

A Week in Images and Quotes

December - 2025

MONDAY

01

The paradox at the heart of caregiving is this: it is a human art—perhaps the most human art there is—that asks us to lean in, to do, to act, and it is also an art that asks us to let go and let be. To just be. In the end, our presence is the most powerful medicine we have. If we get too wrapped up in being the hero of our loved ones' last days, we can forget to just sit there and shut up, to rub their feet, to offer up our deepest, wordless expression of gratitude for the life that is ending and the connection that is morphing.

Courtney Martin

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. Albert Schweitzer

TUESDAY

02

You must keep collecting threads – threads of meaning, threads of hope, threads of purpose, truth and will – along with all the knowledge, skills that every weaver needs. You must keep on weaving – stopping only to repair your broken loom – lacing threads of warmth and light against the coldest night, a cloak in which to wrap whoever comes to you in need, the world with all its suffering, those near at hand, yourself.

Parker Palmer except from his commentary on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of JFK

Well, I do hear that from a lot of theologians, and I think that their experiences of the numinous or the sacred might be different from mine, and theirs might be contingent upon God being real, whatever that means. For me, those experiences of the sacred, of God's presence in my life and in the life of the world, they are real. Whether or not those experiences are constructed by my brain or are experiences of a living God is irrelevant to whether that experience was real for me. What I'm interested in is: How do I get more of that experience of feeling proximal to the sacred, that experience of feeling close to a justice-loving God? How do I get more of that experience and how do I help, in whatever small way I can, bring about the world that God would wish to see on Earth? John Green

WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

05

*I'm not singing for the future.
I'm not dreaming of the past.
I'm not talking of the first time.
I never think about the last.*

A Rainy Night in Soho by The Pogues

I've been struck by how my dead parents feel more present now than ever. Their absence has become a new kind of presence. Victoria Chang, commenting on the work of Ellen Bryant Voigt

- You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life, and we will do all we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die*
- Life is fleeting, and each moment is precious. Embrace every opportunity, cherish the people you love, and pursue your passions with all your heart. Don't wait for the perfect time, because it may never come. Live boldly, love deeply, and make the most of every day, because you never know how long you have.* Cicely Saunders

SATURDAY

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*If you're grateful, you're not fearful,
and if you're not fearful, you're not violent.*

*If you're grateful, you act out of a sense of enough
and not of a sense of scarcity, and you are willing to share.
If you are grateful, you are enjoying the differences between people.*

You are respectful to everybody.

And that changes this power pyramid under which we live.

— David Steindl-Rast

- If I knew where I was going, I wouldn't do it. When I can predict or plan it, I don't do it.
- Each project, I suffer like I'm starting over again in life. There's a lot of healthy insecurity that fuels this stuff.
- The fact is I'm an opportunist. I'll take materials around me, materials on my table, and work with them as I'm searching for an idea that works.
- You've got to bumble forward into the unknown.
- There is stuff I would have liked to have done. But there are no sour grapes.
- Well, I've always just - I've never really gone out looking for work. I always waited for it to sort of hit me on the head.
- I promised a lot of people I'd slow down when I turned 80.

Frank Gehry

I found the following quote in a book I am currently reading and it represents a perspective I hold to be true:

Caregiving can narrow your field of vision in the day-to-day, but a grander sense of perspective will also take shape. You might come to see just how long the list is of things not to worry about: the pettiness of office politics; the nightly news; the traffic. Now you might find yourself more moved by silence or morning birds or small signs of kindness. You care, you show up, you face reality with someone, you touch the limits, and maybe you learn something about yourself. In BJ Miller and Shoshana Berger, *A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death*.

- *The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.*
- *We are only the trustees for those who come after us.* William Morris

For when two beings who are not friends are near each other there is no meeting, and when friends are far apart there is no separation.

Simone Weil

- *We give advice by the bucket, but take it by the grain.*
- *My whole life is waiting for the questions to which I have prepared answers.*
- *Eternity's a terrible thought. I mean, where's it all going to end?*

Tom Stoppard

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A short while ago, Austin Kleon posted on the topic of "the problematic gift." Here is my comment combined with a recent photo:

A problematic gift that resurfaces from time to time is the "blank pages" journal eager to be filled with creative entries yet to be developed. I seem to have several such "gifts" waiting for the muse to inspire me to open.



Welcome to "Now, where did I put that receipt" days to honor our not-so-adept record keeping as we ready to prepare our tax forms. ELP

MONDAY

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Certain things will start a poem in you. It could be something no more important than the sound a broken radiator makes in a room, the knocking of water against pipes, or a murmuring sound, a steady sound . . . the sound of grasshoppers and cicadas in the autumn in the countryside . . . these things will start the feeling of a poem, though the poet doesn't know what's coming or what it's going to be.

John Hall Wheelock

- *The most precious, important thing you have in your life is your energy. It is not your time that is limited, it is your energy.*
- *Mental strength is not just hoping that nothing ever goes wrong. It is believing that we have the capacity to handle it if it does.*
- *It's not whether you "feel" like putting in the work, but whether or not you do it regardless.*
- *Safety isn't in certainty - but in the faith that you can simply keep going.*

Brianna Wiest

WEDNESDAY

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If I could talk to a younger me, I'd tell me to go slow. This time on earth it moves so fast And when it's gone it's gone. When it's gone it's gone.

Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn

- *I like simplicity because it's hard to make, you have to peel away all the extras.*
- *I want to be my own inspiration and not inspiration for someone else.*

Mariana Yee

... the pain of loss stems from the power of love. If you didn't care, this would all be easier. BJ Miller and Shoshana Berger

- *You play, you win, you play, you lose. You play.*

- *Right is right, even if you're alone.*

Jeanette Winter

It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do. Jane Austen

FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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- *If you are a creative person, you try to create things that are an extension of yourself.*
- *Everybody talks about wanting to change things and help and fix, but ultimately all you can do is fix yourself. And that's a lot. Because if you can fix yourself, it has a ripple effect.*
- *It's a very slow process - two steps forward, one step back - but I'm inching in the right direction.*

Rob Reiner

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- *The relationship between reader and writer is reciprocal in a way. We co-create each other. We are constantly emerging out of the relationship we have with others.*
- *Canada has always been a great place for literature. It's strong and growing stronger, and there will always be reading, and there will always be great writers.*
- *Life is fleeting. Don't waste a single moment of your precious life. Wake up now! And now! And now!*
- *Everything in the universe is constantly changing, and nothing stays the same, and we must understand how quickly time flows by if we are to wake up and truly live our lives.*
- *But in the time it takes to say now, now is already over. It's already then.*
- *The past is weird. I mean, does it really exist? It feels like it exists, but where is it? And if it did exist, but doesn't now, then where did it go?*

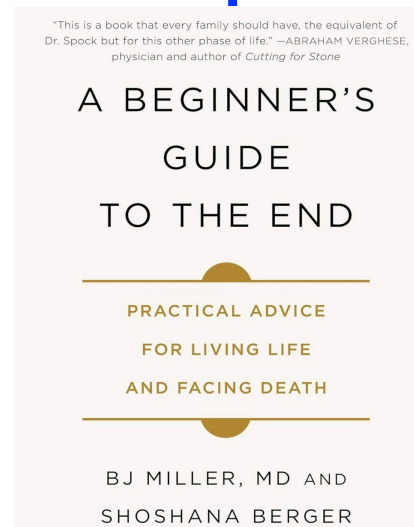
Ruth Ozeki

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I found this to be an extremely valuable resource for caregivers as it approaches timely topics with a thoroughness of understanding on sensitive issues we will all face in our lifetime. The authors provide a vision that the cycle of life and death is a natural occurrence experienced by nature all around us. Relying heavily on up-to-date research, I found it enlightening how the authors enhance my knowledge on this topic. Two thumbs up!

WEDNESDAY

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Seems to me the message of Christmas is simple, this year and every year: shine your light, speak of your love, tell your truth, use your power, and join with millions of others who are doing the same.

Parker Palmer

The years, the months, the days, and the hours have flown by my open window. Here and there an incident, a towering moment, a naked memory, an etched countenance, a whisper in the dark, a golden glow; these and much more are the woven fabric of the time I have lived.

Howard Thurman

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Mason Currey states: *It's useful to think of your project ... (continues with a quote from Elif Batuman) NOT as an object that you're creating or birthing—NOT as a product that you own—NOT as something that's inside you and that has to be extracted—but as an independent entity with which you're in conversation.*

- *These days I settle for feeling only 85 percent sure about most things most of the time. I believe this is keeping me sane, and I also believe that it's keeping me human. In fact, I'm 85 percent sure of it.*
- *I don't think you can come into your wisdom until you have made mistakes on your own skin and felt them in reality of your own life.*
- *Creativity itself doesn't care at all about results – the only thing it craves is the process. Learn to love the process and let whatever happens next happen, without fussing too much about it.* Elizabeth Gilbert

SATURDAY

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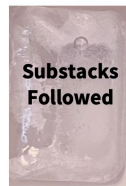
TUESDAY

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I found that most of the entries in this year's journal were inspired or originated from the following 12 sources.



dear person behind me,
the world is a better place
with you in it.

I enjoyed reading this
as I walked behind
someone on my daily
walk today.

December Delights

It's as if all our gods and angels gathered together and said, "It's tough down there as a human being, we know. Here --- have some delights." Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Magic*, p. 128

1. Eleventh day visiting Mom & Dad, Mary and Gene and relatives
2. Back home again
3. Felt good to be back at Lebanon Green
4. No-lettuce salad
5. Started watching Miss Scarlet and the Duke on PBS
6. Nice, healthy salad for lunch
7. Even though I was under the weather, I still walked 1 lap at Lebanon Green
8. We were all winners in Final Jeopardy
9. Ordering T-shirts with a theme from Mahogany Mommies
10. Meeting mail carrier just as she was delivering the mail
11. Mattress for Leo's visit arrived and is breathing new air for the next 48 hours
12. Bought new iPhone 17
13. UConn Women's Basketball Game
14. First plowable snow of the winter season
15. Watched most recent Knives Out movie
16. Gave Dunkin' gift cards to folks at the post office and Certified Auto

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As I scanned the New York Times, there was a compilation of quotes from individuals who died in 2025. Here are the ones that resonated with me.

- *I'm still on the search of finding myself.* Malcolm-Jhamal Warner
- *What drives me is that I constantly want to learn, better myself as an engineer, better myself as a person. I'm constantly looking for the next best thing.* Rebecca Heineman
- *There's always more to discover. That's what makes me tick.* Per Nørgård
- *We were born astonished. We should never grow out of our astonishment.* Andrea Gibson
- *Prepare for the unexpected, and go with it.* Jack DeJohnette
- *It's never perfect, and it should not be.* Christoph von Dohnányi
- *I make myself available to possible audiences. I have found that if you do that and if your work is good, you don't have to sell yourself. You don't have to sell your work. You merely have to let people know that you exist.* Fred Eversley
- *The one thing I don't want to know ever is where I'm going before I get there. I follow the orders of the book. The book tells me where it wants to go, and I write, and I draw accordingly.* Jules Feiffer
- *I do think it important to stress that writing involves hard work and a routine that should be sacrosanct. And, most importantly, tenacity, since it is an act of faith – the belief that things will come right in the end – well, mostly. If only I always followed my own advice.* Zoë Wicomb
- *The subject chooses the writer.* Marlo Vargas Llosa

A question was posed: *How do you know if someone is the right person for you?* I agree with the response. *Does that person make you want to be a better human being? If the answer is yes, that is your person.*

Read in a New York Times article: *Lessons From Decades of Marriage*

December Delights (continued)

17. Empowering Partnership Network Zoom call
18. First time walking the indoor track at Mansfield Community Center – joined Silver Sneakers
19. Parker Palmer's poem and commentary connected to ways of observing: "soft" versus "hard" eyes
20. Printing six documents and edits to series of writings: *The Path of the Perfecting Caregiver*
21. Strawberry Rhubarb Pie and memories of my mom making this pie while I was growing up.
22. Caregiver Support Group Zoom meeting
23. Watching Midsomer Murders with Natyra
24. Christmas Eve Dinner Prepared by Natyra
25. Opening gifts from Natyra
26. Organizing work - completed by Natyra
27. Arrival of Nadya, Leo & Randy / opening gifts
28. Activation of new iPhone
29. Watched segment of American Revolution by Ken Burns with Natyra
30. Return to walking at Mansfield Community Center
31. Final entry to daily calendar – Thích Nhất Hạnh

In, Out.
Deep, Slow.
Calm, Ease.
Smile, Release.
Present Moment,
Wonderful Moment