

## TWELVE VOWS IN THE ETERNAL NOW

[www.DeepGreenAwakening.net/twelve-vows-in-the-eternal-now.pdf](http://www.DeepGreenAwakening.net/twelve-vows-in-the-eternal-now.pdf)



*Fractal Cathedral -- Artist unknown*

By Dennis Rivers, with suggestions from Maía,  
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## PREFACE

These twelve new openings/vows/intentions/aspirations are born of both joy and sorrow. They express the new love of nature, and concern for the well-being of all creatures, the spirit of Earth Day, that has emerged in the last half century, beginning with writers such as Rachel Carson, Loren Eiseley, and Thomas Berry.

The same time period has also witnessed the continuation of chronic war, the re-emergence of religious and political fanaticism around the world, and, in the sexual abuse of children by clergy, the tragic betrayal of entire religious communities by the very people who had vowed to care for them.

And if these developments were not enough to break your heart, the drastic side-effects of out-of-control industrialization are endangering the Web of Life and propelling Earth into the Sixth Great Extinction, which will probably include us.

Spiritually “thrown overboard” by these powerful conflicting currents of ignorance and tragedy, that call into question any vision of a positive future, we invite you to explore with us a spirituality of compassion in the eternal present.

In this vision, traditional vows about our conduct in the future have been transformed into openings in the now, openings to live a thoughtful and heroic love that moves outward from the heart into whatever this day may bring.

In this approach we seek to, “open to it today, celebrate it today, practice it today, embody it today” rather than “promise it forever”.

One way of exploring these openings, in keeping with the theme of “today,” is to read the Twelve Vows each morning on waking up. This is the one day we have been given by Mother Universe in which to increase the total amount of kindness in the world.

*This is a profound invitation, but it is not a requirement.* What is really important is that you find the rhythm of affirmation and commitment that expresses your own deepest yearning for communion with the Web of All.

Also, as you explore these openings, please feel free to re-write them in your own vocabulary, as often as the spirit moves you,  
*or develop a set of life-affirming vows entirely your own!*  
***Life evolves through exploration and variation!***

May these evolving commitments to nurture life become your lifelong friends.

## 1. TURNING TOWARD REVERENCE FOR THE WEB OF LIFE AND PEOPLE

*This moment and this day,*

I open my heart to consider, to delight in,  
to nurture and to celebrate  
the beauty, integrity and well-being of all life-forms and natural systems:  
people of all ages, kinds and races,  
animals and plants, lands and seas, rivers and mountains,  
which co-exist with me now  
and which will come after me into the far future.

These I take to be my kin,  
expressions of the same Heart of Being,  
the same Living Universe,  
of which my life is an expression.



Painting by Meganne Forbes  
(used with permission)  
[www.meganneforbes.com](http://www.meganneforbes.com)

## 2. DEEPENING MY SERVICE FOR, AND CELEBRATION OF, THE HIGHEST GOOD OF ALL

*This moment and this day,*  
understanding and embracing the infinite interwovenness  
of my life with the life of all creatures great and small,  
I commit myself to serving the living Web-of-Life-and-People,  
to hearing the pain of both people  
and our sister and brother life forms in distress,  
to finding the path of service that is right for me,  
and to inviting, joining, encouraging, and accompanying others  
to do the same.

*This moment and this day,*  
may my heart be a window  
through which the light of new kindness  
comes into the world



Painting by Meganne Forbes  
(used with permission)  
[www.meganneforbes.com](http://www.meganneforbes.com)

### 3. EMBRACING SAINTS, EXEMPLARS, AND FUTURE BEINGS IN DEEP TIME

*This moment and this day,*

I open my heart to receive the grace  
of all those who have walked before me  
on the paths of courage, compassion, caring, creativity and truthfulness.  
I open my life to receive the empowering gift  
of their lives and their love for all.

I open my life to be a window of nurturing mercy  
that future generations of people, animals, plants,  
oceans, rivers and mountains,  
might be born into a green Earth  
capable of sustaining life in all its richness,  
and not a nightmare world poisoned by industrial and nuclear wastes,  
and genetic damage.

I embrace all saints as my parents.  
I embrace all life forms,  
as long as the Earth shall endure,  
as my children.



Chambered Nautilus Canvas Print  
Canvas Art by Ev Cabrera Marinucci

#### 4. QUESTIONING AS A PATH OF TRANSFORMATION

*This moment and this day,*  
mindful of the ways that answers can become meaningless  
without the questions that evoked them,  
and that even great truths can become lifeless dogmas,  
I embrace the practice of creative, open-ended, questioning  
of self, of others and of institutions  
as a way of deepening my engagement with the ongoing quest  
for a wiser and more compassionate world.

Following in the spirit of the teachings of Jesus and Gandhi  
“to be the change you want to see,”  
I open my heart to translate every “Thou Shalt...” and “You must...”  
into “How will I...?” and “How will we, together,...?”

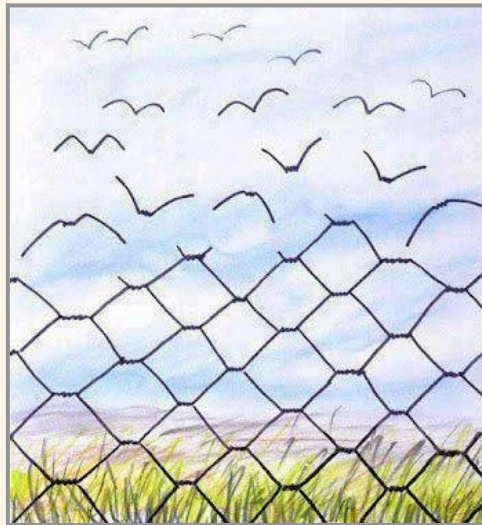


Image from Pinterest – Artist Unknown

Solomon Ibn Gabirol, the Spanish poet and philosopher wrote: "We are wise only while in search of wisdom; when we imagine we have attained it, we are fools." (*Day By Day*, Rabbi Chaim Stern, p.295)



## 5. CULTIVATING THE WEB OF FRIENDSHIP AND THE COMPASSIONATE TRUTHFULNESS THAT MAKES FRIENDSHIP POSSIBLE

*This moment and this day,*  
inspired by the vision of “Love one another as I have loved you”  
I open my life to befriend and nurture  
each person who comes before me.

*This very day,* may I work more mindfully and heartfully with others  
in building cooperative communities, a country and a world of mutual support.

*This very day,* may I face the truth more courageously,  
seeing with clear eyes both all that is noble and all that is mistaken,  
in myself, my community, my culture, and my country,.

*This very day,* may I tell the truth that needs to be said,  
with ever deeper wisdom, compassion and kindness.

Knowing that life is an endless journey of trial and error, of new beginnings,  
may I acknowledge my mistakes quickly, that I might learn from them,  
and thus be free from blindly repeating them, free to create something new  
with each precious breath that Mother Universe gives me.

And may I acknowledge my mistakes quickly  
that I might also be free from mindlessly defending them,  
free to experience the many gifts and possibilities of each new day  
and not be imprisoned in the moment of the mistake I can't admit.



Image copyright : [Edward Hardam](#) via 123rf.com  
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## 6. DEEPENING GRATEFULNESS AND PRESENCE

Learning of the countless ways  
that people, the Earth, and the Universe support my life,  
I open my life *this moment and this day*  
to expand the circle of my gratefulness  
by becoming more fully present  
to each moment of the life that is given to me.

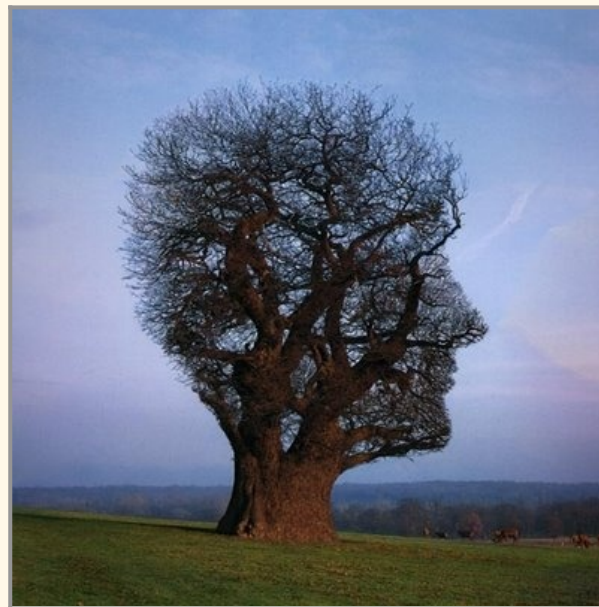
### *This moment and this day*

I open my life to surround with gratitude and appreciation  
all that is radiant and wonderful in myself,  
all that is radiant and wonderful in others, and  
all that is radiant and wonderful in the world around me.

### *This moment and this day*

I open my life to surround with mercy, forgiveness and lovingkindness  
all that is wounded and incomplete in myself,  
all that is wounded and incomplete in others, and  
all that is wounded and incomplete in the world around me,

that we might journey together  
into a deeper completeness.



From: <http://favimages.com/image/177841/>  
Artist unknown.



## 7. DEEPENING FORGIVENESS & OPENNESS

*This moment and this day,*  
learning from the way that nature starts anew each year  
I open my heart to the new possibilities hidden in each moment  
and I open my heart  
to grow in my forgiveness of others,  
to make amends for my mistakes,  
and to ask others to forgive me when I have injured them.



Reconciliation  
St. Michael's Cathedral, Coventry, UK  
Designed by Josefin de Vasconcellos

## 8. EMBRACING UNIQUENESS AND VARIETY

Understanding that nature thrives in variety,  
I open my heart ***this moment and this day***,  
to celebrate and learn from difference,  
as well as to delight in agreement,  
and I affirm the rightness of each person to find their own path,  
their own unique vocabulary, and their own community  
with which to express their love for and concerns about  
the Web-of-Life-and-People.

I will affirm and bless all those  
who leave my familiar circle to follow their own calling.

I open my life to embrace the many moments and blessings  
on my journey that I alone may see and understand.

I open my life to honor the unique world of experience  
of each person, creature and eco-system I encounter.

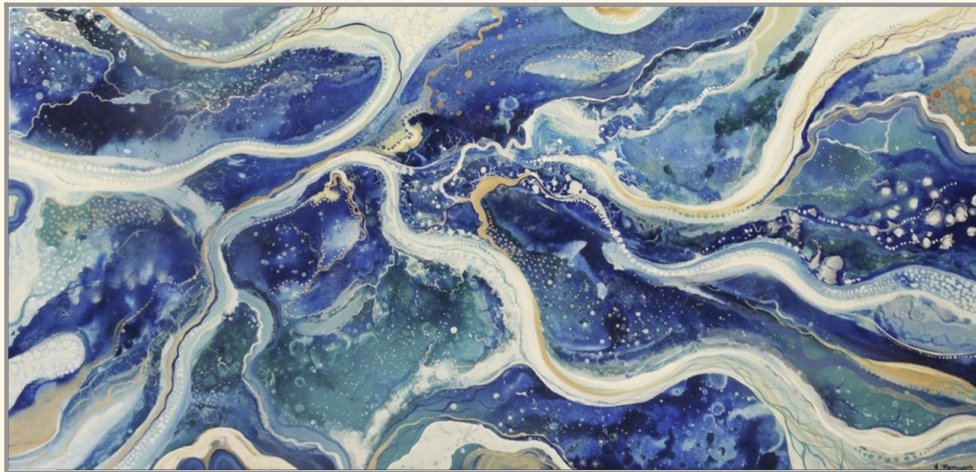


Artist unknown

## 9. EMBRACING CHANGE

Understanding that nature is a continuous flow of change and renewal,  
I open my life *this moment and this day*,  
to acknowledge all that is changing in my life and world,  
and to the periodic reevaluation of all my commitments:  
to organizations in which I may participate,  
to points of view that I may hold  
to the social roles that I may play,  
and positions of influence that I may occupy,  
to citizenships and affiliations that may claim my allegiance  
to all the forms of work and ownership through which I participate  
in the economy of the world.

May all of the dimensions of my life  
be continuously transformed  
by the ever-new practice of lovingkindness.



Turbulent Flow – Painting by Amelia Farrugia

## 10. TRAVELING THE ROAD OF PEACE, NON-VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

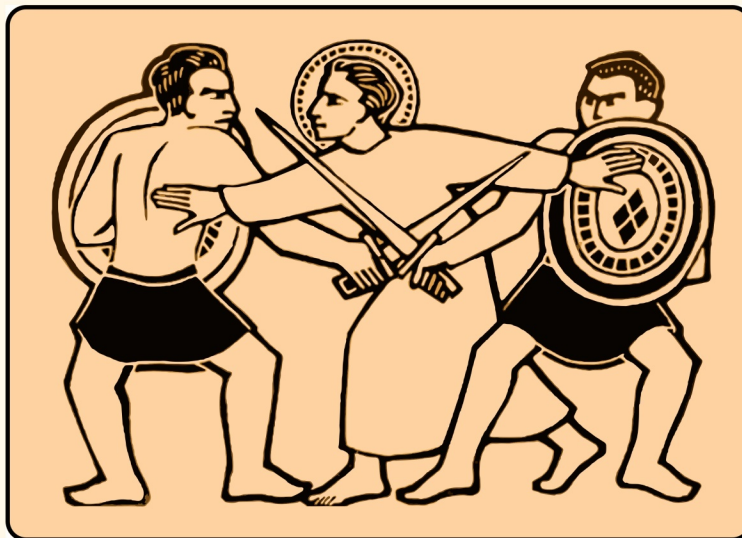
*This moment and this day,*

understanding that human conflicts in a technologized world  
have ever more drastic consequences for both people and the Web of Life, I commit  
myself to work for the peaceful resolution of conflicts  
between persons, between nations, and between humans and  
the many other children of the Earth.

Following the saints of all religions,  
and listening to my own heart,  
I adopt the Golden Rule as the rule of my life,  
and I renounce the intention to injure others.

In support of that process, I commit myself to facing,  
acknowledging, forgiving and transforming,  
any and all of my own anger, fear, greed, and ignorance,  
any and all of my own self-deception, unfulfilled needs, lack of skill,  
and lack of creative engagement,  
such as they may be, and also the same,  
*of my culture and my country.*

These are the steps I earnestly wish others would take.  
These are the steps that I myself will take.



St. Telemachus, Peacemaker (4<sup>th</sup> cent.)

whose effort to interrupt gladiators in the Roman arena

is said to have inspired the ending of gladiatorial contests in the Roman Empire

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Telemachus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Telemachus) & <http://myocn.net/st-telemachus-peacemaker/>

(A deep bow of thanks to the unknown creator of the image above.)

## 11. EMBRACING THE LIFE OF JOY AND SORROW, PASSION AND COMPASSION

*This moment and this day,*  
learning from the cycle of the seasons  
that holds both the harshness of winter and the pleasure of springtime  
I open my heart to embrace more fully  
all the joys and sorrows  
of my life,  
of all people,  
and of all Life.



From: <https://positiveprovocations.com/2017/07/25/joy-and-sorrow-are-inseparable/>

## 12. BEGINNER'S MIND: EXPLORATORY SPIRAL OF ENDLESS BEGINNINGS

*This moment and this day,*

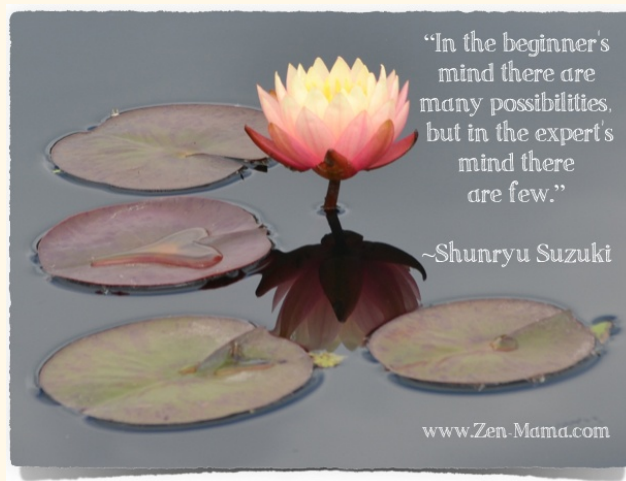
understanding the limited capacity of words to hold spiritual meanings,  
and understanding the temptation to try to complete with words  
what can only be completed in living,

I affirm these Green Vows/Openings in/with/of the Eternal Present  
as a way of mobilizing my inner resources

to continue my path of exploration, action, embodiment, and dialogue,  
my path of compassion, reflection, and celebration.

I make and hold these aspirational declarations  
as beginnings rather than endings,  
as not completing, resolving, or even fully describing  
any of the themes they name.

I open my heart and mind  
to affirm and learn from all that is reverential toward life  
in every tradition and culture,  
and to evolve new affirmations and practices  
as my reverence for life deepens.



From: <http://www.zen-mama.com/2015/06/be-your-own-super-hero-with-beginners-mind/>