



Hello, Friends!

My 2024 One Little Word is BEAUTY. What's yours?

2024 marks my 17th year to choose One Little Word as a focus and guide for the year. This practice has added so much to my life that I encourage *everyone* to choose a word. You can read more about why I chose BEAUTY [in this blog post](#).

But why choose a word? What's the point?

Well, why not?

I don't know what your One Little Word will bring you exactly.... and yes, some years the connections and impacts are stronger and more evident than others.

Like the year I chose [SKY](#) as my One Little Word. No way could I have known going into the year that I would take a picture of the sky every single day. And that by simply taking that moment to look at the sky, to point and click, that I would slow down, feel more peaceful, be in touch with wonder, and receive from the universe many new ideas and inspirations. What an abundant year!

On the other hand, the year I chose the word MYSTERY is still a bit mysterious to me. I don't have anything concrete to report about my experience with my One Little Word that year. But maybe that's the point? I allowed myself to sit in mystery, to not have everything all figured out, to write without some grand purpose or project in mind.

I am certain I was changed by the experience of that year...I just can't tell you how. [It's a mystery!](#)

And how, out of the millions of words, how do you select just one?

You know how sometimes you just know? It's like that. Ask your brain to give you a word, any word...close your eyes and let it float up from the center of the center of your heart...I've found it's best not to overthink it. Trust yourself. The word is there already, like an apple ripe and ready to be plucked from a tree. There's really no way to mess up...just choose a word and GO.

Hey, maybe GO is your word! I don't know. But you do.

And then it's just a matter of remembering what word you've chosen. You can do this by writing it and posting it on your bulletin board or refrigerator or bathroom mirror. You can journal about it or ruminate over it or Google it. Our minds are so easily distracted it helps to keep your One Little Word regularly showing up. In my years of this practice, I find that it's like many other things: the more you put in, the more you get out.

To get your started, here are some posts from folks in our community about selecting their 2024 One Little Word (see how wonderfully varied these words are?!):

[Tabatha Yeatts](#) - OPEN

[Michelle Kogan](#)- COMPASS

[Marcie Flinchum Atkins](#) - GROW

[Patricia J. Franz](#)- AND

[Rose Capelli](#)- EXPLORE

[Linda Mitchell](#) - WORLD

Hey! Those words might also be a wee poem!

open compass

grow and explore world



7 Things I'm Thinking About this February

[Seasons of the creative life.](#)

My name going to the Moon! (You can send yours, too...sign up[here!](#))

Folk art. Because that's my ArtSpeak theme for 2024.[Click to enjoy the art and poems so far!](#) *And if you have a favorite folk artist or piece of art, would you please reply to this email? ***

The new line of Gee's Bend items at [Target](#).

The fact that Alabama is the [Turtle Capital of the World](#). (I am learning so much through the Alabama Master Naturalist program!)

[Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell](#). Y'all. I LOVE this book! It's the kind of book that makes me want to set down my pen and just be a reader for the rest of my life. So good!!

Hummingbirds. In these parts, February is the time to put out the feeder....because those male hummers are scouting, and they are much more likely to settle in a place where there's a reliable food source. (I did this last year, and we had So. Many. Hummingbirds!) This year I am also adding [hummingbird perches](#) in the garden and at my feeding station.

BONUS: Billy Joel's new single "[Turn the Lights Back On.](#)" Gorgeous. Bittersweet. Human. Billy at his best.



Coming in the very near future...

Leap Day! What will you do to celebrate this extra slot on the calendar? Check out these great ideas from [Good Housekeeping](#)...I will be doing #6 and #9, at the very least!

Chamber Music Workshop with [Bayberry String Quartet](#)! I feel so lucky to get to learn from these amazing and kind musicians. My sweet quartet will be playing an arrangement of [Albinoni's Adagio](#).

[South Carolina Association of School Librarians](#) conference in Columbia March 6-7. [Charles Waters](#) and I will be there giving a joint keynote and also a breakout session. We are super honored that both *African Town* and *Be a Bridge* have been nominated for their state book awards...O frabjous day!

Cover reveal of [The Mistakes That Made Us: Confessions from Twenty Poets](#) This anthology will be released October 1, 2024, and it's the first one to hit the market that Charles and I have co-curated. Exciting!

...and then it will be SPRING! And National Poetry Month! And holy daffodils, do I have some fun things in the works! I'll be back in April to tell you all about them.

Meanwhile, may we all remember what (o so wise!) [Julia Cameron](#) says: "Leap, and the net will appear."

Happy leaping!

Love,
Irene

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