



....In The Meantime

With



24 hour confidential hotline: 1-800-537-6066 or 874-1973

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Sometimes you need to get knocked down before you can really figure out what your fight is and how you need to fight it.

Sometimes you need to feel the pain and sting of defeat to activate the real passion and purpose that God predestined inside of you.

Purpose crosses disciplines. Purpose is an essential element of you. It is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history. Your very existence is wrapped up in the things you are here to fulfill. Whatever you choose for a career path, remember, the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose. When I dared to challenge the system that would relegate us to victims and stereotypes with no clear historical backgrounds, no hopes or talents, when I questioned that method of portrayal, a different path opened up for me, the path to my destiny.

When God has something for you, it doesn't matter who stands against it. God will move someone that's holding you back away from the door and put someone there who will open it for you if it's meant for you. I don't know what your future is, but if you are willing to take the harder way, the more complicated one, the one with more failures at first than successes, the one that has ultimately proven to have more meaning, more victory, more glory then you will not regret it.

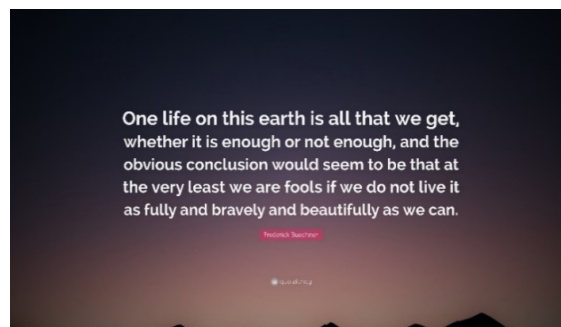
Now, this is your time. The light of new realizations shines on you today. As you commence to your paths, press on with pride and press on with purpose.

The above excerpt is from (actor) Chadwick Boseman's 2018 Howard University commencement speech. (We have chosen to keep this excerpt as true as possible to the original speech and therefore left the references to *God* intact. *God* here can also mean any other divine being or even the *Universe* itself.

Hello,

Whether we believe that one's *purpose* is *divinely assigned* or that we, ourselves, are responsible for creating or discovering it, this is indisputable: If you are here, you were given this one life as you are now. And this one life comes with an expiration date (the speaker of the above quote died this past August after a 4 year battle with cancer. He was perhaps best known for his portrayal of Marvel hero, *Black Panther* (2018). He was 43 years old.) It's true that we are not all Harvard graduates, nor do we have to aspire to be brain surgeons or astronauts to live rich and fulfilling lives. In "Listening to Your Life" (1992), Theologian and writer, Frederick Buechner, sets forth the idea that maybe our *purpose* is really that we find and tap into our 'deepest gladness' and then share it with others in some way (186).

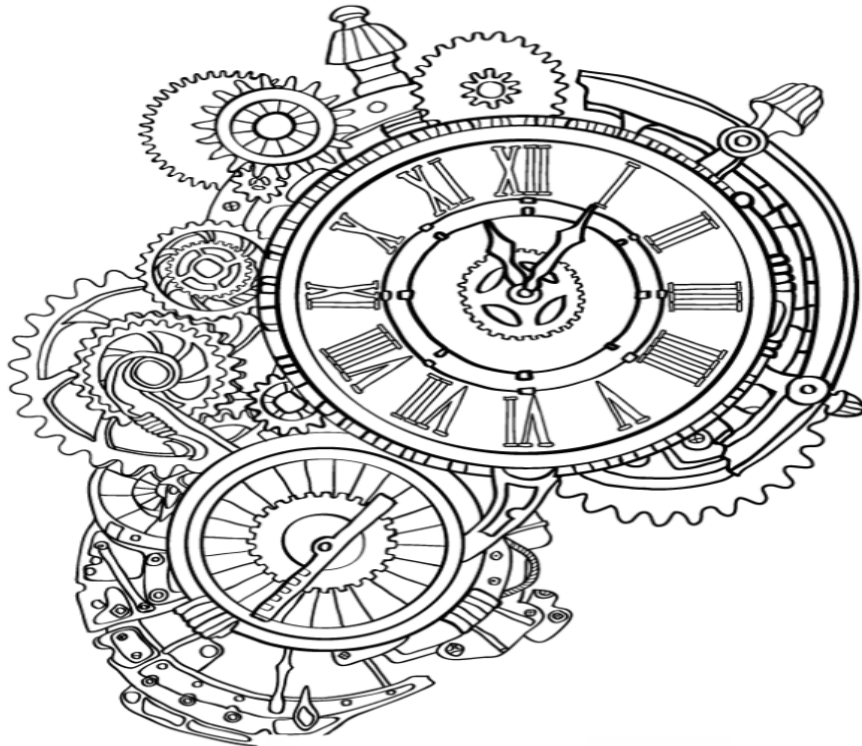
**Best,
Monique
&
Nicolle**



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IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

**It is never too late to be
true to yourself.
It is never too late to
forgive yourself.
It is never too late to
come home to yourself.
It is never too late
to be kind to yourself.
Right now is still available.
Sometimes right now
is right on time.
-Minaa B.**



find your PASSION

	#1	#2	#3
What do you love to do right now (present day)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What did you love to do as a child?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
If you could do one thing for the rest of your life what would it be?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
If you could be one person who would it be and why?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What are your goals?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What do you do with most of your time?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What are your hobbies?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What are your talents?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Can you combine any of your hobbies, talents and loves?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
How can you turn any of these into a business?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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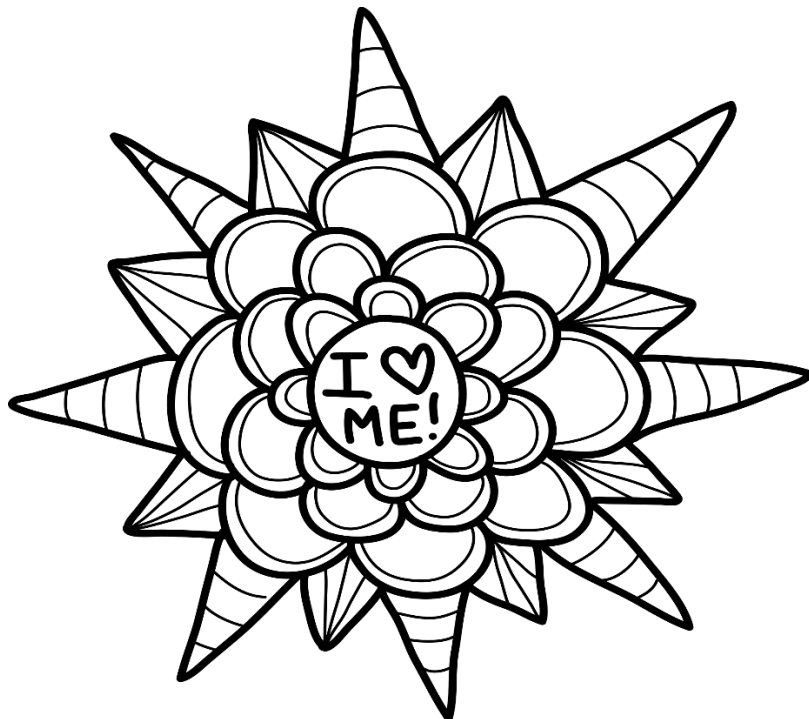
"That I Would Be Good"
Alanis Morissette

That I would be good even if I did nothing
That I would be good even if I got the thumbs down
That I would be good if I got and stayed sick
That I would be good even if I gained ten pounds

That I would be fine even if I went bankrupt
That I would be good if I lost my hair and my youth
That I would be great if I was no longer queen
That I would be grand if I was not all knowing

That I would be loved even when I numb myself
That I would be good even when I am overwhelmed
That I would be loved even when I was fuming
That I would be good even if I was clingy

That I would be good even if I lost sanity
That I would be good
Whether with or without you



Before we set out to find or embrace our ‘deepest gladness’, we must believe we are worthy. In the same vein as the Alanis Morissette song on the previous page, and knowing you are *good, deserving* and *worthy of love & a safe & happy life*, despite your challenges, mistakes, struggles, or incarceration, finish the following sentence fragments.

That I would be good, even if I:

That I would be fine, even if I:

That I would be given a chance, even if I:

That I would love myself, even if I:

That I would be grand, even if I:

That I could pick myself up, even if I:

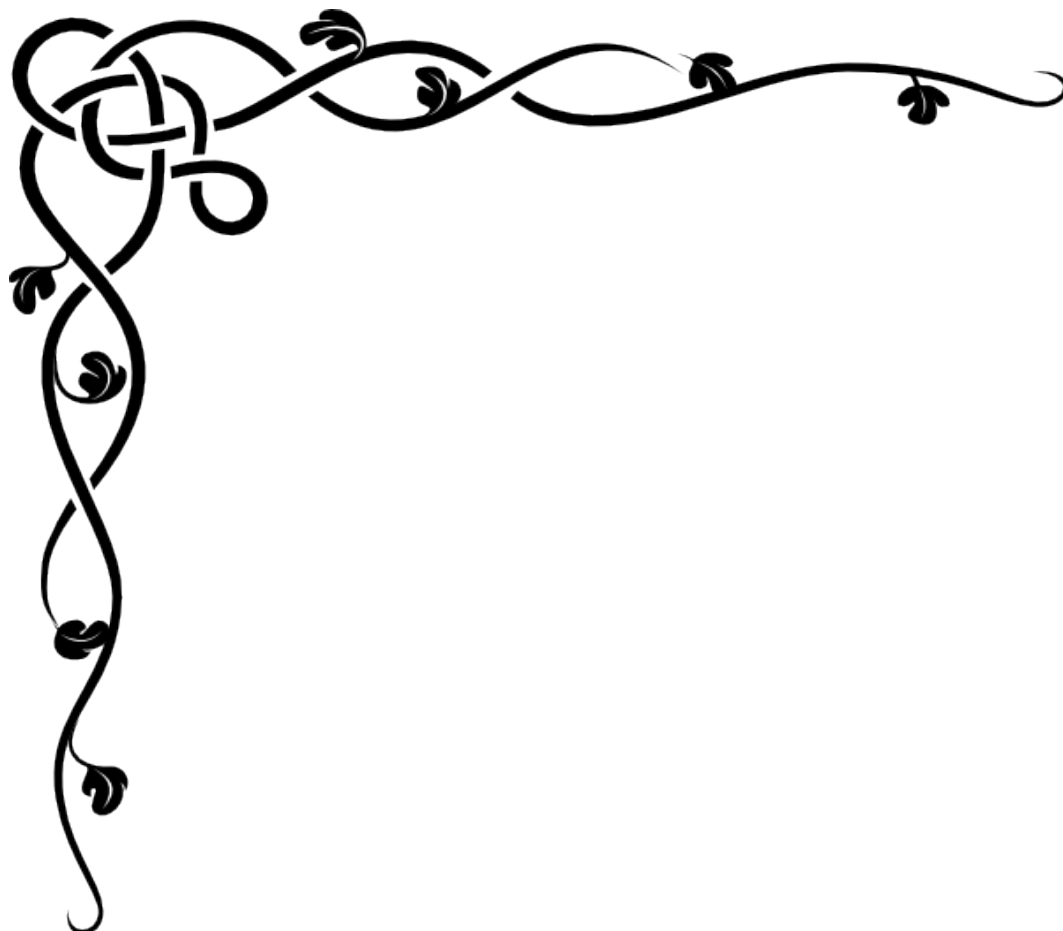
That I would be loved, even if I:



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WRITING PROMPT

I am...



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

RED FLAGS OF MANIPULATION



Your own words are twisted and used against you.



You are made to feel guilty for wanting to spend time with others, wanting personal space, having a different opinion, or goals, etc.



Your partner withholds love & affection if he/she doesn't get his/her way.



Your partner 'gaslights' you: (he/she twists the truth, re-invents the past, pretends you never told them things, distorts what you believe to be facts, makes claims about what you said or did...that you didn't, has you questioning your own mental well-being.)



He/she is quick to blame you for everything that goes wrong.



He/she exhibits irrational jealousy re: your successes/triumphs.

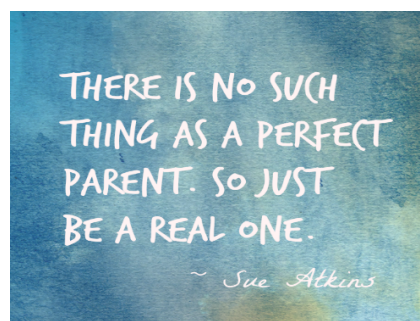
MOMS HELPING MOMS

Representations of Motherhood

Throughout history, 'good mothers' have been defined as selfless, sacrificing, loving, patient, nurturing, tireless beings, who never have an unkind thought or action, and are selfless to their very core. Mothers are the 'givers of life' and therefore are innately equipped to fulfill their divine role of raising perfect humans...and they cherish every single moment. In the opening letter, we discussed one's purpose or deepest gladness, it is no means a stretch or exaggeration to say that 'female born humans are expected to *mother!*'

At the same, *real life* doesn't always fit into the nice & neat package of folklore or public opinion and expectation. Whereas it's true that we look to the world around us for depictions and representations of 'who we are', rarely have we accurately captured the true essence of motherhood. Mothers are either painted as saints or the devil incarnate. Few are the depictions of the difficulties of motherhood. And if we look to animated Disney films, what we get are wicked stepmothers, dead bio-moms or silly fairy-god mothers. In "Operating Instructions: A Journey of My Son's First Year (2005)", writer Anne Lamont, using humor and warmth, gives us a more honest portrayal of motherhood when she writes of marveling at her infant son's 'Christ-like feet' and alternately, after a long night of little sleep, refers to his 'reptilian head'! What Lamont is essentially telling us all is that *even on the best of days, mothering can be difficult.*

If you are presently incarcerated or for other reasons are not presently 'hands-on mothering', you may be experiencing sadness, guilt, desperation or helplessness, few of us on the outside would understand. If you are able to have contact with your children, take every advantage to do so whether it be via phone calls, writing letters and/or visits. If you are unable to presently have contact, you could keep a journal of letter writing or musings on your child(ren)'s births or your favorite memories with them. And it's also important to acknowledge and address your grief and sadness. Time for you may seem like it is inching forward, but in reality, time always passes at the same speed. And remember, your daily decisions impact your future. There is no such thing as a 'perfect mother' and maybe it is we, ourselves, who expect perfection, when all the while, our child(ren) just want us to keep trying and keeping loving them in our own imperfect ways.



INSIDE VOICES

Author: S

Maine Correctional Center 31 years old

4 years/8 yr sentence

~ Survivor ~


Sometimes, in life,
Things just don't go right.
You may ask-how did I get here?
You may be full of fear.
You wish someone else would my burden
And wonder-how will I begin again?
Confusion, loneliness, and anger
Feeling like you don't belong here.
Seek out answers
Because your life is not cursed.
You might be down now
Feeling lost in the crowd,
But things will turn around
And someday you'll be proud-
Proud you survived
And grateful to be alive.
Just because you don't see it,
Doesn't mean you shouldn't believe it.
Hold on to hope
So you can cope
And leave behind the pain
Breaking the chains,
The chains that bind you
And control you.
Let go of anger
Let go of fear
Clear your mind,
You'll be surprised by what you find.
Figure out who you are
And you'll go far.
Find out where you belong
After being lost for so long.
Knock, and the door shall be opened,
And a new life, you can begin,
Seek, and you shall find,
Like removing the mask that made you blind.
You are victorious,
Glorious,
Inspiring,
And instead of asking-
How did I make it through this ordeal?
You'll just know you are healed,
And although it shook you to your core,
You, my dear, are a survivor!

QUOTES

"THE TWO MOST
IMPORTANT DAYS
IN YOUR LIFE ARE
THE DAY YOU ARE
BORN AND THE DAY
YOU FIND OUT WHY."

— MARK TWAIN

E



Your work is to
discover your world
and then
with all your heart
give yourself to it.

-Buddha

"If you can't figure out your purpose,
figure out your passion. For your
passion will lead you right into your
purpose."

 BISHOP T.D. JAKES