

*Life is a Gift
and
We Are Here
to Create Magic*

Margarita Kefalaki

Communication Institute of Greece

**Life is a Gift
and We Are Here
to Create Magic**

2025

Communication Institute of Greece
Athens, Greece

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I would also like to express my gratitude to everyone who has crossed paths with me—those who brought joy, and even those who brought challenges. Each encounter, whether positive or difficult, has taught me something valuable. Through them, I continue to learn, grow, and find inspiration, deepening my appreciation for this beautiful journey called life.

Dedication

To all those in this world who share my vision—

To those who, like me, believe that we are made of magic, and that we are here to share our unique talents
in the hope of making this world a better place—

To all who still believe that each of us can contribute to a world worth waking up to every single morning—

And to my beloved children, Ariadne and Alexandros—

this is for you.

Notes on Contributors

Michael A. Altamirano, honorary Vice President of Strategic Management, COMinG, serves as a proud member of Monroe College's Board of Trustees and a full-time graduate professor for the King Graduate School. He has over 25 years of experience leading and transforming organizations. Dr. Altamirano has a distinguished record of accomplishment as an entrepreneur as well as leadership success with organisations. Dr. Altamirano has a distinguished record of accomplishment as an entrepreneur as well as leadership success with organisations such as Campbell's Soup, Pepperidge Farm, Coca-Cola, and Procter & Gamble. His research interests are in leadership development, diversity, multiculturalism, and ethics. Dr. Altamirano holds a Ph.D. from Carolina University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where his research focus was on organisational leadership and urban education, with a discipline in Christian theological studies. He also holds an MS degree from Manhattanville University in Leadership and Strategic Management, and a BS degree from Concordia College in Business. Additionally, he is an ardent supporter of community involvement and actively volunteers his time as Vice President of Meals on Wheels of New Rochelle, New York.

Fotini Diamantidaki, honorary Vice President of Research and Academic Affairs, COMinG, is an Associate Professor in Education at the UCL Institute of Education, University of London, UK and the Vice-president of Research and Academic Affairs at the Communication Institute of Greece. She received a Ph.D. in Applied linguistics from Nice Sophia Antipolis University in France, an MA in Applied linguistics from the same University, a BA in French Language and Literature from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE Languages) from the UCL Institute of Education in London, UK. Her research interests include the integration of literature in the language classroom in combination with the internet and the digital technologies as well as the integration of world languages into the curriculum. Teacher education pedagogy and learning how to teach are fundamental strands to her research interests combined with cultural and intercultural education in classroom and higher education contexts and mentoring in teacher education.

Sophie Karanicolas, is the honorary Vice President of Learning Innovations and International Relations, the Communication Institute of Greece, is an Honorary Associate Professor in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Adelaide. She is a Principal Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy and Executive Director of PLUS 2 Consultancy. Sophie has been the lead investigator for several learning and teaching grants in flipped learning and facilitates a successful Flipped Classroom Community of Practice consisting of cross-disciplinary academics, students and professional staff at the University of Adelaide. Sophie was the co-lead of a 2014-2015 OLT funded national project grant encompassing students, academics and learning designers from over 15 universities across Australia and New Zealand, helping colleagues to translate the flipped classroom concept into effective classroom practice. Associate Professor Karanicolas has been awarded several teaching awards, to include a 2018 International Flipped Learning Award from the Academy of Active Learning Arts and Sciences, a 2017 Stephen Cole the Elder Award for Excellence in providing Leadership, Support and Enhancement of Teaching Practice and Citation

for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning. In 2013 she was awarded an OLT National Teaching Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching and the University of Adelaide's Vice Chancellors and Presidents Award for Excellence in Teaching (2010), Stephen Cole the Elder Award for Excellence in Teaching (2010.)

Margarita Kefalaki, Founder and President of the Communication Institute of Greece (COMinG), is an adj. Professor at the Hellenic Open University. Additionally, she is an accredited educator in Adult Education and a Certified Assessor for projects on communication and management. Margarita holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Communication, a Master degree in Communication (Corsica, France), a Bachelor degree in event management from Vauban University in Nimes (Montpellier III) and another in business management from Greece. It is in Margarita's beliefs that via education, exchange and collaboration, we can learn to communicate effectively and in this way act together for a better world, for a better future. Academics, students, professionals, and individuals, can contribute to this imperative process of doing this world a better place. Academics have a main role in all this, this is what we are trying to achieve via the academic community we create at the Communication Institute of Greece.

Ailson J. De Moraes, honorary Vice President of Business and Public Affairs, COMinG, holds a full-time academic position at Royal Holloway School of Management, University of London. He has Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Andrews University, Michigan, USA and an MA in Business and Culture Studies from City University, London; a Postgraduate Certificate from Fundacao Getulio Vargas, Brazil, and University of California, Irvine. Ailson also has a Postgraduate Certificate in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning (Accredited programme by the Higher Education Academy) from Royal Holloway Educational Department. He has attended a number of executive and non-executive programs along with his career as an academic and professional in management and business. He has extensive management and business experience, having worked in a variety of industrial and commercial sectors in international organisations in Brazil, Portugal, Switzerland, and the UK. With a profound interest in globalisation and cultures, Ailson travels extensively around the world teaching and attending/presenting in international conferences and seminars; and he speaks fluently three main international languages – Portuguese, English, and Spanish. Ailson is a Guest Professor at the University of Hong Kong MBA programme, Kaplan Singapore, Universidades de Estadual do Parana, Brazil, and St Martins Institute, Malta, in the executive programme. Ailson is a Fellow of the following institutions: Fellow, Higher Education Academy (FHEA); Academic Fellow, Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (AcFIOEE); Academic Member and Ambassador, Communication Institute of Greece; Fellow, Chartered Management Institute (FCMI); Fellow, Institute of Administrative Management (FInstAM). Achievements in Teaching in the last six years: 2017 Nominated "The Excellence in Teaching" Award. 2016 Awarded "The Excellence in Teaching" Award. 2016 Nominated for "The Apple for the Teacher" Award. 2015 Awarded "The Apple for the Teacher" Award. 2014 Awarded "The Apple for the Teacher" Award. 2013 Nominated for "The Faculty Teaching" Prize. 2013 Awarded "The Most Interesting" Lecturer. Ailson's research interests lie in the areas of strategy and leadership. He teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Strategic Management, International Strategic Management, International Business and Global Leadership

Carolyn Rekar Munro, honorary Vice President of Leadership Development, COMiNG, is Professor of Leadership (Faculty of Management, Royal Roads University), adjunct professor (Central Michigan University), and visiting professor (Mount Meru University, Tanzania). She received her doctoral degree with an HR focus from the University of Toronto. She has a Certified Human Resources Leadership designation; a Certified Training and Development designation; and is certified in values-based leadership, MBTI, and EQ Inventory. Carolyn has been recently awarded a Federal grant to conduct a 4-year international study on millennial leaders and how they are shaping the global business world. Additionally, she manages Eye of the Tiger Consulting in which she collaborates with leaders on change management, employee engagement, strategic planning, and leadership development. Carolyn is also a partner at Monarch Safari Guides based in Tanzania offering “the perfect safari experience”. Carolyn’s book, *Managing the New Generation: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Meeting Workplace Expectations of Generation Y*, is hot off the press in print, electronic, and audio formats.

Jürgen Rudolph, is an honorary Vice-President (International Research Development and Relations) at the Communication Institute of Greece. Backed by more than three decades of university teaching, his scholarship now centres on higher-education pedagogy, educational technology (including AI), knowledge management, international business, sustainability management, corporate governance, and business-research methods. He is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching* and formerly Director of Research and Learning Innovation at a leading private higher-education provider in Singapore. Recognised with Singapore’s Spirit of Enterprise Award in 2005, Jürgen has founded and steered several successful ventures alongside his academic career.

A prolific author, Jürgen has published more than 100 works—ranging from journal articles and book chapters to edited volumes, monographs, book reviews, editorials and opinion pieces. His academic portfolio includes an MA and PhD from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany), an MBA from the University of Louisville (USA) and an MEd from the University of Adelaide (Australia). He also holds a Specialist Diploma in Applied Learning and Teaching (Republic Polytechnic, Singapore), the WSQ Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA), a Murdoch University Certificate in Learning and Teaching, and Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Christian Schnee, was an honorary Vice President of Politics and Public Affairs, at the time that the online edition was realized. Even he is no longer with the COMiNG VP team, we always love him and wish him all the best. He is Senior Lecturer and Programme Director at the University of Greenwich, London. He has been a Senior Lecturer in PR at the University of Worcester, UK since 2008. Christian began his career as a spokesperson for the Christian Democratic Party in Germany and served as director of government communications in the city-state of Hamburg. Between 2005 and 2006 he was head of international media relations for the 2006 FIFA Football World Cup Office in Hamburg. His degree is in History and Political Science, and his Ph.D. is in Political Marketing. He regularly works for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Europe’s largest center right political think tank, based in Berlin, with offices in 80 countries. The author is invited each year by the Foundation to talk about political PR at professional conferences and seminars to audiences of students, politicians and various professional groups.

Karl-Heinz Pogner, was an honorary Community Vice President of COMinG at the time that the online edition was realized. Even he is no longer with the COMinG VP team, we always love him and wish him all the best. He is an Associate professor at the Department of Management, Society, and Communication, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. Karl is mostly interested in the interfaces of academia and practice (engaged scholarship), communicating and organising (Communication Constitutes Organization), communication and social / organisational context (Text production as social (inter)action). His research also investigates the discourses of Public-Private Partnerships, Co-Creation, and Change. For more information, click at [Karl-Heinz Pogner](#)

Robert J. Bonk, was the honorary Vice President for Written Communication and Convenor, at the time that the online edition was realized. Even he is no longer with the COMinG VP team, we always love him and wish him all the best. He is a professor of professional writing at Widener University, in Chester, Pennsylvania, USA. With educational credentials encompassing technical communication as well as healthcare science, Dr. Bonk focuses his research on the pedagogies of open education for experiential community engagement, as well as healthcare contexts of communication. His research findings have been published and presented both locally and internationally. His third book, Writing for Today's Healthcare Audiences, was published in 2015 by the Broadview Press. In 2009, he was named a Fellow of the American Medical Writers Association. Prior to joining academia, Dr. Bonk led the communication area of an international pharmaceutical firm. His personal pursuits include ice dance and watercolours.

At this point I would like to give a big welcome to the new [honorary Vice Presidents](#) of the Communication Institute of Greece

[Pr. Jan Bamford](#) (United Kingdom), Hon. Vice President of International Higher Education;
[Pr. Nikleia Eteokleous](#) (Cyprus), Hon. Vice President of Technology Integration; and
[Pr. Louis-Caleb Remanda](#) (France) Hon. Vice President of digital media management.

We have already discussed the upcoming release of a book filled with inspirational quotes and ideas, which we look forward to sharing with you in the future. This project will also offer our new team members a wonderful opportunity to express their thoughts and share their personal sources of inspiration. Stay tuned!

Preface

Margarita Kefalaki

In a world that often feels chaotic, we need hope more than ever. Every day brings new challenges, and while it's essential to draw strength from within, it's just as important to remember that we are not alone. We need one another. We need inspiration. We need to be reminded that life is, indeed, beautiful. That's how the idea for this book was born. It began with simple phrases of empowerment—intended to be translated into different languages as a celebration of communication, exchange, and co-creation. But the idea quickly grew into something much deeper and more meaningful. The first person I shared this vision with was my wonderful friend, colleague, and co-creator, Fotini, who has played a vital role in this short but beautiful journey. I'll never forget how emotional we both became when we spoke about it for the first time.

It's true that human beings sometimes get angry for no real reason. They fight one another, driven by jealousy or pride—trying to prove their strength, which often only reveals their weaknesses. They harm others—humans, animals, even themselves—forgetting to value the incredible, positive charisma they carry within.

Where have the values gone that give life its meaning—respect, honesty, trust, loyalty?

Instead of nurturing these, people seem to focus on creating problems: diseases, wars, environmental destruction...

Do we truly care about what lies ahead?

Will the generations to come have a future worth living in?

Don't we all want a better world for our children and those we love?

What can we do about it?

Can we become part of the change we so desperately need?

Can we choose love, compassion, collaboration, and peace over fear and division?

Yes—we can. We must. Because creating hope and positivity is not just a dream. It's a choice. And it starts with each of us.

As educators and professionals, we hold the power to promote the values of communication, collaboration, and education. This book itself is a testament to that spirit. It stands as an example of what can be achieved through collective effort—through sharing, trust, and love.

We can also act through small, everyday gestures that spread positivity: smile at a stranger passing by, compliment a colleague on their new haircut, bring a piece of homemade cake to share with friends, students, or coworkers. Every day, we influence those around us, creating ripples that may shape future generations.

Even if just one student, one colleague, one relative is touched and inspired by our actions—that counts. We all have the power to make a difference, to nurture a culture of kindness, positivity, and love. Let us not forget: this is why we are here.

When this book was first launched in digital form in 2020, the world was in the midst of a global health crisis—the emergence of COVID-19, or corona, meaning "crown" in Greek, with the title *Why is it worth waking up each morning? Impressions and reflections on inspiration, motivation and collaboration*. The new title *Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic*, describes exactly the same sentiment. The COVID-19 experience reminded us just how deeply we need one another: to stand together, to collaborate, to exchange ideas, to communicate. It showed us that only through unity can we face challenges and live this brief life as fully and meaningfully as possible.

But have we truly understood this lesson? Will we, in the near future?
Only time will tell.

Still, we cannot wait passively. As educators and professionals, we must act.

We must do our part to promote the values of communication, collaboration, and education.

We may not change the whole world—but each of us, in our own way, can make a difference. Even one person—one student, one mind awakened, one heart inspired—counts. Every positive impact adds up.

We all have something to offer.

And together, we can help shape a better world.

Just as it did when this journey began in 2020, this book still aims to offer a sign of hope—first to ourselves, and then to everyone who reads it and feels the power of its message.

Life is a game of impacts. A bird flying nearby, the vast sky above, the sea dancing with the wind, an unexpected smile from a stranger—all leave a trace on us. And in turn, we leave traces on others.

If we choose to act with love and kindness, then—step by step, person by person—the world around us will begin to reflect that same love and kindness.

I truly believe that our first step should be to learn how to respect and love others—to embrace our own nature as human beings, as miracles capable of creating miracles.

But the question remains: Are we ready to make a choice?

Will we choose to share positivity, love, and compassion—or continue to live in fear, hate, and negativity?

What will our choice ultimately be?

Shouldn't we act on our deep need to love and be loved? To create something better? To breathe not just for ourselves, but alongside others—for the good of this world?

Let's pause and reflect:

What would life look like if we shared the good that lives inside us?

What would life become if we all made the effort to spread positivity, to exchange love, to smile, and to offer hope?

What would the world be if each of us simply tried to help and uplift those around us?

The [Academic Community of the Communication Institute of Greece \(COMinG\)](#), with more than 300 Ambassadors from over 60 countries around the world—including Russia, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Denmark, the UK, China, Greece, Belgium, Thailand, the UAE, Kenya, France, Malaysia, Finland, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, Kosovo, Austria, Turkey, Morocco, Croatia, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Spain, Romania, Albania, Tunisia, Singapore, Portugal, Nepal, Italy, Poland, Taiwan, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Libya, Jordan, Indonesia, Germany, Egypt, Slovenia, Tanzania, Japan, Belarus, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bulgaria, the Sultanate of Oman, the Netherlands, Mongolia, Sudan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Israel, Brazil, Latvia, and Scotland—has, in my view, a meaningful role to play in this effort.

Some of our members have already contributed by translating empowering phrases from Greek into their native languages—simple yet powerful acts of collaboration that symbolize the values we uphold.

In addition, the Institute's Honorary Vice Presidents at the time—whom you'll meet further along in this journey of intercultural motivation (as I like to think of this shared experience between author and reader)—have contributed their own thoughts and images reflecting what inspires them to wake up each morning. Different countries, cultures, beliefs, and personalities... yet the same passion to educate, to give, to share, and to connect. That is the heart of this book, and the soul of our global community.

This book aspires to be a symbol of love and hope—an example of intercultural communication, a multilingual and multicultural co-creation, a unifying voice that brings us all together. As mentioned earlier, the idea began with a few motivational expressions that I originally wrote in Greek. These were later translated into various languages by members of our community. There was no cultural, political, or other

underlying motive behind the selection of languages. If we had the capacity, we would have translated them into every language in the world—because every language matters.

Through this example of intercultural collaboration, we reaffirm our commitment to protecting and promoting diversity, and to encouraging collaboration and co-creation across the globe.

Our differences are what make us unique.

We are human—miracles capable of creating miracles.

Each morning we wake up with the gift of life: We can open our eyes, breathe deeply, feel the warmth of the sun, engage in conversation, smile, connect, walk, run, laugh, cry, dream, imagine, and create... What more could we possibly ask for?

This book's poetic, motivational phrases have been lovingly translated into nine different languages—Chinese, Danish, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Trierer Platt—through a beautiful act of global collaboration. These translations were made possible thanks to the generous contributions of distinguished colleagues and Honorary Vice Presidents of the Communication Institute of Greece.

Pr. Fotini Diamantidaki (University College London, UK), Vice President of Research and Academic Affairs of the Communication Institute of Greece and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Education, Innovation and Communication (JEICOM)*, led and supported this multilingual effort. She was joined by:

- Pr. Max Caruso (Director General, Al Ittihad Private School, Dubai, UAE) for the Italian translation,
- Pr. Manuel Pereira (President, EUCED, Portugal) for Portuguese,
- Pr. Ying Yuan Caruso (Chinese Co-Principal, YWIES, Shanghai, China) for Chinese,
- Pr. Elena Shestopal (Head of the Chair of Sociology and Psychology of Politics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia) for Russian,
- Pr. Karl-Heinz Pogner, who contributed not only the German version but also translations in Danish and Trierer Platt, a regional dialect spoken in parts of western Germany.

Each of these translations was more than a linguistic exercise—it was a heartfelt response to a profound question posed to our Honorary Vice Presidents: **“Why is it worth waking up every morning?”**

Their answers, in their own languages and cultural expressions, add depth, diversity, and beauty to this book's central message: that life is a gift, and every morning offers a new opportunity to create meaning, to connect, and to inspire.

But what truly makes this book exceptional and innovative is not just its multilingual richness. It is also the deeply personal, inspiring reflections it contains—offered in response to a simple yet profound question: **“What makes you want to wake up each morning?”**

Each contribution comes from the Honorary Vice Presidents of the Communication Institute of Greece (COMinG) who were serving at the time of the book's original digital launch in 2020. These voices—Karl-Heinz Pogner, Sophie Karanickolas, Michael A. Altamirano, Christian Schnee, Fotini Diamantidaki, Ailson J. De Moraes, Carolin Rekar Munro, Jürgen Rudolph, and Robert J. Bonk—bring authenticity, wisdom, and heartfelt motivation from across disciplines and continents.

Collaborating with each of you on this project has been a true joy. It was more than a professional endeavor—it was a shared journey filled with purpose: to **inspire and be inspired**, to spread **love, positivity**, and **hope**.

Thank you, dear friends and colleagues, for making this vision a reality.

Who could offer a clearer, more meaningful example of intercultural exchange, collaboration, and communication than this remarkable community of educators, academics, and intellectuals—individuals from different universities and countries united by a common purpose?

The concept of cultural co-creation—*joint creation* through mutual collaboration to generate value—is no longer just a noble idea; it is becoming a **competitive imperative**, whether in higher education, business, or beyond (Dervojeda et al., 2014; Gustafsson et al., 2012; Nørgård & Holflod, 2025; Ramaswamy, 2009).

From my perspective, shaped by years of international experience in communication and exchange, I firmly believe that we can all contribute to this process of co-creation—especially we, the *educators* and *professionals*. We have the opportunity and responsibility to share positivity, regardless of our language, culture, nationality, or personal beliefs. Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic.

Reading the reflections of our Honorary Vice Presidents, Ambassadors, colleagues, and friends on what makes life worth living—on why it is worth waking up every morning—reminded me of something simple yet profound: that despite our differences, we are fundamentally the same. We breathe the same air. We share the same human needs. We live together on this beautiful planet called Earth. And we are all capable of making the best of what we have.

The question remains: **Will we?**

Life is too short—and far too wonderful—to be wasted.

It is too precious for us to withhold love, affection, and understanding. Every day is an opportunity to express these gifts—and to receive them.

And now, let me share another surprise hidden within the pages of this book—because yes, I *do* love surprises!

Alongside its words, this book offers a visual journey through a collection of powerful photos and images. Some were captured by me; others were generously contributed by colleagues, friends, and students who wholeheartedly supported this project. Their lenses captured moments that speak directly to the heart.

There's a reason we say, *a picture is worth a thousand words*. A single image can hold an entire story. It freezes a fleeting moment in time and transforms it into something timeless—an eternal memory, a silent message that crosses boundaries of language and culture.

These visuals are not just illustrations. They are expressions of life, love, hope, and human connection—just like this book itself.

This international co-creation is a living testament to what we can achieve through collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

In moments when everything feels wrong—when the world seems painted in shades of grey, even black—when we feel utterly alone, we must remember:

We are miracles. And we have the power to create miracles.

Every small effort we make toward something better, every smile we choose to share, every breath we take in hope—**each is a miracle in itself.**

So, let's stay positive. Let's keep moving forward. Let's work, each in our own way, toward a brighter tomorrow.

Imagine what could happen if every person on Earth tried to do just one positive thing.

Imagine the collective power of those small acts multiplied.

We *can* do this. **You can.**

Look—you're already part of it. You've taken a moment of your precious time to read what we've created.

Thank you for joining me on this journey.

When this book was first launched, I found myself deeply moved by the words of Thiago—and I still am.

That's why I share them with you now:

"We are born, grow up and die. But life is deeper than this, we can do better, we just have to try!

Life is simple after all,

But we can't stop above the wall.

When we have to decide something,

The solution will come as time goes by.

Just stop, and keep breathing,

But don't turn a blind eye.

Sometimes it comes with an opportunity,

*Mine is the ACCESS,
Even has given me chance to help the community.
I believe that is the way to my success.
I'm thankful to have teachers who said that all can be possible,
Even friends, indeed amazing friends!
So I remember that nothing is impossible,
After all, I'm proud to have tried, because it changed my end."*
—Thiago, 2020

The truth is simple: we are born, we grow, and one day—sooner or later—we will leave this life behind.

But what if, before we journey to another dimension, we all chose to create something *positive*?

Why would we ever want to harm others—people, animals, Mother Nature herself?

Why would we destroy kindness, understanding, or hope?

Does the suffering of others truly bring joy? Or...

Wouldn't we be far happier if those around us were happy too?

It's time to truly understand:

We only gain when we choose kindness.

We only gain when we open our hearts, when we choose love, compassion, and connection.

We only gain when we bring joy to others.

Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic.

How simple this truth is—and yet, how complicated we often make it.

Imagine a child. Our child. Imagine our students.

We are *always* examples to them. Whether we realize it or not, our actions teach more than our words ever could.

So, let's ask ourselves: **Can we become good examples?** Yes—we *all* can.

Each and every one of us has the power to inspire. And those of us in academia carry a special responsibility: we shape the minds and hearts of the next generation. What greater gift could we offer than the example of positivity, empathy, and light?

Let's become positive examples for one another.

Let's remember: **we are miracles—each of us—and we have the power to create more miracles.**

We are here for a reason.

Let's honor that purpose, and make this journey better—**together**.

Let's create a positive impact.

I truly believe that life is a game of impact.

The sky above us, the sea dancing with the wind, the people we encounter, even a stranger's unexpected smile—each leaves a mark on us. And in turn, we leave a mark on someone else. If we choose to act with love and kindness, then little by little, the world around us will reflect that same love and kindness. This book hopes to inspire—to remind us of the strength we carry within: the power of positivity and the beauty of collaboration.

Let's create a positive impact.

Take my hand...

Smile...

And I will smile back.

Don't be afraid.

Maybe not everyone will understand at first.

But even if we reach *just one* person with kindness, with light, with love—**that alone can make all the difference.**

Walk with me.

Together, **we can create miracles.**

Together... **we are a miracle.**

What follows are motivational phrases—accompanied by images that speak louder than words.

They cross borders, languages, and cultures to remind us that, though we may look or sound different, **deep down, we are the same:**

We all feel. We all dream. We all long to love, to be seen, and to belong.

Let yourself be inspired.

And remember why—it is *always* worth Waking up Each Morning because **Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic.**

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Why is it worth waking up every morning?



“When the tree meets the sky” (Tetrakomo, Greece) © Margarita Kefalaki

Γιατί αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί ;

Why is it worth waking up every morning?

Pourquoi vaut-il se réveiller tous les matins?

是什么赋予了我们每日晨起的意义？

Perché vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina?

Почему стоит просыпаться каждое утро?

Por que vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs?



“My flowering cherry” (Tetrakomo, Greece).

© Margarita Kefalaki



"Sights of the Sun" (Tetrakomo, Greece) © Margarita Kefalaki

1

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να βλέπω τον Ήλιο

It is worth waking up every morning

To see the sun

Ça vaut de se lever tous les matins

Pour regarder le soleil

感受温暖的阳光让我们每日的晨起有了意义

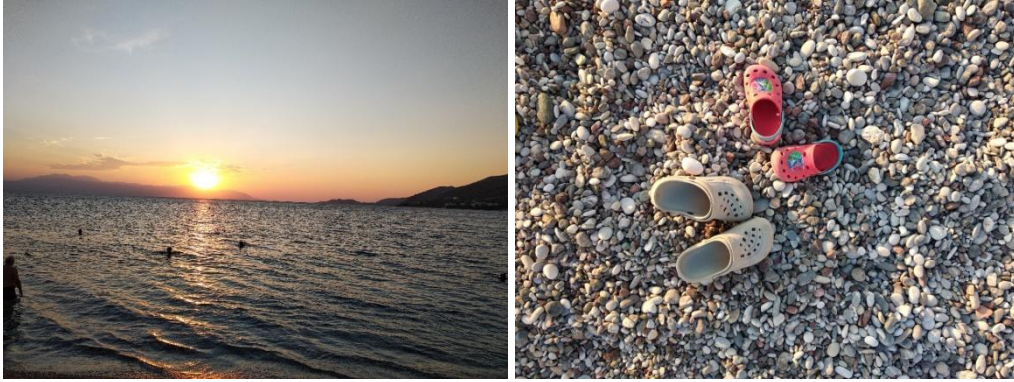
Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per vedere il sole

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы видеть солнце

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para ver o sol



“The Vastness of the Sea” (Loutraki, Greece) © Margarita Kefalaki

2

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να βλέπω τη θάλασσα

It is worth waking up every morning

To look at the sea

Ça vaut de se réveiller tous les matins

Pour regarder la mer

瞭望无垠的大海让我们每日的晨起有了意义

Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per vedere il mare

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы видеть море

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para ver o mar



"LOVE is everywhere, LOVE is everything" © Christina Kassesian

3

**Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί
Για να βλέπω το χαμόγελο του φίλου μου**

**It is worth waking up every morning
To see my friend smiling**

**Ça vaut se réveiller tous les matins
Pour voir mon ami sourire**

伙伴们动人的微笑赋予了我们每日晨起的意义

**Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina
Per vedere il sorriso del mio amico**

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы увидеть улыбку друга

**Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs
Para ver o meu amigo sorrir**



"SMELL, LOOK, be INSPIRED!" (Tetrakomo, Greece) ©Margarita Kefalaki

4

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να μυρίσω ένα λουλούδι

It is worth waking up every morning

To smell the flowers

Ça vaut de se réveiller tous les matins

Pour faire sentir les fleurs

沁人心脾的花香赋予我们每日晨起的意义

Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per annusare i fiore

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы понюхать цветок

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para cheirar as flores



“Paintings like giving kisses to the ones I love the most” by Alexandros ©Margarita Kefalaki

5

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να δώσω ένα φιλί και μια αγκαλιά σε αυτούς που αγαπώ

It is worth waking up every morning

To give a kiss and a hug to the ones I love

Ça vaut de se réveiller tous les matins

Pour donner un bisou et embrasser les gens que j'aime

我热烈的拥吻让我爱的人们每日晨起有了意义

Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per dare un bacio e un abbraccio a quelli che amo

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы поцеловать и обнять тех, кого ты любишь

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para dar um beijo e um abraço àqueles que eu amo



“Paintings like taking kisses from the ones I love the most” by Alexandros © Margarita Kefalaki

6

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να πάρω ένα φιλί και μια αγκαλιά από αυτούς που αγαπώ

It is worth waking up every morning

To receive a kiss and a hug from the ones I love

Ça vaut de se réveiller tous les matins

Pour recevoir un bisou et de se faire embrasser par les gens que j'aime

爱我的人们炽热的拥吻也赋予了我每日晨起的意义

Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per ottenere un bacio e un abbraccio da quelli che amo

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро, чтобы тебя поцеловал и обнял тот, кого ты любишь

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para receber um beijo e um abraço daqueles que eu amo



“Paintings to dream of and create a better world” by Ariadne ©Margarita Kefalaki

7

Αξίζει να ξυπνάω κάθε πρωί

Για να ονειρεύομαι άλλα και να δημιουργώ έναν καλύτερο κόσμο με το χαμόγελο και την αγάπη μου

It is worth waking up every morning

To keep dreaming and creating a better world with my smile and my love

Ça vaut se réveiller tous les matins

Pour continuer de rêver et créer un meilleur monde avec mon sourire et mon amour

用我的微笑和爱来梦想，来创造更美好的世界让我们每日的晨起有了意义

Vale la pena svegliarsi ogni mattina

Per continuare Sognare gli altri e creare un mondo migliore con il mio sorriso e amore

Стоит просыпаться каждое утро,

чтобы мечтать и создавать лучший мир с улыбкой и любовью

Vale a pena acordar todas as manhãs

Para continuar a sonhar e criar um mundo melhor com o meu sorriso e o meu amo

From Individual Purpose to Collective Impact

At this point, we are honored to share the reflections of the Honorary Vice Presidents of the Communication Institute of Greece, as they were at the time that this project began, back in 2020.

These remarkable individuals are not just esteemed colleagues; they are an integral part of a dream that has shaped my life—the creation and ongoing journey of the Communication Institute of Greece. This project is not just academic; for me, it is a life’s purpose, a calling.

I chose to include these exceptional people because each one is truly unique.

Not only are they outstanding professionals—respected educators and leaders who inspire students and colleagues alike—but, more profoundly, they share my vision for a better world: a world built on **knowledge, empathy, and love**.

In truth, they are like family to me. Why do I care so deeply for them? Because through their actions, their values, and their ways of being, they have shown how much they matter—not just to me, but to so many others. Each of them is a living example of the kind of leadership, compassion, and purpose that can guide our society forward.

They embody the answers to some of the most important questions we can ask:

- What do we truly need in this world?
- Why do we need it?
- How can we find it?
- How can we share it?
- And how can we create something even greater—**together**?

What we need—now more than ever—are high-quality role models.

We need high-quality educators. High-quality leaders. High-quality *human beings*.

This is how we change the world.

This is how our brief path through life gains meaning.

This is how we become better—and spark change that helps others become better too.

We all need high-quality examples, high-quality actions, high-quality leaders, high-quality educators. This is how our world can become something better. This is how our small path of this life will have a meaning. This is how we become better, and we also provoke positive reactions for everything to become better.

In the story of *Brida* (Coelho, 2006), we are advised to trust our ability to learn. What would we be without Knowledge? Without experimenting with our curiosity of things?

“As human beings, we cannot not learn” (Siemens et al., 2020, p.1). And I couldn’t agree more with what Dr Jürgen Rudolph that wrote “managing our knowledge has probably never been this important as it is now” (Siemens et al., 2020, p. 4). The role of educators is more than crucial. Educators can change, ameliorate things. Especially the educators that were chosen to take part in this Motivational Project that you actually read!

But why especially these educators?

Coelho (2006) explains that we never truly die; we are eternal: we reincarnate and separate into more than one piece. Then we try, during our different lives, to find our other pieces. I might have discovered some of my other pieces in those great colleagues and friends, or this might just be a fairy tale with witches and miracles, like the one Coelho (2006) has written! But then again, I *believe* in fairy tales. I choose to see the world through a child’s eyes—without fear, without regret, without second thoughts.

So here we are.

I invited these ‘other pieces’ of my soul to contribute their thoughts—to answer the central question of this book: **Why is it worth waking up every morning?**

Each one offered a unique, heartfelt story.

Let us now listen to the voices of these extraordinary “doctors”—not just of the mind, but of the heart—who have touched lives around the world.

Let us discover, through their words, why it is worth waking up each and every morning.

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Why is it worth waking up each Morning?

People like Us: Encouraging and Including Thoughts in Hard Times....

Karl-Heinz Pogner, Ph.D.

Associate professor, Department of Management, Society, and Communication,
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark &
Community Vice President, Communication Institute of Greece.

Why is it worth waking up every morning?

To have a cold bath / swim in the morning, in summer and in winter

Jede Morjen fängst dau oan un dus deich kaal boaden oder schwemmen. Emm Suuma wie im Wanta

(Trierer Platt, dialect from the city where I was born)

Jeden Morgen mit einem kalten Bad oder Schwimmen starten, im Sommer wie im Winter

(German)

At begynde hver morgen med en kold gys eller svømmetur, både om sommeren og om vinteren

(Danish)

Karl-Heinz Pogner; Pocket Philosopher, Winter Swimmer, Beer Enthusiast, (T shirt-) Communication Researcher & ComInG's Vice President of International Communities, proudly presents **People like us: Encouraging and including thoughts in hard times....**

Pocket philosopher, #Staythefuckhome!



I am not sure how hard these Corona times really are for me. I am in a comfortable position, not having to fear losing my job, being able to work from my #homeoffice / #justanotheroffice (with my wife's #homeoffice just next-door) and supported by my digital and analog #homelibrary / #emergencylibrary. Even coaching and working with 'my' students on their projects works well — once we learned to cope with the enabling and constraining aspects of Information & Communication Tech. I am enjoying the privilege of relaxing and cocooning in my #homebar, #homecafé, and #homerestaurant with great food from our favourite restaurants, which

have transformed into takeaways, with marvellous deliveries from my favourite organic web grocery and my favourite pub and breweries. My professional and social life with colleagues and friends nearby and around the world still works fine — including organising, participating in and convening virtual conferences; but also visiting virtual pubs, including my local watering hole, participating in virtual pub quizzes and virtual beer tastings. Alas, no complaints from my side. Many people in the world have many more reasons to worry about, to be afraid of, to complain about, and to protest against. It is a tough situation, and these are hard times for many, no doubt!

Live is too short for..., but on the other side....

My pocket philosophy (Eagle, 2018), grounded on the premises / propositions / suppositions [you choose] that life is too short for many, many things, it still works. Live is too short for bad French movies, boring people, opportunists, friends who are no friends, bad temper...and bad beer (the following joke may contain profanity: "What do American beer and sex in a canoe have in common? They're both f...ing close to water"; <https://upjoke.com/canoe-jokes>). Moreover, after 40 years of hard work, a lot of fights and frustrations and at least some successes, I think I have found my way through this life. I am not sure when the transition from young wild boy to old still-going-strong man took place. However, I am sure about one of my insights: "It" (LIFE) is not only about me, "it" (LIFE) is about being together with others, and "it" (LIFE) is about them and our (= THEIR and MY) shared responsibility for and solidarity in fighting against injustice, inequality, incompetence, and ignorance.

When it comes to our planet (please remember saving the earth, as it is the only planet with beer), “it” (LIFE) is about the people living on it, struggling with living on it and trying to save it and even to make it a better place.

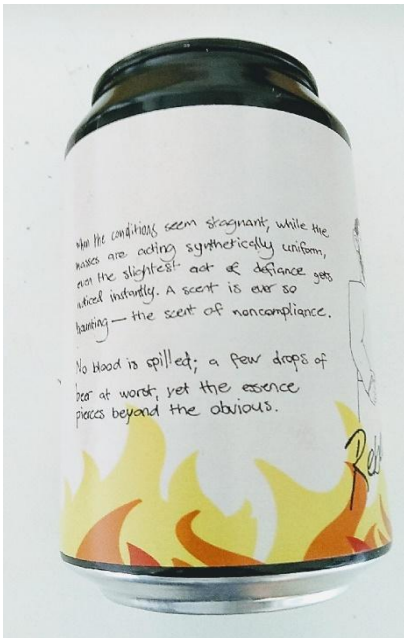


In conclusion, “it” (LIFE) is about enjoying life, the marvellous and sensational in the mundane, or as Louis Aragon has coined it: the *merveilleux quotidien* (Aragon 1926) — without a bad conscience, but not without standing up and supporting others in their fight against injustice, inequality, incompetence, and ignorance — whenever it makes sense and is possible.

For this reason, the remainder of this essay is no longer about my pocket philosophy nor about myself, but about the marvellous and sensational of an everyday artefact: It is about a beer can for a Kölsch-ish style beer and about the story and people behind it.

Rebel's Cologne and Social Revolution by Beer





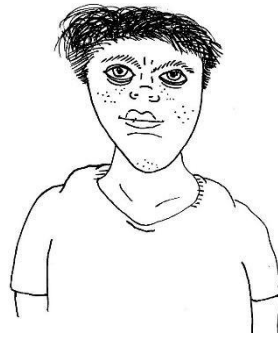
“When the conditions seem stagnant, while the masses are acting synthetically uniform, even the slightest act of defiance gets noticed instantly. A scent is ever so haunting — the scent of noncompliance. No blood is spilled; a few drops of beer at worst, yet the essence pierces beyond the obvious.” This poem by Simon Vesterø, accompanied by the artwork of Sylvester (Sylle) Holm Kappel, concisely tells the story of the socio-economic enterprise and brewery *People Like Us* and their idea of a “Social Revolution by Beer”. *People Like Us* are on a mission “to brew great craft beer to be sold worldwide, create a lot of jobs for people from socially marginalised groups—hoping to inspire others to do the same, [and to] challenge the societal conception of normality and communities.”

People Like Us (PLU) started as a brewing company founded by Lars and Jesper Carlsen. Lars worked as a schoolteacher and Jesper as a psychologist. They have been working “with people with diagnoses” for many years. The business model of *People Like Us* is a for-profit and socio-innovative business “working on developing and spreading new social business understandings.” Their mission is to brew outstanding craft beer and make a serious, sustainable business out of it. PLU is primarily a platform for a range of projects and business units and for developing and running more of them, e.g., outsourcing its employees to other companies.

The PLU team counts about 30 people, 85% of whom have one or more diagnosis/es. As they put it themselves: “Some of us are autists, some have ADHD, some have depression or anxiety; some are war veterans with PTSD, and some don’t have any diagnosis at all.... Common to us all is that we’re hired to do what we’re good at, and we are dedicated to usefully contributing to a working community. We are committed to making a difference—to the benefit of ourselves and the world around us.”



Brewery Artist Sylle



Identity Developer Simon



Welfare Revolutionist Lars
(Founder & CEO)

(Copyright for all cartoons: Sylvester Holm Kappel)

This work of art, craftsmanship, social entrepreneurship, along with its ideas and values, is the result of enthusiasm, compassion, empathy, social responsibility, let's just-do-it philosophy of the people behind all this (they are nevertheless "people like us"!) and collaborating with some of the hippest avant-garde breweries and nerds. All these are terrific reasons for why to get up in the morning...stay up...and stand up the rest of the day! Let us be—at least in-between—people like them! Or, is it people like us?

Karl-Heinz Pogner

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"Blue, but not Blues" ©Karl-Heinz Pogner (artwork & photo)

A Gift of Time

Sophie Karanickolas, M.Ed.

Associate Professor, Principal Fellow of the UK HEA; PLUS 2 Education Consultant, Australia &
Vice President of Learning Innovations and International Relations, Communication Institute of Greece

“When you have faith, you have freedom, you have love” (Father Makarios, 2009).

Faith is an individual belief that provides people with a purpose, in any time and/or context. The Cambridge Dictionary explains it as *“a high degree of trust or confidence in something or someone”*. This ‘something or someone’ could be a faith in one’s God, faith in modern science, in medicine, in nature, in humanity, in family, and the list goes on. The important part here is that when you have a deep faith in your belief, whatever that belief maybe, you have the freedom of thought to find meaning in your existence. Your faith provides you with a positive level of energy that can be transferred to others through the expression of love. Globally, we are in a time of ‘isolation’, with the intent of protecting our communities from a wider COVID-19 infection. It gives me great solace to think that I am contributing to the protection of the wider community by undertaking this ‘isolation’. However, I also view this enforced isolation, as an actual gift of time. We have been given space to reflect and explore our faith more deeply, and a space to care for those whom we love most dearly.

When we reflect on the last few decades, it is obviously clear that as humans, we were robbed of time and space to spend on the important things of life. Instead, our very busy lives were driven by technology, career success, financial gains, and general excess at the expense of others and consequently, at the expense of our planet. The more we had, the more we needed. We found excuses as to why we needed to travel widely, have countless holidays, invest in properties, upgrade our cars, and the list goes on. Many of us had access to so much while others had access to so little—but none of us had the time to reflect on the effect that our achievements and busy lives were having on others. Our many exciting experiences soon started to fuse into one.

We struggled to remember the smaller details of these so-called amazing experiences that differentiated one from the other. In fact, this current health pandemic that we are facing worldwide is a result of all our excesses and greed for more new and exciting opportunities to address our underlying boredom and emptiness. Meanwhile, our brothers and sisters lived in poverty, squalor, disease, and war. Our planet was being assaulted by this greed of ours. Mother Earth responded in the form of tsunamis, earthquakes, drought, famine, and the devastating 2020 Australian bushfires that ravaged the country's wild and wonderful landscape. It is no wonder we find ourselves here in 2020. However, this pandemic has the potential to unite us as a human race. We are all going through the same 'isolation' all at the same time, rich and poor, young and old. The world needs this pause. Mother Earth needs to recover from our abuse, and our humanity needs to recover from our spiritual neglect.

So now we have been given this gift of time and simplicity, although it may not be for long. It is time to spend thinking of others and reflecting on becoming better human beings. It is time to practice our faith, find courage and love. In this 'pause' of time, we are beckoned to free ourselves from some of the worthless acquisitions and activities that previously cluttered our thoughts, lives, and hearts. We have been given this space to read, study and learn new skills, but most importantly to use this new time to connect with and reach out to our wider family and friends. For the first time, we can rethink the use of the internet for positive purposes, to check up on friends and family, despite being socially distanced, to research and to discover new knowledge. In the words of St Paisios of Mount Athos, *"Study is a gift. With study the soul is warmed"* (Build Habits, 2019). So, like the Monks of Mount Athos, let us spend this time in retreat to warm our souls. Let us pray for the safety of all, especially for our selfless health workers, our teachers, and all who are fighting this disease on the frontlines to protect us. Let's grow through learning and reflection, using our academic skills as our gift to be able to foster all that is wonderful, whilst we wait for our world to recover through renewal and regeneration.

Sophie Karanicolas

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Waking Up is Only the Start of Something Special

Michael A. Altamirano, Ph.D.

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Vice President of Strategic Management, Communication Institute of Greece



© M. Altamirano

I wake up every morning with a desire to learn more about myself and how I can continue to serve my community as a role model and leader. I am not sure if I am an effective leader or not. I have never sought out recognition for doing what I am supposed to do. My approach to leadership is to serve those around me and assist in their pursuit to be better people. I consider myself successful at it because I am satisfied with what I have accomplished thus far. There are no special secrets to success. I believe individual achievement is possible through a combination of best practices and good habits. My obligation is to help educate and foster future leaders. I take this charge seriously and with full commitment.

During difficult times, I find my motivation through future positive outcomes. I will always be the unwavering optimist. Things do not always turn out the way one expects, but an optimistic nature will put one in prime position for good things to happen. My positive nature starts and ends with my belief in God. I know that God always places me in the right position to receive His blessings. Even when misfortune strikes, I will focus on everything going right instead of what went wrong. Faith is a strong attribute for a leader. Faith will help keep one focused during the most difficult of times.

I wake up every morning and listen to the calls of those around me. A good leader listens and empathises with his/her people. You cannot always expect society as a whole to share your level of optimism. We all experience tough times in life, but if you possess the ability to listen to and understand

others, you will be blessed with the ability to guide those from darkness into light. This will happen when you believe that you can make a difference... Believe.

I find motivation in the just and fair treatment of all individuals. Treat people fairly and conduct your business and your personal life in an ethical manner. Others will notice and emulate your actions. Lead by example. You have the ability to inspire others through your model of hard work.

The ability to see the sunrise every day gives me hope. It gives me the opportunity to appreciate the things we often take for granted...enjoy the journey. Enjoy all the special moments life has to offer. Spend quality time with your family because work is not everything. Be an unconditional friend to those who are close to you. Lastly, be a good citizen and give back to your community. The world needs more people who are willing to do what is right.

Michael A. Altamirano

It is Not at All Worth Waking Up Every Morning

Christian Schnee, Ph.D.

Lecturer in Politics, IES – Institute for the International Education of Students, United Kingdom &
Vice President of Politics and Public Affairs, Communication Institute of Greece.

Why is it worth waking up every morning? The most troubling thought arguably: **It is not at all worth waking up every morning.** If it were not for blatant economic necessity, the chances are that a good number of us would struggle to see the point: Why drag ourselves out of bed, suffer the commute on bus or underground, elbow our ways through crowded cities to end up in nondescript offices, mindful that by the time we get liberated from our professional cages, the sun is to disappear at the horizon and we better set the alarm clock for the next morning. So, frankly, it is the sheer material force that eggs us on.

Admittedly, there are exceptions. My neighbours report that their offspring is up at 6 am—most astoundingly, by their own accord—to indulge in games and to play with the latest toys. Only a few of us are privileged enough to keep this childlike passion alive. A friend of mine was a keen sailor, and you could see him trundle down to the port in the early hour to ready his boat for the day's tour.

Now, that leaves the rest of us to wonder, what is the point? What is the point of hauling ourselves out of bed on a dark, grim winter's day? And perhaps the answer is to do with a more persuasive strain of self-manipulation. Zack Goldsmith, the former Conservative mayoral candidate in London, serves as an example to highlight my point. He is the scion of an immensely rich family; if there could ever be anyone who does not feel the need to knuckle down and work in order to pay the bills, it would be he. And yet, he did get up: He chose not to spend his life ambling between bed and sofa, interspersed with frequent visits to bars and nightclubs and the occasional workout in the private gym in his basement. No, he chose to commit. He sought and accepted a task that paid so little that the remuneration would not even be of interest to his tax accountant, let alone Her Majesty's Tax Office. He became a Member of Parliament and later London's mayoral candidate. None of these jobs did anything to boost his material status and livelihood.

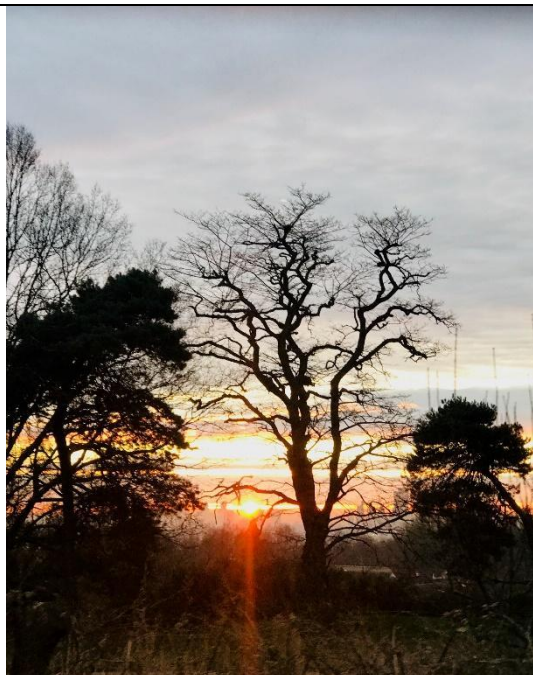
But these jobs did a lot to give him a purpose in life. He consciously nudged himself to recognise a task, identify challenges, and address the activities and needs he had artificially created for himself for one reason—or so I would argue: To understand why it is worth getting up in the morning.

Christian Schnee

Healing Forward

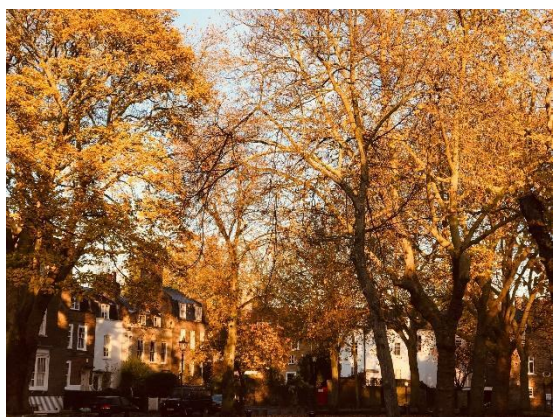
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© Fotini Diamantidaki

(Hampstead Heath, London, UK)



© Fotini Diamantidaki

(Highgate, Pond Square, London, UK)

Healing forward

Following the path in the garden,
Finding the time to play with kids,
Calming the sense of carelessness,
Following our path heavy in delight,
Sailing our minds through the world.

Borrowing time, giving time, making memories.
Falling off the swing and crying happy
Playing with swords and building blocks
Hoping to fight the monsters that appear in the dark.
A big hug and everything disappears.

Waking up to the light
The dancing voices smile forward,
And there goes the fight.
Music corners and singing tunes swirl in the sky,
And fill the mighty daylight.
Rising above all is your kind nature and noble
thoughtfulness.
Keep looking towards the light.

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"Inside the river to heal and find a purpose" © Margarita Kefalaki

What You Know Can Help You Find Your Purpose

Mr Ailson J. De Moraes

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Vice President of Business and Public Affairs, Communication Institute of Greece

I wake up every morning to question myself: Can what you know help you find your purpose?

I am extremely curious! I remember well my childhood when I was always trying something different, even when playing with my friends around. Today, I feel that it is my curiosity that made me who I am—and I wake up every day to keep my curiosity alive. This gives me a sense of purpose in my life. Have you ever heard the expression “Curiosity killed the cat”? It’s a strange expression, but the idea behind it is that curiosity can lead you into a potentially dangerous situation—curiosity is not safe. This one odd phrase has been leading people away from thinking curiously for centuries. Living according to this phrase is unfortunate. ***“Ones who live their lives without curiosity are living without one of the key elements of true genius.”***

Curiosity is simply defined as “the desire to know and learn about anything” ([Dictionary.com](#)). I would like to expand on that definition by adding that curiosity as an insatiable approach to life and an unrelenting quest for **continuous learning**. If you live a life rooted in curiosity, you will always want to know more. In addition, you will never be fully satisfied with any answer you receive because you will believe that there is always more that can be learned.

Albert Einstein, one of the most well-known geniuses of all time, revolved his life around the concept of curiosity. Einstein noted the importance of curiosity in the human mind when he stated: "I have no special talent, I am only passionately curious" ([Top 21 Albert Einstein Quotes](#)). Einstein’s inventions and life show that, when you set out to find the answers to every question you have, certainly good things will come from it. An article published by [Anderson University](#) on the subject of curiosity outlined Donald Latumahina’s four reasons for why living curiously is important: It makes your mind active instead of passive, it makes your mind observant of new ideas, it opens up new possibilities, and it brings excitement into your life.

"I have no special talent, I am only passionately curious."

Albert Einstein

For children, curiosity comes naturally, but because of the standardisation and rigidity of most school systems, this innate gift gets erased or at the very least buried. I am glad to say I did not allow the system to stop me from being curious, and this is why curiosity is what makes me wake up every day. By being curious, one can develop new ideas—under the present situation (COVID-19), society needs more people with creative ideas in different areas, from how to teach online to create a new vaccine (one hopes soon).

Sir Ken Robinson, the famous TED speaker and British author, says that “creativity is important as literacy” and that “imagination is the source of every form of human achievement,” but, unfortunately, “it’s the one thing that we are systematically jeopardising in the way we educate our children and ourselves.” This is why **curiosity has become a skill that must be re-learned consciously and carefully developed.** More than ever, we need people to be more curious, and in my everyday life, this is exactly what I try to do—waking up with a curious mind makes me alive! If you are looking to develop a curious mind that will lead you to your **creative genius**, you can start by understanding that **great minds ask questions.** This is exactly what Socrates is famous for teaching. To lead a life of a creative genius, you must question everything you know in order to develop your own knowledge and opinions on subjects. You cannot allow the government, corporations, religious institutions, or even those family members and friends who are near and dear to think and develop your opinions for you.

By blindly following information and opinions from others without asking your own questions regarding the subject, you allow your brain to become complacent, hindering your own growth and, at risk of being too blunt, completely wasting your entire life.

Wake up every day with a single purpose in your mind—how to develop your curiosity and use your genius within. To get started on your journey to unique genius through curiosity, you can begin by asking yourself some of these questions:

- **Who are my most inspiring role models?**
- **What is my heart's deepest desire?**
- **What legacy would I like to leave behind?**

These questions will allow you to think deeply about your life and lead you to question the values you hold, how they were developed, and why you consider them important. This type of intrinsically curious thinking encourages you to explore every area of your life, expanding your mind in ways that you never thought possible. This type of thinking leads to developing your true identity and therefore leads you to a finding a fulfilling purpose within your life, one that uses your genius the way it's intended to be used! Wake up, and make things happen around you. Society needs you!

Mr Ailson J. De Moraes

Take a minute to think about ...
Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic
So, why is it for you worth to wake up each morning?

For Pr Carolin Rekar Munro, it is worth waking up each day for

"Listening for What your Life Intends to Do with You' ...

Listening for What your Life Intends to Do with You

Carolyn Rekar Munro, Ph.D.

Professor of Leadership, Faculty of Management, Royal Roads University, Canada &
Vice President of Leadership Development, Communication Institute of Greece.

Walk with me...

On a brilliantly sunny and crisp morning in spring, let's make our way from the kitchen in my home where the wood stove is crackling, through the French doors, and out to the veranda where we sit on comfy patio chairs with a blanket over our shoulders, sipping coffee and watching the sun peak over the mountain top. Mother Nature is awake with the promise of a glorious day ahead. Hummingbirds, dressed in majestic coats of bright emerald green and red-orange, cavort at the birdfeeder and jockey for the perfect perch from which to drink; an eagle soars effortlessly yet mindfully overhead; the wind whispers gently in the acacia trees; and the garden is bursting with an artist's palette of fiery reds, festive yellows, and striking purples amidst the sprawling woodland ferns. Animal tracks through the garden signal the ritualistic night voyage of raccoons and deer who are now long gone. Inhale deeply, slowly, and intentionally the crisp air with its fragrant garden lavender and herbs gently caressing the senses.

I brought you purposefully to the sanctity of the great outdoors, where peace and tranquility have the power to quiet our minds and nourish our hearts and souls. It is a place of refuge from the stark reality of the seismic and sudden global crisis that has robbed us of the everyday normalcy in our lives—a normalcy that perhaps slipped away without the gratitude it deserved, and a normalcy that we now yearn for. If we embrace the quiet, we can bring to light the purity of why it is worth waking up every morning. And if we listen carefully, we may come to know what Victor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, meant when he said, "I have something significant yet in life to do" (Frankl, 1959).

In this place of reflective solitude, we are invited to shift our perspective and to think—in a new way—about the situation we all find ourselves currently in. Specifically, we are encouraged to set ourselves free of the persistent and agonising question, *When will this pandemic be over?* and ask ourselves a new question, *How am I called to show up and add value in the eye of this storm?*

During a time that has ravaged a path of health and economic destruction across the world, how can you channel your personal and unique leadership to make this a stepping stone to something positive? How are you called to be in service to others in meaningful and productive ways? What good things are you meant to do or offer right now?

We often think about leadership as that which is reserved for those who have a position or a title; hence, we expect them to absorb most, if not all, the responsibility of leading us during difficult times. On the contrary, each of us has unique leadership gifts and talents to offer, if we choose to do so; and, during a crisis, imagine the impact on our communities when we give to each other the blessing of our presence. Having said this, how can you begin this journey, with the smallest of gestures to guide, to console, to uplift, or to be a steady hand when someone is faltering? Watch and listen to how your singular act of goodness can have a positive impact on those around you. Crisis reveals what is inside us. For it is in times of crisis that the real leaders show up, early, often, with strong and enduring values as their compass; clarity in their mission; and an abundance of faith, hope, and light.

As you venture onward to discover your personal “why” for waking up every morning, Parker Palmer offers this prudent advice, “Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you” (Palmer, 2017).

I wish you an open mind, an attentive ear, and an understanding heart.

And I invite you to...

Walk with me.

Carolyn Rekar Munro

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Wisdom and Love in a Paradoxical Age of Increasing Ignorance

Jürgen Rudolph, Ph.D.

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To answer Margarita Kefalaki's initial question: Why do I find it worthwhile waking up every morning? In short, as a lifelong learner, researcher, and educator, I have a passion for knowledge. Knowledge keeps expanding exponentially; every day, there is so much to learn. It is important to me to reflect on current events, read texts that are recent as well as from different epochs, and hone my own writing along the way.

To some extent—and admittedly, depending on where we live and under what circumstances—we live in a golden age, as we have the *library of everything* at our fingertips. In the future, we may even carry *petabytes* (10^{15} bytes) of information in our purse or wallet—millions of books; billions of articles and essays; millions of songs; trillions of images; and billions of hours of movies, videos, TV shows, and short films (Kelly, 2016). To cite a famous quote by cyberpunk writer William Gibson: “The future is already here—it's just not very evenly distributed” (The science in science fiction, 1999).

While people like Kevin Kelly and me may get excited about the library of everything, it is arguable that things do not look all that rosy for much of humankind globally. At the time of writing, the novel coronavirus weighed heavily on most people's minds and is continuing to lead to much suffering and human tragedy, record unemployment, and business failures worldwide. In light of COVID-19, universities around the globe have also been forced to quickly consider online strategies in lieu of the traditional face-to-face delivery (Crawford et al., 2020).

From a historical perspective, COVID-19 will hopefully soon become a blip or at least a distant memory. However, I do have grave concerns that economic inequality will become even more drastic in the near future. Innovators, investors, and shareholders are the beneficiaries of the Fourth Industrial Revolution—leading to a rising gap in wealth between those who own capital and those who depend on their own labour (Schwab, 2016). A few years ago, the bottom half of the global population collectively owned less than one per cent of global wealth, with one billion people earning less than one dollar a day, and the 62 richest people in the world holding as much wealth as the entire bottom half of humankind (Schwab, 2016; Harari, 2016)! It is everybody's guess whether inequality will be perpetuated at such a depressing level, or get better or even worse.

At present, no thanks to the coronavirus, we witness, for instance in the U.S., unemployment increasing at breakneck speed and leading to further impoverishment and deepened inequality, while the stock market (for instance, the S&P 500) rallies (Hiltzig, 2020), leading to further wealth creation for the minority of Americans who own shares.

Reflecting on inequality and injustice could easily lead to cynicism and nihilism, and to return to Margarita Kefalaki's initially posed question, make us reject the idea of getting out of bed—unless, of course, like the vast majority of people, we need to get out of bed anyway, to earn a living or because of other duties. Most readers of my humble reflection are likely to be fortunate to do *productive* work (i.e., work that we plan, produce, and see the result of). However, and with apologies to sensitive readers, many people have *shit jobs* (largely blue-collar work that is beneficial to society, but workers are underpaid and treated badly) or *bullshit jobs* (largely well-paid white-collar work that is pointless and unnecessary, but employees pretend otherwise) (Graeber, 2018; Rudolph, 2018). Both kinds of undesirable jobs see people, at times, transformed into alienated automatons and a commodity.

While I personally have much understanding as well as some sympathy for the disenchanted and cynical, this is not my approach, and I would like to counter-propose a biophilic love of life. Erich Fromm (2006)—many of whose relatives died in Nazi concentration camps—convincingly argued that love is the answer to the problem of human existence. The practice of any art requires discipline, concentration, and patience, and that includes the art of loving (Fromm, 2006). An important part of *education*—derived from *e-ducere*, which literally means to lead forth, or to bring out something that is potentially present—is for teachers to model mature, loving persons (Fromm, 2006).

In Fromm's perspective, love not only requires effort but also knowledge. The Delphic motto "know thyself" comes to mind. Around 2,500 years ago, both Socrates and Laozi thought of it as a high attainment that they knew that they did not know (Fromm, 2006)—in other words, they were knowledgeable about their ignorance. Millenia later, modern science has brought us the willingness to admit ignorance and the consequent striving for new knowledge. It assumes that we do not know everything, with nothing being sacred and beyond challenge: "it accepts that the things that we think we know could be proven wrong as we gain more knowledge" (Harari, 2014, pp. 250-251). The Truth has been replaced by *truths*, and there is a constant need for questioning what we think that we know.

Knowledge has become paradoxical. With our knowledge increasing at breakneck speed, we should understand the world better and better. But the very opposite is happening. Our new-found knowledge leads to faster economic, social, and political changes. As Harari in *Homo Deus* (2016, p. 59) writes: “Consequently, we are less and less able to make sense of the present or forecast the future.... [I]n 2018, we have no idea how the world will look like in 2050”. With the paradoxical explosion of knowledge, our ignorance is paradoxically expanding even more so. Although we know vastly more about the universe than we did a century ago, every answer breeds more new questions, and we do not know much at all relative to what could be known (Kelly, 2016).

Knowing that we do not know is a good thing. At the same time, we are confronted with information overload. This calls for the search for wisdom more so than ever, but it is hard to come by. “The saddest aspect of society right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom” (Isaac Asimov, cited in Kaku, 2011, p. 405). Without wisdom and love, we are left to drift aimlessly and without purpose, alienated from our fellow humans and from nature. As Fromm (2006, pp. 80-81) observed about Western society already in 1956: “The world is one great object for our appetite, a big apple, a big bottle, a big breast, we are the sucklers, the eternally expectant ones, the hopeful ones—and the eternally disappointed ones”.

I share Margarita Kefalaki’s spirit of positivity and would like to end this reflection with five commandments. These are largely for myself, and the readers are invited to reflect on them, adjust them further, and come up with their own precepts.

- (1) Be a lifelong learner—know how to learn (metacognition). All of us will be endless newbies in the future simply trying to keep up. “Endless newbie is the new default for everyone, no matter your age or experience” (Kelly, 2016, p. 11). Read discerningly and voraciously, do Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), or try whatever works for you (know your personal learning preferences). Apply and share your knowledge!
- (2) Be inquisitive and ask good questions. “The important thing is not to stop questioning” (Einstein, cited in Calaprice, 2000, p. 67).
- (3) Pause and reflect. “To attain knowledge, add things every day. To attain wisdom, remove things every day” (Laozi, cited in Gurteen, n.d.). “In an age of acceleration, nothing can be more exhilarating than going slow.... And in an age of distraction, nothing is so luxurious as paying attention. And in an age of constant movement, nothing is so urgent as sitting still” (Pico Iyer, quoted in Schwab, 2016, p. 102). Activity may be disguised as passivity, and apparent passivity may be the most meaningful activity (Fromm, 2006).

(4) Master a variety of skills and connect the dots. Be like a modern-day hunter-gatherer.

(5) Grow your time via a healthy lifestyle. Epigenetics shows the critical importance of sleep, nutrition, and exercise in our lives. A healthy lifestyle may have a positive impact on the way we think and feel. It may also be life-prolonging.

Jürgen Rudolph

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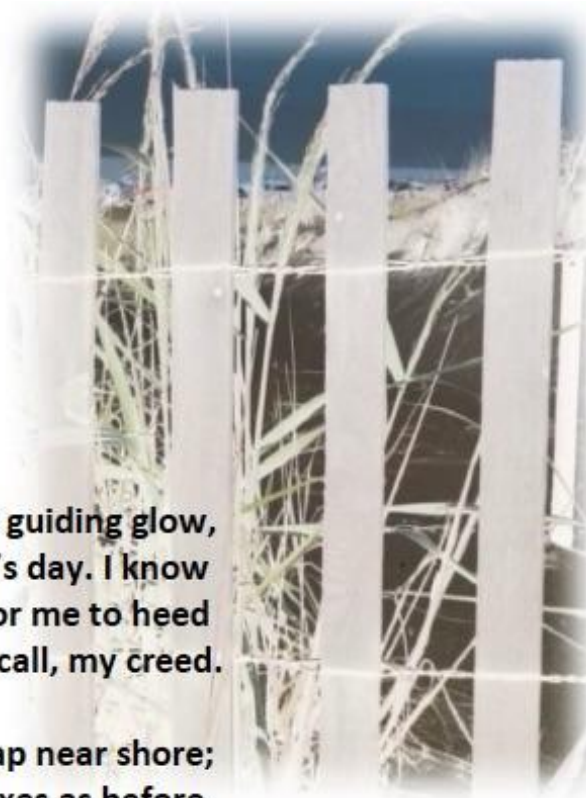
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Moons

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Moons

**A moon has shed its guiding glow,
no tide to call dawn's day. I know
that dawn did rise for me to heed
my ken, my kin, my call, my creed.**

**Laconic loops now lap near shore;
dawn wanes not waxes as before.
Old moons that rose of yesterday
might rise tomorrow—not today.**

**Must I still rise to moons of myth
forever night-etched hieroglyphs
if tides and dawns yet wait to be
awakened by new moons in me?**

Poem and Photo © 2020 by Robert J. Bonk, Ph.D.

Visual Inspirations

Inspiration is everywhere around us and mainly inside us!

MK

In this special section, I invite you to experience not only the written reflections, but also the visual stories that have shaped this journey. Each photo featured here was shared with love—captured by myself, by colleagues, by students and friends from around the world. These images freeze moments of beauty, connection, and inspiration.

Accompanied by short reflections or heartfelt captions, these photos aim to touch the soul and remind us: Sometimes, it only takes a glance to feel something deeply.

Sometimes, an image is all it takes to remember why we wake up each morning.

I have chosen to share a few images that, for me, sparked deep inspiration and motivation. Through these pictures, I hope to offer small but powerful reminders of the beauty and meaning that surround us—if we choose to see it.

The photographs that follow are not just visual moments; they are examples of what I like to call *simple inspirational trips*. Because inspiration doesn't require grand journeys. It doesn't depend on where we are. It lives both around us and *within* us.

As the saying goes, *a picture is worth a thousand words*. And sometimes, one glance is all it takes to awaken a thousand feelings.

Additionally, I truly believe that everything depends on perspective—on how we choose to see the world around us. When we focus on the positive, we often invite more of it into our lives. So, let's do our best to smile, to connect, to share, and to communicate with kindness. Through this lens of positivity, we can help shape a more beautiful world—not just for ourselves, but for others, now and in the days to come.

Let yourself be inspired by everything: the clouds, the sky, the smallest acts of kindness, or a simple smile exchanged on the street. Life is too short—and far too precious—to be taken for granted. This is our only chance to live it fully.

Let's make the best of the time we have.

Look around you.

Look inside of you.

Get inspired.



“Love is everywhere”, Greece © *Margarita Kefalaki*

Love is everywhere

Love is everywhere, even in the sky. **The Heart in the Sky shows us the way.**

Nature mirrors the messages we most need to hear. This heart-shaped cloud reminds us that love is always there, if we simply look up and stay open to wonder.

I looked up, and there it was—a perfect heart floating gently among the clouds. It felt like the universe was sending me a quiet message, a reminder that love is always present, even in the sky.

That day, I paused. I breathed. And I smiled with a kind of peace that can’t be explained—only felt.

It was as if the sky had written a love letter, just for me.



"Between storm and serenity, there is always light.", Greece © *Margarita Kefalaki*

Between storm and serenity, there is always light

It is true that between storm and serenity, there is always light.

I remember standing there, watching the sky shift between shadow and light.

This photo captures the delicate dance between opposing forces—light and dark, clarity and uncertainty, stillness and movement. The clouds gather, but the blue-sky refuses to vanish. The bare branches, reaching in from either side, remind us of resilience—of nature's silent strength during the waiting seasons.

In life, too, we stand between moments of brightness and shadow. This image whispers a quiet truth: no matter how heavy the clouds may seem, there is always a patch of sky—of possibility—waiting to emerge. It is in these in-between spaces that we often find our greatest growth.



“The moon and the sun are always near” © *Margarita Kefalaki*

The moon and the sun are always near

We turn around and see what we can (or what we want to) see.
Sometimes, what’s closest becomes invisible.

We grow used to the light, to the rhythm of presence,
and forget to notice the quiet ways we are held —
by a glance, a memory, or even the steady passing of time.

The sun rises whether we are ready for the day or not.
The moon follows, watching silently, never demanding.
They don’t ask us to understand them —
only to remember that light and shadow are never far apart.

What we choose to see says more about us
than about what’s really there.
Still, they remain — steady, patient, near —
reminding us that constancy doesn’t always come with noise.
That even in solitude, we are accompanied.



"Together We Can", Greece © Margarita Kefalaki

Together We can

"Together We Can". This is so true. Together we can indeed.

The birds stood so close, as if whispering secrets only they could understand. I watched them and thought about how love doesn't always shout; sometimes it simply shows up quietly, on two sets of tiny feet, looking into each other's eyes. It reminded me that connection can happen anywhere, even in the most unexpected corners of the world.

Standing side by side—present, calm, connected. There is no fear, no hesitation. Only companionship. This simple moment, caught on an ordinary path, speaks volumes: *together we can*, we are stronger, braver, more complete. Differences need not divide us—they can deepen our understanding, our empathy, and our power to co-create.

Let this photo remind us that unity begins in small gestures: standing beside another, listening, showing up. Whether in friendship, in learning, or in life, we are never meant to walk alone.



“Walking Side by Side in the Narute” Tetrakomo, Greece © Margarita Kefalaki

Walking Side by Side in the Nature

There is something profoundly beautiful about two children walking side by side in nature. Their steps are light, unburdened by the weight of years or the noise of the world. They are not in a hurry. They are not looking at a destination on a screen. They are simply walking — together — and that, in itself, is everything.

Nature becomes their silent witness. The trees, ancient and kind, lean in slightly as if listening. The wind carries their laughter like a melody only the earth understands. The path beneath their feet may twist and turn, but they walk it with wonder, trusting each step, because they are not alone.

There is no need for grand conversations. Sometimes, the most powerful bond is found in shared silence — in knowing that someone is beside you, seeing what you see, feeling the same breeze, smelling the same wildflowers. That kind of togetherness creates a quiet strength, a reminder that life is not meant to be walked alone.

In these simple moments, life teaches us something essential: that companionship does not need to be loud or perfect — it needs only to be true. Walking side by side in nature, we learn to slow down, to breathe, to connect — not just with each other, but with the world that holds us.

May we all remember to walk beside someone with the same openness and ease — whether through forests or through life. And may we never forget the beauty of taking the journey, not just for the destination, but for who we become along the way.



“Stay natural like nature” (Arta, Peta, Greece) © Margarita Kefalaki

Stay Natural Like Nature

Be inspired by everything around you. Simple and clear things are worth to be inspired of.

MK

Look at the village from a distance. Small houses resting gently on the earth, roofs kissed by sun and time, smoke curling softly from chimneys — this is life, untouched by hurry, rooted in something timeless. The village does not shout for attention. It does not need to. It simply exists in harmony with the hills, the trees, the sky. And that is what makes it beautiful.

We often think we need more — more noise, more success, more speed — to feel alive. But this quiet place reminds us that the most natural things are often the most powerful. Peace. Simplicity. A sense of belonging. The rhythm of seasons, of days that begin with birdsong and end with golden light. Here, nothing pretends to be anything else.

To “stay natural like nature” is not to be passive, but to be real. To listen more than we speak. To grow gently, like trees, without rushing. To offer what we have, like the village that welcomes strangers with open doors and warm bread. In being true to ourselves — not polished or performed — we reflect the honesty of the earth.

Nature doesn’t need filters. Neither do we. Our imperfections, our pauses, our quiet joys — they are not flawing. They are the very proof that we are human. And just like the village nestled in the hills, we are most beautiful when we are simply, honestly, ourselves.



"Some flowers for you" © Margarita Kefalaki

Some Flowers for You

Oh dear Mother Nature! How beautiful and real!

We are shown the way. We are given the means.

The question is, are we able (do we want) to understand the simplicity, the beauty, the smell, the touch? Can we find the true meaning?

A bouquet of flowers — so simple, so common — and yet, in it, lives an entire universe of grace. Each petal holds a silent story. Each color sings a quiet hymn. We look at them and see beauty, yes — but they are more than that. They are reminders. They are offerings.



© Christina Kassesian

Mother Nature, in her quiet generosity, gives without expectation. Flowers bloom not to impress us, but because blooming is what they are made for. They open, even when no one is watching. Their colors do not seek approval. Their fragrance is not a performance. They simply are.

And maybe that is the lesson. That being fully ourselves — in truth, in beauty, in vulnerability — is enough. We don't need to be grand or loud to matter. We just need to open. To offer our presence, our kindness, our authenticity, the way a flower offers its bloom.

So today, here are *some flowers for you*. A gift. A moment to pause and remember that meaning is not always hidden in the complex. Often, it is found in the simplest gestures — a touch of color, a whisper of scent, a presence that says: "I'm here. And so are you."

Let these flowers be a small miracle. Let them remind you that life is full of silent messages waiting to be heard. All we have to do is notice.



© Fotini Diamantidaki



“Travel with the River” © Margarita Kefalaki

Travel with the River

Looking at the picture of the river in the forest, I cannot but wonder:

How much beauty around us? How lucky we truly are? Are we aware?

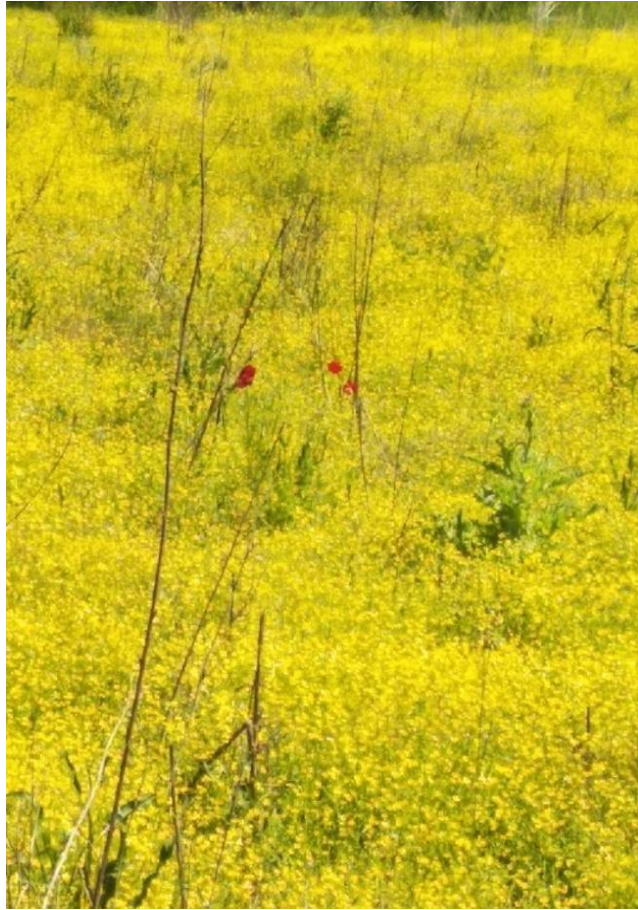
The river winds its way through the forest, unbothered by obstacles, flowing steadily over rocks, past roots, under branches. It does not stop when the path is unclear. It does not question where it's going. It just flows — and in doing so, it teaches us everything.

To travel with the river is to trust the journey. To let go of the need to control every turn. The river reminds us that life is movement — not always smooth, not always easy, but always forward. The rocks may slow it down, but they do not stop it. In fact, they shape it. Make it sing.

We often resist the currents in our lives — change, uncertainty, loss. But the river does not resist. It adapts. It bends. It carves its own way through even the hardest stone. What if we, too, could move with grace, not fear? What if we could see challenges not as barriers, but as part of the flow?

Surrounded by trees, the river is not alone. It is embraced, mirrored, sheltered. Just like us, it is part of something larger — a landscape of meaning. And just like the flowers that bloom without asking why, the river flows because that is its nature.

So, let us travel with the river. Let us stay curious, open, and brave. Let us remember that beauty is all around — not only in what we see, but in how we choose to move through this life. Gently. Purposefully. Together.



“ Pure Nature” (Tetrakomo, Greece) © Margarita Kefalaki

Pure Nature

Take a moment and think about...

Why is it worth

waking up

every morning?

Maybe the answer is closer than we think. Maybe it lies in the stillness of the trees before dawn, the way light gently slips through leaves, or the crispness of the morning air that fills our lungs with quiet energy. Pure nature doesn't ask questions. It doesn't complicate. It simply exists — raw, real, untouched — and in that purity, we rediscover what matters.

To wake up each day is to be gifted another chance. A chance to breathe in beauty. A chance to witness life unfolding with grace and purpose. The rustle of branches, the shimmer on a dewdrop, the call of a distant bird — none of it is loud, but all of it speaks.

Nature reminds us that existence itself is enough. We don't need to earn the right to feel joy or to belong. Like the earth beneath our feet, we *already do*. We are part of this great and living tapestry — not separate, not above, just *within*.

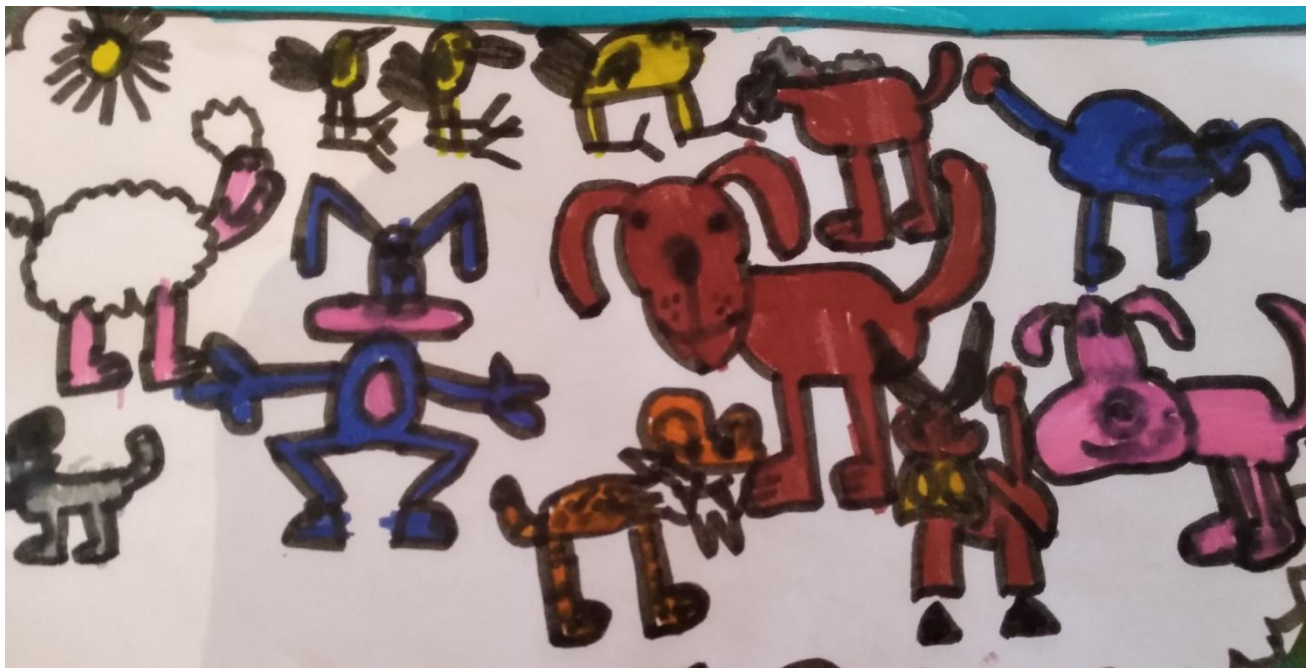
So, why is it worth waking up every morning?

Because every day is a miracle wrapped in ordinary moments.

Because there is always something to notice, to feel, to love.

Because pure nature continues to breathe, and so do we.

And that, in its simplicity, is more than enough.



“The Magical Garden of Happy Creatures”, by Alexandros © Margarita Kefalaki (photo)

The Magical Garden of Happy Creatures

In a world where lines don't need to be perfect and colors speak louder than rules, there is a magical garden where joyful creatures exchange, communicate, live happily together. Drawn by the pure hand of a little child (Alexandros was 4 years old at the time), each animal reminds us of the wonder that lives in all of us, if we just remember how to feel and create like a child.

At the picture, a blue bunny with wide arms welcomes us like an old friend, its playful pose saying, “*Come as you are.*” Pink dogs smile without worry, brown puppies and other little animals close to each other like families who know to love. Even the sheep — with fluffy white wool and bright pink legs — looks like it has just come back from an adventure in the clouds.

These aren't just animals. They are symbols. Of joy. Of unity. Of bold creativity that doesn't ask for permission. No one is trying to look the same, and yet they all belong. There is no such thing as too bright, too different, too odd. Here, every shape has a place. Every color is allowed to shine.

What if our world were more like this drawing?

What if we celebrated the things that make us unique?

What if we let love and laughter guide our designs, instead of fear or comparison?

A child's drawing is more than art — it is a message.

A small, powerful reminder that beauty lives in freedom, and that magic begins where imagination runs wild. So, let us hold onto this picture, not just with our hands, but with our hearts. Let it whisper to us on quiet days, "You, too, are a creator. You, too, can bring joy into this world."

And maybe, just maybe, that is what it means to live fully.



"Ready to travel for another dimension?" by Alexandros © Margarita Kefalaki (photo)

Ready to Travel to Another Dimension?

Close your eyes for a moment, and feel you are still a child. That's not your imagination. That's the entrance to magic.

It doesn't look like what grown-ups expect: silver and smooth... shaped like a rocket. It's colorful, angular, hand-drawn with joy, built with unfiltered wonder.

This ship was made by a child — which means it was made with love. With vision. With no limits. The wings reach out like questions, eager to explore what lies beyond the known. It's a machine powered by dreams and aimed at the unknown.

This drawing isn't just art — it's an invitation. It says, "You don't need a ticket, only imagination. You don't need a plan, only your smile." So whether you are five or fifty, whether the world has felt heavy or light, take this as your boarding pass.

The engines are humming. The colors are glowing. The child within you is ready.

So the only question left is — are you ready to fly?



“We Are Together Now”, by Alexandros © Margarita Kefalaki (photo)

We Are Together Now

There are moments in life that don't need words — moments when simply standing beside someone says it all. Two hearts, drawn in color and courage, lean gently into one another. Not perfectly aligned. Not identical. But deeply connected.

The colors run like stories — stripes of joy, surprise, pain, laughter, and hope. Every band tells a different story, yet together they form one rhythm. Like people. Like families. Like friendships that don't need to be the same to belong. Side by side, these hearts speak: *I see your colors, and I still stand close.*

“We Are Together Now” isn't just a title — it's a vow. A quiet celebration of finding someone, or something, or even just *yourself* again. It's a moment of arrival after wandering alone. A moment where fear softens, where you realize you're not carrying the world on your own anymore.

Made by the hands of a child, this artwork understands what many adults forget: that unity doesn't require perfection. It requires presence. It requires willingness. It requires love that shows up, even when the lines wobble.

So, if you've ever felt alone — remember these hearts. If you've ever needed to feel held — return to this image. If you've ever wanted a sign that you belong — here it is. Bright, bold, a little messy, and completely real.

Because we're not meant to walk through life alone. And no matter where you've been or how long it took to get here, the truth remains steady and glowing:

We are together now.

Be Inspired by the World around You



“The Breath of Delphi”, Greece © Nikoleta Bratsi

The Breath of Delphi

There is a place where silence speaks louder than sound — where mountains cradle the sky, and the stones remember. That place is Delphi. Not just an ancient ruin, but a living breath in the heart of Greece, where time folds inward and whispers rise from the cracks between centuries.

Walk the winding path up the sacred hill, and you'll feel it. Not with your eyes, but with something older — a stirring in the chest, a sense that you've been here before. Maybe not in this lifetime, but in the language of soul-memory. Because Delphi is not just a location. It's a message, etched in the Earth.

They say the Oracle once spoke here, her voice not her own, but filled with the fire of a god. But what if the true oracle was the place itself? The rustle of olive trees. The hush of wind curling through fallen columns. The gold-flecked sunlight flickering across ancient stone. Delphi doesn't give answers — it offers mirrors. It shows you who you are underneath the noise.

And still, people come — not with gold or sacrifice, but with questions. Quiet, private questions. About purpose. About love. About healing. About what comes next.

Delphi doesn't reply in sentences. It answers with presence. It tells you, through its stillness, that you already know. That within you is a sacred center too — an inner temple waiting to be honored. And when you leave, you carry a piece of Delphi with you: a calmness, a clarity, a strange new trust in the unknown.

So, if you ever feel lost, remember this: there is a mountain that once spoke in riddles. It still does, but now the riddles live in you. And the path is not back to Delphi, but forward — into your own mystery, your own becoming.

Because the breath of Delphi never fades. It travels. And it's already found you.

Be inspired by photos, describing your life moments ...



“A Light That Belongs to Everyone”, Stavros Niarchos Foundation,
Greece © *Margarita Kefalaki*

A Light That Belongs to Everyone

In the heart of winter, when the world is cloaked in chill and quiet, something stirs beside the sea in Athens. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center becomes more than a building. It becomes a heartbeat — pulsing with light, music, and warmth.

At Christmas, it glows not just with decorations, but with spirit. The trees shimmer with golden threads. The fountains leap in rhythm, choreographed by joy itself. Laughter rides the breeze, mixing with the scent of warm cocoa and roasted almonds. Even the air feels generous here.

But it isn't only the lights that dazzle. It's the people. Children with eyes wide as constellations. Elderly couples walking slowly, hand in hand, as if remembering something eternal. Strangers dancing together beneath strings of light, forgetting the cold and remembering how to hope.

The SNFCC doesn't ask anything of you. It welcomes you as you are — joyful or heavy-hearted, with friends or alone. Its gift is simple but rare: a moment of shared wonder. A sense that, just maybe, the world is still beautiful. Still kind.

Even the architecture joins the celebration. The sweeping glass halls reflect not just the city lights, but the dreams inside the people who gather there. Every corner sing — not loudly, but softly, like the quiet glow of a candle in a darkened room. And in this glow, something sacred is reborn: not just holiday cheer, but belonging.

You don't need to understand Greek to feel it. You don't need to buy a ticket or wear something special. The magic is already waiting for you. It doesn't belong to any one person — it belongs to all of us.

That's the true gift of this place in December: it reminds us that light was never meant to be kept. It was meant to be shared.

And here, by the water's edge, under the winter stars, it is.

Epilogue

A Closing Reflection

Just a few words to conclude this wonderful trip of intercultural collaboration

By now, it's clear: each of us carries our own reason — quiet or loud, visible or invisible — to rise each morning. No two awakenings are the same. And what a journey it has been... exploring what stirs you, me, and so many others to greet a new day.

Some mornings come easy, like sunlight slipping through open windows. Others are heavier. There are days when staying under the covers feels like the bravest choice — and that's okay. Truly. There is no shame in resting. No shame in pausing. If you ever feel alone in your struggle, please know this: you are not. We are all in the same sea, navigating its waves with different sails. Moments of doubt, sadness, or solitude don't make us weaker — they make us human.

The truth is, we spend our whole lives learning how to balance. Light and shadow. Joy and ache. Action and stillness. This delicate dance is both our strength and our tender spot. And yet, in the midst of it all, there is beauty — sometimes quiet, sometimes bursting.

I find mine in the smallest of moments. A bird's song nearby. A star slipping across the night. The sea swirling her blue gown and dancing with the sky. A soft kiss from my children. A stranger's gentle smile. A shared laugh. A kind word. The silent company of someone simply *being*. And when I offer a smile to someone else — even on my hard days — it somehow brings light back to me.

"I also pray for the strength to live the rest of my life inspiring others — my children, myself, my family, my community, my students... And I cannot help but wonder: What kind of life would I like to create? What would I like to leave behind when my journey comes to an end?"

Through this book — through a child's radiant drawings, the wisdom of those who reflect on why it's worth waking up, and the whispered stories behind every image — I've been reminded again and again: we are not alone. We are walking each other path, across borders, generations, and languages.

We are made of miracles. We create magic just by choosing to love, to see, to stay curious.

So here we are — hand in hand — in this beautiful, imperfect, extraordinary life.

Take a breath. Take my hand.

We are together now. Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic.

Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic

Why do we wake up each morning?

This book dares to ask that simple yet profound question — and celebrates the many answers we carry within us.

Through the eyes of children, the wisdom of scholars, the color of imagination, and the spark of intercultural connection, *Life is a Gift and We Are Here to Create Magic* invites you on a journey of light, reflection, and joy.

From tender drawings filled with wonder to thoughtful texts written by academics and dreamers alike, this project brings together voices from across the world — weaving them into a tapestry of hope, humanity, and shared purpose.

Whether it's a child's vision of another dimension, a heartfelt memory, or a smile exchanged with a stranger, this book reminds us that inspiration is everywhere.

Created through collaboration, love, and a belief in the little miracles of daily life, this book is more than a collection of images and words — it's a call to be inspired, to pause, to feel, to remember what truly matters.

Hold this book in your hands. Share it with someone you would like to inspire. Return to it when the days feel heavy or the mornings hard to face.

And above all, let it remind you: You are not alone. You are part of something beautiful.

And yes — we are lucky to be in this planet, it is lovely to wake up its morning, life is a gift and we are here to create magic.

Edited by Margarita Kefalaki, Founder and President of the Communication Institute of Greece (COMinG), this book reflects the Institute's mission to foster intercultural dialogue, educational collaboration, and meaningful human connection. Rooted in the belief that communication is the bridge between difference and unity, this work brings together a global community — academics, children, artists, and dreamers — in a shared expression of what makes life worth living.

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