

# Cup *of* Comfort

*for when life wrecks you*



*Helena McMeill*

“Inspiring and comforting at the same time! Pass this book onto five women in your life who are going through a tough time of change or loss. It’s for those who need some encouragement to take the next steps or just feel seen.”

**LISA McINNES-SMITH** – Inspirational Speaker & Author

“I would never read a book on loss, pain or adjustment written by an author who had only researched these topics. Helena is not that person. She writes from the depths of gut wrenching life events. Helena knows sorrow, pain and adjustment first hand. Her experiences, strategies and ability to thrive with dignity in the fog are captivating, comforting and hope-giving. Her writing is practical, relatable and all together comforting.”

**SUZIE BOTROSS** – Author & Speaker

“The beautifully collated and written words within this book are born of lived experience. Helena’s writings are real, gently and lovingly brought together in her very honest and heartfelt way. I believe this book may be truly helpful to anyone in a grieving journey and to those who wish to understand the process of grief. I encourage anyone to pick this book up and read as they are able, a little at a time, or again and again, just as is right for you.”

**ZOE BROOMHEAD** – Clinical Counsellor

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This book is dedicated to

*my Jazzygirl*

You captured my heart  
way back as that brown-eyed exquisite little girl  
with messy dark curls and the cutest creative little ways of being you.  
Since then you've continued to save me every day just by being your strong  
but tender-hearted brave beautiful self. Thank you for sharing life these  
past changing years – I'll never forget our kitchen dancing and binge  
watching LOST as therapy sessions together! I'm  
carrying you in my heart with such gratitude as  
I watch you spread your wings and take  
flight on your own adventures.  
Shine bright, my girl.

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# Introduction

You might be reading this because something overwhelmingly painful is happening in your life and your heart is in a very tender place. Maybe you're drawn to the word 'comfort,' because you need to feel the soft comforting weight of a blanket as you curl up in a ball, trying to process the heartbreak.

Whatever the reason you find yourself here, I'm so sorry that you are hurting.

This book is collected from my own tear-stained pages as I journeyed through loss, devastation, adjustment and change these past few years. Some while I reflected, journaled, and read. Others jotted in the car straight after a counselling session or scribbled notes while listening to podcasts or as I spoke to a friend on the phone. All raw and honest.

I wrote this to let you know that you are not alone as you travel your survival. Yes, I know you feel alone - but you're not. So many women have stood exactly where you are now, fearing it would destroy them too. But it didn't.

And I'm one of them.

This book is me giving you a hug, handing you a cup, and wrapping a warm blanket around you. I hope you catch your breath as you slowly sip from this cup of comfort.

HELENA xxx

*January 2024*



Gladden  
Remedy **Support** Soften Hearten  
Solace **Reassure** Quieten  
*Help* **Comfort** Compassion Sympathy Calm  
Respite Lift **Cheer** Assist Consolation  
Nourish Revive **Aid** Salve  
Sustain Encourage Soothe Uphold  
Relief



**Section I**

# **Cup of Comfort**

*Surviving the  
wreckage*





# Surviving can be Beautiful

I won't let pain  
Turn my heart into something ugly.  
I will show you  
That surviving can be beautiful.

CHRISTY ANN MARTINE



# Beautiful and Terrible

If you told me years ago that one day I'd be a bereaved, divorced, single mother with a tattoo, who occasionally drinks vodka, I'd never believe you. Never!

But here I am. And here you are too, dear reader, with your own story.

Because this is life, isn't it? It's both delightful and devastating, that's the deal. Suffering may be part of it sometimes. Life changes. You lose love. You lose people. You lose pieces of yourself that you never imagined would be gone. We live bittersweet lives, and the expensive price tag of loving is the risk of loss and heartache.

“Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you.”

These words were offered to us by the Christian philosopher Frederick Buechner, who seemed to capture this complex duality we all experience in our lives. Yes, life can be beautiful and terrible, and we're invited to embrace all of it with courage instead of fear.

Right now, my terrible thing is up close and personal and stinging. Yours too? I'm believing God is here with us both, holding us through our terrible. And I'm choosing to believe we'll both live to see beautiful in our lives again.



# Navigating 2 Grievs

In late 2019 my marriage of 22 years shattered. It was a terrible, relentless painful year that followed. I cried and howled every night for months, then woke up every morning with a headache and puked. I lived on panadol and cups of tea, trying to process it all, while continuing to do everyday life (in the midst of covid- shmovid craziness) caring for my twin girls, one with severe disabilities. (You may know the story of my precious daughter Sunny from my Cup Of Courage books) They turned 15 that stormy year. I didn't know that would be Sunny's last birthday.

Separation turned into divorce. An unspoken tsunami lies in that short little sentence. I'm just grateful I survived that dark time.

Just when I felt like I was getting my head and heart around building a new life with my beautiful girls, Sunny passed away over Christmas 2020. It was a shock. We always knew her life wouldn't be long and I had been processing and accepting that chronic grief journey with counsellors for quite some time; but I thought we'd have more years with her. She had this fierce strong spirit, always defying medical staff and the odds. But her fragile body was no longer able to sustain her complex medical issues due to her severe disability.

All of a sudden, we were at the Children's Hospital in palliative care, where over 5 days we embraced the unthinkable process of tenderly and bravely saying goodbye to our precious girl, smothering her with love and kisses, thanking her for the joy and deep love she brought to us, and letting her go.



It was surreal. I had fought for her life for fifteen and a half years, and had fallen in love with her brave spirit and that joyful smile that continually defied her suffering. (No one ever tells you how much you're gonna fall in love with your kids, right?)

I felt numb and wrecked. So much loss, grief, and life change all at once. I found myself navigating 2 different griefs: the loss of my marriage and the story and future I thought was mine, and the loss of my precious Sunnygirl.

Life changed drastically. For years my daily routine had been defined by my role as carer for Sunny. I went from high gear nurturing and responsibility to what felt like nothing. Who was I now? I didn't know. It felt like I'd lost myself, my story, my future, my confidence, my peace.



# Trauma

Trauma creates change you don't choose.  
Healing is about creating change you do choose.

MICHELLE ROSENTHA



# The Journey from Being Wounded

*(adapted version)*

The journey from being wounded to being healed  
Will take exactly as long as it needs to.  
I know you want to rush to get your scar as soon as you can,  
But my love, recovery isn't meant to be a race,  
It's often a slow walk down a five-mile curvy country road.  
Take your time coming back to yourself,  
Let your repairs happen carefully.  
Mend your heart like it is a cathedral that is being gently restored,  
One carefully laid brick, mosaic tile and shard of stained glass at a time.  
My love, your scars will come when they come,  
And someday they will teach you  
A masterclass in how strong you are.  
But in the meantime,  
Nurse your wound like a newborn,  
Slowly, thoughtfully, and with the softest of thoughts.

JOHN ROEDEL



# Maybe you are Numb?

Sometimes the numb feeling is a gift - our body is made to help us survive. Shock protects us until we are ready to take in and process on a more conscious level.

So if you feel like you're in a daze sometimes, and your mind is foggy, it's ok. Keep taking care of yourself.

It's part of the surviving process... so we can make it to the healing process.



# Life After Unthinkable Loss

Sometimes the thing  
You thought might kill you  
Doesn't.  
And so you keep going.

I've learned that there is life  
After unthinkable loss.  
There is a future  
After the catastrophe.

To keep on living  
Requires acceptance  
And an unprecedented adaptability.  
It requires healing.

It necessitates the brave task  
Of reimagining your future,  
A future without the one you loved  
And always thought would be there.

AMANDA OPELT





# You're Gonna Be Ok

This song by Jenn Johnson saved me these past few years.

## *verse 1*

I know it's all you've got to just be strong  
And it's a fight just to keep it together, together  
I know you think that you are too far gone  
But hope is never lost, Hope is never lost

Hold on, don't let go

## *chorus*

Just take one step closer  
Put one foot in front of the other  
You'll get through this  
Just follow the light in the darkness  
You're gonna be ok

## *verse 2*

I know your heart is heavy from those nights  
But just remember that you are a fighter, a fighter  
You never know just what tomorrow holds  
And you're stronger than you know, stronger than you know



Hold on, don't let go

*chorus*

Just take one step closer  
Put one foot in front of the other  
You'll get through this  
Just follow the light in the darkness  
You're gonna be ok

*bridge*

When the night is closing in  
Don't give up and don't give in  
This won't last, it's not the end  
It's not the end  
You're gonna be ok

Songwriters:  
SETH MOSLEY, JEREMY RIDDLE, JENN JOHNSON.  
Bethel Music.



# Consolation

I am sitting on the beach shore, sipping hot tea, which I am hoping will calm my mind as well as my soul. This is the same shore I crept out to last night at midnight, alone under the stars, where I sobbed my guts out, swallowing my ugly cry, thankfully hidden in the darkness, wiping snot on my t-shirt. You get the picture. You have experienced your own version of this dark moment, right?

I emptied my cup of tears and pain. It was spilling over and I needed to tip it all out. A numb peace followed. I had emptied the burden of sorrow I was carrying. But I was not pouring it out to the empty darkness of the shore. There is someone on the other side of this sorrow-laden cup-emptying. Someone collecting my tears in a bottle. My tears matter to God. I am not alone in my darkest sorrow.

This is a consolation to me. That there is a Divine Comforter is a beacon of warm light in my darkness. A source of faithful love that never abandons me, even through my snotty ugly despairing cry. Today, that is enough for me.



# I Whisper These Words to You

I know you feel broken,  
So I won't tell you  
To have a wonderful day.

Instead,  
I whisper these words to you  
'Just hold on.'

As the darkest days of grief  
Start to get less,  
The sun will rise again for you.

ZOE CLARK-COATES



# Choosing Marmalade Toast

I'm currently trying to manage anxiety and similar stressful feelings. They're like familiar bad friends who like to visit. I'm learning to make better choices for my heart by reacquainting myself with Little Miss Hope, who is like God's best friend sent to help me out. She's much better company. Turns out you become what you focus on, so I need to chat to her more.

This morning, as anxiety pulled up a chair next to me, I heard Hope whisper, "Hey, leave it in God's hands and go make some marmalade toast and coffee instead."

Opposing emotions can and will coexist in my day – I just need to pay attention to the right one.

I'm choosing marmalade toast and Little Miss Hope over anxiety today.



# Hello Anxiety

Hello anxiety  
I acknowledge you,  
I feel you inside my chest,  
But it is time for you to move on.  
I claim this day.  
I own these moments.  
My hope is greater than my fears.

TOPHER KEARBY



# Congratulations!

You got through another day.

See? You can do this.

I know it hurts like hell

And you thought you would die –

But you didn't!

Look in the mirror and smile at the brave soul you are.

And yes, I know – your eyes are puffy from too many tears,

Which, by the way,

Is crazy that we even notice such trivial things at this time.

It's ok, pop some soothing eye cream on.

We can do this.



# Yellow Chair

I have a vivid memory of myself as a little girl about 4 years old drawing and colouring a picture, and being in awe at the beautiful colour that was filling in the sunshine at the top of the page. I asked my mum what colour it was – yellow! That memory carries the essence of who I am - a creative quirky girl who becomes undone in delight over the beauty of yellow.

So when my heart and world shattered to pieces in late 2019, feeling so lost and overwhelmed, for some reason I felt the need to buy a bright yellow chair for my living room, to help me remember who I am... and help me survive. That chair and colour has symbolised my comeback from the edge of losing myself and my sense of value and worth. It's also my declaration that I will not disappear into loss and pain; I will live brightly and joyfully without shame.

Yes, I've shed tears in that chair. I've also smiled, reflected, watched movies, had deep conversation, prayers, coffees, gratitudes, created pages of this book and eaten ice cream in my yellow chair.

I've been rebuilding my inner life and expressing it externally through colour, art and beauty, one yellow sunflower cushion at a time.





# Re-Framing My Story

Today I walked into the counsellor's office and found myself repeating something I'd been saying for a while now.

"I can't believe this happened to me...I never saw it coming..."

"You're going to need to stop saying that to yourself," she said.

"But it's true, it's what I think every morning when I wake up..." I mumbled in my hurt.

"I know," she said, "but if you keep saying it you are framing your story as a victim, and it will keep you feeling powerless like a victim. The truth is there are many reasons why this scenario has unfolded in your life. You can't control other people's choices and decisions, only your own."

Hmm... turns out how we tell our own story to ourselves is a powerful thing. I'm learning to re-frame how I see myself in my story by believing my own truth, owning my own story and self-worth, and taking responsibility for my own decisions.

When I left that day, my story changed from "This has happened to me" to "This has happened in my life."

"The difference between hope and despair is a different way of telling stories from the same facts." - Alain De Botton



# You are Worthy

Life gets easier when you love yourself harder. Who would've guessed this is one of the harder lessons to learn in life? You can lose yourself in the caring and giving and loving of others. Which means that when you take the simple step of turning your superpower of loving onto yourself it feels so awkwardly hard that you need counselling over it.

I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who finds loving and esteeming yourself a bigger lesson than it should be, but it's critical work if we want to heal rather than just survive.

Hey, don't forget to love yourself as much as you love everyone else. We are all beautiful and worthy. We always have been and always will be. We just got busy and forgot.

It's time to remember your own worth. Love yourself harder please.



# Honouring My Pain

Here they come  
The tears  
Spilling out  
I'm taking deeper breaths  
But it's only helping intermittently

That's ok  
My tears are acknowledging grief  
They are honouring my pain  
Evidence of how deeply I loved and lost  
Proof that I am alive

I am out on a walk  
It's a lovely winter's day  
Where the sun peeks through  
And actually warms your face  
Whispering hope of spring arriving soon

Rather than fight the tears  
I honour them  
Esteeming their purpose and presence  
As they silently fall  
Soaking my face

Hello tears  
Hello grief  
Walk with me on this winter's day  
As I honour the pain  
Of love and loss.



# Let it Hurt

Let it hurt.  
Let it bleed.  
Let it heal.  
Let it go.

NIKITA GILL



# Making a Choice

Letting go  
Isn't about forgetting;  
It's about learning  
And moving on.  
It's making a choice  
To be strengthened by your past...  
Not strangled by it.

STEVE MARABOLI



# Baby Steps

Don't try to figure everything out, just take it a day at a time...or an hour at a time...or one breath at a time if that's what you need.

Take tiny steps. Baby steps are fine. Crawling is fine. Stumbling or limping is ok too.

You don't have to be amazing or have your make up on to keep going and not give up. Keep it real simple. Baby simple. Sometimes you just need one thought to hold on to, to get through the day. Today I held onto this truth and snuggled in it like a baby: "God's with me, I'm gonna be ok."

Sometimes that's how you get through hard days - one.little.baby.step.at.a.time.



# *This isn't Where Your Story Ends*

Oh my love,  
This isn't where your story ends

This is just the chapter  
Where you face the dragon

This is just the chapter  
When you defeat fear

This is just the chapter  
Where you discover  
That you are the very same treasure  
That you've been searching for your whole life

Oh my love,  
Your survival is my favorite story

JOHN ROEDEL



# Symbol of Comfort

I have always loved soft blankets and throws as a way to soften a room. They add warmth, texture and a sense of cosiness - not to mention colour, design and style as well.

(Full disclosure: I love creating beautiful living environments and have so many cushions and throws that I've banned myself from buying them. Also, my friend Jodie has banned me from buying any more denim jackets, so there's that too).

Blankets are not just for physical warmth though. They can help us feel protected, safe and covered in an emotional way too, providing a form of self-comfort when we feel vulnerable, emotionally exposed or fragile. Countless times when my hurt was too raw, climbing under a blanket symbolised comfort and protection that felt like a hug from God.

Maybe go find yourself a blanket (or buy a beautiful new one!) to be your symbol of comfort as you travel through this painful life chapter.

Maybe we can learn something from our kids here, who instinctively reach for a comforting belonging to help them regulate when life doesn't make sense to them. And maybe that's why they keep holding on to that worn old soft toy or blankie that symbolises important feelings of safety to them. Remember we are all just bigger kids now, still just trying to make sense of life.





# Sometimes

And sometimes,  
Healing is rest.  
It is hiding from the world.  
It is having everything inside of you  
Be still and quiet  
And eerily bare.

Sometimes  
Healing feels like nothing at all,  
Like you are a silhouette  
Of hope and hurt  
At the same time.

BIANCA SPARACINO



# A Dimly Burning Candle

“A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench...”

I have always been drawn to the images described in this Bible verse in Isaiah 42:3. It gives two clear pictures of things in a fragile, weakened state, something close to being completely wrecked and destroyed. They are pictures we all recognise - the stem of a plant or flower that has undergone damage or brokenness and it's barely alive, and the dim light of a flickering candle struggling to stay alight, on the verge of burning out.

These images conjure feelings we can relate to, right? Feelings of vulnerability. You might even be feeling this right now. Feeling so beaten down, downtrodden, bent over, crushed, in a weakened state that you cannot hold yourself up anymore, feeling you are barely surviving. Or feeling like that candle struggling in the harsh wind, on the verge of having your fragile flame and light blown out.

The power in this verse is what it reveals about God's response to us when we find ourselves in this vulnerable wrecked state. It's the opposite of what we fear might happen. No, the bruised reed will not be crushed or broken, and the dimly burning wick won't be extinguished.

When we are fragile, God's response is compassion. We are safe.



# Yes it Hurts

It's been 8 months since my heart broke and my world crashed.  
I have turned so many corners, grown so much, cried all the tears I have inside my body and soul, and yet – just when I think I'm doing ok – bam! emotions from nowhere like it's Day 1 overwhelm me.

So.

This is grief.

This is change.

This is the human journey of loving and losing and letting go and healing and trying to move forward.

Some days will still gut you.

And you have to let the wave crash over you and feel it and then get back on your feet again.

This is so hard.

Honestly, if I can get through this harsh pain of hurt and grief, I can do anything!

So what did I do to get through yesterday?

Well I blinked back tears as I went about my day as best I could,

Talked to myself kindly rather than harshly,

Called my friend who kindly confirmed yes, this will hurt bad, gotta prepare for it as you travel through this change.

Yes it hurts.

Yes it is. It just is.



After that good heart talk on the phone, followed by some online shopping to help me numb and change channels in my head – I finally slept.

And today I am treating myself to a day of favourites - walking on the beach with coffee, and listening to good podcasts while driving.

I am learning. I am growing.

I am moving forward and accepting it all.

I'm also highly caffeinated and eating too much banana bread from Macca's Drive Thru...

.



# Burying Emotions

It's ok if you wake up and feel ridiculously angry, furious and enraged. This is part of grief too.

Definitely take those emotions to your counsellor, not your food pantry!

You can't bury that fury with food. There's stuff underneath those emotions that has to come out. Tubs of ice cream will not reach it. I repeat, abort any plan to eat your emotions.

Just take my word for it, ok?

You're welcome.



# Nourish Your Soul

Pay attention to what you feed your soul, not just your stomach. That saying “you are what you eat” is true for the soul as well as the body. If you put junk in, you’re gonna feel junk.

Your diet isn’t only what you eat. It’s what you speak, what you listen to, what you read, and the people you hang around. This creates the atmosphere you live in, influencing what beliefs grow in your soul.

What words are you feeding your soul as you journey this heartache? Are they nourishing you, aiding your recovery? Or are they hurting you, causing further damage?

What words come out of your mouth in the morning that frame kindness to yourself? What words do you speak over yourself that hold compassion and life?

Nourish your soul as you heal...



# Grief Comes in Waves

Healing can be so messy and brutally raw. It can feel like dying instead of rising. Grief comes in waves that knock you over, so it might take a while to find your feet and catch your breath. Don't be hard on yourself when you are a wreck and feeling it all. You are not weak; you are wildly brave as you embrace life. If you got hit hard this week, go gently with yourself.



# Glory Days in Disguise

“It’s ok if you thought you were over it  
But it hits you all over again.  
It’s ok to fall apart even after you thought  
You had it under control.  
You are not weak.  
Healing is messy.  
And there is no timeline for healing.  
Be gentle with yourself.”

UNKNOWN

“Don’t be hard on yourself in your weak days.  
They are your glory days in disguise.”

S.C.LOURIE





# The Ugly Cry

Allow yourself the 'ugly cry'  
As many times as you need,  
For as long as you need.

You are not falling apart,  
You are grieving deeply.

Your tears are not wrecking you,  
They are saving you.

Let grief and trauma move through you  
Or it will remain trapped in your body  
In a hot mess,  
Leaking and seeping  
Into other places in your life.

Allow yourself the 'ugly cry'  
As many times as you need,  
For as long as you need.

You are not falling apart,  
You are grieving deeply.



# Swimming In a Hallowed Stream

When tears come, I breathe deeply and rest.  
I know I am swimming in a hallowed stream  
Where many have gone before.  
I am not alone, crazy, or having a nervous breakdown...  
My heart is at work.  
My soul is awake.

MARY MARGARET FUNK



# Remedy

*(adapted version)*

Take your time to heal, my love  
The way back to yourself  
Isn't a breathless race  
Or a runaway train

Your rehabilitation requires respite, not rush.  
The way to healing  
Isn't a mountain face that you must scale  
It's a quiet church of whispering angels  
It's a still lake of your beautiful reflection  
It's a sacred schoolhouse of learning

If we don't spend time with our pain  
We never learn from it

I don't believe you will ever 'get over'  
Anything terrible that happens to you  
Like it is a fence

Instead I believe that if you rest with your pain  
Under a tree for an hour or two



Like it is your best friend  
It will remind you over and over  
About how you are your most beautiful  
When you refuse to give up

Your pain isn't an obstacle  
It's a testimony of how remarkably brave you are

Don't speed through your recovery  
Lie down with your fat tears on the couch  
For as long as it takes to remember  
You don't need to overcome anything like it is a wall  
You just need to rest for a bit  
And that's how you come back to yourself again  
One long nap at a time  
My love, take your time to heal.

JOHN ROEDEL



# Let Nature Heal You

Get out from your four walls  
And out of your head  
And those million racing thoughts.

Take your body and soul outdoors  
And absorb the energy  
That comes from all things not man-made:

Rocks, Rivers, Oceans, Forests,  
Clouds, Mountains, Streams, Sunsets.  
Let nature speak to you.

Listen to those birdsongs,  
The wind in the trees,  
Breathe in the scent of roses,  
And lavender and dirt.

Greet that tall mighty tree with wonder,  
Touching the crusty bark with your fingers.  
Stand in awe at the roots and strength,  
The wonder that it began with a single tiny seed!



Soak in the mystery.  
The life cycle of nature,  
That unstoppable life force.

Breathe it all in  
As you sit in the quiet.  
Become aware of deeper exhales,  
Relaxed muscles,  
Calmer thoughts,  
Clearer mind.

Let nature heal you.



# Fill Your Cup with Songs

Author Henri Nouwen wrote “Hope means to keep living amid desperation and to keep humming in the darkness.”

I couldn't take a breath deep enough to hum or sing for a long time, but every day I'd stand in my kitchen and ask my new best friend google to play me songs that somehow had the power to pull me through. This was my daily medicine.

Those singers filled my cup of comfort when I couldn't sing for myself. Over time they nourished, soothed and lifted me, and my cup overflowed again.

My 'go to' song was 'You're Gonna Be Ok' by Jenn Johnson. I just needed to hear someone tell me every day that I was going to be ok.

And Dolly Parton, bless her, would sing 'There was Jesus' and I'd be saved all over again.

When anxiety rose in my chest, I'd call on my come-back songs like 'I'm Still Standing' by Elton John, or Aretha belting out 'Respect' and I'd dance alone in my kitchen like my life depended on it.



To remember my daughter Sunny, there are endless songs about sunshine to go to, and each one fills me with a sense of warmth and light as I honour her.

The song “I Can See Clearly Now” with its joyful lyric “It’s gonna be a bright, bright sunshiny day” was always her song, but please, it HAS to be the version by the band Hot House Flowers, so you get a full dance sesh in. No other version of the song cuts it.

Never underestimate the power of a song to fill your cup of comfort and pull you through.





# One Day

This song by Christa Wells guided me to gently and wisely take one thing at a time as I healed. Oh, the power of a song to carry us through unthinkable losses! Here's the chorus...

“One day, One breath, One prayer,  
One thing at a time.  
One word, One step, One hope,  
In the coming light  
Don't try to swallow the ocean,  
Keep doing One day,  
“Til One day you're free.”

And then she leaves us with this beautiful healing picture to close the song. It still takes my breath away...

“Oh, I see you laughing on the other side  
Where the walls have tumbled and the flowers grow wild  
Oh, I see you laughing on the other side  
With your broken heart under open sky”

Songwriter: CHRISTA WELLS



# Being Self Aware

As I write this, I am sitting in a busy seaside cafe in summertime. I chose it because I wanted the sea view as I write and have a coffee.

Part of me needs the distraction of being surrounded by lively chatty people sharing a meal. But another part of me finds the clanging volume of carefree happy people grating on my fragile soul. It's a delicate balance to know how much 'happy' I can handle at the moment. I'm choosing to go with it this afternoon, hoping it will numb my emotions. Too much peace and quiet has invited my introspection to go into overload and I end up an overthinking hot mess. Plus, the view and sea air surpass all other factors for me today.

I'm learning to be self-aware and make good choices for my well-being. Esteeming our own needs before choosing what environment and atmosphere we put our raw, vulnerable self in is a form of self-care. Busy and loud energy may or may not be what we need. Sometimes choosing a quieter, intimate space nurtures a sense of safety. The trick is to be self-aware and know what you need.



# Just Breathe

Just breathe,  
Consciously.  
Listen to your breaths.  
Listen to the sound.  
It's ok if that's all you do today.  
Breathe through it.

What do you need to exhale?  
Fear, anxiety, anger?  
Let.it.go.  
You don't need it,  
You are ok.  
You will be ok.

Tomorrow?  
God's already there,  
Waiting for you.  
You won't be alone.

Just keep breathing...



# Vodka

So I love talking about vodka,  
It's a great word to write and say.

Bit of a symbol for me:  
Women + vodka = brave and strong, like a Russian spy.

Never had one in my life,  
I'm a Jesus-girl since forever

So today I finally did it,  
Ordered a vodka!

Gosh it felt fantastic to actually say it at the bar.

My verdict?  
Not bad at all.  
Overrated?  
No, but I do like its cousin gin,  
Who is just as gutsy but more demure.

It's still my 'go to' word to convey how I feel.  
I'm a Jesus-vodka-coffee-danish pastry-sunshine kinda gal.

My current holy trinity - counselling, vodka and danish pastry.



# The Courage to Re-Open

Healing isn't just about  
A wound having the strength to close.

Healing is also about  
A heart finding the courage to re-open.

JOHN ROEDEL



# Ruminating

I'm trying to look forward as I create my new life, but habitually keep turning my head back to my past life, slipping into what my counsellor calls that well-worn neural pathway in my brain.

Sometimes just a glance, other times full-on movie length scenes replaying in my head, over and over. I get lost in those thoughts, ruminating and overthinking. It's so frustrating and unhelpful!

It's like I'm still stuck at the accident scene of the car crash of my life, trying to figure out what happened, still in shock.

It's hard to change patterns of thought when they've been part of your life for decades. These changes certainly can't happen quickly, and need time. I'm learning to be intentional about creating new neural pathways for my thoughts. At first it comes from deliberately practising, until with time, those new pathways become more of my natural pattern of thinking.

So when I catch myself falling down a rabbit hole of rumination, I have to remind myself - stop looking at the past, you're not going there! Focus on staying in the present and looking ahead to your new future, that's where you're going. Look forward! You don't live in yesterday anymore.



# Drinking from Past Hurt

Don't lose yourself drinking from yesterday's hurt and the past. It's so easy to keep coming back to it. Going over particular conversations and events, stirring them with a spoon, trying to understand or sweeten them. It's like drinking stale cold coffee, such a horrible taste in your mouth, as you relive the hurt with every awful gulp.

Time for a new cup, my friend. And a new taste.

Pour yourself a cup of comfort. Focus on today and yourself and what you need now to heal.

Tend to your own needs...



# Empty Your Cup of Tears

I just came back from a walk  
Where I hid my tears behind sunglasses  
And swallowed my sobs.  
Sometimes you've just gotta let those tears out,  
Then take some very deep breaths,  
Letting that numb calmness take over for a while.

Empty your cup of tears as many times as you need,  
They'll leak out anyway.  
I somehow feel more empowered  
By choosing to let them escape,  
Rather than be overwhelmed by their force  
As they tumble out uncontrollably.

Grief can't be skipped over  
When there is deep loss.  
It has to run through us.  
Embrace those tears.  
They are not the enemy,  
They are not your pain,  
They are your healing.





# Thank You Twisties

Just had the best therapy ever: eating a bag of Twisties whilst watching the latest episode of my favourite Netflix show, sitting in my yellow armchair in the middle of my completely messy new house after just moving in.

Oh, how I wish Twisties and favourite shows were the answer to everything.  
\*sigh



# Self-Compassion

Self-compassion isn't just indulging in bubble baths and pyjama days - although these are lovely acts of self-care! It's so much more than that. Self-compassion is showing deep tenderness, care and understanding towards yourself, actually valuing and esteeming your own needs. For me it feels like 'becoming my own best friend!'

I have always found it so easy to show kindness, affirmation, and compassion to others, but to esteem myself like that? Hmm it was uncomfortable and I found myself resisting it. I couldn't apply the same compassion I gave to others to myself.

With reflection I uncovered this underlying, uncomfortable little problem: I wasn't a very good friend to myself - pretty crap actually - and I didn't think that much of myself sometimes. Why? Turns out I believed crap about myself - messages I'd picked up in my journey - which meant I didn't see myself as worthy of such kindness and generosity and goodness.

The process of uncovering how those crappy beliefs and lies made it into this strong woman's mind has been hard but ultimately so empowering. I've taken my power back. I own my own story and believe my own truth. Learning to trust myself again instead of doubting myself continues to be so deeply healing for me.

Self-compassion has rebuilt me, one cup full of truth and worthiness at a time...



# Writing a New Story

She started writing a new story for herself.  
One of healing,  
One of feeling better in herself,  
One of listening to her heart more  
And having a better relationship with her body.

She stopped taking herself for granted.  
She slowed down.  
She decided she would not carry  
The fear and sadness on her shoulders like she had.

She wanted her arms free,  
To embrace the beauty,  
To embrace the fun and adventures  
That might come along.

She kept reading her new story out loud  
So it might guide her steps.  
So that she might see it take actual form in her life,  
Until it became her every day.

It all began with the belief  
That she was worthy of new stories.

You are too.

S.C.LOURIE



# Permission to Cry

I think the most tender part of self-compassion is giving ourselves permission to cry, acknowledging our sorrow rather than denying it.

Why do we all tend to apologise for tears when they spill out? Are we ashamed of them, or embarrassed? Do we fear they spread discomfort to others? On the contrary, shedding tears is our universal shared human language, the way we all process emotions from devastating experiences. Expressing the grief and pain in our story is necessary for our healing; there isn't another easier way.

The most important truth to acknowledge about our tears is that they are not weakness. Yes, we may feel weak and wrecked by the emotions when we cry, but our tears are anything but weak!

Those wailing tears and guttural emotions are helping us find our way through the pain, so it doesn't stay buried in us. They are the bravest sign that we have survived something terrible, and it still hurts, still shakes us.

Give yourself permission to cry those tears with yourself, with others, and with God. I have come to believe that our tears are, profoundly, a language of prayer to God when we can't speak. Our tears can lead us home.



# Sacredness in Tears

There is a sacredness in tears.  
They are not the mark of weakness,  
    But of power.  
They speak more eloquently  
Than ten thousand tongues.  
They are messengers of  
    Overwhelming grief ...  
    And unspeakable love.

WASHINGTON IRVING



# My Anger's Name is Grief

I'm sitting in a lovely moment by myself on a weekend getaway. I realise it's been about 10 months since my marriage shattered. And I'm realising I am ok; I can breathe and have perspective. I am ok, but it still hurts. And if I think too much about it, anger still rises to the surface.

"I sat with my anger long enough until she told me her real name was grief."  
C.S.Lewis

Oh, this is so true! We feel so angry because we are hurting so badly! This thought is helping me allow the anger to be part of my healing journey. But emotions like powerless anger are exhausting and overwhelming; you can't live in those dark places.

I'm finding ways of expressing my anger that help me move through it without losing my soul in the process. Gotta confess, saying words like f\*\*k have been ridiculously therapeutic for this girl! I highly recommend letting it all tumble out of your mouth freely with no edits! And a session in a smash room with girl power music blaring can be exactly what's needed for some of us.

Speaking and expressing my truth and anger, and being heard, acknowledged and supported with empathy and compassion have been necessary steps for me.



# Soul Medicine

The best thing I ever did? Not try to survive my messy heartache alone. I reached out, and allowed myself to be vulnerable and known and raw and honest. I leaned on deeply trusted friends and counsellors for support and guidance. Because that's the key to surviving – don't try to do it alone.

Experiencing deep community can be a place of powerful connection and healing. It's been life-changing to meet and share with other beautiful strong women, especially those who are living out a similar story of life change and loss to mine. It's like we speak the same language that helps us feel seen and understood. There is a unique empathy and support in these relationships to process the complex changes and stages around divorce and loss and creating a new life for yourself. It helps you fight self-doubt and loss of identity.

These women have filled my cup of comfort in the most powerful and empowering ways. In fact, these pages would not exist if it wasn't for my soul sister Jodie who is clever as well as lovely and made it all happen.

“Some people are soul medicine in the way they love you, support you, and believe in you, always.” – Wild Faith



# Boundaries

It's ok to keep away from people and situations that feel harmful to your heart at the moment. Make decisions that sustain you, not kill you; that soothe the wound, not kick it open - either intentionally or unintentionally. This is called having healthy boundaries, and if ever there was a time in life you're gonna need them, it's now.

Surround yourself with safe people at this time. People who get you. Life-giving people with no judgement, who accept you the way you are at the moment.

Lean into them. Call them. These are your people. You need them. They've got your back. They're in your corner.

More than often, these will be people who have experienced similar devastation in their own lives. They are not afraid of pain, and know that space too well. If you need to speak the language of loss, they are your people.

Be kind to your beautiful vulnerable lost self at this time, friend, and let boundaries help take care of you.





# Learning to Exhale

When your child has severe chronic health conditions, you get used to living with stress. It actually becomes your default ‘normal’ setting (it kinda has to, otherwise you’d just live freaked out all the time). My counsellor described it as “living like there’s a bear outside your window all the time.” You find yourself often living on the edge of survival mode. I’d learned over the years the importance of finding ways to catch my breath and rest, building my resilience.

When I lost Sunny, my entire rhythm of life stopped. I was used to living on adrenaline, and it was a huge physical, mental and emotional adjustment to allow my nervous system to calm down and rest. I had to learn new daily rhythms of life by tuning in to my own internal needs rather than automatically turning outward. Sometimes tiredness requires rest, other times it requires peace. When life crashes, you need both.

My saving grace has been intentionally leaning into those places of soul rest, and finding those ‘Be Still And Know’ sacred spaces that renew, refresh and restore my body and soul.

This is where I take my deepest breaths and my longest exhales.



# Unstoppable

Unstoppable they called her  
But I saw her stop  
I saw her stop many times.  
Sometimes  
I thought she had stopped for good  
But no  
She always found a way to resurrect.  
Rise again.  
Not the same  
Never the same.  
Each time a little more determined  
And a little less vulnerable.  
Unstoppable they said  
But I think  
It was the in the stopping  
That she found her power.

DONNA ASHWORTH



# Moments of Ease

If you've been carrying something heavy,  
After a while, lightness feels almost wrong.

If you've been exhausted for who-knows-how long,  
Deep rest feels foreign.

If the days have been hard for so long,  
Ease and joy can start to feel transgressive,  
Or even disloyal.

Push against that part of you  
That feels tempted to stay  
In the heavy and hard  
Because it's familiar.

Let it be light, and don't apologise  
For moments of ease or joy or rest,  
Unfamiliar as they might feel.

Turn your face to the sun  
Every chance you get.  
Soak up goodness  
Every time you encounter it.  
Let it be light,  
Even just for a little while.

SHAUNA NEQUIST



# Be Gentle with Yourself

Self-care  
is how you take your power back.

LALAH DELIA

Whatever happens today,  
I will be gentle with myself.

MORGAN HARPER NICHOLLS



# Sunflowers Speaking to Me

Today I bought sunflowers for myself.  
They are smiling at me  
From a large vase on my kitchen table,  
Telling me it's going to be ok.  
Reminding me to turn my face to the light,  
Not the dark places today.

I know, I'm weird,  
But God's voice is everywhere -  
In nature, in my kitchen, in sunflowers.

What are your favourite flowers?  
Go buy yourself a bunch, or pick them.  
Pop them on your kitchen table  
And see what they say to you  
Next time you walk into the room...



# Blessing for the Brokenhearted

Let us agree for now  
That we will not say  
The breaking makes us stronger  
Or that it is better to have this pain  
Than to have done without this love.

Let us promise we will not tell ourselves  
Time will heal the wound  
When every day our waking opens it anew.

Perhaps for now it can be enough  
To simply marvel at the mystery  
Of how a heart so broken  
Can go on beating, as if it were made for precisely this -

As if it knows the only cure for love  
Is more of it,  
As if it sees the heart's sole remedy for breaking  
Is to love still,  
As if it trusts that its persistent pulse  
Is the rhythm of a blessing we cannot begin to fathom  
But will save us nonetheless.

JAN RICHARDSON



# Listen to Your Body

Sometimes that tight knot builds up in your throat and you can no longer swallow and fight it. It hurt so bad yesterday, no matter how distracted I was by everything around me. It was sharp like a knife.

I was stinging from something said earlier in the day, and it was a slow, slow trigger that had gone off, and no matter how I fought it, the emotion had to get out. I needed to express the hurt rather than carry it inside me.

As I finally talked to my trusted friend Linda on the phone, the lump was too big to swallow. I let my body do what it was telling me to do. It was painful and uncomfortable to feel that hot sting of pain, but oh the relief once that knot of emotion had been released!

I'm learning to work with my body instead of against it. My body carries those emotions and it's trying to help take care of me. I can trust my body, listen to it and tune in to its wisdom.



# Allow Space for Grief

She will turn up at different times in your life. But it's not always in the moments you expect, such as anniversaries and special events that hold significant memories or triggers.

She may surprise you. You'll have no idea she is there too, until you see her. Try not to dodge her or rush off pretending to be busy. Acknowledge her presence.

Hello grief... I didn't expect you here.

Learn to make room for her, seeing her as a friend, not the enemy. You see, grief is not here to hurt you. Look her in the eye. Listen. Talk to her and share the lament. Maybe even embrace and hold her as she wails.

She is not weak. She is not the past. And she is not trying to ruin your life. She is love, the connection to the most cherished and devastating parts of your life.

Let her remind you of that.





# Remember How They Loved You

On those days  
When you miss someone the most,  
Remember how they loved you.

Remember how they loved you  
And do that for yourself,  
In their name, in their honour.

Love yourself as they did.  
They would like that.  
They would like that very much indeed.

DONNA ASHWORTH



# The Party Was Worth it

Sometimes,  
Grief is a friend  
You wish you didn't know  
But that you have to spend time with  
Because LOVE brought them along to the party.  
And the party was worth it.

NANEA HOFFMAN



# Holding a Distraught Child

Ever held a distraught child when they are inconsolable? All you can do is hold them tight, while they cling to you, for however long they need.

There's no formula for this, it's unique to the moment. Only the terrified child knows when they're ready to move, converse and re-engage. So the parent holds the child, waiting, instinctively, doing everything in their power to convey comfort, safety and love. The parent may not understand all that's going on in their child's little freaked out racing mind, but they know they just need to be there. For as long as it takes.

In the early years, my daughter Sunny used to shut down. She often had to endure medical interventions or experiences in therapy that she couldn't possibly comprehend were done to save her life and help her. It was traumatic for us all.

During and after the blood draw, the insert of the IV, the medical procedure or therapeutic intervention, I would hold my traumatised baby girl. She would close her eyes shut, tight.

And even when it was over, she wouldn't open her eyes until she was ready. I knew I couldn't try and 'cheer her up.' I just had to hold her, stroke her hair and cheek, kiss her tear-stained hot cheeks, sing and speak gently to her until she



felt safe enough to come back and be present. And trust us again. I tell you, you could not have enticed me away from my daughter at that moment for a million bucks.

This memory is painting a picture of how Father God is comforting me through this unbearable time. My pain can't be stopped or the situation changed, but he is present, holding me near, whispering comfort like a parent with their vulnerable child. I am a babe in his arms, feeling powerless, and all I can do is trust the one who is holding me through it all. He feels my pain, holding me for as long as I need; soothing me and gently singing over me.

We are babes in the Arms of God. He doesn't tell us to hurry up and get it together. He feels our pain, holding us for as long as we need; soothing us and gently singing over us as we survive. We are held.



# Holding Both Sorrow and Celebration

To have both sorrow and celebration  
In our heart isn't denial.  
It's deeming life a gift -  
Even if it looks nothing like  
We thought it would right now.

Our sorrows make our hearts more tender  
And allow us to grieve.  
Our celebrations tend to our heart's need  
To recognise what is beautiful about our life,  
Get back up and go on.

LYSA TERKEURST



# Cracks of Light

Some days are like a crossroad – in a split second I need to choose whether my heart will look at what I've lost, or what I have. At the sorrow or the joy. The anger or the contentment.

At the crack where the light gets in or all the darkness. The choice is mine. And I reap the consequences of that choice.

I don't wanna cry today. Not today. There's so much good and beauty around me in this moment. I won't travel down that well-worn path of 'what was.' I choose to be present in my new life today. And marvel at that crack of light I see breaking through the darkness.

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." – Leonard Cohen



# Seeing Beauty

My journal entry for January 2020 read like this: ‘2020 I will not be afraid of you!’

The truth is, of course I was feeling afraid! I was having anxiety attacks and bursts of either uncontrollable sobbing or puking pretty regularly. But I had decided to choose Brave. That yellow girl in me somehow believed that beauty can still rise from the ashes. So I put these words from the book of Proverbs up on my wall, where they still are today – “She is clothed in strength and dignity and she laughs without fear of the future.”

My daughter Sunny taught me that life is to be treasured, even though it’s full of both grief and joy. I can feel broken and brave at the same time. They can co-exist. Her shining smile was testament to beauty found in ashes. She was the beauty in the ashes.

To quote Dr Elizabeth Kubler Ross, pioneer of studying the human experience of grief – “The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, struggle, loss, and have found their way out of the depths. Beautiful people don’t just happen.”



# Golden Repair

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. It highlights the broken places, rather than trying to cover them up. Imperfections are embraced rather than attempting to hide them with superglue, as if they never existed.

There is no shame in the breaks, they are honoured. The broken pot is transformed to possess a different sort of beauty, and the golden cracks are what make the new object unique. This reconstructed piece is now a symbol of fragility, strength and beauty.

Golden repair teaches us that we are more beautiful for our flaws and battle scars.





# Beauty for Ashes

“To comfort all who mourn...”

“To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes”

“To give them bouquets of roses instead of ashes”

“Joy and gladness instead of grief”

“A song of praise instead of sorrow.”

EXCERPTS FROM ISAIAH 61, THE BIBLE.



# Damn those Triggers

Tonight I am fighting the tears again. I've been doing so well. Then an email came with a message I wasn't prepared for. The subject triggered my grief. So here I am again, open and raw. Feeling like I have no skin on. Not bloody fair.

Do I fall into these tears or fight them? Will they lead me to a dark pit or will they cleanse and help me? I am exhausted from crying. But if I ignore the tears and numb out, I'm disconnecting from my own body.

Being triggered and opened up again is harsh and sharp and cruel. I just want to be sick and can't catch my breath. These moments are hard to know how to trust yourself and your body.

I'm recognising my need to learn strategies for how to respond with compassion to myself when I feel triggered. And strategies to protect myself from possible triggers while I'm in a vulnerable state. Deep breath, girl, you will learn.



# Healing is a Complex Journey

Healing is a complex journey  
Of endings and beginnings,  
Closing doors and opening windows,  
Remembering and losing,  
Sorrow, gratitude and courage,  
All coming in any order on any day.

It's an ache, a deep breath, a smile,  
A lump in your throat, a relieved exhale,  
A kitchen dance, a shower sob,  
Perhaps vodka or calming tea.  
It takes time, so go gently today friend,  
Wherever you are on your healing journey.



# Sipping Wine

Tonight I am sipping a \$12 glass of shiraz at a local place as I sit waiting to meet my sister. I am catching up reading messages on my phone and yes, tears are suddenly escaping as I write. Damn. Strangers all around me.

These are the moments when you stop, and it hits you all over again what has happened. It ambushes you because you are not busy ‘pushing through’, running on adrenaline. No sunglasses to hide behind here inside this restaurant without drawing even more attention to myself.

It happens, and will continue to happen for a while, as I process my new reality.

I’m grateful the shiraz is good. “Cheers to me,” I mumble bravely under my breath as I deep breathe and regain composure. I notice the strength in me to be in this moment, endure it and get through it. Helen Reddy’s words come from nowhere as I sip with a sense of new found dignity.

“I am strong, I am invincible, I am woman.”

Another deep breath, this time with wholesome pride. GO ME!



# Hearts like Wildflowers

I hope you are blessed  
With a heart like a wildflower.

Strong enough to rise again  
After being trampled upon,

Tough enough to weather  
The worst of the summer storms,

And able to grow and flourish  
Even in the most broken places.

NIKITA GILL



# The Gift of Humour

My friend Lisa met me for coffee the other day. She knows everything in my life. She handed me a gift bag, saying, “You need some sparkle in your life to ease the pain.”

In it was a gold purse, a gold pen, and I pulled something out from the bottom of the bag - lo and behold, a pair of gold speckled cute knickers were dangling in my hands! It was so ridiculously unexpected, considering the painful context of my life and I laughed so hard -which was the purpose of her gift.

I realised I hadn't laughed in quite a while, and it was a gift to feel that laugh escape past my sorrow and into the air between us.

That one laugh lifted me.

Oh, how grateful I am for the lifeline of that laugh and how it continues to tease a smile out of me when I glance at those knickers in my drawer.

Humour can be part of the story of comfort.



# Seek Light

As you reimagine your life and what might be possible,  
Think about ways you can be more proactive and less reactive.

Move toward what thrills you or brings you peace,  
Not just away from what causes you pain or stress.

It's not enough to avoid the dark.  
Seek light.

Keep moving.

MAGGIE SMITH



# I'm Finding My Way

The past few years when people asked me how I am, I would just answer “I’m finding my way.”

I honestly didn’t know what else to say. My old life was gone but a new one couldn’t really start yet. I was just treading water in this space of loss, breathing and grieving. Yes, I’d buy groceries and go through the motions of life, but it was weird. Like I was in a movie playing someone else.

The journey to finding myself again has had its own timeline. It takes time. There are layers and layers of new thinking, new feeling, new living, new trusting. I think change finds us, in a million little ways over time.

I remember the moment when I was in the middle of recording vocals on ‘Well with my Soul’ and I remembered who I am. A quiet but significant reconnection...oh, that’s right... I’m a singer... hello... I love this part of me! And there I was.

On the day I spoke at a women’s conference a while back, I was crazy nervous, but not afraid. I knew I’d found my voice again.

You can’t push yourself into a new life after heartbreak. It unfolds. It finds you. We’re complex delicate humans, not chess pieces. Allow your soul to be drawn. You are finding your way.





# Comebacks

Comebacks are not like pushing restart on your computer, baby.

We are exquisitely delicate souls

On the holy journey of reinventing a life after pain and loss.

It's raw and real,

Feeling everything and nothing all at the same time.

You feel lost, but you're not,

You're healing.

Go gently, and take your time.



# Healing

Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed.  
It means the damage no longer controls your life.

AKSHAY DUBEY

I find healing to be a fine balance between remembering who you are again,  
and choosing to love the renewed you that you are becoming.

BILLY CHAPATA



# Little Funerals

“...in the midst of my own heartbreaking realities,  
I realised I needed to start having little funerals for the ways I thought  
my life would turn out. Sometimes to get your life back, you have to face the  
death of what you thought your life would look like. You have to let go of what  
isn't so that you can grab hold of what can be. Letting go of these  
expectations isn't an end. It's often what must be present  
for the brand new to begin.”

LYSA TERKEURST



# Letting Go

Letting go is not about having feelings of resignation and hopelessness, which lead to the decision to give up.

Letting go is ultimately an act of surrender, where I accept what I cannot control or change, and release it into the hands of God.

Sounds logical and easy, and it would be if we were robots. But as humans wired for connection and love, the act of letting go might be one of the most painful things we will ever have to do in life.

One of the hardest lessons in life is letting go.  
Whether it's guilt, anger, love, loss or betrayal.  
Change is never easy.  
We fight to hold on and we fight to let go.

MAREEZ REYES



# Choosing Compassion and Empathy

How people treat you is a reflection of them and their own story, not you.

And how you respond to others is a reflection of you and your story, not them.

We're all doing the best we can. Sometimes stuff has nothing to do with us.

Choosing to have compassion and empathy toward each other may be the saving grace to not being totally wrecked by each other.

“How people treat other people is a direct reflection of how they feel about themselves.” – Paulo Coelho.



# Your Own Closure

When we grip to closure,  
When we wait for it,  
When we make our healing contingent on  
What someone else is providing for us,  
We put our healing into their hands.  
In that way,  
We never let go until they allow us to.

BIANCA SPARACINO

We could spend our whole lives  
Waiting for someone to apologise  
Or take responsibility for how they hurt us  
Before we decide to let go.  
But the problem with that scenario is,  
We've made someone else in charge of  
How and when we heal.  
If we truly want to break a cycle and heal,  
We have to forget about  
What the other person is or isn't doing,  
And focus entirely on our own process.

UNKNOWN



# *Don't Wait for Answers*

You might have to carry on without answers  
you thought you would need,  
but you will still be led right where you need to be.

MORGAN HARPER NICHOLLS



# Acceptance

Accept what is,  
Let go of what was,  
And have faith in what will be.

SONIA RICOTTI

God grant me  
The serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

DR. REINHOLD NIEBUHR





# Peace is Calling Me

I hear it in the ocean waves  
And feel it in the cool breeze  
As the sand covers my toes

Inviting me to exhale  
And let go of the worry  
The tangled thoughts  
The confused emotions

Peace is calling me  
Telling me to look up  
Above the treetops  
Beyond that blue sky  
Where clouds dance gracefully

The One who holds it all together  
Holds me too.



# Re-Shaping Anxiety

Woke up with unsettling anxiety this morning. The story of my future as I knew it is now gone. Moving from shock to dawning reality is bringing a heightened sense of vulnerability that is not helping me.

I reach into the familiar roots of my faith which have somehow always sustained me in the past. “Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray... shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns...” from Philippians 4:6 The Message.

So here’s my approach to anxious thoughts today –

*Name what I am feeling anxious about*

*Then change the words around it, shaping it into a prayer*

*Then re-shape it again, this time into gratitude.*

God, I’m feeling anxious when I think about my future.

God, I hand over this anxiety about my future to you.

God, I thank you that my future is in your hands, and that you are already there.

My cup of anxiety is transforming into a cup of gratitude. Tastes so much better!

“Worrying is carrying tomorrow’s load with today’s strength - carrying two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time. Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.” – Corrie ten Boom .



# Storms

I'm staying at a friend's beautiful beach house with a panoramic view of the sea. I just watched a huge storm come in - wind howling, knocking things over, rain saturating, bringing dramatic change to the environment and atmosphere. The temperature dropped rapidly.

The sight of this storm reflected how my soul feels right now. It reminded me of a previous stormy life chapter where a friend said to me "Sometimes he calms the storm, sometimes he calms the child."

This external storm is relenting, but the one inside me is not. So I'm asking God to calm me.



# An Anchor Through the Storm

Late in 1873 Horatio G. Spafford and his family were to travel from the USA to Europe. Delayed by business, Spafford sent his wife and 4 daughters ahead.

Their ship tragically collided with another and sank in just twelve minutes. Spafford's wife was saved, but his daughters perished. After arriving in Wales, Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband, "Saved alone."

Spafford then left by boat to meet her. Near the tragic scene on the high seas, he wrote these words...

‘When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.’

These words were set to a melody and have been sung as a hymn ever since. A song born out of immense pain, literally an ocean of pain, by a grieving father.



It has resonated with the human heart, transcending time and musical styles for over a century.

Why?

Because it captures the soul in its most anguished raw state, drowning in the sea of human sorrow, and throws an anchor: abandoned trust to a higher power.

No answers, reasoning, arguments, philosophising, or trying to make sense of it, because there are none when nothing makes sense. All we have is an anchor to hold us for very dear life.

My anchor has somehow held me through the storms. It is well with my soul.



# I'm Sitting at a Table With You

You can let your head fall on my shoulder  
And howl like a baby if that's what you need.  
Or maybe just let the tears trickle down relentlessly  
And have someone witness your pain,  
And hold you till the wave subsides.  
Handing you tissues.  
Offering a simple cup of tea to sip  
As you gather yourself again.  
Big sighs as you catch your breath.

See me looking across the table  
Straight into your eyes,  
Speaking with a confidence and assurance  
That you yourself don't yet feel.

You can't fathom having joy or being carefree again,  
But I'm telling you that you will. Oh yes you will!  
You will not drown in this sea of sadness  
And confusion and heartache.  
You are amazingly going to swim through it.



Yes you are.  
And there will be calmer waters ahead.

And there will be a moment  
When you feel your body relax  
As you sense for the first time  
You're not in survival mode anymore.  
And you can be present in your body again  
Without feeling trauma.  
And that will be the biggest surprising breath you'll ever take,  
And it will elicit a smile that you yourself will notice  
With such deeply felt relief.

Because in that moment you'll know  
You're gonna be ok no matter what.  
You got through the unthinkable.

And the little girl in you knows she is safe,  
Being carried by the strong, courageous, resilient woman you've become.  
Not because you wanted to, but because you had to.  
And right there is this surreal moment of strange gratitude  
For the heartbreaking journey you've had to travel,  
Because you are so damn proud of the woman you've become,  
And this bittersweet insight you now hold -  
That it was the brutal pain of heartache that taught you to be brave.



And you realise you are able to embrace both  
The bitter and the sweet  
As you move forward in life.

I can see that strong woman in you.  
She's there.  
Let her lead you.  
She won't destroy you,  
She'll save you,  
In a holy collision  
Of broken and brave  
With hope and faith.





**Section 2**

**Cup of Comfort**  
***Soundtrack***

*Songs for surviving  
the wreckage*



# Cup of Comfort Soundtrack

The most unexpected thing happened these past few years. Some of the songs I wrote years ago came full circle to carry me through this dark time. The girl I was when I wrote them came and sang them in my ear, reminding me who I was, helping me find my voice again. Each song pulled me back to that timeless source of hope and comfort and love that was still unconditionally there for me. It felt like God pulling me into a hug, whispering assurance that yes, life will keep changing, but I am held through it all.

This soundtrack is a collection of those songs with a few new ones too. I'm hoping they resonate with you too, offering a calming balm, a picture, a pathway, all drawing you closer to healing while filling your cup of comfort.

These next pages hold 13 song lyrics and my reflections on each song.

You can find and listen to these songs on all streaming platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music. You can also find the lyric videos on my YouTube Channel [@helenamcneill7431](#) or head to [helenamcneill.com](#)





## I CHOOSE BRAVE

Some days she's a fighter  
Raging and strong  
Slaying the darkest of fears  
She's got faith like a fire  
Burning so bright  
And joy dancing deep in her soul

And everyday she would pray  
And everyday she would say

I choose brave  
And I'm gonna hold on to my faith  
I choose brave  
Everyday

No matter what comes my way  
'Cause God is holding me strong  
And hope is my song  
So I choose brave

Some days the sorrow  
Crashed through her soul  
And she's find herself on the floor  
Silently breaking  
And heaving through tears  
Aching and shattered and torn

Everyday  
She was broken and brave  
And beautiful  
And she'd pray  
Love would carry her,  
Carry her through

'Cause fear could not silence  
The hope that's inside her  
Though her voice trembled  
She'd say I won't be afraid

# 7 Choose Brave

Life takes us to places where we can experience being confident and joyful or a sobbing mess on the floor. I've been to both for sure. You too?

Each day we wake up and face situations and emotions somewhere in between these two extremes. And each day we wake up with this extraordinary power in our hands - the power to choose how we are going to respond.

We get to choose what we fill our cup with every day. And I want to choose Brave. Sure, it might not be a bright and shiny jumping up and down kind of Brave, it might be a limping kind of Brave that hurts your heart and stings your eyes. But oh, this kind of Brave makes us beautiful.

Whether we say it with a trembling voice, or a strong laugh out loud confident voice, we can turn our faces upward to the light like sunflowers and choose Brave.



## WELL WITH MY SOUL

It is well with my soul  
Though the storm winds blow  
And my peace is safe  
In the secret place

And in the eye of the storm  
Though my sail is torn  
I will fix my gaze  
On your higher ways  
And however the story unfolds  
It is well with my soul

So let the dark clouds roll  
'Cause on your name I will call

On your name I will call  
'Cause you are my peace,  
My strength  
You are my provider

And however the story unfolds  
It is well with my soul

# Well with My Soul

This song came straight out of my journaling in those first few weeks and months of my life and marriage as I knew it came crashing around me. I felt like a tiny little boat with an already torn sail in a huge fierce storm. Everything felt wild and scary and out of control. I was so afraid of that storm, I just wanted it to stop.

Then scrolling through Facebook one night (as you do) these words were staring at me: “Stop trying to calm the storm. Calm yourself! The storm will pass.”

A gold nugget of wisdom on social media is hard to admit, but there it was, speaking to me. I had no control over this storm or anyone else’s thoughts and decisions! My focus needed to shift to the only thing I did have power over – myself. This change of focus changed everything. I had to decide to believe that I would be ok, no matter how this storm raged, and no matter how it all unfolded. And I had to decide that my peace and value and self-worth were not in the hands of the storm, or my marriage, or any person - it was mine! I owned it. It belonged to me.

The phrase “It is well with my soul” is taken from that great beloved hymn, which always resonated powerfully with me over the years. I remembered that God and I had been through many wild storms together, and my comfort and peace always came from knowing I was not alone in the storm; he was holding me through it.



## EXCUSE ME

They say you've gotta be strong  
You've gotta fight  
And keep holding on  
Tell yourself it will be ok  
Think positive  
Until it goes away

Well excuse me while I cry  
Don't mind these tears in my eyes  
Please excuse me while I fall apart  
And pick up the pieces of my awkward broken  
heart  
'Cause life has worn me down  
And I'm fragile in your hands  
Excuse me

Don't you ever have your moments just like me  
When you cry a prayer in the night  
Desperately  
And your eyes are tired from crying  
And your heart is tired from trying

Should anyone be so brave  
To try and stand alone  
To suffer silently  
In solitary confinement self imposed  
Why don't we speak honestly  
Why can't we weep unashamedly

# Excuse Me

Braving the world of honesty with yourself and God is one thing, but to do that with another trusted person? Well, that's when it all gets real, doesn't it? Vulnerability can feel like scary business, and there's usually desperation or courage (or vodka?) involved.

This song was me learning to be real as a young woman and let others see my inner turmoil so they could support me to grow and heal. I continued to experience the power of vulnerability and being interconnected in authentic, caring relationships over the years.

So when life fell apart, I didn't even try to survive alone. It wasn't my first rodeo. I ran to supportive relationships and leaned heavily into wise counsel, allowing myself to be known and carried.

We're all going to struggle with mental and emotional wellbeing at some point, and no one can just power up when those struggles arise. Having a positive mindset and discipline are incredibly valuable tools but they won't carry you through despair. We are wired for meaningful connection, not solitary confinement. So, when our inner lives are hurting - it's time for honesty and vulnerability and let others come close.







## STILL SMALL VOICE

Still small voice  
Speak to me  
Wake up my heart  
Give me a start

Somewhere in the mess of life  
I've lost my song  
Lost that sacred place in my soul

And I can go through the motions  
Have clever conversations  
But deeper seas are calling to me

And I don't know what to say  
Don't know what to do  
So I look to you

Still small voice  
Speak to me  
Start humming the tune  
So I can believe

Maybe it's the sadness  
Maybe it's just life  
The winds of change can take your breath away

I am looking to the power that is greater  
To the spirit that binds us all together  
To the love, that makes it all worthwhile  
That makes you wanna, love makes you wanna try  
Love makes it all worthwhile

# Still Small Voice

So many opportunities to get lost or stuck or paralysed in our lives!

Sometimes we can get lost in the pain, busyness, routine, parenting role or work, stress, coping, managing, surviving.

And sometimes we can even lose our sense of self, our essence, our confidence, our voice.

This song came back to help me in a whole new way as I navigated divorce and its aftermath. Divorce changes everything in your life, bringing loss and change in huge and tiny ways. Your story, what your future looks like, and your identity go through massive changes, sparking an uncomfortable dance with loss of confidence and self-doubt like never before. It's quite the journey back to yourself.

I needed to find myself in this new life and regain my voice, my confidence, my trust in myself and my own intuition again. In the middle of all the crazy messy changes, this song was an invitation to be still, take deep breaths.





## GRATEFUL

Bitterness go away  
Don't come around today  
I won't forget to take a breath  
And open my eyes  
This journey gives  
And then it takes  
Life is a mystery  
So I will choose gratitude  
Hear my heart say

I am grateful  
So grateful for the gift of today  
I am grateful  
So grateful you love me always

Every winding road  
All the ways I've grown  
The scars that I bear  
Storms that made me brave  
Pain that made me change  
I'm thankful they came  
I will take it all  
The sorrow and the joy  
The gift of today  
The privilege to love  
The sacred power to bless  
It's all in my hands  
I am grateful, so grateful

I am grateful for making me strong  
I am grateful that hope is my song  
I am grateful your mercies are new  
I am grateful you are faithful and true  
I am grateful  
The bitter and the sweet

# Grateful

I wrote this song in the context of learning to find joy within the different motherhood experience I continued to live over the years regarding my daughter Sunny's severe disability. It also marked the grief work of acceptance that had begun in me.

I was learning to be present in the life I had, embracing the bitter along with the sweet, rather than believing that sweet was good and bitter was bad. The weight of both contrasts is needed to comprehend and measure what joy is. I found my expectations adjusted and my interpretation of what was actually precious and really mattered changed.

Choosing appreciation for what I did have rather than what I didn't rewarded me the incredible gift of perspective. Practising gratitude has been a powerful key, firstly in survival, then in flourishing.

So when life fell apart and divorce came along, I let this song lead me again. I feel this song in a heavier way now when I sing it, like I've earned my perspective of gratitude and joy. And I'm grateful.



## LETTING YOU GO

I'm letting you go  
I'm saying goodbye  
I don't want to be  
Angry anymore

I'm letting you go  
I'm setting you free  
My soul has found  
Precious release

I'm letting you go  
So I can let me go too  
'Cause I wanna fly  
Free like a bird  
But this anger and pain  
Is keeping me in chains

So I'm letting you go  
I'm saying goodbye  
I've found a love  
That has dried my eyes

I'm letting you go  
I'm setting you free  
So I can finally  
Be free

I want my heartbeat  
To be mercy  
To be like  
The heartbeat of God  
Who opened a  
Door of mercy for me  
So now I open  
Mercy's door for you  
And let you go

So I'm letting you go  
Set you free  
So I can finally  
Be free



# Letting You Go

To be honest, I've been avoiding writing this page. And now it's the last one to do, so here I am...

After divorce, this song says it all really. Letting go of a marriage, a precious part of your story, a life you thought was yours, a future you planned... it's gut wrenching stuff. I wrote this song in a completely different context many years ago reflecting my healing journey from past offences and wounds. To think I would resonate with this song in the future as part of my divorce recovery is hard to write even now. It's a scar that might always make me wince, I don't know.

Ok, here's my best shot - Letting go is necessary for moving on with life, it sets us free. Forgiveness based on compassion is a space where grace can live, and I want to live my life in grace always. And hey, I hear you, it's hard, and I raise my vodka to you in acknowledgment.

The lyric in this song that I focus on is: "I'm letting you go so I can let me go too." I'm doing this to love and value myself, so I can see and feel beauty in my life as I move forward. I hope you find grace to do the same, letting go of whatever it is you need to release to be free.

Be brave.





## IN THE QUIET

Here in my darkness  
Here in the quiet  
I'm on my knees  
Again in the night  
My broken heart  
Finds your embrace  
Softly in this place  
In this secret place

Here in the quiet place  
Of my heart  
Your sweet compassion  
Touches my night  
Rivers of mercy  
Tears on my face  
Flow softly in this place  
In this secret place

All my burdens I  
surrender  
Laying down  
My sorrows and shame  
At your feet I find a  
safety  
In my need  
I whisper your name

Here in the quiet  
Here on my knees  
Comfort is silently  
Speaking to me  
My broken heart  
Finds your embrace  
Softly in this place  
In this secret place

# In the Quiet

There's a saying: 'Life can bring you to your knees.' It usually infers brokenness, desperation or powerlessness. It's pretty much not the place you want to be. And even though I don't wish that on anyone, being brought to your knees in some way can be a very truthful space for your soul to encounter.

The physical posture of kneeling down makes you feel powerless, bowed down and humbled. You feel the floor with your knees against it, no cushioning in between. Over the years I've definitely crashed or fallen into that 'on my knees soul space', whether literally or not.

This song describes how that space can become a sacred meeting place with ourselves and our higher power. It may be quiet, gentle waiting in solitude or prayer, or a turbulent wrestling and roaring. As long as honesty shows up, anything can happen.

I've been living on my knees a lot over this healing time, finding everything in this song afresh. I cried a lot, and I found God was there crying with me... along with our little white dog Teddy, who never left the room. What a sight! God, me, and a little white dog getting through heartbreak together.







## WEARY SOUL

Weary soul  
So afraid to let go  
Of the pain  
Harboured deep in your soul  
To let it show  
Weary soul

Come and rest  
In the everlasting arms  
Let your tears fall on his shoulder  
Share the burden of your pain  
In the tenderness  
While the tears fall on his shoulder

Burdened down  
From the heaviness in your soul  
Afraid its weight will break you  
Yet afraid to let it go  
To let it show  
Weary soul

Down through the ages  
There has been an open door  
To a resting place  
For the weary soul

# Weary Soul

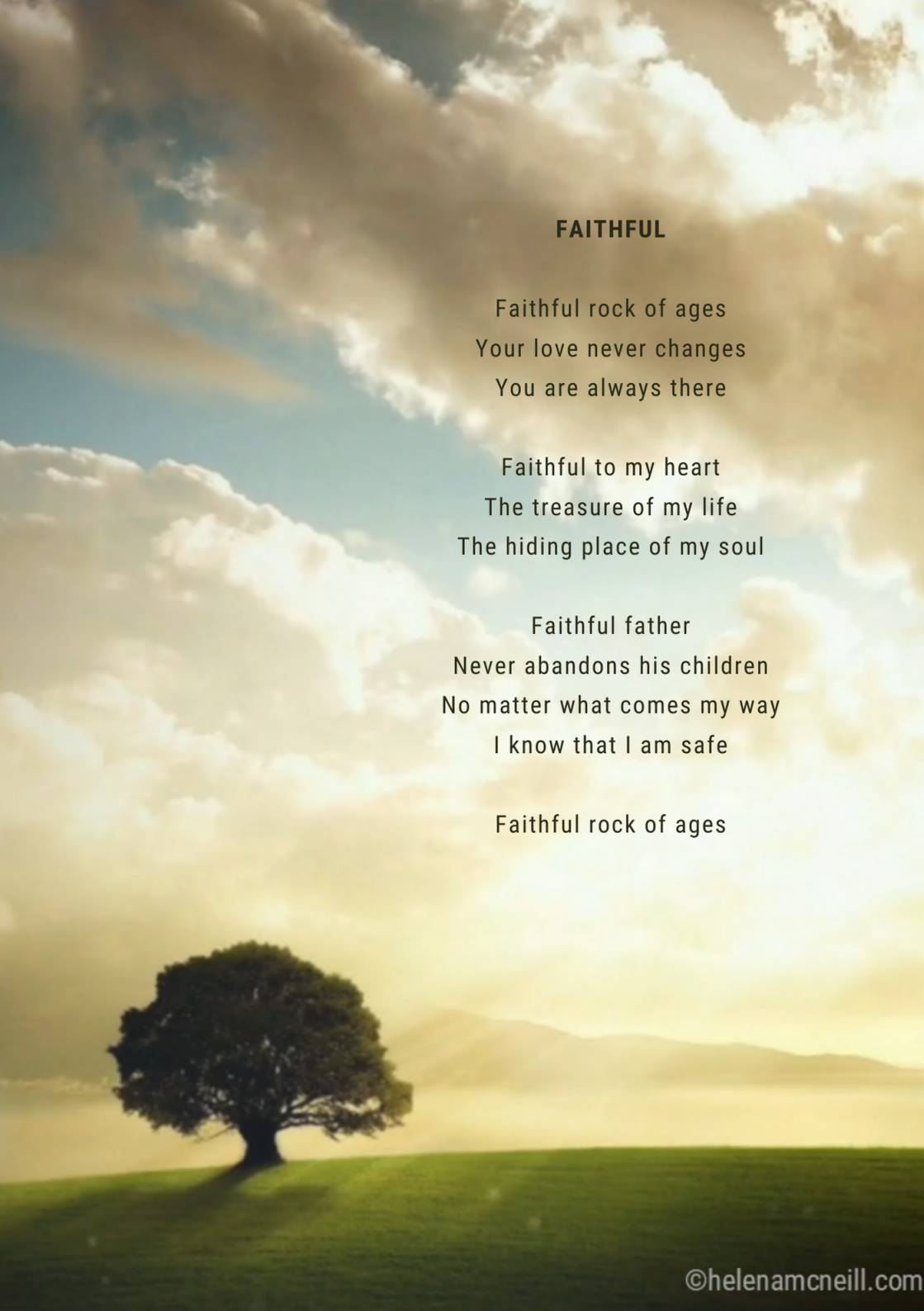
Another song that came back to help me as I journeyed through my grief and loss. It's like the younger me wrote a song for future me ...

The power in this song is the picture it paints. It gently leads the tired, weary soul who is carrying heavy pain into the comforting embrace of the everlasting arms of God. There is such intimacy and tenderness found there as the weary soul finally releases tears that fall on God's shoulder.

I was so used to being the strong one, who had long 'to do' lists and took care of others. It had been a long time since I'd let myself fall into the tenderness of God as a loving Father/Mother/Parent. I needed this song to lead me to that intimate place where I could just be a weary helpless baby that finds utter safety in the arms of God - so I could let all my tears of pain and loss and grief fall on the shoulder of the God who has carried me through every painful moment of my life.

We all need reminding that there is and always will be an open door to a tender embrace for the overwhelmed, hurting, distraught weary soul. We can come as a child...



The background of the page is a landscape photograph. In the foreground, a large, dark, rounded tree stands on a green grassy hill. The sky is filled with large, white and yellowish clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall color palette is warm, with yellows, oranges, and greens.

## FAITHFUL

Faithful rock of ages  
Your love never changes  
You are always there

Faithful to my heart  
The treasure of my life  
The hiding place of my soul

Faithful father  
Never abandons his children  
No matter what comes my way  
I know that I am safe

Faithful rock of ages

# Faithful

Faithful is such a comforting word to a grieving or traumatised heart.

We want to hold on to that word and know there is something solid and certain to rely on, that won't change or disappear. Completely understandable when you've experienced changes that have ripped your heart to pieces.

But we know that's not the nature of life at all. All of us, either naturally or deliberately, must learn skills of adapting, adjusting, growing and processing change to build resilience as we continue our journey of life. We humans are fallible, complex beings usually doing the best we can with what we've got most of the time. So yeah, promises get broken. People change. Life changes, and it can be devastating.

So if we want faithful, unchanging, like a rock, that's God's gig. He's the only one that can pull it off for us. If I've learnt anything at all these past few years it's this.

As I processed my own life changes, this song poured strength and reassurance into me. A girl full of faith was reminding a heartbroken me of the one who will never abandon me. Ohhh she made me cry, but the good crying. I hope she does the same for you as you listen.





## SHELTER ME

Storms are blowing in my life  
Uncovering my pain  
The hiding places in my heart  
Have all been blown away

This world has no haven  
No comfort for my soul  
God this storm has brought me  
To your door

Shelter me  
Under your wings  
Shelter me  
Hold me still  
So no matter how cold the storm  
Or how deep the pain  
I know I'm safe  
In the secret place  
With you

There in your shadow  
Is a love where I can hide  
My trembling heart finds comfort  
In the warmth of your love

Oh this world has no haven  
No comfort for my soul  
Can I stay here with you  
In this place

You're my shelter from the storm  
You're the fire that keeps me warm  
In your arms I know I'm safe  
You're my hiding place

# Shelter Me

This is one of the first songs I ever wrote. I remember sitting at my beloved old piano with the phrase “shelter me” playing in my mind like a prayer. I felt drawn to this picture of someone offering a place of protection and shelter as I faced my own woundedness, and was finding God as that source of safety in my own spiritual journey. God really was the first one I ever showed my pain and vulnerability to.

This picture came from a verse in the bible I had come across. Psalm 91 talks about a “secret place of safety in the shadow of the almighty” where you can “take refuge under his wings.”

Needing a place to be safe, rest and heal is a good hiding place; it’s not escapism or avoidance. To seek shelter is to seek comfort and support, like seeking warmth when it’s cold. It’s not weakness to seek shelter in a storm, it’s acknowledging your reality and taking responsibility for your own emotional needs when life is overwhelming.

These past few years have been a storm I feared would overwhelm me. This song gave me a way to picture God offering me shelter, comfort and safety while the storm raged around me.



## PSALM 42

As the deer pants  
For the water brooks  
My soul longs for thee  
My soul thirsts for the living God

When shall I come  
And appear before God  
Oh my tears are food for me  
While they say  
Where is your God

Why are you in despair, my soul  
And why are you disquieted within me  
Hope in God  
For I will praise him again  
For the help of his presence

I cry to you  
Have you forgotten me  
Why am I in mourning  
Have you forsaken me

Oh but from these depths  
I will look to you  
Your song is with me  
Always with me  
A prayer in the night

# Psalm 42

My friend Michael Adeney wrote this song based on Psalm 42 back when we were younger. We've both experienced unexpected loss since recording it. I have always loved the raw humanity in this Psalm. This is you or me or any regular human wrestling in soul pain, as we either whisper or shout, "Where are you, God?!"

These words hold so much depth of imagery and emotion. Maybe it's the older poetic language that conveys a richness compared to the usual colloquial expressions commonly used. Although we don't use these poetic descriptions in conversations today, they still resonate and reach us. I'm not sure why I feel a longing in my spirit over words such as "my soul thirsts for you" and "disquieted within me" or "my tears are food for me."

This brave human voice takes us with him to "the depths" and guides us to look to God while we are still in the depths. There is no rescue. No fix. No positive spin or answer or explanation. No. Instead he offers these beautiful words "Oh but from these depths, I will look to you... and your song is with me, a prayer in the night."

There it is... comfort. Comfort found while still in the depths of the darkness. We are not alone, his song is there with us, to comfort while we endure the dark night of the soul. We hope in God because of who he is. His presence is our help; not helicopter rescues out of the depths. We find God IN the depths, with us.





## THE HEALING

Your love is finding  
The barren places of my soul  
That have been hidden  
Away with the pain

Your love keeps blowing  
Over my life like a gentle breeze  
Bringing the healing

And my spirit is rising  
As on wings  
As you blow upon  
The ashes of my life  
And my spirit is rising  
As on wings  
As you wash over my pain  
With your love again and again  
And I'm beginning to see  
Beauty

You are watering  
The desolate places of my soul  
And hope is growing  
The pain is fading

Your love keeps pouring  
Over my life like a gentle rain  
Bringing the healing

Keeps blowing over my life like a gentle breeze  
Keeps flowing over my life like a gentle rain  
Keeps flowing over my life like a summer rain  
Bringing the healing  
The healing

# The Healing

“My spirit is rising as on wings.”

After heartbreak, there is a time to lift your head up high again. After being knocked down, there is a time to rise up again. After the grief and loss, there is a time to come back to life. After injured wings have healed, there is a time to fly again. After the divorce, there is a time to build a new life. After the cocoon, there is a time for the butterfly to emerge.

I lived this song years ago as I wrote it. Never dreamed I would live it again. But I have. Right down to the line “...and I’m beginning to see beauty.”

Oh how I hope you experience your own comeback, whatever that looks like for you... especially seeing beauty again. You are worthy of it.



The background of the page is a clear, vibrant blue sky. Several thin, dark brown branches of a flowering plant, possibly a cherry blossom, are scattered across the frame. The branches are adorned with numerous small, light pink flowers, some in full bloom and others as buds. The flowers have five petals and a darker pink center. The overall composition is simple and elegant, with the natural elements framing the central text.

## HOLY ONE

Sweetest name my heart has known  
Gentle lover of my soul  
Jesus, Holy one

Helper of the helpless one  
Bringing hope where hope is gone  
Jesus, Holy one

And I sing this song of praise  
To the beauty of your name  
There's no other in heaven and earth  
Sweeter to the soul than  
Jesus, Holy one

Seeking the forsaken ones  
Gathering them in his arms  
Jesus, Holy one

# Holy One

This gentle melody came from my friend and guitarist Phil Butson, who graciously invited me to write a lyric to his music. We wrote it so many years ago!

And while so much life change has happened since then, I still find the same refuge in this song today that I found when I wrote it.

I've lived this song over the years. God has been my soft place to fall, always. His compassion toward us when we feel broken still captures my heart today.

Is there any more beautiful a refuge for our souls than this?



# Final Note

I've just sent off this eBook content to be formatted, woo hoo! Definitely a dancing in the kitchen moment for this procrastinating overthinker! As I reflect on the timeline of these past few years, I've got all the feels... such relief... I can't believe I got through my darkest days. Tears at the beginning and now tears at the end too...

January 2020 – I was devastated realising my marriage was over, trying to get my head around it.

January 2021 – I was mourning the loss of Sunny. It had been a year of letting go of my marriage and then losing my precious daughter whose severe disability had defined my life.

January 2022 – I was packing up the house which had been home to our family. It had been a year of transition and change. I bawled, waving goodbye to the blue superstar-sunny-car that had served us so well since 2012. I downsized to my new reality as a single mum with a 16 year old daughter and a quirky little white dog.

January 2023 – I was peaceful, so grateful I was surviving and finding my way, slowly creating a new life.

January 2024 – I released CUP OF COMFORT, my story from these past years of loss and change.



So here's to supportive tribes, deep friendships, trusting God when you're shattered on the floor, wise counselling, taking one day at a time, and gentle healing trickling in slowly. Thankful tears!

I'm so ready for a new cup, new aroma, new taste. Bring it.

HELENA  
AKA YELLOW GIRL

“And here you are living, despite it all.”

RUPI KAUR



# About the Author

Helena McNeill is a creative storyteller-singer-musician from Melbourne, Australia, who loves brave love, Jesus, seashells and coffee. Over the years she has worked in various creative roles and recorded numerous albums.

Her most recent project THE HONEST CUP SERIES currently features three eBooks with accompanying Soundtracks:

CUP Of COMFORT for when life wrecks you  
CUP OF COURAGE a shot of inspiration for your soul  
CUP OF COURAGE for the journey of life

THE HONEST CUP SERIES eBooks and Soundtracks are all free to download at **[helenamcneill.com](http://helenamcneill.com)**

You'll find Helena's songs across all music streaming platforms. Her Lyric Videos can be viewed on YouTube and **[helenamcneill.com](http://helenamcneill.com)**

Find Helena on Instagram & Facebook **[@HelenaMcNeillArtist](https://www.instagram.com/HelenaMcNeillArtist)** where she cultivates a community of gratitude and encouragement.



Gladden  
Remedy **Support** Soften Hearten  
Solace **Reassure** Quieten  
Help **Comfort** Compassion Sympathy Calm  
Respite Lift **Cheer** Revive Assist Consolation  
Nourish **Soothe** Aid Salve  
Sustain Encourage **Relief** Uphold







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Helena's music is available across all streaming platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music & YouTube Music.