

Imagine

Poetry and Quotes

Table of Contents

A Human Being is Part of the Whole	2
Allow	2
Autobiography in Five Short Chapters	3
Be Gentle	4
Birthright	5
Comes the Dawn	6
Desiderata	7
Do Not Leave Your Room	8
Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep	9
Enough	9
Garbage	10
Guesthouse	10
Hope	11
Instructions for Living a Life	12
Irish Blessing	12
It's Okay	13
Kindness	14
Labyrinth	16
May Your Practice	17
Last Night as I Was Sleeping	17
May the Road	18
Meditate as an Act of Love	19
Mr. Rogers Quotes (Fall 2022 Retreat)	19
My Ancestry DNA Results Came In	21
People Travel to Wonder	22
Perhaps All The Dragons	23
Reconciliation and Loving-Kindness	23
The Bandaged Place	24
The Cure Begins	24

The Journey	25
The Laughing Heart	26
Unconditional	27
Walk, Don't Run	28
What Do We Know	29
Watch Your Thoughts	30
When You Come to the Edge	30
Wound is the Place	30
Your History is Here Inside Your Body	31

A Human Being is Part of the Whole

- Einstein

A human being is part of the whole, called by us 'Universe'; a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest -- a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Nobody is able to achieve this completely but striving for such achievement is, in itself, a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.

Allow

- Danna Faulds

There is no controlling life

Try corralling a lightning bolt,

containing a tornado. Dam a stream and it will create a new channel. Resist, and the tide will sweep you off your feet. Allow, and grace will carry you to higher ground. The only safety lies in letting it all in – the wild and the weak; fear, fantasies, failures and success. When loss rips off the doors of the heart, or sadness veils your vision with despair, practice becomes simply bearing the truth. In the choice to let go of your known way of being, the whole world is revealed to your new eyes.

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

- Portia Nelson

Chapter I

I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I am lost... I am hopeless.

It isn't my fault.

It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I am in this same place.

But it isn't my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it there.

I still fall in... it's a habit... but,

my eyes are open.

I know where I am.

It is my fault.

I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I walk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down another street.

Be Gentle

- Rachel Holstead

Be gentle with yourself these days.

Sometimes the currents beneath

bring tangles to our hearts

and we don't notice

and glide smoothly on

but wonder why we are

tired, or angry, or fractious.

Let yourself sit gently down

with your wise grandmother,

and let yourself

be a small child again in her arms,

and let whatever comes, come.

And when the small child

has done her crying,

set her gently on her feet again

and send her softly back out into the world.

And sit, as only grandmothers can,

calm and grounded,

wise with twinkling eyes,

amid the ups and downs

of this crazy world.

Birthright

- Danna Faulds

Despite illness of body or mind, in spite of blinding despair or habitual belief, who you are is whole.

Let nothing keep you separate from the truth.

The soul, illumined from within, longs to be known for what it is.

Undying, untouched by fire or the storms of life, there is a place inside where stillness and abiding peace reside.

You can ride the breath to go there.

Despite doubt or hopeless turns of mind, you are not broken.

Spirit surrounds, embraces, fills you from the inside out.

Release everything that isn't your true nature.

What's left, the fullness, light and shadow, claim all that as your birthright.

Comes the Dawn

- Veronica Shoffstall

After a while you learn the subtle difference,

Between holding a hand and chaining a soul.

And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning,

And company doesn't mean security.

And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts,

And presents aren't promises.

And you begin to accept your defeats,

With your head up and your eyes open,

With the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.

And you learn to build all your roads on today,

Because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans,
And futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.

After a while you learn,

That even sunshine burns if you get too much.

So you plant your garden and decorate your own soul,
Instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

And you learn that you really can endure...

That you really are strong,

And you really do have worth,

And you learn and learn,

With every goodbye you learn.

Desiderata

- Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter;

for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery.

But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself.

Especially, do not feign affection.

Neither be critical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be,

and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

Do Not Leave Your Room

- Franz Kafka

You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen.

Do not even listen, simply wait. Do not even wait, be quite still and solitary.

The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice,

it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

- Clare Harner

Do not stand at my grave and weep,

I am not there... I do not sleep.

I am the thousand winds that blow...

I am the diamond glints on snow...

I am the sunlight on ripened grain...

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you waken in the morning's hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of gentle birds in circling flight...

I am the soft star that shines at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry—

I am not there... I did not die...

Enough

- David Whyte

Enough. These few words are enough.

If not these words, this breath.

If not this breath, this sitting here.

This opening to the life

we have refused

again and again

until now.

Until now

Garbage

Thich Nhat Hahn

"Let us not run away from our garbage; we should learn the art of making compost. Using that compost we will grow a lot of flowers. Don't think that without compost you can have flowers. That is an illusion. You can have flowers only with compost.

Whatever you are looking for, freedom, joy, and stability, you know that

suffering plays a very important role in it. So be aware that we cannot just run away from our problems. In fact, we have to go back to our problems. The practice of calming, of concentrating, of embracing, of looking deeply into the nature of our pain, is absolutely necessary for us to get the transformation, the healing that we need so much."

Guesthouse

- Rumi

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Hope

- Victoria Safford

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope—
Not the prudent gates of Optimism,
Which are somewhat narrower.

Not the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;
Nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,
Which creak on shrill and angry hinges
(People cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through)
Nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of
"Everything is gonna' be all right."
But a different, sometimes lonely place,
The place of truth-telling,
About your own soul first of all and its condition.
The place of resistance and defiance,
The piece of ground from which you see the world
Both as it is and as it could be
As it will be;
The place from which you glimpse not only struggle,
But the joy of the struggle.
And we stand there, beckoning and calling,
Telling people what we are seeing
Asking people what they see.

Instructions for Living a Life

- Mary Oliver

Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,

May Love hold you in the palm of her hand.

May Life be with you and bless you:
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings.
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.

It's Okay

- Ayla Nereo

It's okay to be private, it's okay to cry,
it's okay to hold back or hold things inside.

It's okay to scream, to release them, to be seen, it's okay to be seen,
it's okay to receive.

It's okay to notice, to stop and to stare, cause the beauty it blinds you and holds you
right there.

It's okay to listen, one ear to the ground,
one ear to the sky tree street or heart that you pound.

It's okay to giggle a little to yourself, cause the Spirit, it tickles as it enters as sound...

it's okay to sing it, in fact, it's encouraged –
it don't matter how soft rough vivid or tender or out or in key, as long as you mean it,
as long as you mean it, you're giving permission for others to sing it...

and all things for that matter, go as deep as you feel it,
the deeper you mean it, the more the stars can hear it.

The deeper you mean it, the more healing can happen,
the earth heart opens,
connects to your own,
beating song light swimming, flying in space, floating like grace, alone and together,
and one,
and yet Still, an instant, an impulse, individual, tone beat sound, sing itself, singin self...

it's okay to pray, to be deep, to be light, to just breathe, it's okay to be exactly as you
are...

Your own self, your own self

Kindness

- Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is

you must lose things,

feel the future dissolve in a moment

like salt in a weakened broth.

What you held in your hand,

what you counted and carefully saved,

all this must go so you know

how desolate the landscape can be

between the regions of kindness.

How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.

You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.

You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and
purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head

from the crowd of the world to say
it is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you every where
like a shadow or a friend.

Labyrinth

- Rachel Holstead

Put your ear to the seashell of your mind
and listen to your stories,
the invisible lines you walk to.
Cast off instead and walk the labyrinth
where lines of life and death mingle
and the path goes only on.
Feel the comfort of boundary,
the terror of edge
and walk.
See the twists and the turns
and trust in their mystery
and walk and walk
and open your heart.
Bounded by flimsy branch and leaf,
let your heart expand
'til it meets the thorns.

Open your heart,
open your heart,
emerge at the heart
empty.

Stories fall out the doors of your opening heart
and catch on the thorns
and fade into autumn and earth.

From the empty centre,
walk the labyrinth,
walking the dance of alive and dead
and walk and walk
healing your heart,
and walk and walk
with an open heart.

May Your Practice

- by Gary Gach

May your practice nourish and sustain you during dark and light times,
may you be surprised by what is going on underground.

May you trust in your wholeness,
and may you appreciate the flowers of your own good heart.

Each breath, only this breath.

Each step, only this step.

Your presence is your message.

Your life is all of life, to be lived to the fullest. All the rest is commentary.

Last Night as I Was Sleeping

- A. Machado

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a spring was breaking
out in my heart.
I said: Along which secret aqueduct,
Oh water, are you coming to me,
water of a new life
that I have never drunk?

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that I had a beehive
here inside my heart.
And the golden bees
were making white combs
and sweet honey
from my old failures.

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a fiery sun was giving
light inside my heart.
It was fiery because I felt
warmth as from a hearth,
and sun because it gave light
and brought tears to my eyes.

Last night as I slept,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that it was God I had
here inside my heart.

May the Road

- Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May Love hold you in the palm of her hand.

May Life be with you and bless you:
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings.
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.

Meditate as an Act of Love

- Bob Sharples

Don't meditate to fix or heal yourself, to improve yourself; rather, do it as an act of love. In this way there is no longer any need for the subtle aggression of self-improvement, for the endless guilt of not doing enough. It offers the possibility of an end to the ceaseless round of trying so hard that wraps so many people's lives in a knot. Instead, practice meditation as an act of love.

Mr. Rogers Quotes (Fall 2022 Retreat)

"It's not the honors and the prizes and the fancy outsides of life which ultimately nourish our souls. It's the knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our very being is good stuff."

"Imagining something may be the first step in making it happen, but it takes the real time and real efforts of real people to learn things, make things, turn thoughts into deeds or visions into inventions."

"When we love a person, we accept him or her exactly as is: the lovely with the unlovely, the strong with the fearful, the true mixed in with the façade, and of course, the only way we can do it is by accepting ourselves that way."

"All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we're giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors—in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver."

"Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else."

"Love isn't a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like 'struggle.' To love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is, right here and now."

"Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving."

"Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving."

"Imagine what our real neighborhoods would be like if each of us offered, as a matter of course, just one kind word to another person."

"We all have different gifts, so we all have different ways of saying to the world who we are."

"We all have different gifts, so we all have different ways of saying to the world who we are."

"The thing I remember best about successful people I've met all through the years is their obvious delight in what they're doing and it seems to have very little to do with worldly success. They just love what they're doing, and they love it in front of others."

"I don't think anyone can grow unless he's loved exactly as he is now, appreciated for what he is rather than what he will be."

My Ancestry DNA Results Came In

- Fred LaMotte

Just as I suspected, my great great grandfather
was a monarch butterfly.

Much of who I am is still wriggling under a stone.
I am part larva, but part hummingbird too.

There is dinosaur tar in my bone marrow.
My golden hair sprang out of a meadow in Palestine.
Genghis Khan is my fourth cousin,
but I didn't get his dimples.

My loins are loaded with banyan seeds from Sri Lanka,
but I descended from Ravanna, not Ram.

My uncle is a mastodon.
There are traces of white people in my saliva.
3.7 billion years ago I swirled in golden dust,
dreaming of a planet overgrown with lingams and yonis.

More recently, say 60,000 B.C.
I walked on hairy paws across a land bridge

joining Sweden to Botswana.

I am the bastard of the sun and moon.

I can no longer hide my heritage of raindrops and cougar scat.

I am made of your grandmother's tears.

You conquered rival tribesmen of your own color,
chained them together, marched them naked to the coast,
and sold them to colonials from Savannah.

I was that brother you sold, I was the slave trader,
I was the chain.

Admit it, you have wings, vast and golden,
like mine, like mine.

You have sweat, black and salty,
like mine, like mine.

You have secrets silently singing in your blood,
like mine, like mine.

Don't pretend that earth is not one family.

Don't pretend we never hung from the same branch.

Don't pretend we don't ripen on each other's breath.

Don't pretend we didn't come here to forgive

People Travel to Wonder

- St. Augustine

People travel to wonder

at the height of the mountains,

at the huge waves of the seas,

at the long course of the rivers,
at the vast compass of the ocean,
at the circular motion of the stars,
and yet they pass by themselves
without wondering.

Perhaps All The Dragons

- Rainer Maria Rilke

Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.

Reconciliation and Loving-Kindness

- Florence Meleo- Meyer

For anyway that I have harmed myself
In thought, word or action,
Knowingly or unknowingly
May I make peace with myself
May I allow myself to be a student of life and make mistakes
May I be at peace with myself.
And if I can not reconcile with myself in this moment, may I be able to in the future.

For anyway that I have harmed you
In thought, word or action,
Knowingly or unknowingly
I ask for you to make peace with me.
May you allow me to be a student of life and make mistakes.
May you make peace with me.

And if you can not reconcile with me in this moment, may you be able to in the future

For anyway that you have harmed me

In thought, word or action,

Knowingly or unknowingly

May I offer peace to you

May I allow you to be a student of life and make mistakes

May greater peace grow in my heart towards you

And if I can not feel peace in this moment, may I be able to, somehow, grow into this in the future.

The Bandaged Place

- Rumi

Trust your wound to a teacher's surgery.

Flies collect on a wound.

They cover it, those flies of your self-protecting feelings,
your love for what you think is yours.

Let a Teacher wave away the flies and put a plaster on the wound.

Don't turn your head.

Keep looking at the bandaged place.

That's where

the Light enters you.

And don't believe for a moment that you're healing yourself.

The Cure Begins

- Francois Fenelon

As light of awareness increases,

We see ourselves,
to be worse than we thought.
We are amazed
at our former blindness,
As we see issuing forth,
from the depths of our heart,
a whole swarm
of shameful feelings,
Like filthy reptiles
crawling from a hidden cave.
We never would have believed,
that we had harboured such things,
And we stand aghast, (egaast)
as we watch them gradually appear.
But we must neither be
amazed or disheartened.
We are not worse,
than we were;
On the contrary,
We are better.
But while our faults diminish,
The light by which we see them
Waxes brighter,
And we are filled with horror.
Bear in mind,
For your comfort,
That we only perceive our malady
When the cure begins.

The Journey

- Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting

their bad advice-
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do-
determined to save
the only life you could save.

The Laughing Heart

- Charles Bukowski

your life is your life

don't let it be clubbed into dank submission.

be on the watch.

there are ways out.

there is a light somewhere.

it may not be much light but

it beats the darkness.

be on the watch.

the gods will offer you chances.

know them.

take them.

you can't beat death but

you can beat death in life, sometimes.

and the more often you learn to do it,

the more light there will be.

your life is your life.

know it while you have it.

you are marvelous

the gods wait to delight

in you.

Unconditional

- Jennifer Paine Welwood

Willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere;
Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within;
Opening to my loss,
I gain the embrace of the universe;
Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.
Each condition I flee from pursues me,
Each condition I welcome transforms me
And becomes itself transformed
into its radiant jewel-like essence.

Walk, Don't Run

- Rob Bell

Walk, don't run.
That's it.
Walk, don't run.

Slow down, breathe deeply,
and open your eyes because there's
a whole world right here within this one. The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire, it's
been burning the whole time.

Moses is simply moving
slowly enough to see it. And when he does,
he takes off his sandals.

Not because
the ground has suddenly become holy,
but because he's just now becoming aware that
the ground has been holy the whole time.

Efficiency is not the highest goal for your life,
neither is busyness,
or how many things you can get done in one day,
or speed, or even success.

But walking,
which leads to seeing,
now that's something.

That's the invitation for every one of us today,
and everyday, in every conversation, interaction,
event, and moment: to walk, not run. And in doing so,
to see a whole world right here within this one.

What Do We Know

- Mary Oliver

The sky cleared
I was standing
under a tree.
and there were stars in the sky
that were also themselves
at the moment
at which moment
my right hand
was holding my left hand

which was holding the tree
which was filled with stars
and the soft rain —
imagine! Imagine!
the long and wondrous journeys
still to be ours.

Watch Your Thoughts

- Lao Tzy

Watch your thoughts for they become words.
Watch your words, for they become actions.
Watch your actions, for they become...habits.
Watch your habits, for they become your character.
And watch your character, for it becomes your destiny!
What we think we become.

When You Come to the Edge

- Patrick Overton

“When you come to the edge of all the light you have, and must take a step into the darkness of the unknown, believe that one of two things will happen. Either there will be something solid for you to stand on - or you will be taught how to fly.”

Wound is the Place

- Rumi

Trust your wound to a teacher's surgery.
Flies collect on a wound.
They cover it, those flies of your self-protecting feelings,

your love for what you think is yours.

Let a Teacher wave away the flies and put a plaster on the wound.

Don't turn your head.

Keep looking at the bandaged place.

That's where

the Light enters you.

And don't believe for a moment that you're healing yourself.

Your History is Here Inside Your Body

- Martha Elliot

Your history is here inside your body.

Your body is your storehouse

of learnings, feelings, thoughts, and experiences.

Only waiting to be invited to reveal your treasures to yourself.

Help yourself.

As you let the learning emerge

and take shape, you can appreciate

the wisdom of your body.

Each cell alive with

spirit, emotion and intelligence.

Ready to help you at any moment,

always with you and for you.