

The Heart of Abundance:

A Simple Guide to Appreciating and Enjoying Life

by Candy Paull

Obooko edition
Copyright ©2011 by Candy Paull
Nashville, TN 37215

Website: <http://www.candypaull.com/>
Website: <http://www.candypaull.net/>
Blog: <http://candypaull.com/blog.htm>

Cover design by: Candy Paull
Cover photo by: Candy Paull
Editorial assistance: Ellen Paull

Obooko Edition, License Notes

Thank you for downloading this free e-book. You are welcome to share it with your friends. This book may be reproduced, copied and distributed for non-commercial purposes, provided the book remains in its complete original form. If you enjoyed this book, please return to candypaull.com to discover other works by this author. Thank you for your support.

@2011 License addendum for The Heart of Abundance from the author:

The text-only e-book edition is free and you may pass it along to whomever you please. I only ask that you remember I make my living from selling my books in many formats, and your willingness to buy my products supports me and honors our relationship. If you want to quote portions for your blog, thank you for including credit and a link to my website candypaull.com.

Though I offer the e-book itself for free, thank you for protecting the use of my copyrights in all other instances. It is my hope that the support of those who can pay for my works will make it possible for the abundance to be shared with all, regardless of ability to pay.

And remember that whatever your monetary resources might be, you can always share the gift of abundance from your heart. I offer this e-book edition of The Heart of Abundance as a gift of love and as an act of faith in the new gift economy that is developing. It is my joy to share my gifts in a larger and more abundant way.
Candy Paull

There is a great gift when we realize that the journey of life is guided by our willingness to believe in ourselves and know that with God, all things are possible. This kind of abundance cannot be measured, only celebrated. Candy Paull's breathtakingly beautiful photographs and wonderful words of wisdom will remind you of a simple yet profound truth: The journey to claim your abundance begins within.

Rev. Donna Michael, recording artist, forgiveness coach, speaker

Candy Paull's writing is the readable equivalent of Earl Grey tea, steeped in a pot, and served in your grandmother's china. That is: it warms you through and through.

Victoria Moran, bestselling author of *Creating a Charmed Life*

The Heart of Abundance

A Simple Guide to Appreciating and Enjoying Life

The Heart of Abundance is a “best of” collection from Candy Paull’s books, including the bestselling book *The Art of Abundance*. Discover more abundance, encouragement, and simplicity in your life. Be present in the moment, see the divine at work in all circumstances, and experience ordinary life as sacred. Learn to practice the art of abundance as a form of spiritual awareness based in gratitude. This free e-book helps you enjoy the life you have and create a life you enjoy.

Introduction

The Art of Abundance was first published in 1998 and eventually sold over 80,000 copies through my first publisher. As the fortunes of my career and the publishing industry waxed and waned, I went on to write other books and to work with many publishers. Eventually the three Artful Living books were published in 2006 with Stewart, Tabori & Chang. They created amazingly beautiful packages, but the upheavals in 2009 proved too much and the books went out of print. Thanks to a fabulous agent who negotiated a great deal, my rights were returned to me. Now I have the opportunity to publish them on Smashwords.com, where I published my first e-book, *Inner Abundance*, on September 11, 2009. I was determined to have that date mean more than an act of destruction, so I made it a day of creative revolution. Now the revolution—or should I say, the evolution—continues.

I have been greatly influenced in my understanding of the Internet infrastructure and its burgeoning possibilities thanks to visionaries like Seth Godin, Chris Guillebeau, Christine Kane, and Pam Slim, among others. Their insistence on the gift economy and making information freely available has convinced me that it is time to share some of the

best from my books, especially key concepts from *The Art of Abundance*, the book that started it all. *The Heart of Abundance* offers excerpts from several of my books in a free e-book format. It's a good introduction to the other books and products I will be offering for sale on Smashwords.com and in other venues. Please continue to check back at candypaull.com or candypaull.net to see what other books and formats I will be releasing.

We live in transformational times. When the road to transformation gets bumpy and we feel lost and disoriented, it is even more important to ground ourselves in the firm realities of daily life. Mindful living, slowing down to notice and savor the blessings and beauty of the ordinary, and soothing our spirits with thoughtful and loving actions can help us through times of doubt, despair, and loss. Practicing the art of abundance is a form of spiritual awareness based in gratitude.

Everyone has something to be grateful for, no matter how dire the situation might seem to be. The little "Abundance is..." observations can be a springboard to inspire you to discover the abundance, encouragement, and simplicity in your life. By being present in the moment, seeing God at work no matter what the circumstance, and experiencing ordinary life as sacred, you can begin to heal yourself so that you might reach out and heal the world.

May *The Heart of Abundance* bless every person who reads or shares it with others. May it find its home in hearts around the globe, freely and gently, from my heart to your heart.

Your abundance is my abundance.

Celebrate the abundance!

Candy Paull

I feel an earnest and humble desire, and shall do till I die, to increase the stock of harmless cheerfulness.

Charles Dickens

Abundance Prayer

When I am afraid, I ask myself:
How can I give more to life?
When I am tangled in past regrets
or frightening stories of the future,
I bring myself into the present moment
And know that I am safe.
When I am tempted to complain
I choose praise and gratitude.
I take a deep breath.

I look around and see
How rich I am in the things that count.
I look within and see my unlimited potential
I realize that every moment is filled with blessings
and every day I am alive
is a gift to be grateful for.
I remember that God is my Source
and abundance is reflected
in the faces of the people I love
and in the faces of those
I have yet to learn to love.
Eternally, this abundance says:
Every family is my family.
Every success is my success.
Every bride is my beauty
and every bridegroom my Beloved.
Every child is my new beginning
and every elder is my life ripe with experience.
Every dawn is my new day.
Every sunset is my world turning.
Every season is good
and offers its bounty to me.
Every moment is mine to embrace
for it is the Eternal Now
forever expressing in, through, and for me.
I live in the Forever Here
that is alive in all.
Translucent grace shines in us,
awake and aware of the beauty we are
as we become all we were meant to be.
And so it is.

*For it is in giving we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.*
Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Judge not and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned;
forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure,
pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure
you give will be the measure you get back.
Luke 6:37-38 (RSV)

*The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to
him his own.*

Benjamin Disraeli

We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.

Ben Sweetland

Nothing is really ours until we share it.

C. S. Lewis

Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything.

1 Peter 4:8 The Message

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.

Mother Teresa

What we see depends mainly on what we look for.

John Lubbock

In all ranks of life the human heart yearns for the beautiful, and the beautiful things that God makes are his gifts to all alike.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Touch the earth, love the earth, honour the earth, her plains, her valleys, her hills, and her seas; rest your spirit in her solitary places.

Henry Beston

Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invisible host against difficulty.

Helen Keller

An unshared life is not living. He who shares does not lessen, but greatens, his life.

Stephen S. Wise

No Fear In Love

There is no fear in love . . .

1 John 4:18

Fear believes . . . there is never enough.

Love believes . . . there is plenty for everyone.

Fear believes . . . the worst about people and situations.

Love believes . . . the best about people and situations.

Fear believes . . . there is only one right answer.

Love believes . . . there are many ways to understand something.

Fear believes . . . you have to change others through manipulation and coercion to get what you want.

Love believes . . . real change comes from the heart, starting with your own heart.

Fear believes . . . things will never change.

Love believes . . . any situation can be transformed by the power of love.

Fear believes . . . that everything must be mapped out ahead of time.

Love believes . . . that you can trust the process.

Fear believes . . . in negative thinking.

Love believes . . . in positive choice.

Fear believes . . . the damage is done.

Love believes . . . healing can happen.

Fear believes . . . if you're not a success by now, you must be a failure.

Love believes . . . you're only a failure if you give up on your dreams.

Fear believes . . . I must do everything with my own strength.

Love believes . . . there is a Higher Power that wants to help me.

Fear believes . . . that everything needs to be hyped.

Love believes . . . in quiet strength and simple faith.

Fear believes . . . life is cheap.

Love believes . . . life is precious.

Fear believes . . . anyone different is "them."

Love believes . . . there is only "us."

Fear believes . . . it's too late.

Love believes . . . it's never too late.

Fear believes . . . the situation is impossible.

Love believes . . . a solution can be found.

Fear believes . . . that fifteen minutes of fame makes you important.

Love believes . . . we are all important.

Fear believes . . . people are disposable commodities.

Love believes . . . people are sacred.

Fear believes . . . in proving your own superiority over others.
Love believes . . . in honoring the greatness in others.

Fear believes . . . no one is listening and no one cares.
Love believes . . . in prayer.

Fear believes . . . effort is only justified by outward success.
Love believes . . . sometimes we need to do something for its own sake.

Where there is great love, there are always miracles.
Willa Cather

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply.
Romans 12:9-10 The Message

Providence is the care God takes of all existing things.
John of Damascus

Trust God for great things; with your five loaves and two fishes, He will show you a way to feed thousands.
Horace Bushnell

The Art of Abundance

A Simple Guide to Discovering Life's Treasures

Abundance is...not how much I own but how much I appreciate.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
John 10:10 (KJV)

Abundance is... a pink and lavender sunset sky.

Abundance is... the smell of fresh baked chocolate chip cookies.

Abundance is... an unexpected phone call from a friend.

Be alert for the unpredicted presence of God unexpectedly intruding upon your everyday life.
M. Scott Peck

The art of abundance is not about greed or selfishness. The art of abundance is about celebrating life right now, this minute. It is a way of looking at the potential your life holds—the little blessings to be thankful for now and the gifts that God wants to give you, if you'll just open your heart to receive. It's about being enthusiastic about life every day, not just on the rare occasions when everything seems to be going your way. The art of abundance is finding the provision in what is right in front of you, seeing the hand of God already giving you what you need, moment by moment. Then sharing the abundant blessings God has given with others. And completing the circle of giving by praising the One who gave the gifts for us to enjoy.

Write in your heart that every day is the best day of the year.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Abundance is... wildflowers in a mason jar.

Abundance is... the stars on a clear night.

Be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail.

John Donne

Abundance is...creating something special out of the ordinary.

Abundance is... the look of wonder in a two-year-old child's eyes.

Abundance is... the first lick of an ice cream cone.

Abundance is... cows in clover.

For I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for your good, not to destroy you or bring evil to you. These plans are for a future full of hope and promise.

Jeremiah 29:11 (Author's paraphrase)

Choice of attention—to pay attention to this and ignore that—is to the inner life what choice of action is to the outer. In both cases, a man is responsible for his choice and must accept the consequences.

W. H. Auden

Overcoming Fears

I first started consciously practicing the art of abundance a few years ago. My parents had always shared their delight in small things—the view from the front window, the comings and goings of birds and wildlife, the pleasure of flowers on the table and well-cooked food, the joy of reading—but it wasn't until I became an adult that I realized how rich their lives have always been in celebrating the small abundances of life.

Abundance is...a rich red oriental rug.

Abundance is...a vase full of roses from the garden.

Abundance is...watching the seasons change outside your window.

As a freelance writer, I've had times of plenty—but I've had a lot more times of doing without, making do, or just plain being frustrated by a short financial leash. And many times of being scared, because I didn't know how my bills were going to get paid. It seemed I could barely manage the basics, let alone the extras.

But when I learned to live the abundant life, I began to feel rich in spite of fluctuating finances. And I firmly believe that most of the improvements in my financial situation have come about because I learned to stop being fearful and start being creatively thankful. By being receptive to the gifts I had already received, greater gifts came more freely. God was at last able to give the gifts He's been wanting to give me all along.

I also learned how to react to life differently. It didn't come all at once. I didn't suddenly wake up one day and say, "Gee, if I'd just see the glass as half full instead of half empty, I'd enjoy life more." I learned incrementally, one small lesson on top of another small lesson, with the big picture coming slowly into focus.

Once I began to look at life through a more positive lens, I found I had more energy and was able to enjoy the opportunities that came my way because I was no longer blinded by my fear. I could say "yes" to life. I learned that creativity grows in feelings of abundance. And I discovered that my thankfulness for current blessings made me aware of other abundances that I might otherwise have blindly overlooked.

Abundance is...having enough for today.

Abundance is... a warm bed to fall into when you are tired.

Abundance is...pink lemonade.

Abundance is...freshly picked red strawberries and rich white cream in a cobalt blue bowl.

Light tomorrow with today.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Abundance is...ivy and morning glories in a vacant lot.

Abundance is...being able to say "yes."

Abundance is...being able to say "no."

The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions—the little soon forgotten charities of a kiss or smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment, and the countless infinitesimals of pleasurable and genial feeling.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Abundance is...a sunny day when you expected stormy weather.

Abundance is...the first page of a new novel from a favorite author.

Abundance is... a full moon playing hide and seek with the clouds.

Always leave enough time in your life to do something that makes you happy, satisfied, even joyous. That has more of an effect on economic well-being than any other single factor.

Paul Hawken

Abundance is... nurturing a tiny seedling.

Abundance is...bath time for little ones.

Abundance is...a child learning her ABCs.

Abundance is...being able to read this page.

Only the individual with a healthy, wholesome self-view will feel inwardly rich when he or she is outwardly broke.

Marsha Sinetar

*Truth exists for the wise,
beauty for the feeling heart.*

Johann von Schiller

Abundance is...the ability to look at life with the eyes of an appreciative lover.

In every man's heart there is a secret nerve that answers to the vibrations of beauty.

Christopher Morley

Abundance is...taking the long scenic route home.

The strength and happiness of a man consists in finding out the way in which God is going, and going in that way too.

Henry Ward Beecher

Abundance is...pigeons flying into a church bell tower.

Abundance is...a cat purring in your lap.

Abundance is...freshly popped popcorn.

Blessed is everyone that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Psalm 128:1-2 (KJV)

Abundance is...the face of someone who has survived the storms of life with faith and gratitude.

Abundance is...a dance studio full of eager little ballerinas.

Happiness lies in the absorption in some vocation which satisfies the soul.
Henry Ward Beecher

Abundance is...a box of crayons and a clean sheet of paper.

Abundance is...a bouquet of fresh flowers and a vase to arrange them in.

Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men.
Colossians 3:23 (RSV)

Abundance is...a piano recital where parents are as nervous watching as the children are performing.

A New Way of Looking At Life

In some ways I consider practicing the art of abundance as a way of practicing the art of seeing. Artists train themselves to really look at the world around them. And they don't see through everybody else's frame of reference. They discover their own unique vantage point and then express what they've seen in creative ways.

That's what this little book is all about. It's a visual aid, a spiritual tool for learning to look at your own life in healing, creative ways. It is a way to cultivate opportunity for observation and practice the discipline of simple thankfulness to the Creator. When I practice seeing and experiencing my life through the lens of hope and gratitude, I find that life expands in new and unexpected ways.

Practicing the art of abundance means looking at the world as it is, right in front of you, not as you think it should be. It is a way of letting go of expectations and letting what is, what already exists, speak to you in a new way.

Abundance is... an old hound dog dozing on the porch.

Abundance is... a pair of warm hazel eyes.

The world is God's language to us.
Simone Weil

Abundance is...the velvet petals of a newly opened flower.

Abundance is...chicks in an incubator.

Abundance is...a maternity ward.

Look at the lilies and the way they grow. They do not toil. They do not spin. Yet I tell you, even King Solomon in all his glory was never dressed as wonderfully as these.
Luke 12:27 (Author's paraphrase)

Abundance is...tall tall redwoods creating a hushed mountain cathedral.

Abundance is...a pink rose surrounded by a constellation of baby's breath.

Abundance is... an art gallery full of paintings.

Art is the demonstration that the ordinary is extraordinary.
Amedee Ozenfant

Abundance is...an afternoon in a meadow with canvas, easel, paintbrush—and butterflies!

Abundance is...the first daffodils of spring.

Abundance is...white clouds dancing across the sky.

Abundance is...paying attention to the moment here and now.

Abundance is... the swish of clear clean water from a faucet.

One of the most important—and most neglected—elements in the beginnings of the interior life is the ability to respond to reality, to see the value and the beauty in ordinary things, to come alive to the splendor that is all around us in the creatures of God.
Thomas Merton

Abundance is...a window box of purple and gold pansies.

Abundance is...a slice of moon in a cold winter sky.

Abundance is... crisp shiny apples on a fall afternoon.

Abundance is...an exercise class to stretch and tone your body.

Abundance is...white wicker chair on a shady porch.

Every believer must be a kind of psalmist, either literally or privately. That living itself has been given, at least in part, as a way of knowing God intimately. Every event takes on a significance in that context, for there is no waste in experience.

Phyllis A. Tickle

Abundance is...a pure white mountain peak rising above wildflower meadows.

Abundance is...fireflies twinkling like stars on the lawn.

Abundance is...the salt-smell of an ocean breeze.

Abundance is...a hawk making lazy circles in the sky.

Celebrate the Abundant Life

As you master simple practical ways to nurture abundance, you will discover new avenues to receive and enjoy and be thankful for the gift of life.

Venture forth and develop your own creative response by seeing the small gifts life gives. I can almost guarantee that if you take even one baby step, you will find a response in the universe, an embracing and a joyous welcome from the Father to a prodigal child who has wasted so many precious hours of life worrying about what was lacking and being blind to the loving abundance all around her.

God bless you as you begin your personal pilgrimage into the kingdom of abundance. Come celebrate the abundant life!

Abundance is... children and puppies rolling in the grass.

May your laughter be from God.

Irish Proverb

Abundance is...citronella keeping bugs away on a summer night.

Abundance is...a door that opens to let you in.

Abundance is...macaroni and cheese when you want comfort food.

Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has many; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

Charles Dickens

Abundance is...a rest stop on a long hike.

Abundance is...a Little League baseball game on a soft spring afternoon.

Gratitude is born in hearts that take time to count up past mercies.

Charles E. Jefferson

Happiness is itself a kind of gratitude.

Joseph Wood Krutch

Abundance is...a fresh coat of paint.

Abundance is...bare branches against the winter sunset.

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

II Corinthians 9:10 (RSV)

Abundance is...an hour before it's time for bed.

Abundance Is...

Celebrating abundance is the best antidote I know of for fear: fear that whispers there won't be enough for tomorrow, fear that hisses "things will never improve," fear that dominates and tortures, telling you that you're helpless and God has forgotten you. Don't believe it.

Start looking at what you already have. Start with basics like, "I'm still breathing." Make a game seeing how many positives there are in your life. Then start counting the little things, the tiny joys a moment can bring. Open your eyes to see the wonder of the world you live in. I call this the Abundance is... game. Here is a sampling:

Abundance is... a cool breeze on a summer evening.

Abundance is... a song to sustain you through a dark night.

Abundance is... blue jays fighting over the birdseed in a bird feeder.

Abundance is... ginger cookies that snap.

Abundance is... the opening chords of the Hallelujah Chorus.

Abundance is... warm hands on a cold winter day.

Abundance is... someone who asks how you're doing (and really wants to know!).

Abundance is... the smell of a steak sizzling on a neighbor's barbecue.

Abundance is... a cat basking in the sun.

Abundance is... a can opener that really works.

Abundance is... a white church steeple against a bright blue sky.

Abundance is... a flock of geese winging their way south on a sunny fall day.

Abundance is... the first day of a long vacation.

Abundance is... the feel of a fine tool in your hand.

Abundance is... the sharp smell of fallen pine needles.
Abundance is... the opening scene of a favorite movie.
Abundance is... all the different noses on all the different faces in the world.
Abundance is... walking into a public library.
Abundance is... a busy airport.
Abundance is... browsing in a fabric store.
Abundance is... when you get more than you anticipated.
Abundance is... sunlight creating rainbows as it shines through a crystal prism.
Abundance is... an understanding friend.
Abundance is... dandelion seeds blowing in the wind.
Abundance is... a thankful heart.
Abundance is... _____ (make up your own!)

Start playing this celebratory game by looking at your life. It's not only the little things to be thankful for. It's the things that illustrate potential:

Abundance... is a full tank of gas.
Abundance is... a tree loaded with apple blossoms.
Abundance is... a telephone line that's connected.
Abundance is... flour, sugar, butter, salt, eggs, a recipe, and a kitchen to bake a cake in.
Abundance is... a smiling four-year-old.
Abundance is... a box full of kittens.
Abundance is... an hour to play in the park on a sunny day.
Abundance is... the first day you feel better after having the flu.
Abundance is... a crocus peeking its head out of the snow.
Abundance is... the little tight green buds of spring.

Share the Abundance

True abundance is love in action. God in love gives to us. We, in turn, give to others. We can be a part of the chain of love, making a circle of giving that makes its way back around to us in God's good time.

We are made for giving and sharing. True abundance opens its arms to others. Sometimes we get so busy we forget how important being with others can be. Make time in your life for the small joys of giving, sharing, and togetherness.

It must be obvious to those who take time to look at human life that its greatest values lie not in getting things, but in doing them, in doing them together, in all working toward a common aim, in the experience of comradeship, of warmhearted 100 percent human life.
W. T. Grant

Abundance is... teaching a child about gardens.

Abundance is... a cool hand on a hot forehead.

The races of mankind would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time the mother binds the child's head till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help.

Sir Walter Scott

Abundance is...offering encouragement instead of objections.

Abundance is...respecting others' dreams and differences.

Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil; our great hope lies in developing what is good.

Calvin Coolidge

Abundance is...listening to a three-year-old explain his world to you.

God has given us two hands—one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing.

Billy Graham

Abundance is...a warm shoulder in a cold world.

Spend a few hours with a friend, a loved one, or a child. Make a protected time for just the two of you. Do something fun, something relaxing, and something that gives you time and space to talk about life.

Abundance is...a tickle and a cuddle.

Abundance is...telling stories, enjoying good food, and sitting around the table laughing.

Giving is the secret of a healthy life. Not necessarily money, but whatever a man has of encouragement and sympathy and understanding.

John D. Rockefeller Jr.

Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.

I Peter 4:8 (RSV)

Give what you have. To someone it may be better than you dare think.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Abundance is...the good Samaritan who helped you fix a flat tire.

Abundance is...a compliment on how you look.

Wrap a present. Buy small gifts to surprise others. Don't wait for birthdays or holidays. Sometimes the most wonderful gifts are the unexpected ones. Give a gift that says, "This isn't because of any obligation, but just because I think you're wonderful."

Abundance is...finding the perfect gift for someone you love.

All who would win joy, must share it; happiness was born a twin.

Lord Byron

Abundance is...a handful of wildflowers.

Abundance is...children's drawings hanging on the refrigerator door.

Abundance is...hugs and kisses at a family reunion.

Abundance is...a jigsaw puzzle to put together.

The smallest actual good is better than the most magnificent promise of impossibilities.

Macaulay

Abundance is...a smile from a perfect stranger.

Abundance is...golden maple leaves carpeting a forest floor.

Abundance is...a jack-o-lantern grinning at you from a doorstep.

Abundance is...a comfortable chair.

Abundance is...weeds and wild things.

Abundance is... little kids and mud puddles.

Abundance is... snowflakes in a snowstorm.

Abundance is... the potential of every child born on this earth.

Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has its own challenges to face.

Matthew 6:34 (Author's paraphrase)

Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.

Anne Frank

Today is for itself enough...

Shelley

Abundance is...the graceful curve of a fragrant white lily.

Abundance is...someone saying "yes" to your request.

Abundance is...a dog and two kids rolling in the grass.

There is the music of Heaven in all things.

Hildegard of Bingen

Abundance is...running through the sprinkler.

Abundance is...a bowl of Mom's potato salad.

Difficult times have helped me to understand better than before how infinitely rich and beautiful life is in every way and that so many things that one goes worrying about are of no importance whatsoever.

Isak Dineson

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Philippians 4:8 (RSV)

The Art of Encouragement

A Simple Guide to Living Life from the Heart

Encouragement is... inspiring each other to embrace life with enthusiasm, courage, and love.

Encouragement is... a warm shoulder in a cold world.

Encouragement is... a cup of tea and a listening ear.

Encouragement is... being loved for who I am.

Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the world together.

Woodrow Wilson

Encouragement is... seeing the unique beauty in another person.

Encouragement is... saying "I love you."

Encouragement is... a card sent for no special occasion, just because.

By consistently choosing love rather than fear, we can experience a personal transformation that enables us to be more naturally loving to ourselves and others. In this way we can begin to recognize and experience the love and joy that unites us.

Dr. Jerry Jampolsky

You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have really lived are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love.

Henry Drummond

Encouragement is the art of abundance shared and multiplied. It is a way of living that seeks to bless every person we meet. Encouragement looks at what we can be, believes in the best in each of us. Encouragement is love in action. It is taking time to appreciate everyone we meet.

When the world and all its pressures take the heart out of us, we need to know that someone cares for and believes in us. And we need to do the same for others. Encouragement means taking time to let God encourage us, to meditate on the small miracles of life. Enthusiasm and courage, love and appreciation, practical acts of mercy and compassion — that's the way of encouragement. The art of encouragement is the art of creating community and celebrating friendship.

I encourage you to make a circle of giving. Dare to dream for yourself, for one another, for your community, and for our world. *The Art of Encouragement* offers a collection of quotes, meditations, and ideas for encouraging ourselves, encouraging others, and making a difference in our own corner of the world. Say yes to the deepest promptings of your heart and create a life that nurtures your soul.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Real encouragement that makes a lasting difference is visionary. It is the willingness to imagine a good future, the choice to believe in a better world. It is not critical, tearing people down and nitpicking at their faults, but instead valuing their uniqueness and seeing potential that they may not be able to see for themselves. In many ways, a true encourager functions as a personal prophet, helping others discover their own potential and make it incarnate in the physical world.

Real encouragement sees us as we yearn to be seen, sees others as they long to be seen, and the world as it is meant to be seen. Yes, there are faults, problems, evil—but there is an original vision that our deepest hearts know is the true vision. Real encouragers are willing to be fools in the eyes of cynics because they have a great vision, like Martin Luther King, who dared to say to a country, "I have a dream . . . "

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.

Anaïs Nin

Follow the grain in your own wood.

Howard Thurman

Self-conquest is really self-surrender. Yet before we can surrender ourselves we must become ourselves. For no one can give up what he does not possess.

Thomas Merton

When we learn the art of encouragement, we learn to see the good in ourselves, as well as in others. Before we can give to others, we must have something to give. We become like gardeners who look at bare soil and see the flowers and fruit that could grow there. Or we become like architects who envision a beautiful building on an empty lot. A gardener sees what the garden can be and then takes practical steps to plant, weed, cultivate, water, wait, and eventually reap a good harvest. An architect imagines what a building can be, examines the site, draws up the plan, and works with the construction team and the new owners to create a place where others will live, work, and play.

Encouragers do not merely set goals but reach for the stars. They dare to dream first, then find ways to make the dream come true. Yet they do not force their patterns or desires on others. Instead they become visionaries who see the unique fingerprint of God in every person and treasure the sacredness of each human being, including themselves.

What do you dare to dream for yourself?

What do you dare to dream for others?

What do you dare to dream for your community?

What do you dare to dream for our world?

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

Mankind's role is to fulfill his heaven-sent purpose through a sincere heart that is in harmony with all creation and loves all things.

Morihei Ueshiba

I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.

Mother Teresa

This seeing and encouraging of potential in people and circumstances can't just remain a neat, pretty vision in the mind. It needs to be acted out, incarnated (fleshed out, made real) in this physical world where we live, move, and have our being. Small specific acts of encouragement help us move from our heads and hearts to our hands and feet.

Here are some simple ideas that make love visible and physical:

- Take time to share a nurturing meal.
- Write cards and letters.

- When you are thinking of someone, pick up the phone and call.
- Say it with flowers.
- Give little gifts that say "I'm thinking of you," even when there is no special occasion.
- Share back rubs, hugs, touching, cuddling.
- Smile.
- Say a few kind words.
- Welcome others into your home.
- Organize your closet and give clothes you never wear to someone who can use them.
- Offer to drive someone to a doctor's appointment.
- Love a pet.
- Plant some seeds and grow a garden.
- Make a big pot of soup and share it.
- Take time to listen to a friend.
- Volunteer.
- Say thank you.

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

Charles Dickens

Helping others, that's the main thing. The only way for us to help ourselves is to help others and to listen to each other's stories.

Eli Wiesel

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

I Corinthians 13:7 (RSV)

The capacity to be of service to the greater good requires that we have the security to risk our image, our position, and our pride in the search for greater justice—at the workplace, in our families, and in our community at large.

Mark Bryan, Julia Cameron, and Catherine Allen

If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

We know God wipes away all tears, but it certainly feels good when He uses human hands.

Mary Paulson-Lauda

Every man rejoices twice when he has a partner in his joy. He who shares tears with us wipes them away. He divides them in two, and he who laughs with us makes the joy double.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

Bear one another's burdens...
Galatians 6:2 (RSV)

Permission Granted

Think of yourself as an incandescent power, illuminated and perhaps forever talked to by God and His messengers.

Brenda Ueland

You have permission to be who you are. You have permission to love what you love. You have permission to be with the people you wish to be with and to do the things you want to do. You have permission to ask questions, to experience all the pains and pleasures of your life.

You have permission to listen to your body's needs and to meet those needs. You have permission to explore your inner heart. You do not have to separate yourself into airtight compartments labeled *body, mind, soul, spirit*. You have permission to be a whole person, not a fragmented collection of miscellaneous parts.

You have permission to wait for divine guidance. Divine Source gives you permission to be who you are right now—and will help you become all that you were born to be. God is an artist and you are a work of art, unique and beautiful. You are a work of art in progress, a divine poem being written on the pages of time.

You don't have to twist yourself into a pretzel to become someone you are not. You don't have to squeeze yourself into a tight little box to fit someone else's expectations. The universe has given you permission to be yourself.

Breathe a sigh of relief. Let go of what you have been holding onto so tightly. Open your hands and release your spirit. Let the Divine Presence enter the temple of your heart. Allow healing to begin. Allow growth and change to happen. It will be all right. Let life flow through the center of your being. Bask in the sunlight of God's love. You are beloved and you are becoming. God is removing all obstacles, all stumbling blocks, all sin, disappointment, and failure. You have spent too much time beating yourself up for the wrong reasons. No one needs to tell you about your sins, your shortcomings, and all the times you failed to make the right decision and follow through on it. You know these things in your heart of hearts. Your very cells carry the memory and the pain.

But God does not leave you in your misery. The divine intent is life—God is the fullness of life itself, and you share in that fullness. The source that drives the green shoot of spring's new life wants also to fill you with that renewing life. Healing, forgiveness, and refreshment are there for you. Open your heart and open your hands—you will receive.

You have permission to receive this loving flow of energy and healing. You do not have to earn it, or buy it, or steal it from someone else. The ever-flowing fountain of life streams from the center of your heart, from the hidden springs of your being. You just need to rest, rest, rest. Be still in the silence of God's love and acceptance.

If Not Now, When?

You already possess everything necessary to become great.

Crow proverb

If not now, when?

Martin Buber

If not you, then who? You have to start somewhere, believe something. You are the answer to the world's question. Your gifts are to be shaped on the anvil of life and fired in the furnace of adversity, so that they can be polished to reflect the light of shared experience. You do not have to be a superhero; you can choose to start with the work at hand.

It begins with you. Value yourself. Then value others. The quiet contagion of example can spread. It will make a difference, one person at a time. If each of us chooses to make even a small difference in our corner of the universe, then perhaps we can be part of a movement that could one day transform the world. Idealistic? You bet. And isn't it a relief to be idealistic and give free rein to our highest dreams? To choose to practice the art of encouragement is to invest in your best and most idealistic dreams.

We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions.

Aristotle

Everything that lives, lives not alone, nor for itself.

William Blake

Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Matthew 5: 13–16 (The Message)

Let God love you through others and let God love others through you.

D. M. Street

Life is short and we have not too much time for gladdening the hearts of those who are traveling the dark way with us. Oh, be swift to love! Make haste to be kind!

Henri F. Amiel

Encouragement . . .

is not lecturing people about what they should do or what they should be, but holding up a positive mirror and showing them what they already are or have the potential to become.

Encouragement . . .

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things because of love.

Encouragement . . .

critiques but never criticizes, and is always willing to look for the good.

Encouragement . . .

comes from one fellow traveler to another fellow traveler—we are all in this together.

Encouragement . . .

is the art of helping people discover their own beauty, potential, and uniqueness.

Encouragement . . .

is the joy of sharing the load for a small portion of the journey.

Encouragement . . .

is someone to laugh with, to cry with, to rejoice with in happiness and share with in sorrow.

Encouragement . . .

is a lamp in the window on a dark and stormy night.

Encouragement . . .

is a smile and a helping hand.

I'm going your way, so let us go hand in hand. You help me and I'll help you. We shall not be here for very long, for soon death, the kind old nurse, will come back and rock us all to sleep. Let us help one another while we may.

William Morris

The Art of Simplicity

A Simple Guide to Focusing on the Essentials of the Heart

Simplicity is... a single red rose in a crystal vase.

Simplicity is... a child's smile.

Simplicity is... eyes closed in prayer.

I want to know the mind of God. The rest is all details
Albert Einstein

Do you have the patience to wait till the mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?
Tao Te Ching

The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials.
Lin Yutang

Simplicity is... a moment of silence.

Simplicity is... bread, wine, and a table.

Simplicity is... a clean closet.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

Simplicity is...ordering my life around the essentials of the heart.

Simplicity can be difficult to achieve in a world that clamors for "more! more! more!" But simplicity opens the way to the center of the heart—the place where quiet, healing, and a still small voice await. Simplicity is making elegant choices, treasuring precious moments, and valuing that which is of eternal worth. Like Michelangelo who saw the statue of David in the heart of the stone, so we are called to reveal the inner beauty hidden in the complexity of our lives. Simplicity is singleness of heart, focused on the essentials of life, rather than allowing our desires and fears to distract us. Simplicity is a celebration of the heart—an opportunity to touch eternity in a moment of meditation. Simplicity is finding abundance in the small things and rediscovering the wonder we once knew in the purity of childhood days.

For the good man to realize that it is better to be whole than to be good is to enter on a straight and narrow path compared to which his previous rectitude was flowery license.
John Middleton Murry

I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive,

so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.

Joseph Campbell

Simplicity is... focusing my attention on what I want to create and experience.

Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness.

James Thurber

The whole thing boils down to giving ourselves in prayer a chance to realize that we have what we seek. We don't have to rush after it. It is there all the time, and if we give it time, it will make itself known to us.

Thomas Merton

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10 (KJV)

The Freedom of Simplicity

It is a spiritual thing to comprehend what simplicity means.

Frank Lloyd Wright

The singer opens her mouth and the pure tone floats out freely ... and its simple beauty goes straight to the heart of the listener and nestles there. You have a gift to offer the world, a song that only you can sing. Like the soprano who has learned to get out of her own way so that her free voice may float on the wings of delight to the listener's ears, you can make choices that empower you to bring the music of your life to a world that needs to receive the gift you bring.

Everyone is born with a song in the heart. Every person has a unique and wonderful gift to give. The pure life potential beats in every heart. And pure potential waits to be expressed.

However, like the soprano who had to learn how to focus and refine her gift so that her true voice could emerge, so you have to clear the way for your unique gift to emerge. *The Art of Simplicity* is written to inspire you to let the one true song of the heart emerge. Sharing wisdom from many sources, a little bit of practical advice, and a few ideas that might spark your thinking, this little guide encourages you to make the changes within that will flow out and transform your outer life. It encourages you to change habits that hold you back and remove the clutter of old beliefs that limit the free expression of the essential you. *The Art of Simplicity* helps you catch a glimpse of your own spiritual magnificence.

This book grew from my own experience of moving into freedom and simplicity. It is an ongoing process. But as I have learned to move beyond victimhood, blame, anger, fear,

and all the ego games that held me back, I have discovered that every situation, every choice, every single experience in my life contains the potential for God to work all things together for the highest good and for me to express my unique, one-and-only heartsong in simplicity, love, and joy. I know this can happen for you, too.

No matter what your story, no matter what your past limitations, no matter what mountains must be moved, you have no less potential than any other human being on earth to become the person God created you to be. As you get in touch with the great inner simplicity within, you will see your life re-align itself in miraculous ways. You are a co-creator with God, and even small choices can change the trajectory of your life, if you are willing to step out in faith.

When your voice is finally free, you become the instrument. All of the events and choices of your life converge in a pure note of joy and peace. You experience the sensation of being at one with the energies of the Universe, a co-creator with God as you release the exquisite song and spin it out into the air. Alive from toes to fingertips, fully present and aware, you sense the life force moving in and through you. And it is beautiful. Because you have focused on the essentials of the heart, your gift is received gladly, for it rises from deep within and touches other hearts at their point of greatest need.

Let your true essence be the goal you seek, and seek to bring that true essence into everything you do—and everything you are. Let the song of love take flight in your life. Come explore the potential and magnificent power that has been buried beneath the clutter and confusion for so long. Enter into the freedom of simplicity.

*Become aware of what is in you.
Announce it, pronounce it,
produce it, and give birth to it.*
Meister Eckhart

Celebrate the Simple Things

*I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things of life
which are the real ones after all.*
Laura Ingalls Wilder

The simple life. Think about what the simple life really means. Does it mean we strip our lives down to the bare bones, give up our homes and our lives for a more ascetic experience? Or can we discover the simplicity that is within the complex lives we already lead?

I believe that simplicity is about focus and choice. In a life full of distractions, it's easy to lose your focus and lose sight of the small simplicities that make up the fabric of everyday existence. These simplicities are the things we tend to pass over and take for

granted—at least until some crisis or loss or tragedy takes them from us. Then suddenly we miss the small treasures we took for granted.

The simple things, like clean water or a loving hug or a light in the darkness, are the things that keep us grounded and remind us of our connection to the Life Force. They create a sense of safety and wholeness, cradling us in the here and now of creation. Simple things and simple choices make the difference between merely existing and real living. They are about values and character as much as about material possessions. Whether it is a choice to live life from the heart or a quiet appreciation of the small gifts of life, simple living is about simply living, finding a balance between being and doing, making the most of the life you have been given on earth, right here and right now.

Look at the simple things you enjoy. Let them be reminders that God is your source, and that there are many channels and ways for God's good to flow into your life. When you are tempted to focus too much attention on what you don't have, make a conscious decision to shift your focus to what you already have, and decide to appreciate it and enjoy it more fully and completely. Think of all the simple things you take for granted and thank God for them. Realize that each simple joy in life is God whispering that you are loved and supported by an abundant universe.

The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it simply.
Kahlil Gibran

Here are a few of the simple things in life, to remind you that you are already rich in the things that count. Let them inspire you to count your own joyful simplicities and become aware of how much good God brings into your life every day.

- ... hot potatoes, butter, salt, pepper
- ... water flowing freely from a tap
- ... clear skies after a storm
- ... a kiss and a hug
- ... a roof over your head
- ... a safe place to sleep at night
- ... walking shoes and a trail
- ... home cooking
- ... an unexpected compliment
- ... grandparents holding grandbabies
- ... a hot shower or bath
- ... toilets that flush, plumbing that works
- ... soap and water
- ... a new book to read
- ... tea with your best friend
- ... a gentle wind in the tree tops
- ... the laughter of children
- ... dogs loving every second of life (and worshipping you no matter what you do)
- ... cats allowing you to be their servants (dogs have owners, cats have staff)

... a lighted candle
... rainbows
... a flat tire repaired
... fresh raspberries
... bedtime stories for little ones
... fresh veggies from the garden
... a full tank of gas
... good neighbors
... family reunions
... an umbrella on a rainy day
... cheering for your team
... anything young and innocent
... a mountain view
... sacred scriptures in your faith tradition
... a deer in the forest
... open windows
... a check in the mail
... clean laundry
... a quiet moment alone
... the sound of a voice you love to hear
... evening prayer

Essentials of the Heart

One should never be nervous about being asked to tackle anything. One has all the power necessary to achieve everything within oneself. It is only necessary to remember the power. If people are nervous, it is because they forget their potentialities and remember only their limitations.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Simple and easy are not the same thing. Simplicity brings ease, but it is not always easy. Easy is the wish for the magic bullet, an instant solution, or ten easy steps to perfection. Easy formulas that reduce life to quantifiable processes are the fascination of our times. But simplicity is more organic and complex, a pearl of great price that must be sought after with the heart, not just the head.

Easy is like having a crush on someone, with its high floating feelings that dissipate like morning mist when the heat of noonday arrives. But true simplicity draws from a consistent, committed love that lasts through all hours and challenges of the lengthening day.

Simplicity is the marriage of commitment and surrender, the ebb and flow of tides of change and growth, the long slow ripening of the fruit of the spirit. It is learning a deeper, richer way of being present to life. In this simplicity we discover that we are greater than we know, wiser than we realize.

All this sounds quite wonderful and spiritual. But how does this play out in daily life? How do we bring simplicity down to earth after spinning airy pictures of what our lives could be? What does simplicity look like in your life?

Simplicity is found in the common objects and objectives of each day. It is in the choices to create inner stillness through meditation and prayer, clearing clutter in both inner and outer life, choosing positive rather than negative thoughts, handling money and resources wisely, and making that which is most meaningful to you a priority. Whether it is in clothing that expresses your style and values, or a home that provides a nurturing atmosphere, or meaningful work that satisfies your creative soul and helps others, or loving relationships that balance giving and receiving, or creating a more sustainable and just society, true simplicity integrates our gifts, talents, and choices with the deep needs of the world. Inner simplicity helps us find a way to become who we were meant to be, allowing us to discover the amazing person God created and to see that amazing creativity and potential in every person we encounter.

Simplicity makes space for the old fashioned virtues to flower in our lives. Like clearing the garden of weeds and pests, simplicity prepares the soil and tends it as the flower and fruit of our inner selves mature. It is a tending of the garden of the soul. As the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control—grows within, it will affect your practical outer life as well. Choosing to order your priorities around spiritual truth leads to true freedom.

Simplicity that revolves around the essentials of the heart creates a more fulfilling life. Choosing simplicity helps you make room for the important things in life: love, friendship, beauty, fun, creativity, and following your heart to a place of deep wholeness and peace.

Simplicity is...living in the moment so that I can make each moment count.

Whenever a mind is simple, it is able to receive divine wisdom; old things pass away; it lives now and absorbs past and future into the present hour.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Anyone can carry his burden, however hard, until nightfall.

Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day.

Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, till the sun goes down.

And this all that life really means.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Spiritual Magnificence

I am an expression of life, and life will express itself through me in the most playful and wonderful ways, if I let it.

Richard Bach

The art of simplicity is not about reducing yourself to a smaller size. It's about clearing the clutter and chaos to make room for your God-given inner greatness to grow and expand.

Every person is born with the potential for true greatness. This is not the greatness of fame or fortune, though those may come as a by-product of bringing your inner resources to fruition. No, this potential is like a quiet seed within, waiting to be cultivated so that it might grow and multiply and make its contribution to the world.

Think of the size of a seed: so small, so insignificant, so seemingly lifeless. A petunia seed is barely the size of a grain of sand, yet when you plant this seed in fertile soil, water and fertilize and tend it, keep the ground clear of invasive weeds and hungry pests, this seed will naturally and effortlessly create a living, growing, luxurious plant with spreading green leaves and glorious blossom. All of this potential is hiding in the tiny seed, just waiting for the right conditions to release the powerful life force within.

You are just like that seed. You may feel tiny and insignificant in this world, but you contain within your very being the nature of this ever evolving and ever expanding universe. You are a Big Bang waiting to happen; a transforming life force wants to flow through you and become life-giving love, joy, peace, and plenitude. The source of true abundance lies within you, if you are willing to create the conditions for it to manifest through you.

You can create the conditions for such a spiritual and material flowering. It takes simple, practical choices to weed out that which no longer serves you to make room for the higher good to grow. You can also access the wisdom of others who have discovered secrets of abundance and joy. You have the potential to become more fully free and alive than you dared dream you could be. The power lies not in words and ideas, but in what you choose to do with them. For when you unleash the God-given gifts that sleep in the center of your very being, you will awaken to your own spiritual magnificence, and to the great good you are meant to create in a world that is waiting for the gifts you have to offer.

And you, in your heart of hearts, know this to be true. This little book affirms the truth that you've always suspected but have been afraid to believe. You knew it as a young child. And you can know it again as an adult. It is not the outer circumstances which dictate what you can become, but what you can become that will create circumstances you desire. If you are willing to do the work that will free the seed of life to grow within, then you can transform yourself, change your circumstances, and make a real difference in the world around you. You can learn to enjoy the life you have, and to create a life you enjoy.

Your doubting mind will always find reasons to disbelieve, but your inner heart knows the truth. Eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God has prepared for those who

dare to believe—and who dare to do something simple, practical, and meaningful with that belief. That is the true art of simplicity: getting down to the essentials, clearing the way for God to do the work in and through you.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
II Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

You are an evolving person. You have come out of all time and are going to all time, from glory to glory, led by an image of the Lord. There is a perfect image at the center to cause what you are. We don't have to manufacture goodness...just let it through.

Raymond Charles Barker

Religion is realization; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming what it believes.

Swami Vivekananda

We will discover the nature of our particular genius when we stop trying to conform to our own or to other people's models, learn to be ourselves, and allow our natural channel to open.

Shakti Gawain

*My business is not to remake myself,
But to make the absolute best of what God made.*

Robert Browning

*I see life in terms of transformation:
matter being transformed into life, life into consciousness,
consciousness into Divine Experience.*

Bede Griffiths

It takes courage to grow up and turn out to be who you really are.
e.e. cummings

To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming is the only end in life.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Affirmative Prayer

I am deeply connected with the Infinite Mind which created the Universe. This Infinite Power is within me and I now choose to nurture the God-given gifts which wait like seeds within my heart. I dare to dream a larger dream for my life, because my dreams

come from God and are the blueprints for a way for me to be a blessing to the world I live in.

I have the power to create great abundance. I now claim that power, sense it growing and expanding within. I know that this power is the Life Force wishing to express itself through me. I welcome this living, loving energy into my life and know that I am being transformed in this moment. I choose to nurture this seed of faith within and to cultivate spiritual fruit in my life. Before I prayed, God has already answered, and I rejoice in the flow of energy, passion, goodness, and joy that overflows in my heart. I thank God that this is so.

And so it is.

Simplicity is . . . being willing to believe what you know deep in your heart.

Fear is the Poison, Love is the Antidote

Allowing fear to rule your mind will merely make you increasingly fearful, but keeping control of your mind will keep you unafraid even when fear boldly approaches you face to face. A steady mind is the most effective antidote to fear.

Swami Kripalvananda

I know there are many reasons to be afraid in this uncertain world. Old structures are breaking down and we don't yet see what will take their place. We live in a time of upheaval, crisis, and transition.

But I also know this. If we only focus on what's wrong and what's falling apart, it will sap the very energies we need to turn things around. If we spend our energies on criticizing and complaining, we will have no will left to create. If we only judge by the outer appearances, we will not have the wisdom to discern the potential within. The Bible proclaims that love is stronger than death, and this is what I choose to stake my life on.

Human beings made choices and created the world we are now experiencing. We are the ones who are making the choices that will create what will be experienced in the future. Do we want to give up in despair, allowing our fears to overcome our faith? Or are we willing to stake everything on the power of love?

The physicist tells us that we are all connected. If this is true, then if we can raise our consciousness, dare to dream of a better world, and make simple choices each day in love and hope, then we could unleash the potential for quantum change. Anyone who believes in God, prayer, and love can tell you that miracles are possible. I've seen this potential released in my own life, and there are many, many stories of the power of love and prayer and intention that have created hope in the place of hopelessness. Let's make a deliberate choice to focus our energies on better things. We are co-creators with God who can bring about positive change—perhaps more dynamically than we can yet imagine.

In the end, each person must choose. Will you choose fear? Or will you choose love? Fear shrinks back, practices scarcity thinking, and focuses on the problems of the past, projecting them into the future. Love focuses on the potential for a better future, makes a choice in the here and now believing it will make a positive difference, and knows that God's abundance is ever present for our every need. Every time you choose love, you're making a statement of faith in the creative abilities of the human heart united with a God who can help humanity change the world: one thought, one choice, one action at a time.

Fear is the toxin which paralyzes. Love is the elixir which brings healing and transformation. There are no guarantees that all your dreams will come true, all your problems will be over, or that the world will suddenly become a perfect place. But a cultivated receptivity to love and its expression in this world will create a sacred alchemy that will take you to new levels of consciousness and help you create a better life than could ever be created from a fear-based mentality. I've learned to make choices out of love instead of fear and it has transformed my life. I know it can happen for you, too.

Simplicity is . . . choosing love over fear.

Fear says no. Love says yes.

Fear paralyzes. Love dances in ecstasy.

Fear is based on expectation. Love is based on intention.

Fear dictates and controls. Love encourages and improvises.

Fear procrastinates and complains. Love takes the next step in calm faith.

Fear believes life happens TO you. Love knows life happens THROUGH you.

Fear believes that what you see is all there is. Love knows that, with God, all things are possible.

Love is the energizing elixir of the universe, the cause and effect of all harmonies.
Rumi

Those who are afraid to make mistakes serve a god of fear. Their love is incomplete. Go forth boldly. Have the courage to live your vision in spite of your fears.
Ken Carey

All our failures are ultimately failures in love.
Iris Murdoch

If grass can grow through cement, love can find you at every time in your life.
Cher

The future is not waiting for us. We create it by the power of imagination.
Pir Vilayat Khan

We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence, and its only end.
Benjamin Disraeli

Love is letting go of fear.
Gerald Jampolsky

*A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world.
Everyone you meet is your mirror.*
Ken Keyes Jr.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Transformation does not mean to fix or make go away whatever trauma and scars you may be carrying from childhood; instead, you slowly develop a new relationship with your difficulty, such that it is no longer a controlling factor in your life.
Phillip Moffitt

We are the Future

Our aspirations are our possibilities.
Samuel Johnson

Clearing the inner clutter and freeing ourselves from past patterns that would hold us back is the beginning of liberty. But it is only a beginning. We are the ones we have been waiting for, and it is up to us to cultivate our potential for greatness and offer our gifts to the world. If we have emptied ourselves of prejudice, anger, and fear, then we can be filled with the love of God. We can be the hands of the Divine reaching out to bring a cup of cold water and a touch of grace to a hurting world. We can be the dreamers who make a more lovely and equitable world a reality. And with God's help, we will.

*Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it;
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.*
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

We can't take any credit for our talents. It's how we use them that counts.
Madeleine L'Engle

When I look into the future, it's so bright it burns my eyes.
Oprah Winfrey

The Great Creator lives within each of us. All of us contain a divine, expressive spark, a creative candle intended to light our path and that of our fellows.

Julia Cameron

We are the heroes of our own story.

Mary McCarthy

Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what you have.

Doris Mortman

The well of Providence is deep. It's the buckets we bring to it that are small.

Mary Webb

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.

Judy Garland

I desire to create a world that will solve for others what I have struggled with so much of my life.

Peter Block

The cornerstone of effective leadership is self mastery...

And the surest route to self mastery is spiritual practice.

Time spent in peaceful reflection or mindful meditation clarifies thought, sharpens intuition, and curbs unhealthy instincts.

Patricia Aburdene

Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior:

Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get.

Matthew 7:12 (The Message)

Everything in the universe is related; we are all connected; from stardust to human flesh, we vibrate with the same elements of the universe. The web of life is infused by spirit, and each one of us has the power to use that creative energy to manifest our potential.

Rudolfo Anaya

The Golden Spiral

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

I remember the first time I read Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, *The Chambered Nautilus*. It was in a sea shell museum in Port Gamble, Washington. Mounted on the wall above the poem was a halved chambered nautilus shell, revealing the pearly interior spiral of that remarkable denizen of the deep. In a galaxy whorl of rainbow pearl, it marked the ever-spiraling stairway of growth as the creature became larger and larger. The life history of the chambered nautilus lay open and clear in the discarded shell. Once it had danced in beautiful majesty in the waters of the sea, but now only its empty shell reminded me of the living form which once inhabited its smooth chambers. And the poem took me on a soulful journey, showing me a picture of my own ever-evolving life.

We are great mysteries, living in the sea of life. Our lives follow a golden spiral of evolution—infant, child, adolescent, adult, middle age, old age. There is that within our bodies which follows its own timetable of growth, change, and aging. We eat and food becomes part of our bodies, yet we still don't understand how food is transformed into a thought. Our bodies are the vessels through which we experience and interact with life, and our souls grow even as bodies age and die. Something greater within knows that the entire process is essential to this journey of life. Each experience, good and bad, becomes a part of our soul's evolution and transformation.

As the ebb and flow of tides of change wash through us, we can choose growth and expansion, or we can cling to the old ways of thinking and being. Still, even when we choose to cling, life itself changes around us, and we find that trying to stop the evolution of our souls is the way of death. If we choose to seek and embrace the changes, to ride the tides and trust a Higher Power that is both within and without, we co-create our destinies and become more than we ever dreamed we would be.

In fractals, nature's choice creates a continuous feedback loop. For us, each choice creates a spiral, a feedback loop that replicates itself again and again. A positive choice begins a spiral upward, and a negative choice spirals down. The power lies in this moment, this choice. At the intersection of here and now lies the opportunity to begin a new and happier pattern by making a different choice. We can take the high road and reach for our inner greatness. We will see our positive choice amplified over time into a transformed life; a life with the potential to turn chaos into beauty and order.

Simplicity is relaxing into the stream of the life force, riding its currents to an unimagined destination, allowing the tides and seasons to make their mark on our souls, releasing that which no longer serves us to embrace a higher and more expansive good. We learn to trust the deeper wisdom of God and to make choices that amplify that trust. We surrender our own limited agendas to become co-creators with God.

May the wisdom of this poem remind you of your own potential for greatness and encourage you to trust that everything you need is already available to you and within you. May you know an ever-expanding goodness and come to realize that in God's eyes you are already whole, perfect, and complete. Every failure and every success, every lesson learned, every experience of beauty and despair, everything you've lost or loved—all these are essential for your spiritual evolution. May you learn how to tap the power

within by making room for greater and greater good to enter your life. May you catch a glimpse of who you are in God's eyes so that you may aspire to become all you are meant to be. And may you fulfill your highest destiny as you travel life's golden spiral of growth and service.

The Chambered Nautilus
by Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894)

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sail the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purple wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil:
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,

Till thou at length are free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

The Art of Creativity

Creativity is discovering and expressing your deepest and highest potential.

Creativity is... opening your mind to new ideas.

Creativity is... taking a paintbrush in hand.

Creativity is... planting a seed and watching it grow.

We need to make the world safe for creativity and intuition, for it is creativity and intuition that will make the world safe for us.

Edgar Mitchell, Apollo astronaut

Creativity is your birthright. Every human being on this planet is born creative, a reflection of the Creator who made us. *The Art of Creativity* encourages you to appreciate and express your innate gift of creativity—or to reclaim it if you seem to have lost it somewhere along the way. You'll learn about the attitudes and actions that nurture the creative spirit and inspire a more soulful way of living. You'll find a cornucopia of ideas to jump start your creativity and resources for further creative exploration. *The Art of Creativity* offers simple ways to approach your life as a work of art, grow as a person, co-create with others, and imagine a better world. Dare to dream, for you are wiser than you yet know. Dare to do, for you are more capable than you yet believe. Discover the delights of a more artful and heart-full life in this inspirational guide to creativity.

There is a fountain of youth. It is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring in your life and the lives of people you love.

Sophia Loren

Creativity is... forever young, forever childlike, forever free.

Creativity is... the Universe expressing itself through us.

We have no word for art. We do everything as beautifully as we can.

Balinese saying

Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Galatians 6:5 The Message

We seem to have lost contact with the earlier, more profound functions of art, which have always had to do with personal and collective empowerment, personal growth, communion with this world, and the search for what lies beneath and above this world.
Peter London

Creative Genius

You are a creative genius...
Really...

You were born creative
A unique person with special gifts
only you bring to life

and today is the day
to give yourself permission
to create a life you love.

What do you want to create today?
A painting that illuminates the colors in your soul
A song that expresses deep dreams and desires
A dance that celebrates the joy of life
A poem that makes the heart sing
Will you build, sculpt, sew, plant, cook, repair, remake
and reveal some sustaining contribution
that makes life better for yourself
and for the world around you?

Your whole life can be a work of art
whatever you do.
There is art in making a meal
in work well done
arranging flowers
comforting a friend
cherishing a loved one
reaching out to help another.

You can even bring your creative soul
to mundane work
just by being aware
of the potential hidden in every moment.

You are a unique creative genius
and you get to choose
what you bring to life.

If you don't bring it to life
it will never exist.

Today is the first day
of the rest of your life.
So what do you want to create?

I'm eagerly watching to see what you'll do
because I know
you will create something wonderful.

You can do it!

Only as much of life enters into us as we can conceive, and we conceive of life—in the larger sense—only when there is a complete abandonment to it. Let the one who is sad, depressed, or unhappy find some altruistic purpose into which he may pour his whole being and he will find a new inflow of life of which he has never dreamed.

Ernest Holmes

*In each soul, God loves and partly saves the whole world which the soul sums up in an incommunicable and particular way... By his fidelity he must **build**—starting with the most natural territory of his own self—a work, an **opus**, into which something enters from all the elements of the earth. **He makes his own soul** throughout his earthly days; and at the same time he collaborates in another work, in another **opus**, which infinitely transcends, while at the same time it narrowly determines, the perspectives of his individual achievement: the completing of the world.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Art, although produced by man's hands, is something not created by hands alone, but something which wells up from a deeper source out of our soul.

Vincent van Gogh

It is only when we can believe that we are creating the soul that life has any meaning, but when we can believe it—and I do and always have—then there is nothing we do that is without meaning and nothing that we suffer that does not hold the seed of creation in it.

May Sarton

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Creative Spirit

I am simply conscious of the forces I am using and I am driven on by an idea that I really only grasp as it grows with the picture.

Henri Matisse

I attended a painting demonstration just outside of Nashville. It was a perfect blue sky autumn day. The sun warmed my back, the crisp air kept the temperature refreshing. The art gallery was filled with people and out in the back the stage in the outdoor theater was set with a giant canvas, a workman's table, and an artist ready to paint. It was a wonderful opportunity to view master abstractionist Anton Weiss sharing his expertise as he worked with a large canvas during the afternoon. Until I saw Anton at work and heard him discuss his artistic process and philosophy, I had never really understood the lure of abstract art. By the end of the afternoon I not only had a greater appreciation for abstract expressionism, but I saw how much the man's art reflects his life. I have talked since with an artist who says that Anton's paintings never fail to move him. Now I understand why.

Anton's presentation became a classroom, teaching me about the freedom and bravery of creation—a lesson in the art of living. As he worked with the canvas, following the energies of color and light, Anton would share brief observations: Be fearless. There are no mistakes. Master your canvas. Innovate. Experiment. Allow chaos, knowing that order will eventually emerge. Give depth to a flat canvas with contrasts of cool and warm, dark and light. Trust your instincts. Release criticism and perfectionism. Surrender to the process. Follow the energy and keep adding to the energy of your canvas.

As a classically trained artist, Anton stated that he felt too limited by expensive brushes and the rules of traditional art. He made magic with pieces of cardboard, layering the paint, scraping the paint, and even attaching pieces of dried paint torn from old palettes. He was unafraid to paint over something or to scratch out what he had just painted to create interesting layers. Every step of the process was perfect in and of itself.

Now, months later, I have thought about Anton's words and how they apply to my own life. I've been thinking about his admonition to "master your canvas." That's a bold statement. For all the years that I have been writing and for all the "successful" (read: published) projects I have done, something in me has still been afraid of life, afraid of the canvas. I have chosen a smaller, more limited canvas so many times. Writing to please a client, to not offend gatekeepers who say, "You can't use that word, quote that person, question that belief system. You can't say that." But now I use those words, quote those people, and have expanded my boundaries far beyond the limitations of my old belief systems. Yet still, I play small. I struggle with financial debts, but I also wrestle with debts owed to the past, and wonder if I'll ever be brave enough to own all that I can be, to master a larger canvas. I'm stretching and growing, learning to be less afraid, more courageous. My ventures into art and photography are part of the expanded canvas of my creative expression. I'm creating a richer palette and a larger life using art as well as words to speak the deeper truths from my heart.

I'm learning that mastering the canvas is not about having total control. It's about being willing to take risks, to embrace life and follow the energy where it wants to go. It is

about being large enough in yourself to meet the challenges and changes that life throws at you. It is about being unafraid to reach for your own inner greatness, brave enough to believe you deserve to have this, do this, be this—whatever it is you really desire to have, do, or be in life, without playing small because of your own fears or the judgments of others. It's being strong enough to open to the unknown, to ask the questions that you have not been willing to ask before.

As I watched Anton reach out to the canvas and make his mark on it, I saw that he was allowing the energies of life itself to flow through him without confining definitions or limiting preconditions. Big broad strokes are allowed. There is no fiddling little perfectionism. Perfection emerges from the freedom of the ever changing and evolving layers of painting, scraping, adding, subtracting, exploring and feeling the way the painting wants to emerge. Everything adds to the energy and the point is to create something that expresses the essence of life itself. It is larger than the ego that brags and controls, whines and cowers. It is a form of surrender to God, to whatever you define as the Transcendent, as life expresses through you in new ways. It is like watching life itself unfold onto the canvas. By refusing to play small, you give the best of yourself in the moment when paint marries canvas.

An abstract artist who is sincerely working with his whole heart is on a mission that in its own way mirrors the spiritual work of yogis and saints who have dedicated themselves to spiritual awakening. The artist reaches for ways to amplify and illumine what is beyond, that deep Eternal Wholeness, Harmony, and Sacredness that calls to us from behind the windows and lattices of creation. Something new is being birthed. Something is coming into being through the unique gifts and experience of the artist. His art reflects what we all go through to bring our own unique work to fruition. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin calls it the opus that we are all co-creating—that creative work that demands to be born on the page, canvas, recording, or even simply the homes we are making, the families we are raising, and the community we are contributing to. It doesn't matter if you give it a religious name or a secular definition, for it is Mystery beyond all forms and names and definitions. It is the aliveness of Life itself expressing in, through, and for us as we labor.

“Be fearless.” I set aside my nagging doubts and condemning inner voices to spread my wings, trying something never before attempted, daring to be more honest in my self-expression.

“Master your canvas.” A tough one for someone who often feels overwhelmed and oversensitive. Yet I learn to take more responsibility for my own choices. I learn my craft and practice it. I choose to be courageous as I open my heart to life itself. I take responsibility for my own destiny instead of allowing myself to be tossed to and fro by the forces and energies that attempt to master me. I become more myself, tapping into the power to move and make a malleable world; a power that is my birthright as a daughter of the Creator.

“There are no mistakes.” I no longer need to judge myself, or others. I can trust the process and appreciate the journey. I can take risks that perfectionism would never allow.

I follow the energy and surrender to Something larger wanting to express through me. I flow with the fierce urge to create, to make, to work with what is and make it express what could be.

The painting rises from the brush strokes as the poem rises from the words. The meaning comes later.

Joan Miro

The craftsman does not always build toward a prior vision. Often images come in the process of working. The material, his hands—together they beget.

M. C. Richards

All great art is the work of the whole living creature, body and soul, and chiefly the soul.

John Ruskin

Concentrate on the Eternal life, the source of all lives... Express the glory of that immortality in all interactions with the world.

Parmahansa Yogananda

In all true works of art wilt thou discern eternity looking through time, the god-like rendered visible.

Carlyle

In the creative state, a man is taken out of himself. He lets down as it were a bucket into his subconscious, and draws up something which is normally beyond his reach. He mixes this thing with his normal experience and out of the mixture he makes his work of art.

E. M. Forster

A pile of rocks ceases to be rock when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Humans cannot create matter. We can, however, create value. Creating value is, in fact, our very humanity. When we praise people for their strength of character, we are actually acknowledging their ability to create value.

Tsumesaburo Makiguchi

In essence, man is not a slave to himself, nor to the world; he is a lover. His freedom and accomplishments are in love, which is another name for perfect understanding.

Rabindranath Tagore

Divine Spirit is the limitless potential of human life.

Thomas Troward

God does not ask anything else except that you let yourself go and let God be God in you.

Meister Eckhart

Affirmative prayer

We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know Love, Freedom, Power.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Within me is the light of life, the image of God. I have unlimited potential, and I commit to express the Perfection, Truth, and Beauty of God's nature in all I do. As an expression and reflection of the Creator's creativity, I use my own creative powers. I work without fear and enter into a freedom greater than I have yet known. I set aside all petty and negative thinking, allow a more expansive way of being to flower in, through, and for me.

I accomplish my work with ease and effortless grace, knowing that it is not I, but the Greater Wholeness within me that works and wills a more glorious outcome than I can yet imagine. I surrender to this loving Energy and trust the process, knowing it is perfect at each stage of its unfolding. I claim my power to create and enjoy the act of creation in each moment. It is my nature and my calling to create, bringing beauty, order, and harmony out of chaos. All conditions and situations are transformed for the highest good.

I am inspired and the fruit of my labors inspires others to embrace their own gifts, talents, and inner calling to create. I am centered in love and I share that love with others through my creations. I serve with joy, knowing that Love enfolds and sustains me, and heals our world. Thank you, God, for the joy of being your creative child.

I know the truth about myself.
The truth is: I am a child of God,
a reflection of God's nature,
a place in this world
where God expresses
through my thoughts, words, and creative action.
When I focus on the sense of God's Presence
within the very core of my being
I am focusing on all the love,
harmony, beauty, order, peace, joy, and plenitude
that is the nature of God.
All of that love,
harmony, beauty, order, peace, joy, and plenitude
becomes mine in power and ease.
Because the power of God is greater
than all my fears, doubts, and resistance,
this perfect plenitude flows in, through, and around me.
As a light turned on chases shadows and darkness away,

so all my illusions of poverty, lack, fear, and self-condemnation
dissipate in the warm light of God's love.

God within me is the mirror that reflects my true nature.

Circumstances change and conditions come and go.

But the Radiant Reality of God's presence within my heart
illuminates my life

and shows me the truth about myself.

I am one with God,

a beloved child of God.

The Art of Creativity

Key Word: Contribution

Key Concept: Divine expression

Cosmic Question: How can I give my gifts in service?

- You are an expression of God's abundance, love, and creativity in this world.
- By expressing our gifts and talents we bring divine energy and healing love into our world.

Creativity is your birthright. Every human being on this planet is born creative, a reflection of the Creator who made us. *The Art of Creativity* encourages you to appreciate and express your innate gift of creativity—or to reclaim it if you seem to have lost it somewhere along the way. You'll learn about the attitudes and actions that nurture the creative spirit and inspire a more soulful way of living. You'll find a cornucopia of ideas to jump start your creativity and resources for further creative exploration. *The Art of Creativity* offers simple ways to approach your life as a work of art, grow as a person, co-create with others, and imagine a better world. Dare to dream, for you are wiser than you yet know. Dare to do, for you are more capable than you yet believe. Discover the delights of a more artful and heart-full life in this inspirational guide to creativity.

The Art of Celebration

Celebration is grateful awareness of the wonder, joy, and mystery of life and sharing that with others.

Celebration is... dancing to the music of life.

Celebration is... opening your arms and saying "Yes!"

Celebration is... smiling faces of all colors and kinds.

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.

Oprah Winfrey

Life is meant to be a celebration! It shouldn't be necessary to set aside special times to remind us of this fact. Wise is the person who finds a reason to make every day a special one.

Leo Buscaglia

For the joy of the Lord is your strength.
Nehemiah 8:10 (KJV)

All seasons are beautiful for the person who carries happiness within.
Horace Friess

Celebration is... a field of blooming tulips that shouts "I'm red! I'm red! I'm RED!!!"

Celebration is... being truly aware in this moment—here and now.

Celebration is... is a Chinese dragon dancing and wheeling in a parade.

The Art of Celebration

Key Word: Joy

Key Concept: Divine expansion

Cosmic Question: How can I enjoy life more?

- You can celebrate abundance here and now.
- We learn to enter into the ongoing celebration of life as it evolves and expands.

Celebration is giving thanks for the abundance of life. From a shared cup of tea with a friend to a community potluck, celebration is an essential ingredient in the dish of life. Celebration emphasizes the goodness of life and recognizes that we must cultivate joy, even in the midst of life's difficulties. Celebration is forgetting yourself in the wonder of it all. It's creating a special moment for someone you love. Celebration welcomes the stranger into your home for a meal. It gives back to the community and shares with those in need. Heartfelt celebration is a moment of quiet thankfulness, remembering all the mercies and blessings God has showered on you. The abundant life is a life of celebration and community. Let us celebrate together the moments of our days and honor the seasons and transitions of life.

The Art of Enchantment

Enchantment is...tapping into the power of the sacred imagination to create a life I love.

Enchantment is... Monet painting in his garden.

Enchantment is... fairy tale kingdoms and happily ever after.

Enchantment is... turning the water into wine.

*To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wildflower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.*
William Blake

If we had a keen vision of all that is ordinary in human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow or the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which is the other side of silence.
George Eliot

Everything that seems empty is full of the angels of God.
Saint Hilary

Enchantment is... playing with a new idea.

Enchantment is... setting sail for India and discovering a New World instead.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men...
Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

Enchantment is...rediscovering the sacred imagination.

The Art of Enchantment

Key Word: Transformation

Key Concept: Divine presence

Cosmic Question: How can I experience more love?

- Divine abundance and love can transform you.
- Entering into an understanding of God's greatness shows us our spiritual magnificence and potential for love.

Beauty. Romance. Mystery. Adventure. A life full of meaning and promise. Isn't that what we all wish for? We all yearn for the dreams of childhood that promised a life where love is always true and happy endings are only the beginning. But in this cynical and utilitarian culture, we lose that childlike hope and wonder. *The Art of Enchantment* is not a denial of a grim reality, but a rediscovery of the sacredness of life. It is choosing to honor the imagination and learning to look at the world through a child's eyes of wonder and hope. The seeds of the enchanted life are in the life we live today. God is speaking out of eternity into time, telling us that we are on a sacred journey. We are more than we seem to be on the surface and even in the face of suffering and loss, meaning is waiting to be found. *The Art of Enchantment* helps you find the sacred in the ordinary and teaches you to look at life with an artist's eye and a poet's heart.

Inner Abundance

Affirmations for Confidence, Creativity, and Higher Consciousness

Abundance begins in the heart...

Inner Abundance gently helps you look at life from another perspective. You'll find fresh insight on the small joys that you often take for granted or miss in the rush of modern living. This inspirational guide offers simple ways to cultivate a more meaningful and more abundant life.

What you think about affects how you feel about your life. Learning to focus your awareness by affirming the goodness of life is a wonderful tool that helps you move beyond fears of scarcity into a sense of plenitude and joy. The meditations, quotes, and affirmations in this book remind you that true abundance is available every day, no matter what you may be going through.

Discover your hidden potential to create a happier and more satisfying life. Learn to embrace what is already yours with thankfulness, joy, and the expectancy of even more good to come. *Inner Abundance* reveals the treasures of the heart with effective ways to create and celebrate abundance every day.

God is with me now and all is well.

I blossom like a rose in the light of Divine Love. In this blossoming I discover a renewed vision for my life's work, a work that brings joy to my heart and blesses all whose lives I touch. My good expands and brings delight and joy and love to every situation. God is my Source and the inner wisdom of the heart is my guide. Today's positive choices lead to wishes granted, hopes fulfilled, and dreams come true.

And so it is...

When you hold a grain of dust, you are holding the universe in your hand. A golden lion, in all its splendor, is you.

Lo-p'u

I'm always studying the nature of abundance. I don't have all the answers, but I'm learning. I also know that when I write from my best and most intuitive mind, the words I write are often wiser than anything I know from education or experience. My first book, *The Art of Abundance*, rings even more true as the years go by and I grow into the wisdom that flowed from the original writing. Writing *Inner Abundance* has been another intuitive leap from scarcity and fear to abundance and love.

Many books describe the same thing over and over. It is a mysterious yet strangely natural breakthrough "I AM" idea that transcends ordinary reality and brings us into another realm of functioning and consciousness. It is more than merely speaking a few affirmations or making mental assent to a set of theories or theologies. It is about connecting to Source (God as we understand who God is) and about a realization that we are much greater than our limited ideas of who we are and how we relate to the world.

around us. We might call it the “secret” or “awakening” or “enlightenment” or “translucence.” Whatever it is, it cannot be confined to our old definitions and descriptions. It is a new, yet not so new, way of being that takes our lives in a more whole and compassionate direction, a more intuitive and loving way of functioning in the world we live in. A higher consciousness might be one way to describe it.

Whatever this way of being might be called, the trajectory of life changes under its benign direction, taking us in unexpected directions, moving us out of limited and fearful thinking into more expansive expressions of the life within us. We become open to new horizons of freedom and discover an expanded capacity to enjoy and contribute to life. Dropping the baggage of the old egocentric ways of life, we enter into a new life. It is rebirth and transformation, beginning in the core of our thoughts and feelings, expanding outward to reflect in the lives we lead and the people who are affected by our beliefs, attitudes, choices, and creative contributions.

We live in a world that reinforces and rewards the old worldview of fear, lack, and scarcity. Pick up any newspaper or listen to any newscast, and you will be offered a constant stream of bad news. Even if the news is “good” the writer or broadcaster will soon bring up reasons it can’t really be good news, won’t last, is bad news for someone else, or presents a whole new set of problems and potential horrors. In a world that runs on fear, control, and scarcity, there is always a reason to worry, always another disaster waiting around the next corner. Since we are already familiar with this way of thinking, it’s part of our comfort zone. It offers a context and an explanation for the way things are—or how we perceive the way things are.

It’s all a mindset. In many ways we do create our own reality. It’s the mental atmosphere we create around us. We become comfortable with our limitations and our explanations, even if they no longer work for us. We often resist the very change that would lead to greater maturity and fulfillment. No matter how much we might complain about our current situation, there is something in us that is reluctant to disturb the status quo. We are more comfortable in our ruts than we like to admit. Our reptile brain doesn’t want the dangers of exploration and expansion. New territory, new thoughts, new choices are too challenging for the lumpish part of us that resists our own good. Yet the rewards for moving out of the comfort zone of old ways by choosing to change our mindset and create a better reality are immeasurable. And it begins with small choices, incremental changes.

From affirmative self-talk to positive action steps, abundance grows in your life because you believe it is possible and you are willing to take action to prove it to yourself. Your heart already knows this deeper reality. There are many who have gone before you and proved these truths in their lives. It is your choice in the here and now that decides whether you will live a life of increasing abundance or a life of diminishing returns. There are spiritual laws that will work in your favor, but only if you are willing to plant and nurture a few seeds of faith.

Inner Abundance offers simple affirmations and insights to help you cultivate that higher consciousness. The full color photo edition (PDF version to come) also offers photos of beauty and light that seem to capture an eternal moment, helping you to meditate on more positive thoughts and images. Consider them windows into another world where abundance is the nature and order of everything, where we are all interconnected by threads of kindness and caring. Trust that this vision of light, beauty, and abundance is the real world, and the world of fear, scarcity, and egocentric power is truly an illusion.

When I find myself caught between the worlds of scarcity and abundance, fear and love, something about these words and images brings me back into the sanity of trust in Divine providence. They remind me that God is my source, and it is my destiny to reflect the abundance, love, and joy of God's very nature in the life I lead every day. May you discover the riches of your own inner abundance within the pages of this little book.

Abundance is...a candle flickering in the wind.

Abundance is...fragrant purple petunias.

Abundance is...mint overflowing in a garden space.

Abundance is...the smell of steaks sizzling on a neighbor's barbeque.

Abundance is...a lawn mower on a green, green golf course.

God guides me into abundance. I choose to receive abundance from many sources. I anticipate surprises, challenges, and changes, trusting God to be my provider, protector, and comforter. I open my heart to new directions and walk into ever widening opportunities.

Adopt the pace of nature, her secret is patience.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Abundance Begins Within

From every point on earth we are equally near to heaven and to the infinite.
Frederic Amiel

It is not just things we want, it is the creative power that they represent. It is this ability to choose, to take an idea and grow it into something good, something true, something beautiful, that we can experience with our senses and with our full being. It is our creator nature desiring to express itself.

You don't need to pay anyone to discover the secret to the Source of this potential for riches. You hold the secret within. It is the God secret, the Life Force that is the source of

your abundance, awaiting your decision to unleash its power in the world of conditions and effects. “Choose ye this day who you will serve” was not just an admonition to the children of Israel spoken by Moses. It is a choice that is offered always to you today. This moment is your moment to choose, this day is the day you can experience a higher good. Abundance or scarcity, love or fear, faith or unbelief, victory or defeat, the choice lies within you.

You’ll notice that the closer you get to making a life-empowering choice—to practice your art, to commit to a relationship, to build a business, to move from theory into practice—that there is an inner resistance that arises. All the “yes, but...” and “no, I can’t...” and “it hasn’t been done before...” thoughts will rise up and accuse you of being an idiot for daring to question the common wisdom. Old resentments, fears, and past pain will be like fire-breathing dragons that tell you no good waits on the other side of any choice of faith, telling you that there are only more disappointments, losses, and sadness waiting for those who dare to cross the borders between the known past and an unknown future. If you allow the dragons of your own fear and resistance to stop you, they will rule you for the rest of your life. Taking a step of faith can feel like dying. And in some ways, you are dying. You’re dying to the old definitions of who you are and what you can be, do, and have. Releasing your resistance and opening to something greater will take you beyond the limited thinking of the past and help you create the life of your dreams instead of recreating old nightmares.

When you choose to move through your fears and beyond your own resistance, you cross into another level of consciousness and another way of being. The Universe moves you in unfamiliar (and sometimes unfathomable) ways, yet the gentle flow feels right and natural. It feels good, for you are moving into your true and authentic nature, which is a reflection of God’s goodness and creativity.

It is as simple as taking the next step and choosing the next thought. As you do the work that is before you to do, in faith and trust, and follow your inner guidance, the hidden potential that was always waiting to be revealed begins to develop and show itself in your life. You also learn that clear intention and a willingness to stay the course through the difficult times eventually lead you to where you need to go, no matter how long and winding that path may be. Following your heart, trusting your better angels, choosing to move with the rhythm and flow within will take you where you are meant to be. This is something to be experienced, not explained. Words can only sketch the outline. It is your own experience that will fill in the picture.

It can sound like a fairy tale, especially before you fully commit to this kind of life. But countless others have taken this “leap” of faith (more like one baby step leading to the next baby step, actually) and proved that it works. It is new every time, though. You have to prove it for yourself anew every day. No one else can do it for you. It is a choice—a free choice precisely because there is no coercion and there are no guarantees. It’s all about what you want to choose. Once you begin moving in a chosen direction, the whole world begins to move around that decision.

Your free choice is like the first note in a symphony. A quiet flute begins a slow build to a crescendo completion, with each instrument joining in perfect timing and harmony. The conductor directs the ebb and flow of sound that the composer created. The orchestration of the Life Force takes that first decision and moves you in the direction of your dreams. Each moment becomes a prayer to life and an opening to infinite possibility. You begin to cooperate with the Divine givingness that desires your good and responds to your resolute intention, helping you evolve into your highest potential.

While a description of this process can sound grandiose or poetic, it is in the prose and practicality of earth that it unfolds. From choosing a positive thought instead of a negative thought to taking a single proactive step in the direction of your dreams, each small choice will eventually lead to a larger and more meaningful life.

Abundance begins in the heart. There is that within you that knows what to do and how to do it. Trust that inner instinct and follow its leading. Feed your soul with books and resources that encourage you on this path of spiritual discovery. Use affirmative prayers to remind yourself of the reality of the unseen world of love and abundance when you are feeling overwhelmed by the old illusions of fear and scarcity.

Know the spiritual truth: God is your source. True abundance flows from the fountain of the loving Presence that is always with you and within you. God is in your heart, in the still small Voice within that comforts, guides, and sustains. Every time you choose to trust this calm and steady sense of Presence, the Universe will move in support as helping hands, loving hearts, and kindred spirits arrive in your life. Some call it the law of attraction. Some call it growing into our spiritual potential. This is the grace of inner abundance, helping you discover a peaceful, life-giving strength that can transform your life. Heaven is within, and you can create a taste of heaven on earth when you live from that inner reality.

No one is ever really taught by another: each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion, which arouses the internal teacher, who helps us to understand things.

Swami Vivekananda

The life each of us lives is the life within the limits of our own thinking. To have life more abundant, we must think in limitless terms of abundance.

Thomas Dreier

We must make choices that enable us to fulfill the deepest capacities of our real selves.

Thomas Merton

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.

If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.

Jesus, from the Gospel of Thomas

Do the thing and you shall have the power. But they who do not do the thing, have not the power.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

William Ellery Channing

Prayer changes things? No! Prayer changes people and people change things.

Paul Tournier

Blessing arises from a state of mind and heart that understands wholeness, that understands joy, that sees what is right rather than what is wrong. It is not problem-solving as much as it is problem-dissolving.

David Spangler

Only he who can see the invisible can do the impossible.

Frank Gaines

Abundance is...a fire in the fireplace.

Abundance is...having a mom who will kiss it and make it better.

Abundance is...a nap on a Sunday afternoon.

Abundance is...the cereal aisle in an American grocery store.

Abundance is...a church potluck.

Live in the Presence of Abundance

There is no more of God in one place than another. Wherever we are, there God is, and wherever we recognize the Divine Presence, then the Divine Presence responds.

Ernest Holmes

God is always with you, greater than you, yet also expressed individually in, through, and for you. The Divine Presence is always here, waiting for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, for no matter where we are, God is always present. There is no place where God is not. The more you cultivate awareness of the Divine Presence, the more you will discover the peace, power, and wholeness that is alive at the center of all creation.

One simple way to become more aware of the Presence of God in your life is to bring a higher quality of attention and care to whatever you do. Whether you are arranging

flowers or listening to a friend, pay full attention to this moment, this task, this sacred person you are encountering. A hidden wholeness will begin to reveal itself in these times, for you are bringing the quality and character of heaven down to earth with such loving attention.

Paying attention seems simple. You think you're doing it when you listen to a friend telling you about her day, but how often does your mind wander to what's next on your list of things to do? Paying attention means keeping your mind in the moment, taking in what's really happening, what's really being said, instead of some mental scenario about the future or past.

Live fully and attentively right now. See this as a holy moment, a time of communion with the Divine. Sense the sweetness of the day. Observe the sights, sounds, scents, and sensations that surround you. Be awake to the miracle of your life.

As you become aware of how rich life is with blessings, your attitude toward life shifts. Simple gratitude tells the Universe that you appreciate life's gifts and are open to receive more gifts. It shifts your energies from an attitude of lack to an attitude of receptivity and thanksgiving. Learn to see the Divine givingness at work in your life.

Every single day make this affirmation yours: "I live, move, and have my being in the Presence of God." Begin your day with a time of prayer and meditation. Take a brief time out during a busy day to become quiet and present, reconnecting to God as your Source. End your day with a prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts this day has brought, the grace that has been with you in the difficult times.

Connect to God as your Source by dwelling in the Presence. Bring a peaceful quality of focused awareness to each moment, and you will nourish your soul and attune yourself to an inner spiritual reality. From this springs the energy and abundance of life.

One should hallow all that one does in one's natural life. One eats in holiness, tastes the taste of food in holiness, and the table becomes an altar. One works in holiness, and he raises up the sparks which hide themselves in all tools. One walks in holiness across the fields, and the soft songs of all the herbs, which they voice to God, enter into the song of our soul.

Martin Buber

Look at everything as though you were seeing it for the first time or the last time. Then your time on earth will be filled with glory.

Betty Smith

To understand the world knowledge is not enough; you must see it, touch it, live in its presence and drink the vital heat of existence in the very heart of reality.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Belief is a truth in the mind. Faith is a fire in the heart.

Joseph Fort Newton

Made in God's image, man was made to be great, he was made to be beautiful, and he was made to be creative in life and art.

Francis Schaeffer

*The transformation required of us is not simply to be "like" Christ, but to **be** a Christ.*

Alice Walker

We die containing a richness of lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed, bodies we have plunged into and swum up as if rivers of wisdom, characters we have climbed into as if trees, fears we have hidden in as if caves.

Michael Ondaatje

We can, you see, take it with us. It will be precisely because we loved Jerusalem enough to bear it in our bones that its textures will ascend when we rise; it will be because our eyes have relished the earth that the color of its countries will compel our hearts forever. The bread and the pastry, the cheeses, the wine, and the songs go into the Supper of the Lamb because we do: It is our love that brings the City home.

Robert Farrar Capon

Abundance is...a canoe trip on a wilderness lake.

Abundance is...reading Alice in Wonderland for the first time.

Abundance is...goldfish swimming in a goldfish bowl.

Abundance is...the first green buds breaking open to reveal a tender pink flower.

Abundance is...a waving field of grain shimmering under a hot summer sky.

Affirmative Prayers

All that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful, all that is beneficent, be it great or small, be it perfect or fragmentary, natural as well as supernatural, moral as well as material, comes from God.

John Henry Newman

What you think about colors your experience of life. Your ability to focus your awareness is a wonderful tool for creating positive change in your perceptions. You can choose to create a better life on a thought-by-thought basis.

If you focus on what you dislike, what makes you angry or afraid, or who you disagree with and why they are wrong and you are right, you'll find that your mind will dwell on those negative thoughts. You can change your focus and choose to think about what is

good and true and beautiful. Focus your thoughts on the good in a situation or a person and your mind naturally looks for more good. Make it easier on yourself by replacing disparaging negativity with encouraging, life-affirming thoughts.

Affirmative prayer is a wonderful way to encourage yourself and express your trust in God. Speak positive words about yourself and your situation in the present tense, affirming that these things are true and that you trust Divine right action to make them true in your life. It may feel like a lie at first, but you are training your subconscious mind to envision a reality that has potential to exist, and by that simple act, your subconscious mind will work with you to make that vision a reality. This is the true power of an affirmation: your willingness to believe and be open to new ideas, new possibilities, new realities. It is a key to co-creating a better reality by unleashing the power of your own natural potential.

Write a personal affirmation and post it in a prominent place. For instance, you can post it next to your bathroom mirror and read it aloud while you get ready for the day. You can also take a favorite mantra or scripture and turn it into a personal affirmation. Affirmations are faith builders that encourage your heart and convince your reluctant mind of a truth that is larger than the life you have experienced in the past.

Affirmations offer a wonderful way to speak abundance into your life. Whether you use a promise from sacred scripture, a prayer, or a positive saying, an affirmation can be a reminder that abundance is available every day of your life, no matter what you may be going through. Inspirational quotes, positive prayers, and heartfelt affirmations help you embrace life with thankfulness, joy, and expectation.

In difficult and demanding times, it is essential to understand that abundance begins within. Whatever you see in your outer circumstances is a reflection of what you have already created by your thoughts, attitudes, and actions. As you change your thoughts you affect the outcomes of your life. Living in the higher energy of positive attitudes and a more conscious way of thinking opens the door to new possibilities, aligning you with the energies of God's nature.

Your attention is a form of energy, so if you focus on the problem, you focus on the energy of "problem." This might work if it's a small problem that is simple to fix. However, as Einstein said, you cannot solve a problem at the level of thinking that created the problem. You must focus your attention on solutions and positive energy, for then you open your heart and mind to the possibility that something (or Someone) is there to bring about elegant solutions that are greater than anything you can imagine when you are focused on the details of the problem. The problem is an effect of a certain way of thinking. What you want to do is change your way of thinking to achieve a different effect. What you think and believe causes the effect, so if you change what you think and believe, you will change the effect. Affirmations are tools that work with how you think and what you think so you can create the outcomes you really desire.

These are not "name it and claim it" formulas and incantations. Affirmative prayer is a way to improve your self-talk, helping you renew your mind by dwelling on the positives and potentialities of life instead of fears, complaints, and self-imposed limitations. These affirmations emphasize that help is already available even in the most difficult situations. They help you focus on being thankful for the provision that already exists, and on trusting that God is working in, through, and for you to manifest a better and happier reality. Without denying the facts of the situation you are currently experiencing, affirmations of abundance move beyond appearances to tap into a higher truth. Your consciousness affects the outcome, so no matter how you landed where you are right now, the thoughts you choose and the actions you take from here on out release the power that works from within to transform the outward circumstance. An affirmation offers a way to focus your intention, name your heart's desires, and allow a better reality to flow into your life.

You can look at your life not as a series of problems to overcome but as unfolding opportunities to say "yes" to life. It is a way of choosing to cooperate with the Divine in all the joys, challenges, and changes you encounter. The mystical secret is that God is everywhere and there is no place where God is not, so God is expressing in and through you. As you expand your consciousness, growing in your ability to make the truth real in your life, you'll discover that there is a gracious and loving Presence at the center of your life. No matter what name you give to God—the Life Force, the I Am, the Great Mystery, the Good Orderly Direction of Universal Flow, the Christ Consciousness, the Atman, the Buddha Nature—this Presence is with you at all times, a source you can draw upon and that is part of your very nature.

Use affirmations to remind yourself of who you really are. Speak them aloud as an affirmative prayer. They will help you reprogram your thoughts. Using affirmations can help you move to a higher level of consciousness, helping you accept the truth that you have a Divine inner power that helps you reach your full potential.

Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it.

Henry Ford

Prayer is the most powerful form of energy one can generate. It supplies us with a flow of sustaining power in our daily lives.

Alexis Carrel

What lies behind you and what lies in front of you pale in comparison to what lies within you.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I am a co-creator with God and now choose to create a more fulfilling reality in the here and now. Resources appear with perfect timing and the Divine plan is now manifesting effortlessly, naturally, and beautifully in my life. I know that everything works together

toward the highest good for all. I know that there are no rules because I've never been here before. Old patterns no longer apply. New patterns and happier ways of being are manifesting easily and joyfully every single day of my life. That which I once thought "impossible" is now possible, for I am willing to think about myself in a new way. I am thankful that the Divine intention is working perfectly to bring every good gift and blessing to full fruition.

Abundance is...a meadow full of wildflowers.

Abundance is...money to cover the bills when you don't know where the money will come from.

Money, which represents the prose of life and which is hardly spoken of in parlors without apology, is, in its effects and laws, as beautiful as roses.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I say yes to... beauty

Life has one ultimate message: "Yes!" repeated in infinite number and variety.

George Leonard

Each time I say "yes" to abundance I say "yes" to God's good will for me. I consciously choose to practice the art of abundance by being thankful every day and appreciating the gifts that life brings. I enjoy productive work that contributes to the good of all. I treasure time with family, friends, and loved ones. I am grateful as I remember loved ones who are no longer with us and cherish the sweet memories. I savor my food, enjoy peaceful rest, and live a life that is abundant in every way. I say "Yes!" to life.

I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of a flower—the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence.

Helen Keller

Abundance is... apple blossoms on a bright spring day.

Abundance is...sunset behind a mountain peak.

*Sometimes I go about in pity for myself,
and all the while
A great wind is bearing me across the sky.*
Ojibwa saying

I create elegant solutions because I am open to new ideas. I focus on solutions instead of problems. I choose to see every problem as an opportunity. Abundant supply and

abundant wisdom are already mine. God is bigger than my problems and has more ways to solve them than I can imagine. I do not force solutions. I allow solutions to unfold naturally through trust and openness. I am willing to wait for an elegant solution to emerge in God's perfect timing. I give thanks for that within me that knows what to do and how to do it.

The power of a man's virtue should not be measured by his special efforts, but by his ordinary doing.

Blaise Pascal

I say yes to...this moment!

If your everyday life seems poor, don't blame it; blame yourself; admit to yourself that you are not enough of a poet to call forth its riches; because for the creator there is no poverty and no poor indifferent place.

Rainer Maria Rilke

God has created a Universe that works. God has created me to grow and prosper in this Universe. It is a large and wondrous Universe, unfolding in ever expanding goodness, order, and harmony. I am part of that mystery and wonder, growing and evolving. I rest in the Divine intention that impels me to grow and evolve. I look at the world with wonder, trusting that the dreams of my heart are the dreams of the Universe dreaming through me. I am thankful that I live and love in a complex and wonderful Universe.

Every now and then go away and have a little relaxation. To remain constantly at work will diminish your judgement. Go some distance away, because work will be in perspective and a lack of harmony is more readily seen.

Leonardo da Vinci

I say yes to...courage!

One to-day is worth two to-morrows.

Benjamin Franklin

Abundance is...an opportunity to pass the good on to someone else.

Abundance is...sweet sleep after a good day of hard work.

Cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, filling it with a steady and perpetual serenity.

Joseph Addison

I never need to worry or fret. I choose a cheerful faith in Divine resources. Abundant help and provision is always available. I only need to know the highest truth: that God is my Source, and with God as my Source, anything is possible. I calmly anticipate unexpected gifts of abundant provision to arrive in my life. I do the work that is mine to do and choose cheerfulness instead of worry or fear. I trust that all things are working together for the highest good. I receive the gifts life brings with joy and gratitude.

When you make the choice for consciousness, learning, and growth, then you have also chosen the path of spiritual power, which resides in your being and not in your position.
M. Scott Peck

We are a stream whose source is hidden. Always our being is descending into us from we know not whence.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

I ask and it is already given to me: pressed down, shaken together, overflowing, running over—life in abundance, love in the light of Divine love and light. My cup overflows, my barns and granaries are full. I release all fear of scarcity and lack, knowing that I am perfectly supplied by an endless flow of Divine energy. There is plenty for me and there is plenty to share with others. I rejoice in the gift of God's gracious abundance.

I say yes to...life!

Learn to dance, or the angels won't know what to do with you.
Saint Augustine

Resource List

Favorite books that have inspired me along the way.

• Simplicity

The Simple Living Guide
Janet Luhrs
© 1997 Broadway Books

Living the Simple Life: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying More
Elaine St. James
© 1998 Hyperion

Making Choices: Discover the Joy in Living the Life You Want to Lead

Alexandra Stoddard.

© 1994 Avon Books

Elegant Choices, Healing Choices: Finding Grace and Wholeness in Everything We Choose

Marsha Sinetar

© 1988 Paulist Press

Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy

Sarah Ban Breathnach

© 1995 Warner Books

• **Finances and Prosperity**

The Energy of Money

Maria Nemeth, Ph.D.

© 1997 Ballantine Wellspring

The Nine Steps to Financial Freedom

Suze Orman

© 1997 Crown Publishers

Edwene Gaines Seminars

256-635-1377

prosperityproducts.com

Money Drunk Money Sober: 90 Days to Financial Freedom

Julia Cameron and Mark Bryan

© 1992 Ballantine Wellspring

Rich Dad Poor Dad

Robert T. Kiyosaki

© 1997 Warner Business Books

richdad.com

How to Get Out of Debt, Stay Out of Debt, and Live Prosperously

Jerrold Mundis

© 1998 Bantam Books

Earn What You Deserve: How to Stop Underearning and Start Thriving

Jerrold Mundis

© 1995 Bantam Books

• **Wonderful Women**

Lit From Within: Tending Your Soul for Lifelong Beauty

Victoria Moran

© 2001 HarperCollins

Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing

Christiane Northrup, M.D.

© 1994 Bantam Books

The Cloister Walk

Kathleen Norris

© 1996 Riverhead Books

Entre Nous: A Woman's Guide to Finding Her Inner French Girl

Debra Ollivier

© 2003 St. Martin's Griffin

The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine

Sue Monk Kidd

© 1996 HarperSanFrancisco

Prayer Is a Place: America's Religious Landscape Observed

Phyllis Tickle

© 2005 Doubleday

• **Creativity**

The Zen of Creativity: Cultivating Your Artistic Life

John Daido Looi

© 2004 Dharma Communications/Ballantine

Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art

Madeleine L'Engle

© 1982 Bantam Books

The Artist's Way: A Course in Discovering and Recovering Your Creative Self © 1992

The Vein of Gold: A Journey to Your Creative Heart © 1996

Walking in This World: The Practical Art of Creativity © 2002

Julia Cameron

Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

Coaching the Artist Within
Eric Maisel
© 2005 New World Library

Affirmations for Artists
Eric Maisel
© Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

Improv Wisdom: Don't Prepare, Just Show Up
Patricia Ryan Madson
© 2005 Bell Tower

Trust the Process: An Artist's Guide to Letting Go
Shaun McNiff
© 1998 Shambala

Your Heart's Desire: Instructions for Creating the Life You Really Want
Sonia Choquette
© 1997 Three Rivers Press

Creating an Imaginative Life
Michael Jones
© 1995 Conari Press

Creative Ideas: A Spiritual Compass for Personal Expression
Ernest Holmes
© 1973, 2004 Science of Mind Publishing

Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity
David Whyte
© 2001 Riverhead Books

InterPlay®
interplay.org

Having It All: Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit Together Again
Phil Porter with Cynthia Winton-Henry
© 1997 Body Wisdom, Inc.
(InterPlay)

What the Body Wants
Cynthia Winton-Henry with Phil Porter
© 2004 Northstone Publishing
(InterPlay)

• **Intuitive Mind/Holistic Body**

Yoga Mind, Body, and Spirit: A Return to Wholeness

Donna Farhi

© 2000 Henry Holt and Company

Bringing Yoga to Life: The Everyday Practice of Enlightened Living

Donna Farhi

© 2003 HarperSanFrancisco

Meditations from the Mat: Daily Reflections on the Path of Yoga

Rolf Gates and Katrina Kenison

© 2002 Anchor Books

Divining the Body: Reclaim the Holiness of Your Physical Self

Jan Phillips

© 2005 Skylight Paths

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Making Money Through Intuition

Nancy Rosanoff

© 1999 Alpha Books

Trust Your Vibes: Secret Tools for Six-Sensory Living

Sonia Choquette

© 2004 Hay House

Positive Energy

Judith Orloff

© 2004 Three Rivers Press

Conscious Breathing: How Shamanic Breathwork Can Transform Your Life

Joy Manné

© 2004 North Atlantic Books

The Spiritual Dimension of Therapeutic Touch

Dora Kunz with Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., R.N.

© 2004 Bear & Company

see also: healingtouch.net for information on Healing Touch

Vibrational Medicine

Richard Gerber, M.D.

© 2001 Bear & Company

Journey to Freedom: 13 Quantum Leaps for the Soul

Leslie Kenton

© 1998 Thorsons

Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche

Bill Plotkin

© 2003 New World Library

Healing Beyond the Body: Medicine and the Infinite Reach of the Mind

Larry Dossey, M.D.

© 2003 Shambala

The Healer Within: Using Traditional Chinese Techniques to Release Your Body's Own Medicine

Roger Jahnke, O.M.D.

© 1997 HarperSanFrancisco

The Healing Promise of Qi: Creating Extraordinary Wellness Through Qigong and Tai Chi

Roger Jahnke, O.M.D.

© 2002 Contemporary Books

Belly Dancing: The Sensual Art of Energy and Spirit

Pina Coluccia, Anette Paffrath, Jean Püte

© 2005 Inner Traditions

Bellydancing for Fitness

Rania Androniki Bossonis

© 2004 Fair Winds Press

Grandmother's Secrets: The Ancient Rituals and Healing Power of Belly Dancing

Rosina-Fawzia Al-Rawi

© 1999 Interlink Books

The Nia Technique: The High-Powered Energizing Workout that Gives You a New Body and a New Life

Debbie Rosas and Carlos Rosas

© 2004 Broadway Books

Sacred Drumming

Steven Ash

© 2001 Sterling Publishing

Ed Haggard: CDs, drum lessons

thelovedrums.com

• **Cultural Visionaries**

The Cultural Creatives

Paul H. Ray, Ph.D. and Sherry Ruth Anderson, Ph.D.

© 2000 Harmony Books

The Translucent Revolution: How People Just Like You Are Waking Up and Changing the World

Arjuna Ardagh

© 2005 New World Library

Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism

Patricia Aburdene

© 2005 Hampton Roads Publishing Company

Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution

Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins

© 1999 Little, Brown, & Company

naturalcapitalism.com

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things

William McDonough and Michael Braungart

© 2002 Northpoint Press

McDonough.com

The Answer to How is Yes: Acting on What Matters

Peter Block

© 2002 Berret-Koehler Publishers

• **Spiritual Visionaries and Quantum Leaps**

A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose

Eckhart Tolle

© 2005 Penguin/Plume

Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?

Seth Godin

© 2010 Penguin/Portfolio

The Face of Glory: Creativity, Consciousness, and Civilization

William Anderson

© 1996 Bloomsbury

*The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe/
Book Four: The Luminous Ground*

Christopher Alexander

© 2004 PatternLanguage.com

There's a Spiritual Answer to Every Problem

Wayne Dyer

© 2001 HarperCollins

The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire: Harnessing the Infinite Power of Coincidence

Deepak Chopra

© 2003 Harmony Books

Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality

Matthew Fox

© 1983 Bear & Company

One River, Many Wells

Matthew Fox

© 2000 Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

"Arise, My Love...": Mysticism for a New Era

William Johnston

© 2000 Orbis Books

A Course in Miracles

© 1992 Foundation for Inner Peace

The Parables of the Kingdom

Robert Farrar Capon

© 1985 Eerdmans

The Science of Mind: A Philosophy, A Faith, A Way of Life

Ernest Holmes

© 1938 Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

Joy's Way: A Map for the Transformational Journey

W. Brugh Joy, M.D.

© 1979 Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

Living Presence: A Sufi Way to Mindfulness and the Essential Self

Kabir Edmund Helminski

© 1992 Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus

Neil Douglas-Klotz

© 1999 HarperSanFrancisco

Inner Christianity: A Guide to the Esoteric Tradition

Richard Smoley
© 2002 Shambala

Quantum Theology: Spiritual Implications of the New Physics
Diarmuid O'Murchu
© 2004 Crossroad Publishing

Living with Joy: Keys to Personal Power and Spiritual Transformation
Sanaya Roman
© 1986 H.J. Kramer, Inc.

• **Poetry and Quotes**

Anthology of American Poetry
edited by George Gesner
© 1983 Crown/Avenal

Thinking Outside the Church: 110 Ways to Connect with Your Spiritual Nature
Jennifer Leigh Selig, Ph.D.
© 2004 Andrews McMeel Publishers

The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotes
compiled by Mark Water
© 2001 Baker Books

The Westminster Collection of Christian Quotes
compiled by Martin H. Manser
© 2001 Westminster John Know Press

Abounding Grace
edited with commentary by M. Scott Peck, M.D.
© 2000 Andrews McMeel

The Treasure Chest
© 1995 HarperCollins

Zen Soup
Laurence G. Boldt
© 1997 Penguin Arkana

Golden Treasury of the Familiar
edited by Ralph L. Woods
© 1980 Crown/Avenal

Words I Wish I Wrote

compiled by Robert Fulghum
© 1997 HarperCollins

Spiritual RX: Prescriptions for Living a Meaningful Life
Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat
© 2000 Hyperion

Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life
Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat
© 1996 Scribner

The Fairview Guide to Positive Quotations
compiled by John Cook
© 1996 Fairview Press

Credits

Scripture quotations marked RSV are taken from *The Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright ©1946, Old Testament section copyright ©1952, by the Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version®* (NIV®), copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations noted “The Message” are from *The Message: The New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs in Contemporary English*, copyright ©1993, 1996 by Eugene Peterson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Excerpts from “No Fear In Love” and “Permission Granted” © 2001 Candy Paull/Golden Moment Publishing, used by permission

#

The Heart of Abundance includes excerpts from:

Inner Abundance

Affirmations for Confidence, Creativity, and Higher Consciousness

This inspirational guide offers simple ways to cultivate a more meaningful and more abundant life. The meditations, quotes, and affirmations in this book remind you that true abundance is available every day, no matter what you may be going through. Discover your hidden potential to create a happier and more satisfying life. Learn to embrace what is already yours with thankfulness, joy, and the expectancy of even more good to come. *Inner Abundance* reveals the treasures of the heart with effective ways to create and celebrate abundance every day.

Smashwords text-only edition

Copyright ©2009 Candy Paull

The Art of Abundance

A Simple Guide to Discovering Life's Treasures

© 1998, 2006 Candy Paull

Originally published 1998 Honor Books

Second edition published 2006 Stewart, Tabori & Chang

Key Word: Gratitude

Key Concept: Divine awareness

Cosmic Question: Is the Universe friendly?

- You are surrounded by abundance here and now.
- By counting our blessings, we discover how rich we are in the things that count.

The art of abundance is not about greed or selfishness. The art of abundance is about celebrating life right now, this minute. It is a way of looking at the potential your life holds--the little blessings to be thankful for now and the gifts that God wants to give you, if you'll just open your heart to receive. It's about being enthusiastic about life every day, not just on the rare occasions when everything seems to be going your way. The art of abundance is finding the provision in what is right in front of you, seeing the hand of God already giving you what you need, moment by moment. Then sharing the abundant blessings God has given with others. And completing the circle of giving by praising the One who gave the gifts for us to enjoy.

The Art of Encouragement

A Simple Guide to Living Life from the Heart

©2003, 2006 Candy Paull

Originally published 2003 Stewart House Publishers

Second edition published 2006 Stewart, Tabori & Chang

Key Word: Compassion

Key Concept: Divine perspective

Cosmic Question: Can I trust myself? Others? God?

- You have infinite abundance within you and so does everyone else.
- When we choose love over fear, we learn to trust ourselves and others, and enjoy life more.

Encouragement is the art of abundance shared and multiplied. It is a way of living that seeks to bless each person we meet. Encouragement looks at what we can be, believes for

the best in each of us. Encouragement is love in action. It is taking time to praise those we love and to appreciate everyone we meet. When the world and all its pressures takes the heart out of us, we need to hear that someone cares for us and believes in us. And we need to do the same for others. Encouragement means taking time to let God encourage us, to meditate on the small miracles of life. Enthusiasm and courage, love and appreciation, practical acts of mercy and compassion--that's the way of encouragement. The art of encouragement is the art of creating community and celebrating friendship.

The Art of Simplicity

A Simple Guide to Focusing on the Essentials of the Heart

© 2006 Candy Paull

Originally published 2006 Stewart, Tabori & Chang

Key Word: Integrity

Key Concept: Divine wisdom

Cosmic Question: What priorities lead to peace and spiritual growth?

- You can create greater abundance in your life when you make conscious choices.
- Making right choices leads us beyond fear, anger, judgement, and other ego agendas into spiritual—and material—freedom.

Simplicity can be difficult to achieve in a world that clamors for "more! more! more!" But simplicity opens the way to the center of the heart--the still place where quiet, healing, and a still small voice await. Simplicity is making elegant choices, treasuring precious moments, and valuing that which is of eternal worth. Like Michelangelo who saw the statue of David in the heart of the stone, so we are called to reveal the inner beauty hidden in the chaos of our lives. Simplicity is singleness of heart, focused on the essentials of life, rather than being distracted by our desires and fears. Simplicity is a celebration of the heart--a chance to touch eternity in a moment of meditation. Simplicity is finding abundance in the small things.

The Artful Living Series:

The art of living is enjoying the life we have and creating a life we enjoy.

This series...

- uses an easy-to-access format that offers instant inspiration through quotes and practical concepts for better living. The concepts, though shared in simple language, are deep life lessons—essentials we must all learn to become fully human.
- follows a progression of spiritual growth that traces a spiral pattern instead of the usual more linear approaches of most self-help books. Instead of ten easy steps, the format offers an intuitive approach that makes unexpected connections and draws from diverse sources, leaving room for the soul to breathe and to explore.
- is less about steps to some future enlightenment and more about seeing the light, joy, and energy in the here and now of our lives.

- is about embodied spirituality and a sense of holy presence: being aware and in love with life, going ever deeper into the nature of our incarnated life on earth; discovering heaven hiding in earth, eternity in time.
- is encouragement to transform living into an art.
- is less about “self-improvement” and more about luminous acceptance and recognition that we are whole and connected to the Great Source (God, Higher Power, Universe, Infinite Mind, Cosmos, Christ, Buddha Nature, whatever you want to call that Infinite Creator and Sustainer, the Mystery at the heart of all things).
- offers a spirituality that emphasizes
 - deep and embodied love
 - acceptance and delight
 - celebration of life as a dance of divinity
 - the sacredness of all life
 - the importance of art, music, movement, sensation, sensuousness as expressions of our divine nature and a manifestation of God working in and through us.
- offers thoughts on enlightenment, presence, awakening, translucence, awareness, rebirth—that process that moves us from being asleep to the greatness of life to being awake and aware.
- is playful, encouraging generosity of spirit, humor, lightness, love, creativity, gratitude, and joy.

Also available by Candy Paull:

31 Days of Abundance

Meditations to Help You Make the Most of Every Moment

e-book

Copyright ©2010 Candy Paull

Though life continually offers its riches to us, it is easy to become caught up in the daily grind and miss the blessings that are right in front of our eyes. We need to be reminded of the treasures of abundance that our lives already hold. *31 Days of Abundance* offers a month’s worth of inspirational thoughts, quotes and practical actions that remind you to appreciate and embrace the gifts of life today.

31 Days of Abundance offers a combination of inspirational thoughts and practical action steps that remind you to embrace the gifts life offers you right now. A month's worth of meditations and encouraging quotes encourage you to create and celebrate more abundance every day. Savor the small blessings that add up to a larger world of delight, wonder, and joyous appreciation for life itself.

31 Days of Encouragement

Meditations to Help You Persevere and Thrive in Difficult Times

e-book

Copyright ©2010 Candy Paull

A month's worth of meditations encourage you to keep on keeping on, persevering through tough times to fashion a life that is meaningful to you and a blessing to the world. A combination of inspirational thoughts, quotes, and practical action steps help you live mindfully, break through fear, choose peace, take action, and keep a positive attitude through the challenges and changes of life.

To encourage is to put the heart back into someone, to help each other live well and live together. When life is challenging and you feel discouraged, *31 Days of Encouragement* offers meditations that can give you the courage and confidence to live with resolution, vitality, and purpose. Simple, practical meditations offer inspiration for those difficult days. This book includes a free excerpt from *The Art of Encouragement*

31 Days of Simplicity

Meditations to Help You Live with Greater Joy and Serenity

e-book

Copyright ©2010 Candy Paull

Choosing simplicity leads to a life of freedom, peace, quiet joy, and serenity. A month of practical advice, inspiring quotes, and daily meditations help you clear both outer and inner clutter, encouraging you to order your priorities around what matters most.

Discover inspirational resources to help you make more room in your life for the joys of simple living and simply being alive.

31 Days of Simplicity: Meditations to Help You Live With Greater Joy and Serenity encourages you to take practical steps toward living with greater serenity and simplicity. Outward actions like cleaning your home, making do with less, and delighting in small things are balanced with inner choices that help you remember what is most important and meaningful to you. Create a simpler life you truly love. This book includes a free excerpt from *The Art of Simplicity*

Christmas Abundance

A Simple Guide to Discovering the True Meaning of Christmas

©2000 Candy Paull/Thomas Nelson Publishers

also available as e-book

Christmas Abundance is a celebratory look at Christmas—from the small joys of the scents, sights, sounds, tastes, and textures of Christmas as we celebrate it today to the true meaning of Christmas in the birth of Christ.

Now available in e-book format from Thomas Nelson Publishers

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

101 Inspiring Ways to Enjoy Christmas

© Howard/Simon & Schuster

Along with inspirational meditations, you'll find quotes, scripture verses, and simple tips that help you choose easier ways to savor the season and make the most of every precious moment.

About the author

Candy Paull is the author of *The Heart of Abundance*, *The Art of Simplicity*, *The Art of Abundance*, *The Art of Encouragement*, *Inner Abundance*, *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*, and other books.

Candy is a freelance writer who has owned her own business since 1990, specializing in marketing materials for book publishers. She also has been a bookstore buyer and an advertising manager for a small publisher, for a total of more than 30 years involvement in the publishing industry.

As well as being a freelance writer and author, she is a published songwriter and performer who makes her home in Nashville, Tennessee. Known for her encouraging lifestyle, Candy's philosophy of life springs from her experiences as a writer and musician involved in creative arts community. Candy's open approach to spirituality draws insight and wisdom from many spiritual traditions.

There is something inside each of us that is trustworthy, whole, and wise. Instead of always trying to "fix" what is "broken" in our lives, Candy Paull helps us experience the profound wholeness that lies at the center of the universe—and in our own human hearts.

Connect with Candy online

Website: <http://www.candypaull.com/>

Website: <http://www.candypaull.net/>

Blog: <http://candypaull.com/blog.htm>