery and plenty of good days ahead. We miss you and we're thinking of you.

Work email

Sorry to hear you're unwell, and please don't feel you need to reply. If there's anything on your list I could keep moving while you're off, I'd be glad to. I'd check it with our manager first, so nothing extra lands on you.

Avoid: "You'll beat this."

It promises an outcome nobody controls, and it can make someone feel they have failed if their illness does not go the way you said.

Instead: "I'm with you, whatever the next few weeks look like."

Avoid: "Stay positive!"

It turns their mood into one more job, on top of being ill.

Instead: "However you're feeling about it is okay. I'm here for the good days and the bad ones."

Avoid: "My aunt had the same thing and..."

Other people's stories, especially the bad ones, are rarely what an ill person needs to hear.

Instead: "How are you doing with it all, really?"

Sympathy messages

For a death or a loss: say that you are sorry, name the person if you can, and offer something specific.

Card

I'm so sorry for your loss. Your mom was one of the kindest people I've known, and I'll miss her. I'm holding you in my thoughts.

Text message

I just heard, and I'm so sorry. I could drop a dinner at your door on Thursday, no need to see anyone. Just say yes if you'd like it; if I don't hear back, that's completely fine.

Card

There are no right words for this. Please know that you are not alone, and that we'll keep checking in, in the weeks after the funeral too.

Email from a manager

I was so sorry to hear about your loss. Work can wait: I'll arrange cover for what's on your list, and when you're ready, we can talk about what would make coming back easier. There's no need to reply.

Avoid: "Everything happens for a reason."

To a grieving person it can sound as if the loss was deserved or meant to be.

Instead: "I'm so sorry. I'm thinking of you, and I'm here."

Avoid: "At least they lived a long life."

Any sentence that starts with "at least" shrinks the loss.

Instead: "I'm so sorry. Whatever you're feeling, you don't have to explain it to me."

Avoid: "I know exactly how you feel."

Every loss is different, and the comparison moves the focus to you.

Instead: "I can't imagine exactly what this is like for you, but I'm here."

Avoid: "Let me know if you need anything."

It hands the work of asking to someone with no energy to ask.

Instead: "I'm free on Saturday. Can I take the kids for the afternoon?"

After losing a job

For a redundancy, a layoff or a dismissal: recognize the shock, keep their worth separate from the job, and offer help they can use when they want it.

Text message

I'm really sorry about the job. That's a horrible shock. Do you want company tonight, or space?

Say it

That's a lot to take in. If you want to start looking straight away, I'll help with that, and if you'd rather wait a bit, that's fine too. You set the pace.

Work email

I was sorry to hear your role was affected. I've valued working with you, and I'd be glad to write a reference or introduce you to people I know in the field whenever you're ready.

Card

I'm so sorry about what happened at work. You're skilled, you're good with people, and none of that left with the job. I'm here for the practical stuff and the venting.

Avoid: "It was probably for the best."

It may not be, and only they get to decide that, later.

Instead: "That's a real blow. How are you doing?"

Avoid: "At least you get a break now."

It ignores money worries and the loss of routine and colleagues.

Instead: "Is there anything practical I can help with right now?"

Avoid: "You'll find something better in no time."

Searching can take months, and the promise can turn into pressure.

Instead: "When you're ready to look, I'd be glad to read your resume or make an introduction."

Good luck with exams

Before an exam or a driving test: point to the preparation and keep the result in proportion.

Text message

Good luck today! You've put the work in. Take a breath before you start, and go one part at a time.

Say it

Whatever the result, I'm proud of how hard you've worked for this. Go and show them what you know.

Card

Wishing you calm nerves and a clear head for your exams. You've prepared well, and we're cheering for you.

Text message

Thinking of you this morning. Breathe, take your time, and remember this is one test, not your whole future.

Congratulations on a new job

For someone starting a new role: celebrate what they did to get there and wish them a good start.

Text message

Congratulations on the new job! They're lucky to have you. Can't wait to hear all about it.

Card

Congratulations on your new role. You worked hard for this, and it's exciting to see where you're headed. Wishing you a great start.

Work email

Congratulations on your new position. It has been a pleasure working with you, and I know you'll do great things there. Please keep in touch.

Say it

You deserve this. Enjoy your first week, and don't worry about knowing everything on day one. Nobody does.

Congratulations messages

For a graduation, a promotion, a finished project or any milestone: say what they achieved and how they got there.

Card

Congratulations on your graduation! I'm so proud of you, and so excited for whatever you choose next.

Text message

Just heard the news. Congratulations! I'm thrilled for you.

Work email

Congratulations on the promotion. It's well deserved, and the whole team has benefited from your judgment and your support.

Card

What an achievement. I hope you take a moment to enjoy it before you start on the next thing.

Farewell messages

For a colleague, a neighbor or a friend who is leaving: thank them for something real and wish them well.

Card

It won't be the same without you. Thank you for your patience, your humor and the hundred small ways you helped. Good luck with everything that comes next.

Work email

As you move on, I wanted to thank you for everything you taught me in my first year here. Your advice still shapes how I work. Please stay in touch.

Text message

Can't believe it's your last day! Thanks for making this place a lot more fun. Keep in touch.

Card

Wishing you all the best in your new home. We'll miss our chats over the fence, and you're always welcome back.

New baby messages

For new parents: welcome the baby, and offer real help with the early weeks.

Card

Welcome to the world, little one! Congratulations, and wishing you a gentle start and plenty of sleep (eventually).

Text message

Congratulations! So happy for you. If a meal left on your doorstep this week would help, just say the word and tell me anything you can't eat. No reply needed otherwise.

Card

Congratulations on your beautiful new arrival. We're so happy for you, and we'd love to meet the baby whenever you're ready for visitors, with no rush at all.

Work email

Congratulations on the arrival of your baby, and best wishes to all of you for the weeks ahead. No need to reply; we'll be glad to see you when you're back.

Everyday encouragement

Plain words that sound natural in a conversation, note, or message.

Able adj. · everyday

Having enough skill or capacity for the task ahead.

Fits when: reassuring someone who doubts whether they can handle a specific challenge

Not when: not when they need training or help that confidence alone cannot replace

You are able to learn this, even if the first attempt feels awkward.

Bold adj. · everyday

Confident enough to act despite uncertainty.

Fits when: praising a thoughtful risk or a clear stand

Not when: not when the action ignored foreseeable harm or other people's consent

You asked a bold question, and it moved the conversation forward.

Brave adj. · everyday

Willing to face fear, pain, or difficulty.

Fits when: recognizing effort made while someone was afraid

Not when: not to pressure someone into danger or deny their right to step back

You were brave to ask for help when you needed it.

Capable adj. · everyday

Having the ability needed to do something well.

Fits when: restoring confidence before a realistic task

Not when: not as a reason to withhold resources, rest, or assistance

You are capable of leading this meeting, and you do not have to know every answer.

Confident adj. · everyday

Secure in one's ability or judgment.

Fits when: affirming calm self-trust that is supported by preparation

Not when: not when certainty is hiding missing evidence or unanswered questions

You sounded confident because you knew your material and stayed open to questions.

Creative adj. · everyday

Able to produce original and useful ideas.

Fits when: praising inventive thinking or expressive work

Not when: not when novelty mattered more than whether the idea worked

Your creative approach gave the group a solution none of us had seen.

Determined adj. · everyday

Firmly committed to reaching a goal.

Fits when: praising purposeful effort that continued through obstacles

Not when: not when persistence has become refusal to reconsider a harmful plan

You stayed determined and changed your method when the first one failed.

Eager adj. · everyday

Ready to begin with keen interest.

Fits when: praising willing participation or appetite for learning

Not when: not when eagerness is pushing someone to skip preparation

You are eager to learn, and that will carry you through the unfamiliar parts.

Easygoing adj. · everyday

Calm and friendly without being easily troubled.

Fits when: appreciating a calm presence that makes cooperation easier

Not when: not when passivity or unspoken resentment needs to be addressed

Your easygoing manner helped everyone settle into the new group.

Energetic adj. · everyday

Showing lively effort and enthusiasm.

Fits when: praising active participation that lifted the work

Not when: not to imply that a quieter person is less committed

Your energetic start gave the project the momentum it needed.

Enthusiastic adj. · everyday

Showing lively and sincere interest.

Fits when: affirming energy that encouraged participation

Not when: not to require visible excitement from someone who contributes quietly

Your enthusiastic welcome made the new volunteers feel wanted.

Excellent adj. · everyday

Of notably high quality.

Fits when: celebrating work that clearly exceeded the expected standard

Not when: not as automatic praise that hides what was actually strong

Your final presentation was excellent, especially the clear comparison.

Hard-working adj. · everyday

Applying sustained, serious effort.

Fits when: recognizing sustained work that contributed to a result

Not when: not to glorify exhaustion or imply that worth depends on productivity

You are hard-working, and you also deserve a full evening off.

Honest adj. · everyday

Truthful, sincere, and fair in representing facts.

Fits when: praising truthfulness that required courage or accountability

Not when: not when bluntness was used to avoid care or tact

You were honest about the mistake and clear about how you will repair it.

Keen adj. · everyday

Sharply perceptive or strongly interested.

Fits when: praising alert interest or sharp understanding

Not when: not when enthusiasm has become impatience with other learners

You have a keen eye for the detail that changes the whole design.

Kind adj. · everyday

Considerate and concerned for another person's well-being.

Fits when: recognizing a caring choice that respected the other person

Not when: not when pleasantness replaced a necessary honest conversation

You were kind to include him without making him explain why he felt nervous.

Optimistic adj. · everyday

Expecting a favorable outcome while seeing possibility.

Fits when: praising hope that remains connected to action

Not when: not when positive thinking is replacing evidence or contingency planning

You are optimistic, and you have a practical plan for the difficult parts.

Outstanding adj. · everyday

Exceptionally good or clearly distinguished.

Fits when: celebrating performance that surpassed a meaningful standard

Not when: not as automatic praise when specific feedback would help more

Your work on the final section was outstanding.

Persistent adj. · everyday

Continuing purposefully despite resistance or delay.

Fits when: praising repeated effort that remains responsive to evidence

Not when: not when continued pursuit ignores a refusal or a reason to stop

You were persistent without repeating the same failed approach.

Quick adj. · everyday

Able to understand or respond with useful speed.

Fits when: praising rapid understanding or timely action

Not when: not when speed came at the expense of accuracy or care

You were quick to understand the pattern and patient enough to explain it.

Ready adj. · everyday

Sufficiently prepared and willing to begin.

Fits when: affirming that preparation is sufficient to begin

Not when: not when legitimate safety or support needs remain unresolved

You are ready to begin, even if you do not feel completely certain.

Strong adj. · everyday

Having the power or resilience needed for a challenge.

Fits when: affirming demonstrated capacity in a difficult moment

Not when: not to deny vulnerability, tears, rest, or the need for help

You are strong enough to face this and human enough to need support.

Yes n. · everyday

An affirmative answer that accepts an opportunity or request.

Fits when: celebrating a considered decision to participate or begin

Not when: not when agreement came from pressure, fear, or missing information

Your yes to mentoring a new student was generous and brave.

Warm encouragement

Words that carry care or closeness without promising an outcome.

Admirable adj. · warm

Deserving sincere respect or approval.

Fits when: praising a choice that reflects courage, care, or principle

Not when: not as vague flattery when you cannot name what earned the respect

Your decision to tell the truth was admirable.

Authentic adj. · warm

Genuine in a way that matches one's real values or character.

Fits when: affirming honest self-expression or principled consistency

Not when: not to excuse cruelty or impulsiveness as simply being real

You stayed authentic to your values without dismissing anyone else.

Beloved adj. · warm

Held in deep and lasting affection.

Fits when: reminding someone that they are deeply loved

Not when: not when the relationship does not support such intimate language

You are beloved, even on the days when you feel hard to love.

Brilliant adj. · warm

Exceptionally clever, skillful, or successful.

Fits when: celebrating a notably strong idea or piece of work

Not when: not when specific, measured praise would be more credible

Your solution was brilliant because it made the difficult part simple.

Caring adj. · warm

Showing active concern for another person's well-being.

Fits when: recognizing considerate attention or practical kindness

Not when: not when care has become control or unwanted interference

You were caring enough to listen before offering advice.

Courageous adj. · warm

Showing strength while facing fear or difficulty.

Fits when: honoring a hard action taken for a worthwhile reason

Not when: not to romanticize unnecessary risk or silent suffering

It was courageous of you to set that boundary clearly.

Deserving adj. · warm

Worthy of care, recognition, or a good result.

Fits when: countering shame that makes someone reject reasonable care or credit

Not when: not to promise an outcome that effort cannot guarantee

You are deserving of rest before you decide what comes next.

Earnest adj. · warm

Marked by serious and sincere intent.

Fits when: affirming genuine effort or honest conviction

Not when: not when a lighter tone would help someone who already feels pressured

Your earnest apology showed that you understood the harm.

Empathetic adj. · warm

Able to understand and respond to another person's feelings.

Fits when: recognizing careful attention to another person's perspective

Not when: not when someone merely agreed or assumed they knew another person's experience

Your response was empathetic because you listened before trying to fix anything.

Empowered adj. · warm

Equipped with the confidence or authority to act.

Fits when: affirming someone who now has meaningful agency

Not when: not when responsibility was handed over without resources or real choice

You sound empowered to make the decision that fits your values.

Encouraging adj. · warm

Helping another person feel supported, hopeful, or more confident.

Fits when: thanking someone whose words or actions helped another person continue

Not when: not when reassurance ignored the difficulty or promised success

You were encouraging without pretending the next step would be easy.

Engaging adj. · warm

Pleasantly interesting and able to hold attention.

Fits when: praising a person's communication or welcoming presence

Not when: not as a demand that someone perform charm for others

You are an engaging storyteller because you notice what your listeners need.

Enough adj. · warm

Adequate and worthy without needing to become more first.

Fits when: reassuring someone whose self-worth has become tied to perfection

Not when: not to dismiss a practical shortage of time, skill, money, or support

You are enough, even while you are still learning and changing.

Evolving adj. · warm

Changing gradually through learning or growth.

Fits when: reassuring someone that unfinished growth still counts

Not when: not to soften a repeated harm that needs direct accountability

You are evolving, and this wiser choice is evidence of that growth.

Expressive adj. · warm

Able to convey thought, feeling, or character vividly.

Fits when: praising communication or art that conveys something vividly

Not when: not to suggest that quieter expression is less sincere

Your expressive reading made the emotion in the poem easy to feel.

Extraordinary adj. · warm

Unusually far beyond the ordinary.

Fits when: celebrating a genuinely rare effort, quality, or result

Not when: not as routine praise that raises the emotional volume without evidence

The care you gave your neighbor was extraordinary.

Exuberant adj. · warm

Full of lively happiness and energy.

Fits when: celebrating joyful energy that feels natural to the person

Not when: not to ask someone to be cheerful while they are hurting

Your exuberant celebration made the whole team feel proud.

Fearless adj. · warm

Showing courage without being controlled by fear.

Fits when: praising action that did not let fear make the decision

Not when: not to deny that the person felt afraid or faced real danger

You were fearless in speaking up, even though your voice shook.

Flourishing adj. · warm

Growing strongly or developing in a healthy way.

Fits when: celebrating visible progress in work, life, or well-being

Not when: not when a polished appearance hides strain that needs support

You are flourishing in this role because your skill and curiosity both have room.

Generous adj. · warm

Ready to give time, help, attention, or resources freely.

Fits when: recognizing meaningful giving that respected the recipient

Not when: not when the giving exceeded the person's means or healthy limits

You were generous with your time and still protected the rest you needed.

Genuine adj. · warm

Sincere and free from pretense.

Fits when: affirming honest care, interest, or expression

Not when: not as a vague claim when a concrete example would carry more meaning

Your interest was genuine, and people felt safe answering you honestly.

Gifted adj. · warm

Having a notable natural or developed ability.

Fits when: recognizing a clear strength while leaving room for the work behind it

Not when: not if the label would erase practice or make mistakes feel unacceptable

You are a gifted teacher, and your preparation helps that gift reach people.

Grounded adj. · warm

Steady, realistic, and connected to practical facts.

Fits when: praising calm judgment during excitement or pressure

Not when: not to imply that hope, imagination, or emotion is foolish

You stayed grounded, naming both the opportunity and the risk.

Heroic adj. · warm

Showing exceptional courage or selflessness.

Fits when: honoring an unusually brave or protective action

Not when: not for ordinary responsibilities or suffering that should have been prevented

Your heroic decision brought the children to safety.

Hopeful adj. · warm

Able to see a plausible path toward something better.

Fits when: affirming hope that can coexist with uncertainty

Not when: not when optimism is being used to avoid grief or practical preparation

You are hopeful without ignoring the work still ahead.

Humble adj. · warm

Aware of one's limits without claiming undue importance.

Fits when: praising openness to learning and willingness to share credit

Not when: not to encourage self-erasure or refusal to own earned competence

You were humble enough to change your view when the evidence changed.

Imaginative adj. · warm

Rich in original ideas or vivid mental pictures.

Fits when: praising inventive thought, storytelling, or problem-solving

Not when: not when the idea needs evidence or practical testing before praise

Your imaginative lesson turned a difficult concept into something memorable.

Inspiring adj. · warm

Encouraging people to feel hopeful or ready to act.

Fits when: recognizing an example or message that genuinely moved others

Not when: not to turn someone's hardship into a lesson for other people

Your return to school is inspiring because it reflects what you chose, not what you endured.

Joyful adj. · warm

Feeling, showing, or bringing deep happiness.

Fits when: celebrating sincere happiness without demanding it

Not when: not when someone needs space for mixed or painful feelings

You looked joyful when your student crossed the finish line.

Kindhearted adj. · warm

Moved by sympathy and a desire to help.

Fits when: affirming a pattern of compassionate conduct

Not when: not when the person is being taken advantage of for their generosity

You are kindhearted, and the way you checked on your neighbor showed it.

Loved adj. · warm

Held in affectionate care.

Fits when: reminding someone of real affection and belonging

Not when: not when the relationship cannot honestly support the claim

You are loved, and you do not have to earn your place with us.

Loyal adj. · warm

Faithful in support or affection.

Fits when: recognizing dependable support that respects principle

Not when: not when loyalty is being used to demand silence about wrongdoing

You were loyal to your friend without pretending his choice was harmless.

Marvelous adj. · warm

Causing admiration or delight because it is exceptionally good.

Fits when: celebrating a strong result in warm everyday speech

Not when: not when restrained, specific feedback would be more credible

You did a marvelous job making every guest feel welcome.

Mindful adj. · warm

Attentive to the present situation and its effects.

Fits when: recognizing considerate awareness in a choice or interaction

Not when: not as a vague wellness label without a concrete behavior

You were mindful of her time and asked before extending the meeting.

Needed adj. · warm

Important to a worthwhile purpose or relationship.

Fits when: reminding someone that their specific presence or contribution matters

Not when: not to make them responsible for everyone else's stability

You are needed here, but you are also allowed to ask others to carry their share.

Nurturing adj. · warm

Providing care and conditions that support growth.

Fits when: recognizing guidance that helped another person develop

Not when: not when care has become overprotection or control

Your nurturing feedback helped her improve without feeling diminished.

Openhearted adj. · warm

Warm, candid, and generous in feeling.

Fits when: affirming candid warmth or compassionate welcome

Not when: not to pressure someone to disclose more than feels safe

Your openhearted welcome made it easier for everyone to be honest.

Patient adj. · warm

Able to wait or persist without irritation taking over.

Fits when: recognizing calm persistence with a person or slow process

Not when: not to ask someone to tolerate disrespect or indefinite delay

You were patient with yourself while learning the new movement.

Remarkable adj. · warm

Unusual enough to merit real notice.

Fits when: recognizing a specific quality, effort, or result that stands out

Not when: not as inflated praise without a reason

Your second draft is remarkable: the main point is much clearer now.

Resilient adj. · warm

Able to recover, adapt, or remain steady through difficulty.

Fits when: recognizing recovery or adaptation after a real setback

Not when: not to praise repeated exposure to harm or deny the need for support

You were resilient enough to change course after the plan failed.

Steadfast adj. · warm

Firm in commitment and dependable under pressure.

Fits when: honoring principled constancy through difficulty

Not when: not when refusing to change has become stubborn or harmful

You stayed steadfast in your support while still listening to criticism.

Supportive adj. · warm

Offering help or encouragement that strengthens another person.

Fits when: recognizing help that respected the recipient's agency

Not when: not when assistance took over decisions that belonged to the other person

You were supportive without making the choice for me.

Talented adj. · warm

Possessing a notable aptitude or developed gift.

Fits when: recognizing a clear strength while also valuing practice

Not when: not if the label would make effort invisible or mistakes feel shameful

You are talented, and the discipline behind that performance deserves credit too.

Thoughtful adj. · warm

Showing careful consideration for people or consequences.

Fits when: recognizing a considerate choice or well-reasoned idea

Not when: not when prolonged thought has become avoidance of a needed decision

Your thoughtful note named exactly what she had contributed.

Thriving adj. · warm

Growing or succeeding with visible health and strength.

Fits when: celebrating broad, visible well-being or progress

Not when: not when one successful area is hiding exhaustion elsewhere

You are thriving in work that gives both your judgment and curiosity room.

Understanding adj. · warm

Patient and willing to consider another person's perspective.

Fits when: thanking someone for responding with informed sympathy

Not when: not when empathy is being used to excuse repeated harm

You were understanding without pretending the broken promise did not matter.

Unique adj. · warm

Distinct in a way no exact substitute can reproduce.

Fits when: affirming a specific combination of qualities or perspective

Not when: not as generic praise without naming what is distinctive

Your unique mix of technical care and patient teaching strengthens this team.

Vibrant adj. · warm

Full of life, energy, or vivid expression.

Fits when: celebrating lively presence, work, or style

Not when: not to imply that quietness or restraint lacks value

Your vibrant illustrations make the whole story feel alive.

Warmhearted adj. · warm

Openly kind, sympathetic, and generous.

Fits when: affirming a sincere pattern of affectionate kindness

Not when: not when warmth has crossed another person's boundary

You are warmhearted, and your quiet check-in meant more than you knew.

Wholehearted adj. · warm

Given with complete sincerity and commitment.

Fits when: praising complete and willing engagement

Not when: not when total commitment has displaced rest or other responsibilities

Your wholehearted effort made the community day feel genuinely welcoming.

Wise adj. · warm

Showing sound judgment informed by knowledge or experience.

Fits when: recognizing a decision that balanced evidence, consequences, and care

Not when: not as a fixed identity that makes future mistakes harder to admit

It was wise of you to wait for the test results before deciding.

Wonderful adj. · warm

Extremely pleasing, admirable, or good.

Fits when: giving affectionate praise for a person, action, or result

Not when: not when a precise observation would feel more sincere

You were wonderful with the children because you treated every question seriously.

Worthy adj. · warm

Deserving respect, care, attention, or effort.

Fits when: countering shame or rejection that has distorted someone's sense of worth

Not when: not to promise a specific reward or another person's affection

You are worthy of respect even while you repair this mistake.

Youthful adj. · warm

Showing freshness, curiosity, or energy associated with youth.

Fits when: praising lively curiosity or openness at any age

Not when: not as a judgment about appearance or a suggestion that aging is undesirable

Your youthful curiosity keeps the whole group asking better questions.

Zestful adj. · warm

Bringing lively pleasure and enthusiastic energy.

Fits when: celebrating wholehearted enjoyment or spirited participation

Not when: not to demand bright energy from someone who is tired or grieving

Your zestful performance brought the quiet audience to life.

Professional encouragement

Measured language for feedback, recognition, teaching, and work.

Accomplished adj. · professional

Skilled and successful through substantial practice.

Fits when: recognizing expertise that has already been demonstrated

Not when: not for a beginner whose promise matters more than a record of achievement

You are an accomplished editor, and this careful revision shows it.

Adaptable adj. · professional

Ready and able to adjust when circumstances change.

Fits when: praising someone who found a workable path after plans shifted

Not when: not when constant accommodation is costing them healthy boundaries

You were adaptable when the schedule changed, and the whole team benefited.

Dedicated adj. · professional

Steadily committed to a purpose or responsibility.

Fits when: recognizing sustained effort over time

Not when: not when overwork is being praised at the expense of health

You have been dedicated to this project without losing sight of the people it serves.

Dependable adj. · professional

Consistently worthy of trust or reliance.

Fits when: thanking someone whose follow-through made a real difference

Not when: not as an excuse to give the reliable person every difficult task

You are dependable, and your steady follow-through gave everyone confidence.

Diligent adj. · professional

Careful and persistent in carrying out work.

Fits when: recognizing sustained attention and responsible effort

Not when: not when speed or improvisation was the quality that actually mattered

Your diligent review caught the issue before it reached the client.

Effective adj. · professional

Producing the intended useful result.

Fits when: praising an approach that demonstrably worked

Not when: not when the result came through methods that were unfair or unsustainable

Your explanation was effective because everyone knew what to do next.

Efficient adj. · professional

Achieving a result with little wasted effort or time.

Fits when: recognizing a clear process that conserved useful resources

Not when: not when haste reduced care, fairness, or quality

You made the handoff efficient without making anyone feel rushed.

Engaged adj. · professional

Actively interested, involved, and attentive.

Fits when: recognizing meaningful participation rather than mere attendance

Not when: not when someone needs permission to step back or recover

You stayed engaged with the discussion and made room for other voices.

Enterprising adj. · professional

Ready to pursue opportunities with initiative and resourcefulness.

Fits when: praising someone who turned an opening into constructive action

Not when: not when ambition ignored consent, rules, or likely consequences

Your enterprising proposal found a practical use for an overlooked resource.

Essential adj. · professional

Necessary to an important result or purpose.

Fits when: showing someone that their specific contribution matters

Not when: not to make them feel unable to take leave or share responsibility

Your local knowledge is essential to making this plan work.

Established adj. · professional

Securely recognized through sustained work or experience.

Fits when: affirming a credible reputation or stable body of work

Not when: not for early promise that has not yet had time to develop

You are an established voice in this field, and your guidance carries earned weight.

Ethical adj. · professional

Consistent with principles of fairness and right conduct.

Fits when: praising a decision that protected people or honored a duty

Not when: not as a blanket claim when the specific tradeoffs remain unclear

You chose the ethical course even though it was less convenient.

Evenhanded adj. · professional

Applying fair judgment without favoring one side.

Fits when: recognizing balanced treatment during disagreement

Not when: not when neutrality would conceal a clear injustice

You were evenhanded, giving each person the same careful hearing.

Exceptional adj. · professional

Unusually strong in quality, ability, or character.

Fits when: recognizing performance or conduct that stands well above the norm

Not when: not when comparison with others would create needless pressure

Your patience with that frightened student was exceptional.

Experienced adj. · professional

Knowledgeable and skilled through substantial practice.

Fits when: affirming judgment built through repeated real work

Not when: not to imply that experience makes someone incapable of error

You are experienced enough to recognize the risk and wise enough to check it.

Expert adj. · professional

Possessing advanced knowledge or ability in a defined field.

Fits when: recognizing demonstrated mastery in a defined area

Not when: not as a broad label beyond the person's actual field

Your expert judgment gives us a strong basis for the next decision.

Flexible adj. · professional

Able and willing to adjust when needs change.

Fits when: recognizing a useful change of plan or perspective

Not when: not when someone is being asked to abandon an important boundary

You were flexible about the method while keeping the goal clear.

Focused adj. · professional

Keeping attention and effort on the chosen aim.

Fits when: praising sustained concentration on what matters

Not when: not when narrow attention caused important needs to be missed

You stayed focused on the central question and kept the meeting useful.

Formidable adj. · professional

Commanding respect through strength, skill, or ability.

Fits when: affirming someone whose proven ability makes them a strong presence

Not when: not if the word might sound as though the person is frightening or unapproachable

You are a formidable advocate because you pair evidence with persistence.

Insightful adj. · professional

Showing clear and useful understanding.

Fits when: praising an observation that reveals something important

Not when: not when the comment was clever but unsupported

Your question was insightful and helped us see the assumption underneath the plan.

Invaluable adj. · professional

So useful or important that its value is difficult to measure.

Fits when: thanking someone for a contribution that materially changed the result

Not when: not as a substitute for compensation, credit, or reasonable workload

Your knowledge of the neighborhood was invaluable to this project.

Knowledgeable adj. · professional

Having strong and reliable knowledge about a subject.

Fits when: recognizing command of a defined topic

Not when: not to imply authority outside the person's actual expertise

You are knowledgeable about this system, and your explanation made that knowledge usable.

Levelheaded adj. · professional

Calm and sensible under pressure.

Fits when: praising clear judgment in a tense situation

Not when: not to suggest that visible emotion makes someone irrational

You stayed levelheaded and checked the facts before anyone acted.

Meticulous adj. · professional

Extremely careful about detail and accuracy.

Fits when: praising exact work where detail mattered

Not when: not when perfectionism delayed a result past its useful moment

Your meticulous notes made the final review straightforward.

Motivated adj. · professional

Ready and willing to work toward a goal.

Fits when: affirming purposeful energy supported by action

Not when: not to shame someone whose low energy signals burnout or illness

You are motivated, and your consistent practice makes that visible.

Noteworthy adj. · professional

Good or important enough to deserve particular attention.

Fits when: drawing attention to a meaningful result or improvement

Not when: not when ordinary progress would be burdened by comparison

Your improvement in the final section is noteworthy.

Observant adj. · professional

Attentive enough to notice meaningful details.

Fits when: praising careful attention that led to useful understanding

Not when: not when noticing became intrusive watching or speculation

You were observant enough to notice who had not been heard.

Original adj. · professional

Created independently rather than copied.

Fits when: praising a genuinely distinctive idea or expression

Not when: not when novelty alone is being mistaken for usefulness

Your original framing made a familiar problem easier to understand.

Perceptive adj. · professional

Quick to understand feelings, details, or situations accurately.

Fits when: praising an accurate observation with useful depth

Not when: not when an interpretation has not been checked with the person concerned

Your perceptive comment revealed what the group had been avoiding.

Prepared adj. · professional

Ready with the knowledge, plan, or materials needed.

Fits when: affirming useful readiness before a task

Not when: not to imply that every surprise could have been anticipated

You are prepared for the interview, including the questions you cannot predict.

Promising adj. · professional

Showing credible signs of future success or value.

Fits when: encouraging early work that has real potential

Not when: not as a guarantee or as praise too vague to guide the next step

Your first draft is promising, especially the clear opening scene.

Qualified adj. · professional

Having the knowledge, skill, or experience a role requires.

Fits when: countering doubt before a role the person is genuinely prepared for

Not when: not when a required credential or safety competence is actually missing

You are qualified for this position, and your record supports that confidence.

Resourceful adj. · professional

Inventive in making useful options from available means.

Fits when: praising practical ingenuity under real constraints

Not when: not as a reason to leave someone chronically under-resourced

You were resourceful, turning a limited budget into a workable pilot.

Skillful adj. · professional

Done with practiced ability and sound technique.

Fits when: praising the quality of a practiced action

Not when: not when effort or improvement is the more accurate source of encouragement

Your skillful questions helped the witness explain the sequence clearly.

Tenacious adj. · professional

Persistent in holding to a worthwhile aim.

Fits when: praising determined effort that adapts instead of merely repeating

Not when: not when persistence crosses a boundary or ignores decisive evidence

You were tenacious in finding a solution without pressuring anyone to accept it.

Trustworthy adj. · professional

Reliable enough to merit confidence.

Fits when: recognizing a pattern of honesty and dependable action

Not when: not as a permanent label based on one good act

You have been trustworthy with sensitive information every time it mattered.

Valuable adj. · professional

Having substantial usefulness, importance, or worth.

Fits when: affirming the worth of a contribution or perspective

Not when: not to reduce a person's worth to what they produce

Your perspective is valuable even when the group chooses another option.

Versatile adj. · professional

Able to adapt or contribute in many different situations.

Fits when: praising a useful range of skills

Not when: not as a reason to scatter someone's attention across every need

You are versatile, moving from analysis to facilitation without losing clarity.

Visionary adj. · professional

Able to foresee and shape ambitious future possibilities.

Fits when: praising forward-looking thinking tied to practical direction

Not when: not when a grand idea lacks evidence, ownership, or a workable next step

Your proposal is visionary because it pairs a bold future with a testable first step.

Formal encouragement

More reserved choices for public, ceremonial, or official settings.

Eloquent adj. · formal

Clear and persuasive in expression.

Fits when: praising speech or writing that gave an idea fitting words

Not when: not when plain directness was more valuable than polished language

You gave an eloquent account of why this work matters.

Esteemed adj. · formal

Held in high respect and warm regard.

Fits when: expressing serious respect in a formal or ceremonial setting

Not when: not in casual conversation where it would sound distant or inflated

You are esteemed by colleagues who have seen the care behind your work.

Exemplary adj. · formal

So good that it offers a model worth following.

Fits when: praising conduct that demonstrates a standard for others

Not when: not when calling someone a model would burden them with perfection

Your handling of the complaint was exemplary: calm, fair, and complete.

Judicious adj. · formal

Carefully chosen with sound judgment.

Fits when: praising a measured decision in a complex situation

Not when: not for a lucky result that was reached without adequate thought

Your judicious choice protected the budget without cutting the essential work.

Just adj. · formal

Consistent with fairness and right principle.

Fits when: recognizing a decision that treated people fairly

Not when: not when identical treatment ignored unequal needs or barriers

You reached a just decision after listening to everyone affected.

Laudable adj. · formal

Deserving praise for being good, useful, or honorable.

Fits when: recognizing a principled aim or commendable effort

Not when: not when good intentions are being used to overlook harmful results

Your goal of making the event accessible is laudable.

Noble adj. · formal

Guided by honorable and generous purpose.

Fits when: praising an aim or action guided by high principle

Not when: not to romanticize sacrifice that was coerced or avoidable

Your choice to defend the absent student was noble.

Unwavering adj. · formal

Remaining steady through doubt, difficulty, or pressure.

Fits when: honoring consistent support or principled commitment

Not when: not when flexibility would be wiser than absolute constancy

Your unwavering support gave her a safe place to recover.

Literary encouragement

Expressive choices for writing where a heightened tone is intentional.

Buoyant adj. · literary

Cheerful and able to recover spirit after a setback.

Fits when: praising a hopeful return after disappointment

Not when: not when someone is grieving and needs room for sadness

Your buoyant spirit returned without pretending the setback was easy.

Enduring adj. · literary

Continuing strongly over a long period.

Fits when: honoring a quality, bond, or contribution that has lasted

Not when: not to praise someone merely for tolerating preventable harm

Your enduring care has helped this family through years of change.

Expansive adj. · literary

Broad, open, and generous in range or possibility.

Fits when: praising thinking that made room for more people or options

Not when: not when a narrower and more practical focus is needed

Your expansive thinking helped us see possibilities beyond the first solution.

Indomitable adj. · literary

Too resolute to be readily defeated or discouraged.

Fits when: honoring unusual resolve after severe difficulty

Not when: not to suggest that someone must be invulnerable or never rest

Your indomitable resolve brought you back to the work after a painful setback.

Jovial adj. · literary

Cheerful, friendly, and ready for good company.

Fits when: appreciating good-humored company in a social setting

Not when: not when cheerfulness covered discomfort or excluded quieter people

Your jovial welcome helped the guests relax.

Luminous adj. · literary

Radiant, clear, or strikingly bright in effect.

Fits when: praising a presence, idea, or piece of expression with poetic warmth

Not when: not in plain professional feedback where it would sound obscure

Your luminous description made the night landscape feel close enough to touch.

Undaunted adj. · literary

Still determined and courageous after difficulty.

Fits when: honoring resolve that survived a serious setback

Not when: not to imply that fear or discouragement would be a failure

You returned undaunted, with a better plan and the same worthy goal.

Valiant adj. · literary

Showing courage and determination in difficulty.

Fits when: honoring a brave effort even when the outcome was uncertain

Not when: not to turn preventable suffering into a noble story

You made a valiant effort and stopped when continuing would have caused harm.

Playful encouragement

Light choices for a relationship or setting that can carry informality.

Gutsy adj. · playful

Showing bold courage and determination.

Fits when: cheering a spirited, worthwhile risk in informal conversation

Not when: not in formal settings or when the action was reckless

That was a gutsy pitch, and you backed it with a thoughtful plan.

Mighty adj. · playful

Possessing impressive strength or ability.

Fits when: giving spirited encouragement in an informal or playful setting

Not when: not for formal feedback or when the person needs permission to feel vulnerable

You are mighty enough to try again and wise enough to rest first.

Unstoppable adj. · playful

Continuing with unusually strong energy or resolve.

Fits when: cheering visible momentum in an informal setting

Not when: not to imply that rest, reconsideration, or failure is unacceptable

You look unstoppable today, and taking a break will not change that.