

This month's quotes are all about emotions. Don't panic, I'm not having a mental breakdown or anything crazy. These are just beautifully woven words that leaped out at me.

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BOOKS ARE A REFUGE, A SORT
OF CLOISTERED REFUGE, FROM
THE VULGARITIES OF THE
ACTUAL WORLD.

-- JD SALANGER

@INKSTAINEDPAPERCUTS

I remember years ago, when life was just... hard. We faced many challenges on the island while caring for a loved one with early-stage dementia. Our situation was overwhelming, and we needed support, but many of our cries went unheard, as more difficulties piled up.

A well-loved book can provide a therapeutic escape into a world with friends who endure hardships valiantly. It won't dissolve the difficulties one is facing, but there's a sense of camaraderie about being reminded you aren't the only one scaling mountains that seem

unattainable. And it's one escape I used during those hard years.

BOOKS PUT NAMES ON BIG
FEELINGS, & THEN MAKE
THEM FAMILIAR & OKAY.
AND THEY TELL YOU
YOU AREN'T ALONE
IN FEELING THEM

-- ANNE URSU --



I've been curled up in a chair reading away when the words hit me a little differently, when they express what I've been feeling, but couldn't formulate into words. It makes me want to jump up and scream, "Hey look, I know how to explain myself now!"

One of the best books that captures this idea is [The Lonely Hearts Book Club](#). Arthur, a well educated elderly man, struggles with words and emotions. Expressing himself is difficult because his temper often gets the better of him. Yet, he can open his beloved copy of [Anne of Green Gables](#) and find all the words he wishes he could say.

Identifying with a fictional character can make a book endearing. There's magic in reading about emotions and relationships you've yearned for. It leaves you asking, "Is it really like that?" I had such an experience when I read the ending of [Book Lovers](#) by [Emily Henry](#).

When my children were younger, we read a book by [Allen Say](#) called [Grandfather's Journey](#). There is a poignant line where Grandfather expresses his love for two countries is divided, because no matter which country he's in, he was always homesick for the other. The first time I read the line aloud, my seven-year-old gasped and said, "That's me! I know what Grandfather means."

It filled him with joy at being able to express something he couldn't name before hearing it articulated so well. And his mother resonates with understanding. A feeling I know all too well, and one reason I save so many quotes about all kinds of things.



This quote, from the book series, *The Green Ember* by SD Smith, is one that's been on my annual vision board at least twice. It hits me hard because I have allowed fear to dictate some of my choices before. And not the healthy fear that protects us, but the fear that holds us hostage. And it has always filled me with regret afterwards.

I mentioned before about how I partook in a Season Of Yes. The idea was to help people return to normal life post-pandemic. Maybe because we traveled across the world in 2021, I found it hard to resonate with that idea.

What stood out to me was the idea of not letting fear determine my actions. The type of fear

holding me back because I worry about looking silly, being judged, or being capable. And during my Season Of Yes, I tried things outside my comfort zone.



Last week I shared how writing is my cure-all for every emotion I have, and it's true. I've written while crying so hard I couldn't see the screen, and I've written when I'm so excited my fingers trip over one another trying to get the words down.

There's something different about putting those emotions into a story, though. Weaving deep hurts into a character and showing hope on the other side can be a daunting task knowing others will read it. Sometimes it flows well and seems easy to accomplish. Other days it

comes out as a lecture and I need to start again.

Stories that do this well, that touch on the hard, the hurt, and discomfort, stick with us long after we've closed the book and returned it to the shelf. One of the most wonderful things about a book is how we can all read the same story and learn something completely different.

Author's Note:



A little secret a therapist shared with me is that writer or not, journaling your emotions can be quite therapeutic. You don't have to be eloquent in what you write, it's simply a release of the pent-up emotions that are bogging you down. You never even have to read them again. I know someone who writes all their emotions out, and then at the end of the year they have a bonfire and throw their journals into it.

While I've never thrown a journal into a fire before, I wrote a letter once and then burn it. It was to symbolize releasing all the frustrations I was enduring. While I can't say it was a permanent fix, it was certainly refreshing to remove the burden.

Or perhaps you're more like Arthur, and like to highlight all the beautiful words in books which can speak for you. I can relate to that. I've started acquiring, don't pass out e-books, so I can highlight and annotate copies and still have clean physical books to read.

However you deal with your emotions, I hope it's in a healthy way.

The Reluctant Author:

