

Words I Wish

Someone Had Said to Me As a Kid



By Bill Zimmerman

Creator, MakeBeliefsComix.com

Art by Tom Bloom

This book belongs to

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Words I Wish

Someone Had Said to Me As a Kid



By Bill Zimmerman & You

Art by Tom Bloom

An Interactive Digital Diary
from MakeBeliefsComix.com

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Book design: Barbara Berasi

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Please write: William Zimmerman, Guarionex Press Ltd.,
201 West 77 Street, New York, NY 10024.

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In memory of
my parents and my cousin Ruth.
Dedicated to the children in my life.

—B.Z.

Dear Reader,

I wrote this book of encouraging words to help young people as they make their way in the world. **All girls and boys need to hear such words.** I know I did.

You see, I lost my father when I was very young and missed hearing the words that a child needs to hear from his or her dad. Growing up, I tried hard to imagine the things he would have said to guide me if he were around. A few years ago, right before Father's Day, I longed for my dad very much, and to seek comfort I began writing a letter from him to me, saying some of the things which I so wanted to hear—that he was proud of the person I had grown up to become and that he loved me very much.

Writing the letter helped me that day and I continued to write more letters in the voice of a father talking to a child. In time, these letters grew into this book to inspire children.

If you're a young person reading this book, **think of each page as a personal letter of caring words from me to you**, like the ones an older friend or relative might say to you. If you are a parent or teacher, you may find some of the thoughts offered echo what you may have said to a child in your life, or perhaps they will give you new ideas for future personal messages. You can also read and discuss the book's thoughts with a young person.

All the words in this book are encouraging in nature because I know full well that none of us ever hears enough of them in life. They are the ones I have said or written to young people in my own life, including my daughter, my younger sister, my niece and nephews and children whom I have taught over the years. I decided to offer

this free e-book at MakeBeliefsComix.com because so many girls and boys regularly visit the web site and I wanted to reach out and be there for you. **It is my hope that you and your friends will turn to the book whenever you need a good word or when you are feeling lonely or unsure.**

At the end of each thought in this book, you will find a question to help you think more deeply about what you have read and about your life. There is even space there for you to write your own thoughts directly onto the computer screen and into this book, which is in an interactive PDF format. You can save what you have written or print out the pages you wish. Other pages encourage you to write letters of support to yourself or to someone you care about. This e-book also links to an essay I have written, "Words Fathers Need to Say and Boys Need to Hear," published in our [4Parents](#) section.

The words offered here are as truthful as I know; they represent all that I have learned from my own life's experiences. Writing them allowed me to create something positive from the many worries and cares I had in growing up. I hope you will find the book's thoughts caring and hopeful, too.

Yes, deep down I still wish my father had been able to express some of these words to me. But because he couldn't, I did the next best thing: I simply wrote the words I would have liked for him to have said to me. And now, I share them with you. **Perhaps one day when you are grown you will say them to the children in your life.**

Yours in friendship and goodwill,

Bill Zimmerman

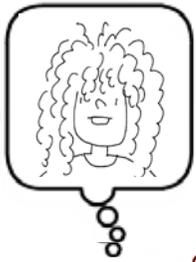
Bill Zimmerman

Creator, MakeBeliefsComix.com



THE WORDS BEGIN...

What Every Parent Wants for a Child



*If I could, I would give you
a basket of happiness
that you could reach into
all your life.*



*If I could, I would never allow pain to enter your life,
If I could, I would keep you in my pocket
to make you feel safe,
If I could, I would plant seeds of joy in your soul,
If I could, I would make you believe that no hope
is impossible to attain,
If I could, I would catch your sweet dreams and
save them for you,*

*If I could, I would grow beautiful colored flowers that blossom for you in the snow,
If I could, I would borrow the songs of birds to give to you when you feel sad,
If I could, I would jump through hoops of fire to free you from dragons,
And, if I could, I would steal away all your doubts to bring a smile
to your face.*

What would you do for your own child?

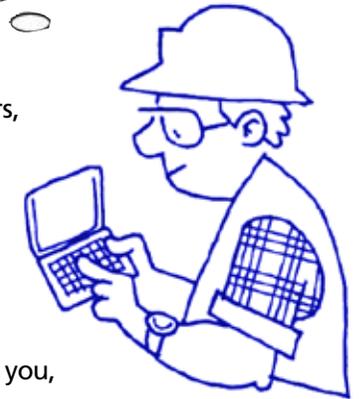
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Remember These Words

*Every time
you do your best,
you make someone
proud of you.*



Every time you try your best,
be proud of yourself.
Every time you are kind and unselfish to others,
be proud of yourself.
Every time you work hard to master a problem,
no matter how difficult
or how discouraged you may feel,
be proud of yourself.
Every time you hold your anger in check
and try to work out a solution to what hurts you,
be proud of yourself.
As much as I wish to, I can't be with you all the time to say these things,
so you must remember to always take pride in the way you conduct
yourself.



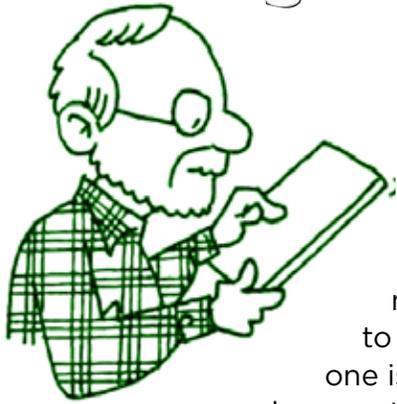
What do you take pride in?

(TYPE HERE)

Advice I Wish Someone Had Given Me



*You are always
in someone's heart;
you are never alone.
Don't be afraid.*



Don't be afraid. You will be all right in life. Just have trust in yourself and each time, when you are afraid, reach deep within you to gather the courage you need to overcome your fears.

Every human being is fearful at times, not just you, and each of us must fight to retain our humanity and courage. No one is exempt from this battle, no matter how pretty or handsome or smart or physically strong. Each of us must struggle with our life, for it is the struggle that forms us as human beings.

You have much courage in you, if only you will look. Take comfort in your strength.

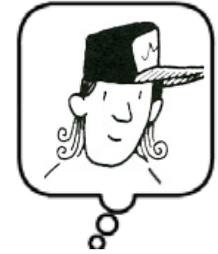
What is the best advice that was given you?

(TYPE HERE)

A Wish For You



*May you meet people
who will be kind to you.*



*May you meet someone special
today
who makes you smile
and feel good
about life and about yourself.*

*And may you also be
that "someone special"
to another.*

That's my wish for you today.



Who is special to you?

(TYPE HERE)

Keep on Marching



You can always overcome a problem with time and effort.



I believe that in life we get second and third and even more chances. Sometimes we make mistakes and fail in our early attempts to reach a goal. Sometimes we just stumble. But that never means all is lost.

I know from my own experience, whether in working through a family problem or having trouble in school or even losing a job, that there is always another chance to succeed—that is, if

we can pick ourselves off the floor and keep working toward the goal we have set. Maybe we'll need to take a different path to reach that goal, but inch by inch, step by step, we creep toward that elusive goal until it is right there before us—and we finally grab it and make it ours.

Yes, it takes grit and sticktoitiveness to not allow failure to overtake us or sap our spirit. So just keep marching on and never look back!

What is an important goal you have set for yourself?

(TYPE HERE)

There's No One Like You



Always remember how special you are in your own way.

When you're feeling lost and isolated, child, hold on. Listen to the voice within you that says you are special. No matter what people say about you or do to you they can't take away your good qualities.

Think about this for a moment: there is no other person like you on earth.

There is no one who sees things the way you do, who thinks your thoughts, who feels the way you do. While we all share some things in common, each of us sees the world through our own lens. Each of us has a particular sense of awareness that makes us who we are. That specialness is a gift which you must treasure and be thankful for.



What is an important goal you have set for yourself?

(TYPE HERE)

You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet



*If you give yourself fully
to your goal
you can accomplish
all that you hope for.*



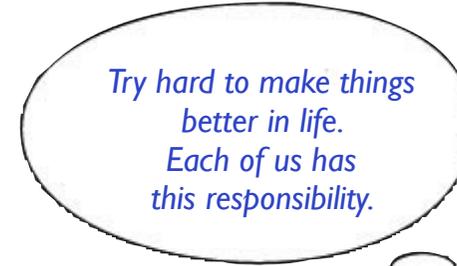
Sometimes, child, when we find ourselves a little lacking, it might be a good time to look at our baby pictures to recall all the progress we have made in life—from taking our first baby steps to becoming the person we are today. Remember how you first had to learn how to crawl, then stand on shaky legs and begin to walk. Then you learned how to speak and make yourself known, and later to read.

All of these were monumental tasks when you first undertook them, but you accomplished them so well since that time when the early photos were taken. These are just the beginning of a long life of “firsts” and achievements that will make up your life in the many years ahead of you. Just remember that everything takes its own time to learn, so be patient with yourself as you master other new “firsts.”

What has been your hardest-won achievement so far?

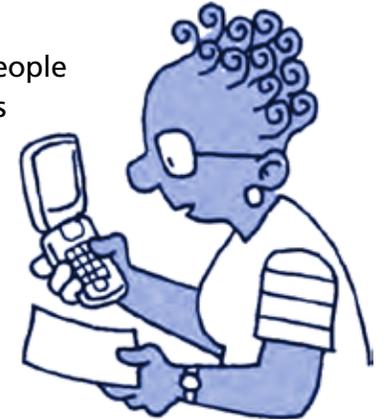
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Make the World A Little Better



Whatever you do in life, try to make the world a better place. Try to be kind to people who need you. You have much goodness in you to offer others.

A funny thing about kindness and love—the more you give, the more comes back to you. You become richer in spirit. Child, there is so much pain in the world and you have it in you to make things better for others.



**What can you do to make life better
for someone or something?**

(TYPE HERE)

Don't Ever Lose Your Dreams



*Have big dreams!
You have a lifetime
to achieve them.*



Be true to your own internal vision of how you want things to be. Believe in yourself no matter if some reject your ideas. Your ideas and imagination are to be trusted—they belong to you and represent the best in you.

Yes, test your vision and ideas against reality, but believe, too, that you can always fulfill some of your dreams if you are willing to fight for them with all your heart. Never ever lose belief in what you yearn for. Never ever give up! Sometimes all

you have are your hopes and dreams, and if you surrender them, or allow someone to take them away from you or put them down, then you will be lost. Your ideas are a gift to be treasured.

Think of a dream you have. What is it?

(TYPE HERE)

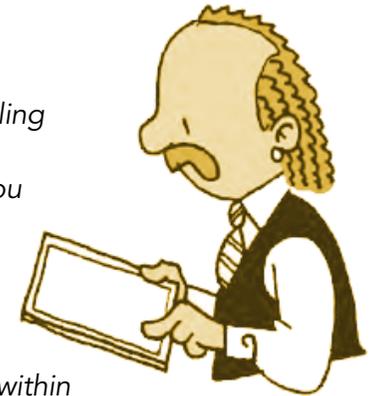
Words to Encourage You on Your Journey

*Never underestimate
the strength within you
—it is waiting to come out
when you call
upon it.*



There will be days when you will wake up feeling overwhelmed by all that you have to do—so many pressures on you. You realize that you just don't have all the answers. I have known this feeling, too.

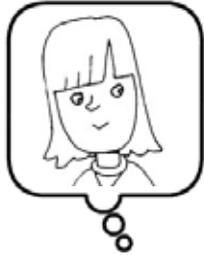
When you feel this way, please pause for a moment. Then reach down deep within you and you will find all the strength that resides within you. You must believe in yourself and in your abilities. Just try to take things one step at a time, and you will see, things will fall into place.



What strengths do you have?

(TYPE HERE)

Be Your Own Good Friend



*Love yourself
in the same way you love others.
You are worthy of such love
and need to take
good care of yourself.*



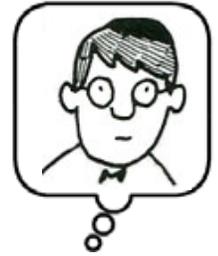
Hold your own hand. By that I mean be your own best friend. Sometimes when it may seem that there is no one there to love and help you, that's when you need to reach out to yourself and offer a helping hand. Such times you need to treat yourself as you would someone who is in need of encouragement. This means silently offering yourself a comforting word or

two, or even a warm smile. Maybe what I am saying is that we need to recognize and honor ourselves from time to time.

Say some good words to yourself.

(TYPE HERE)

Time to Do Your Funny Monkey Dance



*Always try to find
laughter and joy in life
to ease your way.*

Dear child,

Can you laugh at yourself? Can you enjoy the foolishness within you? Must you always take yourself so seriously? Aren't humans sometimes like the little chimpanzees you see at the zoo, scrambling and scurrying around, leaping into the air, tumbling and making silly sounds. They make you smile just thinking about them, don't they? They take you out of yourself and help you remember to be happy

and silly at times. Let your heart become a little lighter as you do your own funny monkey dance. Make time to enjoy your life fully.



What is an important goal you have set for yourself?

(TYPE HERE)

A Loving Prayer



May life be good to you.



*From far away I lay my hands
on your head and bless you, child.*

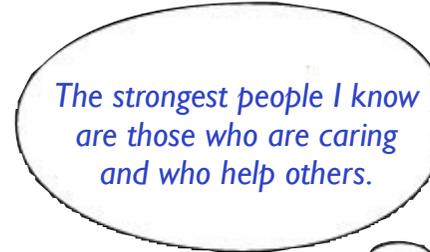
*May the spirit of the universe,
the spirit of nature, love and
protect you and strengthen
your heart throughout your life.*

*May only good things happen
to you.*

Who worries over you? Who do you worry about?

(TYPE HERE)

Be Strong Like a Gentle Labrador



*The strongest people I know
are those who are caring
and who help others.*



When I was a young boy I always worried whether I was macho enough. Did I have what it takes to be a man? Now, so many years later, I can say to you that it is not important to worry about this. Just be yourself. The strongest people I know are those who are kind and gentle.

It takes real strength to believe in yourself and to do the right thing for others. Yes, you can play the game and swagger or speak gruffly if you

feel you need to, but deep inside be a gentle labrador—they're really the best because they have good souls and are the strongest!



What's your definition of being strong?

(TYPE HERE)

What Is Courage?



Each of us has more courage than we think; we just need to work hard to put aside our fears which hold us back.



Courage is a funny thing. You never know if you'll have it in you until the time comes when you need it. But don't worry too much about how courageous you are—just try to do the right thing when the situation arises, when you see the need to help someone or to work out a reasonable solution to a hard problem.

Sometimes the most courageous acts seem to be the simplest acts, such as overcoming your fear of someone different from you and trying to help that person, or trying to learn a new skill which you don't think you are capable of learning or too afraid to try.

It's a matter of going ahead even when you're least sure of yourself.

When I was young, perhaps the most courageous thing I did was to overcome my fears and help care for my father in his last days. He was separated from my mother and lived apart from us, and after school I would visit him when he came out of the hospital to keep him company. I was sometimes afraid to be with him because he was so weak and frail and because he had changed so much from the strong, healthy man I had once known. I was afraid I would lose him and it upset me to see him so weak. But I saw he needed me and I overcame my fears and did my best to comfort him. Helping him helped me become less afraid.

What is the most courageous thing you have done or hope to do?

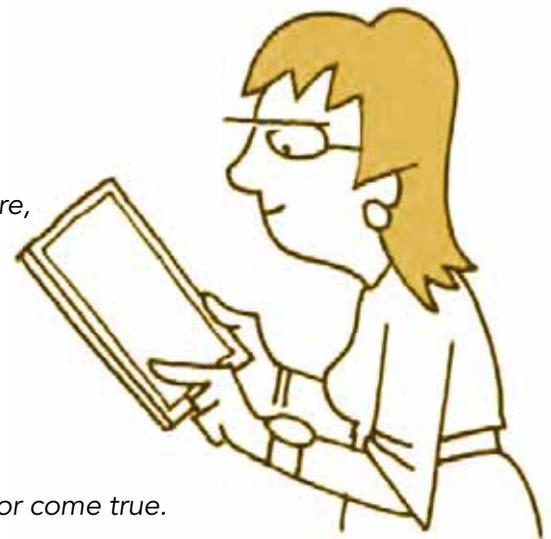
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Sweet Thoughts for a Child

May you always reach for the stars.



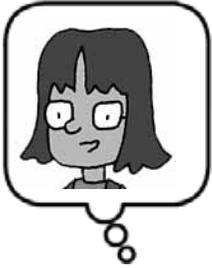
May your dreams be sweet when you sleep,
May you always find time to leap with frogs,
May you find treasures when you walk the seashore,
May you live to hold new life in your hands,
May you one day fly to the moon,
May you have a chance to swim with dolphins,
May much of what you wish for come true.



May you..... (you finish the sentence)

(TYPE HERE)

Love Makes You Leap



May you love someone as deeply as you are loved.



When you find someone to love or care deeply about, leap with joy for you will find your heart growing bigger as you discover the fullness of both your natures. Love means giving of your heart and soul to another, of showing the other respect and gentleness.

Love never means taking over another person or bossing them around, just as you can never really own a flower. Yes, you can nourish that flower with your love, you can admire all its beauty and splendor and gasp at its loveliness. But you cannot pluck it and hoard it just

for yourself. If you do, it will shrivel and waste away.

Love and affection mean sharing what you have to offer with another person or creature who will do the same for you. And by doing so, you will both grow stronger and happier.

Who has shown their love to you? Whom do you love?

(TYPE HERE)

Finding Your Passion



Don't settle for second choice in life: always reach for something better.



Dear child,

If you want to have the fullest, best life possible, then find your passion and go for it. Find the interest or work you can take pride in and which fully engages your imagination and your heart and which gives you meaning.

Too many people are told to be practical and to give up their dreams for something less. But passion, in my book, is what counts. Maybe you won't make a ton of money, maybe every step you take to realize your passion will be hard. But you will be a content person, not getting lost in "what could have been."

Do you know people who had to settle in life? What do their sad faces tell you? Passion for something you love will always get you through the hard times—that's how powerful it is. May you find the thing in life that you were meant to do.



What is an important goal you have set for yourself?

(TYPE HERE)

Something Important to Think About



Remember to stand in awe
at the wonder of the
world and nature.
Enjoy every precious
moment.



**Never take for granted the beauty and wonder
of the world.**

*There is a reason why they were put here for us to
behold.*

*Stand outside and look for a moment at the light of the sun.
Go to the beach and watch the wide ocean, wave after
wave after wave.*

*Feel the breeze on your face. Smell the freshness of the air.
Listen to the sounds of a sea shell.*

Go to a park and smell a beautiful flower or look at the trees.

*Then wonder how all these beautiful, wonderful things came
to be. What was the reason for them? Wonder how you and all the other people
came to be. Think of what role you will play in the world. Think of the Spirit, the Force
which created our universe, and stand in awe at their mystery and majesty. Where
do we fit into the grand scheme of things?*

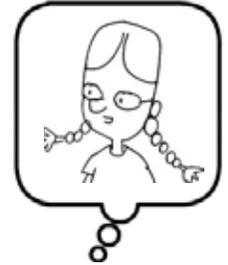
*Think big things, oh son, oh daughter, for you must try to measure up to the wonder
of our universe. Be the best you can be. Be the kindest you can be. Be the lovingest
you can be. Be worthy of your sacred life.*

Name one thing that amazes you.

(TYPE HERE)

This Is What I Believe

I believe that each of us
can make a positive
difference in the world.



I believe that hope is with us forever.

I believe in the healing sunshine.

I believe in the wild and loving heart
that beats in each of us.

I believe in rainbows.

I believe in the narcissus that bravely
blooms in cold winter.

I believe in music and laughter and song.

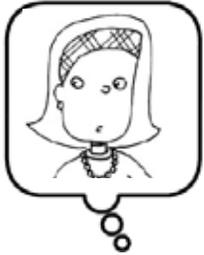
I believe that things always get better if we will them to be.

I believe in the kindness of people that waits to come out.

I believe..... (you finish the sentence)

(TYPE HERE)

Giving Can Also Fill You Up



*Never hold back.
Give yourself fully
to whatever you do.*



Look around you.

You will find some people are takers, others are givers. The “takers” are always hungry for something—love, power, food, money, possessions. The “givers” are the providers, the nurturers, the unselfish ones. We all have a little of each in us, but deep down I hope you’ll be more a giver in life rather than a taker. You see, there is so much pain and need in the world. Our job is to do the best we can to make the world a little better than when we found it.

A funny thing about giving—the more you give, the more ultimately comes back to you. Isn't it wonderful to see someone who has been able to grow a little stronger and happier because of your kindness and support? Imagine what kind of world we'd have if everyone reached out to someone else and had their back? How much better things could be!

Who has been giving to you? In what way? Who have you given to?

(TYPE HERE)

A Divine Mission



*We must honor the life
we are given by using
our time here
as well as we can.*



*Dear one, why do you think
we were put here on earth?
Do you think each of us
has a divine mission to fulfill?
I'd like to think so, to believe
that there is a reason for our
lives that is tied up with
making the world a beautiful
place in which to live.*



How would you like the world to be?

(TYPE HERE)

It Pays to be Stubborn



*Never take “no”
for an answer.
“No” is a closing of the door,
“yes” is an opening
to something better.*



Here's something to think about:

Sometimes being stubborn is a good thing, despite what others may say.

By that I mean taking an attitude that you won't give up in trying to achieve your goal—even if people say that you're crazy or it's impossible. Some times you just have to fight for your dreams to come true. I remember being told many times in my life not to do certain

things, or that they couldn't be done. But I refused to listen and needed to try things my way. Many times I was right. Other times I failed, but I learned from my mistakes. Nothing lost here. You use your perseverance to stay in the game as long as you can.

Sometimes, though, to reach a goal you need to take smaller steps, rather than great leaps. You approach that goal over a period of time and you use your oneriness to keep you going and focused on your goal. Your hard work will pay off, I promise you.

What important thing would you fight for?

(TYPE HERE)

Coaching Yourself



*You have a responsibility
to be the best you can be,
as hard as that may be.*



We can't all be Kings or Queens of the World, but each of us can be our very best, like majesties over our own personal domains. Always try to set high goals for yourself. This will make you stretch and grow. But don't set them so high that they become unattainable and leave you frustrated. Yes, you can make demands on yourself to be better than you are today, but also realize that you need to make time to develop the skills you need to realize your dreams.

Everything, including the writing of this book for you, took practice, practice, and more practice. In writing it, I experienced moments of doubt and had to talk myself through the problems and be my own coach. I would urge myself on, reminding myself that this hard work was important. All goals are never reached at once. It takes much toil to gain the skills and ability you need to fulfill your ambitions. Most of all, you need to believe with all your heart in what you are doing.

What new skills would you like to master?

(TYPE HERE)

It's Important to Ask Questions



Never be afraid to ask questions—that is the only way you can learn.



Learn to ask questions of the people whom you meet. A writer once said her mother told her that when entering a room of new people to ask at least 10 questions of each of those whom she met. By doing so, she would show that she was really interested in learning about those whom she encountered, but even more important, she would learn new things that she hadn't known.

Some of these things might be interesting, some helpful.

That goes for interviews, too. When you apply for a position, try to answer the interviewer's questions as well as you can. But don't be passive—it is also a time for you to learn more by asking questions about the position or how the person interviewing you got to where they are today. Such information can be useful, and your questioning is a way for you to display your own curiosity and intelligence, traits which any employer values.

What important question would you like to ask someone?

(TYPE HERE)

Asking for Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Most people are giving and want to share what they know with you.



It's okay to ask for help. There's nothing wrong in showing others that you don't know everything or that you need help in finding answers. Yet, asking for help was one of the hardest things for me to do when I was a kid. Maybe it was because I didn't trust many adults or lacked self-confidence. But by acting that way I cut myself off from a lot of learning which could have come in handy later on.

Sometimes it may take a lot of courage to ask for help. Many of us don't like to show our weakness or ignorance to others—we feel we'll be judged as lacking. But, just remember, we aren't born into this world knowing everything. We need time to learn all the things that go into making us good, capable human beings—we pick up this knowledge day by day, bit by bit, and by asking questions.

Each day I have new questions for which I seek answers. It doesn't make you less of a person to seek advice and help from others whom you respect.



What do you think is the most important piece of information you've acquired so far in your life?

(TYPE HERE)

Learning the B's



*Be kind to others.
There is so much pain
in the world.*



I read about an educator who encourages kids to learn the "B's." Some of his "B's" include:

- BE responsible.
- BE on time.
- BE friendly.
- BE polite.
- BE a listener.
- BE a tough worker.
- BE a goal setter.

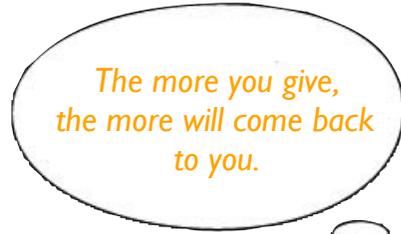
I like his idea and decided to add a few of my own "B's" for you to think about:

- BE caring.
- BE generous.
- BE hopeful.
- BE helpful.
- BE loving.
- BE a good person.

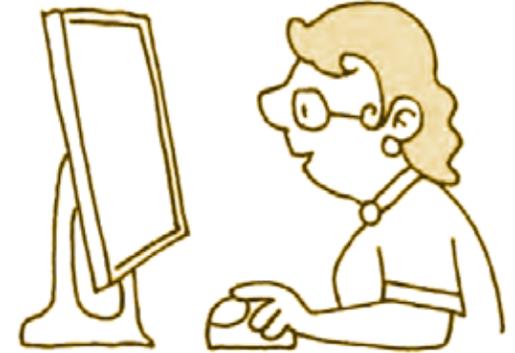
Your turn: BE..... (you fill in the rest)

(TYPE HERE)

Giving What You Need



A poet, Anne Michaels, once said, "I see that I must give what I most need." Her words have always stayed with me. Think about them. I take them to mean, for example, that if you feel very alone or, maybe unloved, then you might consider befriending someone who may feel alone, too. Maybe it's an older relative you know, maybe it's an animal who needs to be taken care of. I think of my dog, Nena, whom I adopted after she had been abandoned and kept in a cage for four months at the dog pound. She looked so forlorn and alone. All she really needed was a little love, and in return she unselfishly gave me what I needed most, too—love and companionship.



What is it you need that you might be able to give others?

(TYPE HERE)

Taking Responsibility



The more responsibility you take on, the stronger you become.



Someone once wrote that each of us must be the drivers of our own car. The writer means that each of us is responsible for pointing ourselves in the right direction and for our actions. We should not allow our friends or peers to dictate to us what we should do or how we should act to others. We've got to decide for ourselves what is the right thing to do. This reminds me of what the fabled mountaineer, Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mount Everest, once said: "It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves."

What mountains in your own life do you want to scale?

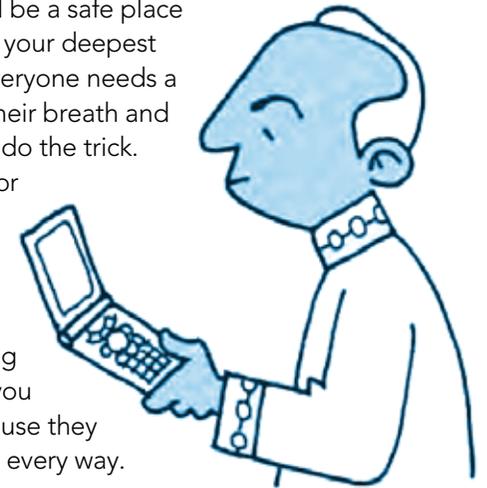
(TYPE HERE)

Keeping A Personal Journal

Make time to think about your life and your experiences. Doing so will help you understand yourself better and make better decisions.



Give some thought to keeping a journal to record your journey through childhood and life. It will be a safe place you can retreat to, where you can record your deepest hopes and yearnings, even your fears. Everyone needs a refuge where they can turn to, to catch their breath and figure out their life. A little notebook will do the trick. Carry it around with you during the day, or if you're fearful you'll lose it, then keep it in a protected place at home. Come to it each day to keep in touch with your heart or to see what troubles you or makes you so happy. Record the amazing things that happen to you, the laughter you hear, the jokes, even the sad things because they are all a part of your life and affect you in every way.



Writing in a journal becomes a way of breathing and bringing light to your soul.

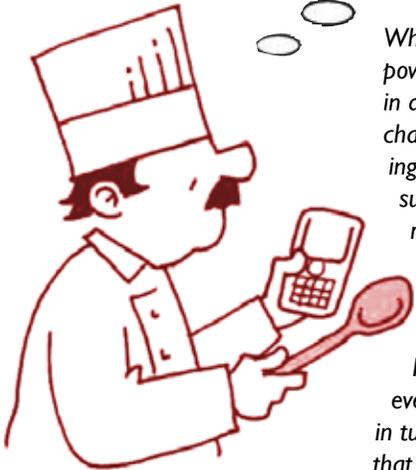
What one thing happened to you this week that you'd like to remember?

(TYPE HERE)

Your Power to Change the World



You have more power than you think you have to make a difference in someone's life.



When I was very young I never felt that I had much power. My daydream back then was to one day work in an office on the top floor of a skyscraper and be in charge of something. (As a child I felt in charge of nothing.) I imagined that in my high office I would be a big success and make important decisions—all of them right—and that would make me powerful. But that was a long time ago, and I've come to realize that each of us, no matter how young or small, has the power to make a difference in the world.

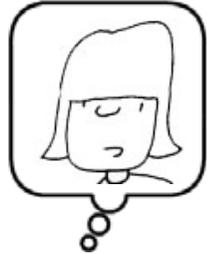
How?, you may ask. Say you help one person this day, even to make them smile or laugh, and that person in turn makes another person smile or laugh, and then that person makes another one smilewell, you get the

picture, don't you? Your actions, your attitude for good—and for bad—affect and influence other people who then pass on what they feel or experience to others. So, you're the key to a chain reaction that can echo throughout your neighborhood, throughout your city, your state, your country, then cross the oceans and go around the world. I bet you didn't know you had this power, did you?

What is the one small act you might do today to change the world?
(TYPE HERE)

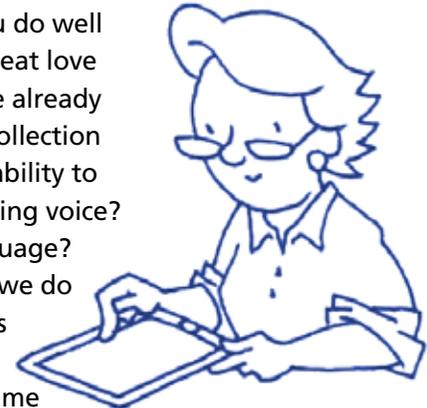
Taking Stock

Take pride in yourself and in the way you conduct your life.



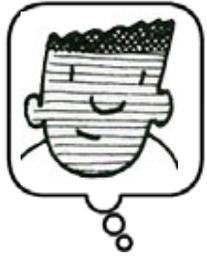
Dear child, think about the things which you do well and which you are proud about. Is it your great love of reading and all the books which you have already read in your young life? Is it your amazing collection of postage stamps or bottle caps? Is it your ability to catch a high fly ball? Is it your beautiful singing voice? Or your ability to speak more than one language?

Each of us needs to take pride in the things we do well or in the new skills we're acquiring. This is particularly important as we struggle to learn new things, some of which may take time to master. If we can feel good about the things we have worked hard to learn, then we will have more confidence to tackle new challenges. That's why it's important now and then to take stock of how far we have come.



What are some of the things you do well?
(TYPE HERE)

I Know You'll Pass the Really Important Tests



*You will be tested
throughout your life.
Just try your best,
that's all one can ask.*



I was surprised to read that two people whom I admire, Winston Churchill and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., did not perform so well in school. They were not great test-takers, and it was said that King did not have great verbal skills. Can you believe that? One became a great leader in Great Britain who helped keep the world free from the Nazis, and the other, through his soaring words and actions, led a great civil rights movement that freed us all.

So as you prepare for your own tests remember these great men and keep things in perspective.

Study hard and prepare well. But these tests won't tell the whole truth about you—they won't get the full measure of your strengths and abilities. The "real" tests will be how well you will confront problems in life and get through them, how you will pick yourself off the floor when things don't go right at first, and how well you can live with others, no matter how different they are from you. I know deep down you will try to do the best that is in you.

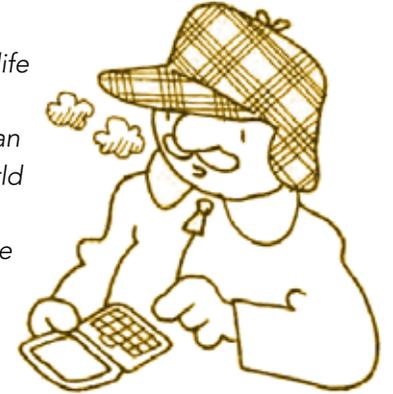
What big challenges do you face in your own life?

(TYPE HERE)

Searching For Heroes



*Be the hero
of your own life.*



Son, daughter, it's good to look up to heroes in life for they can teach us much about becoming outstanding human beings. The heroes who mean a lot to me are the ones who try to make the world a little better, who care about people and living creatures. It makes good sense to learn about the life stories of these people and to try to assume some of their traits. But maybe, we also need to begin thinking about becoming the heroes of our own lives. We need to try to be brave and courageous as we tackle the particular problems that we encounter daily and do our very best to solve them. We are all are capable of becoming heroic, too.

Step outside of yourself for a moment and observe your own actions. Are they the deeds of a person whom you would respect? If you can say so, then you are indeed becoming a hero to yourself.

Who is your hero? What brave deed have you done?

(TYPE HERE)

Someone Is Thinking About You



*There is always
someone in the world
who cares about you.
Never forget that.*



There is someone in the world who has so many hopes and dreams for you.

There is someone in the world who often says a prayer for your well-being.

There is someone in the world who smiles when they think of you.

There is someone in the world who can better bear all the pain that life brings because you are part of their world.

There is someone in the world whom you make happy just by your being you.

Believe this.

Who do you think about with happiness?

(TYPE HERE)

If I Could

*If I could,
I would give you all the stars
in heaven.*



*If I could, I would give you the moon to hold,
or fly with you to the clouds.*

*If I could, I would ask the hummingbirds
to come to your room at night to hum you
to sleep as they beat their wings.*

*If I could, I would bring butterflies
to your classroom to bring smiles
and delight to your face.*

*If I could, I would build a bridge
of rainbows upon which we could walk
across the ocean.*



And, if you COULD, what wonderful thing would you do?

(TYPE HERE)

What's Your Vision?



*Try to find something
you feel passionate about.
It will see you
throughout your life.*



Try to think about the type of person you want to become in life. Have a vision of yourself a year from now, or even five, ten years down the road. Maybe you should take a few minutes to write down the characteristics or traits of the person you want to be. Do you want to be brave? Strong? Kind? Loving? Gentle? Funny? Do you know people with these traits? If so, use them as your role models to come closer to how you want to be. Visions can indeed come true if you work to fulfill them.

Carry around that piece of paper with your vision of yourself and refer to it from time to time when you feel a little lost or adrift. It will give you strength and help steady you. Maybe, even, consider writing a letter to the person you will be 10, 15 years from now. What would you say?

This is my vision of the person I wish to be:

(TYPE HERE)

Listen Carefully

*Be sensitive to the needs
of others. We need to step
outside of ourselves
to understand others.*



Are you a really good listener? I ask this because I once read about a teenage boy who took a vow of silence for one whole year. He said he did so because "I noticed I wasn't really listening to people. I was just waiting for people to stop talking so I could chime in."

When a person talks to you, does he have your full attention, or only a small part? The highest compliment you can pay to someone is to listen fully to what she is trying to tell you. This way you convey that you feel what she has to say is important. Isn't that how you want to feel when you talk to someone, too?

One thing more. We "listen" with our hearts as well as our ears. Sometimes a person may say one thing to us, but he really means something else. That's why it's important to listen carefully and ask ourselves what deep down is that person really telling us. This means we must always trust our instincts, the gut feeling we have about others. Such feelings always protect us and never lie to us.

Who's the best listener you know? Who has truly listened to you?

(TYPE HERE)

Can You Look Below the Surface?



*Try to put yourself
in another person's shoes.
They are as special as you.
They laugh and cry and
have fears as you do.*



I have a best friend who sometimes expresses shame about her skin color and the way she looks. I tell her she is as beautiful on the outside as she is on the inside, but somehow she still can't fully accept what I say and is often unhappy with herself. Maybe she is that way because she suffered so much discrimination as a child. I tell you all this because I believe we need to accept people for who they are, not what we want them to be. People can't change their skin color, or their ethnic origin, or their religion, nor should we want them to. And

neither can they make us change from the way we were born into the world.

The thing we can change, though, is our attitude and the way we respond to others who are different in some way from us. We can respect others for who they are and not expect them to change for us. We need to look under the surface to find the human being we can relate to and become a friend to or love. If we were all born blind into the world, we couldn't easily distinguish the physical differences between one another. And without being able to see, wouldn't we get to know others in a deeper way, through our hearts, our minds, even our touch? Must we be blind in order to accept one another fully?

Who is the human being under your surface?

(TYPE HERE)

Imagining You're Someone Else



*Respect others
in the same way
you want them
to treat you.*



You can do anything you want with the help of your imagination. You can fly, you can soar. You can transform the people you meet into gladiators or princesses or wizards or into anybody you want. Your imagination is your way out of prison, it will always deliver you to a special place, a wider world.

But in the real world, too, use your imagination to try to see what's really inside of people, what's under their surface. Maybe under the strict demeanor of your teacher is a person who loves her school children so much and makes great demands on them because she wants them to achieve a great deal. Maybe under the surface of the bus driver who yells at kids to be quiet is also a father who feels very responsible for the safety and well-being of all his "children" on the bus. Maybe hidden inside a bully at school is a person who never seems to get enough love at home and who carries sadness in her heart which she turns into rage against others. This doesn't excuse her actions, but maybe it helps you understand her better.

Can you see the world through someone else's eyes?

(TYPE HERE)

Having an Open Heart



Care for all
living creatures.
Each has a role
in our universe.



*Have reverence for all of life,
from the tiny ant
to the white dove
to your fellow human
who wanders the land
the way you do.
Each living creature
needs to be loved
and honored,
for each is a part
of the chain of life.*

What things do you revere?

(TYPE HERE)

Always Keep a Dream in Your Wallet

Hang on to all your dreams
no matter what hardships
life brings to you.



As you plug away each day, child, don't forget to keep a big dream or two alive in your heart. I know in my own life that dreams are very important. They keep us going no matter what bad things befall us—and they give us the strength to try new roads! When you stop dreaming or hoping you begin to dry out and lose the joy of life. You don't want that to happen to you, do you? So, take a moment and write your special dream down on paper, then tuck it away in your wallet to look at from time to time. It'll make all the hard work you're going through right now a little easier to bear and it will strengthen your wonderful spirit.



What dream(s) do you carry around?

(TYPE HERE)

Quick, Hide That Grouch!



Try to master your anger so that it does not take you over and destroy you.



No one loves a grouch. This is because people have their own problems and don't want to put up with other's bad humor. One person may be worrying about an ailing child, another fears losing his job, another has a sick parent on her mind or is not feeling well herself. That is why we need to learn how to put on a positive face no matter how bad we may feel.

Yes, you may be sad or angry inside, but in dealing with others it may be best to try to put on a good

front. In so doing, you prove that you can control your feelings when necessary, and that you can interact effectively with others—so important in school and work. I am a firm believer in recognizing and accepting one's feelings (good and bad), but in working with and managing many people over the years, I also know how important it is to be able to work harmoniously with others. We just can't give in to the upset in our souls and make other people miserable. In controlling and working through our anger and problems, we take charge of our lives and, over time, grow stronger.

What is the best way to get out of a bad mood?

(TYPE HERE)

Practice Your Dream

Practice, practice, practice. Everything good that you want to achieve will take practice.



Something worth considering: keep a special space in your head for your visions of the important things you want to accomplish in your life. You see, before you can make a dream come true, you must go over it again and again in your head, scoping it out, plotting out how you will achieve what you want. Your visions are necessary, for as you visualize what you want, you are actively rehearsing how to get there. You are priming your heart and your body to take the necessary steps to realize your dream. But remember, fulfilling a dream doesn't happen overnight. Great visions take time and hard work and patience to come true.

I once read about the habits of an Olympic swimmer who won a gold medal. The nights before her races, while lying in bed preparing for sleep, she would rehearse the race she planned to swim. Lap by lap, second by second, she "practiced" her meet. Her mental preparation was as important as the physical practice she did daily in the pool.

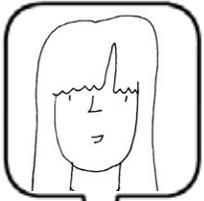
So remember, first comes the vision, then followed by the hard, sweaty work of practicing and learning a new skill—and if we are deserving, we can achieve much, if not all, of what we seek. In my own life, I have discovered that the act of trying to realize a goal is perhaps even sweeter than the victory. But see for yourself!



How do you envision yourself 10 years from now?

(TYPE HERE)

Honor



Only do things
that will make you feel
good about yourself.
Don't sully your
reputation.



A good name is one of the most important things you can have in life. By that I mean you want to be known as a person who will keep her word and treat others with respect. You want to do deeds that will not bring shame to you or your family. When you go out into the world you represent all of your family, not just yourself, and you want your actions and the way you conduct yourself to bring credit and admiration for you from all. That is what I mean when I use the word "honor."

The other day I read the obituary of a man who was persecuted for crimes which he did not commit. Because he was falsely accused, he lost his job and suffered much pain. But he persisted in trying to prove his innocence. Years later, it was found out that all the charges against him were false. Afterward, someone asked him how it felt to have his honor restored. He answered, "I never lost it."

So if you live truthfully and fight for what you believe in, you, too, will never have anything to be ashamed about.

Which characteristic do you respect?

(TYPE HERE)

Learning to Bounce Back

You can recover
from defeats and losses
if you keep your will strong
and refuse to give up.



I want to share a new word with you today—"resilient." It may be one of the most important words to know in life—it means being able to spring back to the original shape or position even after being twisted or stretched out of shape.

Problems and hurts in life can twist us or leave us, initially, with a bowed head or spirit. The key is to find our strength so we can spring back. Even after death or war, people who have suffered great loss find, with time, that they can carry on with their lives and build a new future. I learned this myself when my father died when I was a boy. His loss was terrible to me and I missed him with all my heart. But what kept me going was my memory of him and my belief that he would want me to be brave and try to lead a useful life. So I tried my best and moved ahead.

Now, all of life will not be easy for you—it is never for anyone—but when bad things happen you do have this great power in you to heal and bounce back as you pick yourself off from the floor and continue on with your life. Therefore, I urge you to be resilient.



When have you shown resilience in your own life?

(TYPE HERE)

Keeping Hope Alive



Try to always keep the candle of hope alight in your life. That will help you survive.



I believe that no matter what bad things we are handed in life, we need to keep hope alive in our hearts. We have to believe that things will get better and we must be prepared to work to get things moving our way. If we cave in to whatever hurt or suffering each of us inevitably will experience over the course of our life, we will lose then the chance to find happiness. Hope is like a little birthday candle which we must cup with our hands

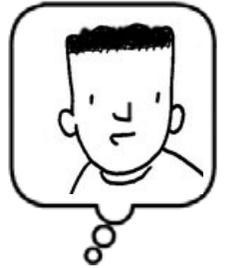
to prevent the wind from blowing out. If we have hope, then we can do anything in life.

What are some things you hope for?

(TYPE HERE)

For When You Have A Bad Day

Focus on the things that you are grateful for in life; it does no good to focus on the negative.



Sometimes there may be days when you feel bad and even a little defeated (we each have such days). When this happens take a sheet of paper and write down some of the good things in your life. Maybe they're goals which you have accomplished, maybe they're people who love you or have been good to you or can make you smile. Maybe it's a wonderful book you've read (learning to read is a major accomplishment **BIG TIME**). Maybe it's a dream you have. I know that writing these things down won't necessarily take away all of the pain or worry you feel that day, but doing so will help balance the scale a little better, so that the bad will be matched by the good.



Writing about what you are grateful for will give you a better perspective, too. By that I mean everything in your life is not bad even though you may feel a little that way sometimes. Everything in life has two sides to it – that's what makes things so interesting. Keeping a list of good things, too, will restore your courage. You see, when we feel overwhelmed with problems or bad news, we tend to forget the good in our lives. Recording our accomplishments helps reinforce the truth that we will have good experiences again in the future, and that this current bad phase is just a small bump along the long road.

What are some good things about your life?

(think hard, you have them, I know you do)

(TYPE HERE)

Believe in yourself.
Never give up!



About the Author

The author of two dozen books, **Bill Zimmerman** has pioneered innovative writing techniques to help people find their writers' voices and

express all the important things within them. His other free interactive digital books are:

- [Laptop Letters](#): Writing Notes of Love & Encouragement to Young People in Your Life
- [Hummingbird Joy](#): A Book of All the Things That Make You Happy
- [Make Beliefs](#) to Spark Your Imagination

He is also the creator of [MakeBeliefsComix.com](#), the online comic strip generator that is used by youngsters, parents, and teachers in more than 200 countries to teach literacy and to encourage creative thinking. The site was selected by UNESCO and Google as one of the world's most innovative projects to foster literacy and reading. His other web site, <http://www.billztreasurechest.com>, features excerpts from all his books. Please visit the sites.

A news executive all his life, Bill was senior editor at Newsday newspaper where he created a nationally syndicated educational page for young people that was twice nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and developed comic books to teach news and history.



About the Artist

Tom Bloom is an artist who has brought joy to the world with his cartoons and illustrations which have appeared in many publications, such as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Fortune* and *Barron's*. He has collaborated with Bill on many other books.

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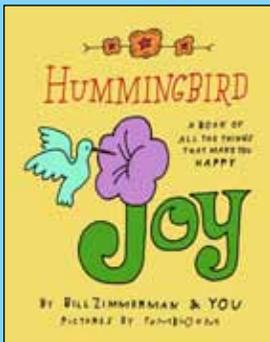
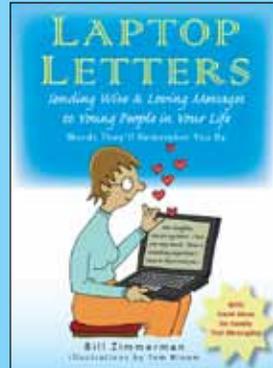
WRITE TO:

Bill Zimmerman
Guarionex Press Ltd.
201 West 77th Street
New York, NY 10024
E-mail: wmz@aol.com

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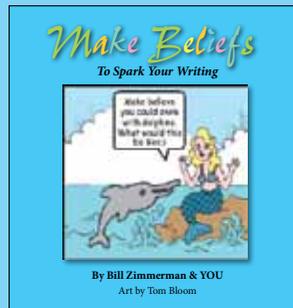
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family members and colleagues. Thank you.