

"Each page of this book is a gift; thoughtful and rich with love, hope, and inspiration to carry with you throughout the day."

- Tonio DiGiacomo
Comedian/Writer

Beginnings

A Daily Guide for Adventurous Souls

Paul S. Boynton



Foreword by Tshidi Manye

"Rafiki" from Broadway's *The Lion King*

Beginnings — A Daily Guide for Adventurous Souls

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Beginnings – A Daily Guide for Adventurous Souls

By Paul S. Boynton

“When you're not sure how to take that first step, open these pages and let Paul Boynton show you how to begin each day with *Yes!* Paul’s mastery of setting intentions shepherds you forward as you take simple steps towards a better day and an amazing, more fulfilled life.” Cheryl Maloney, Author, *Simple Steps for Real Life*

Dedication

Every morning I sign on to the *Begin with Yes* Facebook page and post a short note of encouragement. And each day thousands of friends from all over the world stop by to co-create and participate in a shared experience of inspiration, motivation and hope. With gratitude, this book is dedicated to each of you.

Foreword

As an actor growing up in South Africa where the arts were not as valued or as well recognized as they are in other countries, there was almost no hope offered to a girl like me who dreamed of one day becoming an artist--singing, acting and dancing across the world. My dream was not practical and not encouraged, and the pathway seemed so difficult it was virtually impossible to imagine.

And yet today, here I am in New York City, eternally grateful to be a lead in one of the most successful Broadway shows of all time, *The Lion King*. The path from South Africa to Broadway is still hard for me to fully explain or even to totally comprehend, but I do know that like most long journeys it started with one small step followed by another and another and another.

I first met Paul Boynton several years ago through our mutual friend, Broadway composer Mark Schoenfeld. At dinner one evening Paul asked if I would come to New Hampshire to perform at a fundraising event for The Moore Center, a non-profit agency he directs serving people with intellectual challenges. And I easily said, "Yes." A short time later he asked me if I would meet some of the clients from The Moore Center at *The Lion King* stage door to give them a backstage tour. And again I said, "Yes."

And when Paul called and told me about his upcoming second book, *Beginnings*, and asked if I would write the foreword, I think you can guess my answer. I said, "Oh my! What an honor!" I didn't know where to start, but knew I would find my way. After all, finding our way is really what Paul's writing motivates each of us to do every day.

Beginnings is a collection of practical optimism first published on Paul's *Begin with Yes* Facebook page. Like his first book,

these short inspirations encourage us to face day-to-day challenges always remembering to save time for our own hopes and dreams. My experiences have taught me that you first need to be inspired yourself before you can inspire other people.

Paul believes that in bad times it's not a good idea to put action on hold waiting for a better day. Sometimes you need to take a leap of faith and just take that first step. This book is powerful because it is a daily guide that will get you moving forward and keep you moving in positive and sometimes surprising new directions.

By embracing the *Begin with Yes* philosophy I've been able to take steps leading me in new directions. Recently I've released my first CD, started college, and realized another dream of starring in my own one-woman cabaret show. And of course I love and look forward to every single moment with my wonderful *Lion King* family, and am excited to see what's around the next corner as I continue to take one small step at a time.

That's a long way from the little girl in Africa who dared to dream big.

Tshidi Manye, New York, New York

Introduction

I hope you will keep this book nearby as you begin your day and as your day unfolds. And although it was created in the format of a calendar to be read day by day, you can also simply open the book to a random page and date, and discover a powerful thought that will connect with you at “that perfect time.” When Tshidi brought a copy of the manuscript to the theatre, *The Lion King* cast and crew tried looking up their birthdays and this seemed to work well, too.

And remember, the power is not in the words, but rather in the ideas, feelings and thoughts the words evoke for you. The power lies in your willingness to take small steps forward each day, facing the challenges and embracing opportunities that are unique to you. And most of all, these words are here to remind you that although you weren't given wings to fly, you were given dreams to soar.

With love and high hope for each one of us,

Paul S. Boynton

Beginnings . . .

January



January 1

From this day forward strive to be your own best friend. Look within for your dreams, your inspiration, and your sense of hope. Trust your intuition and your passion. Celebrate your strengths and be open to areas of potential growth. Believe in yourself, and remember that you not only deserve a fulfilled life, your purpose fulfilled is exactly what the world needs. And finally, never be too cautious to think big, and never be afraid to take small steps.

January 2

Let's expand our thinking about expressing love this year, choosing a more all-encompassing love that includes families and friends, people we work with or see at the store or gym. And let's include the people we pass on the street or share a short elevator ride with. And especially remembering who in our lives might appreciate (and even need) a smile and warm hello.

January 3

Sometimes we wake up with tons of enthusiasm and a smile, and moving forward is easy. Other times we have to dig down deep and find just enough energy to take that next step even when we'd rather pull the covers over our heads and make the world go away. But either way, the only way to move forward is to take that next step.

January 4

When we fantasize about those big goals, it's easy to get overwhelmed and discouraged. Earning a degree, writing a novel or losing 100 pounds are worthy ambitions, but they don't happen overnight. *Begin with Yes* teaches that focusing on small steps is the way to get moving, get unstuck and make your life happen. If you want to earn a degree, what's one step you can take today to move in that direction? If you want to write a novel, what can you do today that will set the process in motion? If you want to lose weight, what can you do this afternoon that gets you closer to your goal weight? *Big* dreams come true when you take *small* steps.

January 5

"Good morning" is much more than a pleasant greeting; it's a choice we get to make every day when we roll out of bed. What will you choose today?

January 6

The secret to getting unstuck is so simple, you'll laugh. Here it is: Begin. Do something--anything--that gets you moving in the right direction. Sure, it's not always smooth or even easy, and problems don't just disappear, but you will be unstuck. So pick up that pencil, paintbrush, mixing bowl, greeting card, make that appointment, walk around the house, scream, laugh, cry, click a "Like" button. Begin!

January 7

If you're not in touch with your purpose, it's because you've neglected your passion.

January 8

Is there something you've been putting off for days, weeks or even years? Instead of figuring out why, use today to take a step (small steps count) to setting it in motion! In other words, move it from your "to do" list to your "making it happen" list!

January 9

As we take steps in new directions, we can expect all kinds of feelings that slow us down or even stop us in our tracks. One of those feelings is fear. A while ago, I discovered something very interesting about being afraid. Often what I thought was fear was actually (at least in part) excitement! And it's a lot more fun to be excited than it is to be afraid!

January 10

You already know so much more than you've let yourself see. And you already have all the power you need. Listening to that inner voice and then taking action will unlock your potential and get you moving! No need to wait for anything!

January 11

Just for today, instead of working at making life easier and better for ourselves, let's shift our focus to making it better and easier for others.

January 12

You have everything you need to take that next small step. EVERYTHING!

January 13

We are stronger together.

January 14

We often tell ourselves that small steps are really not all that effective, and we use that as an excuse to stand still. When in reality, nine times out of ten, it's those small steps that make those big changes happen. One small step is all it takes!

January 15

It's easy to say that we celebrate diversity, but a real celebration requires more than just accepting our differences. A celebration calls for "Yes" actions that include embracing, finding joy, and honoring the qualities that make us each unique. And ironically that's when we finally discover that we have, and always have had, much more in common than not. Let the festivities begin!

January 16

The best way to speak up for yourself is by taking action steps that say, "I am here. I have a dream. And I have a right!"

January 17

You have that desire and passion on purpose and *for* purpose. If you focus on what you want to make happen in your life, you will begin to become more comfortable with your life's mission. And getting even one small step closer to your dream is very good for you and equally good for the people in your life, too. The world desperately needs you as you were meant to be. One step today!

January 18

How much does a smile cost and how much does a smile enrich your life? Do the math, and smile, smile, smile!

January 19

Finding time for even a few minutes of physical activity every day is essential. You may not belong to a gym; you may have a billion things to get done. You may be surrounded by people with demands, and a to-do list that's not even possible. You might even think that finding a few minutes for yourself is impossible. That's not true.

January 20

Practice using fear to your advantage. And as you dance with it, don't let it paralyze you; let it motivate you instead. We all get scared – dancing helps!

January 21

What is holding you back? Almost always the answer to that question is not *what* but *who*. And sadly more often than not, the “who” is actually you! You hold yourself back by not making your dream a priority. Today you can take a stand up and a step up for you and your dream. Will you?

January 22

A new day has so much potential, and so do you! The secret is not the size of the steps you take; the secret is actually taking one.

January 23

Love is not something external to be sought; it's something internal to be shared.

January 24

Waiting for inspiration seems like a good idea, but often it's like waiting for a train that's actually coming in on another track. Forget waiting and start creating--inspiration will find us when we shift into action. And we do that by simply taking one small step towards our goal.

January 25

It's not so much about eliminating fear; it's much more about taking those small steps despite your fear. Walking forward through the fear is the goal, and you can do it. I truly believe that you can!

January 26

Friends are one of the true blessings in life, but sometimes friendships require a *friendshift*! If some of your friends aren't encouraging you, believing in your right to have a dream and inspiring you to move forward one step at a time, then it may be time for a subtle shift towards the friends who are.

January 27

A sense of hope combined with hard work and tenacity always delivers results. Always.

January 28

When someone is willing to put their money where their mouth is . . . when they're willing to put action before words . . . when they're willing to step up and take personal responsibility for what happens next, the Universe listens.

January 29

You are dearly loved by those you do not know, those you cannot see, and those who do not exist in the ways you are used to knowing, seeing and existing. All the same, you can sense what I am talking about and you know that it is true.

January 30

What we say, think and feel is extremely important. But it's what we *do* that changes our world.

January 31

If you are part of the *Begin with Yes* family, it's because something deep within understands that you have a mission to touch hearts and lives in positive ways. You are here on purpose, and the overarching theme of your life is, and always has been, love. You begin by loving yourself with all your beautiful imperfections and then grow by extending that love, as best you can, to the people who appear along your path.

February



February 1

There will be times when family and friends try to hold you back from your dreams and your destiny. It may be because they're afraid to move forward themselves, or they're afraid of your courage and successes, or maybe just afraid of being left behind. They have some work to do, but in the meantime they may try to scare you, too. Don't let their fear stand in your way!

February 2

Begin with Yes isn't always easy, is it? Sometimes finding the energy, the will and the power when you're feeling exhausted, discouraged and stuck is just about the hardest thing in the world. On those days make the steps really, really small. Remind yourself that any step is good, and very often it's one of those seemingly small steps that sets big change in motion.

February 3

Today belongs to those who claim it. That doesn't mean everything will go your way, but it does mean you are committed to taking at least one small step towards resolving a challenge or moving forward on a dream. Own it, because the life you want and deserve depends on it.

February 4

Sure we're vulnerable and even needy sometimes. But it's even more important to remember that we also have the capacity to comfort and encourage others. And sometimes the small "Yes" and the small step we need to take are about just that. Today keep your eyes open for a "helping" opportunity and create a day that makes you and others feel good.

February 5

We almost never know when we are close to a breakthrough. So keep taking those small steps knowing that maybe the next one will be the one you'll always remember as a turning point!

February 6

Finding our power when we're overwhelmed, confused or depressed requires us to do something even when we don't want to or don't feel we can. We have all been there, and taking action is the only way out. We may not be able to clean the entire house today, but we can clean out one kitchen drawer. We may not be able to find a job, but we can make an appointment with someone who can help us network.

February 7

Sometimes that small step forward feels more like a stumble. But even a stumble is action, and action beats being stuck any day! One of the things I love about you is that you know how to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and keep moving! You're an inspiration to me and to everyone around you.

February 8

Life can be filled with so many distractions, but remember this simple truth: You are here to love, and you begin by loving yourself.

February 9

There is no need to minimize your pain, confusion or fear. But remember that your thoughts are powerful and they keep you in chains or they set you free. We remain stuck when we accept powerlessness as fact, and we are set free by simply rejecting that concept and stepping out into the sunshine. With each small step towards the light, we are learning that we become more powerful by exercising the power we already have.

February 10

According to Snow White, if you adopt a "Whistle While You Work!" attitude, you'll find your energy shifting in a very good way. Snow White was right!

February 11

Morning breaks. The day begins. Possibilities to give and receive love appear all around us. Be open and generous today.

February 12

If you took one very small step today towards something you've been dreaming about, and then followed that step each day this week with another . . . before you know it, you'd no longer be dreaming, you'd be doing!

February 13

You have some incredibly wonderful good vibes to share with the world. Check it out in the mirror and then share something wonderful right now.

February 14

Happy Valentine's Day! A perfect day to say "Yes" to spontaneity and unexpected thoughtfulness! The people around you may not be expecting it and that's all the more reason to do it! A note, a bigger than usual smile, a cup of coffee, or even a gentle touch on the arm. Love is our theme today and that's what's coming your way from me!

February 15

Positive is powerful. Positive and loved combined--miraculous.

February 16

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, you are here on purpose. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, you have gifts to share and lives to change. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the best place to start is with one small step towards that place from which your inner voice beckons. It's time.

February 17

We fall, we get up. We make mistakes, we learn. We hit a roadblock, we find a detour. That's just who we are!

February 18

Sometimes "hanging in there" is not only all we can do, it's exactly what we need to do!

February 19

What's one very small thing you could do today that would make you feel good about yourself? Make that number one on your "making it happen" list and then put your money where that beautiful mouth of yours is!

February 20

Remember the story “The Princess and the Pea” in which one tiny pea ruined the princess’ sleep? Make your story about how one very small step altered the direction of your day and maybe your entire life!

February 21

You can be certain that not everyone will like the short story you wrote, the cake you baked, the painting you painted, the way you dress, your hairstyle, or the choices you make. But you can be equally certain that most of these very same people would give anything to have your passion; and if they were really honest with themselves, they’d admit that they’d like to be engaged and making life happen just like you!

February 22

Being kind is highly underrated.

February 23

We all yearn for connection. We can make that happen for ourselves and for those around us by simply reaching out a hand. And so across the miles, consider this the offering of my hand.

February 24

Sometimes we are on the verge of meeting someone who holds the key to our next surge forward. Sometimes it's someone we know well and other times it's a complete stranger. Either way, magic is about to happen.

February 25

When you are ready to share your gifts with others, you'll also be open to receive the gifts you need. So share away!

February 26

No one said getting there would happen overnight, but I say, "You can get there." No one said you were born with every tool you will need, but I say, "You have what it takes." And no one said getting started was easy, but I say, "If you take just one small step today, you will be on your way!"

February 27

Life, like an orange, needs to be bit into to get to the juicy part!

February 28

Be on the lookout for someone new to come into your life-- someone to add a little joy, purpose, encouragement and hope. And while you're at it, why not be that someone new for someone else?

February 29
Happy Leap Day!

Think of those small steps you're taking as actual leaps bridging the gap between where you are and where you want to be. You'll not only be making things happen, you'll also get to enjoy the thrill of being midair.

March



March 1

Can you answer this question: What do you want and/or need? If you can, you're well positioned to actually do something about it. If you can't, you need to spend some time figuring it out. Otherwise, life will move on, and you'll one day realize you've been an observer more than a participant. And in my humble opinion, if you're reading this, that's not the life for you.

March 2

Another day, another beginning. Sometimes you're in the mood to begin again, and other days you have to take that small step even when you'd rather stay in bed. Either way today is happening, and there's a lot to be said for making the best of it! Upward and onward!

March 3

What happens next is up to you. You can wait, or you can begin! It's your call.

March 4

If you've spent most of your life trying to get people to like you, consider spending the rest of your life letting people get to know you.

March 5

Simply waiting for the emotional fog to clear may make for a very long wait. When you're feeling confused and unsure what to do, try switching gears. Ask yourself, "What's one small step that I could take to become clearer or less confused?" As you begin to take even small steps, the fog will begin to lift and you'll catch a glimpse of sun!

March 6

Even though you will probably never know the specific ripple effects of a kind word, a gentle touch, a smile, a handful of coins or a note of encouragement, you can be certain that you are contributing to the ripples that are changing the world for the better.

March 7

Rise and shine! Begin and *become*!

March 8

Sometimes our minds are filled with so many ideas that it's almost impossible to know where to begin. On those days we need to guard against overwhelming ourselves and ending up chasing our own tails. Keep a list of all your goals and challenges, and then add to the list as new ideas pop into your head. Then focus on taking daily small steps on two or three of the most important ones!

March 9

You do not have to move mountains today. Start with a small rock or two and repeat. The mountain moving will take care of itself!

March 10

Since practice makes perfect, it's a good idea to be deliberate about what we're practicing! Today practice saying "Yes" to your dreams and hopes by taking one small, deliberate step in their direction!

March 11

You can't eliminate risk even if you stayed in bed with the lights off and the covers over your head. Given that, doesn't it make sense to start the day willing to take a chance on your own happiness? Go get 'em!

March 12

Good morning hope – we were expecting you!

March 13

Please don't forget a very important step--to take care of yourself. Sometimes we need to say "Yes" to more quiet time, "Yes" to a good night's sleep, "Yes" to a break from spending time with negative people, "Yes" to more exercise (sometimes even "Yes" to less exercise) and perhaps "Yes" to some outside help. There's a very good chance you know exactly what you need; and you don't just need it, you deserve it, too!

March 14

The funny thing about setbacks and roadblocks is that very often they turn out to be windows and doorways. Have a wonderful day!

March 15

Today belongs to you. Don't worry so much about what might or might not happen. Instead make something small actually happen. Choose power over powerlessness, and get on with your life.

March 16

If you're on a journey that has you stepping outside of your comfort zone, don't let self-doubt throw you. Expect it to knock at the door from time to time, and be prepared to keep moving forward listening to an even deeper voice that says, "You can do this!" And congratulations for moving out of your comfort zone. That happens to be where some pretty cool things happen!

March 17

If I promised you a million dollar reward for figuring out how to make your life more like the life you want, what would you do today to get a little bit closer? I can't really promise you the million bucks, but I can promise a better life. And I trust that's motivation enough for you to get moving.

March 18

Storm clouds always pass.

March 19

Although I haven't walked in your shoes, you must know the leather on mine is thin in places, and I have been to the cobbler more than once! The point of *Begin with Yes* is not that life is always easier. The point is that despite the difficulties, despite the losses and fears, and despite the challenges, we are all more resilient than we could ever imagine. And because of that and because we always seem to find the strength to step forward one small step at a time, things do get better and our dreams do come true.

March 20

When you expect a little bit more from yourself that's exactly what you'll receive. And sometimes a little more is all it takes to get to the next level!

March 21

If you are faced with illness, financial woes, unemployment, relationship or family stress, or serious challenges that are weighing heavily, please reach out to others. I know you have been there for many others, and the people who love you deserve the chance to be there for you now. And always remember that each and every one of us needs what each and every one of us has to offer: Love. And now is the time to ask, receive, offer and share.

March 22

What if you learned that hidden in every single mistake you've ever made was actually a specific lesson preparing you for today? That might shift your judgments about the past just a bit.

March 23

Why not you? Why not now?

March 24

If you are reading these words, then I am convinced that something good and significant is underway in your life. And by convinced, I mean absolutely certain.

March 25

At some point, you realize the sun was there all along.

March 26

Life isn't always easy, and circumstances and relationships can be heartbreaking. My heart goes out to you if you're facing a difficult cycle, and I hope this note feels comforting and accepting of all that you're going through. But the truth is, during challenging times we still need to keep moving. One day one of our small steps will be revealed as one of our grandest leaps forward.

March 27

If you haven't had a good laugh lately, you're missing out on a life force that is essential to moving forward. If that's your situation, then the most important next step you need to take today is to find that good laugh!

March 28

We've all had our share of disappointments, heartbreak, worries and confusion. And who hasn't screwed up a few times? If you're reading this, I am absolutely convinced that something much bigger, more important and much more beautiful than all of our mistakes and concerns combined is underway for you. Why else would you be here? Case closed!

March 29

Time and time again I've seen that the sooner I shift into action, the better off things become and the sooner I begin to feel better, too.

March 30

Just because we *Begin with Yes* doesn't mean we don't sometimes get discouraged and stuck. What it does mean is that we have the tools to deal with those difficult times and a track record to prove we can and *will do* it!

March 31

If you think good vibes are nonsense or overrated, try smiling at a stranger.

April



April 1

I'm learning that others can invite you to come in from the rain, but you still need to say "Yes, thanks," and step through the door.

April 2

Remember the song "The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow"? Most of us understand that while at times we can't see it, the sun is always there. We don't need to wait until tomorrow to take that small step. We can muster up a little faith today and take another hopeful step towards the warmth.

April 3

If you wait until the time is right, you're missing out on an opportunity to make something good happen right now. One small step is all it takes.

April 4

Sometimes it's the little things (like those little steps) that we feel the most grateful for. Like a cup of coffee, a glimpse of sunshine on a cloudy day, an unexpected smile . . .

April 5

Some of us create with paint and brushes, some of us with words and some by raising loving children. Some of us create cakes that are masterpieces, gardens that are peaceful, while some of us can tune an engine so it hums like a symphony. I only mention a few ideas to make a point. Trust me, you are a creator. Make something beautiful!!

April 6

If you don't have people in your life who are cheering you on and supporting you during difficult times, you have some work to do. But you don't need to go looking for people who will help you, rather look for people who need your help and then offer your hand. The rest will take care of itself.

April 7

Don't be surprised when some people in your life resist seeing you focus more attention on your own dreams. Don't be surprised, and don't let them slow you down either!

April 8

There's another chance waiting for you today--an opportunity to be more deliberate about what you want and what you need. But you won't make anything happen if you stand still and wait. And like a car parked in the yard, it's not likely to go anywhere until you own the responsibility for turning the key and giving the pedal a little gas. The Universe will hold the car door open for you, but the rest is up to you.

April 9

Which train will you get on this morning? The one sitting off the tracks or the one with the whistles blowing and doors wide open? All aboard!

April 10

We all have our wounds – some are hidden deeply and some are more recent and still clearly visible. But we are each in the process of healing, too. When we take steps to heal ourselves, we grow. When we help others heal, we all grow. It's a beautiful thing and just part of every journey.

April 11

Think of someone, not on your usual list of friends and family, and buy that person a cup of coffee this morning. Strangers count! I dare you!

April 12

“Keep your chin up” can be an annoying cliché when spoken by someone who doesn't really understand, doesn't really have the time to listen, or more likely doesn't really care. However when it comes from within, it can be a pretty powerful bit of encouragement that will keep you moving during those cloudy days.

April 13

It may be all right and even necessary to spend much of your day doing the things you need to do to pay the bills, meet the expectations of others, and behave like a responsible adult. But isn't it equally important to honor the gifts you've been given and be grateful enough to find at least a few minutes each day to do something to nourish your heart and soul?

April 14

If every time a ball player was up to bat, they hit a home run, we'd be bored to tears. Expect a few singles and even an occasional strike-out. It means you're in the game!

April 15

It may be raining or cloudy where you are, or the day may be bright and clear. But either way, let the sun shine on you and through you and make this day count!

April 16

There are times for each of us when we simply have to begin again! We've all been there and there's a very good chance we'll each be there again. And although the circumstances vary widely, we know that the solution is always the same: Begin.

April 17

When you're feeling lonely, visit an elderly neighbor living alone. When you're scared, help someone else be brave. When you're stuck, encourage a friend to take a small step. When you're depressed, make someone smile. When you're defeated, cheer someone else on. When your heart is broken, help someone mend theirs. And when things are going well and are unfolding the way you want, be grateful and bring someone else along with you.

April 18

You get to call the shots when you realize it's time for you to begin calling the shots. So simple it has to be true.

April 19

If you're feeling powerless, then you haven't been taking those small *Begin with Yes* steps. Remember power isn't something you get; it's something you dig down and take.

April 20

Sometimes we just need someone to listen. Sometimes we need to be that someone.

April 21

Our calling is always aligned with our passion.

April 22

There is a natural cycle--an ebb and flow to our days and nights. As we pay attention, not only do we begin to notice these shifts, we can actually begin to take advantage of them. Some people refer to this as “going with the flow” and are learning how to swim with the current rather than against it. The best way to sense the flow is to take a deep breath, relax and listen with your heart!

April 23

It doesn't matter where we start, but it does matter that we do!

April 24

If you knew that your passions and dreams were gifts to motivate and lead you, would you be more willing to take the next step? Trust me, they are.

April 25

A simple metaphor to ponder: When you're writing a book, don't worry so much about where to put the commas. Just keep writing, one sentence at a time. You will always have opportunities to correct the punctuation later.

April 26

“If only . . .” is a time and energy drain. Instead, use that emotional energy to create possibilities and hope, and then make something good happen.

April 27

If you can't be honest, clear and direct with others yet, at least be honest, clear and direct with yourself. It's a start!

April 28

Instead of waiting to see what happens, why not step up and make it happen! Say “YES” to BEGIN!

April 29

You are a beautiful fountain--but you do need to turn on the water.

April 30

A fundamental *Begin with Yes* principle is that the Universe shows up to help *after* we show up and take a step forward. So if you've been waiting for the Universe, you now know exactly how to extend the invitation!

May



May 1

What's one small step you'll take today to create more meaning in your life?

May 2

What we've learned to call detours are inevitable, and they can slow us down and be frustrating, especially when we're in a hurry. But sometimes detours are really course corrections. So don't rush to judgment, try to enjoy the unexpected scenery and keep your eyes, heart and mind open. Have a wonderful day!

May 3

Sometimes we are like a flower unwilling to bloom. We hang on tightly to things that no longer serve us, and our hearts and hands aren't able to fully open to receive the gifts the Universe has planned for us. But when we allow ourselves to bloom, we not only receive those gifts--we become them!

May 4

Words can hurt. Choose carefully. Words can heal. Choose lovingly.

May 5

I am so glad we're in the same caravan because the journey ahead is going to be more incredible than any of us could even begin to imagine. Something wonderful and important has begun, and the mysterious and amazing next corner is just ahead!

May 6

There is a very simple way to find out what's going to happen next--make it happen.

May 7

Why do we insist upon barking up the wrong tree when we are surrounded by an incredible forest?

May 8

As today unfolds, remember this: every single person reading these words is on a path of self-awareness and self-actualization. And there are no exceptions. None. Zero. Zip.

May 9

Want to help the people in your life heal, grow, feel happier and more content? Then pay attention to your own journey. Not only will you be paving the way for the people you love, you'll be showing them that it's not only OK to take care of yourself, it's essential.

May 10

There's nothing wrong with using training wheels. Moving forward is moving forward! *Begin with Yes* doesn't require a positive attitude, a lot of energy, a plan for your life or even a clear picture of where you want to go. It only asks for a willingness to move forward. If you're ready but still feel a little unsteady, grab those training wheels and let's go!

May 11

So many people choose to think about what's ahead with fear and anxiety. Another choice is to approach that next corner with a sense of hope and excitement. Practice the hope and excitement choice today.

May 12

Are you spending energy replaying and holding on to past mistakes, regrets or disappointments? It's safe now, and it's time to move on. And if letting go is difficult, shift your focus to grabbing hold of something new. Something new such as a small action step towards something hopeful and good!

May 13

You've been in the batter's box long enough! You don't need to move mountains, but you do need to begin another small step. Remember the game isn't going to start until someone picks up the bat and walks towards home plate. And you're the batter up!

May 14

Some excuses are good and valid, while others are simply a game we're playing. And there are times when we can't even come up with a good excuse. In other words, we're stuck and motionless for no good reason! But good excuse, bad excuse or no excuse, today take a chance and take a step. Move through those real and imaginary excuses and take back a little control over your life. One small step now is all it takes.

May 15

You already know what it takes to make something happen. The question is, will you take what you have and make it happen?

May 16

A rowboat resting safely on the sand won't get you to new places.

May 17

There are body slams, soul slams and heart slams, too. We can have the wind knocked out of us by unemployment, relationship transitions, financial pressures, or all sorts of unexpected and sometimes terrifying scenarios. *Begin with Yes* doesn't suggest that life is always gentle, or that moving on or even getting up and out of bed is always easy. But it does promise that when times are tough, you need to shift your focus to *action*. Find one small thing you can do, and then do it. Then find another small thing and then another. It's the pathway to better times.

May 18

Call it what you will, but practice sending positive thoughts, prayers, and good vibes unannounced to family, friends, co-workers, people in line at the grocery store or at the doctor's waiting room, strangers and anyone else you feel some call to connect with. The possibilities are endless and the goodness a boomerang!

May 19

Sometimes the simplest of actions creates a ripple effect that keeps good energy moving. For example, a simple "thank you," especially one that is sincere and unexpected, can change the day for the recipient and for you as well. And when days change in positive ways, you'll discover positive shifts that will keep the road forward a bit easier and sweeter! Surprise someone today!

May 20

Even the best of excuses are best ignored.

May 21

You have not even begun to tap into your own inner power. No matter how powerful you do or don't feel, dig down and discover a bottomless reservoir of guts, passion and hope. Open the door to your own capacity to take hold of your life and begin to make something happen. People just like you are doing it, and you can too.

May 22

The simple fact that you've discovered *Begin with Yes* means that something good is moving within you. You can feel it or at least sense it, and you know deep down that this time is going to be different. Every day people like you are moving towards goals and making life-altering changes in their lives, one small step at a time.

May 23

Sometimes you have to fight for your dreams because some dreams are so worth fighting for! Do you know what I mean?

May 24

Just for today, take a break from any and all self-criticism. Remember that life is purposeful and progressive, and you are growing and learning. Today you have more resources than you did yesterday, and tomorrow you will have even more. When you let yourself be, you create an opening for personal growth. It's that simple, that important and that profound.

May 25

One question that I often hear is, "How can I take a small step when I don't know where I am going?" When you find yourself there (and we've all been there) your next steps are to seek clarity. Often being confused or stuck is a subtle attempt to avoid discomfort or change. Usually people know so much more than they're letting themselves see. And the question that begs to be asked is, "What steps could I take to better understand what I need and want to do?"

May 26

You may not have complete control over today, but you have a lot more control than you think. Face today with a smile, a sense of hope, an openness to the needs of others, and a willingness to step forward and move forward. Then you, and everyone around you, will fare better. Exercise the power that you do have and let the rest just be.

May 27

Talk. Talk. Talk. Talking is so much easier than doing. But doing is so much more fun! Have fun today!

May 28

In the attic, perhaps in a box tucked away inside another box hidden behind old furniture, outdated magazines and old coats, you'll find it. A small package, carefully wrapped in colorful tissue paper, by young hands. Such a long time ago. Somehow the days became weeks and the weeks became years, and you may have even forgotten about that day in the attic. But that dream is still there, waiting to be rediscovered, gently unwrapped and held in older, wiser, now grown-up hands, once again.

May 29

There are many paths to get there, but only one way to begin.

May 30

As you *Begin with Yes* pay attention to how often you say "No." "No, I can't go to the party alone." "No, I can't play the violin, cards, baseball, etc." "No, I am not good at math, dancing, or meeting new people." Then begin to turn those "Noes" into "Yeses." For example, "Yes, I could play the violin if I rented an instrument, took lessons and practiced."

May 31

Things change and life unfolds. Not everything can be fixed. Sometimes a *Begin with Yes* life means creating workarounds or alternatives, and sometimes it means moving on. Optimism grounded in reality is the goal, and acknowledging where you are and what's real is the first step on any journey. Then with a sense of hope and optimism, simply ask: "Now what?" Gently forward today.

June



June 1

You really can't see a plant grow. The progress is so gradual that on a day-by-day basis growth is nearly impossible to see. But you can be certain that soon the day will come when there's no denying the bloom!

June 2

Sometimes *Begin with Yes* calls you to take better care of yourself. When was the last time you took an afternoon off-- just for yourself? No planning, worrying, resume writing, relationship issues, work responsibilities, or meeting the needs of others. Will you figure out how and when (in the coming days) you can make some alone-time happen for yourself?

June 3

Don't let anyone tell you in words or actions that you're not worthy or that your dreams aren't incredibly important. Use the volume control to turn up the positive vibes and turn down the negative ones. Keep that remote nearby and have a great day!

June 4

Consider yourself in charge of the grounds. With a little care and attention, along with the right mix of rain and sun, I think you'll discover that the grass is actually greener in your own backyard. Make today yours!

June 5

With each small step, we discover that we are becoming more powerful by simply exercising the power we already have.

June 6

It can be so easy to get caught up in the drama of the lives of others. The cure is to create a little excitement in your own. And tomorrow is a great day to begin!

June 7

Be afraid, but don't be stopped. Be confused, but don't be stuck. Be worn out, but don't give up. You've done it before, and you can do it again.

June 8

If you keep doing exactly what you're doing, you'll keep getting exactly what you've been getting! Let that be your guide as you think about and take that next small step into your new day.

June 9

You can do it, but you don't have to do it alone. Sometimes friends help us. Sometimes co-workers or family, and sometimes people we just met (or even complete strangers) are there at just the right moment. And sometimes you get to be that friend, that co-worker, that family, that new person or that complete stranger saying "Yes" to someone else!

June 10

If you don't find time for yourself, the time you have left for others will be less than it could be. Go for a walk, lock yourself in the bathroom, pull over on the side of the road--stop just long enough to be quiet and listen to yourself breathe for a few minutes. Even just five minutes might be enough.

June 11

If you haven't been rejected, you haven't lived! We're all bound to get rejection letters, broken hearts and "No thanks" phone calls. There'll always be someone who won't like our website, our book, our resume, our work, the way we dress, laugh, or tie our shoes (and they'll be happy to tell us, too). We could dwell on the rejection, or we could shift our attention to moving forward with our lives. Seems like an incredibly important decision.

June 12

When you feel yourself tensing up, pulling back and feeling scared, smile and whisper, "Yes." Then breathe, smile and whisper "Yes" again. Repeat until you feel the pit in your stomach relax, releasing the tension.

June 13

Sometimes the smallest of actions, in retrospect, becomes a pivotal and significant life moment.

June 14

Do you ever sound like a broken record? Maybe it's time for some new music! And after all, you're the DJ so you get to pick the playlist! What's your theme song going to be today?

June 15

Some days are just not going to be "surge forward" days. There will be times when we feel like we're standing still, and other days when we feel like we're moving backwards. The simple truth is that our vantage point isn't always high enough to really see or understand the big picture. On those days, take that small step anyway. The "adding up" comes later and you'll be glad today counted!

June 16

What do you have that you could share today? And who will you share it with?

June 17

You (and all the things in your life) are perfectly imperfect. So don't wait until the stars are perfectly aligned to take a small step towards your dream. There is no day like today and no time like right now!

June 18

I'll begin when I lose weight, get a new job, meet some good people, move to the West Coast or become a trapeze artist. When we create these artificial and often arbitrary goals, all we're really doing is creating delay tactics that keep our lives and our dreams on hold. We all do it from time to time, but this time we know better don't we?

June 19

When all is said and done, our lives are up to us. Sometimes we choose to move through our days without really declaring (and owning) our passions, purpose, and our right and need to be happy and fulfilled. It seems easier to stay put emotionally, creatively and productively, and wonder "what if?" But it's so much more fun to co-create with the Universe and see what we can make happen.

June 20

As your day begins, you probably have a list of things to remember and get done. But if you don't take at least one small step towards a personal goal or dream today, you will have missed a significant opportunity. Small steps happen because we've identified what they are. Declare what your small step will be now, and put it near the top of your list!

June 21

Just in case you forgot--you rock! And one more thing--you may or may not be feeling it, but I'm absolutely convinced!

June 22

Most people spend their lives waiting for "someone else to do it." Someone else to vote, to pick up the litter, make the call, send the letter, offer a hand. Every good idea waiting to be implemented and every problem needing to be solved is surrounded by people waiting for someone else to do it. And that's your chance to step up and stand out!

June 23

What are you holding onto that's holding you back? Sometimes it's a feeling or memory. It can also be an outdated belief about yourself or an unreasonable expectation. And it can even be a person. All you have to do today is name it. A small step perhaps, but so important that one day you may remember today as the day your life began to change!

June 24

I am not asking you to believe in the impossible, but I am asking you to imagine it.

June 25

If you don't feel a lot of hope, take a step towards a goal or solving a problem or challenge. Once you do, you will access your hidden power and you'll begin to feel hopeful. The more steps, the more power. And the more power, the easier the steps become. Soon you'll be feeling more hopeful and you will hardly remember being stuck.

June 26

There is so much to do, so many challenges and opportunities to deal with and often so many people demanding our time, energy and attention. At some point we need to say, "Stop". We all need to have the space and time to settle into ourselves. When we do, we discover what's really important. When we don't, we tend to make circles!

June 27

Surprise yourself today.

June 28

If you didn't wake up with a smile, can you think of something to smile about? Look for little things and keep looking until you find something! As you smile, give yourself permission to relax into, and shift to, a "smile state of mind." The chances are your day just got a little bit better!

June 29

Self-respect and confidence grow with each small step that we take. Guaranteed.

June 30

As the day unfolds, take a moment to remember the good things already in your life. Then with arms and heart open wide, gently move into your day. As thoughts drift into your mind, carefully sort them. Those that are worthy and helpful, use to shape your actions. And those that are unworthy and hurtful, gently move aside and forget.

July



July 1

If you want to catch a wave, you have to be willing to get wet!

July 2

Excuses. We all have them. What are your favorites? Make a list and then transfer it to the back of a business card or small piece of paper to keep with you. Then every time you're tempted to use one to slow or prevent action, ask yourself, "Do I really need this excuse today?" Most times you'll be able to say "No" to your excuse and "Yes" to making something happen, one small step at a time.

July 3

Why stand on the sideline watching the parade pass you by when you could be playing a trombone or twirling a baton?

July 4

If you want to see the beautiful fireworks, you need to light the fuse!

July 5

You can choose to be liked *a little* by most people for being who you're not, or loved by *a lot* by some people for being who you are.

July 6

When things are going great, it's easy to send out good energy. But even when things are challenging and worrisome, we still have good energy to share. Of course that may mean we have to dig a little deeper, but when it comes from a deeper place it's that much more powerful.

July 7

When you begin to judge yourself less and love yourself more, you will begin to judge others less and love them more, too! And just imagine what that could mean for your world!

July 8

Begin with Yes is not about sticking your head in the sand and pretending that everything is wonderful all the time. But it is about taking a small (sometimes very small) step even when you're not feeling it! One small step will keep you moving, and it may even make you feel better, too!

July 9

I've learned that we don't always feel like it, or even feel up to it, but we still need to get out of bed and get on with our day.

July 10

Go skinny-dipping today! Show up as you really are, and start a celebration that will be out-of-control contagious!

July 11

It's kind of funny, we tend to think of small steps as really not all that effective, and we use that as an excuse to stand still. When in reality it's those small steps that make most of those big changes happen. But you don't have to take my word for it, just watch--it's already happening.

July 12

Are you wishing on a star or rolling up your sleeves? Your answer could make all the difference in the world!

July 13

Self-doubt. We all hear its taunts and need to remember that we have much better things to do than listen!

July 14

We are not always guaranteed perfect or even easy days. In fact, some of the most optimistic people I know have dealt with some extraordinary challenges and endured many dark days. So don't think easy days are always a good way to judge progress or success. Getting up and out the door on those difficult days and taking a step forward despite the challenges is a much more accurate barometer.

July 15

The simple, not always popular, truth is that you are responsible for your own life. What you do, who you are and what you become is up to you. That's an awesome responsibility and an awesome gift! Make the very most of today!

July 16

One way to *Begin with Yes* is to pay closer attention to our intuition. Today be more open to *you*.

July 17

Why are we so afraid to honor our own heart's desire? And by honor I mean show it some respect and move it to the list of things to actively move towards today.

July 18

You weren't given wings to fly, but you were given dreams to soar.

July 19

Begin with Yes happens when the *Law of Attraction* meets the *Law of Action*. It's about taking and making opportunities and it's about facing challenges head-on, even when you're tired, depressed or overwhelmed! Most of all it's about taking very small, easy-to-do steps that get you unstuck, keep you moving and make good things happen. Are you ready?

July 20

Your life is not just about accomplishments, it's also about contributing to the well-being of others. Once you understand and embrace that, you'll be surrounded by opportunities to move forward in both arenas, and the world will seem better because it is better.

July 21

The day that we decide it no longer serves us to blame our parents, our family, our boss, our circumstances or anyone or anything else, and finally decide it's time to move forward simply because we're worth it, becomes our new birthday! So make a wish!

July 22

The invisible shield we've put in place to protect us now needs a window or two to let in people and experiences that nourish us.

July 23

You can *Begin with Yes* or you can *Begin with No*. But unless you're committed to doing nothing, begin wisely.

July 24

Find a small pebble that appeals to you and with a black marker write the word "YES" on it. Put it in your pocket--it will come in handy.

July 25

Wishing for something to happen isn't nearly as effective or half as much fun as making it happen.

July 26

Begin with Yes acknowledges that life can be extraordinarily difficult and breathtakingly heartbreaking, too. Some days our challenges seem almost unbearable; and depression, worry and fear weigh so heavily we can hardly move. Everyone has been there, right? On those days be gentle with yourself, but even then try for one very small step.

July 27

We can think about making our lives happen, or we can do it. Thinking is easier; doing is more fun!

July 28

Offering a glass of water to someone dying of thirst can literally save a life. A gentle word or touch offered to someone starving for a little love can, too.

July 29

Please don't let fear stop you today.

July 30

Sometimes fear holds us back in small ways, but other times it stands between us and the life we were meant to live. If you are not acting upon your heart's desire because you're afraid, the time has come to move forward. You do it one small step at a time, and you begin right now.

July 31

Sometimes moving through the fear is daunting. But you simply must get through the fire or you will be toast!

August



August 1

You can wait for your ship to come in, or you can hop in your own rowboat and get moving. Waiting or moving--it's your choice!

August 2

My message about taking those small steps may be sounding like a broken record. But if you take those small steps, before you know it you'll be breaking records yourself!

August 3

When we read a book we have no choice but to read it one sentence at a time. When we approach complex problems or wonderful opportunities, doing the one-step is just as essential.

August 4

Many people have a really difficult time being clear about what they want and need. When we withhold our truths, we prevent people from seeing us and interacting with us as we really are. Sometimes we do this thinking we're just being nice, but in reality we're actually being wimps. Trust me. No one ready to be in a relationship with you wants or needs a wimp for a friend or lover.

August 5

You are a wave in a mighty ocean, and as your positive thoughts and actions join with your fellow waves, miracles begin!

August 6

What's one thing you could use to become more effective, more energetic and more competent? And what's one small step you could take to meet that goal? Once you've answered those two questions, the only thing left to do is to take that step!

August 7

The “secret” to making something wonderful happen is to make something wonderful happen!

August 8

Love is a two-way street. You give love and you get love. The more you give, the more you get. It's that simple.

August 9

If you are reading this, you are part of a community of action. We have learned that we are inspired, encouraged, helped, and nurtured as we encourage, inspire, help, and nurture. Sending you each love and gratitude today along with high hopes.

August 10

It's OK to be fearful and tentative, just as long as you keep moving forward! Remember even the smallest of steps count big!

August 11

It is so easy to become overwhelmed and also so unnecessary. Complicated endeavors need to get tackled and ultimately accomplished the same way long journeys do--one small step at a time.

August 12

When you say "Yes, I am ready to begin," the adventure unfolds.

August 13

Moving forward despite our fears and obstacles is one of the most empowering and powerful things we can do. And we can do it!

August 14

You deserve to have what is waiting patiently for you. But the ship doesn't come to you--it meets you halfway. A good life requires us to get in the rowboat *and* pick up the oars.

August 15

You can't swim with the dolphins without getting wet!

August 16

We can disagree about whether the glass is half full or half empty, but I think we'd have to agree that a glass of water is a miracle.

August 17

Today I will let my guard down. I will breathe deeply and gently, and open my arms wide. I will trust that everything will be OK, and I will relax and open my heart to the goodness and light around me. This is how I will say "Yes" today.

August 18

Today, don't ponder. Don't hesitate or worry about the outcome, what others will think or whether it makes sense. Just take a small step toward something important to you.

August 19

You don't need to raise your hand to ask permission. It's your life and that's all the permission you need.

August 20

Repeat after me, "Today I will invite and seek out opportunities to lighten, brighten, encourage and affirm those around me." And you can be sure your light will draw more light towards you!

August 21

There'll always be people around who will gladly tell you what's wrong with you, your life and the world. I suggest spending more time instead with people who will tell you what's good and what's right. More often than not, they'll be the very same people with ideas that will help you move forward. And no doubt you will have an idea or two to share with them as well. So long Naysayers and hello Yeasayers!

August 22

Sooner or later you will need to begin. Why not sooner?

August 23

Moving forward, even a little bit each day, is so much better than being stuck. Sometimes the step forward must be extremely small, but when it comes to getting unstuck, it's not the size of the step that counts; it's simply taking that step!

August 24

If you're taking risks, pursuing your dreams, stepping outside your comfort zone and working through your fear, and someone asks, "Are you out of your mind?" take it as a compliment and answer, "Thanks, I am working from my heart at the moment!"

August 25

You may be a gentle soul, but sometimes you need to flex your muscles. You don't need to hurt anyone, but you do need to realize that the boat's not going anywhere unless someone takes the oars.

August 26

You're not the only one scared! Georgia O'Keeffe said, "I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life—and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do." It's OK to feel scared—just remember that fear is only a feeling, and then take a small step anyway! So many people have done it and are doing it. Join them and keep your life moving forward.

August 27

Dare to say "Yes" to spontaneity and unexpected thoughtfulness!

August 28

If you want to learn to dance you have to expect a few missteps and sore feet before you're dancing with the stars.

August 29

There is no one else exactly like you. You are unique in so many ways, and have learned many lessons, navigated through many storms and survived many challenging times.

August 30

Some people are stuck because they don't dare look at what they want or need.

August 31

Living your life without hope is like forgetting the moon still shines simply because it's hidden behind a passing cloud.

September



September 1

All it takes to *Begin with Yes* is to do one small thing to nurture your dreams. And then another . . .

September 2

Sometimes people don't understand, don't appreciate or don't support us. Sometimes people ignore, bully or disappoint us. This is serious business. And although shifting away from people who don't nurture us isn't always easy, and sometimes we need help, we have the right to decide who we will be with. Our hopes, our dreams, our very souls are counting on us to choose wisely.

September 3

You've been given a full box of crayons. It's now up to you to create a beautiful picture.

September 4

Just for today act as if your dreams count. Just for today believe you deserve people in your life who are respectful, honest, and make you feel good about yourself. Just for today don't listen to anyone who holds you back, keeps you stuck or makes you unhappy. Just for today, take a small and deliberate step towards your dreams. Just for today!

September 5

Today, remember to focus on what you want, but also remember to be grateful for what you have.

September 6

We know life is complicated and we all have baggage. Some of us are packing a steamer trunk, while others travel lightly with a couple of t-shirts and clean underwear. But when it comes to moving forward, we need to set aside our baggage and other distractions, and just for a moment focus on one very small step we could take; and take it.

September 7

You may not be all-powerful, but you do have all the power you need to keep moving forward. You could try to prove it wrong, or better yet go ahead and prove it right!

September 8

Either we step up and declare that we are going to make our lives happen, or we sit back and watch life pass us by.

September 9

Being overwhelmed is a terrible feeling and a wonderful excuse. You can lose the excuse and the feeling by taking just one small step forward! And today's a perfect day to begin.

September 10

What if hidden in your biggest challenges were your greatest opportunities?

September 11

Today, why not make life a little bit easier for others. Ask the Universe to put people in your path who need your kindness and attention. Trust me, you won't be disappointed. But there's a very good chance you will be amazed!

September 12

Obviously we are called to love, help, support and encourage other people. But one very common mistake many of us make is trying to make someone else (or everyone else) happy. It just can't be done. Instead we need to turn our attention to our own goals and dreams--things that we feel passion for--and by doing that we teach others, by example, how to seek happiness for themselves. Have a great day!

September 13

No matter what you're facing and no matter where you're heading, remember the power of one small step can change your life. And the power of one small smile can change someone else's.

September 14

Beginnings are exciting, scary, and easy to put off. But once we really begin, it's mostly exciting! Make this a day to remember!!

September 15

When you feel the need to begin letting go, shift the focus from trying to let go to taking some sort of action. And clearly the best actions are those that advance a goal or dream. When we take hold of something more positive and productive, we are actually letting go of something (or someone) else less positive and productive! Small steps count!

September 16

If you wanted to start the day off with a warm smile, who would you think about? There you go!

September 17

Are you frustrated or angry with someone who is trying to manage your life for you? If so, I don't blame you--that's *your* job! Sometimes a gentle reminder is all it takes. Other times you need to come right out and say it more forcefully. And if that doesn't work, you need to stop the car and grab the steering wheel. Some people will be relieved, and some people will resist. Either way you've done the right thing and can keep moving forward.

September 18

Today offers a new beginning. No matter how you are feeling, and no matter what your obstacles are, today you can stand up for yourself and your dreams and take that small step forward. And one small step forward is about as important as it gets.

September 19

You are the little engine that could.

September 20

Self-responsibility and self-esteem seem to go hand-in-hand. The more you have of one, the more you have of the other. And given that, a step taken in either direction is guaranteed to create positive momentum and immediately enhance your life. This day can be yours.

September 21

One of the most difficult lessons to learn and one of the most powerful life changers you'll ever discover is this: the person standing between you and your dreams is you. Sure there are other people, circumstances, real challenges and problems to deal with, but until you realize that you hold the key, you'll be stuck and wishing rather than believing and moving. And the key is taking that next small step right now.

September 22

Assume you'll make mistakes. That thought alone can be liberating enough to get you moving forward.

September 23

Take your dreams seriously and nurture your gifts. One reason you've been given them is so you'll have something meaningful to share.

September 24

Sometimes we need to say "Yes" to some quiet, "think" time. It can be as simple as a walk in the woods, a long soak in the bathtub, or a ride in the country. No matter how stressed or busy or overwhelmed we feel, we all need to create a physical and emotional quiet and calm space to reflect and recharge. The harder it is to carve out a time and place, the more important it is to do. And if it seems impossible, then it's absolutely essential. You don't need to pretend it's a priority; it actually is one. Schedule it, commit to it and then make it happen. No excuses.

September 25

Who asked you to be Wonder Woman or Superman? And when did you agree to that? I say, "Hang up the cape!" Your real beauty and your real purpose have very little to do with being perfect and wonderful for everyone else, and everything to do with listening to *your* heart and acting accordingly.

September 26

What should you be asking yourself? “What if?” will get you thinking. “What now?” will get you moving!

September 27

Finding a balance between attending to your own dreams while taking care of family and friends, making a living and looking out for others is not easy. Feeling out of balance is. The only way to manage it all is to pay attention. And when you find yourself tipping one way or the other, deliberately take a step to self-correct. Eventually you will figure out the balance--just like when you learned to ride a bike.

September 28

Today there's a stranger somewhere who really needs your smile . . . perhaps on the street, in the elevator, in line at the store. You may never formally meet or even speak, and there's no way of knowing for certain who that stranger is. So please don't take a chance and miss this opportunity. I promise your day will be better, and someone else's will change in a powerful and extraordinary way.

September 29

We all know how a brick pathway is built; and that's exactly how problems are solved, opportunities are approached, and dreams are realized.

September 30

I know this sounds ridiculously simple, but if you want to make something good happen in your life, then *make something good happen in your life*. Have a good one!

October



October 1

Take out your calendar and schedule a meeting with yourself. Under location choose some place peaceful and rejuvenating, and under agenda put "just be." Step Two--do not miss this appointment.

October 2

In reality, our capacity to love one another is limited only by our fear! And fortunately for us (and the world) we are not the kind of people to let a little fear stop us!

October 3

You are so unique that you are truly priceless. There is no one exactly like you and no one who can show up exactly like you. That's an awesome responsibility, but it's also an incredible gift. It challenges you moment by moment, step by step and day by day to become more and more who you are. And who you are is not just priceless and unique; it's beautiful beyond words, too.

October 4

You will never score a goal if you aren't willing to kick the ball!

October 5

If you're truly ready to see how powerful you are, you need to stop thinking about all the things outside of your control. Instead turn your heart, mind and soul towards all the things you *can* influence, and make something good happen today. That's how to *Begin with Yes!* And there's no time like now.

October 6

Sometimes, truth be told, we are just afraid of being afraid. And once we realize what's going on, it's time to take a deep breath and take a small step forward! And when we do, the fear will lighten.

October 7

If it feels like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders, it's time to let go of some serious baggage. For starters, let go of responsibilities that belong to others. Let go of things beyond your control. Let go of past mistakes and regrets. Lighter. Lighter. Lighter. Peace.

October 8

What is the one thing holding you back? Now ask, "What small action step could I take today that would move me past being 'held back' and into the 'moving forward' space?" Name it. Do it. And then repeat!

October 9

Many actors I know have stage fright, but they also know there has never been a successful actor who wasn't willing to take the stage.

October 10

Happy, sad, angry, depressed, energized, anxious, grateful, excited, broken-hearted, lonely, overwhelmed, confused, frustrated, sleepy, worried or hungry. How did you wake up this morning? What's one small thing you can do today to move forward in whatever way you need to or want to move? Name it. Right now. Then do it! It's easier than you think.

October 11

Despite what we've been told, sometimes a little bit of foolhardiness is just what we need!

October 12

The day comes when you fully realize that you can be either your own worst enemy or your own best friend. And at that moment you will decide that your dreams really do count, and the only person responsible for making them happen is you.

October 13

Want to take a step forward? Can you be honest enough with yourself to discover what you really want and need in order to become the person you were meant to be? Write it down, put it in your wallet or pocket. A step forward completed!

October 14

I often speak about celebrating diversity and have learned a powerful lesson. I've discovered that the best way to truly and authentically begin celebrating diversity is to recognize and share your own beautiful uniqueness with your family, friends and co-workers. The world is so hungry for authenticity, and the best gift you have to offer is you!

October 15

Is today the day you finally stand up for yourself?

October 16

Many of us are learning how to speak up and how to speak clearly. When we do, we are often surprised to discover that people actually do hear us and respond appropriately. And if they don't, at least we've done our best to communicate, and we can feel better about doing what's right for our own emotional well-being.

October 17

If you are ready to own your uniqueness, your dreams and your potential, you are ready to take a step in this direction.

October 18

Most of us are juicy berries masquerading as raisins. I like being a juicy berry better.

October 19

If you knew how lovable you were deep down, you'd get in line to give yourself a hug!

October 20

While it may be wise not to take yourself too seriously, that's exactly how to take your dreams.

October 21

Love, time, money, compassion, power, passion, hope, ideas, encouragement—the list goes on and on. When we practice sharing what we need, we see amazing results.

October 22

When you take that next step, your next adventure begins.

October 23

Don't discourage tears any more than you discourage laughter. There are times for each, and both are signs that healing is underway.

October 24

If you take one small step towards resolving a challenge or achieving a goal today, you'll be that much further along when you get into bed tonight.

October 25

You deserve to be happy today and the only way that will happen is if you say "Yes" to yourself. Trust your ability to decide what you need to do for yourself and put that at the top of today's list. That way there will still be time for everyone and everything else, and for once, time for you, too.

October 26

Want to practice something that will change your life immediately? Practice looking at people with your heart rather than your head. Ask yourself, "What does my heart see when I look at Sam or Margaret, or that older driver in front of me, or that teenager skateboarding on the sidewalk?" And then listen as your heart opens.

October 27

You will never have all the answers because each answer creates new questions. There's a sweet rhythm here when you remember that one question, one answer, one step is how life unfolds.

October 28

Beginnings can be messy, muddy, confusing and scary. Laughing helps.

October 29

You will attract people who believe in you and your dreams simply by believing in the dreams of people around you. Who knew it could be that easy?

October 30

We can cry over spilled milk or we can head to the grocery store and buy another gallon! Either way, we need more milk.

October 31

Everyone is scared sometimes. And sometimes everyone is scared to the point of feeling terrified. So don't be surprised or even disappointed when you get that feeling in your guy. Keep moving forward. The feeling will eventually pass, and you'll have another "got through it" experience to add to your repertoire.

November



November 1

It's time to get over feeling guilty about taking care of ourselves. There is so much to do, so many challenges and opportunities to deal with, and often so many people demanding our time, energy and attention. Sometimes finding a little bit of quiet, alone-time is the absolute essential "Yes." And in that space we find our "Begin."

November 2

When it comes to your life, don't be a Monday morning quarterback. You simply don't have the capacity or the vantage point to evaluate what has already happened. Certainly learn what you can from past efforts and mistakes, and then let them go. Save all that awesome energy for moving forward. Have a great day!

November 3

If you are powerful enough to change someone's life with a smile, a touch or a small step, just imagine what you could do for your own life!

November 4

The glass is never half full or half empty. If we really understood all that was happening with, to and through us, we'd actually see that the glass is overflowing.

November 5

If you're not getting enough rest, you're not operating on all cylinders. If getting enough sleep seems impossible, you need to figure that out.

November 6

There's no finish without a start!

November 7

Waiting "until" is a stall strategy and keeps you stuck, possibly bored, hopeless, unhappy and unmotivated. Why not shake it up and take a small step today? Because when you're moving, you're not stuck. And when you're not stuck, you are making things happen.

November 8

Sometimes you need to find yourself before you can be yourself! And sometimes you need to be yourself to find yourself!

November 9

If you really want to move forward with challenges, opportunities, goals and dreams, you need two things: time with people and time with yourself. It's like making bread; you need yeast and mixing, and then quiet time for the rising! And if you're not getting enough of one or the other, the bread's just not going to be the wonderful masterpiece you envision. Here's an essential question: What do you need more of, and how will you make that happen?

November 10

My hope for you today is hope! Embrace it. Believe it. Cherish it. And above all else, share it.

November 11

You can experience gratitude, or you can embrace it. The first warms your heart and makes you feel good. The second warms your heart and changes the world.

November 12

Today I will focus less on what I want and more on what I have; less on my mistakes and setbacks and more on my potential. And finally I will do my best to focus less on my thoughts and more on my heart. And with that, into the world I go!

November 13

Why do we spend so much time thinking about what we should do, and so little time actually doing it?

November 14

There are things that you already know, yet haven't allowed yourself to fully see. Maybe it's a change you need to make, a relationship that needs to shift, a goal you need to focus on, or a dream that needs to be put front and center. Simply asking yourself the question, "What do I know that I haven't let myself see?" is the way to discover deep truths that can change your life in wonderful ways.

November 15

Recently some of you have faced difficult personal situations, illnesses, unemployment and complicated relationships. Others have faced opportunities and changes that are sure to challenge the status quo. But despite our differences, we share something significant in common--each other. And if we symbolically offer the person behind us our hand, we can be sure there will be someone in front offering us theirs.

November 16

We've been told not to bite off more than we can chew. But if we keep chewing, we'll be surprised how big a bite we can handle!

November 17

You are a tender touch, a helping hand and a gentle smile. But you are also a powerful and good force to be reckoned with--ready to stand up and speak up, demanding opportunity, fair play and hope for all. Yes, you are.

November 18

Sometimes the events and life changes that threaten, confuse and worry us are actually life corrections that are moving us towards calmer waters. I know this can be hard to believe when the sky looks so threatening, and we are being tossed about by the winds and waves. But I am learning that often after the storm passes, things are that much sweeter, and I find myself exactly where I needed and wanted to be.

November 19

If you don't deliberately surround yourself with positivity, you will by default, be overwhelmed with negativity.

November 20

You can't take hold of the new you without letting go of the old you.

November 21

What fun would reading a book be if you already knew how it was going to end? If you really want to enjoy a good book and a good life, let it unfold one chapter at a time!

November 22

One small step will keep you moving and is also guaranteed to make you feel better, too! I know many people will make something good happen today--I sure hope you're one of them!

November 23

What you want or need is exactly what you already have that you can share with others. You could try and prove me wrong or you could reach out to someone nearby and prove me right.

November 24

Even a very small act of kindness lasts a very long time.

November 25

Expecting bread to rise without yeast is just plain wishful thinking.

November 26

Each person reading these words today is contributing to a sense of hope. When you say “Yes” to your life, you are actually contributing to a universal “Yes” in a manner that will impact others in positive ways that you may never see. With that in mind, open your arms and hearts to receive a little “Yes” energy that your fellow travelers have set in motion.

November 27

Don't leap into the unknown with your eyes closed screaming “No!” If you're going to soar, do it with your eyes wide open yelling “Yippee!”

November 28

Even when you're lonely, depressed, confused, without hope, angry or scared, you can dig deep and find the courage and strength to take one small step. And one small step is all it takes to move you towards safer ground.

November 29

When you take a small step, you become living proof of the law of physics which teaches that it's impossible to be moving and stuck at the same time!

November 30

Are you a fist that closes and a hand that grasps? Or are you a hand that reaches out and is open to receive?

December



December 1

Awaken to the truth that this is your life. What happens today, tomorrow, next week and next year is up to you. One small step today!

December 2

Life is not perfect, easy or predictable. Some days are simple and wonderful, while others seem like a runaway toboggan heading downhill fast. But no matter what realities we face right now, we've been given another day. We have more chutzpah than we think, and there's always at least one small action we can take to move us in the direction we need and want to go.

December 3

You probably have a long list of things that need to get done today and not much time to stop and smell the roses. And that's all the more reason to take control of at least one minute of your life this morning to stop just for a minute to smell those roses!

December 4

Someone once commented that the word "love" was overused. I think used properly and with feeling, it's not used nearly enough. What do you think?

December 5

When you make someone else responsible for your happiness, sense of purpose and well-being, you are relinquishing your power and your responsibility to live your life fully engaged and full-throttle.

December 6

When you know what's holding you back, that's exactly where to look for that small step to take today!

December 7

Rather than expecting the impossible and delivering nothing, take a small manageable step towards a dream or a goal and accomplish something meaningful.

December 8

I think John Lennon was mostly right: Love may not be all we need, but we definitely all need it. And deserve it, too!

December 9

It's up to you, but remember that complaining wastes precious energy that could be better invested in progress.

December 10

Get up. Show up. And that's how you'll move up!

December 11

Dreaming without also doing is like sailing while tied to the dock. Today put up the sails, untie the rope and begin doing your dreaming!

December 12

It's not just OK to pay attention to your own needs; it's essential. An undernourished heart and soul have so much less to offer the rest of the world (including family, friends, co-workers and strangers, too) than hearts and souls that are filled. So please take care of yourself--the rest of the world needs you fully charged!

December 13

There's a beautiful song in your heart and it's time to start singing.

December 14

Our growth and change is often stressful to those around us. So expect a little (or sometimes a lot of) push back and push through. Don't let the resistance from others slow you down. Instead let it confirm and affirm that you are making things happen and that you're on the right track.

December 15

You know so much more than you may think. You just need to find a quiet place so your heart can talk and your mind can listen!

December 16

Bouncing back is one of the most important skills you can acquire. Practice bouncing and you'll soon be more resilient, stronger and more able to "go with the flow" in ways that will keep you moving forward despite obstacles and upsets.

December 17

There's a fine line between helping and controlling. The people in your life will learn more from finding their own way than they will learn by being pulled in a cart by you.

December 18

Life can be so hectic and the demands so many that we literally need to carve out time to sit quietly, as well as time to make something happen. If you don't schedule it, your time and energy will be depleted, and you will always be on the short end of the proverbial stick.

December 19

We can't predict the future, but we can take part in its creation.

December 20

When the inner you and the outer you join hands, you become the only you. And when that happens, things begin to unfold more easily. (I know this isn't rocket science but it sure took me a very long time to figure it out!)

December 21

Today find someone who has less than you and share a little of what you have.

December 22

Instead of a countdown, let's do a count *up*. No matter how busy we are, let's find a few minutes for some thoughtful, deliberate, loving energy directed towards someone in your life who may be struggling a bit with the holidays. Maybe it's a neighbor, a co-worker, a friend or even a stranger. Make things a little easier, sweeter and more peaceful for that person, and you'll discover the real purpose behind all the celebrations.

December 23

If you know what you want, then you're one step closer to it. If you take a step in that direction, then you're actually making it happen. Think *small* steps and *big* dreams.

December 24

Good morning December 24th! This is our one and only chance to experience today, so let's embrace it with love, hope, compassion and a kind word for those around us.

December 25

If you have a moment this morning to remember your non-tangible blessings, your day will be sweeter.

December 26

The day after anything always represents a new beginning. There's a new feeling in the air and it somehow feels like anything is possible. If you're not in charge of your own life, you ought to be, and you need to make that happen. And if you're already there, you need to figure out how to be in charge so that the life you want and deserve begins to happen.

December 27

Are you ready to accept your gifts and your passions as signs that it's time to listen to your heart? And as you listen, are you finally ready to step into your life in a deeper more action-oriented way?

December 28

We're getting closer to the beginning of the New Year, and if you're not already outside of your comfort zone, there's never been a better time. Sure it can be scary, but it's also exciting and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. And given that you're reading this, whether you feel it or not, you're ready for the next step! *Absolutely* ready.

December 29

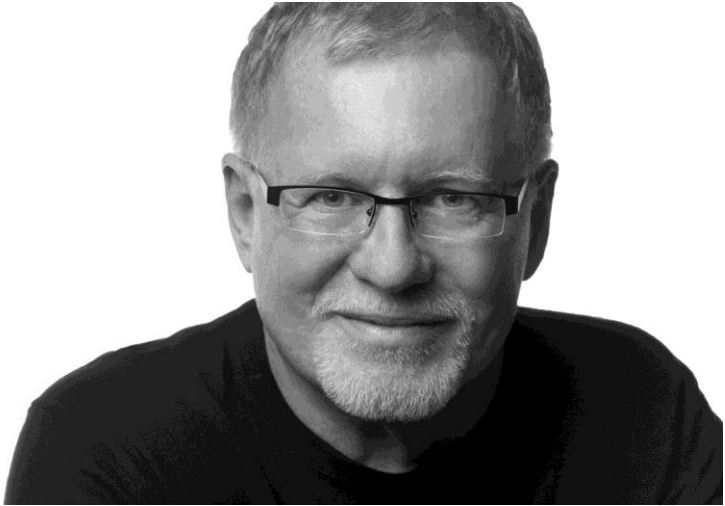
Most of us wonder, worry and spend lots of emotional energy thinking about what's around the next corner. As you begin to re-channel even some of that energy into action steps leading towards your hopes and dreams, you'll not only stop spinning your wheels, you'll be co-creating what will be waiting for you when you get there.

December 30

Some of the most accomplished people have been discouraged and hurt. They have had their hearts broken and their hopes dashed. They have missed opportunities, had regrets and made mistakes. Their lives have not always been easy or perfect; they have endured sadness and worry, and have been confused and alone. And these very same people have gotten up each morning, gotten dressed, opened the window and asked themselves "Now what?" And the answer to that question has taken them to some beautiful, incredible and wonderful places.

December 31

Are you ready for the New Year? Does a new beginning sound like a good plan? Are you ready to say "Yes" to your dreams, your goals, your hopes, and "Yes" to solving your problems and facing your challenges? If you are, then trust me--you are about to begin your most incredible and revolutionary year yet!



Paul Boynton is an award-winning CEO and motivational speaker with degrees in social work and counseling. He is the author of *Begin with Yes* and the guided meditation CD, *Begin Within*. He hosts a weekly radio show called *Begin with Yes* on Empower Radio and also writes the column, *Begin with Yes in the Workplace*. Paul lives in New Hampshire with his partner.

To inquire about speaking availability, please connect with Paul at www.beginwithyes.com

Beginnings

Hardly a day goes by that I don't hear from someone that the daily *Begin with Yes* post on Facebook found them at the perfect time, or that a particular post must have been written "just for them." And although I am always inspired when this happens, it's clear to me that this synchronicity is much less about my words and so much more about the readiness of the people reading them. The words can only open a doorway into something worth pursuing. The real work and joy belong to those who are willing to step through the door and embrace the life-changing possibilities that await.

With that in mind, I have compiled some of my favorite posts from the *Begin with Yes* Facebook page: Quotes to remind you to move forward with small steps, to remain hopeful and adventurous, and to surround yourself with positive people and positive ideas. And even more importantly, quotes that will remind you that you and your dreams are not only essential, they are gifts to be nurtured and shared with a world that needs them now more than ever before.

This is not only your time; it's the perfect time to meet your challenges and opportunities head on and the perfect time to embrace the passions you've been blessed with. Kismet!

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