

GENERAL SHIT TO INSPIRE YOU

INSPIRATION IN 5 MINUTE READS



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For William, who inspires me to be my best self.

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Preface.



Do you dream of a better life? I do. It is my hope to inspire you, as I have been inspired.

Have you ever felt like the way the world runs, just isn't right? Have you ever thought that there must be more to life?

Sometimes a new outlook is all that is needed to equate to a new and happy life. Changing your perspective is not easy, but it will make so much difference in your every day life.

The Equation for Happiness.

Don't you think it's funny the way we limit ourselves? I mean, think about it... We have about 80-90 years to live our lives on this beautiful planet, and what do we do with our time? Time is so valuable. We must learn to appreciate and grab hold of each day. Because after the sun sets, that is a day we are not getting back.

We are born, we are nurtured, loved and we grow. The most of us spend 13 years at school. We turn 18 and we are "ready for the world".

Somewhere along the way, we come up with an equation for happiness. CAREER + MARRIAGE + CHILDREN + HOME OWNER = HAPPINESS.

We make a checklist of all the things needed to make us "happy". We look to society for what we should put on this list, and we listen to what people think of others.

You hear people say, "Poor Aunt Julie, she's 35 and still single".

You hear them talk about cousin Andrew and how he's got his head screwed on straight- he's 26 and has already bought his own home. You don't hear anyone amply praising Lucy, who turned her passion of using scrap metal to make sculptures into a living because she doesn't earn "enough" money in their eyes. You wonder why people don't think more highly of Jonathan. He has made a village in Ethiopia his home, after falling in love with their culture while traveling.

Why must we put happiness in a box and limit what should go in there? Why must we feel the need to judge another's life journey? Why can't we accept that every human being is a beautiful creation and is completely unique? What makes one person happy, doesn't necessarily make another feel the same.

So, you have graduated High School. You are eighteen and ready for the world. "What's next?" you think.

Depending on your choice of career, you may find yourself completing more years of study. You find "The One" – someone similar to the ideals of a Disney movie and you settle down, and maybe get married. You save your money and buy a home. Then it's time to fill those empty rooms in that home with beautiful babies.

Then one night, after you've tucked the kids into bed, you sit down on the couch with your partner and watch MKR. You think to yourself, "My math was wrong. I must have missed an important component in the equation for happiness". You realise that working 9-5 to pay for the life you've created doesn't bring you joy. You realise that the stress of raising children is more than you imagined it would be, and you think "Mothers that I've seen on social media make it look like every second they're with their kids they're having the time of their life". You look over to your partner and realise that you don't have the energy to really connect with your partner these days.

You tell yourself that you are lucky. Many people would kill to have the life you do. You remind yourself of the poor little children in Africa who are starving, and you make a mental note to sponsor a child. You go to bed, and you keep reminding yourself of how lucky you are.

You count your blessings and fall asleep.

In the morning however, this feeling lingers. A feeling that something isn't right. It's a pit in your stomach. It's a longing for joy in your life. A void that you have tried to fill with your "equation for happiness".

You have realised that along your journey, you were so focused on the “end goal”, on the “picture perfect life”, that you forgot to really live and enjoy life along the way. You realise that you have lost yourself. Then you wonder if you ever even took the time to know yourself in the first place.

Happiness comes from within. It comes from truly knowing and loving yourself. Ask yourself, “Who am I?” What makes me, “ME?” What are my core values and personal truths?

You start to take time to enjoy each day. You start by appreciating the little things. You read your kids longer stories and give bigger hugs. You start talking to your partner again about more important things than upgrading the kitchen and how work was. You take time for yourself. You do things that make you happy and you find ways to express your passions.

Your happiness shines through you and inspires others to look within themselves, and discover what makes them happy (if they don’t already know). You have stopped comparing your life to others on social media. You realise that there is no such thing as a “picture perfect life”, but that life is what you make of it.

A Kind World.

Kindness. I think It's safe to say that the majority of people wish that the world could be a kinder place. When a stranger shows you kindness, does it not affect you? Does that random act of kindness not inspire you to show some form of kindness to another? This type of "pay-it-forward" rippling affect is not limited to kindness though.

Have you ever been stuck in traffic? You're moving at the speed of a snail. The lane you're in is ending ahead because, for some reason, the local council have decided that this perfectly decent road needs some work done to it. You're frustrated because no one is letting you into the merging lane.

It is infuriating that you are stuck in this lane that has ended and there have been at least 50 cars pass you, bumper to bumper, who have not given you space to merge into their lane. You finally are able to merge, and you continue at the speedy snail momentum of the traffic.

Further along on your journey, you encounter more road works. This time however, you do not get stuck in the lane that is ending ahead. This time you refuse to let any car merge in front of you. You have the mindset of “pay-back” as you tail gate the car in front of you, not letting anyone in. Why is it that we go to that “pay-back” mentality, instead of remembering the frustration felt when in the same position. Why don’t we show empathy in this situation?

If you want a world of kindness, then BE KIND. It sounds too simple to be true, does it not? It’s a bit like views on weight loss. When I was overweight, my mother suggested that I try to eat healthy and do a bit of exercise. My response was that if it was that simple to lose weight, everyone would be doing it. In my mind, it was far more likely that I had some kind of thyroid problem contributing to my weight gain, as opposed to the huge amount of chocolate I was devouring. Change is hard. We resist it. We play down the effect the change can have, so that we can continue on the path that we are on.

Just imagine though, that the majority of people chose to show kindness on a regular basis in their every day lives? You think, “I am just one person, how can I effect such change in this world?” You forget the rippling effect.

We all know someone who inspires us to be better. Someone who is kind, and has seemingly endless joy in life. Being on the receiving end of kindness, inspires a change of attitude. It can make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside, and you think to yourself “I wish everyone could feel this way”. And so, you go about your daily life with the intent of showing kindness to another, and inspiring such a feeling in them. But, after time passes, the motivation to go out of your way to show kindness starts to fade.

How is it possible, to maintain this change of showing kindness? We need to break the habit of falling back into “payback mode”. We need to abolish the mentality of “ME versus THEM”. We need to stop separating and dividing the human race into categories and stereotypes. We need to keep an open mind. Mostly importantly, we must make a conscious choice to keep showing kindness, even when we are tired, cranky and not motivated to. Who are you showing kindness to, today?

Measurements of Success and Happiness.

A marathon is measured by distance travelled. Liquid is measured in Litres and millilitres. Weight is measured by kilograms or pounds. So how is success measured? Does success correlate to happiness?

When you think of someone who you perceive as successful, how is their success measured? Is it by the amount of money they have? Does the kind of car they drive impact on their “successful” image? Does a persons amount of followers on social media determine their success in your eyes?

For many, success means living large (so to speak). It means having a multitude of material possessions. Success means having the financial freedom to do what you want, when you want. Does this kind of success directly relate to a happy and full life?

Life is not measured by how much you own. At the end of your life, you cannot take your possessions with you to whatever comes next.

So why are we so intent in competing in this “rat race”? We, as a society, seem to be so intent on “getting”. We want to get the big house, the luxurious car, and so many other “things”. Has this type of thinking made us happy? Do these possessions we eagerly desire make our lives full?

Fame. That is something we attribute to success. But, and very unfortunately, there are many “successful people” who take their own life. It seems that this successful life full of wealth and fame is not all it’s cracked up to be. From the outside looking in, it seems as though they have all the measurements and ingredients to make them happy and successful in life. But you cannot know a persons journey and struggles when you have not walked in their shoes.

So how do you measure happiness? Sorry, I dont have the answer for you. For every person is unique, and so happiness is different for each individual.

Searching for happiness is kind of like shopping for a cake. Let's call it, the "happiness cake". Imagine that the supermarket is life, and you are walking up and down the isles in search for this happiness cake that you can purchase. You may be looking for a ready-made cake from the bakery section, or a packet mix in an isle.

You are looking outwards in life, for something else to make you happy. You give up at the grocery store and head home. In this instance, home represents you. It is yourself. At home, you find the ingredients needed to bake the happiness cake are already there. You see, you have to look within yourself.

A Body of water is measured by it's depth. Why don't we put more value on ourselves in the same way? Why don't we strive to be successful, in terms of having great integrity, honesty, insight and kindness? Why not strive to have more understanding and depth? Why not start today?

Time Machine.

You can't go back in time and rewrite history any more than you can unscramble an egg. I hate to break it to you, but the time machine has not been invented yet. We cannot change the past. BUT what we can do is let go of the past, and stop dwelling on the "what if's".

Have you ever thought about a situation in your life that you wished never happened? Do you ever wish you could go back in time, and change a decision you have made? Have you ever been so consumed with the past that you miss out on living in the present? This is what happens when you can't let go of what has already passed. You remain in your memories and the "what if" turning points in your life. You are paused, but the world carries on. The sun does not notice that you are stuck in time, and it continues to rise and set and bring forth new days.

Letting go of things we cannot change is easier said than done.

When I am finding the process of letting go quite difficult, I imagine myself as water. The average adult human body is made up of about 60-75% of water, after all. Visualizing my whole self as water, I take note of the issues (and sometimes a person) that I need to let go of. I see the issues floating around inside me, causing harm. I visualize letting go of these issues, and they flow out of me and away from me.

I am no fool. I understand that visualizing something does not necessarily make it happen. But this helps me with letting go. A friend of mine prefers writing things out on paper. When she is finished writing out her feelings, she burns the paper. Everyone is different, and so each person's way of letting go is different.

Have you ever known someone who just can't let anything go? They may hold onto grudges, or are always complaining about the same thing? My Grandmother is someone like this. I have never known her to be a happy or joyful person. You could move mountains to help her, but her attitude is never one of gratefulness or appreciation. I will never stop loving her, or trying to make her life more comfortable. I only wish I could help change her outlook on life.

You cannot change other people though, you can only offer your help. This is one area that I still struggle with letting go of. She is on her own journey, and I have to respect that. You cannot force your views on other people.

You are on your own journey through life. Your path is your own. There have been forks on this road, and paths not taken. Accept where you are at this point on your path; at this point in your life. For the road ahead also has varying paths, and now you are conscious of that. You are aware of the choices life presents to you, and you can know that each choice leads to a different outcome. Even choosing to not make a decision, is a decision in itself.

Today I am choosing kindness. I am choosing to show kindness to all I encounter. I am choosing to be kind to myself, and know that it's more than okay to take time for myself.

What choices are you going to make today?

Someone Should Do Something!

Have you ever felt like the way the world runs, just isn't right? Have you ever thought that there must be more to life? Have you ever walked past a situation that you wish you could change?

I used to think to myself, "I wish someone would do something about that". I would walk past a homeless person, or see tragedy on the news. I would think to myself "This isn't right, someone should do something to change this"... Then I realised, I AM SOMEONE!

After this realisation I felt full of energy and enthusiasm. I was ready to change the world! Then I became overwhelmed with the "how" of making a difference in this world. "How can one person affect change?" "What can I do to make a difference?" These questions played on my mind until I felt like there was no way one person could effect change.

The world is such a big place. Not only that, but time is endless. How long ago did this earth come into being?

And how far into the future will this planet live on?

I am one person living my lifespan, but what is the lifespan of this world? In truth, real change takes time.

It is unrealistic of me to think I can effect change on this world overnight.

So what is my plan? My plan is to live my life in truth.

To know what I believe in, and to stand up for it.

I believe that we put too much emphasis on material possessions which, in turn, puts emphasis on making money. We get caught up in the 9-5 routine, working hard to be able to afford things we don't necessarily need. We spend roughly a third of our lives at work, and another third of our lives sleeping. So what do we do with our remaining third? Quite often, we don't have the "time" left to do things that we enjoy. It feels like the older we get, the faster time moves. We can get so caught up in how little time we have, that we feel like we don't have the time to think about making the world a better place. We don't have the money to give to that homeless man we walk past every day, because we're saving up for a new flatscreen TV.

So now, if I see an injustice I do not keep silent. When I walk past a homeless person, I give what I can. I give kindness and honest compliments freely, for these cost me nothing and bring me joy. I pick up rubbish that has been left on the pavement. I make a conscious effort to better myself. I strive to leave this world better, will you join me?

The sea reminds me of mankind. Every individual is a droplet of water, but together we are an ocean. We are a force to be reckoned with. All we need to do... is unite! Unite against poverty! Unite against injustice! Unite for love, for kindness, for Mother Nature, and for humanity's sake!

A Life of Fairy Lights.

What little things make your heart happy? What puts a grin on your face? As I child I loved fairy lights, they seemed magical and filled me with a sense of awe and wonder. And you know what, they still do! That's why my backyard is filled with solar fairy lights; wrapping around the trees, brightening up the side gate and lighting up the backyard.

As an adult, we are expected to put away "childish things" and to act our age. But I just never got the hang of that. I still love to eat icecream in a cone, and think that fairy bread is delicious. My laugh is still too loud at the cinemas, and have been known to cartwheel down the beach. When I'm driving in the car, I sing at the top of my lungs and don't mind who's listening. Sometimes in life, it's the little things that bring us joy. It's the moments of wonder and awe, that make being alive so incredible.

When I was 17 and talking to my mother about teenager things, I can remember her saying that it didn't feel like too long beforehand that she was my age. I can also remember scoffing as she said that, because it seemed like we had a hundred years between us.

As I am getting older I realise what she meant. Time does move so quickly. Even though I have learnt a lot and grown a lot, that 17 year old version of me doesn't seem too long ago.

Can you remember learning about the transformation of a butterfly for the first time? Can you remember the awe and wonder you felt afterwards, perhaps when seeing a caterpillar and wondering what kind of butterfly it will change into? Why must we lose our awe of the beautiful things in this world as we grow older? Is it just that we are used to it? We've seen the magician do his rabbit trick too many times, and now we just don't care?

Baking a chocolate cake never gets old. We know how it is made and how it will taste. Yet, when getting all the ingredients out of the cupboard there is an anticipation and excitement for the final product. It was delicious the first time we ate a chocolate cake, and it will continue to be delicious everytime – unless we substitute salt for sugar!

So what is the difference between baking a cake and witnessing the magicians trick? Why does one get tiresome, and the other does not? The latter is something we witness; it is an observation of something outside of our involvement.

It also might be that as we grow, we learn the secret behind the trick and the amazement fades.

In a day where the whole world is at our fingertips it is easier now than ever to lose our sense of awe. A picture of a sunset on instagram with photo edits and filters, seems more beautiful than the sunset we witness in our own backyard. When we have access to so much, why does it become easy to lose interest at what's in front of us?

There are many things I'd like to tell a younger version of myself. One of them would be, "Don't lose your awe of life, remember to take it all in and be filled with wonder".

Keep doing the little things that make your heart happy.

A Meaningful Life.

When my time on this earth ends, I do not want to be left thinking, “What was the point of all this?” I want to feel like I have led a meaningful life.

The other day I asked Siri what the meaning of life is. Her response was “I don’t think I’m qualified to answer that”. How fitting! Are any of us “qualified” to answer that age old question? It is a topic that most everyone has an opinion about. The answers, however, vary between individuals.

Having a meaningful life is not on the same wavelength as seeking the meaning of life. Finding meaning in your life is more personal, and fits to your passions and personality.

So I ask you, what do YOU live for? There is no right or wrong answer to this. What gets you out of bed in the morning and motivates you to keep going? This will probably change over time. In fact, you might find that different things (or people) motivate different areas of your life. What do you feel passionate about? Is there a calling, a niggling in the pit of your stomach? A feeling like there is something you want to change in this world, or a new creation you could bring forth?

So how do you create meaning in your life? Start by looking at what is important to you. What do you place value on? Is it relationships, your career, money, or something else? Time is precious, and when a day has passed you will not get it back. Spend your time wisely. Spend your time on what (or who) is valuable to you.

What makes you angry about this world? This may sound strange, but think about it... what gets you riled up? That's an indication of what you want to change. Domestic violence is something that really riles me up, and makes my stomach churn. It makes me so mad to think about the women (and men) who suffer at the hands of others, and who don't see a way out. I wish I could hold them and tell them that violence is not okay, and its not their fault. I wish them to know their worth and that they deserve love.

What are you passionate about? What lights up your heart, and brings you joy? Is it seeing your children happy and thriving? Is it exploring this earth and all it has to offer? Is it helping a person in need? Or something completely different?

I have been someone who was just getting through the day, getting through the week, and not having real meaning in my life... Until I asked myself the questions I am asking you today.

Where I Am Now.

There are many points in life that have us asking – where do I go from here? To know the answer, I guess it is best to first ask – “how did I get here?”

How did I get to where I am now? Well, every choice that I’ve made has led me to this point. Like a river, my life started as an icy mountain peak. The ice slowly melted, trickled down the mountains terrain and began the start of a little riverlet. The rains added volume, and through bends and twists the water flowed. There have been forks in this river, that could have lead to different streams; different paths in life. But this is where I am now.

I was a strange child, a dreamer and a loner. I found that time spent in nature, with imagination as my companion, was all I needed. My childhood was spent in two worlds. My parents were missionaries, and so the jungles of Ethiopia and the slums of India were my playground. Then when we were “home” in the big city of Sydney, that was a jungle of a different kind.

Although I experienced a lot growing up, I was also quite sheltered. I didn't watch tv, or listen to the radio. All my half siblings were grown and had left home. When I reached adulthood I was quite naive, believing that all human beings were good and honest. I believed that if a person lacked the "goodness" that I felt all people had, it meant that they didn't have the life skills or knowledge needed to choose good in their life. It was with that mindset that I felt like I could help the man who would become the father of my child.

I was eighteen when we met, my heart full of dreams and my head in the clouds. He was unlike anyone I'd ever met. So charismatic, full of life and he could not get enough of my company. At least that is the part of himself that he showed to me, until I fell pregnant. When his true colours came to light, it became clear why he chose to hide his true nature. At his core, he was a sadistic and cruel man. Like a wolf in sheeps clothing. He attempted to isolate me from any influence apart from his, so that I would be entangled in his web of lies. So that I would believe I was worthless and deserved the emotional and physical abuse. Unfortunately this worked for a time, because I clung to the version of him that I fell in love with.

I felt that I could help him choose goodness and a better life. But alas, there are some people who have no desire to be better. They are happy blaming their childhood and other outside influences for the way they are. There are many women who are trapped in the cycle of abuse. If you know of a woman like this, please don't give up on her. Continue to remind her of her worth and help her escape that life. I am so thankful to those who didn't give up on me. I felt I had to create a better life for myself and for my son. I studied Nursing and began working at the hospital. I love my job, and feel very blessed to enjoy going to work.

I became quite involved in the local church, and it was there that I met the man who would become my husband. This man saw my worth when I felt like I had none. He showed me kindness and shared my joy in loving life. Unfortunately, he was also a man pretending to be something he was not. I realised I had made a mistake on our honeymoon. His father was one of the pastors at the church so we didn't live together before we got married. Again, naively, I felt like life didn't have to be like this. That with help we could make our life together better.

As soon as we were married, the kindness that I admired in him disappeared. He refused to lift a finger to help anyone, even his own friends and family. The joy I thought he had faded and seemed to be replaced with resentment for the whole world. I thought maybe he had depression, or some thyroid problems, but no. We tried counseling for years, but he maintained that he was fine and that we were fine. But we weren't. I had lost hope in us. After a series of events and realisations, I told my husband that I didn't love him, but that I loved the person he was pretending to be before we were married. And that was the end of our story together.

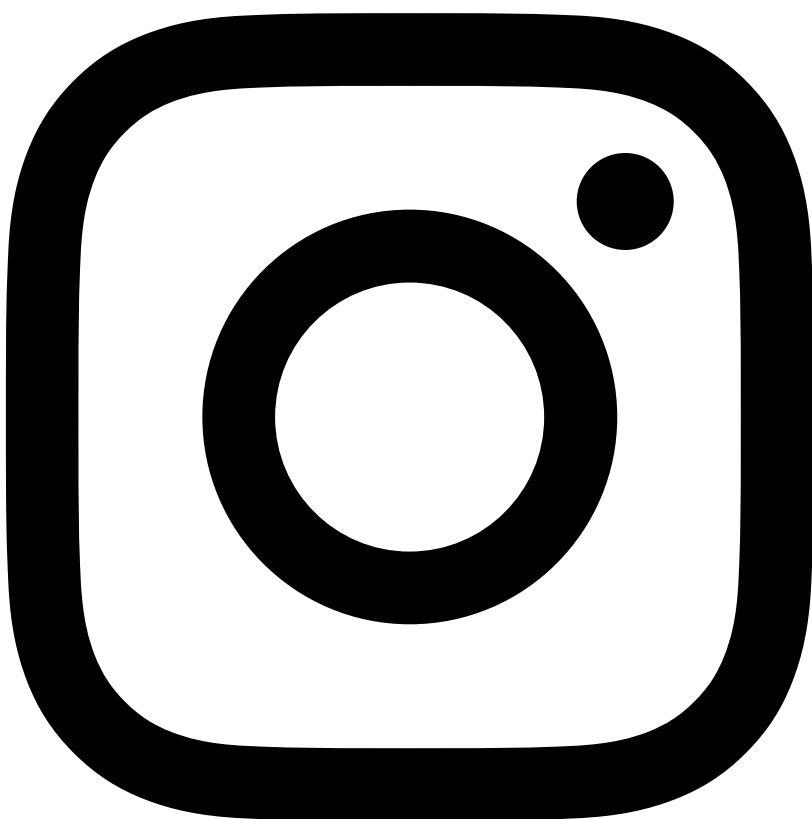
As children we make a wish when we blow the seeds of a dandelion globe. We make a wish as we blow out our birthday candles. We wish on shooting stars, on ladybugs, on folded Doritos, on anything really. As a child, I always wished the same thing. I wished to be wise. I told you I was a strange child. Throughout my life, when I've experienced bad situations, I've always thought – I can learn something from this. I felt that, in a way, I had asked for it. I had wished to be wise, and in turn wished upon my life situations to learn and grow from. But wishing on a dandelion won't make something come true.

Life is life. It is both good and bad. Without the rain, we would not appreciate the sunshine. Without sadness, we would not understand how wonderful love is. Without tragedy, would we truly enjoy our triumphs and amazing life experiences?

I still hold true that there is a time and a season for every purpose under the heavens. Nothing is forever. It doesn't matter if it's good or bad, but nothing is forever. Life is always changing and always anew.

Therefore take comfort in not knowing what may be around the corner, for it might be a beautiful adventure, a great love, something completely unexpected. You have more power inside you than you know. Your thoughts and words have power to create in this life. This is the way vibrations of the universe work- if you are happy, you attract happiness. If you are love, you attract love. Therefore, strive to truly know and love yourself. For then you will be happy in yourself, and the love you have inside will pour out into the world, and attract to you great love and happiness.

Connect With Me



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