

This I Believe

I believe in dying.

I believe that every day, I come closer to an inevitable end. Maybe it's a startling belief, but it doesn't upset me; it's actually a motivator.

I believe in dying... but I didn't always. I used to be afraid. I thought if I ignored death, I wouldn't have to deal with it. This had to change, though, a few years ago. When I was sixteen, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. She passed away within six months. She lived an incredible life... but she forgot to live it with the end in mind. She wasn't prepared-- there were things left for her to do, things she desperately wanted and needed to do.

And this is an important thing to think about-- we all live our lives as if we'll never die. As if life, and all its resources, is inexhaustible. We live as if we're immortal when we should be aware of the time we have left. Or, rather, of the time we don't have left.

I believe in dying. And I've discovered that an amazing thing happens when you believe in dying-- a world opens up to you. You realize that you actually believe in much, much more.

I believe in travelling. I believe in learning new languages, meeting new people, and exploring new cultures.

I believe in being outgoing. In being shy. I believe in being courageous and strong, and I believe in being timid and weak. I believe in taking wild chances and in knowing when you shouldn't.

I believe in saying yes. I believe in saying no.

I believe in laughing. I believe in crying on someone's shoulder. In being a shoulder to cry on. I believe in long-lasting friendships. I believe in fights and in making up afterwards. I believe in second chances. And third chances. And sometimes, just one more. I believe in drawing the line. I believe that some people come in and out of your life to teach you a lesson- and I believe that sometimes, the teacher is you.

I believe in waking up early. In sleeping until noon.

In sunsets and sunrises and stargazing.

In enjoying the *weekdays* as much as the *weekends*.

In taking deep, deep breaths and living in the moment

In going after what you want.

In being happy with what you have. In sometimes fighting for more. In sharing, helping, and accepting help.

I believe we should strive to feel everything we can feel- happiness, sure. But also anger. Sadness. Nostalgia.

I believe in loving. Loving a lot. Loving yourself, or at least trying. In letting important people know *why* they're important. In saying, "I love you," before you can't say it any more.

Because I believe in dying, I also believe in a hundred thousand other things. I believe life is a book written with ink- there's no erasing. There's no going back. There has to be an end. But you can be prepared.

I believe in dying.