

choose you.
claim your self. claim your worth.
you deserve your best life.



karen brandy gunton

enough by karen brandy gunton

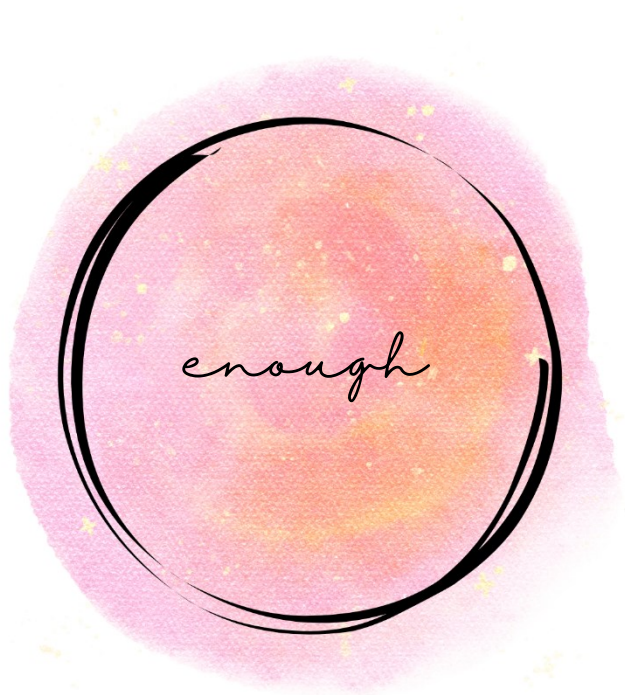
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beautiful reader,

thank you for joining me on this exploration of self and worth. before we begin can you please do one little thing? can you please say this out loud to yourself and finish the sentence...

on the day that i decide i am enough, i will _____ .

what does that look like for you?

what will you do? how will you feel? where will you go?

what will you know, think, or believe?

the one thing i want you to know for sure is that those dreams you have for yourself – for that future “enough” self – those dreams matter.

you are worthy of all those things you just listed.

and the other thing i want you to know for sure by the time you are done this little book is that you are already exactly, perfectly **enough**. exactly as you are. right now. even with all your imperfections, your challenges and struggles, your beautiful messiness, your longing, your wondering, your wandering, your missing pieces... yep, even all of that is simply and absolutely enough.



hello my friend,
may i share my story of self
exploration?

i can remember the first time i felt like i was **good...** like i was **enough**.

i was 10 and we had just moved to a new city and a new school system. at the end of grade five i received an academic award for achieving the top mark in my year level. i do not know why this came as such a surprise to me, i must have had good report cards and good grades all along, but it was perhaps the first moment i saw myself in comparison to other's achievement... the first moment i can remember knowing this about myself: *i am smart. i am the best. i am an achiever. i did good.*

i do not have a specific memory of the first time i felt like i was *not* enough. to my knowledge, i have no solid reason to have ever believed i was not enough... maybe i was just born that way, not knowing my enoughness. i grew up a white, middleclass girl in a mostly white, middleclass town. i blended in, i belonged... i was nurtured, encouraged, supported... i was never told i was not worthy of anything,

in fact i was raised to believe i was worthy and deserving of whatever i set my heart to.

yet, i seemed to be constantly striving. striving to be a good student, a good daughter, a good girlfriend and wife, a good mother, a good friend, a good employee... a good girl.

i never knew i **was good exactly as i was, i thought good was something i had to work at.**

the first time that i really thought about my struggle with enoughness was when i was in my 30s. i found myself in a new country, in a new role as a stay-at-home mother... i had left my career behind, along with all of my friends and family, and i was trying to figure out what was next. i always say that i 'accidentally' started a business – because it wasn't really what i set out to do, i was just trying to have things of my own in my life – but that journey of starting a business and then, later, learning and teaching about business really pushed all of my worthiness buttons.

who was i to do this? i was not trained enough. i was not successful enough. i was too small. i was too new.

so began my journey to build my sense of self-worth.

i could see looking back that i had always been chasing a sense of worthiness and i could see that my new pathway into building a business – then subsequently becoming an author, teacher, and speaker – would force me to figure out this worthiness struggle. i felt that this was perhaps my great challenge here in this life.

i wrote in my book RISE:

i have this theory.

i think that we each have one big thing to deal with in our lifetime... the big challenge we face, the big question we have to answer, the big obstacle we have to overcome, the big lesson we are here to learn, the big story we have been telling ourselves for a long time... that one big thing that shows up again and again in our lifetime for us to work through.

my big challenge is about enoughness. the bullshit story that seems to come up again and again in my head is: i am not enough. this is not enough. it's not unique, significant, smart, successful, special, worth enough. it's never going to land. the other side of that coin is a story about being too much: too weird, too bossy, or dangerously shining too bright.

and just when i think i have cleared that block or changed that story, it sneaks back in again!

as i have been working on finishing this book, after the period of stuckness that i have been in for the past while, it almost feels like being back at square one again. the voice in my head says: *you are not enough. this is not enough. why bother? no one cares anymore. your time to shine is over.*

oh hey there big, persistent, challenging thing... i see that you're back again...

the wound of the self.

as i reflect on my journey of worthiness, my life seems to be full of **paradox**. i am someone who quite likes to rock the boat, yet i have also felt that it was my job to keep the peace. i have longed to shine bright – to be seen, to be valued, to make a difference – but i also have been careful not to shine too bright, lest i put myself in the crosshairs or outshine someone else. i often come across as a bold, confident, leader yet i have also often felt inadequate.

as part of the work i have been doing to know myself, i came across the concept of the chiron in astrology.

chiron, in our astrological natal chart, represents our core wounds and how we can overcome them... our deepest pain buried in the core of our hearts.

chiron is the **wounded healer**. where we have pain, we gain wisdom; the wound is the gift, the teacher... the key. chiron unlocks our powers to heal. the wound is something we find incompatible or unacceptable within ourselves... something we must accept, integrate, or reconcile. chiron, in greek mythology, was a centaur – half man, half horse – so chiron as wounded healer refers to opposing natures that must be bridged.

i discovered that my chiron in aries is an identity wound, the wound of the self. it affects the sense of being, a sense that something is wrong with me, a sense that i do not have the right to be myself, a feeling like everyone else has a purpose but i wasn't given one, a feeling of shame for who i am... who i am is not enough.

the opposing nature of my wound of self is the **wounded warrior**. my wounded self feels inadequate, unworthy, broken, dim; my warrior self is all about bold confidence, self-expression, rising up, and shining bright.

learning about this was fascinating to me! it was a moment where the pieces sort of clicked into place and i thought: ohhhhh. so, this *is* just a part of who i am and

part of what i am here to heal in this lifetime. the healer's gift is their own wound, it is their teacher, it offers insight, it is their path to empathy and compassion.

the irony in discovering my identity wound is that i was exploring astrology and my natal chart as part of the work i was doing to find myself.

finding my self.

in 2018 i found myself in a phase of grief, loss, and depression. my depression started with deep, heart-aching, home sickness. first i lost my dream of home, and then i lost both my mom and my dad, and somewhere along the way i lost my self.

in 2021 i decided that i no longer wanted to be lost... my word for the year was **found** and so i embarked on a bit of an inner quest to learn about me, to remember me, to honour me, to embrace all of me, and to decide: *this is me*.

along with exploring astrology, and many other clues to learn about me, i also explored the enneagram. i am an enneagram four, the **individualist**. a four's core desire is to be unique, special, authentic. we long to be seen and loved for exactly who we are. we fear being inadequate, insignificant, or plain and have an inner feeling that we are tragically flawed, that others possess qualities we lack.

perhaps my struggle was never that i felt *not enough* or *too much*, rather it was a longing to feel *unique enough*, *significant enough*.

that is the beauty of **learning you**. it's like pieces of your own puzzle clicking into place... your spine straightens, your inner light flickers, and your eyes clear. through this process i did indeed find myself but i also found something i never guessed i would find... my worth.

the work i have been doing on identity has given me the deepest sense of my worth i have ever had. it is as though one day i realised: wow! that old story of never feeling enough has been completely rewritten.

the work i did to know myself showed me that i do indeed have a light that is all my own, my light is made up of so many layers, so many colours... i am, in fact, a goddamn rainbow. this is me and who i am is perfectly, brilliantly, exactly enough... exactly as i am right now.

what is even more wild is that as i sat down, just now, to share the story of chiron i found in my journal a note i wrote years ago: *the key to my worthiness is my identity*.

the irony is that i wanted to find myself, so i went on a journey of self-discovery and identity, within that i learned about the wound of self, and along the way i discovered

my worth... and guess what... identity truly was the key! i have been working on myself for decades... decades! only to discover that **the key to finally, deeply knowing my own worth was to deeply know myself.**

my depression started with home sickness and it lifted with coming home to myself. i lost myself in order to find myself, and in finding myself i found my worth.

amazing.

abandoning my self.

as i shared, i cannot really recall anyone ever telling me or teaching me that who i was was not ok. in fact, my parents, my friends, my family always celebrated me: *"who you are is amazing!"*

my struggle with enoughness was never about what i was *told* about me. it was perhaps about the way i *abandoned* me. (without realising!)

throughout my life i learned to tread softly. i held myself carefully. i learned when i needed to make myself small, i would be careful not to shine too bright or be too loud or bold or brash. i often longed to be different and to make a difference, yet i would retreat inwards or decide it was safer to stay on the sidelines. i did not allow myself to be large – to explore my own wild magnitude and

magnificence – and when i did, i would follow up by hiding again.

maybe i had a feeling of **not being enough** because i was literally **not being ME enough**.

i had a feeling of inadequacy not because who i *was* was inadequate but because i was inadequate at *being* who i was.

i think perhaps my full self was shrunk down to a little pebble, rattling around inside, rather than expanding to the full space of me. when i was lost, i wrote in my journal: *i feel like i am just a shadow of a self.*

i was striving to be good, to be successful... i was striving to be ME. but i think perhaps i didn't actually *know* me.

my sense of self came from who i thought i had to be – to keep peace, to have relationships, to be smart, to be successful – and i always felt not enough. but actually, all that *stuff* was not enough because it wasn't me being *me*.

i just didn't know it. because i didn't know me.

my whole life i have always been a seeker... i have been searching for the meaning of life, wondering about my purpose, looking to the universe, dreaming on stars.

i was looking outwards instead of inwards. i didn't really know myself... i was empty of my self. that is what was not enough. there was not enough true ME inside of me.

the longing came from the inside. it was always an inside job.

my wish for all of us.

your story is different to mine, your wounds came from different places, your struggle might not be the same. perhaps you feel a strong sense of worth but still find it hard to prioritise your self... or maybe you feel a bit lost as your life has changed around you... or perhaps you simply feel that life could be better than it is right now.

no matter the pathway that led you to this book, my dream for all of us is the same: that we may know our selves deeply, know that who we are is exactly enough, and know that we deserve the life we have been longing for.

right now, for me, it does feel as though a switch has finally flipped... my sense of worth and my sense of self feel deep and true. but i also know that life is a roller coaster with many ups and downs – any one of us can stumble or find ourselves off track.

we each have our own origin stories, our own pathways and roller coasters to navigate; i hope that in sharing my story and my exploration of self i have encouraged you to get curious and explore your own.

but enough about my story... what i really aim to do with this book is to compile decades worth of learnings, strategies, and inspirations surrounding worthiness together into one handy booklet... a one stop shop of lessons that we can come back to again and again and again.

what follows is a series of letters – written to my own inner, worthy, brilliant **self** and to yours too – that i hope will be actionable and powerful prompts to help each of us stand in the truth of our worthiness.

i am enough. you are enough.

and enough of anything else that tells us otherwise.



dearest you,

the seeker of meaning.

how do we make sense of this word: **worthy**. what does it really mean? and why does it feel so hard to find it in ourselves?

the definition of worthy is having worth, value, importance.

synonyms are: deserving, good, adequate, meritorious; deserving of honour or esteem.

worthiness is the quality of being good enough, suitable, having some kind of value, deserving.

for me, worthiness feels like **enoughness**; feeling unworthy feels like being either not enough of something or too much of something.

that something can include age, appearance, ability, achievement, education, experience, training, talent, intelligence, success, money, personality, physicality... and so much more.

essentially, this wound of enoughness says: *who i am, as i am right now, is a problem.*

and so we are constantly seeking our enoughness.

somewhere in this decades-long journey of exploring
enoughness i came across someone who said:

stop hustling for your worth. instead, claim your worth.

i think this is a very helpful starting point for
understanding the core of the worthiness struggle.

`hustling for worth.`

to **hustle** is to try, work, strive, chase, seek, build, push,
earn.

to hustle can also be to fraud, swindle, cheat.

in other words, **it is not being true to you.**

so to hustle can also be to dim, shrink, blend in, dial down,
amp up, apologise, perform, or put on a persona...

particularly when you believe that who you are isn't
enough or is too much so therefore you must try to be
something else.

we don't just hustle for worth, we might also hustle for
love, recognition, success, power, attention, connection...
all sorts of things.

"fake it until you make it!" is the ultimate hustle – we
pretend or perform and we strive and try and we hope at
the end we've earned or proven our worth.

it is no wonder so many people suffer from imposter syndrome or feeling like a fraud. we take on someone else's judgement of our worth or capability or competence or achievement or success like it is *who we actually are...* like *their* belief in us matters more than our *own* belief in us.

it is a bit like trying on a costume or a wild new outfit: it might look fine from the outside, but if it doesn't feel like you on the inside you don't feel good in it no matter how hard you try.

hustling is a **forceful action**. you are constantly, tirelessly working at it... desperately trying to measure up... against others or against some kind of, often unattainable, ideal.

hustling requires us to have an idea of what we are striving toward... what is worthy. so we look around and we put people and things on pedestals. or we realise others have already done that for us and we find ourselves clinging to the rungs of a ladder we didn't build, constantly trying to **measure up**.

the hustle way to build a sense of worth is very precarious. just when you think you have found it, the whole thing easily crashes down because it's not actually about you, it's about the measuring stick someone else is using.

the hustle is a **pursuit**. it is a chase for a finishing line that is constantly drawn by someone else. the pursuit of worthiness as something that is *outside* of us, something we need to achieve or build or earn or discover, causes us to ignore the worth that exists in every moment of our journey... the worth we are born with and that already exists *in* us.

claiming worth.

so, if that's the hustle, what would it be like to claim your worth instead?

to **claim** is to assert, declare, take as rightful owner.

claiming is a **grounded action**. it is standing exactly where you are, solid earth beneath your feet, knowing your worth based on your inherent value as a human being, as a soul on earth.

damn. doesn't that sound delicious?

you claim your worth because it is yours to take, to hold, to own. it is your **birthright**.

you see, all this time, we thought self-worth was something we needed to build or create or discover or strive for... like some sort of ultimate quest.

it is not.

it is not something we do. it is not somewhere we go. it is something we *are*. it is already in us, it is **inherent** to our humanity.

we are not here to build or find or prove our worth, we are here to BE. and in BEing who we truly are, we are worthy.

but how? how exactly do we claim our inherent worth?

i will go back to one of my favourite quotes by anne lamott:

lighthouses don't run around the island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining.

in order to stand there shining, figure out what *your* light is... your particular, exactly perfect, brilliant kind of light.

figure out **who you are**.

be in your worth by **being you**.



brilliant light,

what colours are you made of?

when was the last time you explored your own identity? it can be a rare thing, for an adult especially, to ask the questions: *who am i? what makes me me? what else is there to know about my self?*

to claim your worth, first you must claim your **self**.

actually, first you must know that you have a self. know that you *are* a self. a whole, unbroken, brilliant, flawed, remarkable, unique, self.

this is the **you** that is just for you – a you that is untainted and unrestrained by the world around you, by what everyone and everything else has needed you to be.

when i use the word **self**, i am talking about that inner you, the truest you, real you... my word for this is soul self. you might pick a different word, but now is the time to tune in.

know your self to claim yourself.

know and claim all the parts of you, even the parts you may have forgotten, hid away, diminished, denied, ignored, rejected, lost, or abandoned.

instead, it is time to honour, allow, assert, cherish, explore, remember, unearth, discover, ignite, embrace, and choose your **self**.

to learn and to exclaim: *this is me*.

there are many things about you that you can explore, for instance: your strengths, values, passions, desires, personality, mindset, beliefs, intuition, experiences, accomplishments, work, community, purpose, your weird self, your hidden self, and more.

consider any identity labels you choose to use now or choose to be done with.

you might also like to explore astrology, enneagram, archetypes, human design, life path, numerology... anything that resonates is fair game! if it means something to you, it's meaningful. if not, never mind.

just remember this... **you get to decide who you are**.

you write the story of you. make up your own words and definitions for who you are. choose the labels that liberate you rather than the ones that box you in. you get to both embrace and reject through this process... both honour and disregard as you see fit.

you might also need to rewrite or release an old story you have heard or said about yourself... a story like: *i am the smart one. i am the organised one. i am the anxious one. i am high maintenance. i am too shy.* what if you rewrote that story of you? what if the opposite were true? what if you were so much more than that?

knowing your true self can be complicated... it can be fluid and ongoing and ever changing. **the self is the work of a whole life time!**

you are always correct, in any one moment of time, when you say: *this is me.* and you will also always be exploring: *who is me?* remember that who you say you are is not a tattoo – it is not permanent. it's a snapshot of a moment in time. so, this is permission to explore and experiment and exclaim.

your light is like a chandelier made of many crystals and facets. this is your permission: toss out the dim and dingy bits that are not helping you shine your true inner light, especially if someone else hung them on your chandelier for you. you are the boss of your light! this is about exploring and knowing all there is to know about your self with compassion and discernment.

or perhaps your light is like a rainbow with many layers of colours and shades. you contain multitudes! and the way

that all the parts of you layer and mix and shine is unique and exactly right.

or maybe, for you, your light is more like a long and winding string of twinkling bulbs. or maybe instead you are a cheetah with a unique pattern of spots that no one else has, or a painting with many shades and colours and layers, or a puzzle with a wide variety of pieces... some you might not have even discovered yet!

no matter what metaphor speaks to you, this is a nudge... take the time now to paint those colours, connect those lights, build up those layers... to know and honour and claim yourself as brilliant just as you are.

if you have ever had to abandon yourself – to please others or to survive in any way – this is your permission to claim yourself now.

if you have ever felt lost – like you lost your self or lost your way or lost your mojo – this is time for you to be found.

if you have been through any type of change or transition – because your soul changes and grows too – this is a chance to explore who you are now.

if you have been trudging along in life, simply doing what needs to be done – you can sometimes forget all the

brilliance you hold inside – this is a chance to rediscover and reignite what makes you *you*.

if you are so ready to deeply know your own worth – to know that your dreams and wants and needs are worthy, that you deserve to claim the life you long for – this is your path forward.

first you must deeply know your **self**.

start with you.

say out loud: *this is me*.

and then fill in the rest of the story with everything that you are.

what i know for sure is that you are a fucking brilliant rainbow of light. i want *you* to know that about you too.

*i created a workbook called shine, which is a guidebook for self-discovery and identity. if you think it might be helpful to your work, find it at karenbrandy.com/shine. otherwise grab a journal and start with that list of aspects to explore. make your own **book of you**.*



*precious soul,
it is not selfish. i promise.*

anytime i talk to people about prioritising themselves or working on themselves in any way the number one concern is: *but isn't that selfish?*

perhaps it is a voice in your head that whispers to you or perhaps it is someone else's voice of judgement or accusation that has you worried. i get it! i have had loved ones straight up tell me that focusing on my self – on finding my self, finding my purpose, pursuing my dreams, working on healing and my wellbeing – was selfish.

when this judgement is passed (either by ourselves or by others) it is meant as negative criticism: i.e. you are **selfish** as in self-absorbed, egotistic, arrogant, or narcissistic... thinking only of oneself or thinking excessively highly of oneself.

but what if we look at selfish in the sense of being self-centred or self-important in a more positive way – as in we need to **centre our self**, we need to **value our self as important**.

i really love what martha beck has to say about selfishness:

selfishness happens when someone is starved of self; their self has been stifled to a point where they cannot think about anyone else. just like if you were suffocating, all you would think about was air... i need air, i need air. as you prioritise your self, restore your understanding of self, and pour as much nourishment into your true self as possible, you get your breath back. only then can you give to others, be there for others... be more selfless.

if you genuinely find yourself needing to be selfish – as in prioritising yourself, centring your self – that is a sign! you are feeling robbed of your true self and need to do something to give to yourself... it must be a priority, just as if you were robbed of air, as if you were drowning. it really gives that metaphor of putting on your own oxygen mask first a whole new meaning!

be full of your self.

to be **full of yourself** is a phrase used to describe someone who is conceited, self-centred, arrogant... someone with an exaggerated sense of self-worth.

but i love what emma polette has to say about this:

we actually need to take back this phrase and truly become full of our self... we need to fill our self up with our *own* self and not other people's shit: their expectations, their needs, their judgements and criticisms. so many of us are never taught to love ourselves, so many of us don't know our worth at all. we must now learn to be about our selves.

and if what martha beck says about selfishness resonates at all, then it is in fact time to be full of your self... full of exactly who YOU are, full of everything that makes you YOU, full of what you need to shine and to be fulfilled, full of your dreams and desires and your purpose and your gifts.

i promise you that it is not arrogant or selfish to work on yourself or take care of yourself, it is actually a necessity... it is **self-sustaining**. in fact, it is rude and disrespectful *not* to... to think so little of yourself that you always put you last, as though none of what you are here to do matters.

if you are doing something for your self and you are accused of being selfish or being full of yourself – or that voice in your head tries to shame you – your answer is:

why yes, thank you for noticing! i have been empty for so long, my bucket is empty, my light has been dim... i am trying to feel ignited again, to remember what makes me feel (alive, fulfilled, worthy... fill in the blank!) i do need to be selfish, i need to be full of my self and full of what fuels me so that i can be my best self.

here is another way to look at it:

conceit, arrogance, egotism, self-absorption, narcissism are acts of the **ego** which is all about the here and now, material existence, comparison, self-preservation.

self-love, self-worth, self-care, self-transformation, self-honouring, self-fulfilment... these are acts of the **higher self**, the inner self, the spirit or soul. the higher self is all about evolving, creating, growing.

that is what we are here to do in this lifetime... to be true to our true selves, so in this way we must indeed be selfish or self-full.



hey sunshine,

can you find your largeness?

not too long ago, i lost my self. and i think now that the reason i lost my self is that i did not have a strong enough hold on her in the first place. she was too ethereal... like a whisp of a self, a mere idea. but not one that i embodied or felt deeply in my bones. my goal now is to know her deeply – my beautiful, brilliant rainbow-light self – to BE her with every breath and heartbeat.

this is me. this is me. this is me.

can you hear the whisper in your own heart beat?

this is me. this is me. this is me.

embody your true self.

what does that *me* feel like to you? what would it be like to embody your deepest, truest self? to feed that self so that it grows from a whisp, a whisper, to something large and full and grounded and solid and substantial.

THIS. IS. ME.

recognise, in the world around you, what feels like you. find things, collect things, surround yourself with things, that allow you to embody who you know your self to be.

the word **embody** means to represent a quality or an idea; to make tangible, visible, definite; to personify or exemplify in concrete form.

in other words, what would be a tangible or visible or concrete representation of who you are?

try this:

- choose a theme song or make a whole playlist that screams (sings?) "this is me!"
- create a personal mantra or a catch phrase that you can repeat easily and often
- consider what your patronus or familiar or muse is
- start an authentic self board (like a vision board) and fill it with reminders of you
- start a gratitude journal but fill it with what you are grateful about your self (i am grateful that i am____)
- write out a meditation that reminds you of who you are, do it daily
- create a big book of you: a journal or scrapbook that is full of examples of you being you

i was recently in a yoga class and the instructor said: now step into warrior two pose... plant your feet, take up space. take up as much space as you can! i thought: damn! that is good advice we need every single day!

when you are ill at ease or uncomfortable in your own skin, when you cannot be yourself or speak up for yourself, when you make yourself small... this allows others to be big – to have power over you, your worth, your life – it is how pedestals and ladders are erected.

be like the warrior. plant your feet. **take up space.**

making yourself small... losing or dimming yourself... accepting a mere whisp or shadow of yourself... this is the opposite of self love, it is self hate. as we have learned, it is an act of self love to be self-ish or self-full so what can you do to fill yourself up, to be embodied, to be largely you?

the audacity of being you.

the word **audacity** means bold, daring, unconventional, unapologetic; a complete disregard for danger or convention; a courage or confidence that other people find shocking or rude.

audacity sounds like this: *how dare you!?*

find the audacity of being YOU. what is daring about your identity? what requires or ignites the bravery and boldness within you? in what way are you unapologetic about who you are?

try this: pick one of your strongest qualities or something about your identity that you would like to honour or

embrace. what is completely audacious (brave, bold, daring) about that quality? what does that audacity lead you to believe?

as an example, i identify as queer. for me, queer audacity includes bucking cultural rules and norms, having complete ownership over one's own body and identity, and believing there is not one way of being or living that is the only way.

my queer audacity leads me to believe that all people are beautifully unique and worthy just as they are and that we ought not make assumptions about any one individual's experience of the world.

i love queer audacity!

try this with your own kind of audacity: your creativity, courage, or humour... your spirituality, sensitivity, or intelligence... your physicality, neurodivergence, or age.

what is audacious about being you?

hardcore i am.

i am are the two most important words we can say out loud. what you follow those two words with matters more than you perhaps realise. choose your words wisely, be intentional with your i am, because whatever you are telling yourself is your truth.

when you catch yourself with a less than positive **i am** – for example: *i am so stupid; i am too old; i am not smart enough; i am just a mom* – **replace that i am with something kind and something true.** doing this consistently and repeatedly can change the neural pathways in your brain... literally rewiring your worth.

even better, come up with an **i am** that is bold, audacious... hard core. (whatever hard core means to you!) here's mine:

i am a fucking brilliant rainbow.

your inherent self-worth comes with complete **freedom** for your self with nothing limiting you, nothing making you question your enoughness. as opposed to any cage you might find yourself in – a cage about your identity, a role you've been playing, a story you've been telling yourself – remember that your true worth **liberates** you. anything that honours who you are, specifically, will help you feel **free.**

your hardcore **i am** – that truest, boldest, bravest statement about who you are – is your liberation.



*darling,
let your true colours shine
through.*

now that you have allowed your true self to become more solid, more expansive, and more free... can you let other people see you too?

express yourself

self-expression is being true to yourself out loud. it is the wearing and sharing of your truth on the outside... so that your outsides match your insides.

because the more that you can *be* who you are, the more that you will *know* that who you are is in fact absolutely, perfectly enough.

how do you like to express your true self? perhaps through:

- language: speaking, writing, voice, words, body language
- art: drawing, painting, photographs, poetry, music, lyrics
- activity: such as physical activity, dance, sport, play, cooking or baking, organising, activism

- adornment: of your body or your space; clothing, accessories, hair, makeup, style or fashion, tattoos, decoration

to explore new modes of self-expression, try completing these statements:

my truest self is _____. i can express that by _____.

you can also consider your **signature thing**. ask the people in your life what they think is your signature thing. you might discover that you would like to implement a new signature thing... pick something for your outsides that matches your insides and make it your thing! just pick it and own it, it's as simple as that... **this thing is me.**

it might help to think of your outsides as completely neutral ground. let go of any previous rules or stories or expectations you have about your space, your body, your activities, your language or art. clean slate. your outsides are gender neutral, role neutral, label neutral. your outsides are like an empty gallery or an empty stage... now you get to use that to display *you* – your insides, your true self – however you like.

this might feel a bit scary. it could be that you have never really shared on the outside who you are on the inside. you might like to start small, in safe spaces, with baby steps.

like very slowly dialing up a thermostat, just bump YOU up a tiny notch and get comfortable before dialling up again.

alternatively, you may feel like you nail your self-expression... like your outsides are already a wonderful reflection of your insides. let this be a nudge to amplify your efforts, to dial it up to eleven as they say. "hey world, just reminding all y'all, this is me!"

it might take a bit of practice, a bit of trial and error. that's ok! you are not in an identity crisis, you are having an identity adventure! give yourself permission to play and be imperfect about it. you might have to keep **re-calibrating**. identity is ever changing, so expression should change too! check in often: *is this me? is this still me? maybe this is more me?*

just remember that you do not have to reveal everything inside of you for everyone around you. YOU decide what it means to be you on the outside, even if it is subtle or symbolic, even if you are the only one who knows exactly what you are expressing.

also remember that this might feel a bit weird. you might decide to express your self in some way and then try it and think: *i feel like a fraud, i feel like an imposter!* but know this: if you are truly being true to your true self, it isn't fake... it's just *new*. new to you. new to others seeing this

side of you. it's not about "faking it until you make it."
rather it's more like "practice it until it doesn't feel so new
and strange!"

one more thing. it does not actually matter one tiny bit
what anyone else thinks about your chosen self-
expression. first, i promise you that other people actually
spend very little time thinking about you. (they are too
busy worrying about themselves!) and second, self-
expression is not for or from or because of anyone else. do
this just for you. as a way of claiming your self and in turn,
claiming your worth.

in fact, ignoring anyone else's judgement of you, as
something that makes no difference to how you show up
in the world, is also a way of claiming your worth. so if it
does happen – if someone questions your chosen self-
expression – you get bonus points! it's double the
opportunity to double down on your *self* and your *worth*...
to say: your judgement of me doesn't really matter... **what
you think of me is actually none of my business!**

you are a unique combination of all the things you love
and dig and feel and want and know and experience. your
light is a rainbow of layers of colours and shades. let those
true colours shine through.



magical imperfect human,
your body is glorious!

claiming your self is not just a mental/emotional/mindset thing... it is a physical thing too. please do the truly revolutionary work to love your physical self and to know your physical worthiness.

so much in this world tells us that our bodies are not worthy just the way they are... we see messages over and over that our physical selves need to be worked on or fixed or covered up or improved or enhanced.

weight loss, wrinkle repair, eyelash extension, face lift, tummy control, body build, spot conceal, hair remove, lip enhance... all of it identifies the thing that is *wrong with us* and the way we ought to *fix it*.

we learn it from mainstream media, social media, marketing and advertising, photoshop and filters... the beauty industry, the entertainment industry, the fitness industry, the fashion industry... cultural norms, gender norms, racism, ablism, homophobia and transphobia, misogyny, capitalism... the patriarchy and white supremacy.

the message is everywhere. and the message is that most of us have bodies that are not good enough.

make no mistake: our dissatisfaction in who we are equals profit. or it equals power because it maintains the pedestal system of worthiness: that some bodies, some people, are *more than* while others are *less than*.

who profits when you believe your body is not enough or too much? that your body needs to be fixed or altered? that your body is better than or worse than other bodies? what hierarchy are you trapped in? question the messages, question the lie... you do not have to listen or buy in or conform.

it is in fact a revolutionary act to love your self, to love your body, now, exactly as you are.

body image resilience.

i really love what doctors lindsay kite and lexie kite have to say about body image resilience:

this is not about believing your body *looks* good, it is about knowing your body *is* good, no matter how it looks.

as sonya renee taylor says: your body is not an *apology*.

your body is not a regret, it is not here to be shamed, it is not something you must fix or change or enhance or hide or control or excuse or justify.

as taryn brumfitt says: your body is not an *ornament*.

your body is not a trinket, it is not decoration, it is not here for other people's entertainment or pleasure or judgement or commentary.

as glennon doyle says: your body is not a *project*. it's not your art. it's not your work or something you work on... it's not an undertaking.

lindsay and lexie kite would say: your body is an *instrument*

...but i personally choose not to use that description.

your body is not a tool, it is not a utensil to be used by others, used to produce or perform what everyone else needs and wants from you.

here is what i think:

your body is a vehicle. ...as in a channel, a means.

it is YOUR vehicle, for your needs.

it is your vehicle for your work, for your dreams and desires, for self-expression, for living your purpose, for shining your light.

your body is an amazing, beautiful, imperfect, flawed, remarkable vehicle. and it is yours.

what is your work? what are your dreams? what are you here to do – a beautiful soul in an imperfect, remarkable human body – in this lifetime?

make a list. make a big list. and appreciate how your body helps you do all those things. my what a good body you have!

watch out for the messages that tell you otherwise... notice how you speak to your body and about your body, catch yourself when you disparage your body and replace those thoughts and beliefs and stories with hardcore kindness for your physical self.

notice how you speak about other people's bodies too.

to **objectify** is to treat someone as an object rather than as a human BEing... to treat a person like a tool or a toy, with no feelings, opinions, rights of their own. do not objectify your self or others. nobody's body is an object to be judged.

i heard glennon doyle say: in our house, our rule is **mind your own body**; we don't talk about other people's bodies.

the more you appreciate the precious vehicle that you have to navigate and experience this world... the more you know that your body is in fact so, so good... the more you claim your worth.

your body is enough. just think of all that it can do!

for more reading on body image resilience:

more than a body by lindsay kite and lexie kite

the body is not an apology by sonya renee taylor

embrace yourself by taryn brumfitt



superstar,

no one does you like you do!

when was the last time you celebrated your self? like cheered and exclaimed and exalted with delight and pride and self-satisfaction.

because i don't think we do enough of that.

i think the world tells so many of us that we shouldn't brag, we shouldn't be self-important, and we definitely shouldn't boast or grandstand.

but who you are is magnificent! you are a brilliant fucking rainbow of light.

the magic of your unique being should be celebrated!

celebrate yourself.

in my book, RISE, i wrote:

when we celebrate our success, we train our brains to believe we are worthy and deserving of success.

when we celebrate our strengths, our gifts, our talents, our service we train our brains to believe that what we offer the world has value.

when we celebrate who we are, as we are, we train our brains to believe that who we are is actually, perfectly enough.

and so, we celebrate. with intention.

celebrate the evidence that you have amassed over the years of all the ways that you shine... celebrate those moments of courage, those periods of action taking, those times that you felt guided or on purpose... celebrate the reminders of your inner strength, of your creativity, of your dreams coming true!

celebrate your strengths, your talents, your gifts, your zone of genius... celebrate the difference you make and the way that you help people and the way that you are uniquely you.

we need to celebrate the abundance of not just what we have, and what we do, but of *who we are...* because **abundance is enoughness.**

celebration teaches us that we are worthy of the very thing we are celebrating.

celebrate who you are.

celebrate what you are here to do.

celebrate all that you deserve.

to **celebrate** is to acknowledge and appreciate. it is a way to lift our selves higher, to honour our own greatness... to become full of what makes us great!

what can you celebrate about YOU, right now? what pops to mind? how can you celebrate that? and what if you could make your celebration even more wild... radical... hardcore?

it's about honouring your self in really intentional ways.

block out time and space for self-celebration. create a celebration ritual. invite others to join you and help amplify your delight. double down on your efforts... do not let celebration fade into the background in lieu of everyday life.

one way to celebrate your self is to feel deep **gratitude** for your self.

we are not taught to do this! we're taught to be grateful for others or to be grateful for what we have but never to be grateful for *who we are*.

my friend emma polette says:

when you make note of something you are grateful for, don't just appreciate that thing as if it happened to you, or for you, but rather it happened because you *are* you.

so, when you practice gratitude, include YOU in your list. include YOUR qualities and gifts and efforts and actions... and be specific!

not just: *i'm grateful for my friend*, but: *i'm grateful that my magnetic personality and weird sense of humour attracted this great friend into my life.*

or not just: *i'm grateful for this vacation*, but: *i'm grateful for my talent and expertise, it allows me to earn money and treat my family to our dream vacation.*

be grateful not just for the good things in your life but also for the role YOU play in achieving, acquiring, or attracting those good things!

also, when people tell you they love what you do, believe them!

just think, when you tell someone that you love what they do, you mean it right? so please do not brush it off as luck,

or as them being nice, or act as if it's no big deal when someone tells you the same. your light matters, own that!

practice NOT brushing off compliments, thanks, or kudos. say out loud: *thank you!* and on the inside: *i deserve that compliment because i am good, i am worthy.*

in celebrating our successes, actions, efforts, gifts, and talents, we are also **defining** those things for ourselves.

for instance, you get to and ought to write your own definition of success. and then, when you reach that success you defined on your terms, be sure to celebrate it! it is how you honour what you decided for yourself rather than someone else's judgement or measuring stick.

you, right now, in this universe, have never occurred before. you are the first, and the only, you.

therefore YOU, and only you, can be the best measure of your success.

celebrate yourself. nobody else knows what it takes to be you. do not let anyone else tell you what is worth celebrating.

you don't even have to wait for a success to start celebrating.

you have a magic all your own. celebrate that.



hey gorgeous,
do not let anyone else
determine your value in this
world.

you and me have been hustling for our worth for a long time. the hustle – the striving and the trying and the pedestals – it has always been about our value to others, our value in relation to what we offer the world: our productivity, our success or accomplishment, our output our outcomes.

it sounds a bit like this: *what can i produce? what can i achieve? what do i contribute? what do i have to offer? what boxes do i tick? how do i measure up?*

we constantly question our value.

what if instead we claim our value by claiming what WE ourselves most value?

what if claiming our values, as a pathway to claiming another part of our selves and our identity, also helps us to claim our worth?

what if we double down on what we value rather than what others value about us?

know your values.

first, we must know what it is we value, and that is different for each of us. this goes back to where we started: self-knowledge... and part of that is knowing your personal core values.

values are how you want to live; they are fundamental ideals, guiding principles. it is what's most important to you. values are action oriented; they are not goals, they are not feelings... they are what you practice.

i like to think of values as something that adds value to an experience. like, when that thing that i value is present it makes everything better. imagine you are a care bear – remember care bears? – whatever you value is the symbol on your little bear chest, and when that value is present or when you get to practice that value, your soul self powers up!

once you know your core values (choose two or three) ask:
what would it look like to double down on those values?
what activities, behaviours, or beliefs help me live and act from those values?

my top values are connection and compassion. doubling down on those values looks like: connecting to my soul purpose and being kind to myself along the way.

if what i have to offer comes from living a life of meaning and purpose, and being of service to others with compassion then what i offer is enough.

it represents what i value therefore it is valuable.

when you let others determine the value of what you offer the world you let insignificant people have too much significance over your life... you base your worth on someone else's metric system.

alternatively, when you double down on your own values, rather than how you are valued by others (by society or culture or work or patriarchy) you take back control of the measuring stick.

something that is very low on my list of values is athleticism. fitness, sport, coordination... it all has very little importance to me. so, if someone judges me poorly on my lack of athleticism, or even on my unwillingness to participate in a physical activity, i truly don't care.

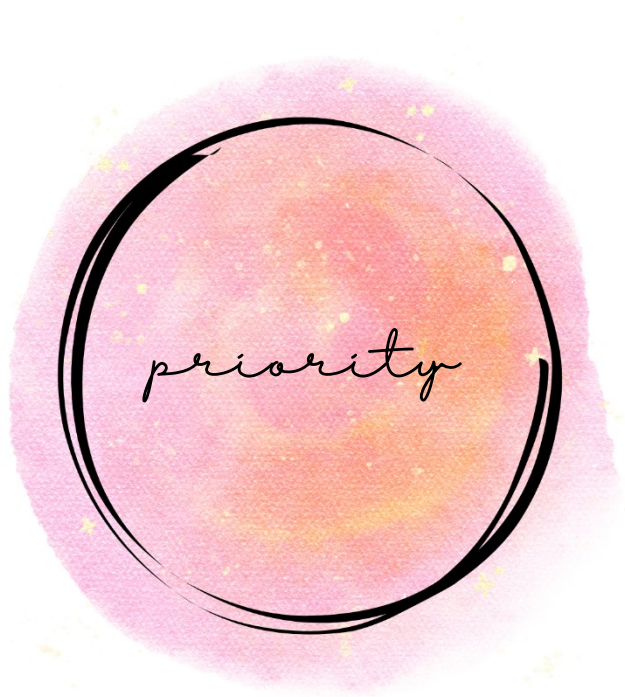
someone else's account of me – their attempt to place me low on the pedestal because i am not athletic enough – does not affect my sense of self-worth at all. what they

value is not the same as what i value. so why would i allow what they value to make me question if i am valuable?

double down on what you value and recognise how it might be different to what others value. do not let someone else dictate your value, your enoughness.

only you get to decide that.

if what you offer the world is first and foremost aligned with what you value then it is indeed valuable. offer it because you value it and you are worth it... rather than because of its value or worth to others.



lovey,

this is permission to put you
first.

how often do you prioritise your self?

you might hear that and think: *ugh another person telling me i need more self-care.* and yes, self-care can be a way to put yourself first. but it is not the only way, and it's actually not even the point.

this is permission to prioritise how YOU experience the world over how the world experiences you.

that is what it means to put you first.

you belong at the top of your to do list! **be more faithful to yourself than to anyone else.**

and remember that prioritising your self is not about fitting more into your day... it is about fitting more of your *self* into your day.

invest in yourself.

invest in yourself because you are worthy of the investment – whether it is time or money or energy or space or rest or joy or whatever it is your self needs –

make a deposit! invest in filling your self up with more of what your true self needs, more of what makes you you. invest space, time, energy to be *with* your self... learning you, using your strengths, following your desires, honouring your purpose.

investing in your self is not a reward in exchange for your productivity, your achievement, your success, or your progress. rest is not a reward in exchange for exhaustion. joy is not a reward in exchange for depletion. time for yourself is not a reward in exchange for all that you have given to everyone else.

you are worthy of the investment now. you do not have to wait until you are empty in order to fill yourself up again. make a deposit for your self today.

the more you invest in you, the more you increase your capacity to feel, heal, explore, reflect, learn, grow, try... everything we are here to do in this lifetime.

speak up for yourself.

stand up for yourself. give voice to what your true self needs and desires.

say out loud... wherever you need to, wherever you long to:
this is me. i am. i want. i need. i must. i will. i won't. i deserve.

boundaries are the number one way to claim what you deserve. **boundaries** are not fences that keep people out, they aren't walls that keep you in... boundaries simply show people where the door is.

boundaries are not barriers to connection, they are in fact pathways to deeper connection, because boundaries are about respect... respect for yourself and for others. it is you deciding and declaring: *this is what is ok, this is what is not okay*, in regards to what people ask of you, what people bring to you, how people treat you.

boundaries come from a place of claiming your worth. if you value your self – your energy, time, space, expertise, identity, health, peace, etc – if you believe all of that is indeed valuable, you will set up boundaries to protect it.

for many of us, prioritising our selves and setting strong boundaries will mean doing less... saying no more often... giving all of your self (your time, energy, effort) away to others less often. do not let *giving less* of your self make you feel like you are *less than*... your worth is not dependant on what you give or offer or say yes to. you are allowed to say no!

doing less does not make you less. doing more does not make you more.

sometimes setting boundaries and prioritising your own well-being will piss other people off. generally, that is because those people benefited from you putting yourself last. do not let it bother you to be cast as the villain in their story... it just means that you are the hero of yours; you showed the courage to love yourself at the risk of disappointing others.

space to be yourself.

"thank you for that time together. time spent with you makes me feel more like me."

this is one of my favourite feelings in the world. do you ever get that feeling? with certain spaces, places, or people?

notice when it happens – who you were with, where you were at, what you were doing together – and then make more time for you to be with those people doing those things.

seek spaces where you have a sense of belonging, where you look around the room and think: *when i am here, this is me*. the more often you get to BE yourself, be seen and heard as yourself, the more you claim your true self, the more you claim your worth.

sometimes, with some people, and in some places, we do not always get that. we cover up our tattoos or tone down our makeup or take out our jewellery... we wear sensible clothes, we watch our language, we try to fit in... we might not share a part of our true self if it does not feel safe or manageable... we might not let our full self be seen or heard because it feels harder to shine than it does to dim.

it does not feel good to forsake or abandon our true self – in fact doing so leads to being out of integrity and hustling for worth. but sometimes in some places it feels *necessary*.

make sure – now that you know where enoughness comes from, from claiming your true self – that you make time and find space to be fully, wholly, you.

have places where you never have to hide or cover or dim or tone down or change or fit in.

have people who not just *let* you be you but *help* you be you just by loving, accepting, celebrating you exactly as you are.



magnificent soul,

come home to you.

how have you had to alter the way that you show up in order to meet someone else's needs? how have you abandoned yourself in order to favour someone else's experience over your own?

to **abandon** is to forsake, disregard, reject, yield, sacrifice, betray, ignore.

some ways one might abandon one's self include:

- saying yes when we want to say no (or vice versa!)
- swallowing our words or staying silent or choosing to be polite over speaking up
- adjusting how we show up to appease others
- choosing someone else's comfort over our own
- letting someone talk us out of something
- gaslighting ourselves (i'm over reacting, i'm just imagining things, things aren't that bad, it's probably my own fault, it's okay... when it's not)
- ignoring, supressing, or neglecting our feelings, our needs, our dreams, our values
- not trusting our instincts

can you think of any others?

self-abandonment can happen in childhood and it can happen in adulthood... we can feel we've moved on, we can believe we have grown stronger in ourselves, and still find that there are ways we abandon or alter ourselves either in our daily lives or with certain people or in certain situations.

highly sensitive people are particularly good at this... we read the room. we sense when people are not happy and we take responsibility for it: *how can i make this better?* we learn to walk on egg shells. we learn how to be certain things for certain people. we learn the parts of ourself that are safe to show and the ones that should be kept hidden.

where did you learn that your worth came from?

was it how perfect, successful, smart, productive, responsible, helpful, capable, or loyal you are? did you learn that your achievement, your creativity, your positivity, your ability to peacekeep or solve problems or make decisions was the most valuable thing about you?

there has been something that you hooked your enoughness on, what was it?

it is all part of the hustle: we abandon ourselves, we alter ourselves, we measure ourselves... we separate from our true self, we create cracks in our identity.

heal yourself.

the opposite of self-abandonment is self-reclamation.

but first, please never judge yourself harshly for any form of self-abandonment. being human is hard and we all are simply doing our best to survive this crazy life we have been given. **be gentle with your self as you return to your self...** return again and again and again.

to claim all that is truly you is your truest purpose in this life time. it is both an act of spirit and an act of inherent worth to BE who you are.

my favourite definition of **healing** is to become whole, to come home to your true self.

self-reclamation is healing.

honouring the **gifts in who you are** is healing. find the gifts in the experiences that led you to who you are now. and remember that the bad shit or hard shit is not what made you resilient or strong or brave or whatever. YOU made you brave. you are the gift

self-advocacy is healing. glennon doyle said:

i will not stay, not ever again, in a room or conversation or institution that requires me to abandon myself.

whisper it: *i will no longer abandon myself in favour of anyone else's needs*. whisper it and whisper it until you can say it out loud, until you can say it real loud: *i will no longer abandon myself*.

unburdening is healing. to unburden is to release, relieve, share... when we share, we bring into the light what festers and grows in the darkness.

the burdens we carry include the rules we have been following; the stories we've been telling ourselves (or have been told about ourselves); the limiting beliefs that hold us back; the pressures, obligations, expectations, and roles that cage us in.

forgiveness is healing... forgiving your self is an unburdening. freedom is healing... freedom to be your self.

rachel cargle said:

you can heal towards a future version of yourself without hating who you are right now. you can love yourself to new levels.

self is the prerequisite to healing.

first, know that you *have* a self... that you are a whole, worthy, complete self. and then, every act of loving, honouring, embracing, expressing, celebrating, prioritising,

valuing your self – every act of claiming your self – is an act of healing.

we are born whole, undivided, worthy, complete. over time we crack under the weight of the burdens we carry; we abandon, we adjust or alter; we separate as a response to culture, to family, to work, to the world around us.

it is our work to bring **integrity** back to our identity.

bring all of the pieces of you back together... heal the wounds and cracks in your identity by honouring, expressing, and celebrating who you are.

know the story that you have been telling yourself about where your worth comes from and heal it. you are worthy simply because you exist.

"the wound is the place where the light enters." ~ rumi

healing is to allow the light to enter, to illuminate all of the hidden parts of you and to allow your true self to shine.



my treasure,

what would the real you do?

what roles have you had to play in your lifetime? how have you learned to become a chameleon or a shapeshifter... adjusting and adapting in order to be what is needed in any given situation?

it is normal to show different parts of you in different situations... perhaps due to comfort, or ease, or anything else you have decided is your priority.

what is hard is when we must take on a role or put on a persona in order to *survive* a situation.

to **survive** might be to fix, to please, to peace keep, to blend in, to achieve, to do what is expected of you, to avoid consequences. it might sound like:

- if i don't do it, who will?
- if i don't do it, everything will fall apart.
- if i don't do it, how will i prove my worth?

your chameleon self.

what are some ways that people might shapeshift? do any of these resonate?

the human spotlight – quick to shine a light on someone else so they feel good, rather than shine yourself.

the street sweeper – constantly fixing what other people have done or said (something dumb or hurtful or inappropriate or volatile); sweep the eggshells away so that everything is fine.

the personal assistant – take care of everyone else's business, keep track of everything, stay on top of everything, plan everything, organise everything... so that everything goes well/works well.

the ray of sunshine – look for silver linings, look on the bright side, everything is fine, make everything ok (instead of sad, upset, disappointed), be the fun one, the funny one, the happy go lucky one.

the mouse – bite your tongue, swallow words, make yourself small, be invisible, don't rock the boat, don't speak your truth lest you upset a fragile situation or someone's fragility.

the boss – bossy, controlling, in charge; rules about how things need to go; try to control things especially in situations of chaos, trauma, uncertainty (maybe no one else is being the adult?)

the glue – the glue that holds it all together, that connects everyone together. without you, the family / the team / the balance / the peace might all fall apart.

the busy bee – never rest, don't be lazy, be productive... keep going, keep working, keep achieving. always on to the next thing because pauses and rests are dangerous.

the typical type – try to be a certain kind of person... a caricature or archetype of a person (e.g. masculine, feminine, brave bold adventurer, kind pleasant sweetheart); be what a person like you is supposed to be instead of being the person you are.

can you think of any others?

consider that scene from a few good men: "you need me on that wall, you want me on that wall. we live in a world with walls and those walls need to be guarded by men with guns."

what is your wall? how have you had to be the person who guards it? and what would it be like if you could put down the gun and get off the wall?

to **shape shift** is to abandon your true self and take on the burden of a persona, particularly if that role is not who you naturally are rather it is who you have had to be or

who you have learnt to be, in order to exist/survive/feel deserving or worthy or valuable.

for example, being a personal assistant may be a role that you've take on as a parent. perhaps you were not earning money so it became a way to contribute and be valuable. perhaps someone had to be organised so the job became yours. but parenting and being a personal assistant are not the same job! maybe now is the time to decide what falls under the role of parenting and what you are no longer willing to do as a glorified assistant. perhaps it is time to get down off the wall and unburden yourself of the job of organising everyone. perhaps you can reclaim the labels and the definitions of who you *are* here to be, reclaim your space to be your true self.

a role you play is not your true self, your full self... it is just one part of you that is working hard to keep you safe or get shit done. what does that part of you need in order to let go of the role? does it need safety, assurance, acceptance, ease? does it need to be seen and valued in some way? how can you perhaps give that to your self so that part of you gets what it needs and can give up the role it has had to play.

the more you deeply know your true self the more aware you become of those situations where you are not playing

the role of your true self, rather you are playing some other role. it is an act of being true to your self to catch these moments and say: *this is not who i am. this is not who i want to be.*

the feeling of not being enough can come from being empty of your true self. when we are empty of our true self or abandon our true self we can find ourselves full of something else... we become full of caricatures, facsimiles, roles, personas. instead, fill yourself up with the true you.

become better at asking: *is this the real me? or is this just part of me playing a role? what would the real me do?*



my beloved,

what would the real you say?

what sort of message does the voice in your head have for you? does it whisper things like...

you are not enough.

you are too much.

you are broken.

you can't.

you shouldn't.

you won't.

you better...

you are too...

you are not...

you are just a...

sheesh. that voice is mean, isn't it? and so bossy!

the most important thing for you to know is that voice is not the real you. your real voice, your true self, is never going to tell you that you are broken, not enough, too much, or not worthy. that voice comes from somewhere else.

for you, where does it come from? who's voice is it? what inner part of you is feeling scared, worried, uncertain,

agitated? is the voice echoing someone or something in the world around you?

who taught you to hate yourself? who taught you to question your value, your worth? who made you feel like you were too much or not enough?

is it possible that voice – those people, those systems, that culture, that scared part of you – is lying? what do they have to gain by you questioning your worth? or by you not standing in your own power?

what better message can you say to that part of you, or version of you, that is questioning your worth?

what would the real you say?

the voice of your soul.

to combat the voice of unworthiness, talk to that hurt, unvalued version of your self from the authentic voice of your soul. yes, your soul's light has a voice too... what would they say to the unvalued part of you who was told they were inadequate, not enough?

what would your true self... your best, highest self... your most soulful, holy self... your imperfectly, inherently brilliant, real self... say?

just as the voice of unworthiness lies to you, so does the voice of grandiosity. *"i am the best"* is not really true either... just as you aren't the worst, you are also not the best.

it is also not your job to judge who other people say they are. that voice that judges you harshly, also judges others: *who you are is not ok. who you are is wrong. who you are is less than.*

speak – about your self and about others – from the authentic voice of your soul. with kindness and compassion, without judgement, shame, or humiliation.

how can you tell if the voice in your head is from your true self? check for these red flags:

is the voice mean? the voice of your soul is kind, compassionate, and connected. it speaks from a place of love... of loving yourself (and others) up rather than beating yourself (and others) down.

is the voice trying to keep you small or same or safe? your true voice is courageous, confident, and creative. the voice of your soul wants to see you rise, wants you to shine bright.

is the voice speaking in extremes? all or nothing, always or never: *you will never be good enough. you always fail. no*

one cares. the voice of your soul is calm, clear, and curious... it sees the world in shades of grey: ok, that sucked. but we can fix this. we can bounce back.

practice **untangling** that voice in your head. learn what the real you has to say and learn what is not actually the voice of your soul but the voice of doubt, lack, fear, or worry... of depression, anxiety, overwhelm... of culture or society or any others. name it for what it is.

practice listening to your authentic inner voice... the voice of self. practice trusting that voice, being guided by that voice.

what would the real you say? *this is me. i am exactly enough as i am.*



sugar,

you've got to see it to believe it.

belief is a funny thing.

i want you to believe – to truly, deeply, within your bones know and believe – that you are enough, exactly as you are.

i want you to believe that you deserve everything you want for your self, and that your self is worth prioritising, celebrating, honouring, and embracing. i want you to believe in your own brilliance!

but it's not that easy, is it?

a belief is something we accept as true. we hold onto it as though it is real... it's a fact. but the truth is, **all beliefs are made up!**

so the good news is that we can make up new ones.

now that we have explored all these ways to claim our worth, we can turn an old belief of "i am not enough" into a new one like "i am enough. i am worthy. i deserve."

the bad news is that it isn't so easy to believe the new beliefs we make up. this is because beliefs are stored in

our subconscious mind and the subconscious isn't easily convinced by words or thoughts... it's not enough to just think up a new belief.

our subconscious learns from experiences.

you can probably look back to an experience that formed the belief of i am not enough, or i am too much, or i don't deserve this.

an event happened, your mind made up a story about why that thing happened (maybe because you aren't good enough) and then your subconscious stored that story as fact (the subconscious doesn't care about true or false, it just stores facts for later) and then that fact, over time and repetition and with further evidence, became your belief.

so now, to form a new belief that you are in fact enough, that you are indeed brilliant exactly as you are, you must **ground that belief in experience.**

you must lean into every experience where you feel you are enough... where you get to be your self or honour your self or share your self and where who you are is enough.

every time you...

- take up space
- make a choice for self-expression
- practice body image resilience
- celebrate your self
- prioritise your self
- double down on what you value
- find a space where you belong
- practice self-advocacy or self-reclamation
- practice self-awareness and shift a moment of self-judgement or self-rejection

make note of it!

anchor into those moments – even the tiniest of moments.

your perception of your self – the story you tell about your self – matters! see yourself being enough within your day-to-day activities, your actions and behaviours, your interactions and experiences.

beliefs are built with perception, time, repetition, and evidence. affirm your enoughness whenever it happens so that your subconscious will begin to trust and believe it.

and if you are about to take any step/do any thing and notice a niggling doubt creep in that sounds like: am i good enough for this experience? am i ready/capable/

smart/talented enough to do this thing? pause and reframe: what will make this experience good enough for me? what will this experience offer me if i simply let myself show up as i am?

you can also look back on old experiences and change the story of your own enoughness. look for the evidence of how you actually were enough back then... the ways you handled the experience, the things you did in fact change/achieve/survive/accomplish/learn in those past experiences.

"wow, past me was actually very brave/clever/capable/resilient/self-aware... i didn't see that clearly then, but i recognise it now!"

looking back at your past with a new lens can help you create the genuine belief that your future self is enough to handle whatever your next experience may bring.

your self-esteem is how you perceive yourself based on your beliefs. you can actively build self-esteem by shifting your perspective and anchoring empowering beliefs.

see all the ways in which you show up for your experiences
– the ways in which you BE your self in everyday moments
– and just notice how awesome that is!

to claim your worth, claim your self.

and to KNOW your worth, NOTICE your self.

note and recognise your enoughness in every one of your experiences.

as they say... seeing is believing!



honey,

please watch out.

you have done the work to claim your self in many different ways. now you must stay alert, stay vigilant.

notice.

watch out for the places and the ways that you **compromise** your true self, where you alter or hide or dim or downplay or excuse you.

the thing that makes you unique – that can make it hard to fit in, hard to be understood, or hard to get what you want – that thing is your greatest gift! it is your greatest path toward what you want for yourself, toward claiming the life you dream of. embrace it and doors will open where before there was no door.

be sure to *be* you and to *stay* you.

watch out for the words you use to describe yourself, or even think about yourself. watch out for where you say "just a" or "too" or "but" about your yourself.

your words matter. catch yourself and make a switch. be **intentional** about the words you use for you.

think highly of yourself!

watch out for **striving and hustling**. watch out for the signs that you are acting or thinking from a place of unworthiness... trying to prove yourself, acting out of desperation, thinking little of yourself.

hustling stories sound like: *i can do or have that when i _____. i can't do or have that because i _____. when i am ____ i will _____.*

instead of thinking: *i can't, i'm not, i want to be, i need to be, i must...* trying saying instead: **i already am.**

practice showing up as: *i already am _____.*

act as if you are already worthy, because you are!

watch out for **pedestals and ladders**. recognise them. recognise when you are putting yourself and others onto pedestals... watch out for ranking and measuring sticks and hierarchies.

ask yourself: *what if there was no ladder?* what if we all are worthy exactly as we are? different, and imperfect, and flawed, and brilliant, and magnificent, and enough.

dignity is having inherent value and worth, deserving respect simply because you exist. all humans have a desire to be treated with dignity and this shared desire is quite powerful... it is how we stop seeing and using the

pedestals and measuring sticks that exist in our world and instead see the dignity in each of us: *the inherent worth in me sees the inherent worth in you.*

watch out for your **judgement** of others as less than... questioning someone else's worth or identity. this is a sign that you need to strengthen your own sense of self rather than judge someone else's.

ask: if i was standing on solid ground (instead of trying to climb a pedestal above someone else) what would i think, do, say? inherent worth is solid, it is grounded.

watch out for the places and ways you **self-reject**: *i won't get the job, no one will read my stuff.* watch out for **perfectionism** as a way we hustle. watch out for the instinct to **abandon** your self.

watch out for your old "not enough" stories.

you rewrote that story. you are not a problem. you are perfectly enough. your new story is different because you know your worth. you have claimed your worth.

write your next chapter from that place.



warrior,

you got this.

is there any chance, as you have been struggling with the ups and downs of life, that you've been holding out for a hero? or perhaps waiting on a magic wand or a magic moment when things will magically get better. maybe there's hope that somewhere out there is a white knight who will swoop in and finally things will change...

but what if the hero you have been waiting for is *you*?
what if *you* are the hero of your own story?

if you could know that for sure, what would you do then?

think like a hero... what would a hero do? perhaps something like this:

- i have my own back
- i will not give up on me
- i fight for what matters to me
- i slay my dragons
- i liberate myself
- i empower myself
- i am the magic wand

can you think of any other things a hero would do for you that you might be able to do for yourself?

because it is time to be your own damn hero. yep, just like we said from the start: it's an inside job. just as you need to claim your self and heal your self you also need to lead your self.

self-leadership is about tapping into the remarkable power of the self... knowing your self and learning to lead *with* self... letting your true self drive the bus.

the leader of the pack.

i like to think of my whole self as having lots of different inner parts. there is my soul self – the me that is inherently worthy, the fucking brilliant rainbow-of-light me – but there are also other parts of me: parts that can be anxious, angry, depressed... parts that would rather hide away than shine bright, or would like to burn the world down rather than keep struggling.

it is the job of my soul self, my favourite self, to embrace and know and honour and explore these parts.

through this journey of enoughness you have explored parts of you that have been abandoned, parts of you that have had to hustle, parts that got the job done, parts that

were required to change depending on what was needed at the time, parts that never quite measured up.

these parts of you all need your kind and loving leadership.

they all have needs, they all have a story that needs to be heard, and they all need to trust you... to trust that you've got this!

when our parts don't trust us they get loud, they get angry, they take over... and it is really hard to claim the life *you* want when one of them is driving the bus.

perhaps your beautiful soul self could have a chat with all those inner parts. once you know them, and know what they need, it is a lot easier to be the leader and guide the whole self forward toward what you know you want.

to claim your self is to claim all the parts of your self – even the ones you have perhaps ignored, avoided, or hid away in the shadows... even the ones you have not always agreed with or understood. now is your chance to invite them to your conference table – to see them and hear them and honour them – because every part of you is worth *you* knowing.

remember: your true self is kind, compassionate, curious, calm, and confident. breathe into that soul self you know

and claim – breathe in and find that self within you, without all the other bullshit that can get in the way – that self is your **inner leader**.

to strengthen and foster your inner leader you can tap into the leadership skills you already possess. what do you think makes a good leader?

- empathy and respect
- a vision for the future
- inspiring, guiding, motivating, empowering
- building safety and trust
- responsibility and accountability
- listening, encouraging, honouring

you've got this. like truly, literally, you have got all those gifts inside you right now. you likely already support others in your life with those qualities... self-leadership is about intentionally giving those things to your self.

you might have noticed that the letters in this book have headings like integrity, agency, curiosity, authenticity... these headings are **states of being**, they are qualities of your present experience. i chose these headings specifically to remind you of your true nature, your birthright.

of course you can add to this list... what other qualities do you want to remember about your self? autonomy, vulnerability, liberty, authority, capacity, capability, creativity, responsibility, resilience... you have this all inside of you.

tap into the remarkable power of your true self. create a self-led inner world and a self-led outer world... lead your life from self as much as possible.

that is how you hero.



sweetheart,

you are magic!

marianne williamson, in her book a return to love, writes:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

indeed, who are you not to be?

you were born to be you. you were born to shine your light in the exact way that only you can shine. you were born whole. you were born worthy and you *are* worthy.

listening to a podcast one day, i heard sonya renee taylor say:

the same divinity that decided there should be sunrises and butterflies decided there should be me! you are divine, your worth is divine... you are a being of that same divinity, simply because you exist.

you are magic... a magical combination of all the things that make you you, magic that has never existed before and never will again. you are a stunning, imperfect, intricate mosaic of everything you have lived, all your hopes and dreams, all your shadows and all your light.

***you* are the best thing that ever happened to you.**

you have claimed your self. you have claimed your worth. continue to do this every day, with every breath.

i am here. i am me. i am worthy.

i already am.

i already am.

i am.

i am.

i am.

you are a miracle. thank you for being here. thank you for
shining your brilliant rainbow of light in the world.

dear reader,

i wrote this for me, as a reminder of everything i have learned in my exploration of enoughness, so that i can keep doing the work of claiming my self.

i share this book with the world in the hopes that it also helps you... perhaps to explore yourself, perhaps to heal, perhaps to shine your light even brighter.

this book is based on my lived experience and what has made a difference to me. i acknowledge that your lived experience and your story may be very different to mine. it is not my intention to bypass the truth of your experience with a suggestion that self-help fixes all, i simply wish to offer some ideas that may contribute to your self-agency and self-leadership.

i acknowledge my privilege. i am a white, cis, straight-passing, middle-aged, middle-class, woman with time, capacity, and money to work on myself. it is safe for me to work on myself. i don't face dangerous consequences when i stand up and say to the world: this is me.

my hope is that the more of us who use our privilege to speak up for our own worth and the worth of all people,

especially those who are marginalised, the safer it becomes for all.

this little book is a work in progress... i am sure that there are flaws to my thinking and places where i do not know nearly enough about the bigger picture, but i feared that i would never learn from those flaws if i was never brave enough to put this out into the world.

my aim was to write from a place of deep honouring of the self, of all identities, and of inherent worth. however, if there are any places where i can make improvements to the inclusivity and sensitivity of this work, please do reach out. my email is *kb@karenbrandy.com* and i am humbly open to your feedback.

as brene brown says: i am not here to be right, i am here to get it right. i wish to keep learning... to keep opening my eyes, my mind, and my heart.

with gratitude,

karen

about the author.



karen brandy gunton is an author, teacher, and life coach with a focus on self-development and self-empowerment. she is on a mission to get unstuck and do more of what lights her up.

she is also badass rule-breaker who never uses capitals because she lives her own message, which is permission to be you... to own your light and shine your way.

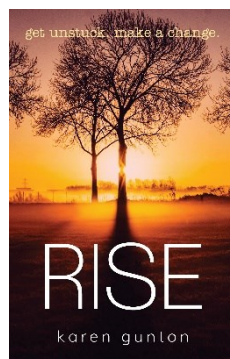
karen is a canadian girl who lives in adelaide, australia with her husband, her three children, and her two demotivational support frenchies. you can find her in her happy place on the beach with a book in one hand, a cold beer in the other, and her bare toes in the sand.

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find more.

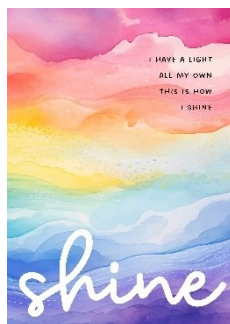
rise.

55 simple self-leadership strategies to get unstuck or make a change.



shine.

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