

THE WAY OF REST

FINDING THE COURAGE TO
HOLD EVERYTHING IN LOVE

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sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

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PART I Rest in Imperfection

1 A Brand New Day

To all the heartbroken ones, the misunderstood ones.
To all you misfits, outcasts, freaks, and worldly
failures.

To the ones they jeer at, poke, ridicule, and crucify.
To all you lonely disillusioned poets and mad
visionaries.

To those whose worlds are falling apart.

To those who have sought the Light for so long yet
still feel far away.

To those whose unshakable absolutes have dissolved
into the relative.

To those whose hearts are burning up.

To those whose dreams have crumbled to the ground.

To those who have given everything for truth.

To those who have taken the path of crucifixion over
the path of worldly comfort.

To all of you out there in the dark.

I salute you.



There is such dignity in what you are going through.
Life has called you to the deepest kind of trust in
your own experience.

Do not turn away.
This is your unique invitation.

From the cosmic perspective,
nothing has gone wrong.

Only the false can die.

From the perspective of the heart,
it is always a brand new day.

Your beauty lies in your willingness to break.

I walk with you,
my perfectly broken family.

2 Your Perfect Imperfection

As a human being, you are perfectly imperfect, gloriously flawed, your story forever unresolved. You will never reach a state of perfection in time, and that is why you are so lovable and human. Your flaws give you character, your quirks make you unique, your wrinkles and battle scars sing of a life fully lived, a world fully tasted, a song fully sung, a long road, traveled well.

Yet at the same time, beyond your personal history, your narrative, your beliefs, your memories, your plans, your dreams of past and future, you are nothing less than Consciousness itself, awake and alive here and now, prior to identification as a separate “me,” an incomplete seeker looking for home. You are undivided from the vast Intelligence that moves the planets on their axes, inseparable from what *I Am*, and your human “flaws” pale in comparison to your cosmic perfection, your deathless and timeless nature, your Original Face prior to even the big bang.

You are so imperfect, and that is exactly what makes you so perfect.



Look at yourself in the mirror, and at first perhaps you will feel disappointment, shame, even disgust, because that's what you were taught to feel. But allow yourself to feel these feelings, and know they are not "you," only old energies moving. And let thoughts appear in the mind, like "ugly" and "fat" and "bad" and "broken," and know that they are just words and sounds, and familiar, and old. Let the mind chatter away, like so many birds.

You have to love yourself by also loving the part that doesn't love yet, or trust yet.

Allowing all of you to be reflected now.

Begin to see yourself through the eyes of a loving mother who sees you as precious even if you have pimples or deformities or rashes or birthmarks, even if you have half a face or missing limbs. You have to see yourself through these bigger eyes, eyes of pure loving attention, eyes that do not judge but allow all judgments, too.

Your eyes have been too small up until now. You were taught by people who didn't love themselves, and you got infected.

Until you looked at yourself today.

And the medicine now is naked, choiceless attention, being as spacious as the mirror itself, making room for thoughts and feelings but not mistaking them for the truth. Your beauty lies in your

willingness to feel, and see beyond all labels. Hold the totality of the image the way the mirror holds it, not resisting, not hiding, not shaming, not trying to adapt yourself to some secondhand idea of beauty or perfection. Your imperfections are so perfect in this light; your wrinkles and blotches a work of divine art, fascinating and real, and so human.

See. And in the seeing, allow yourself to be seen.

You are beautiful, without changing a thing; your beauty is not earned.

4

A Perfectly Divine Mess



Bow to your awkwardness. Kneel at the altar of your failures. Smile at your clumsiness. Befriend your incompetence. Laugh when you stumble and fall. These are all perfectly precious waves in the oceanic vastness of you.

Perfection is unattainable in time, but found only in presence; the presence of imperfection makes you real, and relatable, and that's perfect. You'll be consistent when you're dead. Until then, celebrate your silly old self, your marvelous inability to conform, or to live up to any image at all.

Don't bore yourself into a spiritual coma. Say the wrong thing, just for once. There is such freedom in allowing yourself to screw up, to be kind to your mistakes, to kiss the ground as you rise again, to adore the falling, too.

Don't let your spirituality numb your humanity, your humility, and most importantly, your sense of humor.

5 Sometimes . . .

. . . you have to fail to succeed
. . . you have to lose to win
. . . you have to break to mend
. . . you have to be weak to be strong
. . . you have to be wrong to be right
. . . you have to disconnect to reconnect
. . . you have to stop trying to change things
to change things
. . . you have to say “yes” to saying “no”
. . . you have to cease seeking to truly find
. . . you have to forget to remember
. . . you have to be foolish to be wise
. . . you have to fall to fly
. . . you have to plunge to soar
. . . you have to die to really live!



Face it. You'll never fit in. And that's a wonderful thing.

And there's a very good reason why you'll never fit in. There's no such thing as "fitting in."

You see, objects fit in. *Things* fit in. Lumps of concrete fit in holes. Blocks of wood fit in containers. Humans cannot fit in, unless they have reduced themselves to lumps, numbed themselves to life and adventure and the ever-present possibility of transformation.

Humans relate. Humans feel. Humans experience life firsthand, touch life where life is happening, have attitudes and perspectives that are ever changing, urges that are constantly shifting. Something alive and vital cannot "fit in," no matter how hard it tries. Therein lies the rub—and the freedom.

The secret? Everybody is trying to fit in, and nobody feels like they fit in . . . even when they seem to fit in! Fitting in is not possible when you realize that you are alive and therefore have no fixed self, no constant shape, no "hole" with your name on it.

Because even if you were to fit in, even if they finally let you into the club, at what cost would that come to your mental health, your sanity, your inner peace, your awakening? Would you have to play a role to fit in? Squeeze all that precious aliveness out of yourself? Numb your deepest longings and urges? Behave? Perform? Adapt? Be a good, very kind, or

very “spiritual” boy or girl? Say the right thing? Hide what you really feel? Stop asking questions? Try to be something you’re not? Deny your true path? Stop exploring? Abandon yourself?

Did you ever really want to fit in, friend? If you were accepted, liked, approved of by others for the role you were playing, the persona you were carefully crafting, the “self” you were holding up, would it truly satisfy? Surrounded by a cast of thousands, playing an empty role devoid of truth, wouldn’t you still feel like an outcast, far from home? In the perfect relationship, yet having sacrificed your inner freedom and silenced your precious voice, wouldn’t you long to break free again?

It’s delicious, ingenious, perfect, intelligent that you never felt like you fit in. It means that you were always alive, and therefore unique and irreplaceable, designed to resist any kind of labeling whatsoever, unable to be pinned down or reduced to a category.

To paraphrase Groucho Marx, you’d never want to belong to a club that would have you as a member.

Friend, I love your rebellious heart.