



'Just six minutes of reading
per day can reduce stress
by up to 68 per cent.'
University of Sussex, 2009

DAZZLE GRADUALLY

This is an anthology about **truth**, to be read aloud, or simply have at your side at work, or wherever you need it.

With Forward Arts Foundation, The Reader has put together this collection to mark **25 years** of National Poetry Day, 3 October 2019.

National Poetry Day is an annual, UK-wide celebration on the **first Thursday of October** - designed to get people everywhere discovering, sharing and enjoying poetry.

0151 729 2200
www.thereader.org.uk
@thereaderorg
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The Mansion House
Calderstones Park
Liverpool
L18 3JB



Ever struggled with the task of giving someone **honest feedback** – whether a colleague, a friend, or even a passing stranger?

Or, perhaps you find yourself at the other side of the spectrum, **wanting to sensitively relay** some information to someone but finding yourself **bluntly blurting** it all out?

‘Tell all the **truth** but tell it **slant**’, Emily Dickinson suggests. Is that a contradiction? What’s this ‘Success in Circuit lies’? Is there such a thing as **successfully telling the truth**? What have children and lightning got to do with all this?

Tell all the truth but tell it slant – **by Emily Dickinson**

Tell all the truth but tell it slant—
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind -



Can we really be **ourselves** at work – or *indeed* – **anywhere**? How do we reconcile **personal** and **professional goals**? Or, are we best to **hide**, on the shop floor? If ‘work-life balance’ is a **conundrum** for you, Mathew Arnold might offer food for thought.

‘There rises an unspeakable desire/
After the knowledge of our buried
life’. **Buried life**? What’s that? ‘A thirst
to spend our fire and restless force/
In tracking out our true, original
course’. Do we have a **true course**?

And many a man in his own breast
then delves,/ But deep enough, alas!
none ever mines’? Do we ever **think
deeply** enough? Not being able to
‘speak and act/ Our hidden self’ – is
this something we **have to accept**?

The Buried Life

by Mathew Arnold

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.

And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves—
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on for ever unexpress'd.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well—but 't is not true!



How do you
keep on track?
Business books?
What if you're in a
team – how do you **stay**
connected? Can Elizabeth Barrett
Browning help – or maybe not?

'Truth, so far, in my book'. This might feel like a **mission statement?** Does truth mean anything at work? Is it fixed? Truth 'which draws through all things upwards'. Could you really see this in practice in your work plan?

Do phrases like '**twofold world**', '**perfect cosmos**' or '**bond of nature**' reflect real life? Are we at risk of separating 'natural' and 'spiritual'? Do they have currency today? Should they be kept out of the workplace?

Truth, so far, in my book

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Truth, so far, in my book; --- the truth which draws
Through all things upwards, --- that a twofold world
Must go to a perfect cosmos. Natural things
And spiritual, --- who separates those two
In art, in morals, or the social drift
Tears up the bond of nature and brings death,
Paints futile pictures, writes unreal verse,
Leads vulgar days, deals ignorantly with men,
Is wrong, in short, at all points. We divide
This apple of life, and cut it through the pips, ---
The perfect round which fitted Venus' hand
Has perished as utterly as if we are
Both halves.

Give thy thoughts no tongue

from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Where to start? Each line seems to be **saying something very different**. 'Give thy thoughts no tongue,/ Nor any unproportioned thought his act.' How do we make sense of this advice? Why not **give tongue to our thoughts**? What is an 'unproportioned thought'?

'Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;/ Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.' What **would it feel like** to get such advice?

'This above all: to thine ownself be true,/ And it must follow, as the night the day,/ Thou canst not then be false to any man.' Is this key to **unlocking the tension** between work and home?



Shared Reading Community 2019

Shared Reading is a unique experience that helps thousands of people connect, feel good and live well.



OF PEOPLE READING IN THE COMMUNITY...



OF SHARED READING VOLUNTEERS...



¹ 1408 respondents 2019; ² 1383 respondents 2019; ³ 1377 respondents (2019)
⁴ 434 respondents; ⁵ 433 respondents; ⁶ 430 respondents (2017-2019)

Shared Reading at work

Keep it simple - it's amazing what you can achieve in 10 minutes with a poem, especially when sharing it with another person. Whether it's in the staff room during lunch, a slot in your team-meeting agenda or on an away day, making time to be still, to think and share is a worthy investment for the rest of your day.

Let people know - you can share the joys of reading in many ways. If it's proving tricky getting people together, popping up a 'poem of the month' on the staff noticeboard can drum up a bit of interest and help reading become a more natural part of your workplace culture.

Keep it enjoyable - it's important that reading remains a pleasure, never a chore. If you're trying to get others to join, make sure to keep things relaxed, open and flexible.

Make the space - is there a place you could make extra comfy? Add some cushions or a few books? If colleagues are unsure if they can join you, they may be interested in helping you create a reading nook?

Keep it natural - Shared Reading is not an assessment. There is no wrong or right answer, just your own feelings, thoughts and questions about what you've read. So, read your poem aloud together, just having a chat over a cuppa.



If you'd like to work with us to bring Shared Reading to your workplace, or you'd like to bring your team to The Reader at Calderstones, get in touch!

info@thereader.org.uk
www.thereader.org.uk
+44 (0)151 729 2200
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L18 3JB

The Reader at Calderstones

The Reader at Calderstones Park in Liverpool is a community unlike any other, where people can get together, experience literature and try something new. The park's Mansion House is a Georgian, Grade II listed building that has been recalled to life after a huge restoration by The Reader, and is now accessible and open to the public.

The Calderstones Story

Visit the Mansion House and travel back in time in our dedicated exhibition that tells the story of Liverpool life, starting in the Stone Age. In the garden, get up close to the ancient Calder Stones that give the local area its name. Inside, see how the exhibit rooms weave together the life of the Stones and the Mansion, alongside the evolution of storytelling.

International Centre for Shared Reading

The Mansion House is also home to the International Centre for Shared Reading – a centre of excellence that is open to anyone who wants to begin or develop their Shared Reading practice. Whether you're new to this, or you're an experienced practitioner looking for a refresher, we run training throughout the year, in a truly inspiring setting.

The Garden Theatre and more

The magnificent 1940s Garden Theatre is back to its former glory and it will, again, play host to public events. It's open for hire for any occasion, from a team day to a family celebration, alongside the Studio for wellbeing activities, a Making Room for crafts, and many other very special spaces besides.

This anthology has been made possible by Forward Arts Foundation, producers of National Poetry Day

Poetry takes over on National Poetry Day, but it's worth sharing and enjoying poetry every day of the year. Find out more about the year-round programme at www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk.

