

START CLOSE IN

By David Whyte

from his poetry collection 'River Flow'



Start close in,
don't take the second step
or the third,
start with the first
thing
close in,
the step
you don't want to take.

Start with
the ground
you know,
the pale ground
beneath your feet,
your own
way of starting
the conversation.

Start with your own
question,
give up on other
people's questions,
don't let them
smother something
simple.

To find
another's voice,
follow
your own voice,
wait until
that voice
becomes a
private ear
listening
to another.

Start right now
take a small step
you can call your own
don't follow
someone else's
heroics, be humble
and focused,
start close in,
don't mistake
that other
for your own.

*Start close in,
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the second step
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Recommended – David Whyte reciting this poem himself on YouTube, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=030YqrN4SFC>

Hold Out Your Hand

Let's forget the world for a while
fall back and back
into the hush and holy
of now
are you listening? This breath
invites you
to write the first word
of your new story
your new story begins with this:
You matter
you are needed — empty
and naked
willing to say yes
and yes and yes.



Do you see
the sun shines, day after day
whether you have faith
or not
the sparrows continue
to sing their song
even when you forget to sing
yours
stop asking: Am I good enough?
Ask only
Am I showing up
with love?
Life is not a straight line
it's a downpour of gifts, please —
hold out your hand
Julia Fehrenbache

If you can sit quietly after difficult news:

If in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm;

If you can see your neighbours travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy;

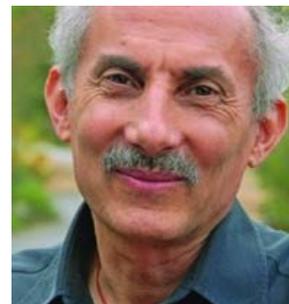
If you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate;

If you can fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill;

If you can find contentment just where you are:

You are probably ... a dog.

Attributed to Jack Kornfield



Oriah Mountain Dreamer

What if there is no need to change?
No need to try to transform yourself
Into someone who is more compassionate, more present, more loving,
or wise?
How would this affect all the places in your life where you are endlessly
trying to be better?

What if the task is simply to unfold,
To become who you already are in your essential nature:
Gentle, compassionate, and capable of living fully and passionately
present?

What if the question is not
"Why am I so infrequently the person I really want to be?"
But "Why do I so infrequently want to be the person I really am?"
How would this change what you think you have to learn?

What if becoming who and what we truly are happens not through
striving and trying
But by recognising and receiving the people and places and practices
That are for us the warmth of encouragement we need to unfold?
How would this shape the choices you make about how to spend today?

What if you knew that the impulse to move in a way that creates beauty
in the world
Will arise from deep within
And guide you every time you simply pay attention
And wait.

How would this shape your stillness, your movement,
Your willingness to follow this impulse
To just let go
And dance?

from the Prelude to "The Dance", 2001. Harper Collins

A Morning Offering

*I bless the night that nourished my heart
To set the ghosts of longing free
Into the flow and figure of dream
That went to harvest from the dark
Bread for the hunger no one sees.
All that is eternal in me
Welcome the wonder of this day,
The field of brightness it creates
Offering time for each thing
To arise and illuminate.
I place on the altar of dawn:
The quiet loyalty of breath,
The tent of thought where I shelter,
Wave of desire I am shore to
And all beauty drawn to the eye.
May my mind come alive today
To the invisible geography
That invites me to new frontiers,
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,
To risk being disturbed and changed.
May I have the courage today
To live the life that I would love,
To postpone my dream no longer
But do at last what I came here for
And waste my heart on fear no more.*

~ John O'Donohue ~



Kindness
Naomi Shihab Nye, 1952

*Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.*



*Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.*

*Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.*