

An Invitation to
TRUST

Kate M Foster





This book is dedicated to my daughters.

It is also dedicated to you, its reader,
and all beings on this planet.

The Offering



This book is offered with deep respect and reverence for all faiths and the many paths we travel to return to the divine. If something contained within these pages encourages, supports or inspires you, may that grace settle deep within your being. And if by chance you are disturbed or confronted, may these challenges quickly dissolve as would words written in a fast flowing river. Seek support or comfort if you need. May your journey be safe and may you find yourself immersed in deep unshakable peace and joy in this lifetime.

My precious children

If you are reading this you must be celebrating your sixteenth birthday. Happy birthday my precious one. I am eternally thankful for your presence in my life and I pray that I have many, many years to witness you and your lives blossom. You each contain so many miraculous gifts in your hearts. Gifts I have no doubt you will share to bless this world. Unknowingly, you have paid an immense price for this book. You see, it's taken years to create. And recreate. Years of living through my fears, procrastinations and distractions before I even began. Then, once I thought I was at the end of the challenging chapter and finally free to write, the dance began again. This time it was an unending dance of how to serve you both, holding our family precious, while also diligently committing to recording these words with the intention of benefiting all.

At times, I sacrificed play. I sacrificed reading books. I sacrificed hugs and tenderness. I sacrificed 'time and moments' that will never come again. It was sacred sacrifice. It didn't always feel that way. It was not always easy to make friends with myself and I was called to apply a 'salve of forgiveness' to my own heart many times over. Do I hold regrets for the moments I'll never get back? Sometimes. That's my medicine. It humbles me. Awakens me. Invites me to this moment and again to trust.

At times, I felt so pressured I succumbed to anger and impatience. I used a "big voice". ("Mama I don't like your big voice.") I made mistakes often and scooped you into my arms and apologised. I did my best to explain that my frustrations were a result of my own internal world and that they mean nothing at all about either of you. I taught you about my humanness with all the honesty in my being. With honest vulnerability, I did my best to make friends with all of my frailties so you could see that

it is possible to do the same.

Again and again, I remind you both that you are entirely precious and whole and lovable, just the way you are. I repeatedly tell you “Speak to be heard, the world needs your voice.”

And with all my failures, I wrote on.

So thank you. Thank you for being my children. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for choosing me and my unique ‘messy branches’ to be your shade tree. I have done my best in every single moment. Your gracious hearts have allowed me to share with the world. I pray that you too are blessed, held, reassured and guided to remember the truth of your own hearts as you read these words. My precious daughters, this book is first and foremost for both of you. It has been written with all the love that I am.

Trust yourselves always. Even on the hard messy days. For on the days during which your doubt is highest, you are no further from your divinity than the days your heart sings with divine purpose. Whatever challenge, hardship or grief you find yourself in, remember, that this too will change.

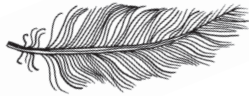
And when it departs, infusing your life with its perfume, you will embody its gifts, shining evermore brightly into this world.

You will come to know in your deepest heart that you are a miraculous, whole and holy part of this divine, beautiful universe and nothing more than your presence will ever be required to fulfill your life’s purpose.

Be kind and gentle with yourselves, each other and all you encounter in this beautiful world. I bow to each of you and the miracles you are.

With love from my deepest heart, Mama xxo

Chapter One



**A note from this book...
and her writer**

Welcome!

Welcome my friend! Welcome to 'An Invitation to Trust'. May this book become your friend, a warm cup of tea to comfort you and solace for the journey home.

Please come sit with me. Let us wander these pages together, remembering the truth of who we are until we once again fall into restful awakening. When you turn the pages, I encourage you to make yourself tea or coffee, often. Remember the peace that is found in prioritising and caring for yourself with the simple things.

This book comes with many little letters and notes, written with a deep love and service to all. There is no right or wrong way to read it. Front to back, back to front or opened randomly are all of equal value. May that which you seek be found within these pages and may this book become a loyal friend to serve you over your entire life.

While these words flowed through my fingers, their wisdom is not mine. Its credit lies in the beauty and courage of every human that has ever lived. These sharings have called me to honour the richness of life many times over. It has demanded that I embody the teaching that all of life is an invitation to trust, regardless of its wrapping. My prayerful hope is that you come to remember whatever you are living through or experiencing in your own life is also that: another invitation to trust. It may be messy. Your heart may be broken. Yet show no haste. There is no need to hurry, for all is more well than you can imagine. Rest my friend. Lean into these pages. Let them wrap you with all the warmth and reassurance you have been yearning for. I am here to guide you home. You are not alone.

The path I travelled will not be the same path you are on, yet the maps contained within these pages are guaranteed to light

the way. You see, all paths guide us to truth and we are all free to meander in different valleys and fields as we find our own unique way.

So let us set sail. The time has come. This moment, right now, is simply an invitation to trust.



If reading an eBook, please insert imagination...

Reality is not always as it seems. Take me, for example. One might consider me a simple book. Yet that is only part of the story. You see, I was once a tiny seedling, lovingly planted by a human who knew she would never get to rest under my branches. In her heart, she had a sense of trust that in the years after her life ended, I may somehow contribute and benefit others. So she planted me anyway. I am also the sunshine, the rain and the moonlight that for decades poured forth upon me, blessing me and allowing me to grow year after year. I am the seasons, I too contain autumn, winter, spring and summer. I am the laughter of the children who climbed my branches, I am the song of the birds who nested here. I am the infinite love of the logger's mother who birthed the human who would one day cut me down so that I may serve with all of my being. I am the balance of time, reaching my branches high to the heavens, while stretching my roots deep within the earth. So yes, I am a book, yet also a mini universe held within your sacred hands. I offer you all that I am, so that you many come to know yourself as a reflection of all that exists and, therefore, take your place as an equal in the sacred interconnected nature of all.

My pages are yours. Hold me tenderly, I was created to bless. Drink tea with me often, take baths with me and have no fear of moistening my pages. Please leave me close to life, pick me up, share me. Write notes upon my pages, bend my corners, mail me to your friends, talk about me fearlessly, and please do stick all manner of treasures within my cover. It will be my absolute honour to hold precious your dreams and hopes, your photos and feathers.

So for now, I say thank you courageous one. I see you. I know the truth of your heart and I am buoyed by your resilient and willing spirit.

Travel safely my dear friend. Be ever so gentle with your precious self. You are in good company. We will walk together in our aloneness. And again I say rest, the meaning you yearn for lies here now. It will reveal itself to you endlessly as you seek.

There will be times when you forget me, leaving me buried under the layers of life. Do not worry. When the time is right, you will once again caress my pages with your warm touch and I shall speak to you and we shall laugh and cry and rest together.

Remember you are not alone, you travel with the support and love of all who came before you.

So for now carry on, turn the pages and continue that which began long, long ago.

Chapter Two



Where it all began

This book was born long ago. Its first whispers arrived on my sixteenth birthday. Reflecting now, I realise that I never really stood a chance of being whatever the world deemed ‘normal’. While I was packaged as a ‘good girl’ who didn’t rock the boat, I was anything but your average child. My earliest memories are questioning the meaning of life. Wondering what is ‘life’ all about? What are all these grown-ups doing? Why is everyone so consumed with being anywhere but here? This whole thing, this living, it must be about so much more than what is shown on the surface. Why is there so much hurt and heartache and destruction? Why aren’t we kind to others? Why aren’t we kind to ourselves? Why don’t all the grown-ups cry when they watch the news?

My questions were unending. I began interviewing grown-ups about ‘the meaning of life’.

My Dad told me, “There isn’t one.” he said, “You just live then die.”

My Mum’s response, “You have to find your own.”

My Nan, “To love your grandchildren.”

The answers were as varied as the people I asked.

Love and relationships have been one of the greatest motivators in my life. At age five, when I saw an older couple who stood out, who actually looked happy, I decided to ask them what the secret to love was. And so, I began compiling inner lists from both the happy and unhappy couples and the words they shared about the secrets of love. Throughout all my questioning and insatiable yearning to understand, I somehow came to the conclusion that the world was actually crazy. Everyone knew it, that’s why no one talked about it, and I held tightly to the belief that when you reach your sixteenth birthday, you would be given a ‘book of life’ that explained it all. A sacred book that made sense of this huge mess.

For the coming years, I continued my research. I still asked

questions, yet I had a more surrendered heart as I leaned into the arrival of the 'book of life'. On the morning of my sixteenth birthday, my parents gave me a glory box, I loved it for I had been collecting homely things like books for my future children and sheets and doilies for my life to come. I thought it was the perfect precursor to the arrival of 'the book'. I went to school, still resting in my certainty of the coming book of answers. I arrived home and when it became evident that there was no other present, I began to question and doubt. I survived my birthday dinner, enjoyed chocolate cake, but when bedtime came I broke down. My Mum sat with me on my bed, attempting to understand and console. I was silent, waiting, stubborn. Why were they so mean? Why were they holding out on me? Eventually, with snot and tears flailing everywhere, I sobbed the words, "When are you going to give it to me?"

My Mother, bless her, could not hide the confusion on her face. Her gentle enquiry to understand, my blubbering, "The book, the book of life, I can't wait any longer."

"What book is that?" asked.

"You know, the one that explains this whole mess, this life, what it's all about."

"Oh darl," she said, as she pulled my head to her heart and held me the way only a mother can, "There isn't one. If there was, I would give it to you." She paused. "Maybe you should write it?"

Needless to say, the rest of my teens were spent exploring, questioning, falling, stumbling and attempting to find meaning and purpose in this life and then beginning all over again. I decided that if I ever had children, I would write the book for them, the book of answers that I so desperately yearned for. Not long after this insight, I forgot all such wisdom and promptly immersed myself in the art of living my way through the triumph and tragedy of life with a sensitive, open heart.

A decade later, at the age of 26, I had reached a breaking point. I had fulfilled my greatest hopes, I had a beautiful life, lived in my dream location, had married a kind and wise man, the man of my dreams, and was contributing to others. Yet, I still felt unfulfilled. I was restless and could not find peace. For all the ways I loved my life, I also held equal uncertainty and angst. And no matter how or what I tried, I could not escape that torture. There was something inside me that pulled me forward and, despite my mind's cautionary advice and anguish, I listened. In 2005, I left my life, my marriage, my country. Unintentionally breaking my own heart and many others' hearts in the process. At this time, I sold pre-order copies of a book called 'An Invitation to Trust'. The pre-order sales of this book that I was yet to write and the generosity of others funded my air ticket to Canada. Many people told me I was crazy. In many ways, I was. My choices left a trail of devastation, impacting people I loved and still hold dear in my heart. My innocent heart knew not of the ocean of shame and guilt that was to come, there would be ample time to make friends with that in the decade following.

So with no money and a fractured heart, I left for a foreign country in search of something that couldn't be named.



Today, a little silk bag sits upon my desk. Within this bag are the handwritten pre-order forms from over a decade ago. A tangible reminder that others have trusted me, even in the moments when I wasn't yet able to trust myself. I have looked and listened and prayed to that little bag often. Prayer connected me with my courage, my shame, my lateness, my doubts, my

fears of not having anything valuable to offer. I wrote and wrote and wrote and yet it wasn't the right time. I honour that. I honour my courage to listen and show up anyway. I honour the dedication required to live with and build a friendship with feeling entirely uncomfortable and sharing anyway. While I may not have had a sense of being 'on the right track' throughout this whole journey, I am thankful and hold great reverence for the process of divine time and for deeply listening to the silence that guides all of life.

Fast forward again. It's 2013. I am mid-conversation with a friend when she casually asks if I had begun "that book" for my children (knowing the story of my sweet sixteen-year-old heart). This question was a swift kick in the butt. My eldest child was already seven years old, leaving me only nine years until I had to have the book ready for her sixteenth birthday. Life crisis 369 began. How do I capture words that will support and uplift my children if they have anywhere near the questions I did? How do I find words to express the beauty, the pain, the challenge and the divinity of this divinely sacred mess? The answer is - I don't know. I am vastly unqualified. And, as I have heard my teacher say often, the best I can hope for is to fail well.

What I came to was this, I decided to write anyway. It can be a start. And I will gift both my daughters with a journal at the same time, to which they can add their own insights and answers. They can fill in the gaps, as can you.

Since the initial seed sprouted to write this book, it has been two intensely rich and beautiful decades. I've married, divorced, re-partnered, had a child, separated and, after vowing never to marry again, did the inevitable, and fell in love. I've lost people I love to sickness and suicide. I've birthed babies and I've broken and mended more times than I knew were possible.

In the past decade, I have also lost two 'almost complete' versions of this book. One three years ago. The most recent

earlier this year. To say I am technologically challenged is an understatement. Fortunately, I now have a team of people who have my back. I've been has trained in the ways of Google Docs. I have enormous hope that I will never lose a book again! Grieving my way through this loss twice reminded me that I'm not ever really in control of anything. Writing hasn't always been one great laugh, yet it has always been 'An Invitation to Trust'. Cosmic humour at its finest, I am told. At times, I had other words for it!

So if you are holding this book in your hands, you are actually holding a miracle. That is how I view it anyway. Through the grace of life and the infinite support and generosity of many, it has found its way out into the world for the benefit of others. 'An Invitation to Trust' is my response to life's unending questions. It is in no way definitive, nor exhaustive, and nor should it be. I have given myself permission to begin without having all the answers. To begin knowing I may not even live to see its publication.

Because here's the thing. My unwavering decision in this life is to show up anyway. To be real and imperfect and entirely in love with life just the way it is.

The truth is, hiding serves no one. It's time to be seen. So let us begin. What are we waiting for?