



## A Fireman's Wish...



### I Wish You Could

#### **I wish you could see**

The sadness of a business man as his livelihood goes in flames or that family returning home, only to find their house and belongings damaged or destroyed.

#### **I wish you could see**

What it is to search a burning bedroom for trapped children, flames rolling above your head, your palms and knees burning as you crawl, the floor sagging under you weight as the kitchen beneath you burns.

#### **I wish you could see**

A wife's horror at 3 A.M. as I checked her husband of forty years for a pulse And find none. I start CPR anyway, hoping against the odds to bring him back, knowing intuitively it is too late. But wanting his wife and family to know that everything possible was done

#### **I wish you could see**

The unique smell of burning insulation, the taste of soot-filled mucus, the feeling of intense heat through your turnout gear. The sound of flames crackling, and the eeriness of being able to see absolutely nothing in dense smoke—sensations that I have become too familiar with.

#### **I wish you could see**

How it feels to go to work in the morning after having spent most of the night, hot and soaking wet at a multiple alarm fire.

#### **I wish you could read**

My mind as I respond to a building fire, 'is this a false alarm or a working, breathing fire? How is the building constructed? What hazards await me? Is anyone trapped or are they all out? Or to an EMS call, 'what is wrong with the patient? Is it minor or life-threatening? Is the caller really in distress or is he waiting for us with a 2x4 or a gun?'

#### **I wish you could see**

in the emergency room as the doctor pronounces dead the beautiful little five-year old girl that I have been trying to save for the past twenty-five minutes,

who will never go on her first date or say the words,  
“I love you Mommy,” again.

**I wish you could know**

the frustration I feel in the cab of the engine, the driver with his foot pressing down hard on the peddle, my arm tugging again and again at the air horn chain, as you fail to yield the right-of-way at the intersection or in traffic. When you need us, however, your first comment upon or arrival will be, “It took you forever to get here!”

**I wish you could read**

my thoughts as I help extricate a girl of teenage years from a mangled

remains of her automobile, ‘What if this were my sister, my girlfriend or friend? What were her parent’s reactions going to be as they open the door to find a police officer.



**I wish you could know**

how it feels to walk in the back door and greet my parents and family, not having the heart to tell them that I nearly did not come home from the last call

**I wish you could feel**

my hurt as people verbally ,and sometimes physically abuse us or belittle what we do, or as they express their attitudes of, It will never happen to me.

**I wish you could realize**

the physical, emotional, and mental drain of missed meals, lost sleep and forgone social activities ,in addition to all the tragedy my eyes have viewed.

**I wish you could know**

the brotherhood and self-satisfaction of helping save a life or preserving someone’s property, of being there in times of crisis, or creating order from total CHAOS.

**I wish you could understand**

what it feels like to have a little boy tugging on your arm and asking, “Is my Mommy O.K.?” Not even being able to look in his eyes without

tears falling from your own and not knowing what to say. Or to have to hold back a long-time friend who watches his buddy having rescue breathing done on him as they take him away in the ambulance. You knowing all along he did not have his seat belt on. Sensations that I have become too familiar with.

**Unless you have lived**

this kind of life, you will never truly understand or appreciate who I am, what we are, or what our job really means to us.

**I wish you could**

-unknown author-

