

INTRODUCTION

Be the Change You Want to See in the World is a daybook for helping us keep our hearts and minds open to all that lives. I wrote it originally for myself, in journal form, as a way of keeping an account of all the significant things I learn about as I go through life, information too detailed and important to allow to fade away. As my stack of journals grew, the writing began to take on a distinct shape. No longer just random notes, my jottings started coming together into a coherent collection of nonreligious yet deeply soulful suggestions for demonstrating concern, kindness, and consideration for nature and its animals in our daily deeds.

For every day of the year I offer personal anecdotes, inspiring quotations, verses of poetry, simple vegetarian recipes, women's health tips, environmental facts, and green thoughts—each just a small thing that you can do to have a positive impact on the world. Alone your actions are significant; together with others their impact can be enormous. You don't need any special tools or skills to begin building a better world, but I do encourage you to keep a journal as you read along so you can record your own green and compassionate ideas and plans and daily acts. When we see our words in print, either written by hand or on a computer screen, we can be clearer about what we are thinking, clearer about our intentions, clearer in our plans.

I wrote the book for women. Why? Because I believe that women are less afraid than men to show emotion and act upon it. We are more compassionate and sensitive by nature and embody a certain humility and humanity that predisposes us to want to make a difference. Of course I welcome men to read along as well; if there are entries that you are tempted to skip, think about sharing them with a woman friend. As I see it, we are a sum total of our thoughts and actions and we should put our energies toward the good.

By reading this book you will discover why individual acts really do matter: if each of us drops a large enough pebbles into a large enough pond to ensure large enough ripples, we can create a new world without hunger and pain, without war, injustice, or cruelty. I wrote this as a daybook to keep that pebble in the forefront of your mind; we can start small and make a big difference. As demonstrated so beautifully in the movie, *Pay it Forward*, a better life starts with one person helping another with a simple act of human kindness, which then inspires both that person and anyone who witnesses or hears about it to do likewise. If every reader brought just some of these thoughts and ideas to life, the world would be a much better place.

And it all starts now, with my heart and with yours. May your skies be forever blue and your thoughts forever green.

—Julie Fisher-McGarry