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Fall/Winter Reading List 2021-2022

This season’s list highlights articles, texts and other creative and thoughtful offerings which address universality and making meaning

The Oxford definition of universality includes,

“the quality of involving or being shared by all people or things in the world or in a particular group …; the quality of being true in or appropriate for all situations.”

*Human Family,* Maya Angelou

I note the obvious differences  
In the human family.  
Some of us are serious,  
Some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived  
As true profundity,  
And others claim they really live  
The real reality.

The variety of our skin tones  
Can confuse, bemuse, delight,  
Brown and pink and beige and purple,  
Tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas  
And stopped in every land,  
I've seen the wonders of the world  
Not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women  
Called Jane and Mary Jane,  
But I've not seen any two  
Who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different  
Although their features jibe,  
And lovers think quite different thoughts  
While lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,  
We weep on England's moors,  
And laugh and moan in Guinea,  
And thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,  
Are born and die in Maine.  
In minor ways we differ,  
In major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences  
Between each sort and type,  
But we are more alike, my friends,  
Than we are unalike.

We are more alike, my friends,  
Than we are unalike.

We are more alike, my friends,  
Than we are unalike.

### You can listen to her beautiful recitation here:

### [Maya Angelou - Human Family - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F_aHt34a-g)

Group Related:

Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy,* 1980, Basic Books: New York.

“Organized around what Yalom identifies as the four ‘ultimate concerns of life’ ~death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness ~ the book takes up the meaning of each existential concern and the type of conflict that springs from our confrontation with each.” Cover.

Bernard Frankel (2002) *Existential Issues in Group Psychotherapy*, International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 52:2, 215-231

Existential themes have become more prevalent in groups as we navigate this prolonged pandemic. This article offers a useful existentialist lens that we can use to explore and work with existential themes as they emerge in group.

And for some group-related humour, the following Beligian Bus Company Advertisement offers a visual endorsement for groups :)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W41UtzpSv5Q>

Of Interest:

John Vervaeke Podcast, *Awakening from the Meaning Crisis*, 2019, YouTube.

John Vervaeke is a Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Toronto.  He maintains that our modern society is in the midst of a mental health crisis that is due to the complex interplay between our environment and political systems, which are deeply enmeshed within a deeper cultural and historical crisis that he calls *crisis of meaning.*He explores this complex sociocultural context in depth to see what can be learned from the past. His work seems particularly relevant now as we face and try to make meaning of the Covid crisis.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54l8_ewcOlY>

*Roses, Late Summer,* Mary Oliver

*And over one more set of hills,*

*Along the sea,*

*The last roses have opened their factories of sweetness*

*And are giving it back to the world…*

*I wouldn’t mind being a rose*

*In a field full of roses.*

*Fear has not yet occurred to them, nor ambition.*

*Reason they have not yet thought of.*

*Neither do they ask how long they must be roses, and then what.*

*Or any other foolish question.*

The following Brief, by Mary Kate Lee (the Program Coordinator for the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University, NY), explores why meaning matters. She differentiates between the meaning *of* life and the meaning we create *in* life, and how we make meaning *with others:*

<https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1051&context=lerner&preview_mode=1&z=1612816671>

*Self Love Poetry for Thinkers & Feelers,* Melody Godfred

*(Left Brain – Thinkers)*

*I thought this would be*

*The year I get*

*Everything I want.*

*Now I know this is*

*The year I appreciate*

*Everything I have.*

*(Right Brain – Feelers)*

*Expectation closed my eyes.*

*Gratitude opened them.*

*Fear closed my eyes.*

*Trust opened them.*

*Complaining closed my eyes.*

*Appreciation opened them.*

*Perfection closed my eyes.*

*Authenticity opened them.*

*Guilt closed my eyes.*

*Self love opened them.*

Joan Halifax, *Standing at the Edge - Finding Freedom Where Fear and Courage Meet*, 2018, Flatiron Books: New York.

This inspirational book is a light-bearer for these polarized times. The author identifies 5 psychological Edge States: Altruism, Empathy, Integrity, Respect and Engagement - that serve as guides to transforming suffering through compassion. We are at a fork in the road when standing on these Edge States; either we find our footing or lose our footing during turbulent life challenges.

and Motivation

Podcast: This Jungian Life. Assessing your values, meaning and motivation.

“Values are the wellspring of libido: they motivate action toward goals. Unless preferred values are in alignment with the underlying flow of energy, unconscious agendas may prevail.”

<https://thisjungianlife.com/episode-164-assessing-your-values-meaning-motivation/?fbclid=IwAR2OL7i9arB6RisX54ayuqHGwFTG2WIHCvcyyAdhG2Y3Ef8uXHUXgldVgJw>

The following link offers 8 poems to help you embrace change, including, *Rebirth:*

<https://www.readpoetry.com/8-poems-to-help-you-embrace-change/>

*Rebirth,* Alex Elle

*there will be moments when*

*you will bloom fully and then*

*wilt, only to bloom again.*

*if we can learn anything from*

*flowers it is that resilience is born*

*even when we feel like we are*

*dying.*

The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary,* 1999, Broadway Books: New York.

This inspirational text captures journal entries from high-school students, originally labelled as ‘unteachable’ and ‘at-risk’. A first-year English teacher addressed gang violence and racism by making tolerance the core of her curriculum. By encouraging her students to see the parallels between themselves and each other, and in the stories of people they read about, these students transformed their own lives and the lives of those around them.

The film version, *The Freedom Writers,* directed by Richard LaGravenese, with Hilary Swank, Patrick Dempsey, Scott Glenn, Imelda Staunton… is currently available on Netflix.

Although we are not promoting or endorsing any particular products, this Heineken beer advertisement offers some interesting insights about creating spaces for conversations and bridging our differences…

<https://youtu.be/etIqln7vT4w>

David Whyte, *Consolations: The Solace, Nourishment and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words,* 2016, Many Rivers Press: Washington.

This exquisite collection of 52 short essays explores the underlying meaning of words and feelings that we may have taken for granted… until now.

Sue Monk Kidd, *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life’s Sacred Questions,* 2016, Harper Collins: San Francisco.

“An inspiring autobiographical account of personal pain, spiritual awakening, and divine grace.” Cover.

We’d like to end this season’s list of recommendations with an incredible rendition of the Beatles’ Song, *Blackbird,* sung by Emma Stevens (16 y.o. at the time of recording) in her native Mi’kmaq language. To us it represented the beautiful universal language of music.

### [Emma Stevens - Blackbird by The Beatles sung in Mi'kmaq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99-LoEkAA3w)