

**REMINDE
ME
AGAIN**

Poems and Practices for
Remembering Who We Are

JOE DAVIS

REMIND ME AGAIN

Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are

Copyright © 2023 Joe Davis. Printed by Sparkhouse, an imprint of 1517 Media. All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from the publisher. Email copyright@1517.media or write to Permissions, Sparkhouse, PO Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209.

Cover and interior image: Abstract Mid-Century Geometric Shapes Blue Gray Distorted Scratched Textured Background by Oxygen.

Copyright © Getty Images. Adapted by Kristin Miller.

Cover and interior design: Kristin Miller

Interior typesetting: Josh Eller

Editor: Dawn Rundman


Project Manager: Julie O'Brien

"Love Always" first appeared on THRED.org. "Who Is Your Everyone?" first appeared on THRED.org. "Show Up" first appeared in *Staying Awake: The Gospel for Changemakers* by Tyler Sit.

ISBN: 978-1-5064-9126-4

Manufactured in USA

27 26 25 24 23 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It features various shades of blue, gray, and black, with sharp, angular shapes and distorted, scratched textures. The overall effect is reminiscent of mid-century modern graphic design, with a sense of depth and movement. The pattern is dense and layered, creating a rich, textured visual field.

**This book is dedicated to all
those who need reminders
of who they are, who we are,
and what's possible together.**

To the Reader

“Charge it to my head, not to my heart.” That’s what I say whenever I forget something that really matters to me, but it simply slipped my mind, like someone’s name or birthday.

Reminders are often helpful. I know I’m not the only one who needs them—I’ve seen people set multiple alarms, post endless sticky notes, and even tie strings around their finger as if to give their memory a gentle jolt of electricity.

Reminders are especially helpful when our deepest truths are forgotten, lost, or stolen.

Truths such as how to be vulnerable and courageous, how to unapologetically reclaim our bodies as good and worthy of love, and how to cultivate and sustain authentic community with one another.

As an artist, I like to write poems and songs that help us remember what matters most, what we forgot we already knew. Just like many of our elders and ancestors used poetry and song in their sacred ceremonies and rituals to stay connected to a shared sense of being, we do the same today in our communities of faith, in our school classrooms, and even in our halls of political power.

Growing up, it was playful rhymes and rhythms that helped me memorize everything from the alphabet to Easter speeches, the bones in the human body and the planets in the solar system, the names of presidents and the branches of government.

What if we deepen these already cultural and communal practices with an intention of reclaiming our full selves—our heads, hearts, spirits, and bodies—so that we re-embody otherwise disembodied truths? What if we

reminded each other of the possibility of healing, wholeness, and human flourishing in such beautiful, powerful ways that the truth becomes unforgettable?

What if we “charge it” to our entire beings like a billion-voltage lightning bolt zigzagging across the blue-black midnight sky, writing our names and birthdays in cursive amongst the stars, an eternal streak of fire setting the moonlit stage ablaze with the wholly flames of who we are and all we can become?

Maybe we can respond to these questions together in the pages of this book and through the poetry of our lives. I wrote this book as if to say, “Pssst! Hey! Look over here! Have you tried this? It worked for me and my community or worked for other groups of people or worked for our ancestors. Maybe it could work for you too?”

And on the days when we need a gentle jolt of electricity to reawaken the wisdom buried within our cells and our souls; when our deepest truths have been forgotten, lost, or stolen; maybe we can turn to each other and say, “Remind me again.”

Contents



My Mind, Body, and Spirit

Reminders for Myself

Brave Space	11
Good & Worthy of Love	15
Wounds	20
Whole Armor of God	21
You're Not Crazy	22
Emotions Are Guests	26
Thoughts	29
I Am Free	31
Soul Stories	35
Let Go	36
Enough	37
Love Always	38

My Community

Reminders for Each Other

We Rise Higher Together	43
Systems	46
Versions of Our Selves	48
Proud and Free	49
Future Friends	50

Pace of Relationship	51
Good Neighbor	53
Who Is Your Everyone?	55
Call Out / Call In	56
Bully-Free Zone	59
big kids	60
Elder Songs	62
Ancestral Echoes	64
Humanity (Ubuntu)	68

My Purpose

Reminders for the World



Advent of Hope	73
Finding Your Why	76
The Waiting Game	78
Show Up	79
Don't Show Up	82
Wholly Water	85
Love Like Fire	87
Breath of God	91
God Is	94
(K)New Jesus	96
Many Ways to Pray	100
Faith Language	102
Transform	103
Prophetic Imagination	106
BE: The Church	107

Emotions Are Guests

A reminder to feel our emotions

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if we sit with them,
they don't have to live with us.*

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if they are expressed,
there's gifts they can give to us.*

We meet them with the same sweetness
with which they greet us.

But we get uncomfortable
when they get too comfortable
and put their feet up.

The temperature was perfect,
but they turned the heat up.

There's no more food in the fridge
for them to eat up.

They need to leave,
it's past time we speak up.

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if we sit with them,
they don't have to live with us.*

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if they are expressed,
there's gifts they can give to us.*

As we travel this path we're on,
emotions are our passengers,
and as they're passing through
they have messages they're passing us.

We are the drivers of their taxi bus,
and while it may feel as if they're taxing us,
a ride to the other side is all they ever ask of us.

Can we be more hospitable hosts for these guests in our homes
who offer us wisdom, songs, prayers, and poems?

They have messages to tell us—
we can help them help us.

They may overstay their welcome, but cannot stay forever.
Can we give them the chance to change us for the better?

Can we offer them a welcome mat, without becoming one?
Invite them for coffee or tea until the conversation's done?

Unless we give them our blessing, there's no rest yet.
Until we've fully felt them, there's no exit.

Their story's incomplete, until we've finally read it.

“This too will pass,”
but only if we let it.

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if we sit with them,
they don't have to live with us.*

*Emotions are guests,
emotions are visitors—
if they are expressed,
there's gifts they can give to us.*

Try This Practice

Play “Emotion Roulette.” Write all the emotions you can think of on small strips of paper and place them in a hat, basket, or cup. Randomly pick one of the strips of paper and try to read this poem (or others) in the emotional tone you selected. For example, if the emotion you select is sadness, anger, or joy, you would read the poem with a sad, angry, or joyous tone.

We Rise Higher Together

A reminder of what's possible together

Life is better
when we rise together.

There are possibilities
only realized together.

With your help,
I rise higher than myself.
United, we reach higher than ever.

We can climb on our own,
but we climb ever higher when we're not climbing alone.

We are not self-taught, we are community-taught.
We are not independent, we are interdependent.

I am because we are—
and everything we are is because someone loved us into existence.

The world has more than enough to share,
and all of it was meant for us.

And if what we carry is too much to bear,
then others can lift us up.

Together, more can be done,
together there's more to become.

Everyone wants their time to shine,
but the sun shines on everyone.

We shine brighter when we shine together,
we rise higher when we raise others.

Together we weather any storm
to gather a rainbow of colors.

We can't have collective healing
without the collective,
when our well-being is interconnected.

Can we rise to our highest intention?
Can we rise to love's highest expression?

Together we rise higher
than what holds us down
to common, higher, holy ground.

Together we rise higher,
like words from the page to the world stage,
like the smoke of palo santo or sage.

Together we rise higher
than the muck and the mire,
we rise even higher than crumbling empires.

Together we rise higher
like voices in the choir,
like sunflowers and sun fire.
If we fall or forget,
we'll be each other's reminder
until we're so high that our souls fly!

Together we'll rise higher and fly higher
until we rise close to the Most High.

Try This Practice

Call two or three people in your community and offer them words of encouragement. Do any of you have a project or task that would be better if worked on in collaboration?

Finding Your Why

A reminder of our purpose

What's your North Star?
What's your soul mission?
What choices lead to your flourishing?

What wakes you up in the morning
or keeps you awake at night?

What makes your heart sing
or gives you strength to fight?

What are the wrongs in the world you want to make right?
What makes you feel joyous and fills you with light?

Finding your Why
is asking the next most faithful question,
making the path as you step in that direction.

Finding your Why
is the puzzle piece your soul fits,
no denying something inside
is enlivened and you know it.

Finding your Why
is discovery and discernment,
you may not always find it
but you'll keep on searching
because the journey in itself
unearths a deeper purpose:

Affirming you're worth it,
sometimes with words,
sometimes it's wordless,
won't always feel certain,
won't always look perfect,
but can stir up courage
and self-assuredness.

Finding our why is like exploring love.
Finding our why is like a well
that can replenish and nourish us.

When our Why is clear,
so is the way before us
and benevolent forces
join to support us.

Try This Practice

Consider these questions when discerning an
important choice:

Does it increase my aliveness?
Does it increase the aliveness of those around me?

How does it feel in my body?
How does it feel in my spirit?

What would happen to me or those I love if I didn't
do this work?

Acknowledgements

I offer deep, heartfelt gratitude to Mother Henderson, S'sense Adams, Kirk "Bro Sun" Washington Jr., J. Otis Powell?, Andrew Thomas, Mel Reeves, Dr. Joi Lewis, Resmaa Menakem, Marlon Hall, adrienne maree brown, and Prentis Hemphill.

Your practice, work, and play serve as gentle yet powerful reminders in my life.

You remind me again and again what's possible together.