

MINDSPARK

e - M a g a z i n e



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ISSUE: I

“ Life Is a Gift,
Be Thankful
For Every
Breathe ”



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE
RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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SPARK MIND

IDEAS OUTLIVE EMPIRES

The First Creative Writing Magazine By

Department of English
Language Teaching
Untold expressions of the
students and staff

Department of
English Language Teaching
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka



A scenic view of a tropical coastline. In the foreground, a powerful waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff. To the left, a sandy beach meets the turquoise ocean, with waves breaking onto the shore. In the background, a lush green mountain rises, and a faint rainbow is visible in the sky above it. The entire scene is framed by a thick black border with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn edge.

**Life Is a Gift,
Be Thankful
For Every
Breathe .**

The definition of "life"

It's truly fascinating to ponder the word "life" and how its meaning has unfolded across different languages and throughout history. Since we can interpret "life" in so many ways, exploring its linguistic roots offers a unique perspective.



Delving into the past, roughly five thousand years ago, we encountered Proto-Indo-European, the grand ancestor of the entire Indo-European language family. Within this ancient tongue, the seed of our word "life" appears to have been "life," signifying "to remain, to persevere." This notion of "perseverance," of continuing despite difficulties, resonates deeply with our understanding of life, whether it's the journey of a person, a plant, or an animal navigating the inevitable challenges.

Venturing into the realm of ancient Greek, we discover the term "ZOE," a word embraced to describe all living things, the "living soul." "Zoe" encapsulates the very essence of existence and animation shared by every creature that breathes and moves. It's remarkable how this single word encompasses the vitality of all life forms. Across Hebrew, a venerable Northwest Semitic language, we find "chayah," which beautifully translates to "to live." Interestingly, "chayah" also connects to the English word "eve," meaning "mother of all living." This link subtly echoes our present-day use of "life" to denote the condition of being alive.



Turning our gaze to Old English, the word "life" was understood as "the condition or quality or fact of being a living organism." This definition hints at the intertwined nature of growth and development inherent in life. It even suggested a sense of vitality in both natural and perhaps less obvious phenomena. Considering these historical linguistic threads, it becomes clear that pinning down a single, absolute definition of "life" has been an enduring quest. However, these diverse linguistic origins beautifully converge on the idea of individual existence, the span from birth to passing away.

Even in our modern world, the word "life" continues to blossom with varied meanings. The Oxford Dictionary aptly defines it as "the state of being alive or existence of a living thing, be it human or otherwise." We see this reflected in our everyday language. We wish newlyweds a "happy married life," and we speak of a fulfilling "family life." Those deeply connected to their faith lead a "spiritual life," much like the serene existence of monks in temples. Conversely, someone is confined by law experiences to "prison life." Intriguingly, we even extend the term "life" to inanimate objects, speaking of the "lifespan" of a battery or the "half-life" of an atom.

In essence, from the grand sweep of historical languages to the nuances of our contemporary vocabulary, the word "life" remains inextricably woven into the fabric of human experience, a term that evolves and adapts alongside the very existence it seeks to describe.

I.S.G. KALPANI SOORIYAMPOLA
AG/2023/020



Life

A dialogue between dreams and reality

Once Bob Marley said that “Open your eyes that look within. Are you satisfied with the life you are living? ”A slow-motion life allows us to appreciate the beauty in everyday moments and serves as a reminder that true meaning lies in the dialogue between our dreams and everyday realities.

Those small, calm, everyday events that tie life together are often overlooked in the big pursuit of goals. A haze of obligations and goals take over, and life turns into a race. However, when we slow down, we find that life is a delicate dialogue or a conversation between our imagination and our experiences rather than just a ladder to climb or a goal to accomplish. This is the dynamic interplay between dreams and reality where life really happens.

Dreams are what gives life to its purpose in life. They push us to grow, to look for mission, to improve what we have, and to become more. Dreams, whether they represent creativity, freedom, love, or prosperity, arouse emotion and sustain hope even in the face of sorrow. They are the perfect representations of our lives, molded by our fantasies and desires.

In contrast, reality is anchoring. It teaches us to be patient through routines, to be disappointed by failures, and to find beauty in the little things. Even though they are not major triumphs, the smells of rain on parched ground, a child's laugh, or a warm cup of tea in the morning are the things that give our lives vitality. In our dreams, they are the solutions to the questions we never considered questioning.

Living in the past and pursuing our goals with tunnel vision puts us at danger of missing out on the blessings of the present.

However, we start to realize that aspirations and realities are partners rather than competitors when we live in slow motion consciously and thoughtfully.

Though dreams are based on experience, reality is challenged by dreams to change. Life takes on meaning through their conflicts and discussions.

Consider an artist as an example.

In the mind, the dream is a strong and magnificent artwork.

The canvas is real, flawed and unyielding. Every brushstroke is a dialogue as the artist adapts to the paint's texture, the inspiration's flow, and the time constraints. The finished product is a tribute to the processes and the quiet mornings, the unsuccessful tries, and the everyday hours that made it possible as well as the dream realized.

One must learn to live slowly in order to appreciate this dance instead of hurrying through life, but listen to life movements. We should take note of both where we are and where we are heading. By doing this, we come to understand that living while dreaming is just as beautiful as realizing our dreams.

In essence, you can't get to the end of life by avoiding the usual. It is a dialogue or a conversation between our lofty aspirations and the sobering realities of our daily existence. And, when we slow down that dialogue, we discover beauty, clarity, and the subtle realization that the everyday moments are actually spectacular.

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The background of the slide is a composite image. On the right side, there is a silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing left, looking out over a city skyline. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. On the left side, there is a sepia-toned image of a city skyline with several tall buildings, including one with a prominent spire. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image, in a white serif font with a drop shadow.

**"My mission in life is not
merely to survive, but to
thrive; and to do so with
some passion, some
compassion, some humor,
and some style"**

-Maya Angelou-

The Unwritten Story, We All Live

LIFE?

Life? What is life? What is life all about? Why is life so significant? What is the point of life? All those questions might never receive the right or appropriate answers because those questions are so subjective. And now, I always wonder about that question whenever I hear about life. Everyone has his or her own interpretation for life. For me, life is to live in the present and there is no necessity to predict our future. Life is a book each day, a new page each month, a new chapter and every day is a series. Remember that life is actually very much like a book with an infinite number of pages. These pages represent or depict the memories that we go through in our life as well as the ones that we will be going through soon. Each page is actually like a new chapter and a new start of every new beginning in life. Life can also be presumed to be mysterious enough since each new page portrays a new problem or a new issue in life. It is up to us to solve them with our logical reasoning and experience that we have acquired in the past.

As a matter of fact, our whole lives are analogous to a storybook, and therefore we must make every possible effort to make it a bestseller. Remember that when things go wrong, it doesn't mean that luck will never smile upon us again. Life is truly full of ups and downs and we must accept it or take it as it comes to us.

On the other hand, life is the nearest, most mysterious[1], and most shared experience that we all face. It's a forever-changing landscape of emotion, choice, relationship and education. From the instant we take our first breath to the quietude of our last, life invites us along a path as complex as it is stunning

We tend to think of life in terms of big milestones - births, graduations, marriages, careers, and accomplishments. These milestones provide shape to our timelines and provide tales to share. But, if we examine it closely, we see that life isn't comprised of the big moments alone; it's also held together by thousands of little ones. It is on those off-putting days the morning hours, the lengthy commute, the family dinners, the late-night wondering where our most profound changes tend to take place. Change is a natural part of life. The seasons change, people come and go, health improves or deteriorates, circumstances change.

*“Life is difficult or impossible to understand,
explain or identify.”*

We welcome eagerly new experience, love and birth of a child. Others arrive unexpectedly at loss, heartache, illness, failure. However, they all change us. What is wonderful, is not necessarily that change happens, but the way we approach it.

Life doesn't require perfection but involvement. It entices us to show up: to keep going forward even when we are afraid, to evolve, to mourn, to celebrate or to learn. Every evolution, no matter how agonizing it is, is the promise of expansion. Pain being unpleasant, however, has the strange power of making us richer. Joy, fleeting as it is, has the power to rejuvenate our souls and remind us of the essentials. Essentially, life is about connection. With ourselves, with others, and with something beyond something more than nature, it is a sense of purpose, spirituality, or creativity. Relationships give life its meaning. Friendships, family, partnerships, and even passing encounters can all leave impressions that linger.

We are not meant to go through life alone. Vulnerability, empathy, and love are not signs of weakness, but they are bridges to understanding and healing. The shared experiences of joy and sorrow are what makes us human. In a world that often praises independence and success, it's easy to forget the value of community simply seen and heard by another.

It's easy to think of life as something we will fully enjoy someday once we have more money, more time, and more security. But life is not a dress rehearsal. The moment now, with all its imperfections, is about all we get.

Meaning is not something that lies ahead of us down a long path; it's something we construct each day. It's in little things: cooking dinner for someone we care about, taking a walk through the woods, being kind to a stranger, taking a breath amidst a crazy day. These are mundane moments, but they are where life happens

Embracing the Unexpected

Slowing down and being present in the moment allows us to appreciate the texture of life the sounds, the scents, the dialogue and the emotions. It invites us to be more fully and intentionally engaged in life, not careening through it on automatic pilot. The great paradox of life is the battle between control and submission. We plan, we fight, we organize. But, life always reminds us that all is not in our control. There are wrong turns, delays, and endings that catch us off guard.

But, maybe that is not a weakness but a strength. Life's unpredictability is what makes it alive. If all were certain, it would be dull. Not knowing what comes next compels us to be strong, to hope, and to be open to possibilities we could not have conceived.

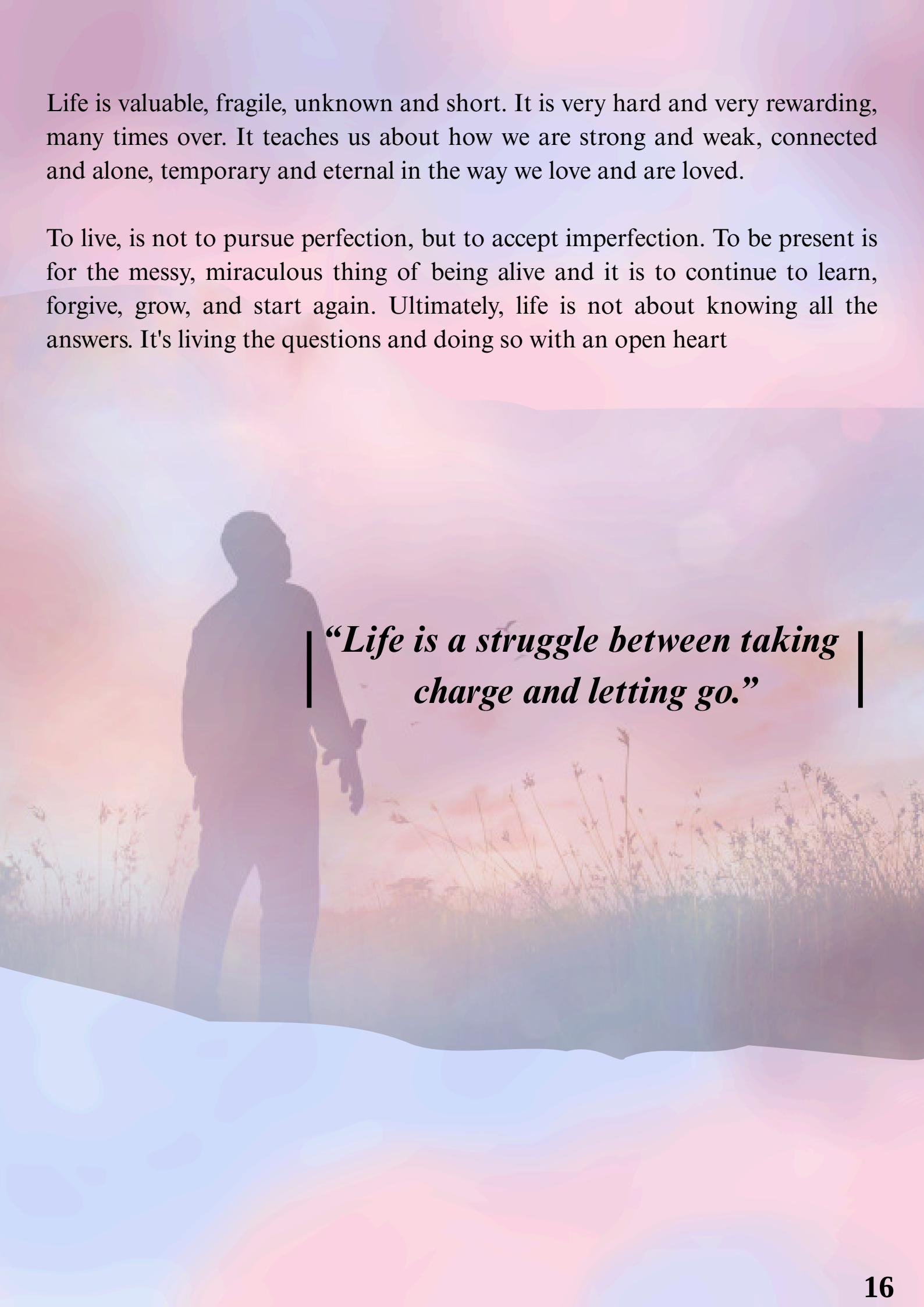
Surrender is not quitting; it is accepting what is, without letting it dictate everything that could be. It is being at peace even when the world appears in chaos, and letting life happen with all the mystery intact.

We all end up asking ourselves at some point what the meaning of our life is. The answer is both deeply personal and universally elusive. For some, meaning is found in work or service and for others, in family, creativity, study, or spiritual searching.

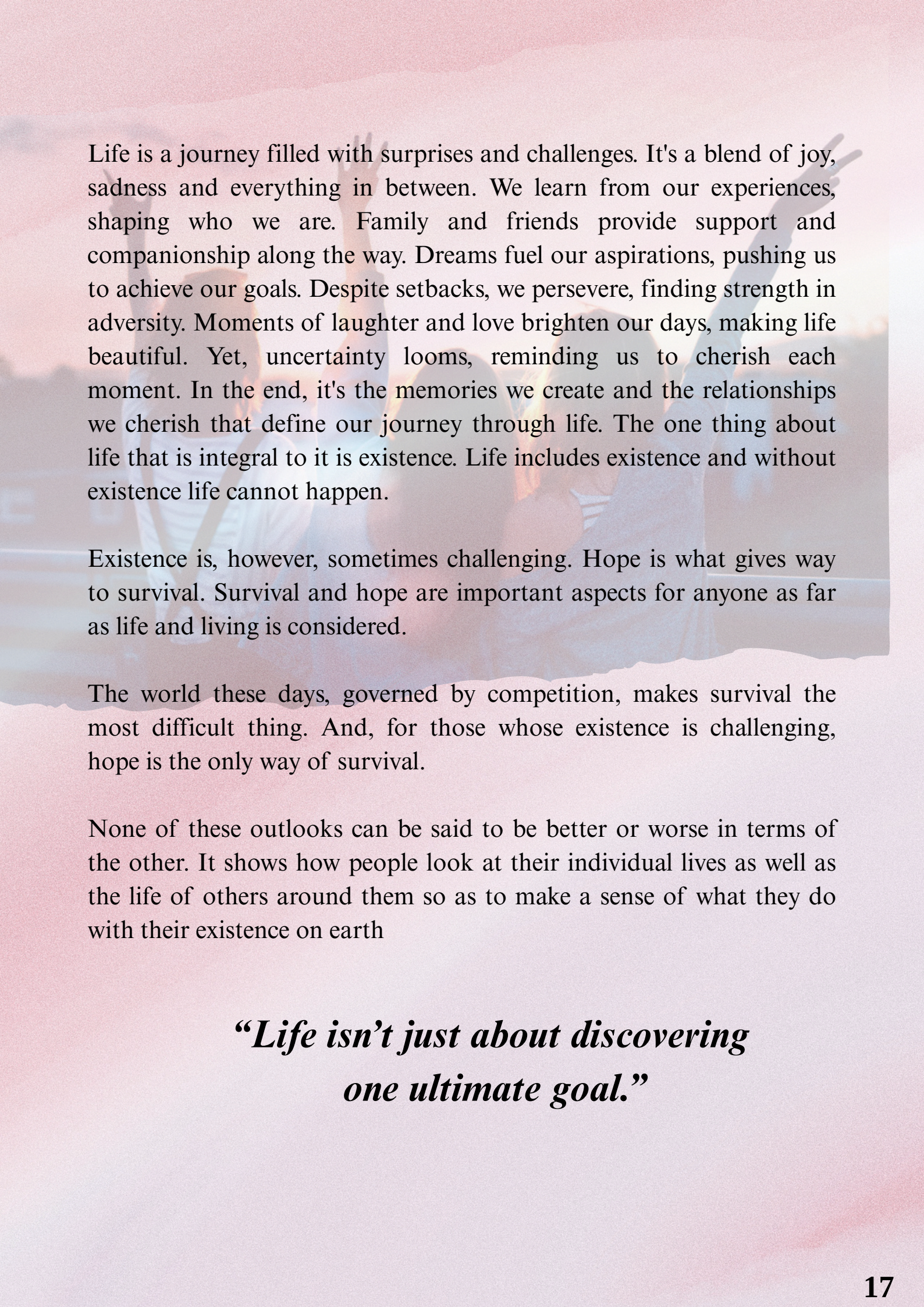
But, maybe life's not about finding a single overarching purpose. Maybe, it's creating a mosaic of meaning - an experience-value-relationship collage that speaks in its own unique voice to our narrative. Legacy doesn't necessarily involve being legendary or making an impact on an epic scale. It can simply be the way we touched others, what we instructed, the affection we shared.

Life is valuable, fragile, unknown and short. It is very hard and very rewarding, many times over. It teaches us about how we are strong and weak, connected and alone, temporary and eternal in the way we love and are loved.

To live, is not to pursue perfection, but to accept imperfection. To be present is for the messy, miraculous thing of being alive and it is to continue to learn, forgive, grow, and start again. Ultimately, life is not about knowing all the answers. It's living the questions and doing so with an open heart



*“Life is a struggle between taking
charge and letting go.”*



Life is a journey filled with surprises and challenges. It's a blend of joy, sadness and everything in between. We learn from our experiences, shaping who we are. Family and friends provide support and companionship along the way. Dreams fuel our aspirations, pushing us to achieve our goals. Despite setbacks, we persevere, finding strength in adversity. Moments of laughter and love brighten our days, making life beautiful. Yet, uncertainty looms, reminding us to cherish each moment. In the end, it's the memories we create and the relationships we cherish that define our journey through life. The one thing about life that is integral to it is existence. Life includes existence and without existence life cannot happen.

Existence is, however, sometimes challenging. Hope is what gives way to survival. Survival and hope are important aspects for anyone as far as life and living is considered.

The world these days, governed by competition, makes survival the most difficult thing. And, for those whose existence is challenging, hope is the only way of survival.

None of these outlooks can be said to be better or worse in terms of the other. It shows how people look at their individual lives as well as the life of others around them so as to make a sense of what they do with their existence on earth

***“Life isn’t just about discovering
one ultimate goal.”***

The Art of Living Boldly and Gently

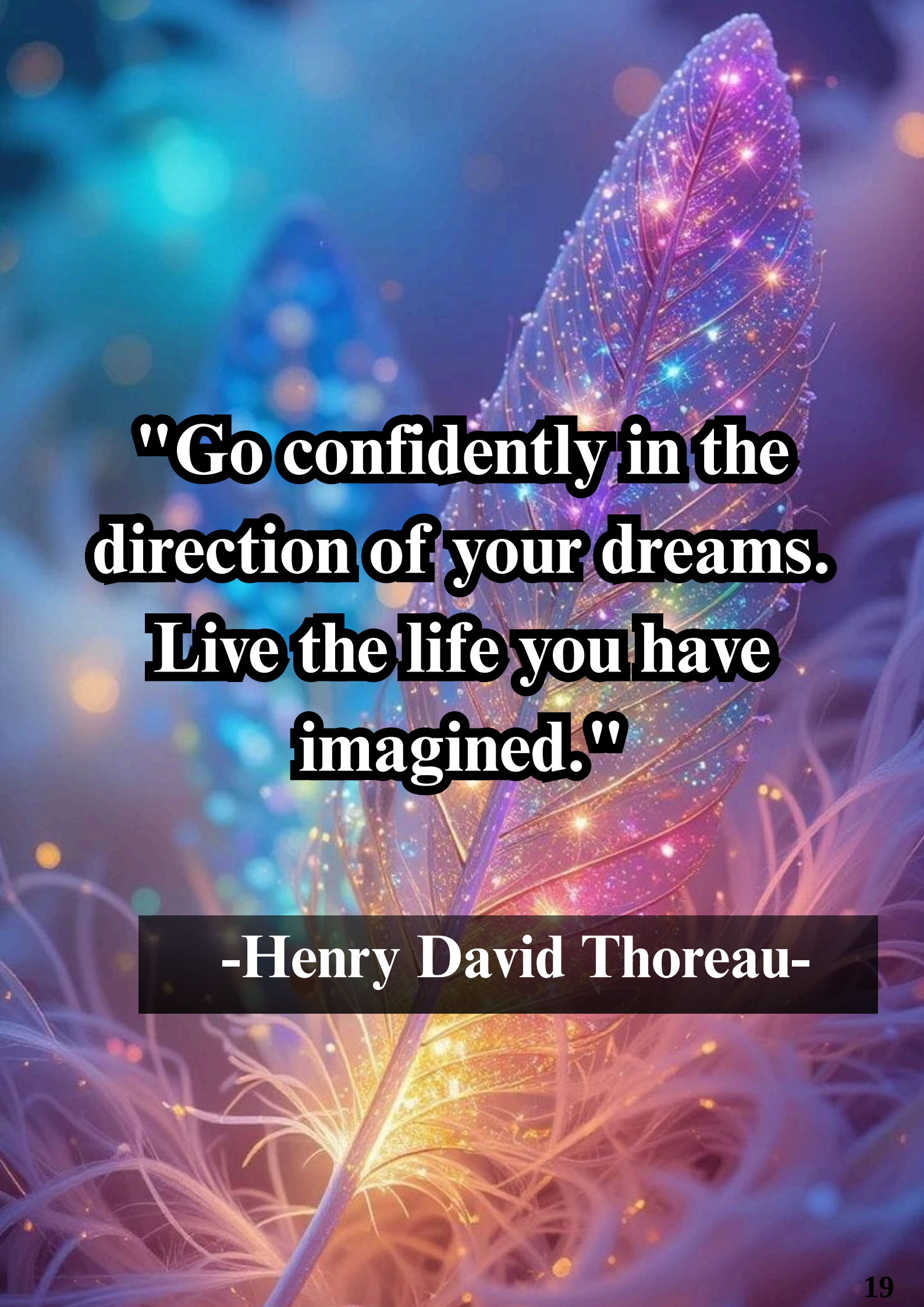
So, what is life? It's a canvas splashed with colors we don't always choose, but ones we can still learn to blend into something beautiful. It's a conversation between our hopes and our doubts, a dance between planning and surprise. Life whispers its meaning in the quiet moments: in how we treat others, how we speak to ourselves, and how we rise after falling. So, live boldly, but gently. Chase dreams, but don't forget to rest. Love deeply, forgive quickly, and laugh often. And above all, don't wait for the perfect moment to start living this moment in life and it's already yours.



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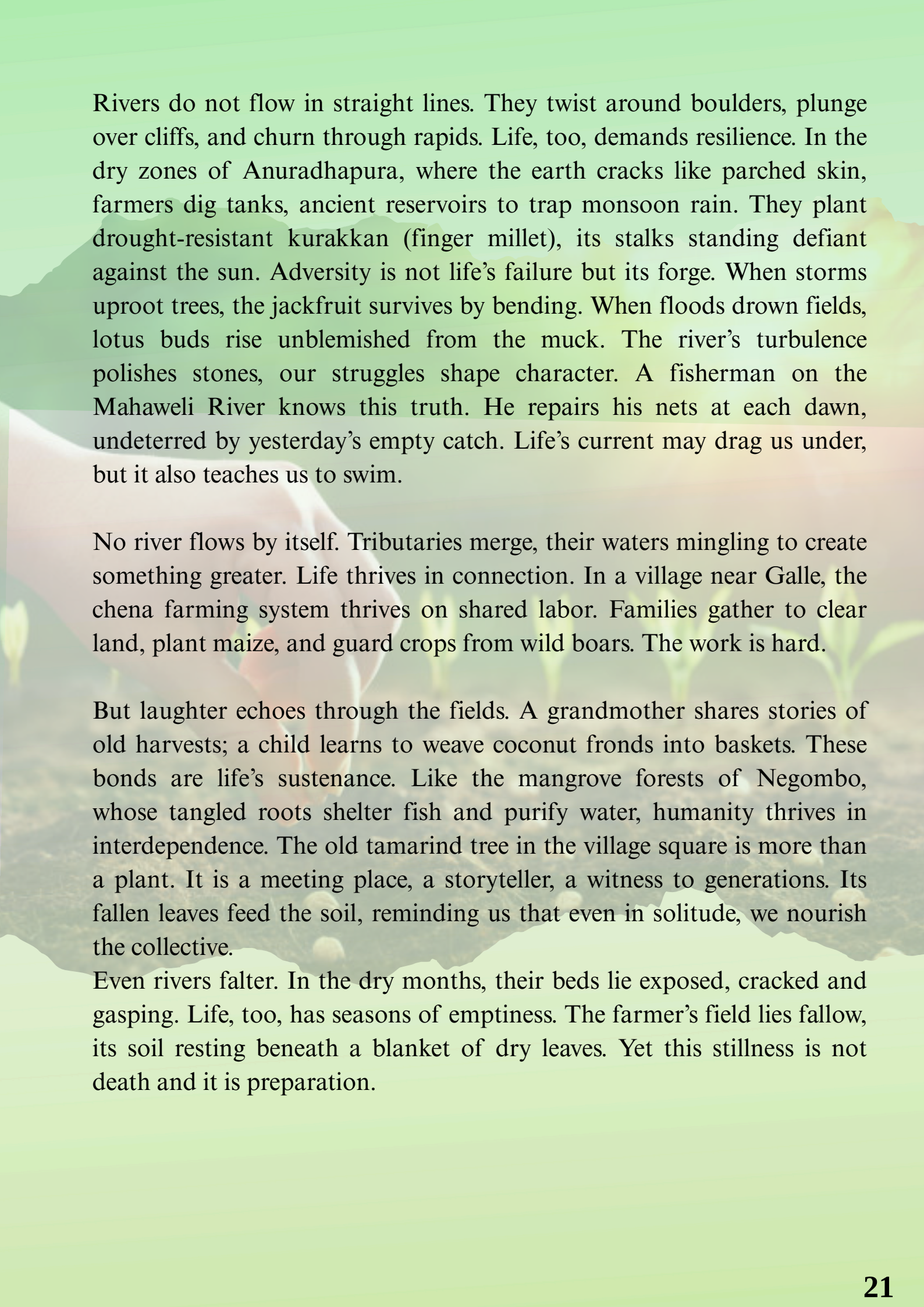
**"Go confidently in the
direction of your dreams.
Live the life you have
imagined."**

-Henry David Thoreau-

The Unseen River

Life flows like a river, an eternal force that cannot be trapped. It begins as a trickle in the mountains, a fragile stream of beginnings and grows into a roaring torrent, carving valleys and nurturing plains. Along its journey, it mirrors human experience: the quiet persistence of roots, the resilience of weathered stones, and the quiet surrender of water to gravity. To understand life is to walk its banks, to observe how it bends around obstacles, nourishes the land, and embraces both stillness and storm.

Every river starts small. High in the mist-covered hills of Sri Lanka, springs emerge from hidden crevices, their waters barely audible. Life, too, begins with whispers. A farmer's calloused hand drops a seed into the earth, a child's first step falters on muddy ground, and a sapling pushes through cracked soil. These moments, humble and uncelebrated, hold the blueprint of existence. In the terraced paddy fields of Kandy, farmers plant paddy with a reverence passed down through generations. They know that growth is not measured in days but in seasons. A seedling does not question its purpose; it simply reaches for light. Life's beginnings teach us to trust the unseen roots that anchor, the rains that will come, and the sun that promises to return.



Rivers do not flow in straight lines. They twist around boulders, plunge over cliffs, and churn through rapids. Life, too, demands resilience. In the dry zones of Anuradhapura, where the earth cracks like parched skin, farmers dig tanks, ancient reservoirs to trap monsoon rain. They plant drought-resistant kurakkan (finger millet), its stalks standing defiant against the sun. Adversity is not life's failure but its forge. When storms uproot trees, the jackfruit survives by bending. When floods drown fields, lotus buds rise unblemished from the muck. The river's turbulence polishes stones, our struggles shape character. A fisherman on the Mahaweli River knows this truth. He repairs his nets at each dawn, undeterred by yesterday's empty catch. Life's current may drag us under, but it also teaches us to swim.

No river flows by itself. Tributaries merge, their waters mingling to create something greater. Life thrives in connection. In a village near Galle, the chena farming system thrives on shared labor. Families gather to clear land, plant maize, and guard crops from wild boars. The work is hard.

But laughter echoes through the fields. A grandmother shares stories of old harvests; a child learns to weave coconut fronds into baskets. These bonds are life's sustenance. Like the mangrove forests of Negombo, whose tangled roots shelter fish and purify water, humanity thrives in interdependence. The old tamarind tree in the village square is more than a plant. It is a meeting place, a storyteller, a witness to generations. Its fallen leaves feed the soil, reminding us that even in solitude, we nourish the collective.

Even rivers falter. In the dry months, their beds lie exposed, cracked and gasping. Life, too, has seasons of emptiness. The farmer's field lies fallow, its soil resting beneath a blanket of dry leaves. Yet this stillness is not death and it is preparation.

Beneath the surface, earthworms churn the soil, mycelium threads weave through darkness, and seeds bide their time. In Jaffna, farmers plant murunga (drumstick trees) during droughts. Their roots dig deep, drawing moisture from hidden reserves. Life's pauses teach patience. A potter in Ratnapura reshapes broken clay; a weaver in Matara mends torn fabric. We learn that rest is not surrender but a quiet kind of courage.

When monsoons arrive, rivers swell, tearing through villages and reshaping landscapes. Life's floods loss, change, upheaval leave scars. Yet they also bring renewal. In the aftermath, silt deposits enrich the soil. Farmers in Kalutara plant water-loving kangkung (water spinach) in flooded fields, turning disaster into bounty. The river does not mourn what it destroys; it rebuilds. A mother who loses her home to landslides plants a garden in the rubble. A fisherman whose boat sinks builds a new one from salvaged wood. Life's floods remind us that endings are illusions. The coconut palm, uprooted by wind, becomes a bridge for ants. The mango tree, split by lightning, blooms again

All rivers meet the sea. In their final act, they spread into deltas a labyrinth of channels that nourish estuaries and feed mangroves. Life's legacy lies in release. The elderly rice farmer in Polonnaruwa knows his hands will not plant forever. He teaches his grandson to read the monsoon clouds, to honor the soil, and to sow with hope. The river does not cling to its water; it lets go, trusting the cycle. A village midwife passes her knowledge to apprentices; a potter's wheel spins on in younger hands. Even in departure, we remain a ripple in the water, a seed in the wind, a story told under the stars.

Life is not a solitary journey but a continuum. The same water that quenches a seedling today once rained on ancient kingdoms. The rice we eat carries the sweat of our ancestors. In the tea estates of Nuwara Eliya, workers pluck leaves under the same sun that warmed their forebears. The river's song is eternal, a lullaby for the weary and a hymn for the hopeful. To live is to merge with its flow to plant, to endure, to share, and finally, to let go. Our footprints fade, but the river remains, carving new paths for those who follow



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BEAUTY OF EARTH

**The earth wears colours soft and bright,
In dawn's first glow and starry night.
Green fields wave and rivers run,
Beneath the golden morning sun.**

**Mountains rise with quiet grace,
Clouds drift by in endless space.
Flowers bloom in silent cheer,
Whispering beauty far and near.**

**Birdsongs echo in the trees,
Dancing leaves in gentle breeze.
Oceans speak in waves that roll,
Nature sings to every soul.**

**So, pause a while and truly see,
The earth's deep charm and mystery.
Her beauty's more than eyes can find
It lives in heart, in soul, in mind....**

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A JOURNEY AROUND THE LIFE

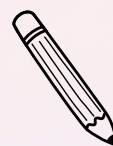
Life is a wonderful journey that we all have from birth to death. There, we face different experiences, learn a lot, and move forward by turning the pages of the big book called life one by one, adding memories and experiences to each page. Some pages are painted in different colors while others are painted in black and white.

Of course, every moment of life is unique. It is like a vast ocean filled with different emotions such as happiness, sadness, victories, defeats, love, hatred etc. We sometimes roam freely like birds flying happily. At other times, we are enveloped in the black cloud of sadness and are pulled into solitude. There is no matter what the circumstances are, life is a huge tree that teaches us a lot.

We need strength to face the challenges of life. We need courage to overcome obstacles. We need kindness to cooperate with others. We need love to illuminate the lives of others.

We get the opportunity to learn something new at every moment of life. We should firmly keep in mind that life is only one opportunity that we have. We should live it meaningfully. We should try to fulfill our dreams. We should live our life in a way that is a blessing to ourselves and others.

Life is short. None of us knows the time it takes for a flower to bloom and fade. Life, full of sweet and sour situations and challenges, is built only through experience. We should make sure to live the best we can in the time we have. We should treat others with love. We should walk that journey happily.



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EMBRACING CHANGE

Growing through life's shifts

Life is a continuous journey of change. Yet, despite knowing this, we often resist it. We hold on to what feels familiar, not because it's always right or safe for us, but because it's comfortable. But life can't stay still all the time. It has to shift, and it challenges us to grow.

One of the most vital lessons we can learn is to embrace change rather than repel it. Embracing change isn't easy. It can be excruciating, uncertain, or even terrifying. Moving to a new city or country, ending a long-term relationship, or entering a new phase of life forces us to leave what we know. The perspective is to view the changes in our lives as a new beginning, rather than complaining about them as the end.

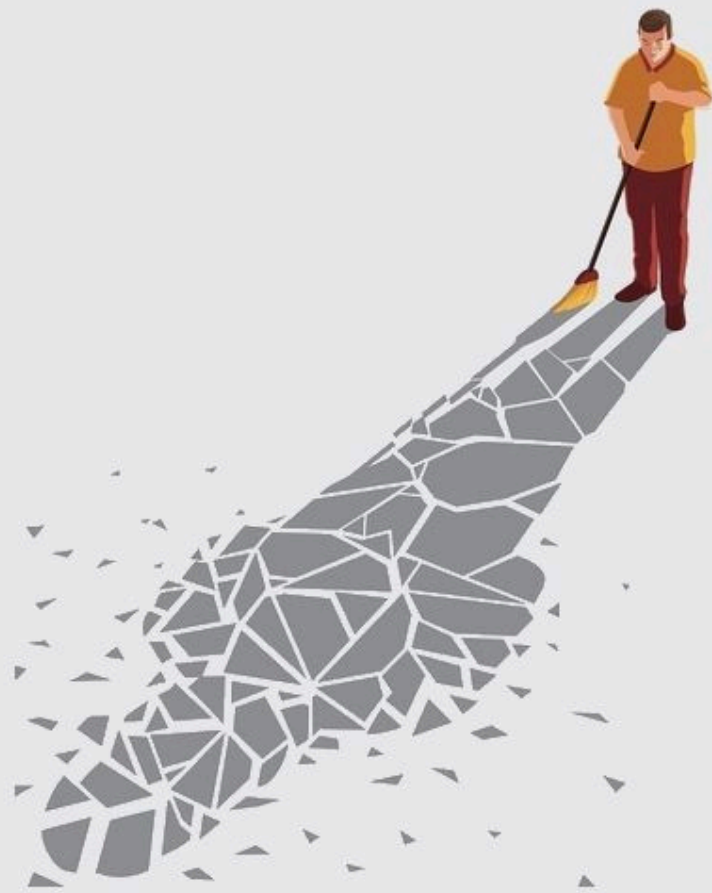
Throughout my life, I have endured numerous situations where changes have knocked on my door, demanding my attention continuously. Change doesn't always come suddenly; sometimes, it happens quietly in the way we interact with each other, the way we feel about ourselves, or in the way we view the outside world.

Before I entered university, I was an extrovert. I loved being around people, making connections, and sharing laughter wherever I went. But with time and through the experiences I have had, especially the heartbreaks, something in me changed. I began to withdraw, not out of bitterness, but out of a need for peace. It wasn't easy at first. I didn't recognize this new version of myself, someone who preferred solitude, who found comfort in being alone rather than in crowded rooms or constant conversations. I missed who I used to be. But slowly, I began to understand that this wasn't a loss. It was growth.

With every tough experience, I was being reshaped, not into someone weaker, but into someone more self-aware. Being alone taught me how to enjoy my own company, how to protect my private life, and how to safeguard my inner peace without others interrupting it. It wasn't always easy, but it helped me realize that change doesn't mean we are broken. It means we are becoming stronger.

There are moments I still look for the older parts of me, the open, louder, friendlier, and fearless girl. But also, I see strength and peacefulness in quiet. I have learned that embracing change means allowing ourselves to evolve, even though it feels unfamiliar. So, if you are changing too, becoming soft, quieter, more protective, and considering your personal space, know that it is okay

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Adapting to change involves letting go of what you are comfortable with and opening up to what could be. This will make you uncomfortable at first, but trust the process. Changes can be messy, but they are often necessary for something greater to emerge. Instead of questioning yourself, “Why is this happening to me?” try asking, “What is this trying to teach me?” Understand that setbacks and obstacles are unavoidable. Instead of viewing them as failures, see them as great opportunities for growth. Not every person is gifted with happiness and success for their entire life.

. All people have to face setbacks throughout their lives. And we have to accept them and move forward. That is how life is.

In the end, change isn't always appealing. Sometimes it feels like loss, confusion, like everything you thought you knew slipping through your fingers. These life changes will strip you down, make you uncomfortable, but if you let it be so, it will build you up even stronger. You will not understand it while you are in it. But one day, you will look back and realize that change didn't break you; it revealed you. And that is ***LIFE***



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Whispers of the Seasons

**Spring, the youth full of colours
Laughter bloomed as lawn of flowers
Dreams grow up with vibrant hue
To the bright sky for a brand-new view**

**Summer, the time to go and play
To the chasing goals with blazing ray
Sunburned hopes say try and try
Even wilted dreams still reach the sky**

**Autumn, comes to pull sun back
Leaves fall slow on memory's track
Moments whispered softened care
With the flowing comfort air**

**Winter, brings the hush of snow
Time to rest, reflect and know-
That every season, bright or grey
Is part of life in its own way**

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“TRAVEL IS A PAIN-KILLER”

Travel is not just a fun trip. It is a process that can do a lot for our mental well-being. Going to a new environment; getting away from the pressures of everyday life, brings freedom to our minds. Also, seeing and experiencing new things broadens our minds. Ultimately, all of this together heals us mentally. It is like a special act done for mental well-being.

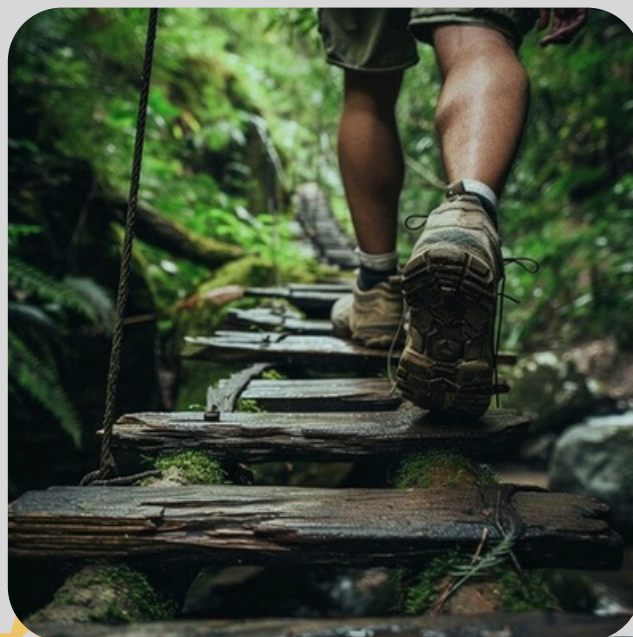
“Travel more – stress less”

Travelling directly affects our mental health. Also, travelling is an opportunity to take time for ourselves to see new things and learn about different cultures. It also helps increase self-confidence and gain a new perspective on life.

Camping while travelling in Sri Lanka is a great way to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and get close to nature. The country has many suitable places to camp in mountainous areas, national parks, coastal strips and forest trails. They are Horton Plains, National Parks, Udawalawe National Park, Wilpattu National Park and Sandaraja Wana Arana. Here, you cannot only see wild animals and elephants, but also go on safari. A campfire is the heart of the camping experience. It's not just a source of light or warmth, it's a source of connection, a source of memories, and a source of comfort. The glow of a campfire amidst the silence of the surroundings is a truly beautiful sight. This is why camping is a special occasion when travelling.

It is very valuable to record interesting moments in a book while travelling. In that book, we have pasted things like tickets and pictures of the places we have visited. Then, that book is not just a notebook, it is like a visual record of our travels. As time passes, when we read those notes, the feelings we got at those moments and the things we saw come back to our minds. It is a good habit to use a book with notes when you travel in the same way. It will help you relive your beautiful memories of the past

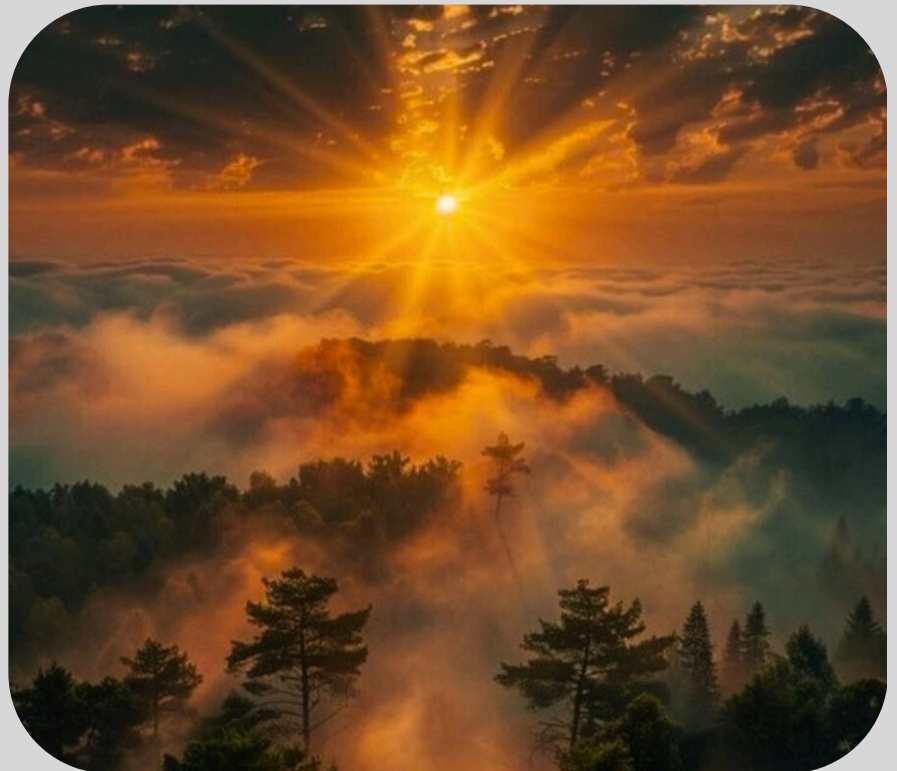
"Forest Bathing" is a must-do when travelling. It's also called "Shinrin-yoku" in Japanese. It's more than just walking in the forest. Forest bathing is about using all of your senses to connect deeply with the forest environment. That means smelling the forest, hearing the birds, feeling the coolness of the leaves, looking at the different colors, and enjoying the silence of the forest. This results in reduced stress, lower blood pressure, a stronger immune system, improved concentration and memory, and increased positive emotions.



Trying out the traditional foods of different regions while travelling is a very interesting experience. You not only get to know the flavors that are unique to each region, but you can also learn about the local ingredients used in those dishes and the methods of preparing them. Also, trying new foods also helps you understand the differences and similarities between cultures. We can sometimes come across delicious foods that we don't expect. So, when you travel, don't miss out finding and tasting the famous dishes of each region. It will be a truly wonderful experience!

Another part of traveling is the sunset. Watching the sunset from a mountain top is a truly beautiful experience. It is a time when the mind feels free and calm. The feeling that comes when the sunlight gradually decreases and you look at the colorful sky, is difficult to describe in words.

Taking photos while travelling is also fun. We can record the beautiful things we see and the experiences we have gained on photos as memories. Taking photos is also a kind of art. When we see a beautiful scene, it is a great pleasure to





capture it in the best possible way on the camera. Some people are very good at taking photos from different angles and under different lighting conditions. It is also like a kind of hobby.

“Traveling is not just one thing, it is a medicine that encompasses many things and well-being”.

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2021/2022

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THE LIFE IS A RIVER

**Life is a river,
That flows endlessly,
with bliss and grief,
Beauty and malice.**

**Life is filled,
With laughs and tears,
dreams and hopes,
It constantly travels.**

**Life builds faith,
With noise and silence,
With sacrifice and assistance,
It gives meaning.**

**Life lingers in memories,
That claims forever,
Carrying lovely memories,
It travels to heaven.**

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LIFE IS A CANVAS, PAINT IT WITH BOLD STROKES OF HAPPINESS.

A meaningful life is not being rich, popular, being highly educated, or being perfect. It is about being real, being humble, being able to share ourselves, and touch the lives of others. Only then could we have a full, happy, and contented life.

Life is a very precious gift granted to us by God, and we must be grateful to Him for giving us such a precious gift. So, we must appreciate the good in our life and express gratitude for it.

We face different types of challenges at different stages in life. Most people face problems in offices, issues in relationships due to their busy lives.

At such times, we shouldn't run away and should have the ability to face them courageously. Although life is something beautiful, it is not a bed of roses.

It is not easy for anyone. If we understand this reality, it will be easier to lead a contented life.

“Find happiness in little things” is a beautiful concept. Often, philosophers emphasize the importance of appreciating and deriving joy from the small, everyday moments in life.

Look at the following examples:

- **The sound of birds singing.**
- **The feeling of sunshine on your skin.**
- **A heartfelt conversation with a friend.**
- **A warm cup of coffee in the morning.**

So, those are little things that help us develop peace in our minds, which is a key fact of a happy life. Considering my life, it has been a crazy roller coaster with many events that have affected me in different ways.

There have been times when my life has been at its highest peak in the world, then it falls down, right into a deep valley. When I was a young girl, my mother had always told me the same thing over and over again.

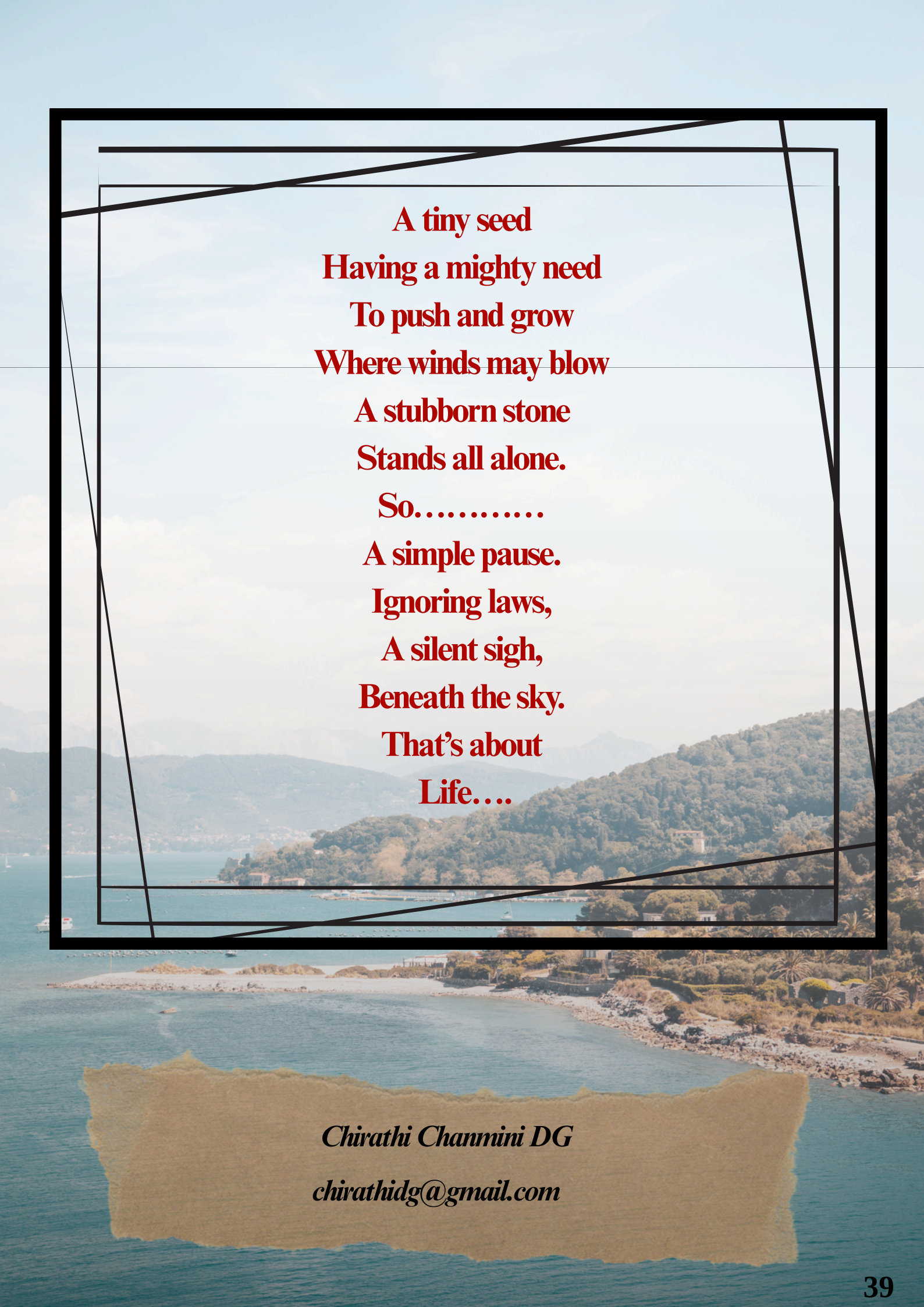
I am happy to say that I learned more about life from my mother and father. So, I like to see their sacrifices and everything they did to build my future successfully.

Life, in all its grand and intricate plan, will always be like an unspooling tapestry. Each thread is a moment, an experience, a relationship, woven into a unique and ever-evolving work of art. Some threads shine with dazzling hues of joy, love, and triumph, casting light and warming our hearts. Other threads are dark, perhaps streaked with the kinks of sorrow, strife, and uncertainty. But it is the intersection of these contrary threads that provides the overall design with its depth, richness, and inner beauty.

We enter this grand tapestry with a few threads already given to us – our birth, nature, and initial circumstances. As we journey, we intentionally weave in additional threads, decide what color and texture they will be, and add them to the fabric of our life. We learn to interweave our strands with others, forming intricate patterns of relationship and need. Sometimes, strands break, leaving gaps that ache with loss, but even these gaps are woven into our story, reminding us of the vulnerability and preciousness of what we have.

The beauty of the tapestry lies not in perfection, for imperfections are part of the process of creation. Rather, it lives in the distinctive combination of textures, the surprising clash of color, and the courage with which new yarns are added to repair the damage. Life is not a fixed photograph to be gazed upon from a distance, but an ongoing process to be experienced, sensed, and consciously constructed. It requires us to be present, open, and willing to take in the entire range of human life.

Lastly, the journey of life, with its own doubts and surprises, is a great and precious gift. It is an ongoing creation, a tapestry with threads of joy and sorrow, connection and loneliness, success and failure. By accepting its natural dynamism, learning from its contradictory strands, and actively engaging in its emergent design, we come to apprehend the beautiful complexity and profound meaning woven into the very essence of our existence. Let us therefore approach each new strand with intention, each thread with courage and compassion, and cherish the unique and dynamic piece of art that is our life.



**A tiny seed
Having a mighty need
To push and grow
Where winds may blow
A stubborn stone
Stands all alone.
So.....
A simple pause.
Ignoring laws,
A silent sigh,
Beneath the sky.
That's about
Life....**

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A JOURNEY AROUND THE LIFE



Of course, every moment of life is unique. It is like a vast ocean filled with different emotions such as happiness, sadness, victories, defeats, love, hatred etc. We sometimes roam freely like birds flying happily. At other times, we are enveloped in the black cloud of sadness and are pulled into solitude. There is no matter what the circumstances are, life is a huge tree that teaches us a lot.



Life is a wonderful journey that we all have from birth to death. There, we face different experiences, learn a lot, and move forward by turning the pages of the big book called life one by one, adding memories and experiences to each page. Some pages are painted in different colors while others are painted in black and white.



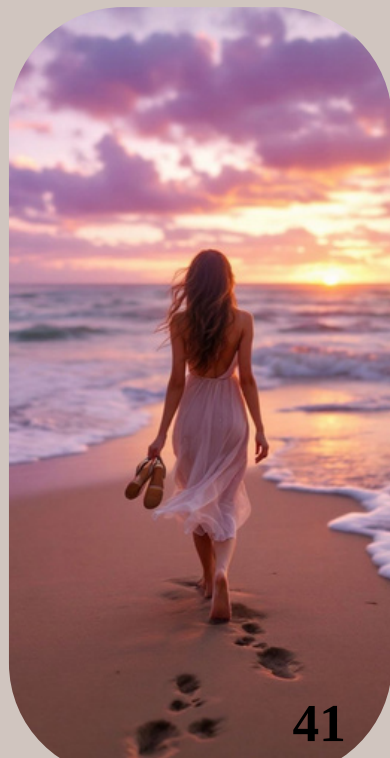
We need strength to face the challenges of life. We need courage to overcome obstacles. We need kindness to cooperate with others. We need love to illuminate the lives of others.

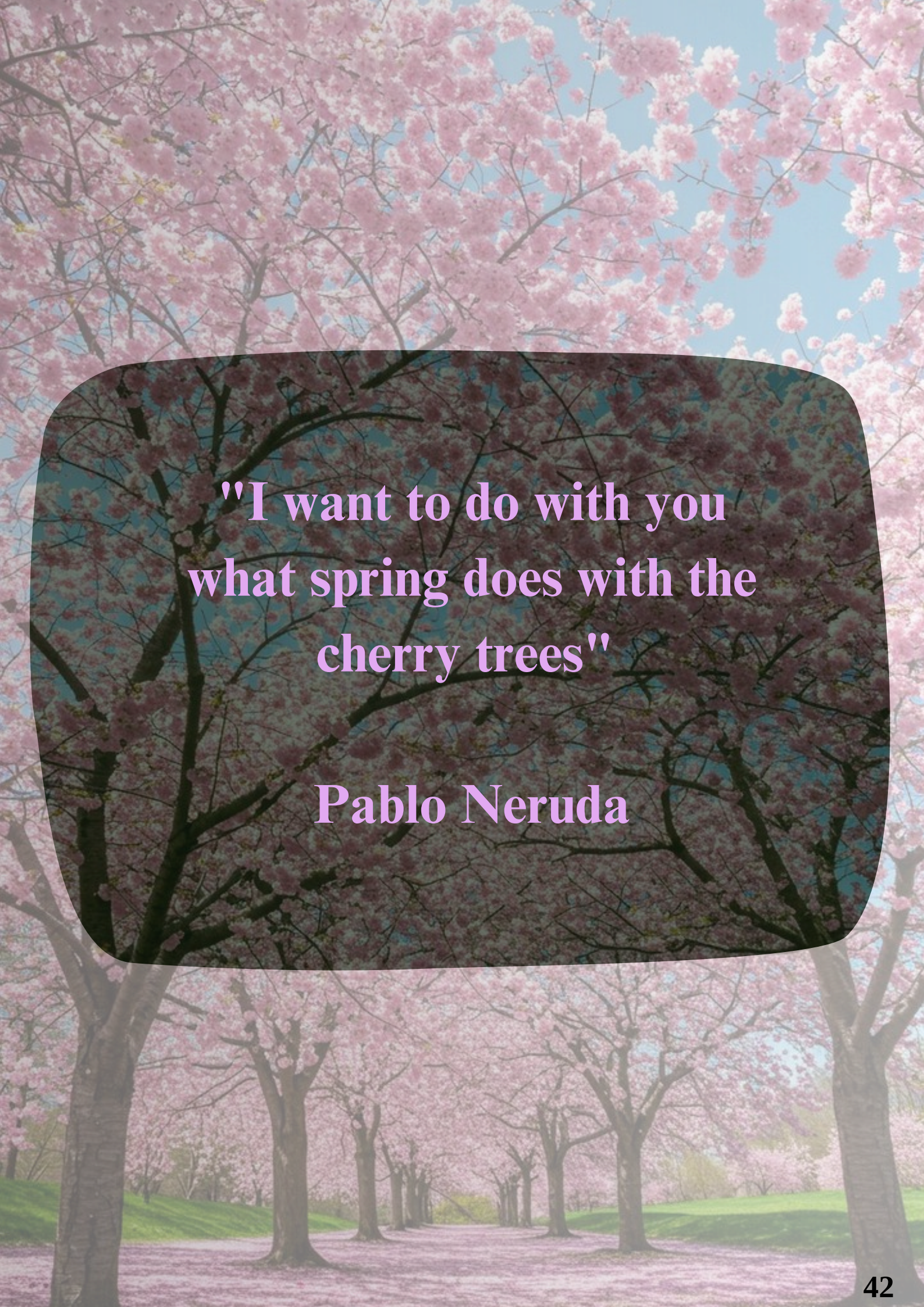


We get the opportunity to learn something new at every moment of life. We should firmly keep in mind that life is only one opportunity that we have. We should live it meaningfully. We should try to fulfill our dreams. We should live our life in a way that is a blessing to ourselves and others.



Life is short. None of us knows the time it takes for a flower to bloom and fade. Life, full of sweet and sour situations and challenges, is built only through experience. We should make sure to live the best we can in the time we have. We should treat others with love. We should walk that journey happily.





"I want to do with you
what spring does with the
cherry trees"

Pablo Neruda

CHALLENGES IN LIFE

Life is an amazing thing that is full of challenges. Something that tests your strength, skills, attitudes, qualities, and behaviors is called a challenge. A challenge is something that requires great mental and physical effort to be accomplished successfully and therefore tests a person's ability. In our lives, we have to face many challenges from birth to death. These challenges make us successful. So, challenges are very important in our lives.



Challenges are fundamental to personal growth, fostering strength by forcing individuals to develop resilience, perseverance, and adaptability. When a person faces any challenge, he or she should have inner strength and power. These challenges provide opportunities to understand oneself better, identify strengths and weaknesses, and learn from mistakes. Experiences make a complete person. Personal experiences give knowledge about how to face challenges well and how to put in better effort to succeed. Also, facing challenges tests emotional and mental resilience, leading to a stronger ability to manage stress and navigate difficult situations. Overcoming challenges builds confidence and self-belief.

However, challenges also help us gain knowledge about what happens to others. Natural disasters, funerals, exams, university life, and sports matches are some examples of challenges. Those who win, learn, or gain experience from challenges are successful individuals. There are many successful people like Lord Buddha, Madduma Bandara, King Dutugamunu, Thomas Alva Edison, and Nelson Mandela, among others.

Furthermore, life's challenges are inevitable, but they are also essential for growth and self-discovery. Each obstacle faced is an opportunity to learn, adapt, and emerge stronger. While difficulties may test our resilience, they also reveal our true potential and inner strength. Embracing challenges with courage and perseverance not only shapes our character but also inspires others. In the end, it is not the obstacles themselves but our response to them that defines our journey. Facing challenges head-on transforms them from barriers into stepping stones toward a more resilient and fulfilled life. Many writers have written poems and songs about facing challenges.

Dr. Heartsill Wilson is a poet who has written poems about challenges.

“This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. What I do today is very important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving something in its place I have traded for it.”

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE



Life is a journey complex, unpredictable, and overwhelmingly beautiful. It is the essence of existence, encompassing not only survival but also development, connection, feelings, and aspirations. From the moment we are born, life sets us on a path full of experiences, each of which contributes to making us who we are. Although philosophers, scientists, and artists have for centuries tried to define life in countless ways, its meaning is usually discovered in how one chooses to live it.

Life begins with innocence. As children, the world seems big and magical. The smallest things give joy the colours of a butterfly, the laughter of a friend, the warmth of a parent's embrace. Life now is largely a time of discovery. We learn to walk, to speak, and to discern right from wrong. We begin to experience things more deeply: joy, sadness, love, fear, and curiosity. Childhood teaches us the fundamentals of values and principles that we hold with us.

As we grow up, life takes on various forms. Adolescence is typically followed by confusion, aspiration, and searching. It is a phase of questioning identity. We begin searching for meaning and purpose, asking ourselves who we are and what we want out of life. This stage is typically fraught with problems peer pressure, academic stress, and emotional turmoil. Yet it is also fertile soil for passion and purpose. Dreams are planted during this time, and when properly nurtured, can grow into life-long goals.

Adulthood is perhaps the busiest and most trying phase of life. It is accompanied by responsibilities school, career, relationships, and usually, the care of others. This is the period when life is no longer solely about self but about contributing to the world. People strive to be successful, to marry, to have families, and to leave a legacy. Life may become busy, and stress is a common visitor. However, it is also during this phase that individuals can experience some of life's greatest joys: personal achievement, deep companionship, and the fulfilment of dreams.

Despite its many rewards, life is not without struggle. Pain, loss, failure, and disappointment are inevitable. No one escapes hardship, and yet, these moments of difficulty often teach us the most profound lessons. They make us resilient, compassionate, and humble. A broken heart can make us more receptive to love; a failure can lead us to a greater destiny. The beauty of life lies in its duality — the coexistence of both light and dark, joy and sorrow. If there was no night, we would never behold the stars.

Life is also relationships. Human connection gives life richness and depth. Family, friends, mentors, and even strangers can make a lasting difference. Through relationships, we learn empathy, compromise, loyalty, and forgiveness. In a more digital and fast-paced world, the value of meaningful human connection cannot be overstated. One act of kindness can change someone's day or life.



Time is the one thing life gives us all equally and the one we can never recover once it's gone. That makes it even more important to use our days wisely. Life is too short to be wasted on negativity or regret. Each moment is an opportunity to make a difference, to pursue happiness, and to make memories. As the quotation goes, **"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."**

In the latter stages of life, reflection becomes more intense. The older people become, the more they look back not at how much they earned or how busy they were, but at the love they gave and got, the people they touched, and the values they lived for. Life, on its final pages, teaches us acceptance, gratitude, and release.

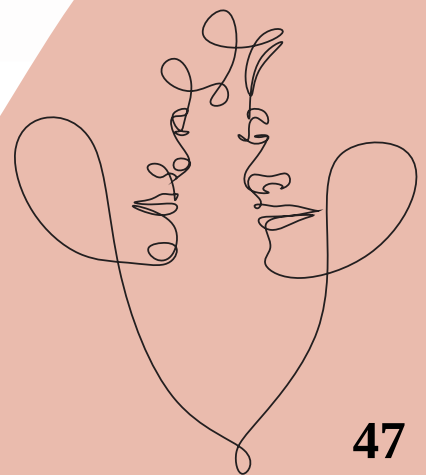
Ultimately, life is what we make it. It is a canvas on which we paint our dreams, our terrors, our passions, and our choices. The life is a wonderful adventure with its peaks and valleys, obstacles and triumphs. It is fragile and resilient. To live well is to embrace the full spectrum of human experience to laugh, to cry, to learn, and to love. Life is not merely an existence; it's a gift that needs to be lived purposefully, with gratitude and courage.



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WONDERS OF LIFE...



Ripples on calm,
La-la songs in sorrows...
Battles in silence,
Lilly blossom in glance...
Waffles in honey,
Lolly in advance...
Metals on heat,
Latent for a while...
Medals on victory,
Loving for a time...
Cattles on breeze,
Leaving for a prime...
Manuals in mind,
Lonely for a crime...
Casuals with shine,
Lowly for a match...
Cripples on a breakup,
Lasting for a heal...
So that,
Wonders of life,
Leaving some lessons...
Just,
Accept with a smile...

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Life is a Gift – Just Enjoy It

Life, in its purest form, is an invaluable gift bestowed upon all of us irrespective of gender, age, religious faiths, caste, creed, beliefs etc. It is not something earned or demanded; rather, it is granted for everyone without condition. While the complexities of modern living often cloud this simple truth, it remains essential to pause and reflect on the profound privilege of being alive.



In a world driven by deadlines, ambition, and material pursuit, most of the time, many individuals forget to appreciate life itself. They wait for milestones such as graduation, marriage, career success and the like to begin “living.” Yet, genuine joy is not something reserved for the unpredictably distant future. It is found in the present, in the seemingly ordinary details that comprise our daily lives.

To truly enjoy our life is to acknowledge its impermanence. Time, once passed, cannot be reclaimed. Therefore, we all should approach each day with gratitude, mindfulness, and purpose. The morning light streaming through the window, a shared smile, or a simple act of kindness; all of these hold the potential to bring quiet contentment, if only we choose to carefully take notice of.

Enjoying life does not imply a lack of seriousness or responsibility. Rather, it demands balance: a conscious effort to prioritize inner well-being alongside external achievement. It is about embracing life in its entirety: the highs and the lows, the certainties and the unknowns. Challenges are inevitable, but they too shape our experience, teaching resilience and deepening our appreciation for days full mirth and merriment.



Moreover, recognizing life as a gift fosters a sense of responsibility: to oneself and to others as well. It calls for compassion, humility, and the courage to live with integrity with others whatever our shelter is. In choosing to enjoy life, we uplift not only ourselves but also those around us. Joy becomes contagious; it spreads through kind words, laughter, and shared human relationships.



Ultimately, the essence of this truth lies in simplicity. Life is not about accumulating more, but about being more and more present, more appreciative, and more alive to every moment. The world offers countless reasons to despair, but it also presents daily reminders of hope, beauty, and love.

Let us then, not postpone joy. Let us not overlook the value of today in search of a better tomorrow. Life, fleeting as it is, should not be wasted in worry or regret. It is a one-time journey, and its deepest fulfillment lies not in perfection, but in presence.

In conclusion, life is not merely an existence to be endured; it is a sacred gift to be cherished. Let us recognize it as such and make a conscious choice: to enjoy it fully, gratefully, and wholeheartedly.



**SMC Bandara
AAM Nizam
DELT**

NATURE'S WHISPER

“NATURE NEVER DID BETRAY THE HEART THAT LOVED HER” is a massively popular quote by William Wordsworth. When a person truly loves and respect nature, nature will never disappoint or deceive them, instead it offers peace, wisdom, and emotional support. Nature often refers to the physical world and surrounding which is not made by human and also it is one of the gifts god has given for the human beings. Nature is the most powerful and beautiful force on earth.

Mother nature provides us with numerous gifts to raise our lives to the peak. Mother nature provides everything that is important for the survival. Earth (soil, rock), Water (ocean, river), Air (atmosphere, wind), Living Organisms (animals, human, insects), Natural Forces like gravity are the main components of this green world. In the quite rustle of leaves, the golden glow of sunrise, and the rhythmic flow of rivers, we find the essence of nature – pure endless beauty. One of the persuasive reasons to appreciate nature is, it's unlimited beauty. The blossoming flowers, blue water waves, green surrounding, open sky, and vibrant colors of sunset illustrate the beauty of mother nature.

Mother nature provides enormous offers with the human kind. Nature grants mental well-being, and health, environmental, cognitive, social and spiritual benefits. Exposure to the natural environment can enhance the immune system by walking, hiking, and other forms of exercises that we do in nature helping us increase the physical activities. Outdoor sceneries often reduce stresses and reducing anxiety, improving the mood, and decreasing symptoms of depression are some magical abilities of mother nature. This green realm is linked with greater feelings of happiness and well-being.

Overall, this shows that mental health often promotes through this nature. This proves that as human beings it is our greater responsibility to become keen nature lovers. Cognitive benefits like enhancing focus and creativity, improving memory and mental clarity are some other perks. Cognitive benefits refer to the benefits that we gain in the way brain processes information. These affect thinking, learning, memory, and problem-solving abilities. This green realm can restore attention, boost creative problem solving and also enhance mental clarity. Food like vegetables, fruits, nuts, cereals and Medicines like aspirin which are derived from willow bark are some modern drugs & gingers and turmeric use in herbal remedies in traditional healing are some direct benefits that mother nature provides. Not only food but also medicines clean water, clean air, raw materials, climate regulations, pollinations are some other boons that nature offers. Natural ecosystems like forests, wetlands filter and purify water.

Plants and trees which are components of nature absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen which supports all living kinds. We know that lungs and respiratory system are the primary parts that improve the air quality within the body. So, what about the environment? “Forests act as lungs of the Earth”. This statement was discovered by Jose Celestino Mutis, a Spanish botanist. This statement showcases the crucial role of forests which are being the greatest part of the nature. Pollinators like bees and butterflies play a crucial role in nature. “To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow” – Audrey Hepburn... This quote reflects the idea that pollinators are the unsung heroes behind the growth and blooming of plants. Without them, future generations would face numerous challenges. They ensure the sustainable food supplement. Therefore, the pollinators act as an essential component of his mother nature. Merits of the nature are somewhat unexplainable and it can't be expressed in words.

There is no matter how much mother nature grants and people fail to showcase the kindness. As human kinds, we have a great responsibility to protect this valuable offer given by the god. Humans have caused significant harms to nature through different activities like clearing forests for agricultural purposes and loggings and destroying habitats of animals.

Are we so ignorant that we cannot protect the gift god has given us until our last breath? Why can't we protect this gift of mother nature? Let's hold our hands to preserve this treasure until our last breath. Also, let's pray that Mother Nature will give us the strength to stand up to all the factors that oppose the nature.

“Mother whispers through the rustling leaves,”

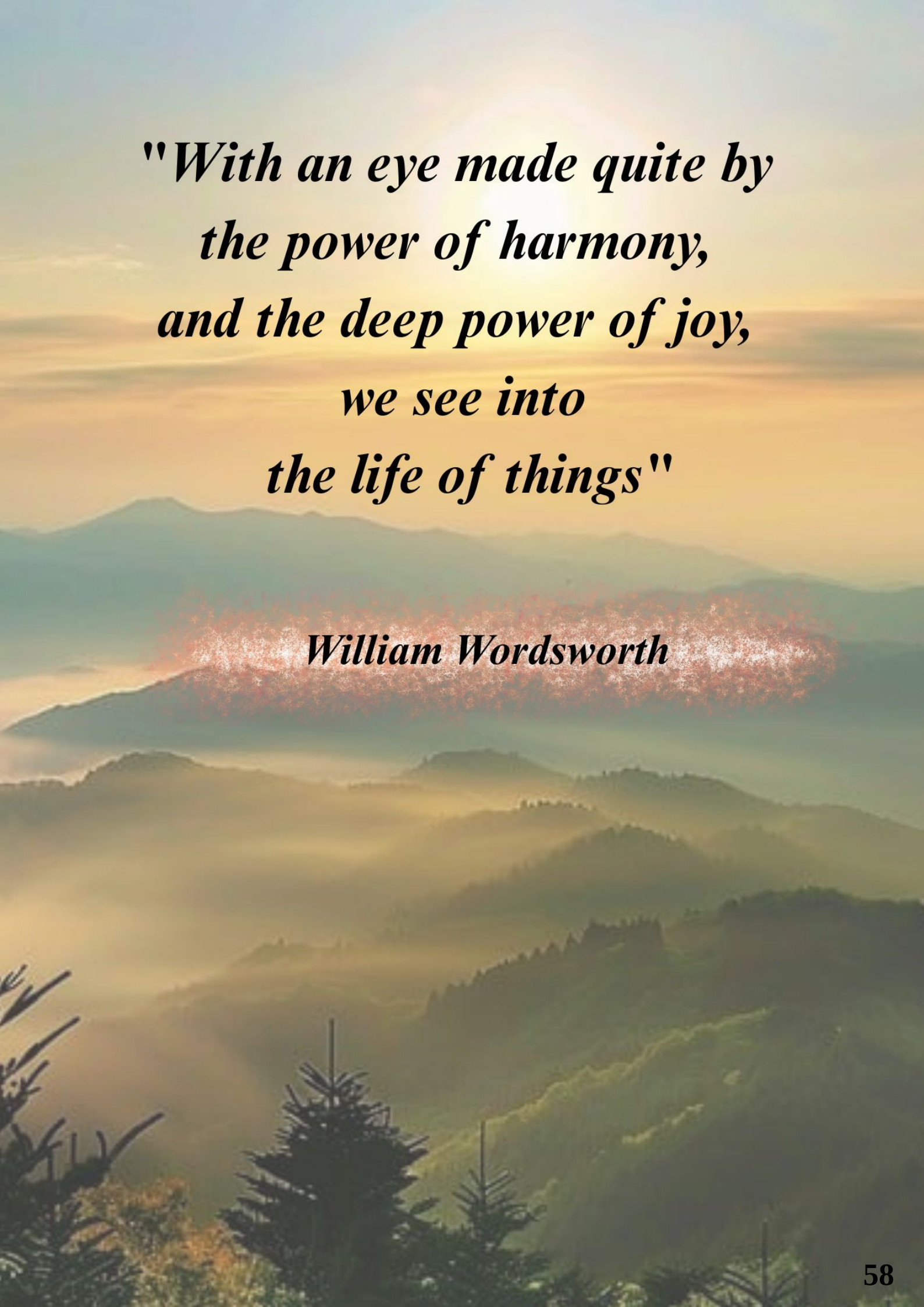
“Caring rivers, sowing seeds with ease,”

“Her breath the wind, her tears the seas”

M.R.Mariyam

AG / 2023 / 032





*"With an eye made quite by
the power of harmony,
and the deep power of joy,
we see into
the life of things"*

William Wordsworth

The Power of Habit

Building a Life of Purpose and Productivity

“Once you understand that habits can change, you have the freedom and the responsibility to remake them. Once you understand that habits can be rebuilt, the power of habit becomes easier to grasp and the only option left is to get to work.” -Charles Duhigg-

A habit is something that you do regularly or usually, often without thinking about it because you have done it so many times before (Longman Dictionary). At a time filled with distractions and limited time, the capacity to make consistent progress in life often comes not from intense motivation spikes, but from the subtle, ongoing influence of habits. Our habits influence our health, efficiency, financial stability and mental health. Studies indicate that a large portion of our everyday behaviors are driven not by conscious choices, but by automatic routines we've cultivated over time (Wood, Quinn, & Kashy, 2002). Grasping how habits function and how to alter them can be one of the most impactful skills we acquire.

The Science of Habit Formation

Habits are created through a neurological mechanism called the habit loop, a concept brought to prominence by Charles Duhigg (2012). This loop comprises three elements:

Cue – A signal that starts the behavior

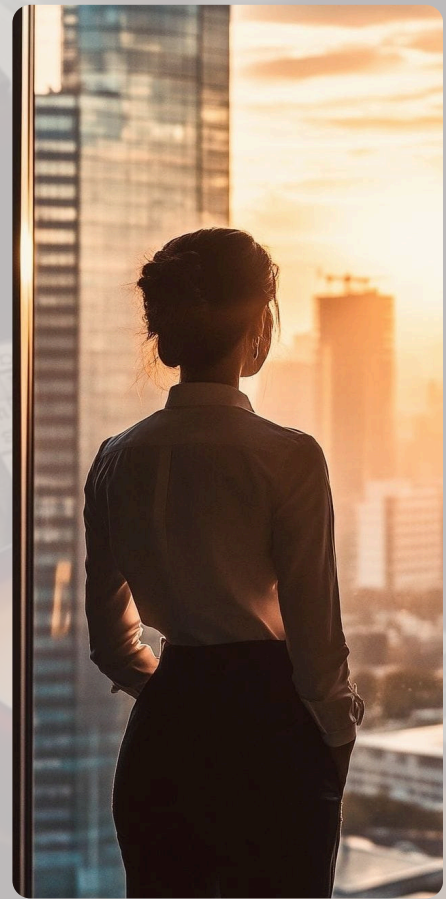
Routine – The behavior or action performed

Reward – The positive reinforcement that strengthens the behavior

Why Habits Matter

According to a study by Wood et al. (2002), approximately 45% of the actions we take daily are habitual. This indicates that almost half of our lives are governed by routines we may not even consciously recognize. Habits play a crucial role in determining our success across various aspects of life including academic achievement, career growth, health, relationships, and financial management. Positive habits have been associated with enhanced well-being and accomplishment.

On the other hand, detrimental habits such as procrastination, overeating or excessive screen time can become ingrained and challenging to alter although change is not impossible.



Altering Unhealthy Habits: Shifting from Opposition to Guidance

Overcoming a negative habit involves more than just determination. Research in behavioral psychology indicates that substituting a harmful habit with a healthier one is often more effective than attempting to remove it completely (Neal, Wood, & Quinn, 2006). This approach retains the initial cue and reward while changing the routine.

For example, rather than mindlessly scrolling through social media during study breaks, one could go for a brief walk or spend a few minutes practicing deep breathing fulfilling the need for relaxation and mental stimulation without the diversion.

Essential approaches for altering habits consist of:

Recognize triggers:

Maintain a journal to track when and where the behavior takes place.

Alter the surroundings:

Eliminate cues that encourage undesirable habits.

Employ positive reinforcement:

Acknowledge small achievements to remain motivated.

Develop substitute routines: Select actions that fulfill the same psychological need.



How to Build Lasting Positive Habits

Developing sustainable habits doesn't require a complete lifestyle change. It's about making gradual, steady enhancements: a concept supported by James Clear in his book *Atomic Habits* (2018). Here are some actionable, evidence-based strategies for forming habits: Begin with manageable, precise actions: According to Fogg's (2009) "Tiny Habits" approach, keeping things simple is vital. Rather than declaring "I will get fit," say "I will perform 5 push-ups each morning."

Link new habits to established routines: This method, known as "habit stacking," leverages existing behaviors (Clear, 2018).

Shape your surroundings:

Individuals are more likely to achieve success when their environment promotes positive habits (Neal et al., 2006).

Monitor and evaluate your progress: Keeping track of your actions enhances accountability and strengthens commitment (Michie, Abraham, Whittington, McAteer, & Gupta, 2009).

Celebrate achievements: Rewards driven by dopamine reinforce habit loops, making it more likely for behaviors to become ingrained (Wise, 2004).

Real-World Examples of Habit Transformation

When Paul O'Neill took on the role of CEO at Alcoa, he surprised investors by prioritizing a single issue: safety in the workplace. His conviction was that instilling a culture of safety across the organization would foster better communication, discipline, and overall efficiency.

Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps incorporated mental rehearsal into his daily routine. Each morning and evening, he imagined executing a flawless race - from his entry into the water to reach the wall at the end.

Stephen King, recognized as one of the most productive authors globally, follows a disciplined writing regimen, generating 2,000 words each day (King, 2000).

During his presidency, Barack Obama committed to a regular morning exercise routine, a practice that enabled him to sustain his focus and energy levels throughout the day.

Habits Shape Destiny

Our routines shape the direction of our lives more than we often acknowledge. Whether we seek academic achievements, career advancements, or personal health, establishing the right habits is essential. As Aristotle famously noted, “We are what we repeatedly do. Therefore, excellence is not merely an act, but a habit.”

By being more deliberate about our daily practices, identifying the triggers that influence them, and altering our surroundings to facilitate healthier choices, we can transform our lives from the core. In a world characterized by change and complexity, fostering positive habits may be the most straightforward yet impactful route to success.



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A person is sitting in a meditative pose on a long wooden pier that extends into a calm body of water. The water is still, reflecting the surrounding environment. Tall reeds are visible on both sides of the pier. In the background, a dense forest of trees is shrouded in a thick mist or fog, creating a serene and contemplative atmosphere. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

**"The only
journey is the one
within"**

-Rainer Maria Rilke-