

What Could A Caring Friend of Family Member Tell My Estranged Child?

Q: "A friend of mine is going to my estranged daughter's wedding. She's someone that my daughter grew up with and thinks of as an aunt. I trust this friend not to do anything that would make my estrangement worse, but is there anything she could do or say that would make it better? In so much pain."

A: While I don't think it's ever useful for friends or family to actively advocate for the estranged parent, she could affectionately let your estranged child know that she loves her and that she loves you too. She could say that she doesn't want to be in the middle and knows that family life is tough, but hopes that you'll be able to work it out together. If your daughter complains about you, she can accept the complaints rather than refute them but try to return it with something like, "I understand but your mother also has a lot of wonderful qualities that maybe are a little harder to see right now. I know that she'd do anything to repair it if you become open to that..And if there's ever anything I can do to help move the ball forward, I'm happy to because I love you both." And then drop it.