

WIDE AWAKE. EVERY DAY.

DAILY INSPIRATION
FOR CONSCIOUS LIVING



STARLA J. KING

*"Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground."*

RUMI

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2009, my business and life coach sent an email to me that became a never-fading torch which has lit the way for the direction of this book.

“I was wondering how you might be able to simply, with few words, create impact on the reader that has them leaning into their lives – and this precious moment – in a new, profound take-your-breath-away way.”

This book is my answer to that challenge.

We can skim through life on the surface, with our eyes half closed as our souls remain restless and obscured behind our mind’s ongoing ramblings, or we can engage with a richness of living that goes deeper, with both eyes open and our minds pausing regularly to sit in the lap of our vibrant souls.

We can choose to experience only the small sliver of a sleepy life, or we can choose to step into the dynamic, full spectrum of a conscious life and be *wide awake, every day*.

This book has nothing to do with a huge, complicated process; it’s all about the simplicity of paying close enough attention to finally see what’s already there waiting to wake us up.

In our Mennonite family of nine children growing up in Cuba, Mexico, and then rural Virginia, living simply (and simply living) was both a spiritual and physical requirement in our daily lives. I was steeped in Bible teachings, nature, the work of my hands, music, play, and community, yet I longed for something more. I lived fully within the parameters of learned belief and life systems, yet I yearned for freedoms I didn’t know then that I could choose.

Little by little, fueled by an intense need for authentic self-expression, and supported by therapists, coaches, and all manner of introspective exercises, I dared test the waters of those childhood boundaries. As I grew, so did my courage, inspiration, and delight in this incredible gift called life.

I now know the power of choice, and the inspirations in this book are the result of many years of choosing my own version of living as broadly, deeply, reverently, and completely as I know how.

Although filtered through my own perspective and experience, *Wide Awake. Every Day.* combines wisdom from many who have come before me and others who walk beside me. My teachers have shown up in the form of artists, coaches, spiritual leaders from Eastern and Western religions, soul-friends, nature (including animals), and the words from my own pen, and they have gathered together here to offer you this book.

You will find seeming contradictions from one page to the next: recommendations for rest followed by a nudge to test the edge of exhaustion; suggestions toward laser focus followed by an urging toward expanded attention; encouragement to move towards relief followed by a gentle challenge to stay with the discomfort. Different facets of life benefit from different approaches on any given day in any given situation.

Also, you will notice these pages are not grouped by theme or category; life does not unfold in neat groupings, so neither does this book. Consider it a real-life practice in discovering and responding to the varied gems that each day holds.

Each day includes a *Bring It To Life!* exercise and questions for contemplation to help you integrate each day's learning into your own life in a more personal way.

This book is a tool kit offering, not a lesson plan, so soak in what speaks to you and step around what doesn't – *you get to choose.*

I'll conclude with a poem by a soul-friend, written after she came back from a perspective-shifting walk in the woods. "I seriously woke up," she reports. This, (facing page) dear readers, is what it looks, feels, and sounds like to be *wide awake, every day.*

They say you should write the book you wanted to see on the shelves and couldn't find. This is that book for me. May it also be the book you've been looking for. Let's stay wide awake, every day, together. *Starting now.* – Starla J. King

GROWTH SPURT

Rebecca P. Cohen

Prickly-twisted branches along an uneven, pitted path
poke my web of thoughts, but do not bleed.
Their invisible scars weigh heavy as I stumble
and scout and search for a beautiful vista
until I give up looking
and stop.

The once-distant, thunderous sound
crashes along my rocky shore
and crashes and floods and breaks
louder and louder until
the lines rusted over lifetimes run
clean with the fresh, gently flowing river water
running pure,
and I awake
in warm rays of golden sparkles
outstretched on the undulating bright green moss
holding hands in connected threads
at the base of the Tree of Life
with eternal, sacred knowing.

JANUARY

WIDE AWAKE 1 EVERY DAY

JANUARY 1

"Let each moment open your eyes."

SJK

AWAKE

Build your heat
through the fires
of attention,
flames licking your eyelids
kissing them apart to
melt the icy fear holding
your heart
at bay
and with each blink
you spark into
life and
Awake.
Awake.
Awake.



BRING IT TO LIFE!

Today, open your heart to noticing the details of each experience you have.
Let each moment open your eyes, increase your attention, and expand your gratitude.

How does this exercise impact your day?

JANUARY 2

*“The past quickly goes stale even as the future lures us with hopeful promise,
but the present – the right now – is where real life happens.”*

SJK

IN THE MOMENT

Sitting at an outdoor café, I watched a precious little girl dancing on a tiny piece of mulch. Her bright pink barrettes (matching her entire outfit) had a life of their own, bouncing in a slightly delayed rhythm, accentuating her determination of each jump step so carefully aimed at that one piece of mulch. The plaza was bustling around her, but she was oblivious to anything except her dance and that shred of wood. ☺ As adults, we often lose this single-minded fascinated focus. The big picture, that thing that happened yesterday, and the next thing on our list arrests our attention and we overlook the magic of the present, the delight in right now. Like the cool breeze at dusk, the lingering touch of a friend, the flavor complexities of a single savored bite of food. ☺ The past quickly goes stale even as the future lures us with hopeful promise, but the present – the right now – is where real life happens. The present is where the embodiment of joy dances on a piece of mulch.



BRING IT TO LIFE!

As you go through your day today, notice the young children.

What captures their attention?

What does their body language tell you when they're focused on activity?

How might you bring that full-focused present-moment enthusiasm to your own life?

JANUARY 5

*“When open to the healing powers of darkness,
I am often met by a darkness so soft that all my edges fade.”*

SJK

A DARKNESS SO SOFT

So often we think of darkness as the absence of light or hope. It's the thing we fear, the feeling we avoid, and the state we fill with monsters and malevolence. ☾ Yet recently I've discovered that when open to the healing powers of darkness, I am often met by a darkness so soft that all my edges fade, and from this soft space of comfort, I begin to understand how we might all be interconnected parts of a global divine energy. ☾ In a darkness so soft, let's wait a few moments before rushing to the glare of the light.



BRING IT TO LIFE!

In the darkness before dawn or after sunset, step outside
and feel the soft cashmere of darkness around you.

*How might your emotional dark times change
if you remember this physical darkness so soft?*

JANUARY 7

“Feel more. Hide less.”

SJK

NOTE TO SELF

Love more. Eat less.
Feel more. Hide less.
Write more. Panic less.
Allow more. Judge less.
Grin more. Grouch less.
Intuit more. Resist less.
Plan more. Plan less.
Sing more. Think less.
Delight more. Despair less.
Cry more. Avoid less.
Step in more. Drift less.
Unpack more. Tidy up less.
Heart more. Gremlin less.
Create more. Doubt Less.
Believe more. Believe more.
– All my love, Me. (You.)



BRING IT TO LIFE!

Write a note to self, using this “more and less” format. Carry it with you and add to it during the day. Encourage someone else to share their “more and less” ideas.

JANUARY 8

*“What if our natural state bears an uncanny resemblance
to the divine?”*

SJK

OUR NATURAL STATE

So many of our learned messages (religious and other) tell us that we are sinful, broken, and lacking, and that we need to spend our whole lives making up for these inherent shortcomings and failures. ☞ I used to subscribe fully to that belief, prayerfully apologizing to the God who I believed I had disappointed simply by being alive in this world, while at the same time some part of me fought that idea. My open heart in church would regularly close in protection as I was frequently asked to confess my sinful nature. ☞ On the day I began work with my professional life coach, she noted her belief that we are all “creative, resourceful, and whole.” I felt that truth in the depths of my core and it immediately began to erase the nameless self-apology I’d carried around with me for years. ☞ What if we live as though our natural state is wholeness? What if we always are and have enough? What if we have nothing to make up for, no sinful nature to apologize for, and no inherent failures born in us from our first breaths? ☞ What if our natural state bears an uncanny resemblance to the divine?



BRING IT TO LIFE!

Today, suspend disbelief and live and believe as though every part of you is whole, healed, and a reflection of pure love and light. Set a timer for 10 minutes and describe what that might feel and look like today, getting as specific as possible.

Then go live from that place of wholeness.

How does this impact the way you think about yourself and interact with others?

JANUARY 9

*"We all deserve to be treated like royalty,
no matter our capabilities, capacities, or achievements."*

SJK

LIKE ROYALTY

He was pedaling slowly, taking some effort to pull the covered cart attached to his bicycle. I first noticed how the grin on his face contrasted with the impersonal feel of the city sidewalk grunge, then my eye was drawn to the cart itself. It was built like a Nativity scene, open in the front, with the three wooden sides, top, and bottom all covered with an exquisite silky cloth, patterned as if made for royalty. ☞ Inside this carrier, sharing the grin of the man providing her travel, sat a physically challenged girl, riding with the air of a princess in full delight of her court. ☞ We all deserve to be treated like royalty, no matter our capabilities, capacities, or achievements. ☞ We all deserve to be treated like royalty.



BRING IT TO LIFE!

Today, start by treating yourself like royalty.
Then carry that feeling out to the world around you, treating all you come in contact
with today as though they were utterly deserving royalty.
How does this impact your day?