

The
BOOK
of
EMOTIONS

Or — how it feels to feel

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A heart project and an invitation

Sometimes we shut down, turn off our emotions. It might be our way to make it through. Our way to stay sane and keep some parts of ourselves safe.

Almost everybody do it, but some of us have felt the need to tune out for long periods, months or even years.

For me, it became years. The chaos around and within me was too complex to cope with. Without really noticing I pushed my feelings down and away and emotion after emotion was shut off.

And then the day came when I felt safe and secure enough to want to smile and I noticed that I lost the ability to freely feel.

THE BOOK OF EMOTIONS

My wish is to create a book on emotions and feelings. A guide to everybody or anybody who have shut down or lost their own system of navigation.

It would give me, personally, a greater knowledge and support in my journey and I hope it can be of help to others.

THE INVITATION

Each month during 2017 the door to explore one emotion will be opened. I will do it with my craft – graphic art and book design. But a books is nothing without words and I am not a writer.

My invitation goes out to all heart leaders, highly sensitives, empaths and survivors that feel called to write and contribute with their perspective on feelings and emotions.

Coming together we can create a small encyclopedia on emotions for anybody and everybody who needs guidance.

If you feel called to contribute you will find information on the website for the project: bookofemotions/annalinder.com

ANNA LINDER is a Swedish based graphic artist supporting heart leaders and soulful women to craft beautiful brands, books and web designs that align their vision and story. The Book of Emotions is her heart project. Website: annalinder.com



*Healing is a homecoming,
and it isn't to a place
but to a person.
You.*

SKYLER MECHELLE WEINBERG

Homecoming

SKYLER MECHELLE WEINBERG

Experiencing a homecoming, when you have never known what home is or what home feels like, doesn't always feel like what you thought it would. It is a life long experience, not a singular one. A messy, raw, sticky, experience that invites you, in all that has attached to you, to be cleansed in the clarity of the redefined comfort. Of surrender.

When I used to dream of home, I would dream of walking down a cobblestone lane in the spring time. It was simple, I never tripped on the wobbly stones below my feet, and I knew exactly where I was headed. When I first began my life long dance with homecoming it didn't feel that way, and for years I wobbled over the stones as I reclaimed by understanding of what exactly I was walking towards. Where I was headed. What I wanted to be at the end of that road.

Emotional work is body work. Emotions live and breathe and begin and fall within our skin. This work is internal, not external; which is why comfort tends to feel like a destruction, as it washes away the disillusionment of abuse and manipulation and fear. Because healing is a homecoming, and it isn't to a place but to a person.

You.

As you wade into the waters, and place your hands on your precious skin. As you feel the stickiness and sores and wounds, and acknowledge them for what they feel like not what you were told they are or needed to believe they were to survive. As you meet comfort, and embrace destruction. As you rise, and as you fall. As you feel, and as you surrender...

Know you're not alone.

I believe you. I believe what you feel. I believe who you are. There is no soul better to guide your inner child in their homecoming than you.

There is no better time than when you are ready.

There is no better entanglement of grief and joy, than feeling at home in your body again.

There is no better freedom, than yours.

SKYLER MECHELLE WEINBERG After enduring over 17 years of incest, physical violence, and sex trafficking through and by her immediate family, Skyler escaped at the age of 18 and has and has since sought to redefine what it means to live life after abuse. She has built a movement that not only seeks to educate and destigmatise a very prevalent issue in our society, but refine and modify the support that is already in place.

Focusing heavily on the systemic oppression, racism, ableism, and segregation that further impacts the poor trauma after care and mental health fields globally, she has set out to break the silence and reform abuse care by believing all survivors.

Photo: Laurence Hofman

Website: skyler-mechelle.com.



PEACE

May Peace Be with You

PATRICIA L. ATCHISON

“I give you my Peace.”

“May Peace be with you.”

When I was younger and attended Catholic Mass, these statements were similar to what the Priest would say to the congregation. What followed next, was a part of the service when everyone could take a breath, smile and relax from the seriousness of the liturgy and extend wishes of peace to those around them. With firm handshakes, hugs, smiles and verbal, “Peace be with you” messages, the energy in the church became dynamic.

Those moments were always magical to me. To be able to look shyly in another’s eyes and wish them Peace. In giving the blessing, I’d be giddy with apprehension and excitement. It was like giving away a prized possession, something that was accepted and never returned. On the receiving side, my heart opened with love, buoyant on a wide wave of peaceful movement. A spontaneous freedom of pleasurable emotion had me grinning from ear to ear.

As a seasoned adult, when peace comes swirling like an early morning mist, it slides over me, caressing my skin. It’s reverent. Similar to sitting in

a quiet stone chapel with sunbeams painting stained glass-colored light across the interior surfaces.

Peace is stillness in my being, devoid of emotion. My body senses a gentle breath, separating me from the chaotic world. I sense myself slipping through an imaginary silk curtain from a breezy, noisy, entrance way into a cool, quiet space of serene puffy cushions and stark white décor.

In contemplating the emotion of peace, I realize more peaceful feelings occur when I'm in unique landscapes, and at places where I find vestiges of quiet emotion. Churches, sanctuaries, gardens, spas, monasteries, retreats, museums, libraries, really any place that gives a suggestion of "Peace" or "Quiet". These structures offer tranquility and the ease of allowing my body, mind and spirit to slip into a space of solace and stillness. They provide the bridge from external to internal awareness of peace. Once there, inside that space, the surrounding energy provides the stillness required to sense the same within my body. Eyes closing, deep breaths, anxiety disappears, calmness and tranquility take over every cell.

*Peace is stillness in my being,
devoid of emotion.
My body senses a gentle breath,
separating me from the chaotic world.*

A slight smile tugs at my lips. A sense of floating. The color of white light and brightness. Simply Peace...

I've learned from these special places of tranquillity, that to feel peace I need a sense of quiet in my mind. The ability to block out external noise and mind chatter, to breathe and imagine a peaceful space. Peace for me also comes with letting go of clenched fists, relaxing my muscles, focusing on a serene moment or place, and then going inside. Opening my chest with breath, emptying the clutter of anxiety and mixed emotions till I find that sanctuary deep within which allows me to subdue my emotions. To freely lay down and expand awareness to nothingness but a blissful, euphoric expansion of bright white light, and harmony.

While in church (those many years ago and when I visit now), it is this blessing of Peace, this clarity of stillness, a state of quiet, calm, serene emotion, which I want to wish to people. "May Peace be with you." I hope you find your unique experience to sense the emotion (and gift) of peace in your body, mind and spirit.

PATRICIA L. ATCHISON shares a love of writing, dancing Nia (Holistic Fitness), and making doll and teddy bear creations. Her children's books, Little Blue Penguin and McKenzie's Frosty Surprise have delighted many youngsters. She blogs and thinks of new books to write while living passionately.

Website: patriciaatchison.ca



Peace

ABIGAIL TAMSI

Everyone sees peace as the untarnished white dove, flying in majesty and blinding beauty. It is perfectly soaring in the sky as if no wind or rain can crash its perfect flight. It looks as if it holds a wisdom no imperfect human can ever attain.

In a world that is full of chaos and discord, in the jumble of thoughts inside my head, in the wild ocean of my heart, in the jungle of my ever-changing body, peace's elusiveness beguiles me and I am ever in search of it.

It sometimes comes in the moments when life seems to slow down before my very eyes. In that brief moment of looking in the eyes of a smiling baby. When I suddenly look up and see a beautiful clear blue sky. During a second of that happy photo snap. In the mildew and silence of dawn. At a busy intersection and I see myself above the swarm of people, apart yet connected.

Its that feeling when everything is just as its meant to be. Peace is in the here and the now, an acceptance of my moments. Easy? No. Because I am so far removed from *now*.

What if I simply looked? Amongst the chaos of what I see, what if I

simply became the witness? See the moving scenes before my very eyes like a movie screen. See myself a part of it or not. Watch all the actors in the play of life.

What if I just listened? Listened to the voices telling me what to do and not to do. What if I just allowed myself to truly hear? Hear all the lies and judgments floating all around. Decipher who's talking and who's not. And just like before, allow myself to be the listener amongst this cacophony.

What if I let myself be touched? Give my muscles a chance to be felt. Allow the air to caress my skin. What if I don't recoil from what's coming at me and let myself receive? Stand majestically as the one being brushed by my breath.

And maybe, just maybe... I'll start to experience the part of me who receives all of these moments. There's this part of me who is silently behind all that I see, hear, smell, touch, taste, think and feel in this lifetime. There's this part of me who has always been here watching the actor, hearing the listener, feeling for the human.

This is the part of me who has seen what has gone before me, who has heard the whispers of my years, who has smelled the diversities of life, who has tasted the sweetness of the earth's bounties, and who has felt both the pain and joy from other souls.

Though this part has experienced all of these, one thing I will notice is that this part is the one who has always been here, the *unchangeable* part of me. This is the part that speaks up to say "I am." Nothing more, nothing less.

In "I am," I find my peace. It's somewhat my feeling of contentment but so much more. It's finding my place in the spaces I occupy. It's taking my own seat in my life. It's resting in my being.

In "I am," I am not my past nor my future. I am not my body that I parade around. I am not the labels that the world puts on me. I am not who I strive to be or who I think I should be.

*In "I am," I find my peace.
It's finding my place in the spaces
I occupy. It's taking my own seat
in my life. It's resting in my being.*

In "I am," I am simply me. The magick of peace holds me. It's the peace that is not unattainable nor blinding. It's the peace that is grounded in me from the first ever breath that I breathed and the one that stays with me until I pass over.

It's the peace that shouts at me to bring me back to myself. It's the feeling that gives me life. It's the feeling that weaves a smile. It's the feeling that supports my every step. It's the feeling that strings me to here, connects me to every one, and roots me to every thing.

There are no reasons to peace. No roadmaps. No why's. No how's. No what if's. Peace is that strong sense that binds me to that mysterious part of me.

Peace is the Universe's cosmic joke. No matter what life presents, peace is still here because peace is my truth. Peace is my soul. Peace is my beginning. Peace is my end. Peace is my now.

Enveloped in peace's embrace, I find myself both soaring as that white dove does and courageously walking through life's muck. I am connected to myself. I am connected to my being.

In this reconnection, I find my peace, I feel my peace, I let peace lead me, I let peace keep me safe, I accept peace resonating within me, I allow peace to help me make it through.

Because peace is not out there flying in the sky. Because peace is not elusive.

Peace has always been within me. Peace resides in that throne within my heart, looking with wise eyes. Peace flows underneath my skin, beneath the rugged terrain of old age. Peace jumps in my belly, letting me feel my power beyond words or force.

And if peace has always been here, then yes, I can always feel peace again whenever I choose to. I only have to find that still point, let it expand, let it breathe me and let me feel again.

ABIGAIL TAMSI is a self-proclaimed courageous woman and soul-writer. She loves and lives courageously, always aiming to step through the barriers that stop her from living and loving fully. Her life adventures pour out in her writing, which have been featured in *Rebelle Society* and *The Urban Howl*. Website <http://www.abigailtamsi.com>



WERE IN THE BODY DOES PEACE LIVE?

*Peace fills my chest through
breath.*

PATRICIA

*In the stomach, I would say.
Breaths needs to get down to
the belly in the right way, then
a divine calm, safe and won-
derful feeling spreads from the
belly and out through the body,
into the arms and legs. Warms
the heart and gives the soul new
power. Love it.*

LOTTA

*The breath, in and out, in and
out, again and again*

AIMEE

In the belly and heart.

ELISABETH

*In the lungs, the breathing
becomes calmer.*

JEANETTE

In my belly.

MOUNA

*A sense of ease throughout the
body. And heaviness. Heavy as
completely relaxed and with a
ease of mind.*

EVA

Lungs and heart in harmony.

MARIA

On the breath of the exhalation.

TRACY

My heart.

KATHLEEN

*It's like a line from the middle of
my forehead to my heart on the
inside of my bones.*

KIMBERLEY

In my heart, a lovely calmness.

KERSTIN

A Piece of Peace

AIMEE DUFRESNE

Tumultuous times attempt to raid our peace
Under the cacophony of fear, cutting words and incomprehensible acts
When a gaping hole of hate and blame threatens to suck you in.
An absence of compassionate sentiment brings you to your knees
When it feels as if all is lost

May I offer you a piece of peace?

The moon waxing and waning
The sun rising and setting
The wind blowing and easing
The leaves falling and blooming
The tide washing in and out
The birds singing
The stars hanging overhead, always constant yet constantly changing
The still calm on a lake
The time passing – constant, ushering in constant change

*Peace.
A kind word said,
a kind deed done.
To you, from you.*

Peace

A hug

A smile

A listening ear

Laughter

The unconditional love of a pet

The unconditional love of a person

Sinking in a warm bath, the scent of lavender tickling your nose

A kind word said, a kind deed done

To you, from you

The breath, going in and out, in and out, again and again

May you experience a piece of peace

And another

And another still

Build on it
And when all that is not peace knocks it down,
May you pick up the pieces of peace
And begin building once again.
Sharing it with those who have also been knocked down.

May you find peace within
May you see peace without
May you be peace

AIMEE DUFRESNE is a Joy Catalyst and soul-shifting creator, writer, and traveler. She is the proud author of *Keep Going: From Grief to Growth*, a memoir about love, loss, life's journey and the power of perseverance. Aimee is currently writing her next book, *52 Lessons I Learned From My Father*.
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Peace

KRISTINA JOHNSON

Nobody can bring you peace but yourself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Peace exists. Just not consistently in my day to day life. Peace is something that I actively pursue, but it often eludes me. I've begged, I've pleaded and I've prayed for that delicious peace to come and permanently settle into my crazy life, but no matter what I do to capture her, she always seems to be just beyond my grasp. I did not always feel this way about the elusive temptress peace. It has taken me years to fully understand the importance of having a life filled with peaceful moments and even more years to incorporate peace as part of my daily existence.

As a child, I was raised to believe that agitation and constant movement was the best way to travel through the world. Sitting still and doing nothing was so frowned upon that punishments would actually occur for inactivity. My nervous system reacted by igniting hyper-drive and to this day I am often unable to fully disengage from the internal vibration that fear embedded in my body so long ago. In many ways, I remain a product of my childhood but I still have not given up hope that all these damaged

places might someday be completely erased by the active pursuit of peace. With patience and persistence, damage to my nervous system is gradually healing and I am looking forward to one day discovering a lasting peace.

My father stepped out of my life when I was five years old. One day he was there full of life and laughter wrapping his strong protective arms around our bodies with his giant bear hugs, and the next day he was gone. No explanation, no visitation, just gone. It left a devastating hole in my heart and a gaping void in my life. The peace and happiness that wove a golden thread through the days of my early childhood had evaporated with such force that breathing became impossible. Grief settled into my deflated lungs with such an intensity that it would be years and years before I would ever be able to find my breath or experience a similar peace once again.

When a child loses the safety and security that is each of our birthrights or finds themselves trapped in a situation to which there is no escape, anger is the emotion that eventually must rise. When the peaceful life I cherished vanished, my anger expanded and intensified, roaring into enormous flames that charred my lungs and ravished my heart. It is impossible to be at peace when one's life is consumed with anger and hatred. It is impossible to find peace when respiration comes in small shallow breaths. A body cannot sustain its life force when fires rage inside. These were the simple truths I eventually uncovered. With determination and hope for a calmer future, I finally went in search of cool water to douse the flames. I realized that I could not expect others to change or do the work for me. Peace is an inside job. If the war torn wounds were ever to heal, I would need to discover for myself how to bring peace back into my troubled world.

Yoga became my refuge. The quiet comforted my lonely heart and the flowing movements healed my body. With radical self-care I learned to breathe once again. Authentic breaths. Deep full bodied breaths that

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vanished, my anger expanded and
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and ravished my heart.*

filled my belly with love and light. Each cool breath dousing the flames of anger, disappointment and hatred until piece by piece my wounded spirit began to heal. Savasana became my happy place and for a brief moment several times a week, I found the peace that had been missing in my body. The sensations pulsing through my body felt so foreign, but also so delicious that I longed for more. Gradually, I spent more time away from the mat calmly sitting and breathing deeply, taking what I called mini-vacations that calmed my spirit and settled my restless nervous system. It took time and effort, but gradually I have been able to rewrite my story and smooth out the jitters that once uncontrollably danced within. Surprisingly, all it took was re-learning how to breathe.

Now, I understand that yoga might not be the path to peace for everyone, but I do believe with all my heart that each and every person who seeks peace and quiet in their life, can easily find their own little piece of Nirvana by connecting to the breath. “Doesn’t everyone breathe?” you might ask. While technically that is true, not everyone breathes as the human body intended. Upon observing a baby’s body, one notices that they breathe from the belly, not from high up in the chest as most adults do. Chest breaths constrict and limit the depth of our breathing. When

we are in danger or under stress, our bodies revert to taking shallow chest breaths. This type of breathing only serves to agitate the body, rather than calming it. Taking a long deep inhale that drops the diaphragm down into the belly allowing it to expand like a balloon, pausing to hold that breath for a moment, then slowly and carefully exhaling every ounce of that breath to the slow release of 6–8 counts, will instantly draw relaxation and peace into the body. Inhale the future. Exhale the past.

A few years ago I took a yoga class in Sao Paulo, Brazil. At the end of class the instructor took us to our mats, preparing us for Savasana. She explained that the Portuguese words for inhale and exhale were inspirar and expirar, which she said roughly translated to “in spirit” and “out spirit.” This beautiful description of what happens when we inhale and exhale has stayed with me and made my practice more meaningful. Allow your spirit to travel in and out on the river of your breath and I promise you that you will discover the peace and stillness that you long for.

KRISTINA JOHNSON is a lover of all things that inspire creativity and invite happiness. In addition to teaching Vinyasa Yoga and whirling her cares away on the dance floor, she makes time to travel the world, create art, do cartwheels in the grass and make play and laughter a priority.



I Am Peace in Prayer

TRACY STAMPER

Searching for Peace proved to be a never-ending quest.

Striving for Peace made me weary.

Fighting for Peace is oxymoronic and never made any sense to me whatsoever.

Finding Peace became an endless game of hide-and-go-seek.

Attaining and sustaining Peace always got slippery as soon as Life happened.

Peace is within me, and becomes far easier to find when I realize I don't have to search / strive / try / seek / attain / create Peace.

Peace is elusive until I stop trying to get there and remember that I Am Peace.

Only by giving up am I able to give in, look in, and settle into the Peace that I Am.

I am at Peace with the beautiful, sacred fact that I am made of an entire orchestra of Peacekeeper cells designed for balance and harmony. We all are.

I can simply be Peace when I connect to the brilliance of my body.

Bowing to my bones, sinking into the sensations of my cells and riding the rhythm of my breath, I know that I Am Peace.

The stardust that you and I are made of? It is the very essence of Peace itself.

I shift. I shed the search to attain and sustain. I learn to return to the Peacefulness of center more quickly, more effortlessly.

The miracle of the human body is designed to return to harmony. Living life in a body is an exquisite dance of moving off-center and returning to center. The more we practice this dance of re-centering, the more entrained this pattern becomes. I embody the knowledge that Peace is actually what we are made of. It is encoded into our cells, woven into our very fabric. Bodies want and work to bring us back into balance.

98.6 degrees Fahrenheit is an averaged fulcrum point of our inner climate. The human body's ability to return again and again to this balance is nothing short of miraculous. Consider how much heat we constantly create through movement. Our brilliant bodies orchestrate activation of sweat glands when our temperature rises. Our cooling system kicks in, coating the skin with moisture, cooling us down as it evaporates. When we veer from center in the other direction and become too cool, blood vessels closer to the skin constrict, drawing heat in closer to the core. When extremely cold, the muscular section of the body's orchestra picks up their instruments, eliciting the shiver response. Shivering is the muscles' contribution to heat production.

Many sections of the orchestra play in concert to restore the body's optimal temperature. This is all done automatically. We do not have to seek, strive, try or search. Our brilliant bodies organically bring us back into balance.

When tired, eyelids grow heavy, signaling sleep to restore us.

The inhalation follows the exhalation.

The heart's expansion follows its contraction.

Fluid composition expands and contracts. When hydration level is low, hormones communicate with the kidneys, asking them to retain fluid. The

*Fighting our nature by not crying
when stress tickles our tear ducts
dams the road back to feeling
Peaceful. Choking back tears
locks stress into the body.*

sensation of thirst cues us to rehydrate. When fluid level is high, the urinary tract kicks in, releasing excess fluid so as to return us to that center point of optimal hydration.

We are watery beings. Flowing water cleanses and clears by carrying away debris. Such is the mercurial nature of our emotional selves. Stagnation is not a sign of health. Change is adaptive, allowing us to clear toxic energies, refresh and renew.

When our emotional selves experience stress, bodies have the built-in healing mechanism of crying. The chemical components of tears cried during times of stress include the stress hormone ACTH. The intuitive act of crying is our body's way of literally releasing stress. Fighting our nature by not crying when stress tickles our tear ducts dams the road back to feeling Peaceful. Choking back tears locks stress into the body.

Straining to work against our nature is akin to ‘fighting for Peace:’ counterintuitive and unproductive.

When systems veer from optimal state, bodies have a vast array of healing techniques. From crying... to creating scabs... to the bones’ regenerative ability, the body’s healing capacity is vast and awesome.

The examples are endless; the dance intricate.

Surrendering to the dance frees us to embody the dance.

The dance teaches me that Peace is not a static destination. Perhaps it’s not a destination at all, but a sensation; something I feel in my body.

Like all feelings, it is fleeting.

Just as I cannot hold onto a wave, I cannot sustain a constant state of Peace. (I am open to learning otherwise. For now, with what I know in this moment, this is how I best know Peace.) Like waves, feelings have beginnings, middles and ends. Feeling Peaceful comes in waves and returns back to sea in waves. Rather than wrestling with grasping waves,

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allowing the sensation of waves to wash over and through me is how I touch Peace.

I desired control of something in this often-turbulent world. I desperately wished to reach Peace and to stay there. I wanted certainty. It took acknowledging that that option is simply not in the cards for this star-dust earth dance. Like the moon waxes and wanes, like the tide ebbs and flows, Peacefulness comes and goes. In trusting its return, I find, for this moment, the much sought-after solace of Peace.

While we may not always feel Peaceful, we are, by our essence, Peace embodied.

The fact that everywhere I look I see instructions on how to attain Peace speaks to the universality of striving for this often-elusive entity. Meditation is the practice of finding inner Peace. Self-help books outline maps to Peace. Historical figures have devoted entire lifetimes to teaching humankind to live in Peace. Religions preach and teach us to seek Peace.

Of all the prayers said in devotion across the world, Peace may very well be the most prevalent wish sent up to the heavens.

Shanti. Shalom. Salam. Shlamaa. Wo'okeyeh. Fred. Vrede. Friede. Pace. Paci. Ets'a'an Olal. He Ping. Amani. Mire. Paz. Pax. Paix. Pau. Dohiyi. Sióchain. Here. Peace.

Of the thousands of words of wisdom I have read about Peace, the ones which land closest to home are those written by Chinese philosopher and Taoism founder Lao Tzu:

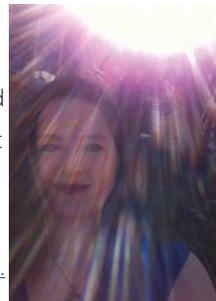
“If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,

There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.”

My own prayer now becomes...

Let there be Peace.
Let us know Peace.
Let us return
to knowing
We Are Peace.
I Am Peace in Prayer.

TRACY STAMPER is a dancer at heart, in mind, of body, and with words. Her writing has been featured in *Rebelle Society* and *Elephant Journal*. Her current favorite colors are purple, orange and glitter. She likes her chocolate dark, her inspiration flowing and her car dances to be uninhibited. Website: [facebook.com/DancingPenTracyStamper/](https://www.facebook.com/DancingPenTracyStamper/)



Next chapter

The Book of Emotions is an ongoing project and every month will be focused around one feeling and become one chapter in the upcoming book. Each month a digital sneak peak of each chapter will be released – free for everyone to share with the world.

UPCOMING EMOTIONS

Anger and freedom was the focus for January and February. March was about Support and April gave us Vulnerability and this chapter is about Trust. The feelings for the upcoming months are:

September: Fear

October: Joy

November: Grief

CONTRIBUTE

If you feel called to contribute you will find information on the website for the project: bookofemotions/annalinder.com

The Authors

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AIMEE DUFRESNE is a Joy Catalyst and soul-shifting creator, writer, and traveler. She is the proud author of *Keep Going: From Grief to Growth*, a memoir about love, loss, life's journey and the power of perseverance. Aimee is currently writing her next book, *52 Lessons I Learned From My Father*. Website: aimeedufresne.com.

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CASHA DOEMLAND LA-born, Georgia-bred and one-half of a set of identical twins, Casha spends her days writing poetry and prose and exploring the world. She's a classic film enthusiast, runner, dog walker, and collector of quotes and tattoos.

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KRISTINA JOHNSON is a lover of all things that inspire creativity and invite happiness. In addition to teaching Vinyasa Yoga and whirling her cares away on the dance floor, she makes time to travel the world, create art, do cartwheels in the grass and make play and laughter a priority.

LYSA BLACK is a Heart Healer who uses her gifts to help you return to the magic of your own heart. The more we can trust ourselves the more we can trust our gifts: the gut knowing, inner wisdom or intuitive guidance we all receive.

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MARTIN FERDINANDS climbs trees, practices yoga, meditates and writes in his journal. When he is not doing any of those, he reads and translates texts from various Asian spiritual traditions as part of his graduate studies. So far, none of his creative writing has been published, except for a Dutch piece ([found here](#)).

PATRICIA L. ATCHISON shares a love of writing, dancing Nia (Holistic Fitness), and making doll and teddy bear creations. Her children's books, Little Blue Penguin and McKenzie's Frosty Surprise have delighted many youngsters. She blogs and thinks of new books to write while living passionately.

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SKYLER MECHELLE WEINBERG After enduring over 17 years of incest, physical violence, and sex trafficking through and by her immediate family, Skyler escaped at the age of 18 and has since sought to redefine what it means to live life after abuse. She has built a movement that not only seeks to educate and destigmatise a very prevalent issue in our society, but refine and modify the support that is already in place. Focusing heavily on the systemic oppression, racism, ableism, and segregation that further impacts the poor trauma after care and mental health fields globally, she has set out to break the silence and reform abuse care by believing all survivors.

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TRACY STAMPER is a dancer at heart, in mind, of body, and with words. Her writing has been featured in Rebelle Society and Elephant Journal. Her current favorite colors are purple, orange and glitter. She likes her chocolate dark, her inspiration flowing and her car dances to be uninhibited. Website: facebook.com/DancingPenTracyStamper/