

DAILY INSPIRATION

A Pick-Me-Up for the Soul

Sometimes we need words of wisdom to get us through the day. In this issue of Daily Inspiration 3 authors discuss art, life and our willingness to accept change.

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THE POWER OF ART

By: Olivia Liang

In her memoir, 'In The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone,' Liang explores sorrow, loneliness, art, and much more.

“T here are so many things that art can’t do. It can’t bring the dead back to life, it can’t mend arguments between friends, or cure AIDS, or halt the pace of climate change. All the same, it does have some extraordinary functions, some odd negotiating ability between people, including people who never meet and yet who infiltrate and enrich each other’s lives. It does have a capacity to create intimacy; it does have a way of healing wounds, and better yet of making it apparent that not all wounds need healing and not all scars are ugly.

If I sound adamant it is because I am speaking from personal experience. When I came to New York I was in pieces, and though it sounds perverse, the way I recovered a sense of wholeness was not by meeting someone or by falling in love, but rather by handling the things that other people had made, slowly absorbing by way of this contact the fact that loneliness, longing, does not mean one has failed, but simply that one is alive.”

WHO WE ARE

By: Joan Didion

In her collection of essays entitled Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Joan Didion discusses her life in California and New York City in the 1960s. This particular quote explores her willingness to accept change, both in life and in herself.

“...I think we are well-advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget. We forget the loves and the betrayals alike, forget what we whispered and what we screamed, forget who we were.”

THERE IS NO LOVE OF LIFE WITHOUT DESPAIR OF LIFE

By: Albert Camus

Camus— whose life was supported by the ethos that happiness is our moral responsibility — tells the story of a young woman dancing insanely in a Spanish cabaret and writes :

Without cafes and newspapers, it would be difficult to travel. A paper printed in our own language, a place to rub shoulders with others in the evenings enable us to imitate the familiar gestures of the man we were at home, who, seen from a distance, seems so much a stranger. For what gives value to travel is fear. It breaks down a kind of inner structure we have. One can no longer cheat - hide behind the hours spent at the office or at the plant (those hours we protest so loudly, which protect us so well from the pain of being alone).

I have always wanted to write novels in which my heroes would say: "What would I do without the office?" or again: "My wife has died, but fortunately I have all these orders to fill for tomorrow." Travel robs us of such refuge. Far from our own people, our own language, stripped of all our props, deprived of our masks (one doesn't know the fare on the streetcars, or anything else), we are completely on the surface of ourselves.

But also, soul-sick, we restore to every being and every object its miraculous value. A woman dancing without a thought in her head, a bottle

on a table, glimpsed behind a curtain: each image becomes a symbol. The whole of life seems reflected in it, insofar as it summarizes our own life at the moment. When we are aware of every gift, the contradictory intoxications we can enjoy (including that of lucidity) are indescribable.

There lay all my love of life: a silent passion for what would perhaps escape me, a bitterness beneath a flame. Each day I would leave this cloister like a man lifted from himself, inscribed for a brief moment in the continuance of the world...There is no love of life without despair of life.

**THERE IS NO LOVE OF LIFE
WITHOUT DESPAIR OF LIFE**