

# Companion Pieces

## Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

*The following resources are not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of imagining what it means to be a people and a person of becoming.*

### Word Roots & Definitions

The word root *be* comes to us from the Old English prefix *be* “on all sides” as beset, or bedazzled. It also includes the Proto-Indo-European PIE root *bheue* to be, to exist, to grow. The old English idea of *cumin* “to move with the purpose of reaching” extends that to growing with intention.

[Source](#)

### Wise Words

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

*Anais Nin*

Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

*Howard Thurman*

A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will come out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real... It doesn't happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time.

*Margery Williams Bianco, The Velveteen Rabbit*

If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step, you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take. That's why it's your path.

*Joseph Campbell*

If we're always looking in mirrors—made of glass or social media—and looking outward, we should not be surprised when truly new things don't want to come through us to be born.

[Caitlin Breedlove](#)

Do not ask your children to strive for extraordinary lives. Such striving may seem admirable, but it is the way of foolishness. Help them instead to find the wonder and the marvel of an ordinary life. Show them the joy of tasting tomatoes, apples and pears. Show them how to cry when pets and people die. Show them the infinite pleasure in the touch of a hand, and make the ordinary come alive for them. The extraordinary will take care of itself.

*William Martin*

We find comfort among those who agree with us – growth among those who don't.

We evolve in the midst of narratives meant  
only for some  
and ways of being made narrow by fear and  
power.

We must, then, have the courage to listen to  
the truth of our own lives,  
to the wisdom that comes from within...

This lifelong labor cannot be carried out  
alone. It requires help  
from friends, and lovers, family, and  
creaturely companions  
who bear witness to what makes us come  
alive.

And say to us, "Listen. Look. Feel. Pay  
attention to that."

This is loving and being loved.

[\*enfleshed\*](#)

There is something dying in our society, in  
our culture, and there's something dying in  
us individually. And what is dying, I think, is  
the willingness to be in denial. And that is  
extraordinary. It's always been happening,  
and when it happens in enough of us, in a  
short enough period of time at the same time,  
then you have a tipping point, and the culture  
begins to shift... Where I feel like people are  
at now is, no, no, bring it on. I have to face it  
— we have to face it.

[\*Rev. angel Kyodo williams\*](#)

There is no me without you.

We shape one another.

The Sacred that birthed us  
weaves our lives together  
so that we can only find ourselves  
through shared becoming.

[\*enfleshed\*](#)

Everything about our existence points  
toward change, flexibility, and  
dynamic re-creation.

And it's hard because change involves loss.

Can we hold the losses well  
while not holding ourselves back?

[\*Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti\*](#)

The path of awakening is not about becoming  
who you are. Rather it is about unbecoming  
who you are not.

*Albert Schweitzer*

There are two questions that [a person] must ask [themselves]. The first is "Where am I going?" and the second is "Who will go with me?" If you ever get these questions in the wrong order, you are in trouble.

*Howard Thurman*

Now I become myself. It's taken  
Time, many years and places;  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people's faces...

[\*May Sarton\*](#)

Our deepest fear is not that we are  
inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful  
beyond measure. ..  
We ask ourselves,  
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented,  
fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?

*Marianne Williamson*

For a long time it had seemed to me that life  
was about to begin — real life. But there was  
always some obstacle in the way. Something  
to be got through first, some unfinished  
business, time still to be served, a debt to be  
paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned  
on me that these obstacles were my life.

*Alfred D'Souza*

We do not grow absolutely, chronologically.  
We grow sometimes in one dimension, and  
not in another; unevenly. We grow partially.  
We are relative. We are mature in one realm,  
childish in another. The past, present, and  
future mingle and pull us backward, forward,  
or fix us in the present. We are made up of  
layers, cells, constellations.

*Anais Nin*

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned,  
the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme,  
and some stories don't have a clear  
beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not  
knowing, having to change, taking the  
moment and making the best of it, without

knowing what's going to happen next.  
Delicious ambiguity.

*Gilda Radner*

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took  
the one less traveled by, And that has made  
all the difference.

[Robert Frost](#)

I believe in waking up in the middle of the  
night and packing our bags and leaving our  
worst selves for our better ones.

*Leslie Jamison*

If we are going to find our way out of shame  
and back to each other, vulnerability is the  
path and courage is the light. To set down  
those lists of \*what we're supposed to be\* is  
brave. To love ourselves and support each  
other in the process of becoming real is  
perhaps the greatest single act of daring  
greatly.

*Brené Brown*

A defenseless heart is where real love grows.

*Pauline Capalbo*

## **Poetry**

### **Becoming**

*Jim Harrison*

Poem found at:

<http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2014/05/jim-harrison-becoming.html>

We finally die from the exhaustion of  
becoming.  
We whirl with the earth...  
our soft brains ill-trained  
except to watch ourselves disappear into the  
distance.  
Still, we love to make music of this puzzle.

### **Love After Love**

*Derek Walcott*

Poem found at:

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/love-after-love/>

The time will come  
when, with elation,  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror...

### **Famous**

*Naomi Shihab Nye*

Poem found at:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47993/famous>

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is  
famous,  
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything  
spectacular,  
but because it never forgot what it could do.

### **Having Come This Far**

*James Broughton*

Poem found at:

[http://www.sharonsinger.ca/poem.php?poem\\_id=390](http://www.sharonsinger.ca/poem.php?poem_id=390)

No longer do I hunt for targets  
I've climbed all the summits I need to...  
Now I give praise and thanks...

### **How Becoming a Mother Is Like Space Travel**

*Catherine Pierce*

Poem found at:

<https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/how-becoming-a-mother-is-like-space-travel/>

### **I Am Afraid of Nearly Everything**

*Anonymous*

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/i-am-afraid-nearly-everything>

...most of all, I am afraid of what I might  
become:  
reconciled to injustice,  
resigned to fear and despair,  
lulled into a life of apathy...

## Music

We create two different playlists for each of our monthly themes: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. We organize these lists as a journey of sorts. So consider listening from beginning to end and using the lists as musical meditations. Follow the links below to connect with this month's "Becoming songs." And we have TWO PLAYLISTS for you this month, one on the general journey of becoming and another celebrating the journey of becoming your true self!

Click [here](#) for the Spotify playlist on [Becoming](#).

Click [here](#) for the Spotify playlist on [Becoming Our True Selves](#).

Click [here](#) for all [Spotify playlists](#).

Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on [Becoming](#).

Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on [Becoming Our True Selves](#).

Click [here](#) for all the [YouTube playlists](#).

## Videos & Podcasts

**Why Is an Ordinary Life Not Good Enough Anymore? – Alain De Botton**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KDB42qGT-8>

On our modern hunger to become extraordinary, admired and "loved"  
On the not-so-subtle message that becoming "ordinary" is not good enough!

**What [would you become] If Money Was No Object? - Alan Watts**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khOaAHK7efc&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khOaAHK7efc&feature=emb_logo)

**I'm Adulting - The Holderness Family**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheHoldernessfamily/videos/437551800438068>  
[Related video](#)

**Anne Applebaum, Pulitzer-prize winning author and staff writer at The Atlantic, on the future of democracy**

<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/962-the-munk-debates-podcast-p-52131924/episode/anne-applebaum-on-the-future-of-75690167/>

**The Monk Debates: Be it Resolved, the political survival of the Republican Party requires a clear and irrevocable break with Donald Trump and Trumpism.**

On what's becoming of politics...

<https://munkdebates.com/podcast/republican-party>

**Ian Morris, archaeologist and historian, on the past and future of human civilization**

<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/962-the-munk-debates-podcast-p-52131924/episode/ian-morris-on-the-past-and-75505145/>

## Articles

### **For Those Who (Privately) Aspire to Become More Reclusive**

<https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/for-those-who-privately-aspire-to-become-more-reclusive/>

### **Becoming Free, School of Life**

<https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/becoming-free/>

### **How your personality changes as you age**

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200313-how-your-personality-changes-as-you-age>

“Our traits are ever shifting, and by the time we’re in our 70s and 80s, we’ve undergone a significant transformation... We become more conscientious and agreeable, and less neurotic... Research has shown that we develop into more altruistic and trusting individuals. Our willpower increases and we develop a better sense of humor. Finally, the elderly have more control over their emotions. It’s arguably a winning combination...”

### **When Are You Really an Adult?**

*Julie Beck*

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/01/when-are-you-really-an-adult/422487/>

### **On Not Meeting Nazis Halfway**

*Rebecca Solnit*

<https://lithub.com/rebecca-solnit-on-not-meeting-nazis-halfway/?fbclid=IwAR2AoDnk-mrKQhg8LpBHKb7VwyHov5d7UEGi60V2LhXOzXrMUge7vChoNL4>

On how we become a country that deals with our divisiveness.

### **The End Of Capitalism Has Begun**

[https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/17/postcapitalism-end-of-capitalism-begun?CMP=share\\_btn\\_fb&fbclid=IwAR1THrLleFa3W85tMf5JlerfS-383CmBldtlu5Io1NLiDNX2eubQ\\_i0zWs10](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/17/postcapitalism-end-of-capitalism-begun?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR1THrLleFa3W85tMf5JlerfS-383CmBldtlu5Io1NLiDNX2eubQ_i0zWs10)

**The Future of American Politics: A party built on whiteness is collapsing; two-party dominance may go with it.**

<https://prospect.org/politics/future-of-american-politics/>

## **Books**

### **Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood**

*From Skinner House Books*

<https://www.uua.org/young-adults/spirituality/becoming>

### **Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life**

*Richard Rohr*

On how the work of becoming changes in the second half of life...

Find a review [HERE](#)

### **From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Revolutionary Approach to Growing Older**

*Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi*

### **On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old**

*Parker J. Palmer*

### **Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow**

*Elizabeth Lesser*

### **[Caste](#)**

*Isabel Wilkerson*

On American reckoning with who it is and what it needs to become

## Movies

[Moonrise Kingdom](#)

[Lady Bird](#)

[Becoming](#)

[Moonlight](#)

[Boyhood](#)

[The “Up Series”](#)

[Soul](#)

