

Dear Austin, Ryan, Sarah, Jacob, and Alana,

I have been wanting to write to you for quite some time. Now seems like the right moment. I do so just in case you begin to give up on yourself. Just in case you doubt your remarkable and unique potentials and gifts. Just in case you wonder why you're here and what your life means. Just in case you begin to question your dreams and your deep capacity and right to pursue them. Just in case you feel disconnected, overwhelmed, and pressured to give in to all the voices that try to constrain and narrowly define who you are, what you are good or not good at, and what you should do with your life. Just in case you're not sure how you fit or belong. And just in case you dismiss as impossible or as nonsense your genuine capacity to change the world.

I share my notes with you just in case you will need help in figuring things out in the often strange neighborhoods you will encounter throughout your life. Just in case the lessons embedded in these notes give you meaning and hope. Just in case they invite you to reconnect to the web of life and learning that joins us all.

Despite all the cultural messages to the contrary, you are born into a world of abundance, wholeness, and love. It is a world of unity, order, connections, relationships, and continuous learning, and it will support and sustain you if you accept its open invitation to imagine, dream, discover, and continue to learn and become all that you can be.

You must explore the magic and mystery that live inside you and "sing the song" that is uniquely yours to sing. I have heard it many times.

It is beautiful and it belongs only to you. If you do not live your song and continue to nourish it, you will not be visible to the world. Your song is your gift to the world.

So here are my notes, and I send them with love.

1. *Slow down and learn something very well. Let go of right answers and illusions of objectivity, control, and predictability, and listen to your intuition and your heart.* Live from the inside out. Do not participate in your own diminishment, and always walk in the direction of your own learning and healing.
2. *Do everything with the seventh generation in mind.* The future is being born now in everything you do or do not do. Live a life of wholeness and connection. You are the seeds of a sustainable world. You are the mapmakers of our future.
3. *Honor and celebrate life in all its forms, be gentle with the earth, and absorb and embrace the wonder and beauty that surround you.* Beauty changes people. If you stop listening to nature, you will not be able to hear one another.
4. *Be a steward of your gifts, your passion, and your dreams.* The world desperately needs your imagination, your courage, your passion, and your commitment. Small stories have never stirred the soul. Dream big dreams, and create new realities worthy of your life. Be faithful to your own image of possibility, and remember that the price of passion and commitment is the shattering of personal illusions of safety. Be visible in the world so it can find you. You are grander than you can imagine.

5. *Say yes to belonging.* There is a songline woven into the universe, the earth, and life itself, and it is one of wholeness, coherence, connection, and relationships. There is no such thing as alone or lost in the web of life.

6. *Find your own voice, speak your own truth, and choose faith and hope over cynicism.* All are choices, and cynicism will never invite the potential for goodness and genius that lives within you.

7. *Pay attention, and listen for the sacred that lies hidden in the ordinary.* Your spirit and soul breathe best when you are still. So slow down, cherish silence, and listen for what wants to emerge. Percussive conversations do not welcome your inner voice. It is the depth of your attention that allows you to access the depth of your own identity.

8. *Decide what you want your name on.* Your name is everything. It is your identity and your integrity. Remember your name, and reclaim your life for the world. Put your signature on impossible causes; they are the ones most worthy of who you are.

9. *Invite yourself into a life of learning, and choose the questions you want to be holding for your life.* Your boundless capacity to learn and grow your mind is the path to transformation—yours and the world's. New minds can shape new possibilities, and new possibilities can create new realities. You can indeed shape the future. Be mindful of what you learn and how you learn it. Seek connections and wisdom. Understand the meaning of “enough.” Embrace wonder, welcome surprise, and always, always keep learning.

10. *Remember that contrary to the voices, images, sounds, and messages that surround and bombard you, your life is about:*

Your integrity, not your position
Your voice, not your power
Your name, not your title
Your calling, not your career
Your legacy, not your success

So think and learn more slowly. Listen to your heartsong. Honor the voice of possibility that calls you. Notice what diminishes you and what makes you come alive. Embrace your questions, treasures, and gifts with gratitude. Passionately commit to impossible causes. Love generously, and pay attention to the deeper song that connects all of life, including your own. Believe in your own goodness and genius, and always, always keep learning. You can be the ones to imagine and create a just, compassionate, and sustainable world for us all.

I know that you won't learn these “lessons” just by my telling them to you. My hope is that if you keep them in a safe and quiet place and take them out from time to time as you grow, they may begin to enter your heart and guide your journey. They may cause you to notice different things and to see with new eyes. Then perhaps one day, you will take them out and add your notes and pass them on to your children.

Love,

Grandma Steph