



Jars of Joy, Hope and Happiness /1

Description

Inspirational quote jars for life in a pandemic lockdown

By Wanda Potrykus

Don't put the key to happiness in someone else's pocket

– Inspirational quote

Today more than ever in these unprecedented times many of us will need a little help to get us through the day, especially when we feel alone, or lonely, dispirited, anxious, frustrated, overwhelmed or just fed up dealing with family members cooped up at home, with nowhere much to go and perhaps running out of things to do. As the saying goes: "Don't put the key to happiness in someone else's pocket". So with that in mind, here's an activity that can be done alone, or as a couple, or as a family.

Design an inspirational quote jar

Inspirational quote or idea jars are not a new idea. Some crafters might already be familiar with them. But since creating one takes time that many of us mightn't have had before, in this era of pandemic lockdown it might conceivably become a simple activity that appeals; especially since the basic requirements are pen(s), paper, scissors, and a container, although those with a decorative bent can also go wild in terms of creativity.

Those with printers can type up and print out their quotes instead of writing them out, or write them on colour-coded Popsicle sticks, and if you choose a Mason jar as your preferred container you might also need some tape or glue if you are decorating it. But basically, that's it. The rest is up to your imagination, but if you feel you still need simple 'how-to' instructions, you can find them at amberscraftaweek.blogspot.com

Become inspired and get creative



Why not get creative and design and fabricate a whole series of inspirational quote jars to be accessed at various times of the day? Use them as stress relievers: “Whoops... maybe it’s time for a tension diffuser... go get the laughter jar”. There are examples of these jars all over the Internet, especially on sites such as Pinterest and on various blogs. Plus you can also find plenty of quotes on the Internet or stretch yourself and create your own from books, poems, religious verses, or song lyrics (pop, rock, whatever) or even favourite family sayings.



Image: Clem Onojeghuo – Unsplash

‘You’ve tasted two worms.’

– Rev. William A. Spooner

Can you malaprop or not?



In some households family sayings, often **malapropisms** or **spoonerisms*** (there is a difference) can also potentially become the basis of an amusing quote jar. If known, put the date on when the saying came into being and who first said it. That way you have also made a recording of a little bit of your family history. But if you can't remember who said it, write it down anyway and make the attribution 'Unknown', or add your surname plus 'family member' and the approximate date e.g. "Keenoy family member, 2020".

The **Reverend William Archibald Spooner** (1844–1930), warden of New College, Oxford, after whom spoonerisms are named, was notoriously prone to switching the first syllables of words, although it is debated which of the many recorded 'spoonerisms' were his, and which were those of his friends and colleagues. Nevertheless, many of them are very clever. One of my favourites of the Reverend's many attributed 'misspeaks' is: "You've tasted two worms" ("you've wasted two terms") reputedly said to one of his students, but there are plenty more examples out there.

Decorate your jar or repurpose other containers

The oft depicted container on the net for these quotes and sayings is a Mason, jelly or another glass jar with a screw top, and there are myriad ideas out there for those with decorative abilities to make great looking containers, but also let your imagination soar as just about any jar or jug, tin can, box or bag can be repurposed for this activity.



Image: Pikrepo



'Walking hand in hand with the bag you love.'

– Kate Spade, NYC

Why not bag it!

Come to think of it, I have a collection of handbags, it might be nice to open one at various times of the year and find a quote inside. Let your imagination soar and use what you have at home already. No need to go shopping.

'It doesn't matter how great your shoes are if you don't accomplish anything in them.'

– Martina Boone, author, *Compulsion*

For instance, how many of you have an extensive shoe collection? Pop a quote in each shoe. Or what about that miscellaneous pile of boots, shoes and slippers in the front hall or mudroom or porch? Perhaps the time has come to tidy them up and maybe think about inserting a quote for the next time they are worn, even if it's next winter? It can be as simple as "Best foot forward" or "Jump to it" or maybe "It doesn't matter how great your shoes are if you don't accomplish anything in them."

How about that collection of ceramic figurines? Why not paste a short quote on the back that you take the time to read when you dust your collection? Or maybe use those empty but beautifully decorated wooden boxes you might have on display, as they could easily house a whole world of sayings and texts.

'Hard times are about losing spirit, and hope, and what happens when dreams dry up.'

– Karen Hesse

Tea and teasers

A china teacup collection might also serve as a suitable repository. I have a friend who has a stunning teacup collection. She uses a different cup each day for her afternoon tea. She could perhaps put a quote in each cup, so when she takes it down to use, she could enjoy a quote from one of her favourite poems or books. A twist could be added, if one has a mind to do, of course, to then challenge oneself to remember which book or poem the quote came from.



Image: [Prudence Styles](#) via [StockPholio.com](#)

For instance, the **Karen Hesse** quote, “Hard times are about losing spirit, and hope, and what happens when dreams dry up”, came from which of her young adult novels? Clue 1: the book won the Newberry Medal. Clue 2: she also wrote a book about a girl who was raised by dolphins, an 11-year-old stowaway on Captain Cook’s ship Endeavour in 1768 (based on a true story) and a family who created a teddy bear in Brooklyn in 1903.

See there’s a whole slew of possibilities out there. Think a while on what makes sense for you, or you and your family.

My ceramic wish jug is another’s inspirational spirit cup

My inspirational wish ‘jar’ is a fabulous large ceramic jug. A bona fide work of art, indeed a true ‘one-off’, I purchased it a few years ago at an Art Fair held at the Peter Hall School in the Ville Saint-Laurent borough of Montreal. All the exhibitors were people with disabilities and the range of art and crafts offered for sale was impressive and extensive.



The creator of my jug was a young man aka “the singing artist” who had a selection of his artistic endeavours for sale. He drew colourful and original cartoons. He had a CD of an original song that his mother, a musician and vocalist herself, had written for him when he was a non-verbal child and she had made a promise to herself and him that she would teach him not only to talk but also to sing that song. And she did, although it took her more than a few years to accomplish that task; however, the existence of that song was the reminder of her quest to help her son triumph over his verbal communication challenges, and he did.



Image: Eric Prouzet – Unsplash

‘Each day of the week write a positive note to yourself and expect to receive whatever you have written.’

– Enoch Broomes aka The Singing Artist

I bought the CD and listen to it often, along with the most amazing ceramic jug that the artist, **Enoch Broomes**, called a ‘spirit cup’. It came with a week’s supply of positive thoughts rolled up inside along with a handwritten note that read: “Each day of the week write a positive note to yourself and expect to receive whatever you have written”. It was the first time I had come across this idea – part prayer, part power of positive thinking – that was oh so gently explained to me by that young artist. I was enthralled.

I would have bought the jug even without the notes, as it is quite simply stunning. Created in a folk art style, it is old



rose pink in colour and decorated with striking bas-relief cartoon characters from Enoch Broomes' imagination. A masked rabbit, a young boy, a masked woman, a dog and an owl (or is it a ghoulish ghost or spirit? I haven't quite decided). Animal and human super, and maybe supernatural, heroes surrounding a young boy, I still have a great time imagining them all in action.

Nevertheless, having those inspirational thoughts inside and learning about the purpose of his 'spirit cup' or 'inspiration jug' was a bonus I wasn't expecting at the time but one has learned to appreciate.

'The spirit is one of the most neglected parts of man by doctors and scientists around the world. Yet, it is as vital to our health as the heart and mind.'

– Suzy Kassem



Enoch Broome's spirit cup – Image: Andrew Burlone

Today the jug sits on a shelf in my bedroom and I glance at it every day when I wake up and it makes me smile. Thanks, Enoch – your skill, imagination and artistry truly make every day better.

Broomes created his 'spirit cup' while attending a summer pottery class at the Visual Arts Centre on Victoria Ave in Westmount. Unfortunately, it is a one-off as he does not have a kiln at home, so he cannot make more, but he is one talented young man. I am thrilled to have met him.

As a result of our meeting at the art fair I learned Broomes is also a rapper and a capella singer, so I invited him to participate that summer in an event I produce annually in Westmount Park, courtesy of Community Events, called [Words and Music](#), where he was able to showcase his talents as a Singing Artist to a new audience. I hope to welcome him back soon when public life resumes again and we can gather safely once more in the park to share poetry, songs, stories and music around the lagoon – an inspiration of a different sort.

According to **Suzy Kassem**, a prolific American-Egyptian poet, writer, thinker and philosopher, "The spirit is one of the most neglected parts of man by doctors and scientists around the world. Yet, it is as vital to our health as the heart and mind."



Now we have the opportunity to think about what quotes speak to us, perhaps this is just time to bring to life to some of those Jars of Joy, Hope and Happiness to help us get through these novel and unfamiliar times.

Watch for **Part 2** of *Jars of Joy, Hope and Happiness* – coming soon.

* Definition of malapropism and spoonerism: The origin of the word malapropism is in the French phrase mal à propos, which means ‘inappropriate.’ It is the use of an incorrect word in place of a similar-sounding word, which results in a nonsensical and humorous expression. For example: “Mum often complains we take her for granite” (instead of ‘for granted’) or “In times of pandemic many people propose to drink themselves into Bolivia” (instead of ‘oblivion’).

Malapropisms are often confused with spoonerisms, which is the transposing of letters and word sounds where the result can also be funny e.g. if one says “a half-warmed fish” instead of a “half-formed wish” or “it’s roaring with pain” instead of “it’s pouring with rain”

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