

Book Of Days 2019

January Musings & Journal Prompts



January is all about hope for me as the new year offers a fresh canvas and my intentions and goals offer up the colours I might use to paint the life I desire. January, like morning, always comes, and with it, the opportunity to look at everything with fresh eyes. Planning, goal setting, 'resolutions', vow-taking, all of these activities come into play for most of us at this time of year. There can also be a sense of wistfulness that the former year has passed - especially if it was a good one - or a sense of relief if it wasn't all that great.

I love January, even if I don't particularly love the weather that takes hold in the Northern Hemisphere at this time of year. It can seem bleak, with everything appearing as though it is frozen in a black and white photograph, but it can also be diamond studded with light shimmering on snow and ice, and there's something about the stars in winter that makes me feel certain someone or something is paying attention to my tiny little life.

Hope is a heart word. It is far more urgent and powerful than 'wish' or even 'dream', which are other words that we might be tempted to play with at this time of year. Wishes and dreams feel like 'head' words to me. Hope has its origin in the place where love lives. Love is magicks. We all know this, yes? It is co-mingled with desire, with the most secret longings of our deepest selves. It is gilded with expected joy, a gold thread we can almost see even before our hopes come to pass.

If life were nothing but a series of pure moments, hope would be unnecessary. It's because life is a mixed bag of the good, the bad, the transcendent, and the ugly that hope is so much a part of what we are as a species. Without hope, problems would not find solutions. Without hope, life would be stagnant, full of sameness and lacking meaning. Hope, and its cousin, desire, lead us to leaping off ledges in the hope that the net will appear, or better yet, a pair of wings. Hope leads us to taking the risk, making the date, quitting the job, starting the relationship or business, setting out for the next destination. At its most powerful, hope leads to action that leads to joy. Sometimes, yes, it leads to disappointment, but if we never hope, if we never move in the direction of our hope, we will never know joy, either.



I think this is why there is so much emphasis on hope and joy at this particular time of year. We pass through the darkest and most silent night in December. We rebel with a cacophony of sound and a riot of light. We do not succumb to it. We do not let it take us down. We live in the hope of the returning light, and every year, our hope is fulfilled as the days grow longer and light returns. It is a metaphor we can all relate to, since in all of our lives, light comes and goes. We are a part of a great turning wheel of birth, life, death, and rebirth. The way the year turns and turns reminds us.

Darkness comes before the dawn. Hope is never a vain pursuit, and besides, for most of us, hope is not a choice. It is a natural state of being. It comes on like breathing. We must hope. It is an involuntary response, like the beating of our hearts.

What are your hopes for this year? What are your desires? What joy are you longing to experience? Are your hopes simple? Complex? Are they based in past experience? Is there a sense of adventure and openness about them? Is there a sense of anxiety? Of worry? Give yourself over to hope as we enter the fresh, shiny year with the knowledge that as long as we are alive on planet earth, there is something to hope for.

Daily Prompts

The rest of this PDF is an opportunity to check in with yourself day by day throughout the month of January. I have created a series of prompts - one for each day - that is meant to lead you to deep thinking and feeling about hope, desire, & joy, and your relationship with them. The prompts themselves are listed in order on the next page.

The entire PDF can be printed at the beginning of the month on 8.5 x 11 office paper, or you can also just read this PDF on screen, and then jot down only those of prompts that you wish to engage.

While these prompts were designed for use in written journaling, they are also very ripe for art journaling. You can do both written and art journaling, or you can opt to do only one or the other. It's entirely up to you.

I often find that writing about something first leads me to the art journal. I'll write something particularly resonant - like, 'hope is an involuntary response, much like the beating of our hearts' and BOOM! I will want to create a journal spread that uses that quote and expresses that thought in symbol and imagery. For me, creativity is a mishmash of writing AND art, and the one always seems to lead to the other, but I am aware that we don't all work that way.

You might find the prospect of written journaling completely daunting. If that's the case, don't write. Sit with the prompt for five or ten minutes and contemplate it. Let whatever thoughts or feelings lead you to picking a colour, a symbol, a technique. If an answer to the question pops into your head, jot it down for use as a quote or text element in your journal. In other words, use this how-ever you like, in whatever way best suits your creative style.



January Prompts

January 1 - Define hope.

January 2 - Where do you feel hope in your body?

January 3 - What is it you most hope for right now?


January 4 - What symbol(s) or image(s) represent hope for you?

January 5 - What is your biggest, most outlandish, least likely hope?

January 6 - When you consider your biggest, most outlandish, least likely hope, consider how you might break it down into parts or pieces. For example, if you hope for world peace, ask yourself about what that would look like, what is that made of, and how you, personally, could create a little piece of that in your tiny corner of the world.

January 7 - How did this week's reflections on hope impact you?

January 8 - Do hope and desire feel related to you? Why and why not?



January 9 - What is it you most desire right now?

January 10 - When you experience desire, where do you feel it in your body?

January 11 - What symbol or image represents desire for you?

January 12 - How can you bring more of what you desire into your life *to-day*?

January 13 - What is your relationship with the part of you that feels desire (sexual or otherwise)?

January 14 - If you could wave a magic wand and have *anything*, what would you have?

January 15 - What are the obstacles you are currently facing? In what areas of your life?

January 16 - What is really hard right now?

January 17 - What emotions accompany you on a day to day basis that you wish you could be rid of?

January 18 - Where do you feel stuck?

January 19 - What are some literal or symbolic actions you can take to 'un-stick' yourself? Example: if you feel spiritually stale, could you attend mass or create a little ritual to re-ignite your spiritual life? If you are feeling under the thumb of a bad habit, is there a subtle shift you could make that might help you ease out from underneath it?

January 20 - What makes you feel stuck that you have absolutely no control over? What outside influences come to bear upon this area of stickiness?

January 21 - What makes you feel empowered?

January 22 - How do you feel?

January 23 - What has shifted for you since the beginning of this month, if anything?

January 24 - What do you wish would shift?

January 25 - When you get quiet, what voices arise? What do they say?

January 26 - What is your relationship to hope and desire this week?


January 27 - If you could change anything going forward, what would it be?

January 28 - Where does your joy come from?

January 29 - What can you do to create more joy in your daily life?

January 30 - Where do you experience joy in your body?

January 31 - How do hope, desire, and joy relate to one another in your life? Are they connected?



Notes