



# A Letter to Sophia

An elder pursues the challenge of conveying resilient legacy and building sustaining skills into a child's emerging life through the use of storytelling and a few pencil sketches as a remembrance letter to Sophia

**RESILIENT HACKS**

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There is much that I would tell you, Sophia, and there is so little time to do so. You see time is not constant. In the beginning, every heartbeat is a wondrous and life changing moment. These moments slowly become days that ever so slowly become the first years of growth. A unique self emerges, encouraged to laugh, loath to cry and forever driven to prevail. As years pass, you will recognize that time again slows down, great change occurs within a short period of time and each heartbeat again becomes precious. Time is an unspoken bond that the young and old share.

You and I share this bond, Sophia. But, it is not about the beginning, nor the end that I wish to tell you. It is the time between. When you believe you have all of the time in the world. That tomorrow will always come and your body and soul are unconquerable. No, it is not my intent to diminish that belief. It is to sustain it when the tomorrow seems uncertain.





A single breath was your first act in this world as it will be the last. Am I so fragile, you might ask. Rather, you are so strong as to believe the next breath will sustain you a moment longer than the last. If you breathe, you can believe. What you believe becomes what you will do. So, choose carefully your beliefs. The consequences of your beliefs become your legacy, how others remember you.

Look behind me, Sophía. See the path I have walked. That is my legacy, how others will remember me. See where the path is true and the walk was sure. That is where I held to good beliefs. See where the path went astray. That is where I followed false beliefs that were self-defeating. You wonder why we go astray. Change often demands greater courage than following the same belief, however harmful.





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Look to your path, Sophia. Your perception, the way you see your journey, is shaped by your beliefs. Changing belief changes perception, giving you control, an inner strength and courage to change. The next step you take on your journey becomes your future. Is your footing sure or are you led astray by a false belief. Do you have courage to change?

Change comes in steps, as many steps as needed to persist and meet the challenge. Find a reachable goal and follow the steps that gradually and steadily meet the challenge. Persistence brings about change that brings about courage, the belief you can succeed. Change is made in one or many steps. So too is courage made.





Look with me, Sophia. See the path I have walked. See where other paths have crossed mine. Yes, one of those paths is yours. See that our paths have changed direction. You have changed me as I have changed you. We all affect each other. Sometimes these interactions offer to bring about great change to our lives. But, hold true to your good beliefs. Be not affected by those whose beliefs are unworthy. Those who promise hope but foster intolerance and punish the land. Do not fear them. Rather, seek to understand them. We often best treasure the wondrous and miraculous only through experiences with the painful and stolid.

You have walked with me and for a few moments you experienced my life. Empathy opens the lock into the lives of others. You learn of other people from other people. Look to their paths as you did to mine. Do you see we all begin with the same needs, the same desires, encouraged to laugh, loath to cry and forever driven to prevail. Though our experiences shape us to differences, our needs and desires remain much the same. Empathy lets you understand what another experiences from their frame of reference. Then trust can develop by reaching out to engage and provide support.





Look carefully to the path I have walked, Sophia. See where the path was treacherous. See where I stumbled. See where my path was surer, wider, though the footing was poor. This was where someone walked with me. This was someone I trusted. Reaching out to others is not without risk, though risk may have its own rewards. You may find trust in each other.

We need not walk alone, Sophia. Others, my peers, those whom I trust, shape me to interact with the world as we perceive it. We become a community of one, sharing common beliefs. As walks my peer group, my support, my mentors, so I too follow. Choose wisely with whom you surround yourself for they are the shapers of your beliefs.

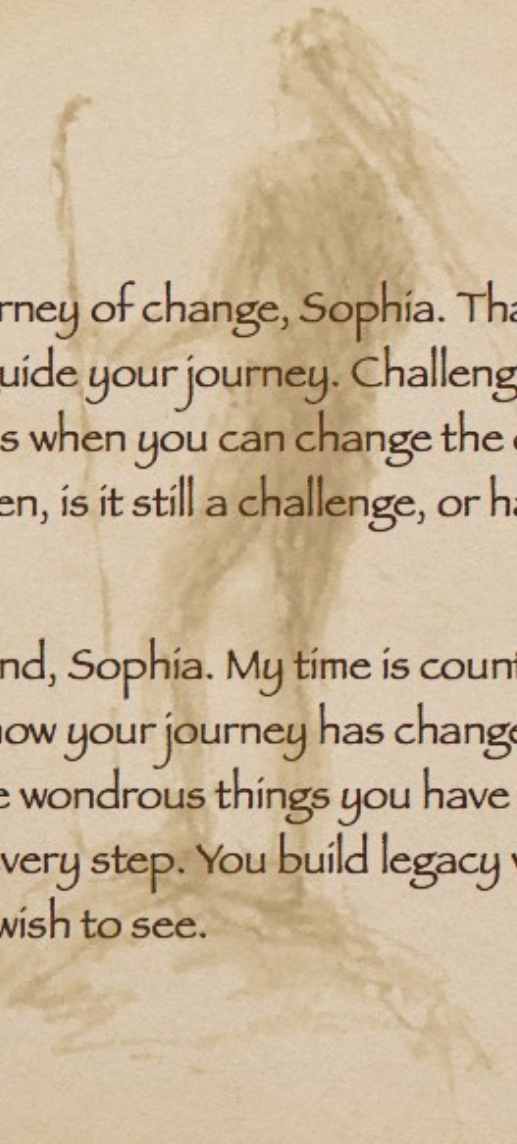




You wonder how I can walk this long path, Sophia. Good beliefs, of virtue, give inner strength. I persist. The strength to continue the journey comes from sustaining my body. I choose to be fit. Fitness is the physical strength that brings awareness of mind and body, of self and needs. This strength is forgiving of my falls, those times when my sight is poor and my footing awash in storms of violent change. I recognize that my body and mind must be strong to survive the journey. I provide myself with proper nourishment and exercise. I choose my nourishment carefully and deliberately to sustain me. I choose my exercise for endurance. I remember to relax and sleep. Fitness gives me the ability to cope with change knowing I have the strength to make change. I can persevere.

My walking stick, you ask. Support comes in many ways. It may be a close group of people who sustain me as I sustain them. Or, it may be a stick that provides support, faith. Whether by a walking stick or the spirit of greatest expectation, my adaptability provides confidence and understanding that I will find an outcome that meets the challenge. When I am unable to change the challenge, I change the way I perceive it. My perception is an expectation of success. My success is a reachable goal, a belief, an attitude.





See that my path is a journey of change, Sophia. That too is your journey. Your imagination and beliefs guide your journey. Challenges bring change to your journey. Remember there are times when you can change the challenge. Other times you must change yourself. Ask then, is it still a challenge, or has it simply become another step in your journey.

Time is our unspoken bond, Sophia. My time is counted in heartbeats. Look once more to your path. See how your journey has changed others. You too are a shaper of others beliefs. See the wondrous things you have accomplished. You have changed the world with every step. You build legacy with every step. Become the change in the world you wish to see.

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