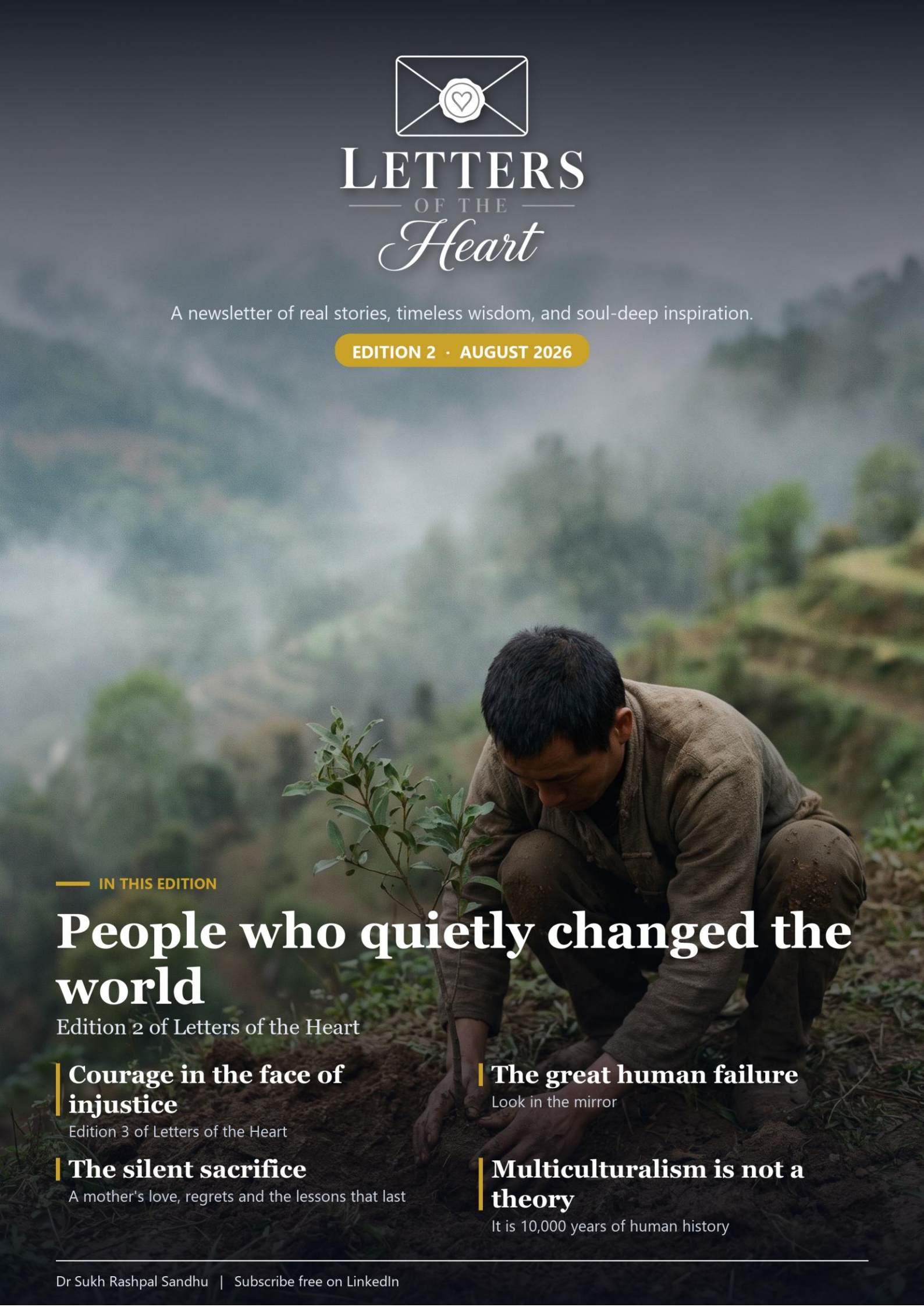
LETTERS OF THE Heart

A newsletter of real stories, timeless wisdom, and soul-deep inspiration.

EDITION 2 · AUGUST 2026



IN THIS EDITION

People who quietly changed the world

Edition 2 of Letters of the Heart

Courage in the face of injustice

Edition 3 of Letters of the Heart

The great human failure

Look in the mirror

The silent sacrifice

A mother's love, regrets and the lessons that last

Multiculturalism is not a theory

It is 10,000 years of human history

Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | Subscribe free on LinkedIn

EDITION 2 | AUGUST 2026

Contents

Letters of the Heart: August 2026 3
Edition 2: People Who Quietly Changed the World 4
Edition 3: Courage in the Face of Injustice..... 19
THE GREAT HUMAN FAILURE: Look in the Mirror, What Have We Become? 37
The silent sacrifice: a mother's love, regrets, and the lessons we often learn too late..... 40
Multiculturalism is not a theory. It's 10,000 years of documented human history..... 47
Letters of the Heart · Special Edition · 14 April 2026: When hope outlasted the strongman... 53
Follow us on LinkedIn 56
About Letters of the Heart 58

INTRODUCTION

Letters of the Heart: August 2026

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu

Edition 2 of Letters of the Heart: 6 pieces for August 2026.

A newsletter of real stories, timeless wisdom, and soul-deep inspiration.

This edition brings together 6 pieces first published in Letters of the Heart on LinkedIn, each carrying the date it first appeared. Republished pieces appear as they were first published, with their original images; facts, figures and links are as they stood on that date.

In this edition

- Edition 2: People Who Quietly Changed the World
- Edition 3: Courage in the Face of Injustice
- THE GREAT HUMAN FAILURE: Look in the Mirror, What Have We Become?
- The silent sacrifice: a mother's love, regrets, and the lessons we often learn too late
- Multiculturalism is not a theory. It's 10,000 years of documented human history.
- Letters of the Heart · Special Edition · 14 April 2026: When hope outlasted the strongman.

Thank you to every reader who subscribes, shares and responds.

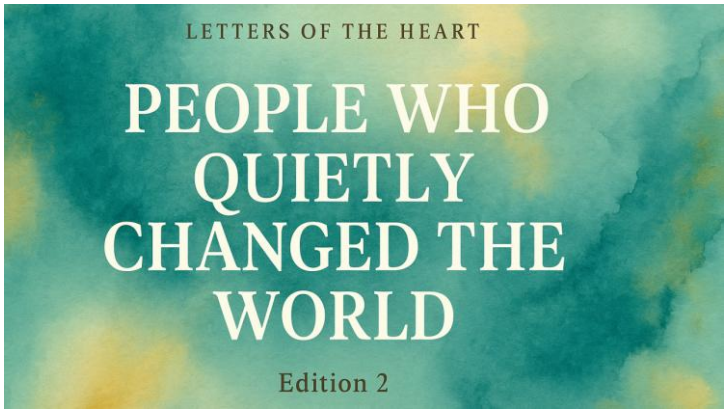
Warm regards,
Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu
Author, Letters of the Heart

LETTERS OF THE HEART

Edition 2: People Who Quietly Changed the World

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 18 May 2025

I don’t know about you, but ever since I was a child, I’ve had a fascination, an almost reverent love, for reading about **people who changed the world** in extraordinary ways.



Dear Reader,

Not just those who shouted for attention. But those who whispered truth. Who built quietly. Who faced storms, and walked through them anyway.

Over the years, I’ve collected **hundreds of their stories**,cut from old magazines, tucked into folders, saved from newspapers, sometimes scribbled into journals during flights, long nights, or early mornings.

Some were stories of genius. Some of grief. Others of grit, grace, and the quiet power of persistence.

Whenever I find time (ha ha, somewhere between **family, study, work, business, social media and everything else**), I go back to them. And they still move me.

That’s what this edition is about. It’s a tribute to the people who’ve **reshaped our world**, not through noise, but through **impact**.

People like:

- **Grigori Perelman**, the mathematical recluse who rejected $1 million because truth was enough.
- **Ronald McNair**, who went from being denied a library card because of his race to having a library named after him, as an astronaut.
- **Naval Ravikant**, who read himself into clarity, wealth, and wisdom, without ever chasing applause.
- **Dr. Linda Salvin**, who turned pain into spiritual purpose and radio waves into healing light.
- **Madam C.J. Walker**, who built an empire from hair products and gave Black women power in business before most had the vote.
- **Sara Blakely**, who reshaped an industry with a pair of scissors and a refusal to fear failure.

- **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**, who transformed a biotech shed into a billion-dollar company for the public good.
- **Martine Rothblatt**, who dared to transcend gender, business, and biology to save her daughter's life, and thousands more.
- **Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil**, who I've known personally for over 30 years, and recently interviewed for *Salaam E Zindagi (Hello Life)*, a prince who turned his palace into a shelter for the LGBTQ+ community.
- And **Len Ainsworth**, Australia's most controversial billionaire, whose empire of pokies is a study in contradiction, a reminder that legacy is rarely neat or easy.

These are not just stories. They are **mirrors**. Reflections of the resilience, courage, and complexity that live in all of us.

Some will inspire you. Some might challenge you. All, I hope, will remind you that **every life holds a story worth telling**, and yours is no exception.

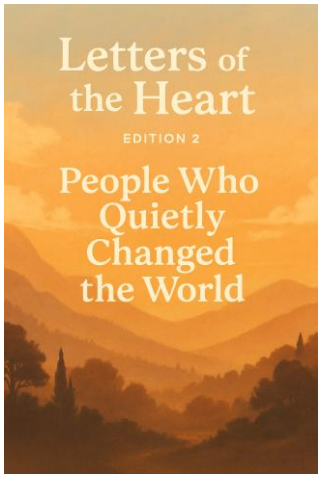
Welcome to *Letters of the Heart, Edition 2*. Read slowly. Feel deeply. And carry these people with you, not just in memory, but in meaning.

With admiration for the quiet revolutionaries,

Sukh Sandhu

Editor,

Letters of the Heart



Story 1: He's Not Homeless, He's a Genius.

✐ *The Quiet Brilliance of Grigori Perelman*

At first glance, you might walk past him, a modest man on the metro of St. Petersburg. His hair uncombed, his clothes unassuming. Nothing about him screams brilliance. And yet… this is **Grigori Perelman**, one of the greatest mathematicians the world has ever known.

He solved the **Poincaré Conjecture**, a problem so complex it stood unsolved for nearly a century. In 2006, he was awarded the prestigious $1 million Clay Millennium Prize.

But here's what stunned the world: **He turned it down.**

> *"If the solution is correct, no further recognition is needed."*

Perelman stepped away from fame, awards, and even academia itself. While the world chased spotlight and applause, he chose **truth over trophies**, and **purpose over prestige**.

In Russia, young people now wear shirts with his face and the words: **"You can't buy everything."**

His life quietly teaches us:

- 🧠 Real genius often wears silence.
- 💰 True worth doesn't need a cheque.
- 🌟 Not all brilliance craves a stage.

Sometimes, the loudest minds are the quietest souls.



Story 2: From Denied to Dedicated.

📚 *The Library That Once Said No… Now Bears His Name.*

In 1959, a young boy in South Carolina stood at the counter of a public library and asked for a library card.

He was just 9 years old. He loved to read. He was full of questions about the universe.

But the librarian told him: **"We don't issue cards to coloured children."**

He didn't yell. He didn't argue. He walked away, silent, but not defeated.

That boy's name? **Ronald McNair.**

Years later, he earned his **PhD in Physics from MIT**, one of the most prestigious institutions in the world. He became an astronaut. In 1984, he flew aboard the **Challenger**, one of NASA's proudest missions.

But perhaps the most poetic twist?

The very same library that once turned him away… **now bears his name.**

The Ronald McNair Life History Center.

A space for learning. For belonging. For everyone.

This is more than a story of success. It's a lesson in **quiet strength** and **unshakeable dignity**.

- 🚪 He was once denied access.
- 🚀 He opened doors for thousands.
- 🔄 He turned injustice into inspiration.

Never underestimate the child who walks away without a fuss. They might return as the reason the door stays open.



Story 3: The Man Who Whispered Into the Future

🧠 *Naval Ravikant: From Libraries to Legacy*

He wasn't born with influence. He wasn't raised with wealth. He didn't inherit a legacy, **he built one.**

Born into poverty in India. Abandoned by his father at 9. Raised not in gated mansions, but in public libraries. In the Bronx. By a single mother. With nothing but books, and belief.

Where others saw noise, Naval saw structure. Where others sought fame, he chased clarity. While the world shouted, he studied. Silently. Relentlessly.

He read philosophy by night. Learned programming by day. And in the quiet spaces between, he listened, not to what the world was, but what it was *becoming*.

> ***He didn't follow trends. He decoded them.***

Startup investor. Angel philosopher. Strategic builder. He bet early on companies the world hadn't heard of, yet. And earned a $2 billion fortune not by chasing noise, but by **understanding patterns**.

In an interview, someone asked:

> *"You're famous now. What does that mean to you?"*

He answered without hesitation:

> ***"Fame can give you access. But it can also take away your freedom."***

His belief?

- 🎯 **Fame should be a byproduct of contribution, not a goal.**
- 🔓 **The façade you build for attention can become your prison.**
- 💭 **Changing your mind isn't weakness. It's wisdom.**

Naval didn't pretend to be perfect. He chose to keep learning. He didn't chase followers, they found him because **he was real**.

> *"You can be rich without being greedy. Famous without being fake. And powerful without pretending."*

His story isn't just about wealth. It's about **quiet revolution**.

A whisper in a world that screams:

> ***"You don't have to shout to be heard. You just have to speak what's real."***

Start where you are. Think clearly. Speak gently. Build wisely. And let the future come to you.



Story 4: The Psychic Who Rebuilt Her Path with Light

Dr. Linda Salvin, From Science to Spirit, from Survivor to Entrepreneur

In December 2024, aboard the historic **Queen Elizabeth II in Dubai**, I had the honour of personally meeting Dr. Linda Salvin, MPH, PhD at the Forttuna Global Excellence Awards®, a gathering of visionaries, thinkers, and change-makers from around the world.

She wasn't just a speaker. She wasn't just an awardee. She was a presence, calm, wise, and quietly powerful.

That evening, she was named **Business Woman of the Year** in the Entertainment and Media category. But her story, the one behind the applause, is one that stayed with me.

She began her career as a **public health expert**, with degrees in health education and epidemiology. She worked in aerospace. Conducted cancer research. Lived a life rooted in science.

Until life intervened.

- A plane crash in 1981.
- A fire truck accident in 1982.
- A near-fatal car crash in 1984.

Each event chipped away at the rational shell she had built. Each near-death experience cracked open a new dimension.

She began to see. Feel. Know.

What followed was a transformation few could have predicted, from **Dr. Linda Salvin, MPH, PhD**, to **"The Original Radio Psychic."**

She didn't abandon science. She expanded it. She became a voice on KBIG-104 FM in Los Angeles, connecting with millions. Her talk show reached 350+ markets. Her words became comfort, her presence, a guide.

She launched **Wicks of Wisdom™**, a spiritual candle line rooted in energy, intention, and healing. She mentored others. She built a brand. She turned personal trauma into professional purpose.

And she didn't ask for anyone's permission.

That night in Dubai, she stood radiant not because of the award in her hand, but because of the journey behind her name.

> ***She didn't just survive. She listened. She evolved. She built her own light, and chose to share it.***

Her story is a reminder:

- 🔄 You can begin again, even after being broken.
- 🔥 There is strength in blending science with spirit.
- 💔 And sometimes, the greatest businesses are born from the most personal pain.

To me, **Dr. Linda Salvin** is not just an award-winning entrepreneur.

She is proof that **some souls rebuild not by fighting fate, but by finally trusting what it's trying to show them.**



Story 5: The Millionaire Who Started with a Comb and a Cause

👩🏿‍🦲 *Madam C.J. Walker, Building Beauty, Business, and a Movement*

Before she was a legend, she was **Sarah Breedlove**, The daughter of former slaves. Orphaned by 7. Widowed by 20. A washerwoman earning $1.50 a week.

She could have faded into the margins of history. But she didn't.

Instead, she picked up a comb, a mirror, and a dream.

Struggling with hair loss and scalp conditions, Sarah experimented with homemade remedies. Her own healing sparked something greater, a **vision for Black women** who had been overlooked, underestimated, and underserved.

She reintroduced herself to the world as: **Madam C.J. Walker.**

And what she built changed everything.

She didn't just create **hair products**. She created *possibility*.

- She designed formulas specifically for **Black women's needs**.
- She launched the **Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company**.
- She trained **thousands of women** as "Walker Agents," empowering them with jobs, dignity, and financial freedom.
- She established a **college** for "hair culturists" in Pittsburgh.
- She grew a national brand with **over 3,000 employees**.

But her story didn't end with business.

Walker became a powerful **philanthropist** and **civil rights advocate**, funding scholarships, donating to schools and orphanages, and standing beside the NAACP to fight against racial violence.

She once said:

> ***"There is no royal flower-strewn path to success. And if there is, I have not found it."***

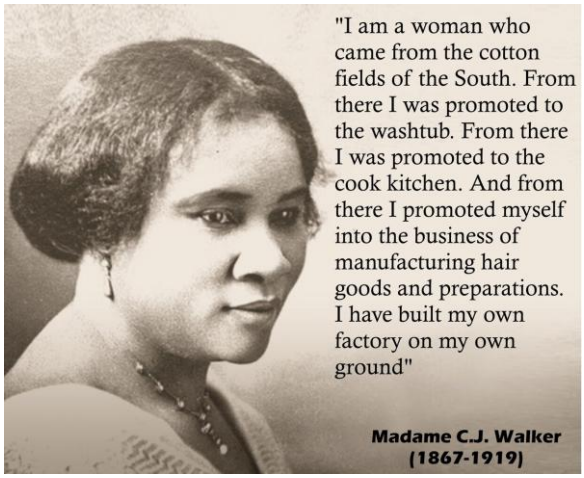
By the time of her death at just 51, **Madam C.J. Walker** was the **first female self-made millionaire in American history**.

But her true legacy?

- *She built an empire not just for profit, but for purpose.*
- *She gave Black women a place in the economy when the world gave them none.*
- *She turned oppression into opportunity and pain into power.*

She proved that greatness isn't inherited, it's earned. Often in silence. Often in hardship. Always in courage.

And for every woman who's been told she doesn't belong in the boardroom, the bank, or the business world, **Her name still answers back: "You do. You always did."**



Story 6: The Woman Who Cut Her Way Into History

Sara Blakely, From Rejections to a Billion-Dollar Brand

She didn't have investors. She didn't have experience. She didn't even have a business plan.

But what Sara Blakely did have was an idea. And just $5,000 in savings.

One night, getting ready to wear white pants, she cut the feet off her pantyhose to get smoother lines. That small act of frustration sparked a billion-dollar solution, **Spanx**.

Rejection Wasn't the End, It Was the Start

Hosiery mills shut their doors. Retailers brushed her off. But Sara *kept going.*

Finally, one mill owner said yes, thanks to his daughters, who saw what others didn't.

Her resilience wasn't luck. It was built at the dinner table.

> *Her father used to ask, **"What did you fail at this week?"** Not having an answer was the real disappointment.*

From that, Sara learned: **Failure is just proof that you're trying.**

The Breakthrough That Changed Everything

In 2000, Neiman Marcus placed a major order. Then, Oprah named Spanx one of her **Favourite Things**. The result?

- $4 million in sales in year one.
- $10 million in year two.
- A **global brand** that redefined comfort, confidence, and control.

But what makes Sara's story extraordinary isn't just the numbers.

A Business Built on Authenticity

She didn't use models, she used herself. Her "before and after" photos weren't polished, they were real.

She spent two years personally visiting stores, listening to customers, understanding the women she wanted to empower.

Sara didn't chase perfection. She embraced vulnerability. She believed success starts **in the mind**, not the market.

> *"Don't be afraid to embarrass yourself," she said. Because once you stop fearing embarrassment, you start chasing possibility.*

The Spanx Legacy

Sara Blakely didn't just reshape bodies. She reshaped *how women see themselves, and how they're seen.*

She launched the **Red Backpack Fund** to support women entrepreneurs during the 2020 economic crisis. She became one of the world's youngest female billionaires, yes, but she also became something even rarer:

A businesswoman who led with heart, humour, and humanity.

Her story is proof that:

- 💡 *You don't need millions to start, just the courage to begin.*
- 🚪 *Every "no" can still lead to one "yes" that changes everything.*
- 🍸 *Ideas don't need to be perfect, they just need to be planted.*

> ***Start small. Think big. Improve constantly. And never, ever let fear be the reason you don't begin.***



Photo Credit: LinkedIn Profile

Story 7: The Scientist Who Built an Empire in a Shed

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, India's Biotech Beacon

In 1978, a young Indian woman stood at the threshold of a rented shed with nothing but a modest investment, a head full of science, and a heart determined to prove she belonged.

Her name? **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.**Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

At a time when women were expected to follow tradition, not disrupt industries, she founded **Biocon**, a company that would go on to redefine the global landscape of biopharmaceuticals.

A Lab Coat in a Man's World

The biotech field was male-dominated. Investors were skeptical. Banks turned her down. Partners dismissed her as "too young," "too female," and "too ambitious."

But **Kiran didn't flinch.** She *formulated* answers. She *cultivated* resilience. She *engineered* her own path.

She began by producing industrial enzymes. She ended up leading the way in **oncology, diabetes, immunotherapy, and affordable insulin**.

In 2004, **Biocon went public**, achieving a **$1 billion valuation on Day One**, a historic milestone that stunned the business world.

More Than a Businesswoman

She wasn't just building profits, she was building access. She saw biotech not as a product, but as a **promise**, to make lifesaving medicine **affordable, accessible, and advanced**.

She transformed Biocon into one of Asia's largest biopharmaceutical firms, serving **millions**, not just shareholders.

Champion of Women, Research, and Impact

- As India's **first self-made female billionaire**, she shattered glass ceilings with grace.
- She created a culture of **innovation, research, and scientific curiosity** within Biocon.
- Through the **Biocon Foundation**, she gave back, through education, healthcare, and social upliftment.

Her leadership became a blueprint not just for entrepreneurs, but for change-makers.

She once said:

> ***"You must be the change agent, not just the beneficiary of change."***

And she lived those words, not through slogans, but through structure.

Why Her Story Matters

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw didn't inherit a legacy. She **engineered it**, cell by cell, step by step.

- She proved that **science and compassion** can co-exist.
- That **vision matters more than validation.**
- That a shed in Bangalore could become the launchpad for global healing.

> ***Her story is a formula for every underdog: Start small. Think deeper. Build boldly. And let your work speak before the world does.***



Story 8: The Mind That Rewrote Matter

Martine Rothblatt, From Satellites to Cures, From Self to Transcendence

Some people build businesses. Martine Rothblatt builds **futures**.

She's a **lawyer, scientist, entrepreneur, technologist, futurist, author, and activist**, But those are just chapters. Her true story is one of **transcendence**.

A Mind That Reached for the Stars

It began with **satellites**. As a young lawyer, Martine visited an air force base in the Seychelles and saw NASA's satellite technology in motion.

In that moment, she didn't just see wires and transmissions, She saw **connection. Unity. Possibility.**

That spark became **Sirius Satellite Radio**, which she co-founded in 1990. She revolutionised communication. She gave millions access to voices they'd never heard before.

But her greatest mission was still to come.

When Purpose Became Personal

In the 1990s, Martine came out as a **transgender woman**, during a time when acceptance was rare and understanding, even rarer.

She transitioned with grace, supported by her wife, Beverlee, who said:

> *"I love you for your soul, not your skin."*

Then came a crisis. Her daughter, Jenesis, was diagnosed with **pulmonary hypertension**, a rare and terminal illness.

Most would have grieved. Martine got to work.

She left Sirius. Founded **United Therapeutics**. And committed herself to **saving her daughter's life**, and thousands more.

She succeeded. As a real hero

Reimagining What's Possible

Martine and her team didn't just improve treatment, They developed an oral medication that **revolutionised the disease**.

She went further. Her company began pioneering **xenotransplantation**, using genetically modified animal organs in human transplants.

A pig-to-human heart transplant, once seen as science fiction, became science fact.

Leadership Without Limits

In 2013, Martine became the **highest-paid female CEO in the biotech industry**, earning $38 million.

But she remains humble about the title:

> *"I can't claim that what I've achieved is equivalent to what a woman has achieved. For the first half of my life, I was male."*

Still, her **impact is undeniable**:

- 🧬 Transformed biotech with a mother's urgency and a scientist's precision.
- 🌈 Became a **champion for transgender rights**.
- 📖 Authored *The Apartheid of Sex*, a groundbreaking call for gender freedom.
- 🚀 Advocated for **space exploration and digital consciousness**.

Her son once said:

> *"She's always been trying to transcend borders. Her transition was just part of that."*

A Mind Deeper Than Matter

Martine Rothblatt's story is a **blueprint for brave reinvention**. She proves that the **greatest revolutions** begin not with certainty, but with **curiosity**.

- 🚪 She opened new doors in medicine and identity.
- 🔭 She questioned what it means to be human, and answered with compassion.
- 💡 She became a mirror to possibility: "Any body can take you anywhere."

> ***Her mantra? "Mind is deeper than matter." And when the mind believes, Matter moves.***



Story 9: The Prince Who Opened His Palace, and His Truth

👑 *Manvendra Singh Gohil, From Royal Legacy to Rainbow Revolution*

Some people inherit palaces. Few use them to shelter the disowned. But **Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil** the world's first openly gay royal, is no ordinary prince.

I have known **Manvendra** personally for over **30 years**. Our friendship has been one of admiration, shared advocacy, and a deep commitment to human dignity. Recently, I had the

profound honour of recording an interview with him for my upcoming show, **Salaam E Zindagi (Hello Life)**, which will soon be available on my **YouTube channel**[@SukhSandhu.](youtube.com/sukhsandhu)

But to understand why this conversation matters, you need to know the story behind the crown.

Born Royal, Raised in Silence

Born in 1965 into the **Gohil Rajput dynasty** of Rajpipla, Gujarat, Manvendra was destined for honour, tradition, and public service.

But behind the grandeur of the **Rajvant Palace**, he harboured a truth he couldn't speak.

At **age 12**, he realised he was gay. In a society that didn't even have a word for it, he grew up feeling isolated and ashamed, groomed to marry, rule, and conform.

At **25**, he entered an arranged marriage. Within a year, it ended. His wife, in a moment of painful clarity, urged him:

> ***"Don't ruin another woman's life."***

Out of Shadows, Into Fire

In 2006, at **age 41**, Manvendra did something no one in his lineage had ever done, He came out. Publicly. In a Gujarati newspaper. As India's **first openly gay prince**.

The backlash was immediate.

- Protesters burned his effigy during Holi.
- His parents disowned him in the papers.
- The people cried shame.

But **he did not bend**.

> *"I wanted to show that even high-society people could be gay."*

He had already endured **conversion therapy**, including electroshock and proposed brain surgery. What else could they do? He had survived.

A Palace for the Disowned

In 2000, even before coming out, he founded the **Lakshya Trust** to support MSM (men who have sex with men) in Gujarat, offering HIV care, legal support, and community.

In 2018, after **India struck down Section 377**, Manvendra transformed his **15-acre palace** into a **safe haven for LGBTQ+ people** who had been cast out by their families.

> *Housing. Vocational training. Medical care. A new kind of royalty, one that heals.*

That same year, he launched **South Asia's first LGBTQ+ academic module** at Karnavati University.

Truth, Love, and Legacy

In 2013, Manvendra married **DeAndre Richardson**, an American, making their union a statement of love *and* resistance in a country where same-sex love was still illegal.

Together, they advocate for marriage equality and adoption rights, pushing boundaries with grace.

Today, Prince Manvendra is a **global icon**, Seen on Oprah, TED Talks, and Pride stages around the world.

But more than the headlines, what stays with me is his **heart**.

- 💔 A man disowned by his own family…
- 💡 Who became family to so many who had none.
- 🏰 Who opened his palace not for parties, but for *healing*.

"Gay rights must be won not just in courtrooms, but in the hearts of people."

A Personal Reflection

As I sat across from Manvendra during our interview, I saw not just a prince… But a **pioneer**. A survivor. A symbol of **what it means to live your truth, even when it costs everything**.

His journey reminds us:

- That **courage is contagious**.
- That **legacy is what you build for others, not just what you inherit**.
- That **freedom doesn't come from bloodlines, but from truth-telling**.

He may be royal by birth. But he is revolutionary by choice.



Story 10: The Man Who Gambled With Fate, and Won

📺 *Len Ainsworth, From Poverty and Illness to Power and Provocation*

In the **gritty suburbs of Sydney**, far from glitter and gold, a boy named **Leonard Ainsworth** was born in 1923.

He was the son of a dental technician. The Great Depression was his childhood. Hunger was his teacher. And **survival** became his driving force.

At **14**, he left school to support his family. At **30**, with a $500 loan and a dream, he founded **Aristocrat Leisure**, the company that would make him a billionaire.

But the machines he built weren't cars or radios. They were **poker machines**. Or as Australians call them, **pokies**.

And Len Ainsworth would become known as their king.

A Life Built on Grit

Len tried it all: clerk, milkman, postman, factory worker. But it was in his father's dental supply business that he found his knack for mechanics.

That led him to **slot machines**, a tiny, uncertain industry at the time.

With his own hands, he built machines in a cramped Sydney workshop. He lived lean. Seven children, no holidays. Just work, ambition, and the constant hum of gears and gamble.

The Rise of Aristocrat

By the 1960s, the "**Clubman**" machine became a sensation. By the 1970s, **Aristocrat** dominated Australia's gambling scene.

But Len paid a steep price:

- A **failed marriage** under the strain of relentless hustle
- **Two battles with cancer**, stomach and prostate
- Public criticism for creating machines that fed addiction

Yet through it all, he **refused to quit**.

> *"Life's a gamble," he once said. "You play the hand you're dealt."*

When family tensions pushed him out of Aristocrat in 1994, most assumed it was the end.

It wasn't.

The Second Act No One Saw Coming

In 1995, at age **72**, Len started over.

Ainsworth Game Technology was born, his second pokies empire.

This time, the machines were **digital**, **microprocessor-based**, and even more addictive.

His fortune grew again. So did the backlash.

A Divided Legacy

Critics like **Tim Costello** called Len's inventions **destructive**. Communities in **Western Sydney** saw his name not as philanthropy, but as pain.

Artist **Nelson Nghe**, whose childhood was scarred by family gambling, was horrified when the **Art Gallery of NSW** named a hall after Ainsworth for his $10 million donation.

> *"That name caged me," Nghe said.*

And yet…

Len gave away **millions** to medicine, science, and art. He pledged to donate **half his fortune**. He funded **cancer research**, cultural institutions, and education.

Was it redemption? Reparation? Or simply a final act of impact?

That question still lingers.

A Man of Contradictions

Len Ainsworth made enemies. Made machines. Made billions. And made it, again and again, when the world thought he wouldn't.

At **101**, his net worth reached **$5.85 billion**. His name is on hospitals and galleries. But also whispered in rehab centres and anti-gambling campaigns.

He remains **Australia's most controversial billionaire**. Not because he failed. But because his **success changed lives, for better and worse.**

Why This Story Matters

Because it doesn't fit in a neat box. Because **heroism and harm** can co-exist in one life. Because resilience is not always noble. And impact, not always pure.

Len Ainsworth's legacy may divide us.

But his journey reminds us:

> ***Not all power looks perfect. Not all wealth is guilt-free. And not all success stories come without shadows.***

But still, they are stories worth telling.

Until Next Week...

Thank you for walking through these lives with me.

Each of these stories, whether whispered in a metro, carved in a palace, or built in a shed, is proof that the human spirit is endlessly inventive, defiant, and full of grace.

They remind us that greatness doesn't always shout. Sometimes, it shows up quietly, in a quiet act of truth, a small decision to try again, or a refusal to accept things as they are.

I hope these lives made you pause. Reflect. Maybe even look at your own story a little differently.

Because you don't have to be royal, rich, or revolutionary to matter. You just have to be real. And keep showing up.

📝 **More stories are coming next week**, more unsung heroes, deep truths, and moments of magic we often miss in the noise.

Until then, keep reading, keep wondering, and most of all… keep listening to the letters your own heart is writing.

With respect and storytelling love,

Sukh Sandhu

Letters of the Heart

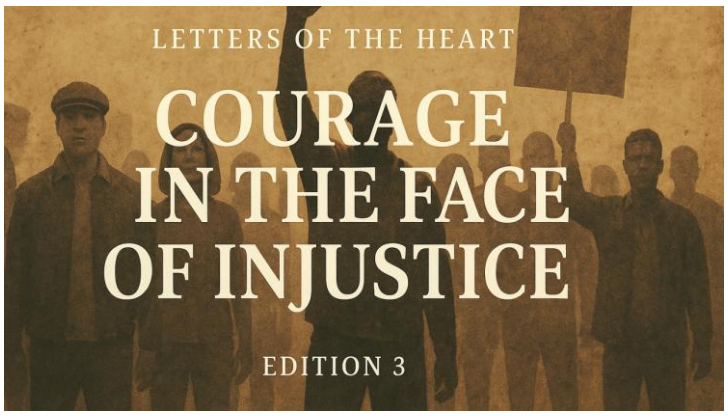
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LETTERS OF THE HEART

Edition 3: Courage in the Face of Injustice

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 23 May 2025

In this third edition of Letters of the Heart, we witness something extraordinary: ten souls separated by centuries, continents, and circumstances, yet united by an unbreakable thread: the refusal to let injustice have the final word.



From Sophie Scholl's defiant leaflets scattered in a Nazi university to Malala's pen raised against Taliban darkness, from Harriet Tubman's nineteen journeys to freedom to Liu Xiaobo's empty Nobel chair, we see courage wearing a thousand different faces but speaking with one voice. Each story whispers the same eternal truth: ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things when they choose principle over comfort, truth over safety, and love over hatred.

What strikes us most profoundly is not the magnitude of their individual achievements, but the pattern that emerges when their lives are viewed together. These ten souls teach us that courage is not the absence of fear, it is the decision to act despite fear. They show us that justice delayed is not justice denied when there are voices willing to keep crying out across the generations.

Gandhi's spinning wheel and Mandela's twenty-seven years in prison, Anne Frank's hidden diary and Grace Tame's legal battle, Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Declaration and John Lilburne's "freeborn rights", each represents a thread in the great tapestry of human dignity being woven across time. They remind us that the arc of history bends towards justice, not automatically, but only when people like these, and like us, are willing to help bend it.

Their final words echo across time with haunting power: Sophie's certainty that her death would awaken thousands, Gandhi's prayer "Ram! Ram!" as bullets found their mark, Liu Xiaobo's gentle command to "Live on well," and Lilburne's confident surrender of his soul to the Almighty. These were not endings but beginnings, seeds planted in the soil of sacrifice that continue to bloom in every generation that refuses to be silent.

Perhaps their greatest gift to us is this: they prove that the human spirit, when anchored to truth and animated by love, becomes truly indestructible. Prisons could not contain it, bullets could not stop it, laws could not silence it, and death could not defeat it.

In our own age of challenges and choices, their voices call to us still: Stand up. Speak out. Choose courage. For in the end, we are all part of the same eternal story, the story of humanity's long, slow march toward justice, carried forward by those brave enough to take the next step, even when they cannot see the destination.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

May we choose to stand with them.

Sukh Sandhu

1. Sophie Scholl (1921-1943)



The White Rose That Bloomed in Darkness

Sophie Scholl was a German student and anti-Nazi activist who transformed from a member of the League of German Girls into one of history's most courageous resistance fighters. Born on May 9, 1921, in Forchtenberg, Germany, Sophie's awakening came after witnessing Nazi injustices and her father's imprisonment for opposing Hitler.

At the University of Munich, Sophie joined the White Rose, a student resistance group advocating nonviolent opposition through anti-Nazi leaflets. On February 18, 1943, while distributing these leaflets with her brother Hans, Sophie made a spontaneous decision that would seal their fate, she threw the remaining pamphlets from the university's top floor into the atrium below, where a Nazi janitor witnessed the act.

During their swift trial, as the judge condemned their actions, Sophie courageously declared: **"Somebody had to make a start! What we said and wrote are what many people are thinking. They just don't dare say it out loud!"**

On February 22, 1943, at just 21 years old, Sophie was executed by guillotine. Her final words remain a testament to her unwavering spirit: *"How can we expect righteousness to prevail when there is hardly anyone willing to give himself up individually to a righteous cause? Such a fine sunny day, and I have to go, but what does my death matter, if through us thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?"*

2. Harriet Tubman (1822-1913)



The Moses of Her People

Born into slavery, Harriet Tubman escaped to freedom in 1849 but refused to enjoy liberty while others remained in bondage. She became the most famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, making 19 trips back to the South and leading approximately 70 enslaved people to freedom, never losing a single person.

Tubman's courage extended beyond rescue missions. During the Civil War, she served as a spy, scout, and nurse for the Union Army. She also led the Combahee River Raid, which freed more than 700 enslaved people in a single operation. She became known as the "Moses of her people" for her leadership and bravery. After the war, she was active in the women's suffrage movement and established a home for elderly African Americans in Auburn, New York.

Despite constant threats on her life and a bounty on her head, Tubman never wavered in her mission. Her faith sustained her through countless dangers, and she often said, *"I never ran my train off the track, and I never lost a passenger."*

Tubman's faith, determination, and vision for freedom are reflected in her many other powerful statements:

"If you hear the dogs, keep going. If you see the torches in the woods, keep going. If there's shouting after you, keep going. Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going."

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

"There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other, for no man should take me alive."

"When I found I had crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven."

"Slavery is the next thing to hell."

"I said to the Lord, I'm going to hold steady on to you, and I know you will see me through."

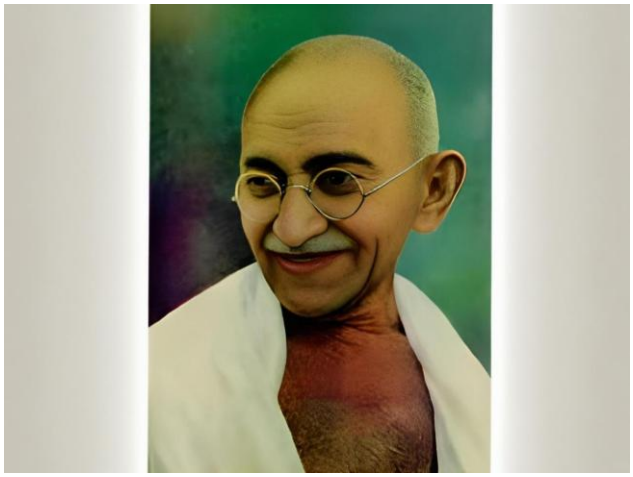
"I have heard their groans and sighs, and seen their tears, and I would give every drop of blood in my veins to free them."

Legacy

Despite the constant threat of capture and a bounty on her head, Tubman's missions were always successful; she never lost a single passenger. Her courage, ingenuity, and unwavering commitment to justice made her a legend in her own time and a lasting symbol of resistance

and hope. Harriet Tubman's life and words continue to inspire those who seek freedom, justice, and equality.

3. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)



The Father of Nonviolent Resistance

In the annals of human history, few souls have demonstrated such unwavering commitment to justice through love rather than hatred, through peace rather than war. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known to the world as Mahatma, meaning "great soul", transformed not only a nation but the very understanding of how the powerless can triumph over the powerful.

Gandhi's journey toward becoming the conscience of humanity began in the most unlikely of places: a first-class train compartment in South Africa in 1893. Despite holding a valid ticket, the young lawyer was thrown off the train simply because of his skin color. Shivering on that cold platform in Pietermaritzburg, Gandhi made a decision that would echo through eternity: he would fight discrimination, but he would do so without becoming the very thing he opposed.

It was there, in the crucible of personal humiliation and systemic injustice, that Gandhi forged his philosophy of *satyagraha*, the force of truth expressed through nonviolent resistance. This wasn't passive submission but active, courageous confrontation with evil through the power of moral force.

When Gandhi returned to India, he brought with him a revolutionary idea: that the oppressed could free themselves not by becoming oppressors, but by appealing to the humanity within their oppressors. Through the iconic Salt March of 1930, where he walked 240 miles to the sea to make salt in defiance of British law, Gandhi showed the world that sometimes the most powerful act of rebellion is the simplest act of conscience.

But perhaps Gandhi's greatest courage lay not in his public acts of defiance, but in his private moments of doubt and determination. When fellow train passengers mocked him for cleaning filthy compartments, throwing coins at his feet in derision, Gandhi absorbed their scorn and continued his work. *"I shall be content if I could die as a sweeper, serving others,"* he said, understanding that true leadership begins with humble service.

His vision transcended politics; it embraced the unity of all faiths and peoples. In his prayer meetings, Gandhi read from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and other scriptures, declaring with profound conviction**, "**I am a Hindu, I am a Muslim, I am a Jew, I am a Christian..." This radical inclusivity, this insistence on the universal brotherhood of humanity, made him enemies among extremists of all faiths.

The man who proclaimed that *"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed"* lived his philosophy. He spun his own cloth, ate simple food, and owned

virtually nothing. He demonstrated that the most powerful weapon against materialism and hatred is a life lived in service to others.

Gandhi's methods, fasting, peaceful marches, boycotts, and civil disobedience- proved that *"the force generated by nonviolence is infinitely greater than the force of all the arms created by man's ingenuity."* His approach inspired liberation movements across the globe, from Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight for civil rights in America to Nelson Mandela's struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

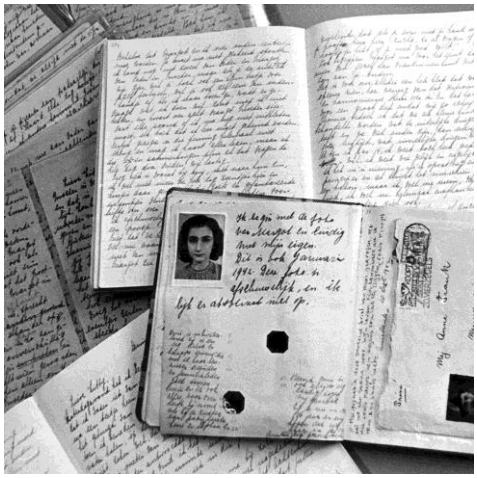
On January 30, 1948, as Gandhi walked to his evening prayer meeting, as he had done countless times before, three bullets ended his earthly journey. But even in that moment of violence, his response was one of forgiveness. His last words, *"Ram! Ram!"* (Oh God!), were not a cry of pain but a prayer of surrender, embodying his lifelong belief that even death could not defeat love.

The assassin, a Hindu nationalist who could not accept Gandhi's message of religious unity, thought he was silencing a voice. Instead, he immortalised it. Gandhi had long prophesied his own fate, saying, *"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it, always."*

Gandhi's legacy is not merely political, it is profoundly spiritual. He proved that *"our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world, but to change ourselves,"* and that when we change ourselves, we inevitably change the world. His life embodied his most famous teaching: *"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."*

Today, when the world seems torn apart by hatred, violence, and division, Gandhi's message burns brighter than ever. He showed us that the weak can forgive, that love can conquer hate, and that one person armed with nothing but truth and moral courage can move mountains. His life remains our eternal reminder that *"nonviolence is a weapon of the strong,"* and that the greatest victories are won not on battlefields, but in the human heart.

4. Anne Frank (1929-1945)



The Voice That Lives Forever

In the suffocating darkness of a hidden attic, where sunlight was rationed and silence was survival, a thirteen-year-old girl picked up her pen and changed the world forever. Anne Frank's diary, begun as a birthday gift and transformed into humanity's most powerful testament against hatred, proves that even in the deepest darkness, the human spirit can illuminate the path toward hope.

Anne's story began not with hiding, but with dreaming. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, she was a spirited, curious child whose laughter could fill a room. When her family fled to Amsterdam in

1933 to escape Nazi persecution, Anne embraced her new life with characteristic optimism. She attended school, made friends, and harbored dreams of becoming a famous writer. Little did she know that her greatest wish would come true in the most unimaginable way.

On July 6, 1942, when Anne was just thirteen, the Frank family disappeared into the secret annex behind her father's office building. For twenty-five months, eight people lived in cramped quarters, their very existence dependent on absolute silence during daylight hours. In this pressure cooker of fear and confinement, where the slightest sound could mean death, Anne found her voice.

Her diary became more than a record of daily life, it became a masterpiece of human resilience. With remarkable wisdom that belied her years, Anne wrote: *"Paper is more patient than man."* To her diary, which she named Kitty, she confided her deepest thoughts, her fears, her first love, and most remarkably, her unwavering faith in human goodness.

What makes Anne Frank's words so extraordinary is not just their eloquence, but their context. While bombs fell around Amsterdam and families were torn apart by deportations, while the very air she breathed was thick with terror, Anne chose hope over despair. She wrote: *"I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains."* This wasn't naive optimism, it was conscious, deliberate courage.

Anne's growth during those hidden years was phenomenal. She evolved from a giggly teenager into a profound philosopher of human nature. She observed herself with startling clarity: *"I can watch myself and my actions, just like an outsider... The Anne of every day I can face entirely without prejudice, without making excuses for her, and watch what's good and what's bad about her."* This self-awareness, developed in the crucible of extraordinary circumstances, produced insights that continue to guide humanity decades later.

Her most famous declaration, *"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart"*, was not written in comfort but in the very teeth of evil. When the world seemed determined to prove her wrong, when everything around her testified to human cruelty, Anne chose to believe in human goodness. This was not innocence; it was heroism of the highest order.

Anne understood the power of individual action: *"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."* She recognized that even in her confined circumstances, she could make a difference through her words, her choices, her refusal to let hatred poison her heart. *"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news,"* she wrote. *"The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"*

Her dreams reached beyond survival to significance: *"I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death!"* These words, written by a girl who had no way of knowing whether she would live to see another birthday, reveal a soul focused not on self-preservation but on service to others.

Even in her darkest moments, Anne found light. *"I've found that there is always some beauty left, in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you."* When she glimpsed the sky through her tiny window, she wrote: *"As long as this exists, this sunshine and this cloudless sky, and as long as I can enjoy it, how can I be sad?"*

On August 4, 1944, Dutch police, acting on a tip from an informant who was never identified, discovered the secret annex. Anne, her family, and their companions were arrested and deported to concentration camps. Anne died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen in early 1945, just weeks before the camp's liberation. She was only fifteen years old.

But Anne's prophecy came true, she did live on after her death. Her father Otto, the only survivor from the annex, fulfilled his daughter's dreams by publishing her diary. Anne's voice,

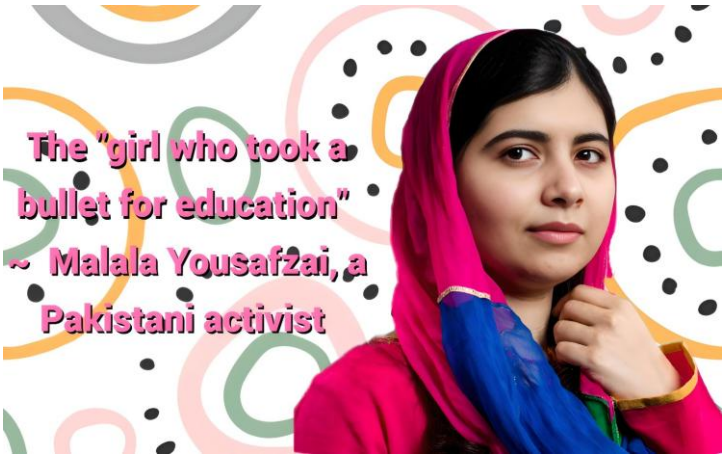
silenced by hatred, became louder than ever. Her words have been translated into more than 70 languages and have touched millions of hearts across the globe.

Anne Frank's legacy transcends her tragic death. Through her diary, she achieved immortality not as a victim, but as a teacher. She showed us that circumstances cannot crush the human spirit unless we allow them to. Her life reminds us that *"Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness."*

In a world still torn by prejudice and hatred, Anne's words continue to whisper hope into our darkness: *"Where there's hope, there's life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again."* Her gentle spirit proved that *"In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit."*

Anne Frank's story is not ultimately about the Holocaust, it is about the triumph of hope over hatred, of love over fear, of one girl's unshakeable belief that tomorrow could be better than today. Her diary stands as humanity's eternal reminder that even in our darkest hours, we can choose to be the light.

5. Malala Yousafzai (1997-)



The Girl Who Stood Up for Education

In the verdant Swat Valley of Pakistan, where cherry blossoms once danced in mountain breezes and children's laughter echoed through ancient streets, a eleven-year-old girl named Malala Yousafzai picked up her pen and declared war, not with bullets, but with words. Her weapon of choice was education. Her battlefield was a blog. Her enemy was ignorance itself.

Malala's story began in a place where education was treasured like precious jewels. Her father, Ziauddin, ran a school and filled their home with books and dreams. In their family, learning was not just encouraged, it was sacred. Malala grew up believing that every child deserved the same gift her father had given her: the power to read, to think, to question, to dream.

But paradise was shattered when the Taliban swept into Swat Valley like a dark storm, bringing with them a medieval interpretation of the world that had no place for girls in classrooms. Schools were bombed. Teachers were threatened. Young girls were forbidden from seeking education under penalty of death. The Valley that had once celebrated learning became a place where knowledge was contraband.

Most would have cowered in fear. Most would have accepted this new reality in silence. But Malala was not most people. At just eleven years old, she began writing a blog for BBC Urdu under a pseudonym, documenting life under Taliban rule and her hunger for education. Her words were simple but powerful: *"I had a terrible dream yesterday with military helicopters and the Taliban. I have had such dreams since the launch of the military operation in Swat. My*

mother made me breakfast and I went off to school. I was afraid going to school because the Taliban had issued an edict banning all girls from attending schools."

As the situation worsened and schools were forced to close, Malala's voice grew stronger. She understood something that her oppressors feared: *"The extremists are afraid of books and pens, the power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women."* This fifteen-year-old girl had identified the source of their terror, educated women represent the death of ignorance, the end of blind obedience, the birth of free thinking.

Malala began speaking publicly, giving interviews, and advocating for girls' education with a courage that belied her years. She became a symbol of resistance, proving that *"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."* Her message was revolutionary in its simplicity: education is not a privilege to be granted by men, it is a fundamental human right.

On October 9, 2012, as Malala rode the school bus home after taking an exam, her courage met its ultimate test. A Taliban gunman boarded the bus, asked "Who is Malala?" and shot her in the head. The world held its breath as this brave young woman fought for her life in a hospital bed, the victim of men who believed that silencing one girl could silence a movement.

But they had gravely miscalculated. As Malala herself would later say: *"We realize the importance of our voices only when we are silenced."* The attempt to silence her only amplified her message. The bullet that was meant to stop her instead became the starting gun for a global movement.

During her recovery, Malala displayed a forgiveness that stunned the world: *"I do not even hate the Talib who shot me. Even if there is a gun in my hand and he stands in front of me, I would not shoot him."* This wasn't weakness, it was strength beyond measure. She understood that hatred would make her no different from her attackers. *"With guns you can kill terrorists, with education you can kill terrorism."*

Malala's near-death experience only strengthened her resolve. She refused to be defined by what happened to her, declaring: *"I don't want to be thought of as the 'girl who was shot by the Taliban' but the 'girl who fought for education.' This is the cause to which I want to devote my life."*

When she addressed the United Nations on her sixteenth birthday, less than a year after being shot, Malala delivered words that will echo through history: *"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."* Standing before world leaders, this teenager who had stared death in the face proclaimed: *"Let us pick up our books and our pens. They are the most powerful weapons."*

Her message transcended her personal experience: *"I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not. It is the story of many girls."* Malala understood that her voice carried the dreams of millions of girls who had been denied the simple right to learn. *"I raise up my voice, not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard."*

In 2014, at just seventeen years old, Malala became the youngest Nobel Prize laureate in history, proving that age is no barrier to world-changing impact. But for Malala, the prize was never the point, the cause was everything. *"We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back,"* she reminded the world, articulating the simple truth that society fails when it fails its daughters.

Malala's courage came not from fearlessness, but from something far more powerful, purpose. *"We were scared, but our fear was not as strong as our courage."* She understood that *"At night our fear is strong... but in the morning, in the light, we find our courage again."*

Her vision extends far beyond her own experience: *"Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country, this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world."* This is not just hope, it's a call to action, a reminder that *"If one man can destroy everything, why can't one girl change it?"*

Today, Malala continues her fight as a student at Oxford University and through the Malala Fund, working to ensure that every girl has access to twelve years of free, safe, quality education. Her life proves that sometimes the most powerful revolution begins not with violence, but with a young person picking up a pen and refusing to be silent.

Malala Yousafzai's story is ultimately about the triumph of courage over fear, of hope over hatred, of education over extremism. She showed the world that *"There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women."*

Her legacy reminds us all: *"Let us make our future now, and let us make our dreams tomorrow's reality."* In a world still struggling with inequality and injustice, Malala's voice continues to ring out like a clarion call: the future belongs to those brave enough to educate themselves and generous enough to educate others.

6. Grace Tame (1994-)



The Voice That Broke the Silence

In the pristine wilderness of Tasmania, where ancient forests whisper secrets and the Southern Ocean crashes against untamed shores, a young woman named Grace Tame discovered that sometimes the most dangerous predators hide behind the most trusted faces. Her story is not just one of survival, it is a testament to the transformative power of refusing to be silenced, even when the law itself demands your silence.

Grace's nightmare began in the classroom, a place that should have been safe, sacred, a sanctuary for learning and growth. Instead, it became the scene of unspeakable betrayal when her teacher, a man entrusted with her education and wellbeing, became her abuser. For a teenage Grace, the trauma was devastating enough, but what followed was a second violation that would prove almost as destructive as the first: the law's cruel insistence that she remain silent.

Australia's archaic gag laws meant that while her abuser was free to speak publicly, even profit from his story, Grace was legally forbidden from identifying herself as a survivor. The very legal system meant to protect her had become her jailer, trapping her in a prison of enforced silence while her abuser walked free to tell his version of events. The injustice was staggering, the perpetrator had a voice, but the survivor did not.

For years, Grace lived with this suffocating contradiction. She watched as her abuser enjoyed public sympathy, speaking at conferences and even writing about his "redemption," while she was threatened with prosecution if she dared to speak her truth. The message was clear and crushing: his story mattered, but hers did not. His voice deserved protection, but hers deserved silencing.

But Grace Tame possessed something that the lawmakers hadn't counted on, an unbreakable spirit and an absolute refusal to accept injustice as inevitable. She understood a fundamental truth that would drive her crusade: *"Laws are meant to protect, not silence."* If the law was protecting perpetrators while silencing survivors, then the law itself was the enemy of justice.

Grace became the face of the #LetHerSpeak campaign, transforming her personal pain into a public mission. This wasn't easy, standing up to entrenched legal systems, facing public scrutiny, reliving trauma in courtrooms and media interviews. There were moments when her courage wavered, when the weight of the fight seemed unbearable. But Grace had learned a truth that sustained her: *"Speak up, even if your voice shakes."*

The battle was long and grueling. Grace faced skeptics who questioned her motives, legal obstacles that seemed insurmountable, and the constant pressure of being a public figure while processing private trauma. But she also discovered something powerful: she was not alone. Her courage inspired other survivors to join the fight, and she learned that *"History, lived experience, and evidence show that the power of the collective is mighty."*

In 2019, after years of relentless advocacy, the impossible happened, the law changed. Grace Tame became the first woman in Tasmania to speak publicly under her real name about surviving sexual assault as a minor. The moment she could finally say "My name is Grace Tame, and this is my story" was not just personal vindication, it was a victory for every survivor who had been forced into silence.

But Grace's vision extended far beyond her own case. She understood that changing one law in one state was just the beginning. Using her newfound freedom, she launched a national campaign to reform laws across Australia, to shift cultural attitudes about consent and abuse, and to ensure that survivors everywhere could reclaim their voices and their stories.

Grace's message to fellow survivors was revolutionary in its simplicity and power: *"You don't need to be a saint to be a survivor. You just need to keep going."* She rejected the notion that survivors had to be perfect victims to deserve justice, that they had to be constantly strong to merit support. Her authenticity, speaking about her struggles, her anger, her imperfections, made her more relatable and her message more powerful.

In 2021, Grace was named Australian of the Year, a recognition that gave her an even larger platform for change. But she refused to let the honor silence her edge or soften her message. Instead, she used every speech, every interview, every public appearance to demand accountability from institutions and individuals alike. She called out hypocrisy, challenged comfortable assumptions, and never let anyone forget that behind every statistic about sexual abuse was a human being deserving of justice.

Grace's approach to advocacy was fearless and uncompromising. She understood that real change required more than polite requests, it demanded uncomfortable conversations, difficult truths, and the courage to make powerful people squirm. She called out politicians who offered thoughts and prayers but refused to enact meaningful reforms. She challenged institutions that protected their reputations more fiercely than they protected children.

Her message to survivors was both tender and empowering: *"Share your truth. Your story matters. You matter."* Grace understood that healing comes not just from being heard, but from being believed, supported, and valued. She created space for others to speak by speaking first, to heal by healing publicly, to transform pain into purpose.

Grace Tame's impact extends far beyond legal reform. She has fundamentally changed how Australia talks about sexual abuse, consent, and survivor rights. She has shown that one person's refusal to be silenced can break open conversations that a nation needed to have but was too uncomfortable to start.

Her legacy is not just in the laws she changed or the awareness she raised, but in the countless survivors who found their voices because she found hers first. She proved that the most powerful weapon against injustice is often the simple act of refusing to be quiet about it.

Grace Tame's story continues to unfold, her voice continues to ring out across Australia and beyond, reminding us all that courage is contagious, that truth has power, and that sometimes the most important thing we can do is simply refuse to let others silence our stories. In a world that still too often prioritizes institutional comfort over individual justice, Grace Tame stands as a beacon of hope and a reminder that change is possible, but only if we're brave enough to demand it.

7. Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)



The First Lady of Human Rights

Born into privilege in 1884, Eleanor Roosevelt transformed personal adversity into a lifelong mission for social reform. During her tenure as First Lady of the United States (1933 to 1945), she broke precedent by actively engaging in political, social, and racial issues. She held press conferences, wrote a daily newspaper column, and advocated for the rights of women, minorities, and the underprivileged.

One of her most notable acts of defiance against racial discrimination occurred in 1939 when the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to allow African American singer Marian Anderson to perform at Constitution Hall. In protest, Roosevelt resigned from the DAR and arranged for Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial, drawing a crowd of 75,000 and making a powerful statement against segregation .

After President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, Eleanor continued her public service on the global stage. In 1946, she was appointed as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly and became the first chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights. In this role, she was instrumental in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted on December 10, 1948. She referred to the UDHR as the "international Magna Carta of all men everywhere," emphasizing its significance in affirming the inherent dignity and equal rights of all human beings .

Eleanor Roosevelt's eloquence and moral clarity resonate through her enduring quotes:

- "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home... Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination."
- "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
- "Do what you feel in your heart to be right, for you'll be criticised anyway."

These words continue to inspire individuals to stand up for justice and equality in their communities and beyond.

Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy extends to Australia, where her advocacy for human rights has influenced national policies and inspired generations of activists. Her work laid the groundwork for Australia's ongoing commitment to upholding human rights and promoting social justice.

Eleanor Roosevelt's life exemplifies the profound impact one individual can have in championing human rights and dignity. Her courage, compassion, and unwavering dedication serve as a beacon for all who strive to make the world a more just and equitable place.

8. Liu Xiaobo (1955-2017)



The Prisoner of Conscience Who Refused to Hate

In the vast expanse of modern China, where ancient wisdom meets contemporary struggle, one man dared to dream of a different future, a future where freedom would flourish alongside prosperity, where democracy would dance with dignity, where the human spirit would soar unshackled. Liu Xiaobo, a literary critic turned democracy advocate, paid the ultimate price for this dream, but his legacy burns brighter than any prison cell could ever contain.

Liu's journey toward becoming one of the world's most revered prisoners of conscience began not in politics, but in literature and philosophy. As a professor and critic, he wielded words like weapons against conformity, challenging established thinking and encouraging intellectual freedom. But Liu could not remain in the ivory tower when history called him to the streets.

In the spring of 1989, when students filled Tiananmen Square with songs of freedom and dreams of democracy, Liu made a choice that would define the rest of his life. He was abroad, safe from the gathering storm, but he chose to return to China to stand with the protesters. This wasn't political opportunism, it was moral conviction. Liu understood that freedom demanded sacrifice, and he was willing to pay the price.

As the situation in Tiananmen Square grew increasingly dangerous, Liu played a crucial role in negotiating a peaceful withdrawal of students from the square, likely saving countless lives. While others fled or fell silent, Liu stood firm, becoming a bridge between the protesters and authorities, choosing dialogue over destruction even as the government prepared to crush the movement with tanks and bullets.

The aftermath was swift and merciless. Liu was detained, imprisoned, and marked as an enemy of the state. But imprisonment could not imprison his ideas. Upon his release, Liu continued his advocacy with even greater determination, understanding that true change required persistence, not just passion.

Liu's greatest act of courage came in 2008 when he co-authored Charter 08, a manifesto calling for political reform, constitutional democracy, and greater human rights in China. The document, signed by thousands of intellectuals and activists, was a direct challenge to one-party rule, a challenge the government could not ignore.

In 2009, Liu was sentenced to eleven years in prison for "subversion", the crime of peacefully expressing his views and advocating for democratic reforms. The sentence was harsh, designed to break his spirit and silence his voice. Instead, it amplified his message around the world.

In 2010, while Liu sat in a prison cell, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded him the Peace Prize for his "long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China." He became the first Chinese citizen to receive the Nobel while living in China, but the empty chair at the ceremony spoke louder than any acceptance speech could have.

What made Liu Xiaobo extraordinary was not just his courage, but his refusal to let suffering poison his soul with hatred. In his most famous statement, delivered before his sentencing, Liu declared words that would echo through history:

"I have no enemies and no hatred. None of the police who monitored, arrested, and interrogated me, none of the prosecutors who indicted me, and none of the judges who judged me are my enemies... I hope to be able to transcend my personal experiences as I look upon our nation's development and social change, to counter the regime's hostility with utmost goodwill, and to dispel hatred with love."

This was not naive optimism, it was revolutionary wisdom. Liu understood that hatred would make him no different from those who oppressed him. By refusing to hate, he retained his humanity and demonstrated the moral superiority of his cause.

Liu's vision extended far beyond his personal circumstances. He believed deeply that *"Freedom of expression is the foundation of human rights, the source of humanity, and the mother of truth. To strangle freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, stifle humanity, and suppress truth."* This wasn't abstract philosophy, it was lived experience, the hard-won wisdom of a man who had seen how silence enables oppression.

Even in the darkest moments of his imprisonment, Liu maintained unshakeable faith in the future: *"For there is no force that can put an end to the human quest for freedom, and China will in the end become a nation ruled by law, where human rights reign supreme."* His optimism wasn't based on naive hope but on deep understanding of human nature and historical progress.

Liu's love for his wife, Liu Xia, sustained him through years of separation and hardship. In letters that became literature, he wrote: *"Your love is the sunlight that leaps over high walls and penetrates the iron bars of my prison window, stroking every inch of my skin, warming every cell of my body, allowing me to always keep peace, openness, and brightness in my heart, and filling every minute of my time in prison with meaning."*

These words reveal the secret of Liu's strength, love was stronger than hate, hope more powerful than despair, connection more enduring than isolation. The authorities could imprison his body, but they could never imprison his capacity to love and be loved.

In 2017, after serving eight years of his eleven-year sentence, Liu was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer. The government moved him from prison to a hospital but refused his request to seek treatment abroad. Even in his final weeks, Liu was denied basic human dignity, held under guard while fighting for his life.

On July 13, 2017, surrounded by his beloved wife Liu Xia and family, Liu Xiaobo spoke his final words: *"Live on well."* These simple words, spoken to his wife with his dying breath, encapsulated everything Liu stood for, the belief that life has meaning, that love endures, that the struggle for freedom must continue even when individual fighters fall.

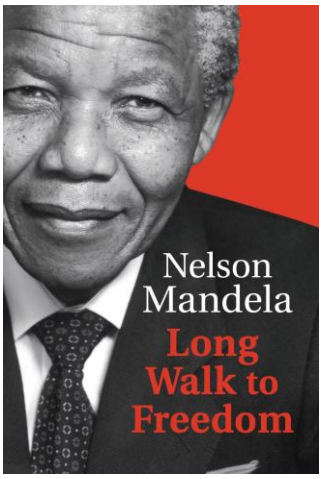
Liu died in custody, never seeing the free China he had envisioned. But his death was not defeat, it was transformation. His ideas, once confined to prison cells and censored websites, spread across the globe. His example inspired democracy advocates from Hong Kong to Myanmar, from Iran to Russia.

Liu Xiaobo's legacy transcends his nationality or political system. He proved that one person's commitment to nonviolence and democracy can shake the foundations of authoritarian power. He showed that refusing to hate your oppressors is not weakness but the ultimate strength.

In an age when democracy faces challenges around the world, Liu Xiaobo's words ring with prophetic clarity: *"I firmly believe that China's political progress will not stop, and I, filled with optimism, look forward to the advent of a future free China."*

Liu Xiaobo's life reminds us that the price of freedom is often paid by those who never live to enjoy it. His story is a testament to the truth that some principles are worth dying for, some dreams worth pursuing even when they seem impossible, and some voices worth hearing even when they have been silenced forever.

9. Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)



The Long Walk to Freedom

Nelson Mandela's life stands as a testament to the power of resilience, forgiveness, and unwavering commitment to justice. Born on 18 July 1918 into the Thembu royal family in Mvezo, South Africa, Mandela chose a path of activism over privilege, dedicating his life to dismantling the oppressive apartheid regime.

Mandela's early years were marked by traditional leadership and education. After his father's death, he was raised by Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo, the acting regent of the Thembu people. Mandela attended prestigious institutions, including the University of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand, where he studied law. His experiences with racial discrimination fueled his passion for activism, leading him to join the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944 and co-found its Youth League.

Initially advocating nonviolent resistance, Mandela's approach shifted after the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, where police killed 69 unarmed protesters. Recognizing the need for more assertive action, he co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's armed wing. In 1962, Mandela was arrested and, during the Rivonia Trial, delivered a powerful speech:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison for his fight against South Africa's apartheid system, emerging to become the country's first Black president and a global symbol of reconciliation. Born into the Thembu royal family, Mandela chose the path of activism over privilege.

As a founding member of the African National Congress Youth League, Mandela initially advocated for nonviolent resistance. However, after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, he helped form Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's armed wing.

Released in 1990, Mandela chose reconciliation over revenge, helping to peacefully transition South Africa to democracy.

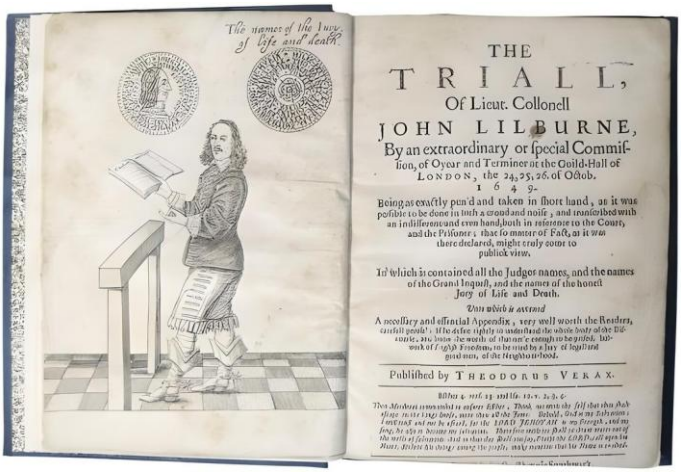
Mandela's influence extended globally, inspiring movements for justice and equality. In Australia, his legacy resonates deeply. The Australian government imposed sanctions against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s, and Australians participated in international campaigns advocating for his release. Mandela's emphasis on reconciliation influenced Australia's own journey towards acknowledging and addressing historical injustices faced by Indigenous communities.

Mandela's speeches continue to inspire:

- "It always seems impossible until it's done."
- "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- "I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying."

Nelson Mandela passed away on 5 December 2013, but his legacy endures. His life reminds us that with courage, perseverance, and compassion, we can overcome even the most formidable challenges. In Australia and around the world, his story continues to inspire the pursuit of justice and equality.

10. John Lilburne (c. 1614-1657)



Freeborn John, The Father of Civil Liberties

In the turbulent landscape of 17th-century England, where kings claimed divine right and common people were deemed subjects rather than citizens, one man dared to proclaim a revolutionary truth: that freedom was not a gift from rulers but a birthright from God. John Lilburne, known to history as "Freeborn John," spent his entire life proving that no earthly power could legitimately strip away what the Almighty had granted to every human soul.

Born into a gentry family in Sunderland around 1614, Lilburne grew up in an England where the Stuart monarchy ruled with absolute authority and the Church of England wielded spiritual tyranny over dissenting voices. But young John was exposed to Puritan ideals that planted seeds of rebellion in his heart, not rebellion against God, but rebellion against any human authority that presumed to stand between a person and their Creator.

Lilburne's first taste of persecution came in 1638 when he was arrested for distributing unlicensed Puritan literature. Most would have submitted, apologized, and retreated into silence. But Lilburne possessed a conviction that would define his entire existence: truth could never be defeated by force, and conscience could never be subordinated to convenience.

When brought before the Star Chamber, that dreaded court where men's fates were decided in secret, without jury, without the protection of common law, Lilburne did something unprecedented. He refused to take the oath that would compel him to testify against himself. In that moment, he articulated a principle that would echo through centuries: no person should be forced to be the instrument of their own destruction.

"I know it is warrantable by the law of God, and I think by the law of the land, that I may stand on my just defence, and not answer your interrogatories, and that my accusers ought to be brought face to face, to justify what they accuse me of," Lilburne declared. These words, spoken by a young man facing the full power of the English state, would later inspire the Fifth Amendment to the American Constitution and legal protections around the world.

For his defiance, Lilburne was sentenced to be whipped from Fleet Prison to Westminster, pilloried, and imprisoned indefinitely. As the lash tore into his back, as he stood in the pillory while crowds jeered, Lilburne's resolve only strengthened. He understood that his suffering was not meaningless, it was testimony to the truth that some principles are worth bleeding for.

The English Civil War provided Lilburne with a larger stage for his convictions. He fought bravely for Parliament against King Charles I, believing that he was fighting for a better England, one where law would reign supreme over arbitrary power. But Lilburne soon discovered that Parliament could be as tyrannical as any king when it suited their purposes.

As leader of the Levellers, a radical political movement that emerged during the Civil War, Lilburne articulated a vision of society that was breathtakingly ahead of its time. He advocated for universal male suffrage, equality before the law, religious tolerance, and accountability of government to the governed. In works like "England's Birthright Justified," he laid out principles that would not be fully realized until centuries later.

Lilburne's concept of "freeborn rights" was revolutionary. He argued that liberties were not privileges granted by governments but inherent rights endowed by God to every person at birth. This wasn't merely political theory, it was theological conviction. Lilburne believed that to deny a person their freeborn rights was to rebel against the divine order itself.

"The people are the foundation of all power and authority," Lilburne proclaimed, articulating a theory of government that placed sovereignty in the hands of citizens rather than rulers. This was treason to the ears of both monarchists and many parliamentarians, but it was gospel truth to Lilburne.

His commitment to principle made him enemies on all sides. When Parliament proved as willing as the king to suppress dissent, Lilburne turned his pen against them with the same fury he had once directed at royal tyranny. *"I know nothing that makes a man a Magistrate over me but law, and while he walkes by the rules of that Law which make him a Magistrate, I shall own him as a Magistrate, but when he tramples it under his feet, and walkes by the law of his own will, I for my part in such a condition cannot own him for a Magistrate."*

This wasn't mere political opposition, it was moral philosophy. Lilburne understood that legitimacy came not from power but from law, not from force but from consent, not from tradition but from justice. He was willing to oppose any authority, no matter how powerful, if it violated these principles.

Lilburne's courage was sustained by deep religious faith. He saw his struggle for civil liberties as part of his service to God. *"I am resolved to suffer for the truth, and to stand for the liberty of my conscience,"* he declared. For Lilburne, religious liberty and civil liberty were inseparable, both flowed from the fundamental dignity of human beings as creatures made in God's image.

Throughout his life, Lilburne faced repeated imprisonment, trials, and persecution. He was tried for treason multiple times, always defending himself with eloquence and courage that amazed even his enemies. *"I shall never be afraid to speak the truth, and to write what I think,"* he proclaimed, understanding that free speech was not just a right but a duty, the duty to bear witness to truth regardless of consequences.

Lilburne's final years were marked by continued struggle against injustice, but also by a deepening spiritual conviction. When he died in 1657, he left behind a will that revealed the source of his lifetime courage: *"I bequeath my soul into the hands of the Almighty, in whom I have put my trust, hoping by the merits of Christ Jesus, my only Lord and Saviour, that I shall be saved from hell and damnation."*

These words were not the desperate plea of a defeated man but the confident testimony of someone who had fought the good fight and kept the faith. Lilburne understood that his earthly battles were part of a larger cosmic struggle between truth and falsehood, freedom and tyranny, light and darkness.

John Lilburne died before seeing most of his dreams realized, but his ideas proved more durable than the governments that persecuted him. The principles he articulated, due process, religious liberty, freedom of speech, equality before the law, government by consent, became the foundation stones of democratic societies around the world.

"Freeborn John" never lived to see the Bill of Rights, the American Constitution, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but his fingerprints are on all of them. He proved that one person's unwavering commitment to principle can plant seeds that flower centuries later, that courage in one generation can bear fruit in the next, and that some truths are so powerful that no prison can contain them, no government can suppress them, and no tyrant can defeat them.

In an age when civil liberties are again under assault around the world, John Lilburne's voice calls across the centuries: freedom is not a gift from governments but a birthright from God, and it is the duty of every generation to defend those rights not just for themselves but for all who come after. His life reminds us that the price of liberty is not just eternal vigilance, it is the willingness to suffer for principles that transcend our own immediate interests.

The Torch Passes to Us

As we close this third edition of Letters of the Heart, we are left not with endings, but with beginnings. These ten extraordinary souls have shown us that courage is not a rare gift bestowed upon the chosen few, it is a choice available to every human heart that refuses to accept injustice as inevitable.

Sophie Scholl was twenty-one when she chose to scatter leaflets rather than live in silence. Malala was eleven when she picked up her pen to fight ignorance. Grace Tame was young when she decided the law itself needed changing. Anne Frank was thirteen when she began writing words that would outlive empires. Each reminds us that age is no barrier to world-changing impact, only apathy is.

From Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad to Gandhi's Salt March, from Mandela's prison cell to Liu Xiaobo's empty Nobel chair, from Martin Luther King's dream to Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Declaration, from John Lilburne's "freeborn rights" to the voices still crying out today, we see an unbroken chain of courage stretching across centuries.

The baton now passes to us. In boardrooms and classrooms, in communities and countries, in the small places close to home that Eleanor Roosevelt spoke of, we are called to be the next link in this golden chain. We are called to be the ones who refuse to let hatred have the final word, who choose love over fear, who pick up our pens when others reach for swords.

Their blood was not spilled in vain if we remember. Their sacrifices were not meaningless if we act. Their voices were not silenced if we speak. Their dreams do not die if we dare to dream them forward.

The world still needs Sophie Scholls to scatter truth where lies take root. It needs Harriet Tubmans to lead the enslaved to freedom. It needs Gandhis to choose love over hatred. It needs Anne Franks to find beauty in the darkest places. It needs Malalas to demand education for every child. It needs Grace Tames to break the silence around abuse. It needs Eleanor Roosevelts to champion human rights. It needs Liu Xiaobos to speak truth to power. It needs Mandelas to choose reconciliation over revenge. It needs John Lilburnes to defend our God-given freedoms.

The world needs us to be them.

As we face our own moments of choice, when injustice demands our silence, when hatred asks for our consent, when fear whispers that we are too small to matter, may we remember their faces, hear their voices, and feel their courage flowing through our veins.

For in the end, the measure of our lives will not be found in our comfort or convenience, but in those moments when we chose to stand when it would have been easier to sit, to speak when silence would have been safer, to love when hatred would have been simpler.

The torch is ours now. The question is not whether we are worthy to carry it, the question is whether we are brave enough to let it burn brightly in our hands, lighting the way for those who will come after us.

"How can we expect righteousness to prevail when there is hardly anyone willing to give himself up individually to a righteous cause?" Sophie Scholl asked as she faced death. *"What does my death matter, if through us thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?"*

We are those thousands. We are the awakened. We are the stirred to action.

Let us prove worthy of their sacrifice. Let us show the world that the flame of justice, once lit in the human heart, can never truly be extinguished.

The future is unwritten. The choice is ours.

Letters of the Heart is dedicated to preserving the memory of those who fought for justice and inspiring others to continue their work. Share these stories. Tell them to your children. Let them echo in your choices. For until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream, the work continues.

Until next time, may courage guide your steps, compassion fill your heart, and the memory of these ten souls light your way forward.

Regards,

Sukh Sandhu

www.sukhsandhu.com

LETTERS OF THE HEART

THE GREAT HUMAN FAILURE: Look in the Mirror, What Have We Become?

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 17 December 2025

Let us stop pretending. Let us stop lying to ourselves.





A mother's worst nightmare: Her 5-year-old daughter, broken and weeping, asks for 'new skin colour' after facing painful racism at school. Her heartbreaking plea has ignited global outrage and calls for change.

We call this progress.

We call this civilisation.

But if we can reach the moon and still cannot reach the heart of our neighbour because their skin looks different, then we have gone nowhere.

We are not advanced.

We are stagnant.

Stuck in the ancient mud of tribal thinking.

When a five-year-old child asks for a new skin colour because their own brings pain, ridicule, and exclusion, humanity has collapsed.

That is not a debate.

That is not an opinion.

That is moral bankruptcy.

This is not a headline.

This is not a trend.

This is an emergency.

How are we still here?

How, in an age drowning in information, are we starving for wisdom?

We obsess over pigment.

We worship borders.

We defend dogma.

And we forget the simple truth.

We are one species sharing one fragile moment in time.

We catalogue differences with precision.

Yet we remain illiterate in shared humanity.

To the Adults: What Have We Become?

> *Some will say that we have always been like this, that division, hatred, and cruelty are simply part of human nature. But isn't that even worse? To accept that this cycle of pain and prejudice is our default state is to admit defeat, to deny our capacity for growth, for empathy, for change. It means we are choosing to remain stagnant, refusing to rise above the basest instincts of our history. If this is how it has always been, then it is all the more urgent that we break the pattern, because to persist in this way is not just failure; it is a betrayal of every opportunity we have ever had to be better.*

Children are not born cruel.

They are taught.

They inhale what we exhale.

Our jokes.

Our whispers.

Our silence.

Our news cycles that sell outrage.

Our dinner tables poisoned with casual prejudice.

We call ourselves mature.

Yet we cling to inherited hatred like comfort blankets.

We teach kindness in textbooks.

Then model cruelty in practice.

We tell children to share.

Nations hoard.

We tell children to be fair.

Systems exploit.

We tell children to be gentle.

The world rewards brutality.

What kind of adults scroll past a child’s pain without stopping?

What kind of society normalises cruelty and calls it freedom of opinion?

Our indifference is not neutral. It is violent.

To the Systems: Engines of Division

This is bigger than individual behaviour.

This is engineered.

Education still glorifies conquest instead of connection.

Politics still survives by dividing rather than uniting. Leaders still win by naming enemies instead of lifting people.

Everywhere you look, identity is weaponised.

Fear is marketed. Hatred is profitable.

We built economies where some must stay crushed so others can feel tall.

We built platforms where outrage earns clicks. We built systems where empathy is inefficient.

None of this is accidental.

The Environment We Are Creating

Look at the world we are handing to our children.

A world where they are constantly watched.

Labelled.

Ranked.

Valued for what they did not choose.

We force adult conflicts onto young minds.

We steal childhood and replace it with survival.

Children now learn words like discrimination before they learn how to feel safe.

They learn rejection before belonging. They learn hate before hope.

When a child realises they are despised for what they are, not who they are, we have failed at the most basic human duty. Protection.

The Awakening

We are failing because we have forgotten how to be human.

We replaced compassion with competition. Depth with noise. Wisdom with data.

Do not wait for saviours.

Not in politics.

Not in policy.

Not in power.

The failure lives in the mirror.

Until we see ourselves in strangers.

Until colour disappears before character. Until humanity comes before ideology.

We will keep failing.

And children will keep paying for our blindness with their tears.

Wake up.

Time is not on our side.

LETTERS OF THE HEART

The silent sacrifice: a mother's love, regrets, and the lessons we often learn too late

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 25 December 2025

I left home at 14.





Chasing dreams.

Chasing degrees.

Chasing a better life.

But here is the truth I never told anyone.

It was Mamma who made me leave.

She was the one who pushed me to be independent.

She was the one who said, "Go get work experience. Go see the world. Don't sit in comfort. Grow."

She found the course that would shape my career.

She planted the seed that would become my future. Every success I have today.

Every title. Every achievement. It started with her belief in me. Before I believed in myself.

She built me.

And then she let me go.



My parents smiled at the airport. They said, "Go. Make us proud." They didn't say, "Stay. We need you."

Years passed. I built a career. I built a house. I built a life.

But every phone call reminded me. What I was not building.

My father's voice got softer. My mother's questions got repeated. The pauses got longer. The goodbyes got heavier.

I missed birthdays. I missed anniversaries. I missed the small moments. That become the big memories.

They never needed my money. Mamma ran her own hospital on the first floor of our three-storey home. A respected figure in her community. People came to her for healing. For hope. She had everything. Success. Respect. Purpose.

Everything. Except me.

What she wanted wasn't financial. It was presence. Someone to sit with her at dinner. Someone to hold her hand. Someone to laugh at her old jokes.

She never complained. Not once. That made it worse.

But let me tell you something about my Mamma.

She had a sixth sense.

Our home was three floors. The hospital on the first. Our living space above. Stairs everywhere. And Mamma, she was not young anymore.

But the moment I stepped foot in that house. The very first step. Before I could call out. Before I could climb the stairs. She knew.

I don't know how. I still don't.

But I would hear her. Running. Through the corridors. Down the stairs. Her footsteps fast. Her breath heavy. Racing to reach me.

And there she would be. At the door. Arms open. Eyes shining. Like she had been waiting her whole life for that moment.

Every single time.

It didn't matter if I came at noon or midnight. It didn't matter if she was tired or busy or unwell. The moment her son came home. She ran.

That was her love. Not in words. In running. In rushing. In reaching.

She came to Australia many times.

She walked through my home. She cooked in my kitchen. She slept under my roof. She saw the life I was building. And for those precious days, those stolen weeks, we were together.



But visits end. Flights leave. And every time she went back, a piece of me went with her.

We had a plan.

Before COVID, we were together. I went home. I held her. I sat with her. I heard her laugh. I watched her run down those stairs one more time.

And she told me. "Beta, just let me settle a few things here. The hospital. The house. A few things. And then I will come. I will come to Australia. I will stay with you. Not just visit. Stay."

Beta. It means "son" in Hindi, Punjabi, and many other languages. But it is more than a word. It is how a mother holds her child in language. It is love wrapped in two syllables. Every time she called me Beta, I was not a man with degrees and titles. I was her little boy again.

I smiled. I said, "Yes, Mamma. Come. This time, stay forever. We will be together."

This was different. This wasn't another visit. This was going to be permanent. No more goodbyes at airports. No more watching her flight disappear into the clouds. No more counting days until I see her again.

We had a plan. We had time. We had tomorrow.

And then the world stopped.

COVID came. Borders closed. Flights cancelled. Countries locked.

She was in India. I was in Australia. And between us. An ocean. A virus. And a silence that grew louder every day.

Then Mamma got sick.

And I couldn't go to her.

I couldn't hold her hand. I couldn't sit by her bed. I couldn't run to her. The way she always ran to me.

I was thousands of miles away. Watching through a phone screen. Helpless. Broken. Trapped in a country I had chased my whole life. While the woman who gave me life. Was slipping away.

And even then. Even from that hospital bed. Even through the screen. She kept saying the same words.

"Focus on your life, Beta. Focus on your work. Focus on your clients."

She was dying. And still thinking about my success. Not hers. Mine.

The woman who pushed me to be independent. Was still pushing. Even when she needed me most. Even when I couldn't reach her. Even when all I wanted was to run to her. The way she always ran to me.

Sometimes we would have these quiet sessions. Video calls that lasted hours. Her voice soft. Her eyes knowing.

"Beta, I have gotten old now. I will go."

I would press my hand against the screen. As if I could touch her. "No, Mamma. You have to be with me. You were supposed to come here. We had a plan. You were going to stay this time."

She would laugh. That gentle, knowing laugh.

"I used to say the same thing to my mother. And to my grandmother. They smiled too. Just like I am smiling now."

And then she said something. Something that haunts me still.

"Beta, if I had known. If I had known what Australia would take from me. What these foreign countries would cost me. I would have never sent you. Never."

She paused. Her eyes wet. Her voice breaking for the first time.

"I sent you to build your life. I didn't know I was giving away mine."

I heard her. But I didn't listen.

I told her not to be emotional. I told her everything was fine. I told her she would get better. I told her she would still come to Australia. I told her we would have more time.

I ignored her.

I ignored the woman who never spoke about her own pain. The woman who carried everything in silence. When she finally opened her heart. When she finally told me what my absence had cost her. I closed my ears.

That is my greatest regret. Not that I left. But that when she finally told me the truth. I looked away.

She gave me wings. And I flew so far. That when she needed me most. I couldn't fly back.

She wanted to come to me. Not to visit this time. To stay. She had plans. She had dreams of being with her son. Of waking up in my home every morning. Of never having to say goodbye at another airport. Of finally being together. Forever.

COVID stole that from us.

The borders that kept the virus out. Kept me out too. Kept me from my mother. Kept me from holding her one last time.

She had come so many times before. But the one time that mattered most. The time she was supposed to stay. She couldn't come.

Before she passed away, something changed.

The phone calls got longer. Two hours. Sometimes three.

She would just talk. About everything. About nothing. Old stories I had heard a hundred times. New thoughts she had never shared before.

And sometimes. She would go quiet. Just looking at me through the screen. Just listening. To me. To my voice. To my breathing.

"Beta," she would whisper. Just that one word. Like she was holding me. Across the oceans. Across the distance. With just my name.

I used to wonder why she wanted to stay on so long.

Now I know.

She knew. Mothers always know.

She wasn't going to make it to Australia this time. She wasn't going to settle those few things. She wasn't going to stay with me forever like we planned.

So she was filling herself up. With the sound of her son. Her Beta. Storing my voice somewhere deep. For the journey ahead.

She was saying goodbye. Without ever saying the word.

The woman who could sense my footsteps from three floors away. Was now holding onto my voice through a screen. So she could carry it with her. Wherever she was going.

One day she said, "Beta, I just wanted to hear your voice." She didn't need anything. Just my time.

And I realised. Too late.



She didn't send me away because she didn't need me. She sent me away because she loved me more than she loved herself. She sacrificed her happiness for my future. Her presence for my success. Her heart for my dreams.

That is what selfless love looks like. It doesn't hold on. It lets go. Even when it's breaking inside.

And then. It waits. It waits at the door. It waits by the phone. It waits for a flight that never comes. It waits until it can't wait anymore.

Time does not ask permission. It does not wait for you to be ready. It simply goes. And takes with it everyone who was waiting for you to come.

We spend our lives chasing what we don't have. And forget to hold what we do. Until one day, our hands are full of success. And empty of the people who mattered.

I chased degrees. I chased titles. I chased countries. And when I finally stopped running, when the borders finally opened, I turned around. And the chair where she used to sit. Was empty.

She had come so many times. She had walked through my door. She had filled my home with her laughter. But the one time she was supposed to stay forever. She never made it.

All those visits. All those precious days. They were gifts. But I always thought there would be more. I always thought the next visit was coming. I always thought we had time.

The greatest gift you can give someone is not what your hands can buy. It is what your presence can offer. She never asked for expensive things. She asked for me. Her Beta. Just me. Sitting beside her. Sharing a cup of tea. That was enough. That was everything.

To everyone living far from home.

Your parents may have sent you away.

They may have smiled at the airport.

They may have told you to go and never look back.

But know this: every night, they look at your empty chair.

Every morning, they reach for the phone, hoping for your call.

They will never tell you this, because their love is selfless. It gives, it doesn't ask. But I am telling you.

Because my Mamma finally told me. And I didn't listen.

Don't make my mistake. Call them today.

Not tomorrow.

Today.

Ask about their day.

Just listen.

Stay on the phone a little longer, even when you’re tired.

Because one day, there won’t be another call.

And when they tell you what your absence costs them, don't ignore it. Listen. Let their words break your heart. A broken heart that listened is better than a guilty one that ignored.

Mamma, you made me who I am. You pushed me to fly, and then you stood alone, watching the sky. You paid the price for my wings. You told me to focus on my work, but you were my greatest work.

I carry the weight of my regrets, but I will not be crushed by them. I will turn them into my purpose. I can’t go back and hold your hand. But I can honor you. I can live a life worthy of your sacrifice.

You taught me to be independent. Now I will teach others that true strength is not just about flying away, but also about knowing how to fly back home.

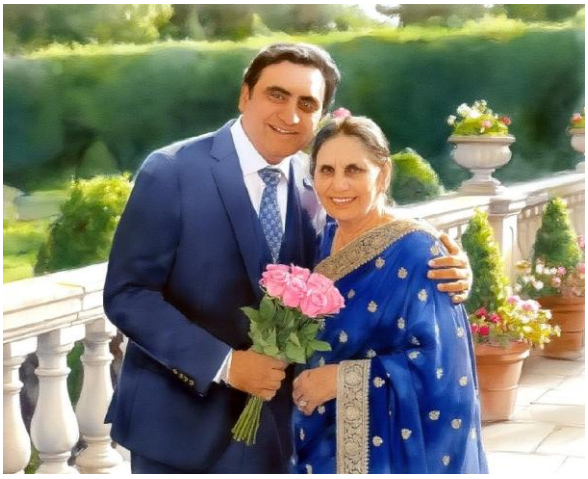
You wanted me to succeed. Now, I will redefine success. It will not just be about titles and degrees, but about presence, about connection, about making time for the people who matter. I will build a life that is not just full of achievements, but full of love.

Your love was a verb, it ran, it rushed, it reached. My love for you will also be a verb. It will act. It will serve. It will connect. It will ensure that no other "Beta" has to feel the silence I feel now.

This is not the end of your story, Mamma. This is where your legacy begins. Through me. Through the lessons I share. Through the love I give.

You are not in the empty chair. You are in every step I take from now on. You are the voice in my heart. You are my strength. My purpose. My forever Mamma.

I am listening now. And I will spend the rest of my life making you proud.



True love isn't found in grand gestures.

It's in the quiet moments.

The unspoken sacrifices.

The choice to put another's joy before your own, time and time again.

Selfless love doesn't chain you to its side.

It gives you the sky and the strength to soar.

It celebrates your flight, even if it means watching you disappear over the horizon.

It is the anchor that holds you steady from afar, and the light that always guides you back.

This love doesn't ask for anything in return.

Its reward is simply in seeing you become everything you were meant to be.

That is the purest love. The one that builds you up, and then, with a heart both breaking and full, sets you free.



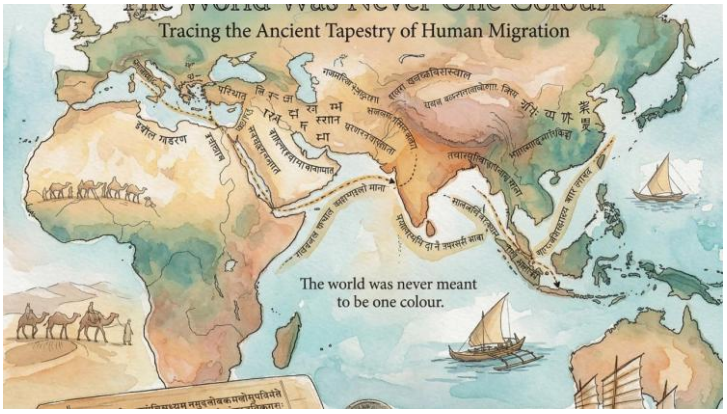
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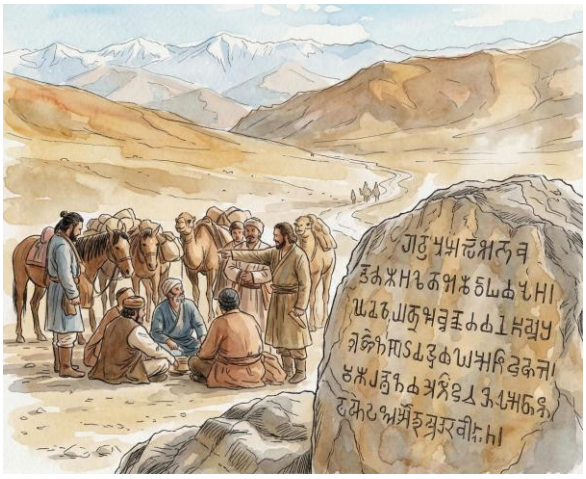
LETTERS OF THE HEART

Multiculturalism is not a theory. It's 10,000 years of documented human history.

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 16 March 2026

You like others.





You do not like others.

That is your choice.

You may stop reading here.

You may not.

But the reality needs to be told.

And it is not my opinion.

It is **documented**.

It is **evidence**.

It is **carved in stone**, written in **ancient texts**, and **buried in the DNA** of every civilisation that ever rose and every one that ever fell.

The world was never meant to be one colour.

And it never was.

Long before passports existed, humans were already crossing continents.

Long before borders were drawn on maps, cultures were already merging, trading, teaching, and transforming each other.

Travel is not modern.

Migration is not new.

Movement is the oldest human instinct after survival itself.

And history has the receipts.

Sanskrit, one of the oldest languages on earth, left its fingerprints across the entire world.

Thousands of years ago.

The word "mother" in English?

From the Sanskrit "**matr.**"

"Father"? From "**pitr.**"

"Door"? From "**dwar.**"

"Name"? From "**naam.**"

These are not coincidences.

They are **evidence.**

Evidence that Indian languages, Indian thought, and Indian people reached deep into Europe, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia *thousands of years before the first colonial ship ever set sail.*

Sanskrit inscriptions have been found in **Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand.** Hindu temples stand in **Angkor Wat**, built centuries before Notre Dame. The **Borobudur** temple in Java tells Indian stories carved in Indonesian stone.

The **Roma people** of Europe?

Their language carries **Rajasthani and Punjabi roots**, tracing back over a thousand years to the Indian subcontinent.

Now flip the lens.

The **Phoenicians** were sailing from Lebanon to Britain for tin **3,000 years ago.** Greek traders reached India before Alexander ever marched.

Arab merchants built settlements along the coast of Kerala *centuries before the Portuguese "discovered" it.*

Chinese admiral **Zheng He** sailed to Africa with **300 ships in 1405**, nearly a century before Columbus stumbled into the Caribbean.

Vikings reached North America **500 years** before any European coloniser planted a flag.

Persian poetry shaped Ottoman courts. African rhythms became the backbone of American music. **Indian numerals**, carried by Arab scholars, became the mathematics the entire modern world runs on.

No continent built itself alone. No civilisation rose in a vacuum. No culture exists that was not shaped by another.

You may not like hearing that. But the stones do not lie. The manuscripts do not lie. *The languages do not lie.*

The **Silk Road** was not just a trade route. It was proof that humanity has *always* chosen **connection over isolation.**

The **Roman Empire** absorbed Greek philosophy, Egyptian engineering, and Persian governance. The result? *The most influential civilisation of its era*.

The **Islamic Golden Age** welcomed scholars from every faith. Hindu mathematicians. Christian translators. Jewish physicians. The result? **Algebra**, **optics**, **astronomy**, and the foundations of modern medicine.

Renaissance Italy did not bloom in a sealed room. It was fuelled by Arabic texts, Byzantine refugees, and trade routes spanning three continents.

Silicon Valley was not built by one passport. It was built by immigrants from India, China, Iran, Israel, Vietnam, Korea, and dozens more.

History is not whispering. *It is screaming*: **monocultures stagnate**. **Diverse societies innovate**.

Those who demand everyone look the same, speak the same, think the same are not protecting culture. **They are burying it**.

Because culture was never static. *Culture has always been a river, not a wall*.

But here is the other truth, and it must be said with equal force.

If you choose a country as your home, **respect it**.

Learn the language.

Follow the laws.

Understand the values that built the society you chose to join.

Contribute before you criticise. **Integrate before you isolate**.

Do not demand the freedoms of your new home while importing the divisions of the one you left behind.

Migration is not just a right. **It is a responsibility**.

You do not get to enjoy the harvest of a society you refuse to water.

I was born in India. I worked in the United States. I earned residency in Canada. I built my life, my career, and my family in **Australia** over *thirty years*.

I carry **twelve languages**, **three continents**, and decades of lived experience in this country I proudly call home.

Australia gave me opportunity. **I gave it everything I had in return**.

That is the deal. And it is a fair one.

Multiculturalism is not a theory. ***It is*** 10,000 ***years of documented human history***.

The door should stay open. But those who walk through it should walk in with **gratitude**, **humility**, and a willingness to give back more than they take.

You liked this or you did not. But the evidence does not care about your feelings. It simply exists.

The only question left is: are you brave enough to accept it?

Agree? Disagree? I want your honest take. Drop it below.

#Multiculturalism #Immigration #Respect #CulturalDiversity #Australia #Leadership #GlobalCitizen #Integration #Sanskrit #History #HumanMigration

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It is in peer-reviewed journals. In UNESCO World Heritage sites. In museums on every continent. In the DNA of languages you speak every single day.

Read. Verify. Then decide.

#Multiculturalism #History #Evidence #Sources #Migration #Diversity #Research

LETTERS OF THE HEART

Letters of the Heart · Special Edition · 14 April 2026: When hope outlasted the strongman.

By Dr Sukh Rashpal Sandhu | First published 14 April 2026

He rewrote the rules. He still lost.





In June 1989, a 26 year old law student stood on Heroes' Square in Budapest, in front of a country still under Soviet occupation, and demanded that Soviet troops leave Hungary and that free elections be held. It was an act of real, physical courage. The name on that microphone was **Viktor Orbán**. He had already co founded Fidesz a year earlier as a liberal, anti communist youth movement. He had even studied at Oxford on a George Soros scholarship.

Remember that. Because it is the only way to understand what he chose to become.

In 2010, after eight years in opposition, Orbán came back to power with Fidesz on 52.7 percent of the vote and, thanks to a quirk in the post communist electoral system, 68 percent of parliamentary seats. A two thirds supermajority. The exact threshold needed to amend the constitution. In 2011, his government drafted a completely **new constitution** behind closed doors, debated it in parliament for just **nine days**, and passed it on a party line vote. In his first year alone he amended it **twelve times**.

Then came the courts. The Constitutional Court was expanded from 11 to 15 members, the all party approval rule was quietly dropped, and in the first year alone **274 judges and prosecutors**

were forced into early retirement. Then came the electoral map. Parliament was cut from 386 seats to 199. Districts were redrawn in secret by Fidesz loyalists. A "winner compensation" mechanism was invented out of thin air to amplify the ruling party's seat share. In 2014, with Fidesz's vote share having ***dropped*** to 44.9 percent, it still held its two thirds supermajority by a one seat margin.

Then came the press. A loyalist Media Council. State advertising diverted to pro government outlets. Independent papers starved of revenue and bought out by friendly businessmen. In 2018, over **500 pro government outlets** were placed under a single umbrella foundation called KESMA. In 2020 the independent news site Index was taken over and its editorial team walked out in protest. Hungary dropped **69 places** on the Press Freedom Index between 2010 and 2020.

Then came civil society. NGOs accepting foreign funding were branded "foreign agents." Organisations helping asylum seekers were criminalised under a law literally called "Stop Soros." **Central European University**, one of the most respected graduate institutions in the region, was driven out of Budapest and forced to relocate to Vienna in 2018 after Orbán passed a law tailor made to strangle it. A government that is confident in its ideas does not exile universities. A government that is terrified of them does.

Then came the scapegoats. **George Soros**, the 90 year old Hungarian born philanthropist whose scholarship once paid for Orbán's own Oxford education, was turned into the villain of a nationwide poster campaign that Jewish organisations described as nakedly antisemitic. Migrants were cast as existential threats. LGBTQ+ Hungarians were targeted by a 2021 law grouping gay lives in the same legal breath as paedophilia. Meanwhile, the share of Hungarians calling themselves Christians actually fell from 54.2 percent in 2011 to 42.5 percent in 2022, under a self described Christian nationalist regime. The Christianity was never the point. The ***enemy*** was the point.

Then came the money. Between 2011 and 2021, just **12 businessmen** close to Orbán's inner circle captured 21 percent of the value of EU funded contracts awarded through closed, non competitive procedures. His childhood friend from his home village, Lőrinc Mészáros, a former gas fitter, somehow became one of the richest men in Hungary. His son in law, István Tiborcz, was investigated by OLAF, the European Union's own anti fraud office, for irregularities in tens of millions of euros of EU funded contracts. In 2023, Transparency International ranked Hungary **the most corrupt country** in the entire European Union.

And then came the verdicts from the outside world. In 2018 the European Parliament triggered **Article 7** proceedings. In 2019 Freedom House downgraded Hungary from "free" to "partly free," the first EU country ever to receive that downgrade. In 2020 Freedom House reclassified it from a democracy to a "hybrid regime." In September 2022 the European Parliament voted, **433 to 123**, to formally declare that Hungary was "no longer a full democracy" and had become an "**electoral autocracy**." The young democrat of Heroes' Square had built exactly the kind of state he once risked his freedom to pull down.

And then, on **April 12, 2026**, the machine he had spent sixteen years welding shut cracked open.

Péter Magyar's Tisza Party won **138 seats out of 199** with 53.6 percent of the vote. Fidesz collapsed to 55. Turnout hit a record 79 percent, the highest since 2002. Orbán, 62 years old, stood in front of his own party workers and called the result "painful" but "clear," and conceded. Five days earlier, **Vice President J.D. Vance** had flown into Budapest to campaign beside him at a "Day of Friendship" rally. Donald Trump had publicly promised American "economic might" if Orbán won. Vladimir Putin's Kremlin had been quietly hoping for the same outcome. The Hungarian people looked at that entire network of backers, weighed it, and voted the other way.

The man who had rewritten the rules to make losing almost mathematically impossible, lost anyway. The man who had made himself the EU's most reliable blocker of Ukraine aid, lost the veto pen in one night. The man who had spent a decade lecturing Europe about the inevitability of illiberal democracy, discovered in a single evening that nothing in democracy is inevitable, not even its defeat.

There is a lesson here for every right wing leader currently in love with Orbán's playbook. Every Trump. Every Netanyahu. Every admirer of the Hungary model. Every would be strongman in South America, Africa, and South East Asia who is currently quoting Orbán's "illiberal democracy" speech to their own base. Packed courts can be unpacked. Captured media can be restaffed. Gerrymandered districts can be redrawn. Stolen constitutions can be rewritten. Inflated myths about national destiny have a shelf life measured in exactly how long it takes ordinary people to check their own fridge and their own pay slip.

Voters are patient. They are slow. They are often misled for years at a time. ***And then, in one night, they are not.***

> *A young man once risked his freedom to demand free elections. An older man spent his entire career making sure no one could ever use one to unseat him. He still lost. That is the part the strongmen of the world cannot undo, no matter how much control they think they have. Democracy, even a wounded one, still has teeth.*

Hungary chose. The rest of us still can.

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Masthead

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