

The background of the image is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a dark silhouette of a forest. The sky is a gradient from deep blue at the top to warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The sun is a small, bright orange circle at the bottom center. The foreground is dominated by the dark, silhouetted shapes of trees on the left.

AJAHN BRAHM

Wisdom & Wonders

INSPIRATION AND INSIGHTS FROM PERTH

Inspiration adds beauty to our world.

Ajahn Brahm

AJAHN BRAHM

Wisdom & Wonders

INSPIRATION AND INSIGHTS FROM PERTH

Copyright. Ajahn Brahmavamso 2014

Photo copyright, 2014

ISBN 978 983 9382 76 1

Creative commons attribution non-commercial no derivatives cc by-nc-nd

You are free to share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format under the following terms:

Attribution

you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Non-commercial

you may not use the material for commercial purposes.

No-derivatives

if you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you may not distribute the modified material.

No additional restrictions

you may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Foreword

The pictures in this book are from Bodhinyana Monastery and Jhana Grove Retreat Centre. These remarkable facilities in Perth and the quotes from Ajahn Brahm's teachings that accompany them are mirror images of each other. This is no accident—Ajahn Brahm has been the main force behind the creation of these sanctuaries for spiritual development.

This book celebrates Ajahn Brahm's still evolving legacy. The pictures and the quotes are two complementary angles on his remarkable achievements.

May you enjoy this tribute to Ajahn Brahm on the occasion of his 40th anniversary as a Buddhist monk.

With the deepest respect and gratitude,

Ajahn Brahmali

Perth, June 2014

(on behalf of everyone who has contributed to this book)



THE DOOR OF MY HEART IS ALWAYS OPEN TO YOU

— no matter who you are, or what you've done.

MY LOVE FOR YOU IS UNCONDITIONAL.

THERE'S NO ENTRY FEE TO HAPPINESS.



The best way for a student to show gratitude to a teacher
IS TO LEAD A HAPPY, VIRTUOUS, AND COMPASSIONATE LIFE.

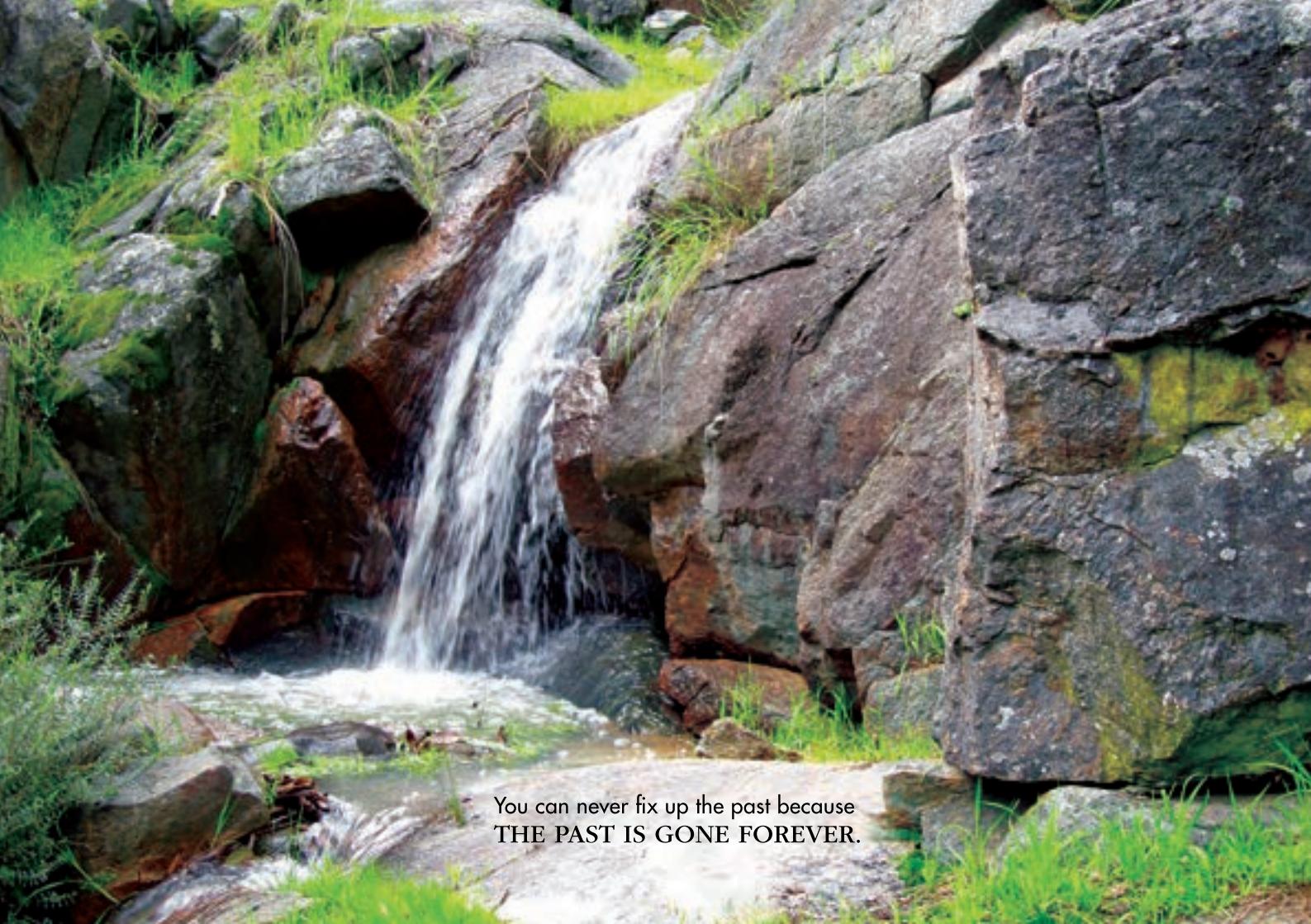




THIS IS GOOD ENOUGH.

A photograph of a bare tree against a clear, vibrant blue sky. The tree's branches are dark and silhouetted against the light blue background, creating a stark contrast. The branches are twisted and crooked, some reaching upwards and others outwards, forming a complex, organic shape.

We're all damaged goods, like crooked trees.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE BEAUTIFUL.

A photograph of a waterfall cascading down a series of large, dark grey and brown slate rocks. The water flows from the top left towards the bottom right, creating white foam at the base. The rocks are covered in patches of green moss and grass. The background is filled with more rocks and some sparse vegetation.

You can never fix up the past because
THE PAST IS GONE FOREVER.



Tragedy, difficulty, and pain keep coming back because
THEY'RE THERE FOR US TO LEARN FROM.



FEAR CREATES NEGATIVITY.



Once the tears are dry and the heart is healed,
YOU'LL BE A WISER, MORE COMPASSIONATE,
AND MORE WONDERFUL FRIEND.



What's the purpose of having a garden
where everything is just beautiful
IF YOUR HEART IS ANGRY AND VIOLENT?



THOUGHT IS ONLY AN APPROXIMATION OF REALITY.

We gaze at the past through a distorted lens.



THE FUEL FOR DISCONTENT
is thinking that happiness lies somewhere else.

The background of the image is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise. The upper half is dominated by large, billowing clouds bathed in bright orange and yellow light from behind. Below them, the sky transitions into a darker, more uniform orange. The horizon line is visible at the bottom, appearing dark and flat against the bright sky.

EVERY TIME YOU'RE THINKING, YOU'RE NOT SEEING;
you're missing out on reality.

JEALOUSY is seeing only one side of the person we want to be like.





'I want peace' is an oxymoron.
PEACE HAPPENS WHEN WANTING ENDS.



LIFE

is like climbing a mountain of treacle with the heavy weights of past and future on your back.



DON'T BE SO JUDGEMENTAL ABOUT THE WEEDS IN YOURSELF.

Simplicity doesn't mean we lose out.
WITH SIMPLICITY, WE GAIN SO MUCH.





PAIN IS LIKE THE WINTER BEFORE SPRING.

A cockatoo with a large white crest and grey body feathers is perched on a bare, light-colored branch. It is facing away from the camera, looking towards the left. The background is a clear, vibrant blue sky. In the top right corner, there are some out-of-focus green leaves.

All fear is about losing something you own,
SOMETHING YOU'RE ATTACHED TO.

A wide-angle photograph of a serene natural scene. In the foreground, a dark blue lake or river reflects the surrounding environment. On the right side, a large, dense forest of tall, green trees rises against a clear, pale blue sky with a few wispy white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

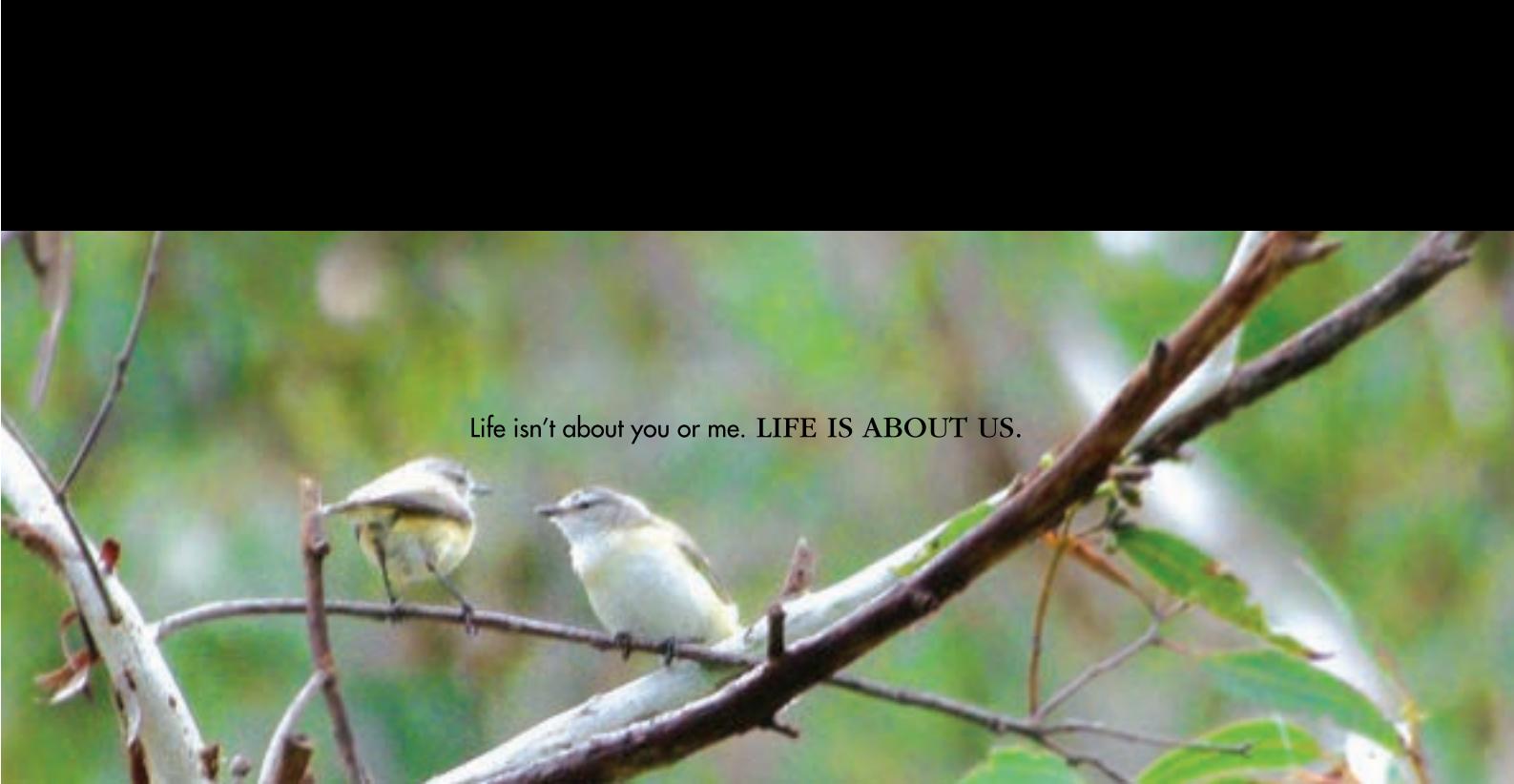
THE BEST RELATIONSHIP
is the relationship with peace.



TRUE LOVE IS SELFLESS LOVE.



The most important etiquette is COMPASSION.



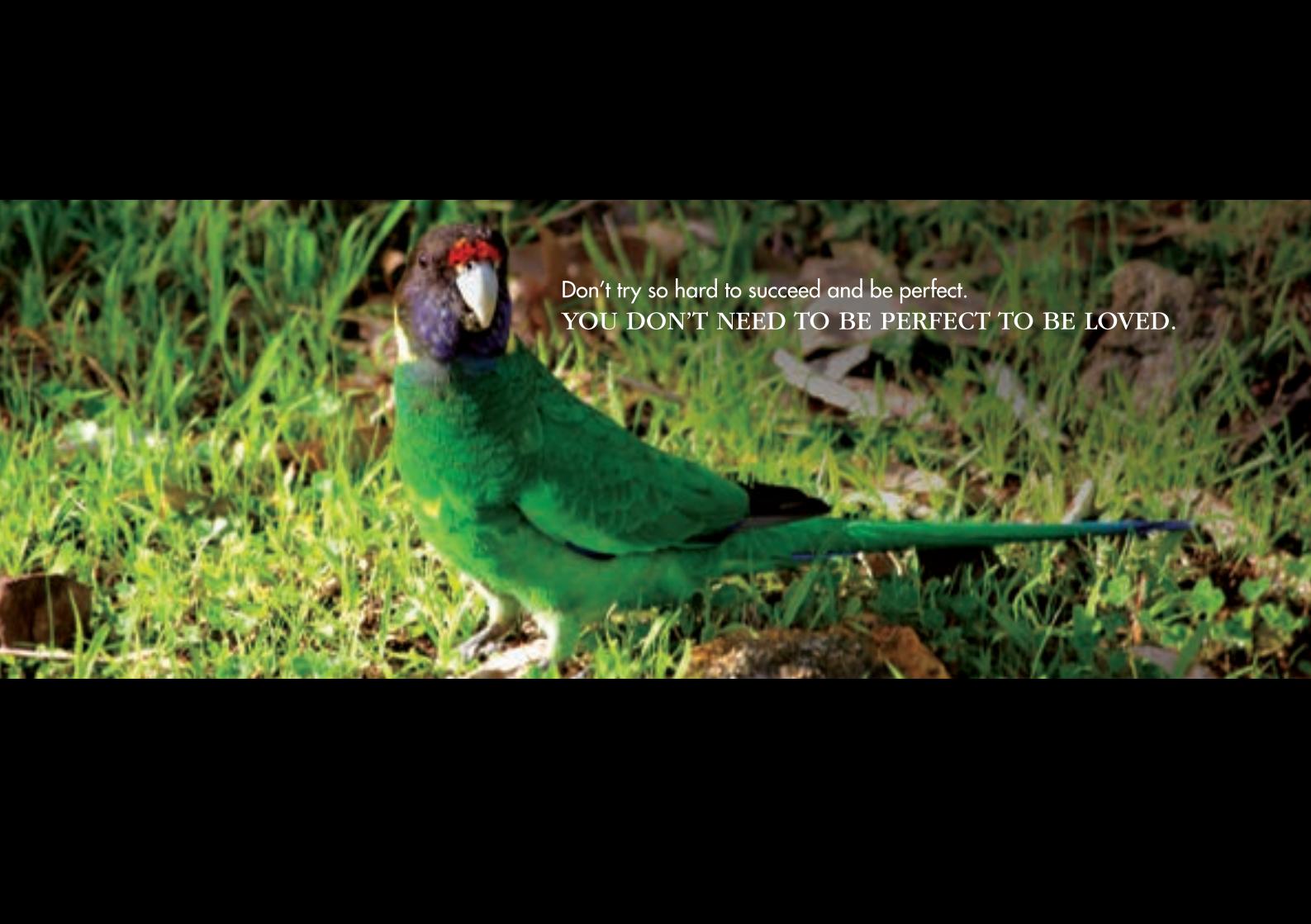
Life isn't about you or me. **LIFE IS ABOUT US.**



CHERISH THE UNCERTAINTY IN LIFE.

WANTING BENDS PERCEPTION.



A close-up photograph of a green parrot with a red patch on its forehead, sitting on a patch of green grass. The parrot is facing towards the left of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing more grass and some fallen leaves.

Don't try so hard to succeed and be perfect.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE PERFECT TO BE LOVED.



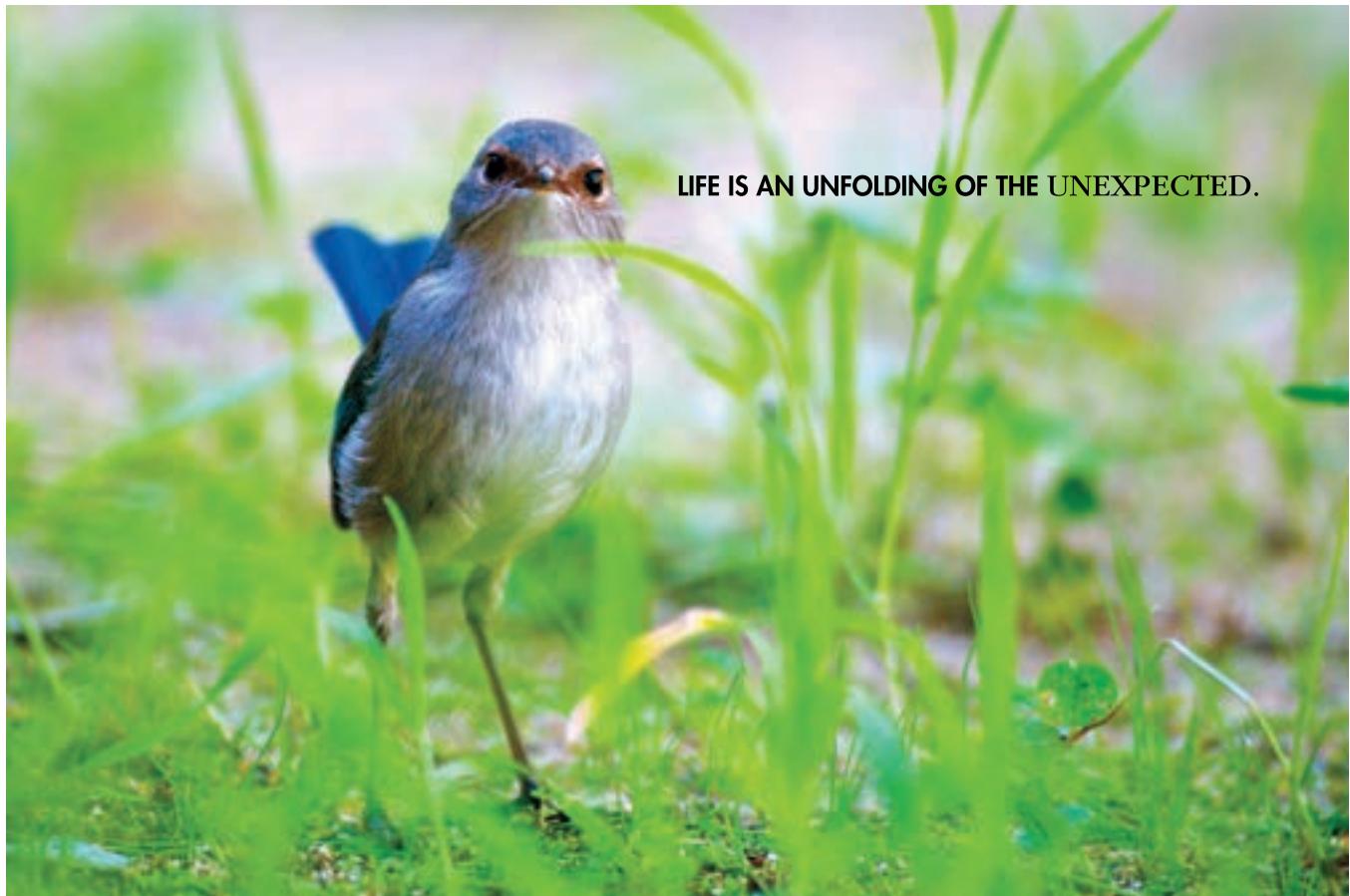
*Memories are dead bodies of the past.
DON'T KEEP CARRYING AROUND THE COFFINS.*

Rather than philosophising about life,
EXPERIENCE IT WITH YOUR HEART.





A fantasy is a lie.
DON'T LIVE YOUR LIFE AS A LIE.



LIFE IS AN UNFOLDING OF THE UNEXPECTED.



Never allow anyone or anything
TO CONTROL YOUR HAPPINESS.

NOW IS WHERE THE FUTURE IS MADE.

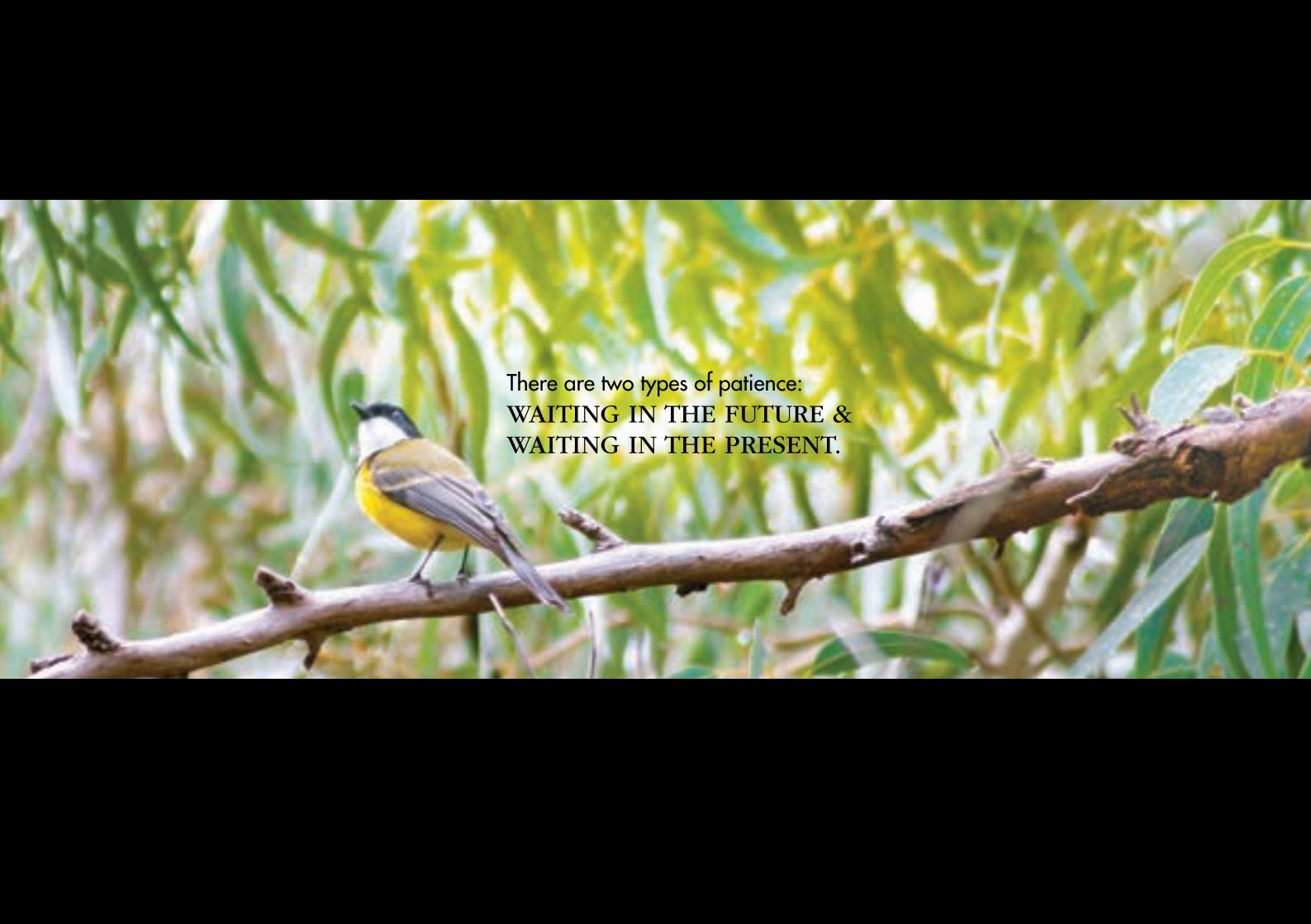


A landscape photograph of a desert sunset. The sky is a clear, pale blue, transitioning to a warm orange and yellow at the horizon where the sun is setting behind dark, silhouetted mountains. In the foreground, there are several dark, leafless trees and shrubs. Overlaid on the upper left portion of the image is a white text block containing a quote.

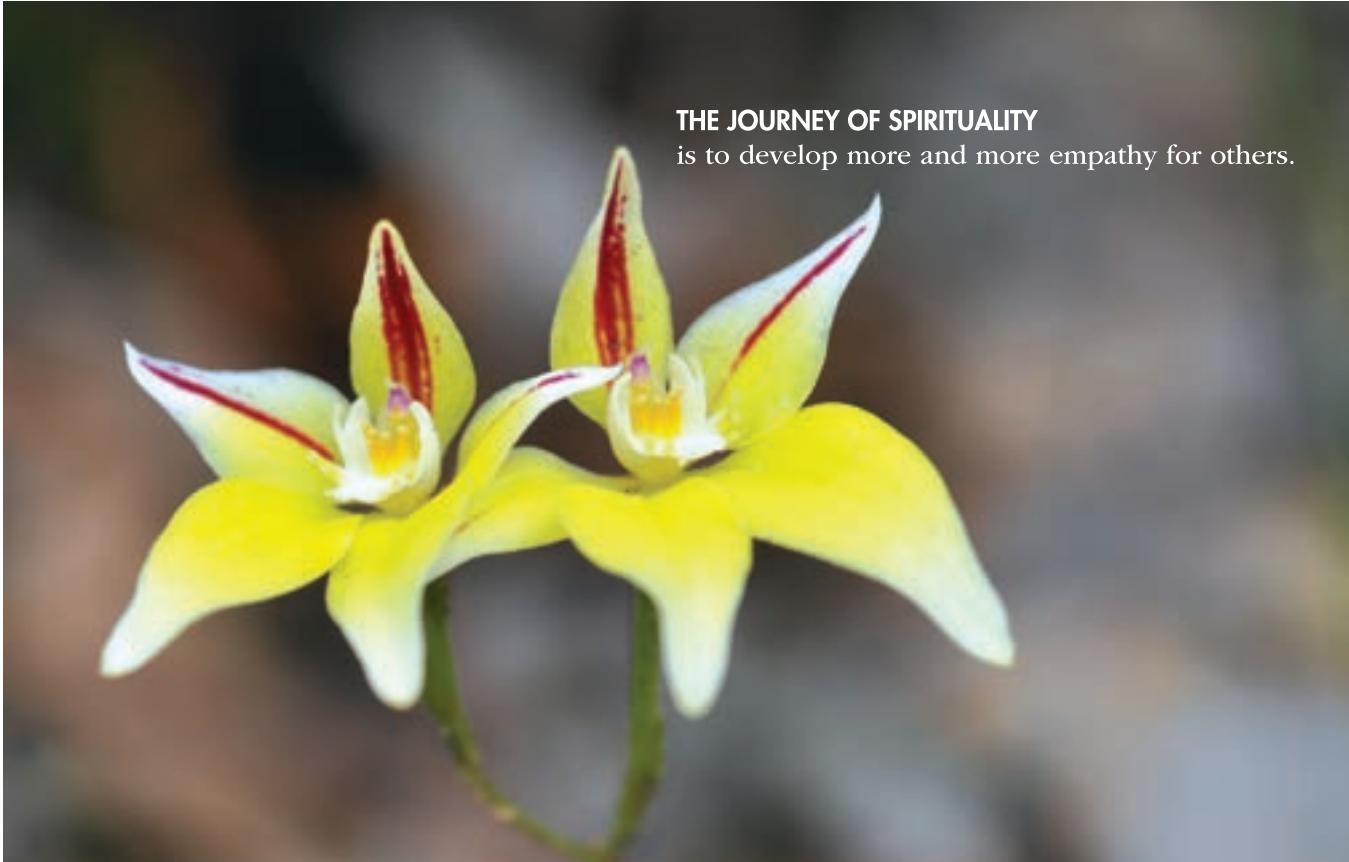
We cannot change the world,
BUT WE CAN CHANGE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT.



BE HAPPY WITH YOUR OWN COMPANY,
and you can be happy with others.

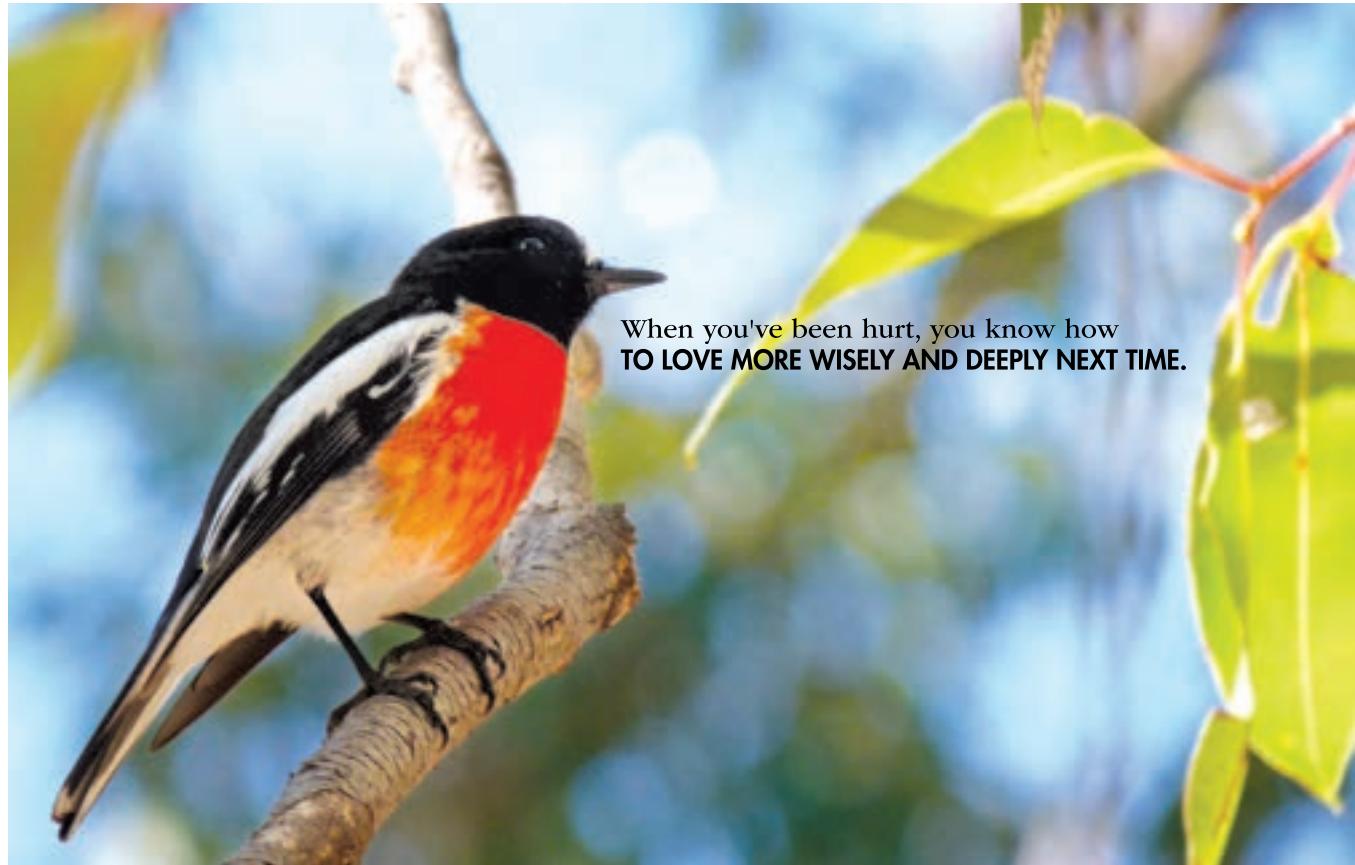
A small, yellow and black bird, possibly a kinglet, is perched on a thin, brown, leafless branch. The bird has a bright yellow breast and belly, dark wings, and a black cap. It is facing towards the left. The background is filled with out-of-focus green and yellow leaves, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting.

There are two types of patience:
WAITING IN THE FUTURE &
WAITING IN THE PRESENT.



THE JOURNEY OF SPIRITUALITY

is to develop more and more empathy for others.



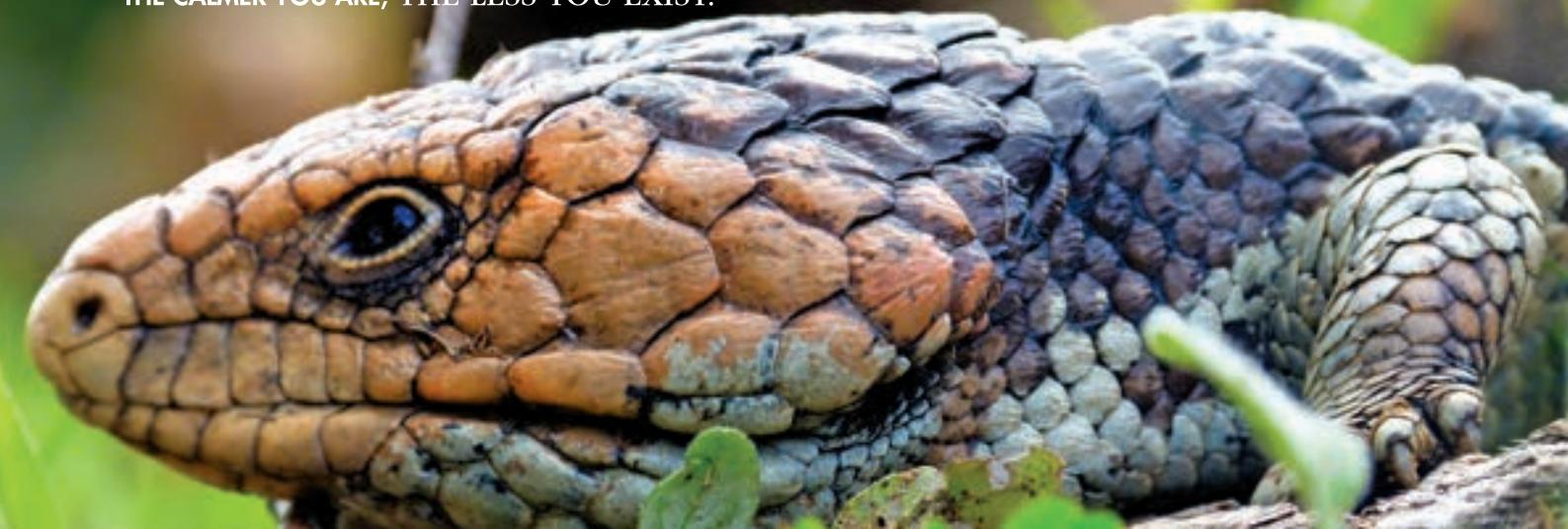
When you've been hurt, you know how
TO LOVE MORE WISELY AND DEEPLY NEXT TIME.

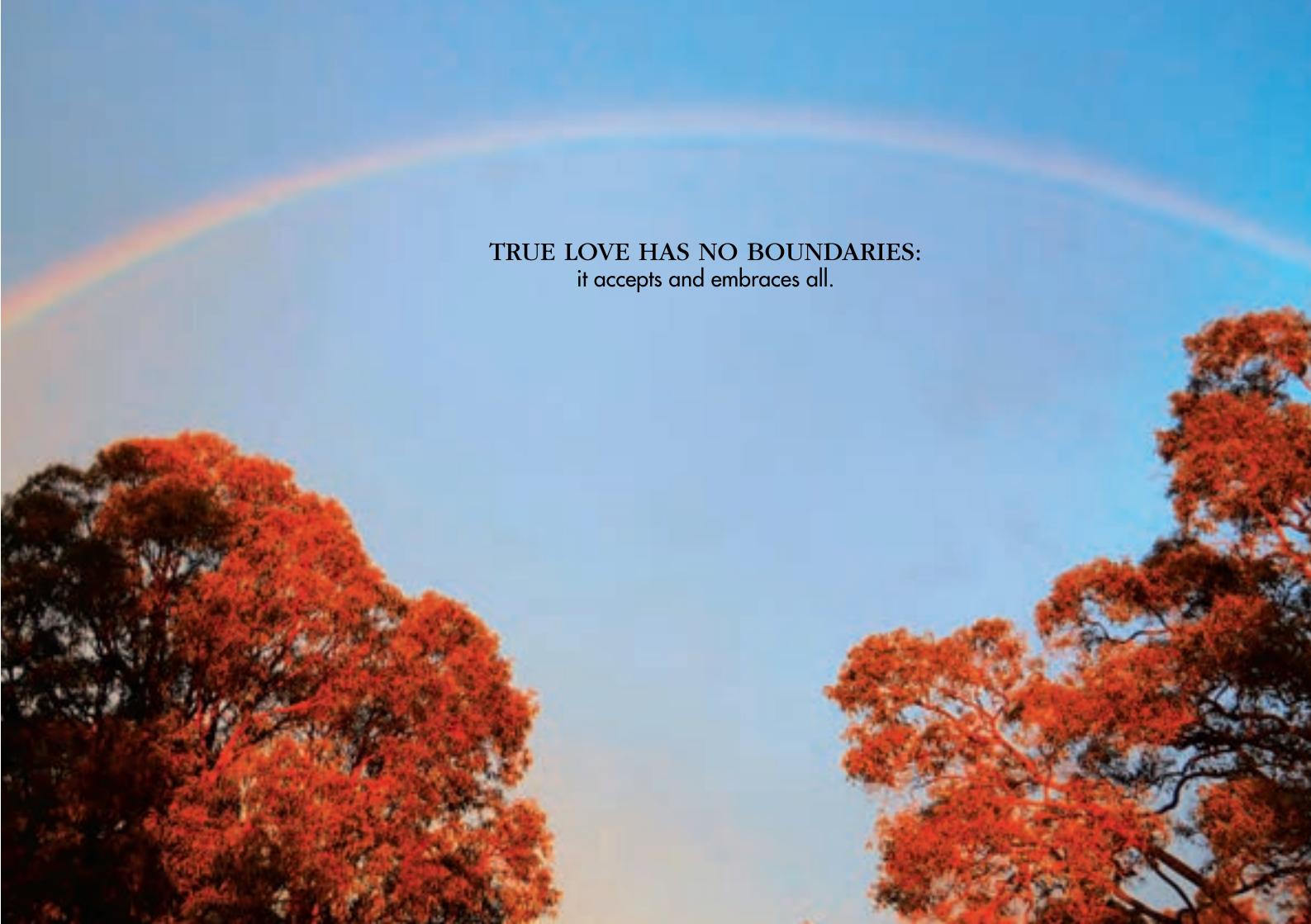


LOVE THE WHOLE OF LIFE,

including the unpleasant, because you're stuck with it!

THE CALMER YOU ARE, THE LESS YOU EXIST.





TRUE LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES:
it accepts and embraces all.

Insight is not used to argue with your friends.

INSIGHT IS WHAT STOPS YOU FROM ARGUING.





TO BE ASSERTIVE
means to stand up for "us", not just for yourself.



A close-up photograph of a cluster of green clover leaves and two bright pink flowers with yellow centers. The flowers are positioned in the lower right quadrant, while the green leaves form a dense, textured background.

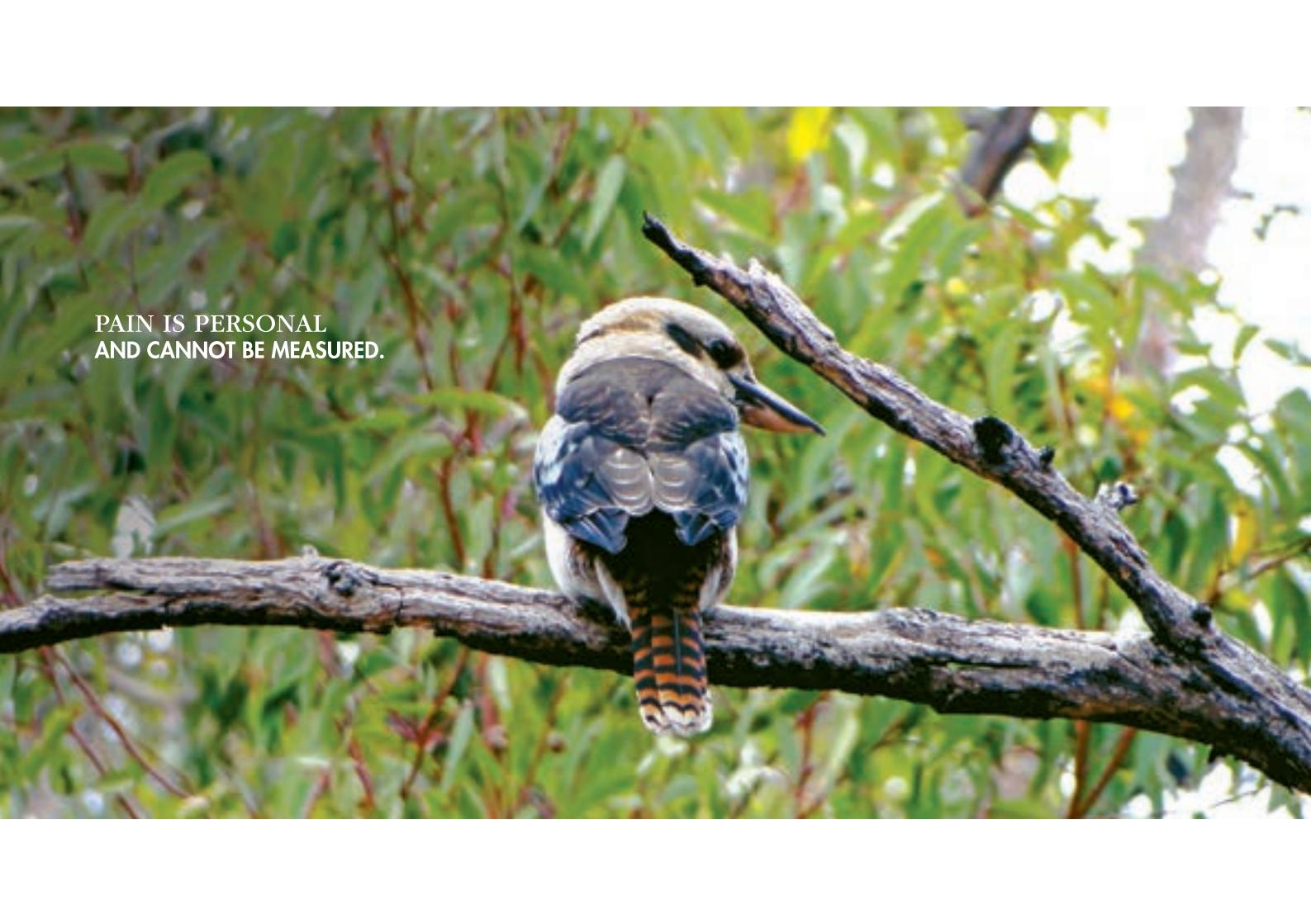
**RECOGNISE YOUR GOOD QUALITIES,
AND THOSE QUALITIES WILL GROW.**



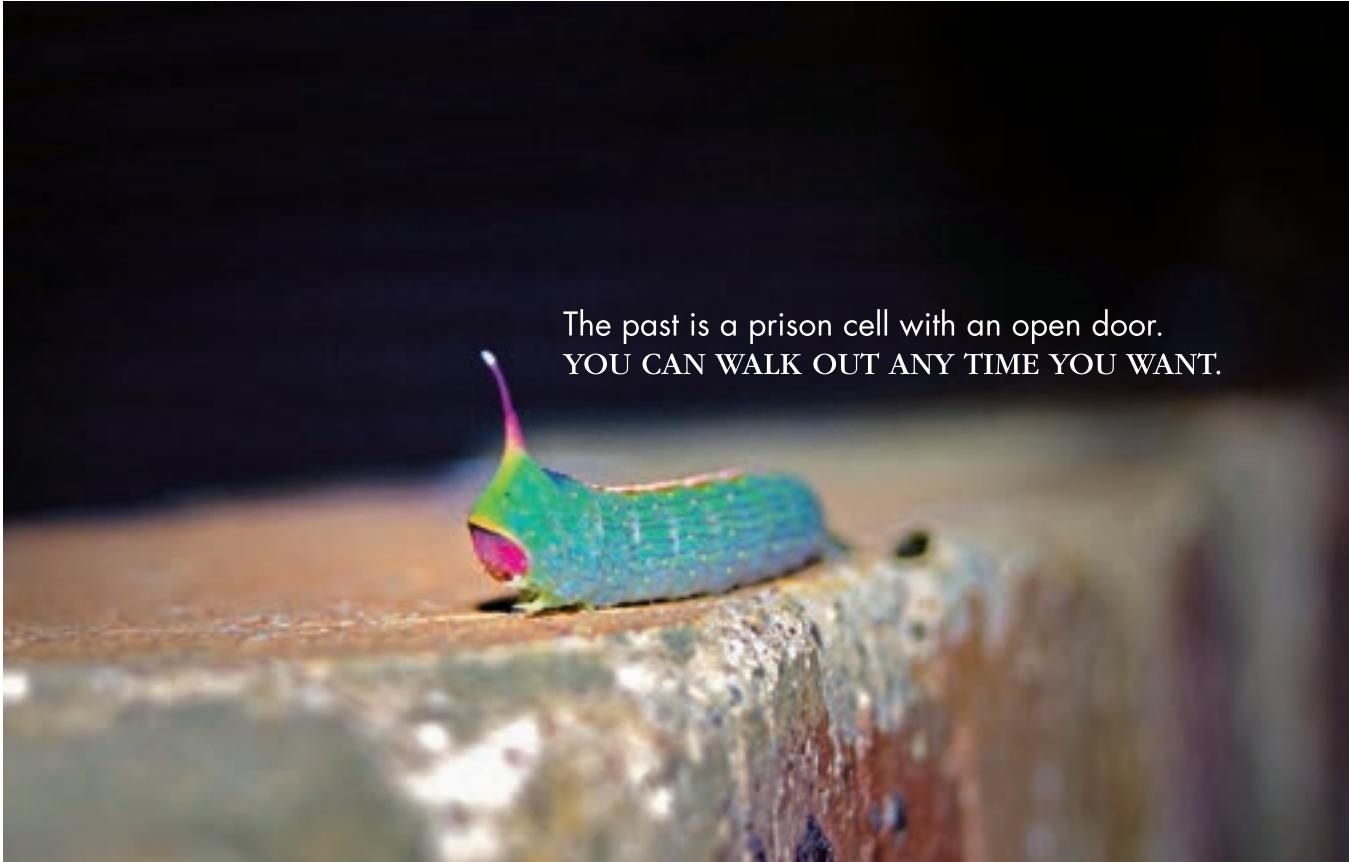
PUNISHMENT IS WHAT DRIVES TRUTH UNDERGROUND.

**FORGIVENESS
IS WHAT DRIVES TRUTH TO THE SURFACE.**

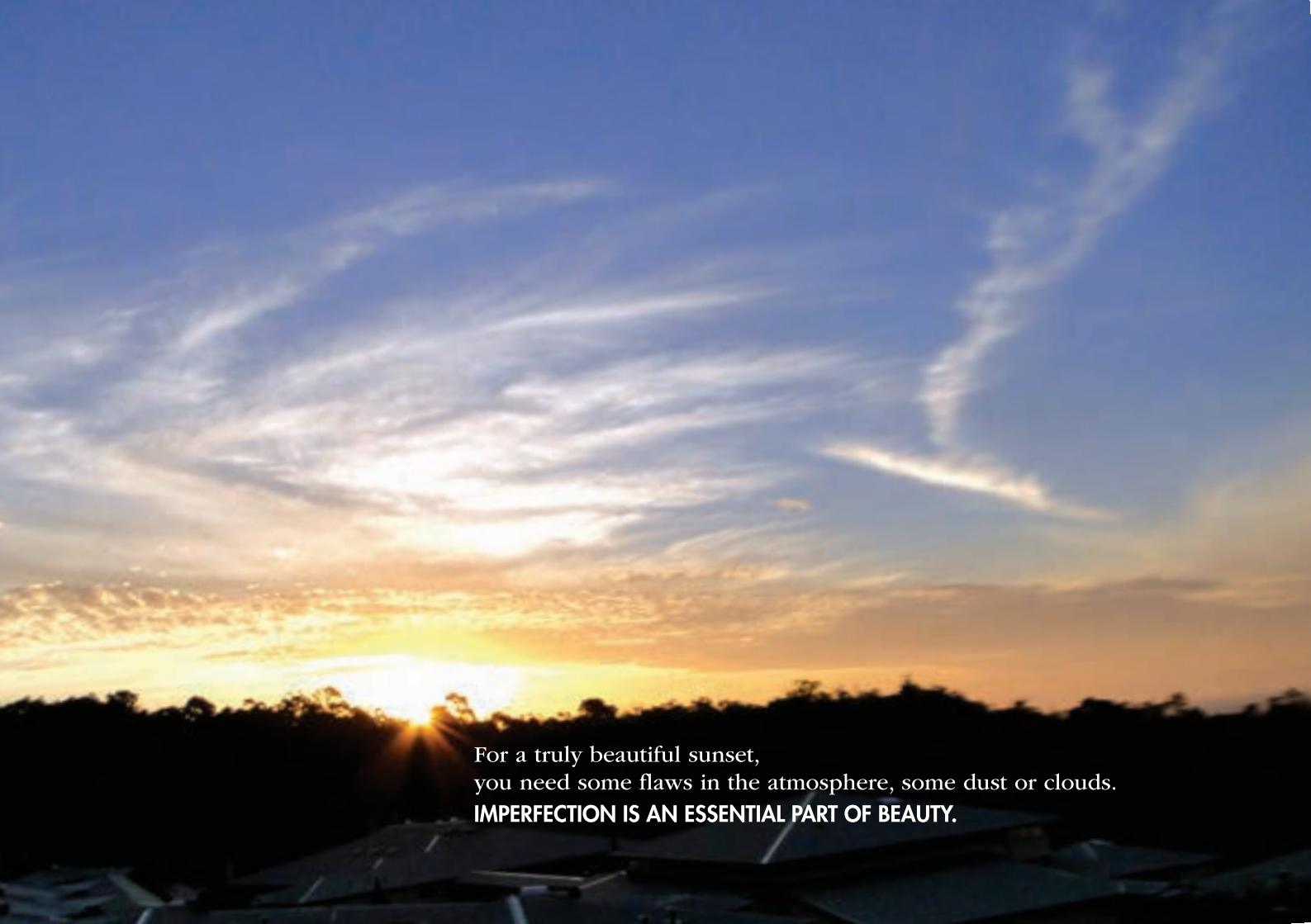


A Kookaburra, a large kingfisher, is perched on a weathered, gnarled tree branch. The bird is facing right, its body angled away from the viewer. It has a light brown head with a dark stripe through its eye, a white neck, and a dark blue-grey back and wings. Its most striking feature is its long, sharp, slightly hooked beak. The tail is dark with prominent orange and white horizontal stripes. The background is a soft-focus view of green foliage and other branches.

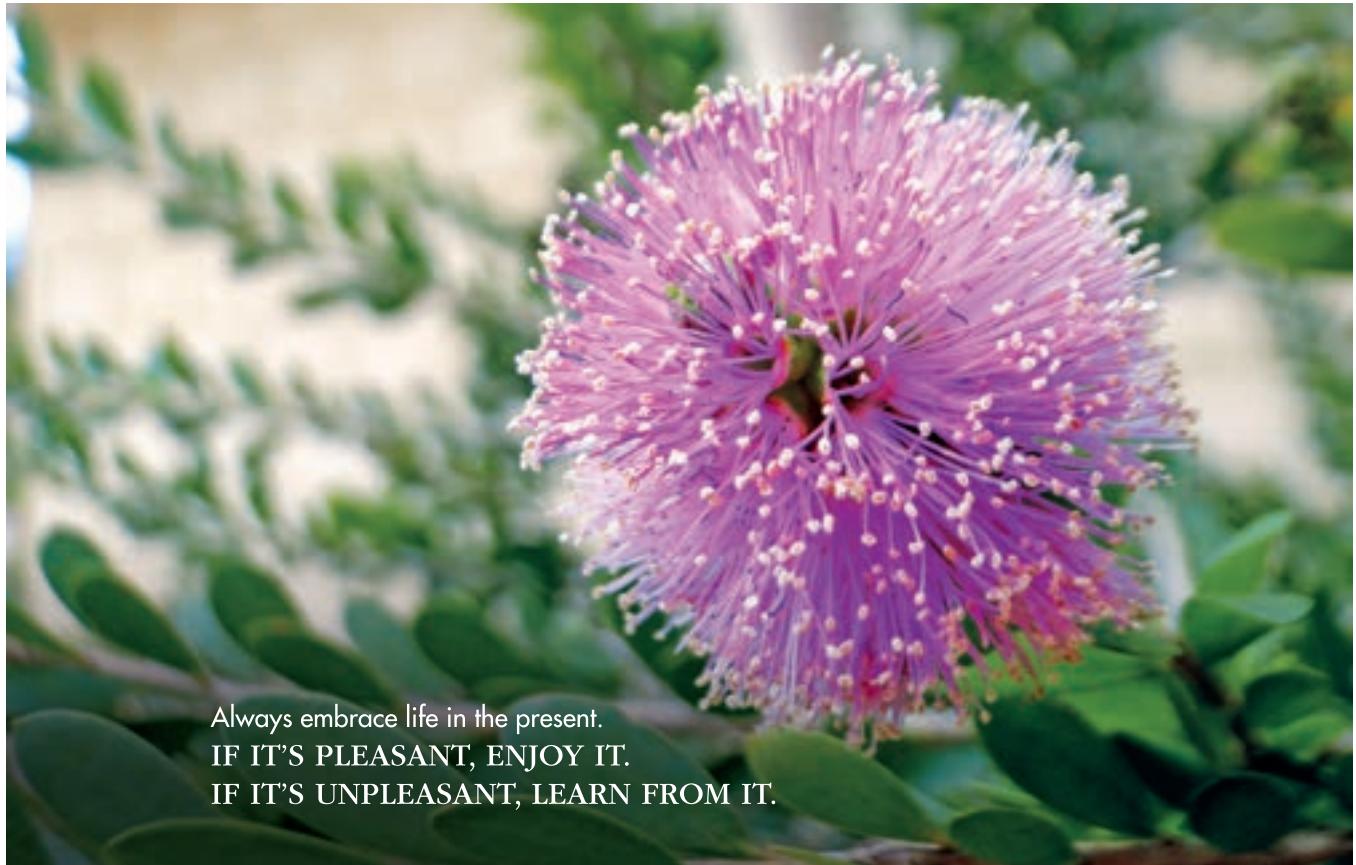
PAIN IS PERSONAL
AND CANNOT BE MEASURED.



The past is a prison cell with an open door.
YOU CAN WALK OUT ANY TIME YOU WANT.

A photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a dark, silhouetted landscape. The sky is filled with wispy, white and grey clouds, some illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a warm glow. The horizon line is low, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and slightly hazy.

For a truly beautiful sunset,
you need some flaws in the atmosphere, some dust or clouds.
IMPERFECTION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF BEAUTY.



Always embrace life in the present.
IF IT'S PLEASANT, ENJOY IT.
IF IT'S UNPLEASANT, LEARN FROM IT.





The problem with desire:
ONCE IT GETS GOING, NOTHING IS EVER ENOUGH.



LOVE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE,
and your love will be like the sun shining in a garden, making the flowers grow.



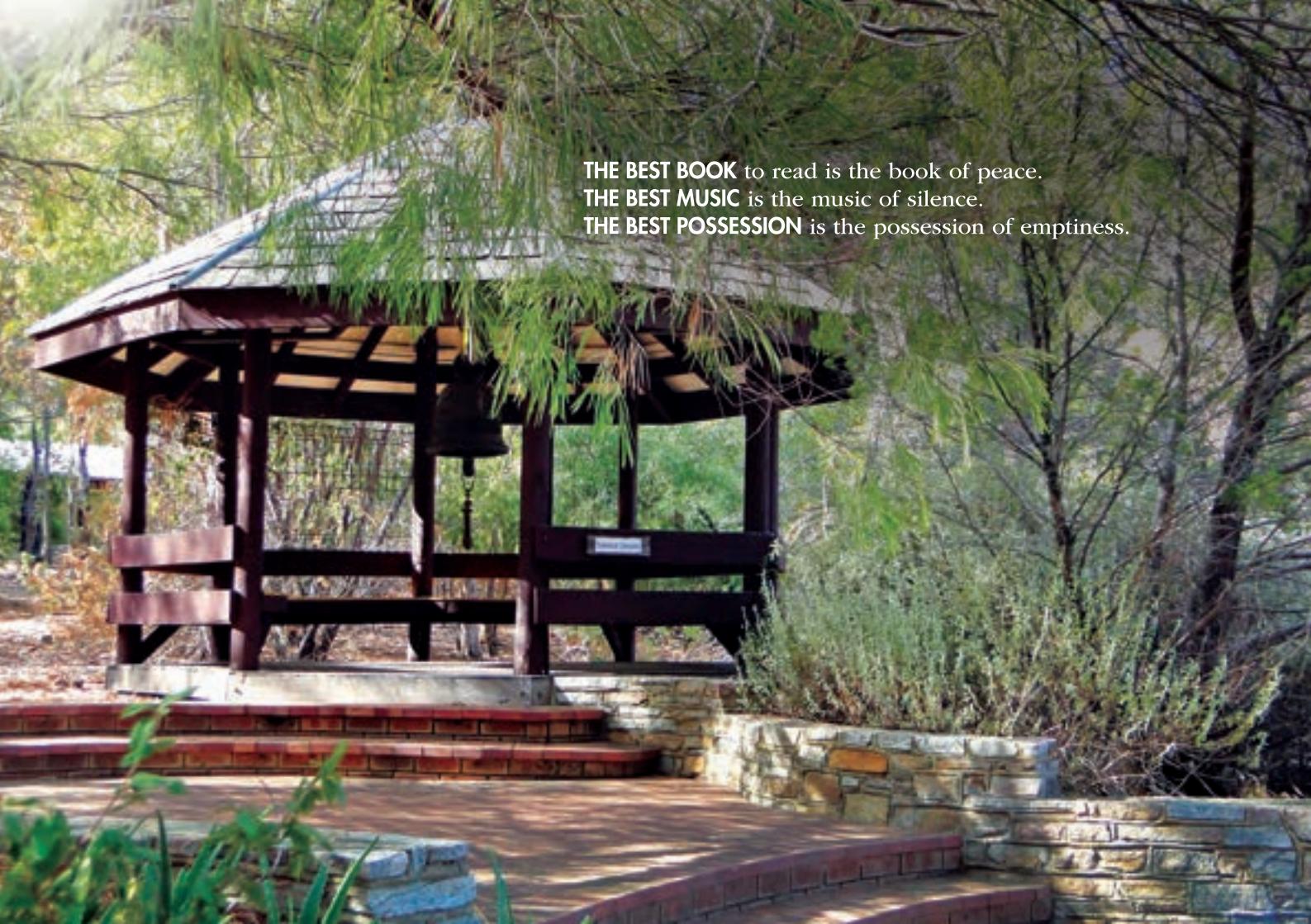
TO COMMUNICATE WELL, YOU HAVE TO LISTEN.

Only when we listen do we understand.

HAVE A MIND LIKE A PADDED CELL.

When something hits it, it just squelches
on the wall and does not bounce back.

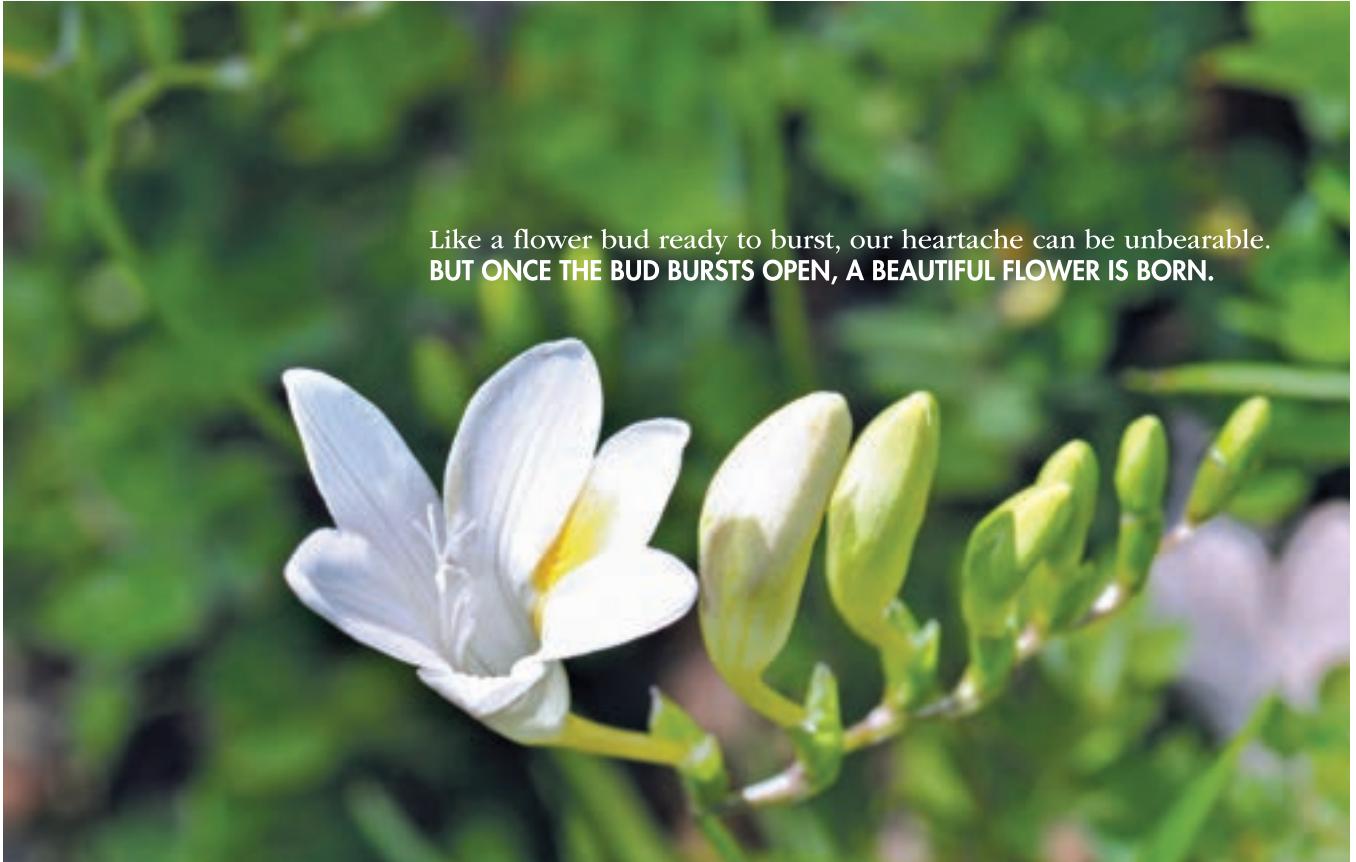


A photograph of a traditional-style wooden pavilion with a dark brown roof and a bell hanging from its eaves. The pavilion sits on a stone base and is surrounded by lush green trees and bushes. A plaque on the front of the pavilion reads "Bell of Silence".

THE BEST BOOK to read is the book of peace.
THE BEST MUSIC is the music of silence.
THE BEST POSSESSION is the possession of emptiness.



NO ONE CAN SEND YOU TO HEAVEN OR HELL OTHER THAN YOURSELF.



Like a flower bud ready to burst, our heartache can be unbearable.
BUT ONCE THE BUD BURSTS OPEN, A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER IS BORN.



Love is free. Caring is free.
Kindness is free.
BE GENEROUS WITH THESE.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF COMPASSION.



A photograph of two cockatoos perched on a horizontal tree branch. The bird on the left is facing right, showing its grey feathers and white wing patch. The bird on the right is facing left, also showing its white wing patch. They are surrounded by green leaves and branches against a clear blue sky.

You have a choice:
GET ANGRY OR LET GO.

A close-up photograph of a large tree trunk, likely eucalyptus, showing significant texture and a large, hollowed-out section at the base. Sunlight filters through surrounding green leaves, creating bright highlights and deep shadows. The hollowed-out area appears to be a natural cavity or a den.

THE MORE YOU CONTROL,
the bigger the ego.



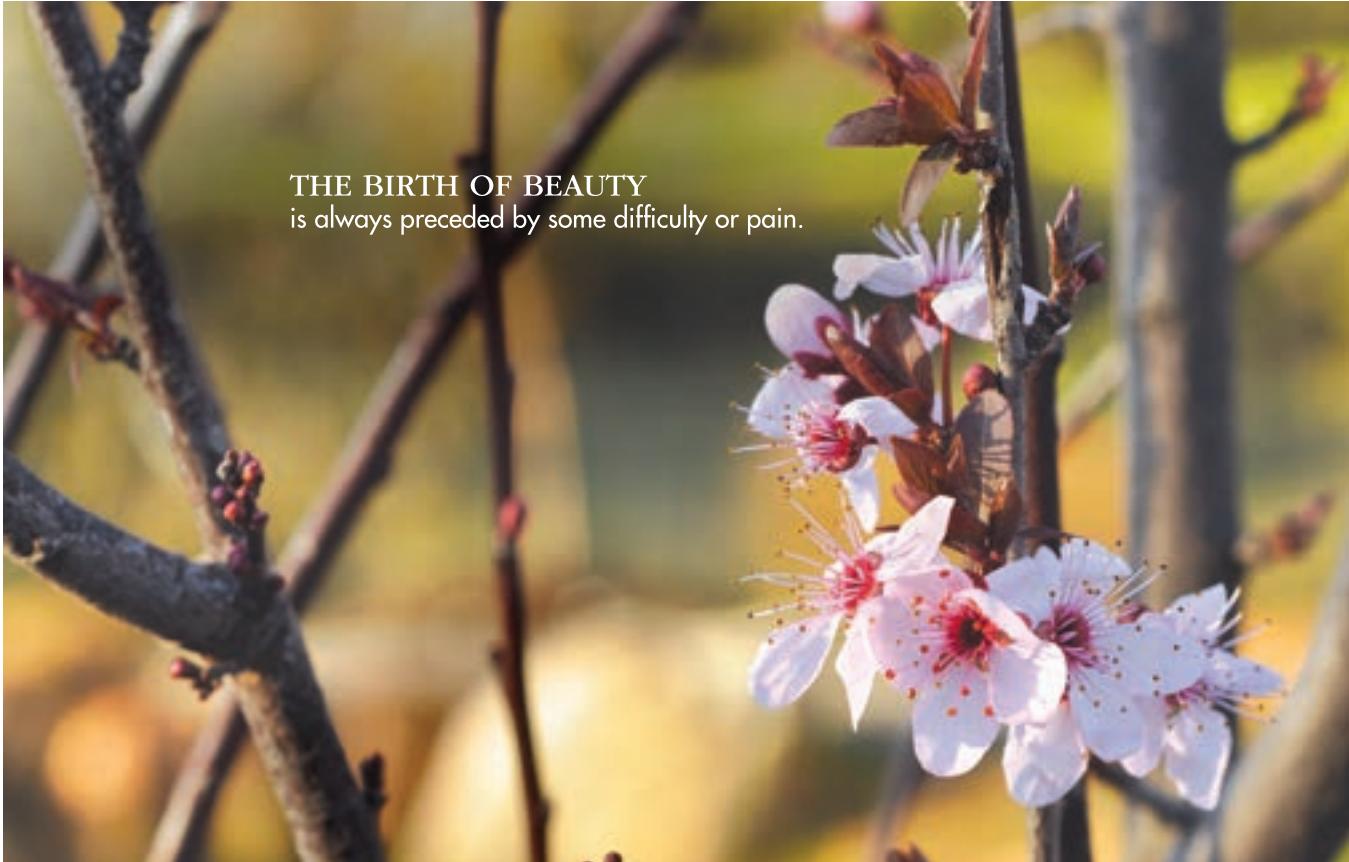
THERE'S NO END
to wanting material things.



LIFE IS BORING ONLY WHEN YOU ALLOW IT TO BE.

A photograph showing a large pile of discarded construction materials in a forest. The materials include stacks of concrete blocks, wooden pallets, metal pipes, and various other debris. The scene is set in a sunlit clearing with tall trees in the background.

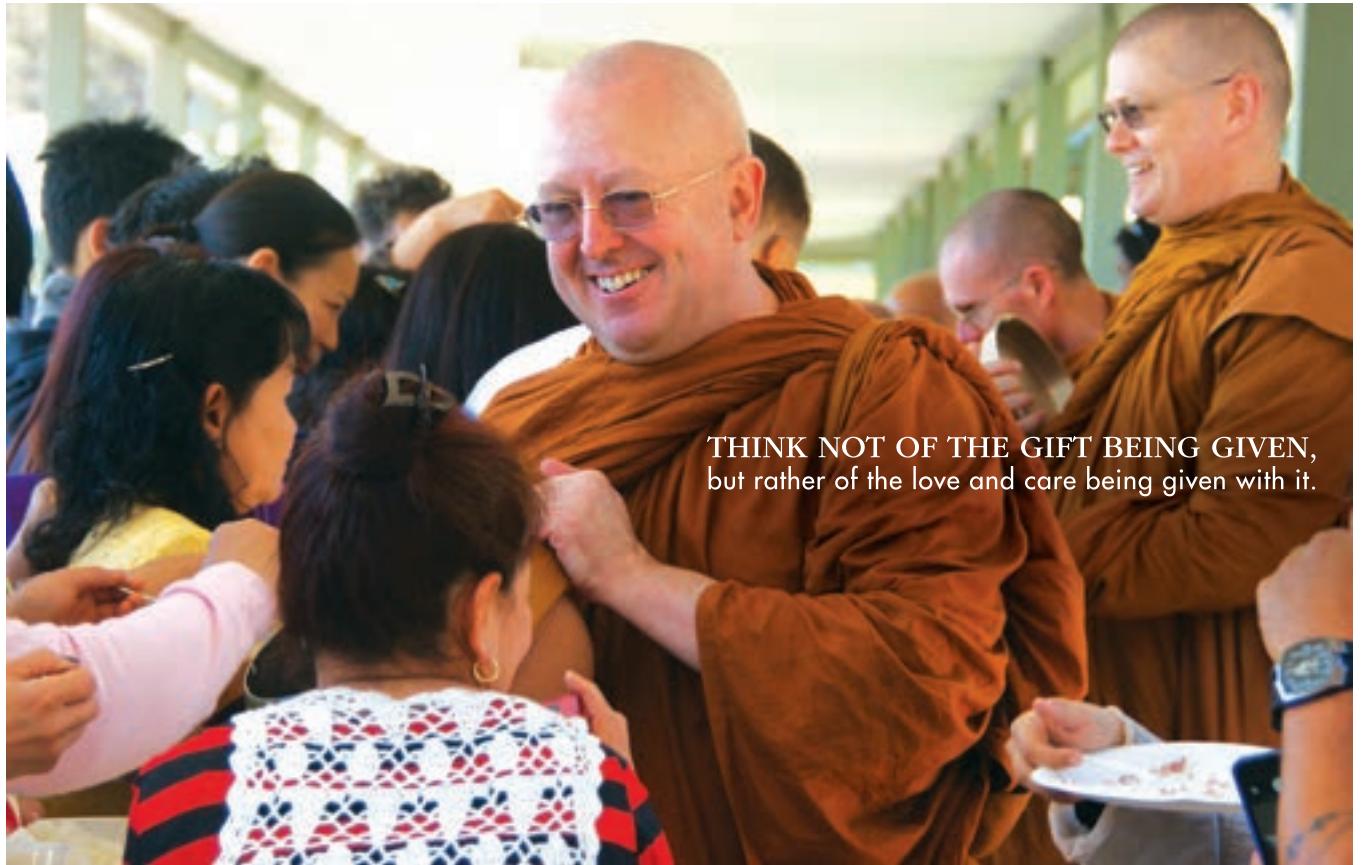
SOMETIMES THINGS NEED TO FALL APART
before they can be rebuilt.



THE BIRTH OF BEAUTY
is always preceded by some difficulty or pain.

LOVING KINDNESS IS THE KEY TO PROSPERITY.





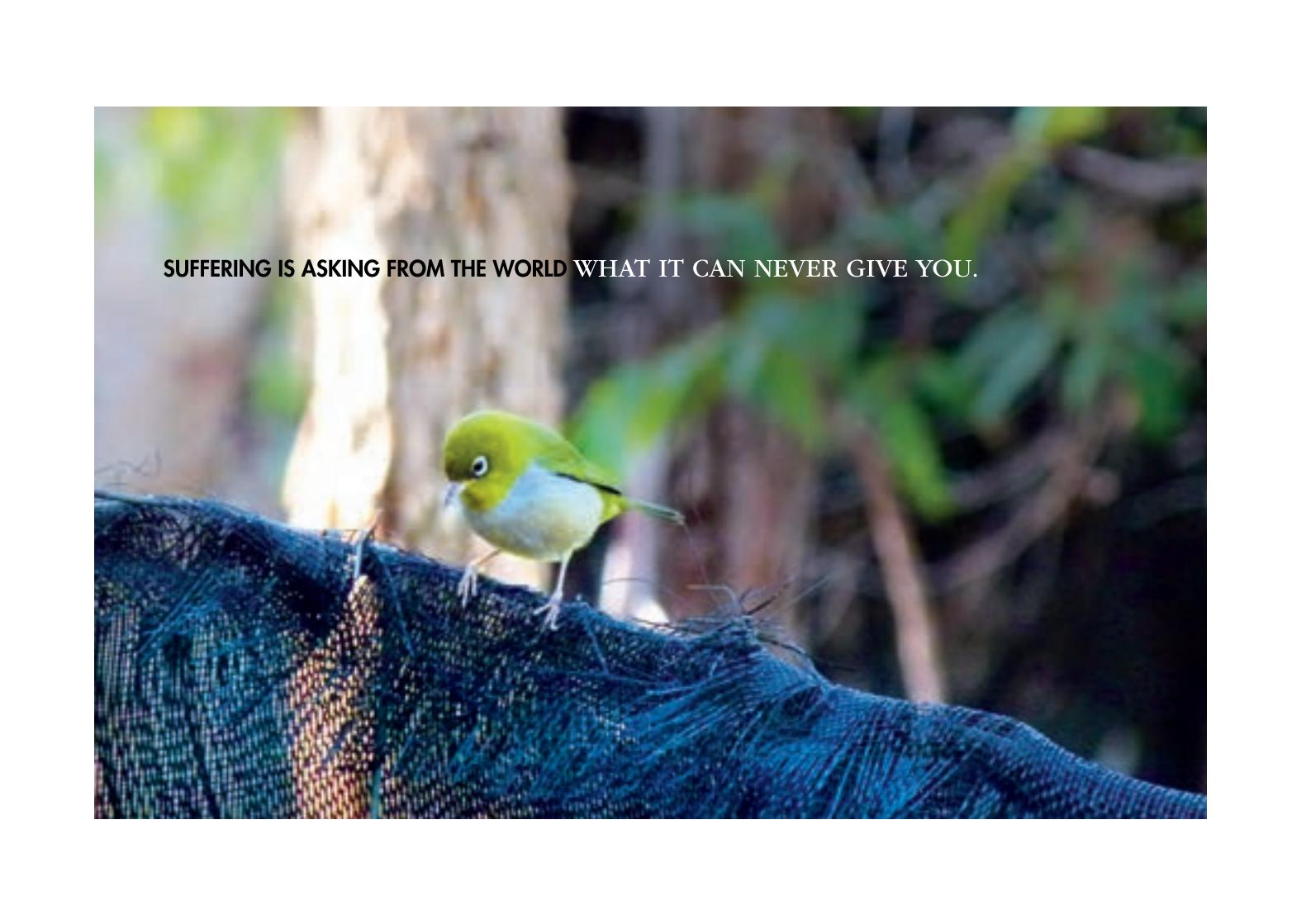
THINK NOT OF THE GIFT BEING GIVEN,
but rather of the love and care being given with it.



MAKE PEACE WITH IMPERFECTIONS.



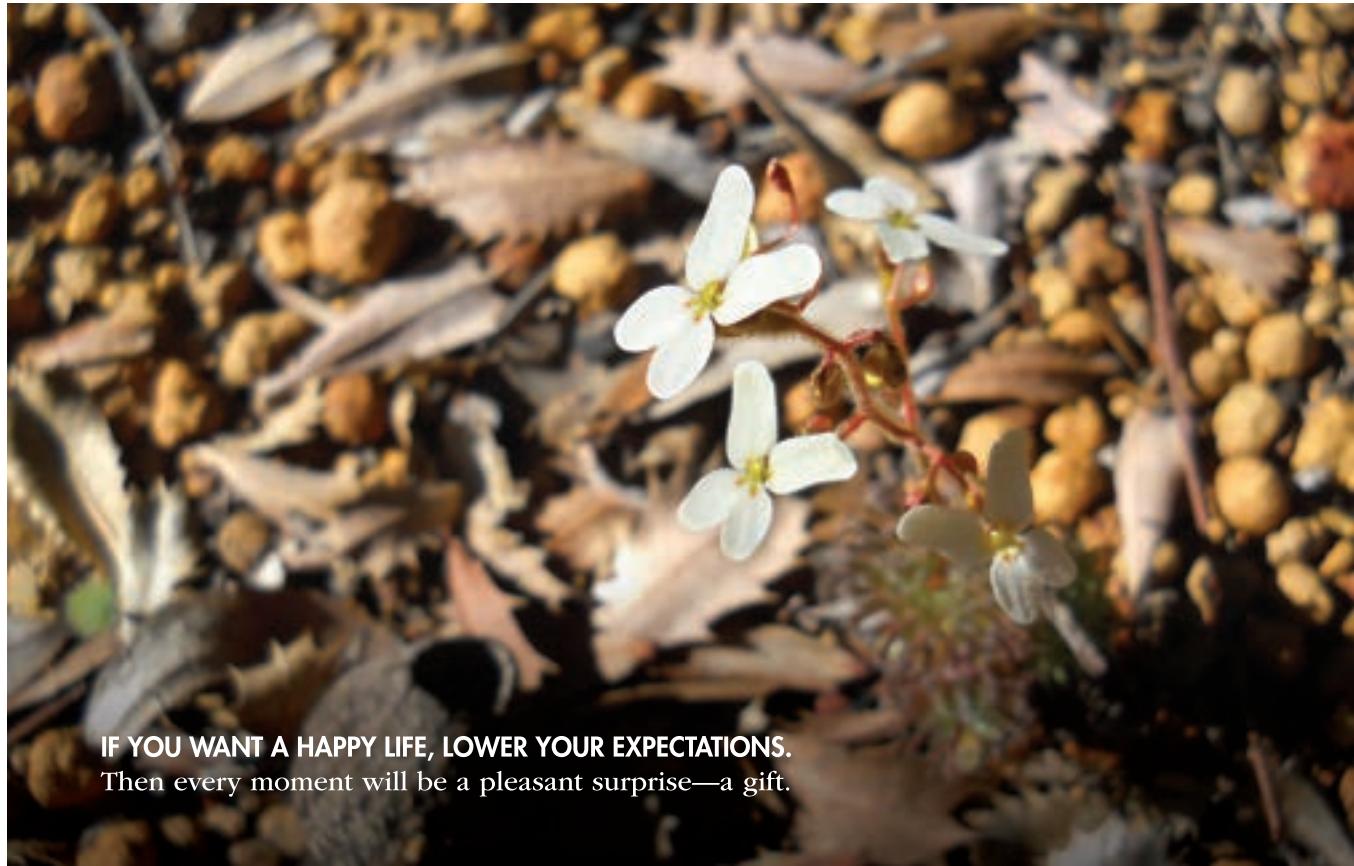
IF YOU TRY TO GET RID OF THINGS YOU DON'T LIKE,
you'll have a difficult life.



SUFFERING IS ASKING FROM THE WORLD WHAT IT CAN NEVER GIVE YOU.



Happiness is only the gap between two moments of suffering.
ALL SUFFERING IS DEFINED BY THE HAPPINESS WE'VE LOST.



IF YOU WANT A HAPPY LIFE, LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS.
Then every moment will be a pleasant surprise—a gift.



EVERY TIME YOU REMEMBER THE ABUSE,
they're abusing you again.

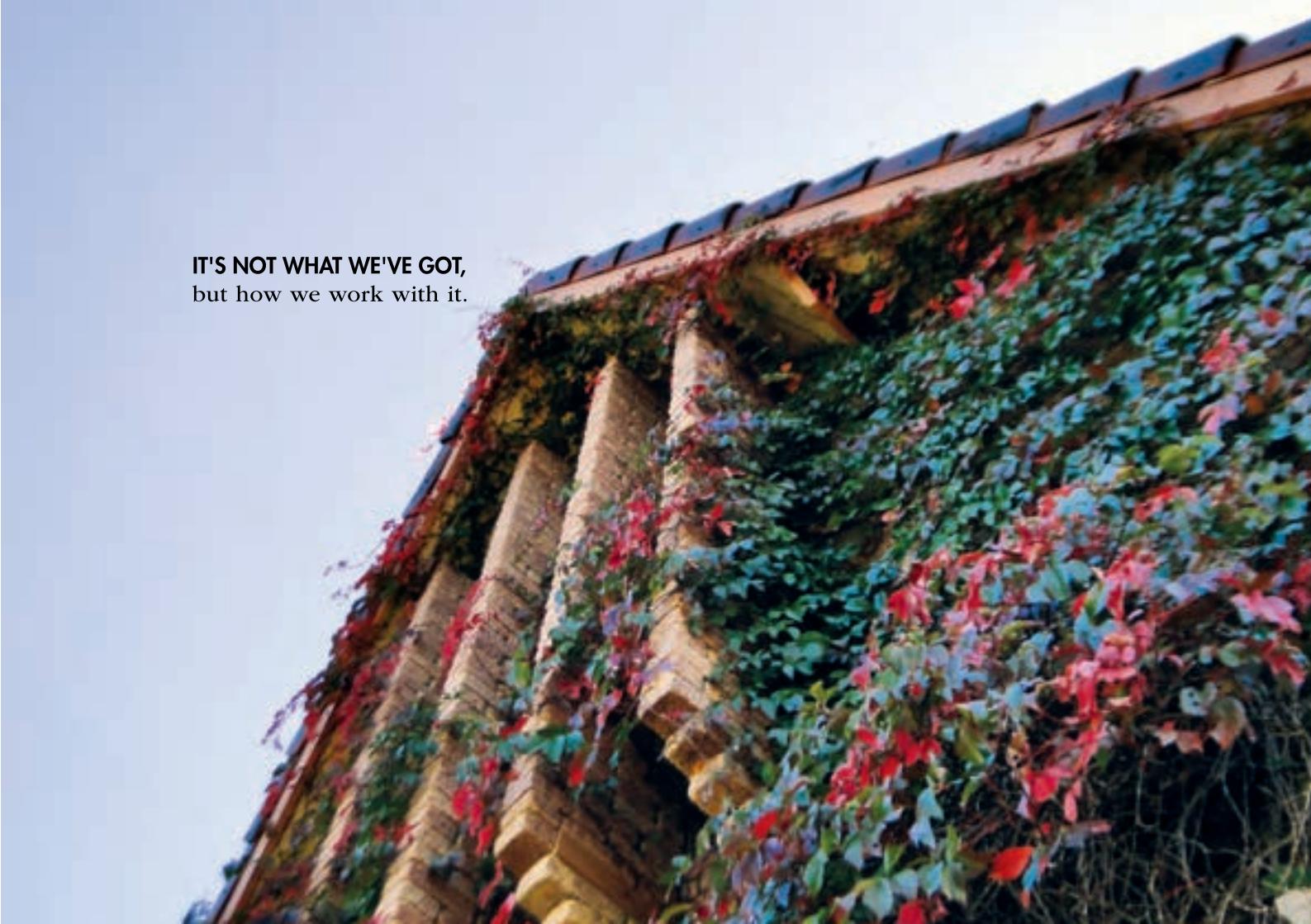
NEVER LET YOUR LEARNING GET IN THE WAY OF TRUTH.





WE WOULD RATHER ENDURE SUFFERING

than let go of our attachment to the way we look at life.



**IT'S NOT WHAT WE'VE GOT,
but how we work with it.**



When you stop complaining,
YOU STOP SUFFERING.



Pain and hatred live in the past. Fear lives in the future.
LOVE AND PEACE LIVE IN THE PRESENT.



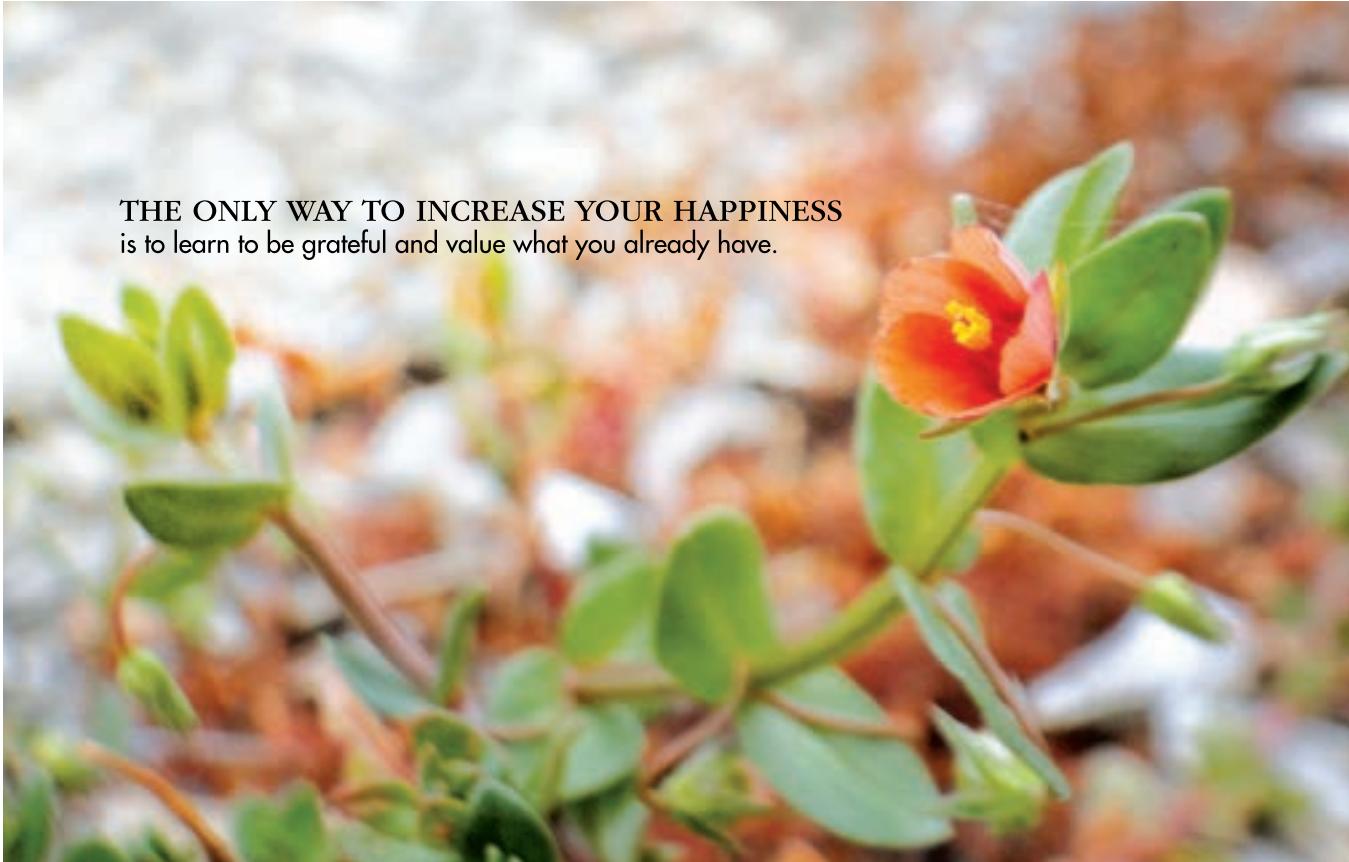
WHEN WE FIND FAULT AND CRITICISE, **WE'RE DESTROYING LOVE.**

A close-up photograph of a green lizard, possibly a monitor lizard, resting on the ground. The lizard's body is oriented horizontally across the frame, with its head turned slightly to the left. It has a dark green, mottled patterned skin. The background consists of dry, brownish-yellow grass blades, creating a natural camouflage for the lizard.

Never allow the opinions of others
TO DEFINE WHO YOU ARE.



ONLY WHEN YOU ABANDON YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES
can you trust what you see and what you perceive.



THE ONLY WAY TO INCREASE YOUR HAPPINESS
is to learn to be grateful and value what you already have.

Happiness does not depend on what happens in the world.

HAPPINESS IS OUR FREE CHOICE.



A close-up photograph of a kangaroo sitting in a field of green grass. The kangaroo is facing right, its body angled away from the viewer. It has a light brown coat with darker brown patches on its back and legs. Its large ears are perked up. To the left, the textured bark of a tree trunk is visible. In the background, several other trees with white or grey bark stand in a soft-focus forest.

EXPECTATION

is one of the biggest problems in life.



LOVE IS NOT LIKING SOMEBODY.
Love is embracing things that sometimes you don't like.



WE'RE GREAT AT MAKING FRIENDS WITH OTHERS,
but not so good at befriending ourselves.

A small green bird with a white patch on its wing is perched on a branch of a bush with many dried, star-shaped flowers. The background is blurred.

REAL FEAR IS FEAR OF DISAPPEARING.



We criticise others for what we don't like in ourselves.
WE TRANSFER OUR FAULTS TO OTHERS.



IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN COLD,
you won't feel the need to give warmth to others.

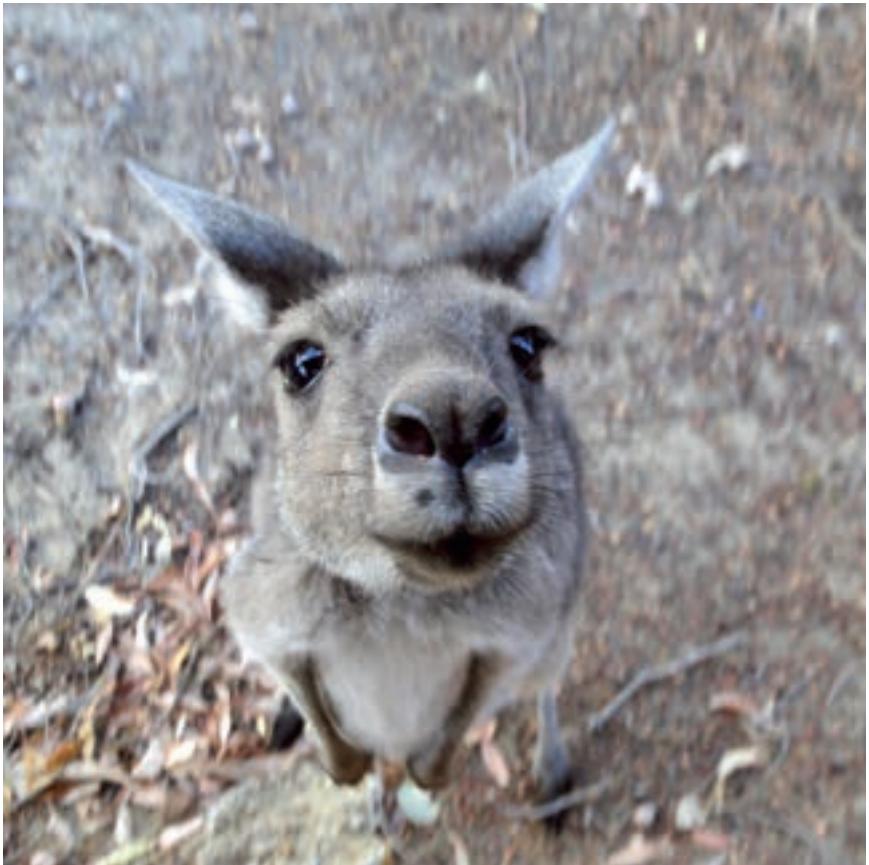
LISTEN TO LIFE. LISTEN TO THE PEACE IN YOUR HEART.





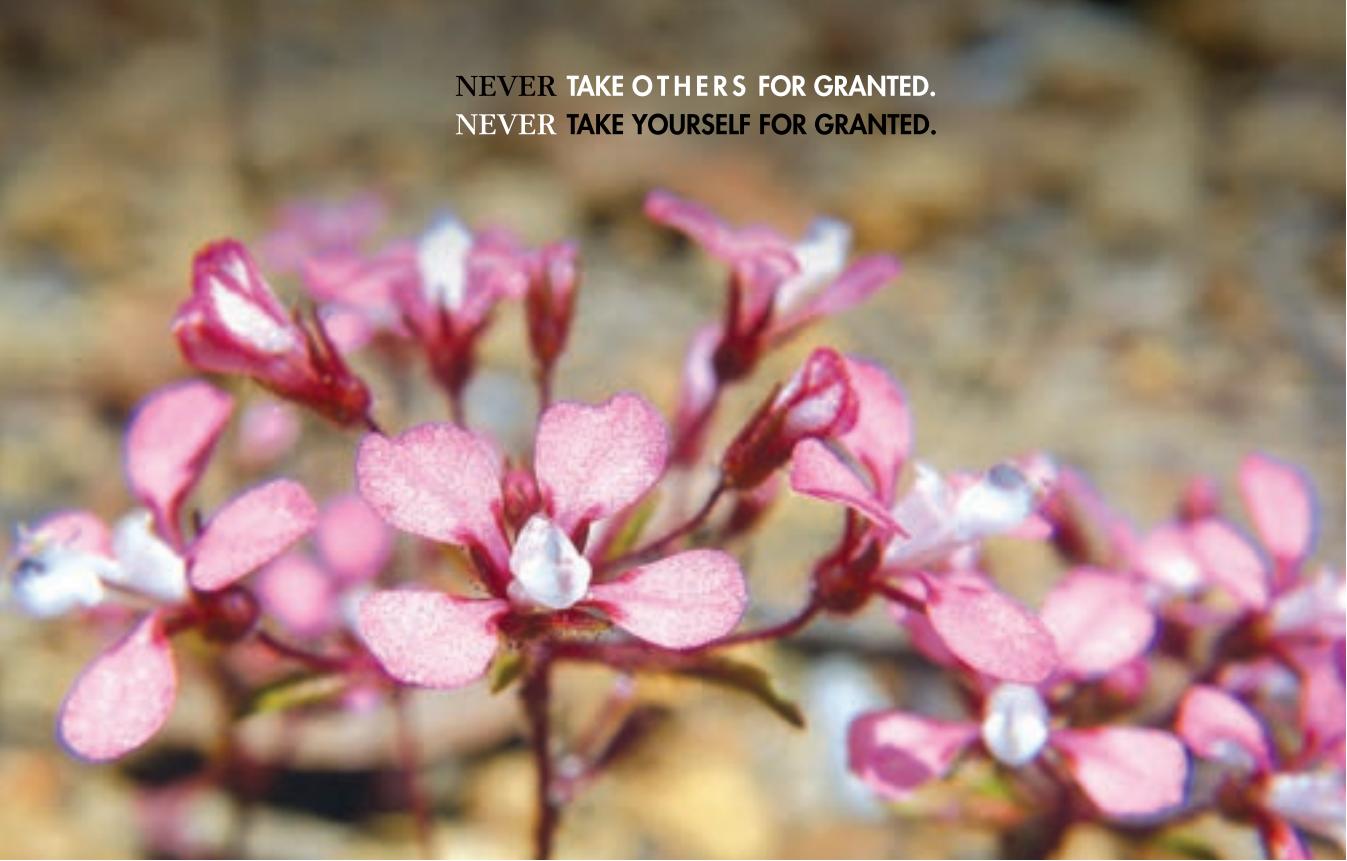
NEVER ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE JUDGED.

It's much better to smile like an idiot
THAN TO GET ANGRY BACK.



A photograph of a small, dark-colored bird with a light belly, perched on a single, thin, vertical tree branch. The branch extends from the bottom left towards the center of the frame. The background is a clear, pale blue sky. At the top of the image, there are several branches with green, needle-like leaves, likely from a pine or similar coniferous tree.

IT'S BETTER TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL FUTURE
BY CARING FOR THE PRESENT
than to destroy it by remembering the painful past.



**NEVER TAKE OTHERS FOR GRANTED.
NEVER TAKE YOURSELF FOR GRANTED.**



ALL TRUE HAPPINESS IS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT.



LIFE IS LIKE A MIRAGE.
We imagine meaning on top of what's really there.

WISDOM NEVER COMES FROM THINKING. WISDOM COMES FROM SILENCE.



About Ajahn Brahm

Ajahn Brahmavamso, popularly known as Ajahn Brahm, was born and raised in London, and graduated from Cambridge University in theoretical physics. Ajahn was ordained as a monk on 5 December 1974 at the age of twenty-three, and subsequently spent nine years training in the forest meditation tradition of Thailand under the renowned meditation master venerable Ajahn Chah.

In 1983 Ajahn Brahm was asked to go to Australia to help establish a monastery in Perth. Ajahn Brahm is now the abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery in Serpentine. In 2014 the monastery housed a community of 23 monks.

In 2005 Ajahn Brahm started to plan a meditation centre to provide a suitable environment for meditation for laypeople. Jhana Grove Meditation Centre was inaugurated in April 2009. The centre now caters for a large number of retreats every year.





The gift of the Dhamma surpasses all other gifts.

The Buddha