Dear chapters:
The following quotes were excerpted from *How Then Shall We Live?* and can be used in any promotional material you design for your chapter. Some ideas include: a seasonal letter to your donors and grantees; a flyer publicizing an event; printed on stationery or envelope, etc. When crediting Wayne, simply write:

Wayne Muller  
Founder of Bread for the Journey  
from *How Then Shall We Live?*

Ps. Some of the quotes near the end of the document will not be appropriate for BFJ material. I have included them anyway simply because I thought you might appreciate them.

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**Quotes by Wayne Muller**  
**excerpted from**  
*How Then Shall We Live?*  
**Four Simple Questions That Reveal the Beauty and Meaning of our Lives**

Indeed, the value of a single life shines brightly. A single rose, a single star, a single note of sweet music played at the right time—these are things of great beauty and wonder. All that we do becomes embedded in the whole; because of this, our every day—our every word, every act of kindness, love, or beauty—is an invaluable opportunity to contribute to the growth and beauty of all things. With our single life, we change the shape of the universe.

Our actions at work, our decisions about our children and our lovers, our choice of vocation, our use of time, our ability to respond with wisdom and kindness—our every act is an integral part of our spiritual practice, our way of walking on the earth.

The heart of most spiritual practice is simply this: Remember. Remember who you are. Remember what you love. Remember what is sacred. Remember what is true. Remember that you will die, and that this day is a gift. Remember how you wish to live.

To live a day, to care for a single day, is to shape a life. Each day is an opportunity to choose where to place our care. What shall we do today? What simple acts of remembrance will we use to punctuate our time and enrich our walk upon the earth this single day?

…Thus our sorrow becomes our gift. From within our tender hurt there can spring kindness, generosity, and love for others. In our grief and confusion, we may mistakenly believe we have no offering to bring the family of the earth. But mere suffering cannot extinguish the priceless gift of our true nature. As soon as we begin to heal – the instant we experience some degree of inner clarity or spaciousness – in the very next breath, generosity naturally arises. As we feel the measure of our own strength, we simultaneously
experience a natural impulse to share it. This is not faith, this is simple spiritual physics: As we are fed, so do we wish to feed others.

If we can make music or hold a hand or listen or build or love well, these are our gifts. The currency of our kindness flows from what we are, what we love.

A life is made of days. Each day is an opportunity to say something honestly, to make something more beautiful, to create something precious, to give a gift only we can provide for the family of the earth. To dedicate a single act to the healing of others is a day well lived.

Some of us wish to wait till our gift is potent and comprehensive enough to solve all the world’s problems. Seeing that our gift does not stop all the suffering, we decide it is inadequate. But every gift is a drop of water on a stone; every kindness, every flash of color or melody helps us remain hopeful and in balance. Each of us knows some part of the secret, and each of us holds our small portion of the light. We can thrive on the earth only if we each bring what we have and offer it at the family table.

…all life is intimately connected in a web of giving and taking, and as long as we are alive we are an integral part of that web. We cannot live on the earth and not give; we cannot live and not receive.

The fundamental laws of kindness are merciful: they insist that the most beautiful and life-giving acts are those that bring rich and fruitful blessings to both giver and receiver.

“What is my gift”? is not about coercing us into giving more and more, but rather about becoming more mindful of how we are already intimately connected with everything and everyone.

True kindness is rooted in a deep sense of abundance, out of which flows a sense that even as I give, it is being given back to me. We are always giving, we are always receiving. When I am spacious and easy with my offering, I am assuming that it will always return to me in some form. It is a statement of my deep faith and belief – nay, experience – that this is the truth of how things are, an abiding sense that all is provided.

Just as our giving naturally invokes receiving, so can an authentic act of receiving give birth to a rich and generous gift.

When we are resting easily in the rhythm of giving and receiving, it becomes difficult to tell who is the giver and who the receiver.

The Buddha said that if we truly understood the power of giving, we would never let a single meal pass without sharing it. The power of giving is not measured by the size or expense of the gift, but rather in the beautiful freedom that takes birth in a moment of genuine kindness. In a freely offered gift there is nonattachment, love, surrender, a sincere wish for the well-being of another, sympathetic joy, selflessness, effortlessness…

From wherever we stand, if we perceive something necessary, and if we have it, then we can offer it. Giving need be no more complex or difficult than this. We cannot save everyone; we cannot do it all. Often one small gift is all that is required to sow a garden of well-being.
The opportune moment for kindness and generosity seems to present itself clearly, if only we are able to hear and are prepared to respond.

Many of our [Bread for the Journey] projects were started by ordinary people who simply saw a need and felt they had something to offer. There are no guarantees they will work. Some work, some fail. But the success or failure of any single project is far less important than the offering of the gift. The project can always be altered, revamped, resurrected. But a gift not offered dies in the heart.

Bread for the Journey is based on the belief that our healing as individuals is made full and complete through attending to the healing of others, and that each one of us stands in kinship with those who experience economic, emotional, social or physical suffering.

With our every action, word, relationship, and commitment, we slowly and inevitably become what we love.

The more we know about how things work, the more carefully we will walk on the earth. When we see how our words affect our friends and family, we will be careful with our language; when we see how our actions ripple out into our work and our community, we will be more mindful of what we choose to do and not to do; when we see how our thoughts create the inner atmosphere in which we move each day, we will be more aware of which thoughts we give our energy to and which we simply allow to fall away as uninteresting and not useful.

Paul said, “I’ve done so much work to prepare for this moment [of dying]….But I also wish that I could stay here.”

“What would you do if we could give you those ten years? What would your life look like?” I asked.

Paul spoke easily and certainly. “I would be kind. I would live my life with kindness,” he said. “I would be kind to children. I would teach them to be kind, too. This is all I ever really wanted to do, just to be kind, to be loving.”

Beneath all the stories of our past, beneath our joys and sorrows, we have within us an essential nature that is whole and unbroken….If we can take nourishment from this inner strength and wisdom, we will find great peace and courage.

By what star do we navigate our journey on the earth? What we love will shape our days and provide the texture for our inner and outer life.

Each of us has a gift to bring to the table, and the family of the earth yearns to receive it.

Our most fruitful practice is the one that most gently leads us into ourselves just as we are…

I was asked to…name those things that, in spite of abuse, remained strong: the wisdom born of pain, the watchfulness born of hurt, the intuition desperately cultivated in an atmosphere of dishonesty, the generosity born of knowing the true power of kindness, the healing born of attention to sorrow.
For those of us raised in family pain, surrendering into community with others is often difficult and confusing. We may harbor deep ambivalence about being seen and known by others…For us, community is bittersweet. We cannot imagine surrendering into the care of others; yet to live completely alone can bring great sorrow. In separateness, said the Buddha, lies the world’s greatest misery.

Spiritual identity is not something far off, not something we need to go to Tibet to find. It is here, in the way we walk on the earth, the way we see our life, the way we care for ourselves and others. Our true nature is not something extraordinary; in fact, it is quite ordinary, an inevitable portion of our daily life.

Love and sadness are blended together in the waters of our life, and we must drink them together, just as they are. Neither cancels out the other. Love, added to the sadness, makes our grief bittersweet. Sadness, injected into our love, creates a love that burns the heart.

We live in our body, and we live in the presence of the bodies of others…We need to see one another, to touch and be touched, to exchange some gift, some energy, some knowing that can be transmitted only in the physical body, from one to another. It is tangible, yet mystical; physical, yet immeasurable, invisible.

For those close to death, it becomes instantly clear that everything they do in their remaining days is precious. Every conversation, every action, every choice is pregnant with meaning and value. Only those relationships that are fruitful and loving are kept; the rest are allowed to fall away. Every act is a sacrament, every breath a gift. Nothing is taken for granted, nothing wasted…Knowing we will die, how shall we live?

There is a time to act and a time to remain still. There is a time to push and a time to wait. There is a time to engage and a time to retreat. If we can feel the truth of this fundamental law of expansion and contraction of all things, then we will be easy and at peace. And, much to our surprise and delight, we will see that much will be accomplished.

Much of spiritual practice is just this: cutting away what must be cut, and letting remain what must remain. Knowing what to cut—this is wisdom. Being clear and strong enough to make the cut when it is time for things to go—this is courage. Together, the practices of wisdom and courage enable us, day by day and task by task, to gradually simplify our life.

Someone once asked Jesus about the true meaning of the Ten Commandments. If one was unable to follow them all, which single commandment was really the most important one to follow? What should they do? Jesus answered, “Simply this; Love God, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.” This, he said, is all that is required.

Gratefulness slows time.

Our life is not a problem to be solved, it is a gift to be opened. The color of the sky, the song of the bird, a word of kindness, a strain of music, the sun on our face, the companionship of friends, the taste of the sea air, the shape of clouds in summer, the reds of maples in fall—there are so many gifts in a single life. If we are preoccupied with what is missing and what is broken and wrong, we lose the miraculous harvest of all these tiny gifts, piled one upon the other, that accumulate without our acknowledging them. If we listen more carefully for the infinite blessings of a single day, this will not discount or obliterate our
sorrows. But it will help us to remember how strong and rich we can be, even in the midst of suffering. A single word of gratefulness can transform a moment of sorrow into a moment of peace.

Jesus was firm in this declaration: We are the light of the world. We must let our light shine, he insisted, and not hide it under a bushel. Our sorrow does not contaminate our gift. In fact, in my experience the opposite is often true: Our sorrow can break us open, illuminating our gift. From deep within our suffering and loss, we can become more aware, more sensitive, more attentive and kind. From within our hurt we learn to listen more carefully for what is needed; we become exceptionally mindful of the right word, the most precise gesture of compassionate action.

Each of us has a gift to offer the family of the earth. For some of us, that gift appears in a clear, dramatic way; for others, we may stumble from place to place in search of our strength, our talent, our offering. Still, while the size, shape, flavor, and texture of the gift undoubtedly changes from person to person, the certainty of that gift is, in my experience, undeniable.

One way to name our gift is to pay close attention to what we love.

After the death of the Buddha, his followers instituted a practice that continues to this day: Monks must beg each day for their food. They go from house to house with their begging bowl, accepting whatever they are given as their daily bread. Most important, monks are not allowed to keep food overnight. Each day they must trust again in the delicate rhythm of giving and receiving. Within this balance, just as the monks send out their prayers for the healing of all beings, so will food come to them for their nourishment. If they remain empty, like the bowl, ungrasping, then the river of giving and receiving will flow through them.

The gift of life, the gift of love, the gift of the earth – these can never be earned. They are given freely.

There are times when our offering is not necessarily some tangible gift or helpful act, but rather simply a peaceful manner. If we are clear and present, if we are quiet and centered, then others may be nourished simply by our lack of agitation. The world is so agitated that to be in the presence of a single person who is a peace can feel remarkably healing, a great blessing. If we are still, others will come when they need to remember who they are.

Another quiet gift we bring is the gift of simply doing no harm: to refrain from judging ourselves and others, not to use sarcasm or anger to advance our cause, not to be hurtful in our speech or our actions. If we simply refrain from causing suffering, then the limitless potential for natural healing can quietly arise unimpeded.