

# Imagine

## Poetry and Quotes

### Table of Contents

A Human Being is Part of the Whole	2
Allow	3
Autobiography in Five Short Chapters	4
Be Gentle	5
Birthright	6
Comes the Dawn	6
Desiderata	7
Do Not Leave Your Room	9
Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep	9
Enough	10
Guesthouse	10
Hope	11
Instructions for Living a Life	12
It's Okay	12
Kindness	13
Labyrinth	15
May Your Practice	17
Last Night as I Was Sleeping	17
May the Road	18
Meditate as an Act of Love	19
My Ancestry DNA Results Came In	19

People Travel to Wonder	21
Perhaps All The Dragons	21
The Bandaged Place	21
The Cure Begins	22
The Journey	23
The Laughing Heart	24
Unconditional	25
Walk, Don't Run	26
What Do We Know	27
Watch Your Thoughts	28
When You Come to the Edge	28
Wound is the Place	28
Your History is Here Inside Your Body	29

---

## 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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.