

23 things you might not know about you  
notes of encouragement, smartness and truth

{a zen at play offering}

Dearest you!

When I asked 23 glorious humans to  
write a love note for  
your glorious self, they said:

"YES PLEASE!"

We offer this little book as a gentle nudge  
to remind you of your magnificence,  
your sense of possibility, your beauty,  
and your truth.

With much love, Lisa  
(+ some very wise friends)

<http://zenatplay.com>

You're a captivating compendium of innate talents, acquired skills, hard-won lessons + intuitive glimpses.

**Alexandra Franzen :: 4**

the simple fact that you are alive...

**Amanda Oaks :: 5**

Learn to give yourself permission

**Chris Guillebeau :: 6**

We desperately need your glorious light of love and your one of a kind blazing genius.

**Chris Zydel :: 7**

Your attractions are a mirror of what's possible.

**Danielle LaPorte :: 8**

There's no need to put on your "say cheese" smile or hide in your Spanx or cover up your grays.

**Darrah Parker :: 9**

Yes, you are a mess, but...

**Dyana Valentine :: 10**

You are a goddess.

**Goddess Leonie :: 11**

You are made of *bigness*.

**Fabeku Fatunmise :: 12**

Your body is on your side.

**Heidi Fischbach :: 13**

You turn your elegant head and the Earth spins on her axis.

**Hiro Boga :: 14**

I want you to know that you are an artist.

**Jamie Ridler :: 15**

Staying on your own side will get you what you truly desire.

**Jen Louden :: 16**

we are one and the same. Light seeing light. Love seeing love.

**Julie Daley :: 17**

Just once, I wish you knew nothing about yourself.

**Karen Maezen Miller :: 18**

You're worthy.

**Kylie Springman :: 19**

How can you find contentedness?

**Leo Babauta :: 20**

You are kinder, more courageous, funnier and much, much more powerful than you usually recognise.

**Marianne Elliott :: 21**

"Do you think you are a small star, when in fact you have the entire universe within you?"

**Mark Silver :: 22**

It is safe for you to spend time with your self.

**Susannah Conway :: 23**

You might not be able to ignore the vampires

**Tammy Strobel :: 24**

You know more than you think.

**Tara Gentile :: 25**

Can you feel the one deep inside your chest, who has existed forever?

**Tara Sophia Mohr :: 26**

XO

*Who made that? I did! A little about Lisa :: 27*



Alexandra Franzen is a promotional wordsmith & pro-active pimp with queer savoir faire (and really great hair). Find her tweeting away @Alex\_Franzen, and blogging up a storm at [Unicorns For Socialism](#).

## YOU ARE GIFTED.

You're a captivating compendium of innate talents, acquired skills, hard-won lessons and intuitive glimpses. There is no one who can do what you do, in precisely the way that you do it. There is no comparison, and no competition. How miraculous is that?

## YOUR STORY IS FASCINATING.

Your first kiss. Your road trip epiphany. Your father's death. Your final straw. You are an archetype, a narrative vessel, and a potent protagonist. We want to know how you got here. And we want to know what happens next.

## YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE.

And so are your opinions, services, and knee-jerk reactions. The wisdom you take for granted could be a revelatory experience for somebody else. Never undervalue your knowledge.

## PEOPLE WANT TO HELP YOU.

You have allies + advocates. Mentors + muses. Super-pimps + secret admirers. If you need their aid, just ASK — sweetly, concisely, and without expectation. You might be astounded at the outcome.



Amanda Oaks lives in western Pennsylvania with her love & life partner & their two sons. She blogs kindness, truth, inspiration, gentleness & love at [Kind Over Matter](#)

Hi Beautiful,

I just want to let you know how incredibly lucky you are to be reading these words right now, not these particular words but just the pure fact that you ARE.

You probably have contemplated this a time or two, every day even, but I want to pass along this gentle reminder to you inside this very moment, just in case you need to hear it.

Without getting into the physics & biology of it all, the simple fact that you are alive is quite impossible to believe. The circumstances behind your life, just one small variation in your ancestry, since the very beginning of time, only had to differ ever-so-slightly to make you... not so.

Revel in that thought for a moment, roll around in your gratitude for it all. The next time you look in the mirror, be kind, try smiling at yourself, there is no one in this whole entire universe like you.



Chris Guillebeau is a writer, entrepreneur and world traveler.

Find his Art of Non-Conformity blog at [ChrisGuillebeau.com](http://ChrisGuillebeau.com)

You don't need permission from anyone else. Learn to give yourself permission – to pursue a big dream, to take a big step, to go all-out, to change the world.



Chris Zydel has over 32 years of experience as a compassionate and soulful creativity guide. Through her classes, workshops and training programs she has devoted herself to providing the support, guidance and inspiration that allows her many students to connect with the sacred force of creativity that lives inside of us all.

[CreativeJuiceArts.com](http://CreativeJuiceArts.com)

You were born with a light inside of you. And when you die it will go wherever you go. This light is shining in you at all times. And even if you can't see it yourself, it is shining out on others. No matter what you think or feel or have been told or believe, that light cannot be dimmed. It cannot be extinguished. It is yours and yours alone. And it waits patiently to be acknowledged by you so that you can live your life KNOWING that it is there. And in that knowing allow it to shine ever MORE brightly.

You can distract yourself from this light. You can throw things on top of it like draping a towel over a lampshade. The light still shines, bright and shimmering underneath the towel, but it doesn't come through quite as clear and brilliant and radiant as it truly is.

This light is more beautiful than you can even begin to imagine. And I know why you shy away from it. It's scary to shine so brightly. If you could truly see the exquisiteness that is you, it would shake you to your core. But dearest heart, we no longer have the time for towels over the lampshade. Things are getting a little dire here on our lovely green and blue home. We need to take those dusty old towels that are all crusty and stiff from being baked by such luminosity and heat and sheer heart radiance and throw them into a bonfire together.

We desperately need your glorious light of love and your one of a kind blazing genius. That light of yours that can melt hearts and soothe souls and cast its brilliance to finding a path through any darkness. That light that can fill a room with its sweet glow of compassion and wisdom and creativity. That light that will allow you to awaken from the sleep of your perceived inadequacy. That light that can gently illuminate those dark and scared places inside of you so that you can truly sparkle and glow and beam the starshine, moonshine and sunshine of your soul and spirit into my light. So that we may all shine as one light together.



Danielle LaPorte is the creator of [WhiteHotTruth.com](http://WhiteHotTruth.com), which has been called "the best place on-line for kick-ass spirituality."

Your authentic self lives in your dreams.

Even if your current life has little resemblance to your "ideal" or "fantasized" life, your true self is living in what you desire – your desire to be dynamic, prosperous, courageous, light, in charge, at peace, hot stuff.

Your attractions are a mirror of what's possible.

You are what you desire.

So...move toward what you want, and your creative power to make it real will begin to emerge.

But you have to move. You need to meet your power half way.





Darrah Parker is a Seattle-based portrait and family photographer and creator of the [Slice of Life Project](#), a photography e-course for anyone with a camera. Armed with her camera and her curiosity, she is on a constant search for the joy in everyday life, beauty in the overlooked and under-appreciated, and the magic in simple moments.

[DarrahParker.com](http://DarrahParker.com)

You, there. Yes, *you*. I see you and you are beautiful.

Now, before you shrug your shoulders and start pointing out your flaws, take a deep breath and take this in: I see you and you are beautiful. Did you hear it that time? I'll keep saying it until you do.

You may look in the mirror and see the dark circles, the sags, and the bags, but that's not what I see. I see you. *All* of you.

There's no need to put on your "say cheese" smile or hide in your Spanx or cover up your grays.

Your beauty radiates from a deep place. It comes from a place of knowing, a place of living, a place of "been there, done that." All that you have been has created all that you are – the struggles and the strife, the joy and the laughter. It's all there. In your knowing glances and deep breaths and hopes for the future.

Never discount all you have done and all you have been. You have earned your beauty. Wear it proudly as a badge of honor. Remove one struggle, remove one wrinkle, and you would not be all that you are. You could not be all that you can be.

So just know this: I see you and you are beautiful. Exactly the way you are.



Dyana Valentine is a professional instigator, speaker, emcee and group wrangler. She helps self-starters become self-finishers.  
[DyanaValentine.com](http://DyanaValentine.com)

I wish you knew what I know about you:

Yes, you are a mess, but in that I can't wait to sit with you in the kitchen and laugh about how great it is to be messes together.

That time when you surprised yourself, went for it and got exactly what you wanted? Yeah, I saw that.

When I need to hear-it-like-it-is, you are the one I call.

You say No, Thank You, in a way that makes me know I can do it, too.



Goddess Leonie is the creator of [GoddessGuidebook.com](http://GoddessGuidebook.com), a popular creativity + spirituality blog for women. ooh! and [GoddessCircle](http://GoddessCircle), an online tribe of goddesses.

I want you to know, beautiful soul,  
that you,  
just by being you  
without having to  
change even one  
molecule...  
you are a  
goddess...





I'm Fabeku Fatunmise -  
life awesomizer, suck  
exorcist, wearer of red  
suede shoes. I help  
people turn up the  
awesome in their life +  
business through the  
magic of sound. In my  
spare time, I covet dark  
chocolate, write love  
letters to Yoda and  
roam the internets in  
search of the perfect  
luchador mask.  
[SankofaSong.com](http://SankofaSong.com)

You are made of *bigness*.

At your core, there's something in you that's bigger than all of it.

All of the pain. And the struggle. And the doubt.

Bigger than the complicatedness. And the comparisons. And the feelings of *not-enough-ness*.

Bigger than the fear of being broken.

Or the fear that maybe you already are.

There's a bigness in you that's always there.

You can't lose it.

And no one can give it to you. Or take it away.

Its mojo is deep. *Enduring*.

Breathe into it.

*Let go.*

It'll catch you.





Heidi Fischbach is a massage therapist, mood detective and potion mixer. She's also a lover of word and world, a curiosity fan, and is prone to inappropriate laughter.

[HeidisTable.com](http://HeidisTable.com)

"You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves." --Mary Oliver

Your body is on your side. It adores you. If you want to take good care of it, it will show you how. If you want to learn its language, it will teach you. Listen. Listen...

You are already on your way, my friend. I see that you come bearing the gift of curiosity. Great! Use curiosity like the superpower it is.

What does animal-you love? What does it need? Your body is smart and oh-so-wise, it will show you.

You can start really basic. Curiosity is all about listening, observing, reeeally paying attention... Find out what foods it loves. Have you fed it those? Find out how it loves to move. Do you move it every day? Do you take it out into the fresh air? Do you take it to the forest or to your city park? Your body is an animal, after all! Find out when it likes to go to bed. Do you go when you're tired or do you make your body wait? Do you give it fresh water to drink?

What's that? It's hard and you have no will power?

Oh my sweet, forget will power. Will power is overrated and never really lasts. And when, by some chance, it *seems* to work, scratch under the surface and you will find gritted teeth and white knuckles hanging on for dear life. Nah, that's no way for you to live.

Rather than will power, stick with love. What does the soft animal of your body love? Find out. And then do it. From love.

In time your body will start to feel more like home to you. You will see. When things get too deep and dark in your thoughts, and when your spirit is exhausted, your body will be the one that's up there holding the ropes, rappelling you back up to solid ground.

You're doing great, my sweet. Your body is one lucky duck to have you. What a pair you make. Just look at you!

Can't wait to hear how it goes. Send me a postcard?



Hiro Boga is a writer, teacher and intuitive business strategist who blends transformative energy technologies, the magic of story, and grounded spiritual wisdom to help creative people and their businesses flourish. Clients have called her "a gifted healer," "a sacred witness," and "a blessing," praising her "illuminating, grounded and specific intuitive insights." Find Hiro at [HiroBoga.com](http://HiroBoga.com)

You are beautiful! So beautiful, I could sit and gaze at you all day and drown in wonder as night falls and Time dissolves.

You are magnificent.

You hold the sky as lightly as a bubble in the palm of your hand.

You, my friend, are the light that shines through the tender green of this leaf and brings eternity into focus.

You are the restless power of the sea, and the yielding boundary of the shore. You are the freedom of wild geese on the far horizon.

You turn your elegant head and the Earth spins on her axis.

You are all that is Necessary, and Sufficient.

You dream the stars from their home in the belly of the Earth.

Your circle of inner selves is the crown that shelters, the lap that cradles.

The bead of sweat on your fingertip nourishes the whole, hungry world.

*What will you do, with all this power?*

Who will you be, when you see your true reflection?

Come visit the Pool of Remembering with me. Even a puddle will do. Come, see your true reflection.

Everything conspires to show you your Self.

Everything conspires to make you visible.

Will you rise on the horizon in the Land of Wagging Fingers?

Will you become a Pool of Remembering for them too?

Write the truth of your being on your body. With your naked finger.

Write:

I am beautiful! I am magnificent! I am you! And you! And you!

Write it! Sing it! Say it! I am love. We are love.

Our business—O, our business is love.



Jamie Ridler is a creative living coach and the founder of Jamie Ridler Studios. From coaching to workshops, from podcasting to blogging, Jamie is here to help people find the confidence and courage to discover and express their creative selves so they can be the star they are.

[OpenTheDoor.ca](http://OpenTheDoor.ca)

They were wrong.

They were wrong when they told you that you couldn't sing. Or dance. Or draw.

I know it hurt. I know it shut you down. I know you believed them. But they just didn't see.

I want you to see.

I want you to know that you are an artist. That every day something in your heart is waiting to be born. With words. With pictures. With creativity. With action. With love. You have gifts unique in all the world and we need you.

So, cry if you need to. Get angry on the page. And know that because they didn't see your gifts doesn't mean they aren't there.

Sing. Paint. Doodle. Draw. Dance. Grab your camera. Tend your garden. Write a poem. Wear a costume. Cook a great meal. Play. It's time to rediscover what you knew when you were 5. You are an artist. You are.



Jen Louden is a best-selling author and champion of soulful service. She's just started a one year experiment in savoring and serving the world. Join her at [jenniferlouden.com](http://jenniferlouden.com).

The ability to stay with yourself, grounded in your belly and breath, to be on your own side, to not leave yourself in service to some ideal or yet another comparison or in the hurry up urge to get yet another thing ticked off your bucket list, to stay here, especially when it is messy, painful (literally) empty, perplexing and confusing - that my darling precious jewel, is the key to all you desire, the doorway to being feeling fully alive, the magic carpet ride to bringing your true vocation to life, and the sure fire way to have lots more sex (if you want more sex). Staying on your own side will get you what you truly desire - pinkie swear.





Julie Daley is a coach, teacher, writer and healer. She's led hundreds of people from all walks of life to take an inward journey of the creative heart—the source within each of us that guides us to answers, healing, and personal evolution..

[UnabashedlyFemale.com](http://UnabashedlyFemale.com)

Why, hello there. It's lovely to meet you. I'm going to get a little intimate with you, because that's what I do. Trust me. I think you'll like this.

I'd love to introduce you to someone really quite extraordinary. I'd love for you to meet you, the radiant glorious you that is looking out your eyes. I know you know the you I mean. You may pretend not to know, but I know you do. If I were to sit down right in front of you and gaze into those sweet peepers, I'd see you and you'd see me. I don't mean how we usually look at others, through the thinking mind. I mean how you look at another when you are really here, intimately here, heart open and wanting to receive.

So can I? Can I sit down here with you and look into those extraordinary eyes? If it's okay, I'll tell you what I see. I see light, oodles of light, light from the sun, the moon and the stars all rolled up into two sweet beams streaming out your eyes. I feel love, oceans of love that emanate from your heart. And I feel peace, the peace that is at the center of your very being. How do I know these beautiful things?

Because we are one and the same. Light seeing light. Love seeing love. You don't have to hide any part of you, because I'm already in love, love struck by who you really are.

Right here, right now, in this fluid moment, you are swimming in a conscious sea, a sea infinitely pregnant with possibility. This sea wants you to know it is longing for you to know it. It is here, at your service. All you have to do is open to it; open your beautiful heart to what is here, just as you have done with me.

Thank you for sharing you with me. It has been the most glorious and sacred moment. Two souls meeting, opening and acknowledging that we are indeed one. It doesn't get any better than that.



Karen Maezen Miller calls herself an errant wife, delinquent mother, reluctant dog walker, expert laundress and stationmaster of the full catastrophe. She's also a Zen Buddhist priest and teacher, or *sensei*, at the Hazy Moon Zen Center in Los Angeles. [KarenMaezenMiller.com](http://KarenMaezenMiller.com)

Just once, I wish you knew nothing about yourself.

I wish you could forget everything you think you know, everything you tell yourself over and over again, every lesson learned, every insight, every hard knock, the whole of your life story.

I wish you could see that there is no way to know yourself, because you are far more than you can know.

You are vast and you are small; you are strong and you are fragile; you are day and you are night; the sun and the moon; the seasons, repeating, repeating. You are creation itself unfolding.

Just once I wish you could see that to know nothing is to know everything and then, just once, stop seeking what you already are and what no one else can tell you.



Kylie Springman is an empowerment coach and photographer who's all about the intricate art of liking ourselves. You can find her on Twitter as [@kyliewriteshere](#), or read her weekly at [Kyliewrites.com](#).

You're worthy.

You don't need to do anything to deserve to be taken care of, or showered with affection, or pampered. You've already earned it, by virtue of the fact that you're you.

You deserve a dance break, a vacation, and your favorite meal on a platter. A gold star. *A zillion gold stars.*

The more you realize and embody your zesty greatness, the more others will adore your you-ness and benefit from it. And the more you'll be a magnet for the people who keep you nourished and cared-for.



Leo Babauta is a simplicity blogger & author. He created *Zen Habits*, a Top 25 blog (according to TIME magazine) with 200,000 subscribers, [mnmlist.com](http://mnmlist.com), and the best-selling books *focus*, *The Power of Less*, and *Zen To Done*.

Explore the question: are you content, and if not, how can you find contentedness?

Most people are not content with what they have or who they are, and so their lives are spent full of desire to have more and be better, acquiring more, being busy, becoming stressed out, getting into debt, being unhappy with themselves, often ruining relationships.

The answer is simple (and difficult): find contentedness. If you can find it, you'll end most of your problems.



Marianne Elliott is a human rights advocate, writer and yoga teacher. Zen peacekeeper. Change-maker. Instigator of radical acts of kindness to ourselves and others. Creator of the 30 Days of Yoga course. Practicing Buddhist (trust me, it takes a lot of practice). [marianne-elliott.com](http://marianne-elliott.com)

I want you to know that you are kinder, more courageous, funnier and much, much more powerful than you usually recognise.

The reason *you* are so aware of those moments in which you are impatient, ungenerous or ungracious is because most of the time you are so generous, so gracious, so kind.

You can be kinder to yourself, that you can embrace even your crankiest self, without fear, because you are truly, deeply good, right down to your very core.

I want you to know that you respond very well to radical kindness, and that your power - because it is so rooted in your goodness - is nothing to be afraid of. You can unleash it on the world because it is a force for good, and we will all be better for it.



Mark Silver has authored seven heart-centered business learning programs, and his writings are followed by thousands every week. He is a designated master teacher in his Sufi spiritual lineage and is currently pursuing his Masters of Divinity [HeartofBusiness.com](http://HeartofBusiness.com)

There is a quote from my tradition of Sufism, a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that is said to be a direct quote from Divine Source: "Neither My heavens nor My earth contain Me. Only the heart of My faithful servant contains Me."

To me this brings alive a further quote from my sheikh, Sidi al Jamal, "Do you think you are a small star, when in fact you have the entire universe within you?" The vastness of what our hearts carry is something beyond comprehension. It means that we never truly run dry of that which our hearts thirst for. It means we have an infinite spring that constantly renews, and we need have no fear of endings, or leavings, or loss.





Susannah Conway is a photographer, writer, Polaroid addict and very proud aunt. She's the creator of the Unravelling e-courses and her first book is due to be published in spring 2012..

[SusannahConway.com](http://SusannahConway.com)

It is safe for you to spend time with your self.

I know it might feel self-indulgent, when there is so much to be done around the house. I know it might feel scary, that the gremlins could have a field day if you stopped running and stood still. I know it can feel lonely, when it's just you and your self, no one else in the room.

But building a relationship with the woman you see in the mirror is the greatest gift you can give yourself. She is your ally and friend; it is safe for you to spend time with her, I promise.



Tammy Strobel is a writer, tiny house enthusiast, cat-lover and coffee addict. She blogs about social change through simple living at

[RowdyKittens.com](http://RowdyKittens.com)

You might not be able to ignore the vampires, but you can cultivate a sense of gratitude for the people in your life who are amazing and supportive. For every mean and nasty comment or email you get, counteract the negative energy by doing something positive for yourself, your family or community. Doing this kind of work helps keep the big picture in perspective.

If you run across vampires in real-life or online, remember that you are worthy, smart, and have something incredible to offer the world. Don't let the vampires tear you down. We need you to keep doing amazing work.





Tara Gentile is a philosopher of creative living, supporting artists of all sorts with coaching, business support programs, and kicks-in-the-proverbial-pants. Find her musings at [taragentile.com](http://taragentile.com) and her digital zine, Scoutie Girl, at [scoutiegirl.com](http://scoutiegirl.com).

You know more than you think. Yes, you. What I want you to know about yourself is that you don't need to read another book or deconstruct another tutorial because you already have the wisdom it takes to do what you want to do. The best teacher is not someone else - it's you. Your experiments, missteps, and hard work are enough to produce something you're proud of.

We've been trained to notice all the knowledge we're lacking. But there is so much more to you than what you're missing. In fact, it's only in your abundance of wisdom, truth, and beauty that you can see your tiny pores. Be confident in all the knowledge & experience that you do possess and don't worry about what you lack. You'll fill in the gaps.

Step away from the instructions and dive into your goals. You know more than you think.



Tara Sophia Mohr is a writer and personal growth teacher. She writes the blog *Wise Living* and is the creator of the *Playing Big leadership program* for women.

## **The One Deep Inside Your Chest**

Step back and watch your body, being a body.  
Watch an arm move through space, watch an ankle turn.

Watch your body, as it likes things or doesn't,  
as it gets scrapes and bruises  
as the skin darkens and falls into folds.

Step back to the perimeter of the theater  
and watch your body on the stage.

Recede to that quiet knowing:  
For now, I am associated with this body –  
not inside it, or one with it –  
just associated, for a time.

Casing. Only casing.  
Be kind to the casing if you like – put oils  
on it and nourish it and move it to keep it stronger, for a time.  
Never become it. There, only suffering.

Can you feel the one deep inside your chest,  
who has existed forever?  
Who has made a thousand journeys?  
Who feels like a comet in the dark?  
The inner filament?

I know, no one ever told you.  
I know. It wasn't the name you learned to write at school,  
but that one is you.  
That one is the real you.



Who made that?

I did! Lisa Baldwin. Prolific ponderer. Kindness enthusiast. Writer of short things. A playful Buddhist with a passport and a pencil. *Hello!*

If you enjoyed this offering, you might also like to:

- ✓ Share this book with your lovely friends – chances are they'd like some words of encouragement too. Here's the link: <http://zenatplay.com/23things>
- ✓ Get more big love delivered to your inbox. If you'd like to receive more yum, [subscribe here, sweetheart](#).
- ✓ Take a peek at my short, sweet guide to getting your good stuff done gently. It's called [Take That Nap](#). Of course.
- ✓ Frolic with me and my ponderings on the interwebs. That would be lovely. I'm on [twitter](#) and [facebook](#), of course, and I'd love to see you there. And you can find more gentle writings on the [Zen at Play blog](#). Mwah!

So much love to you! Thank you for being your glorious self.

XO