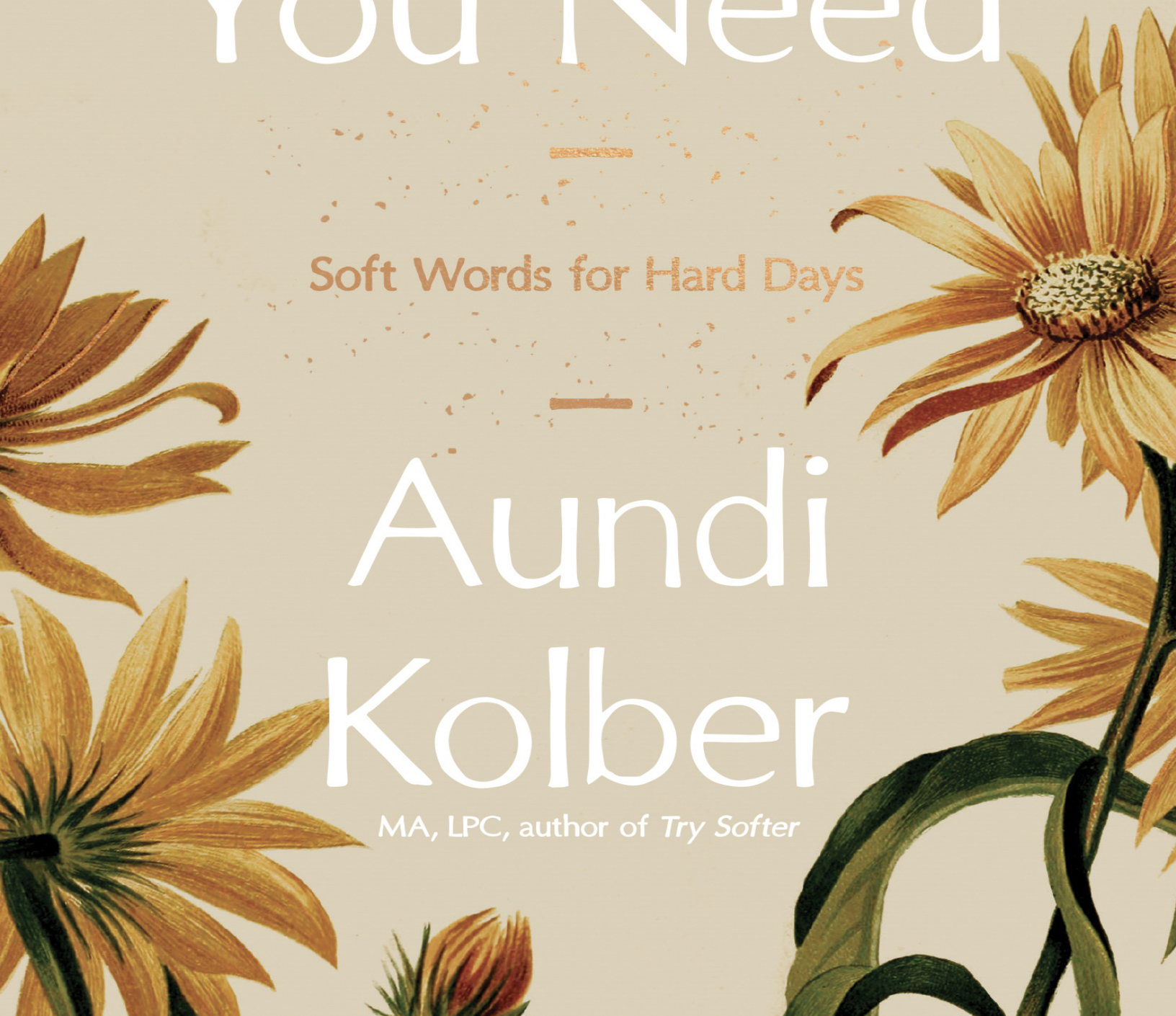


Take What You Need

Soft Words for Hard Days

Aundi
Kolber

MA, LPC, author of *Try Softer*

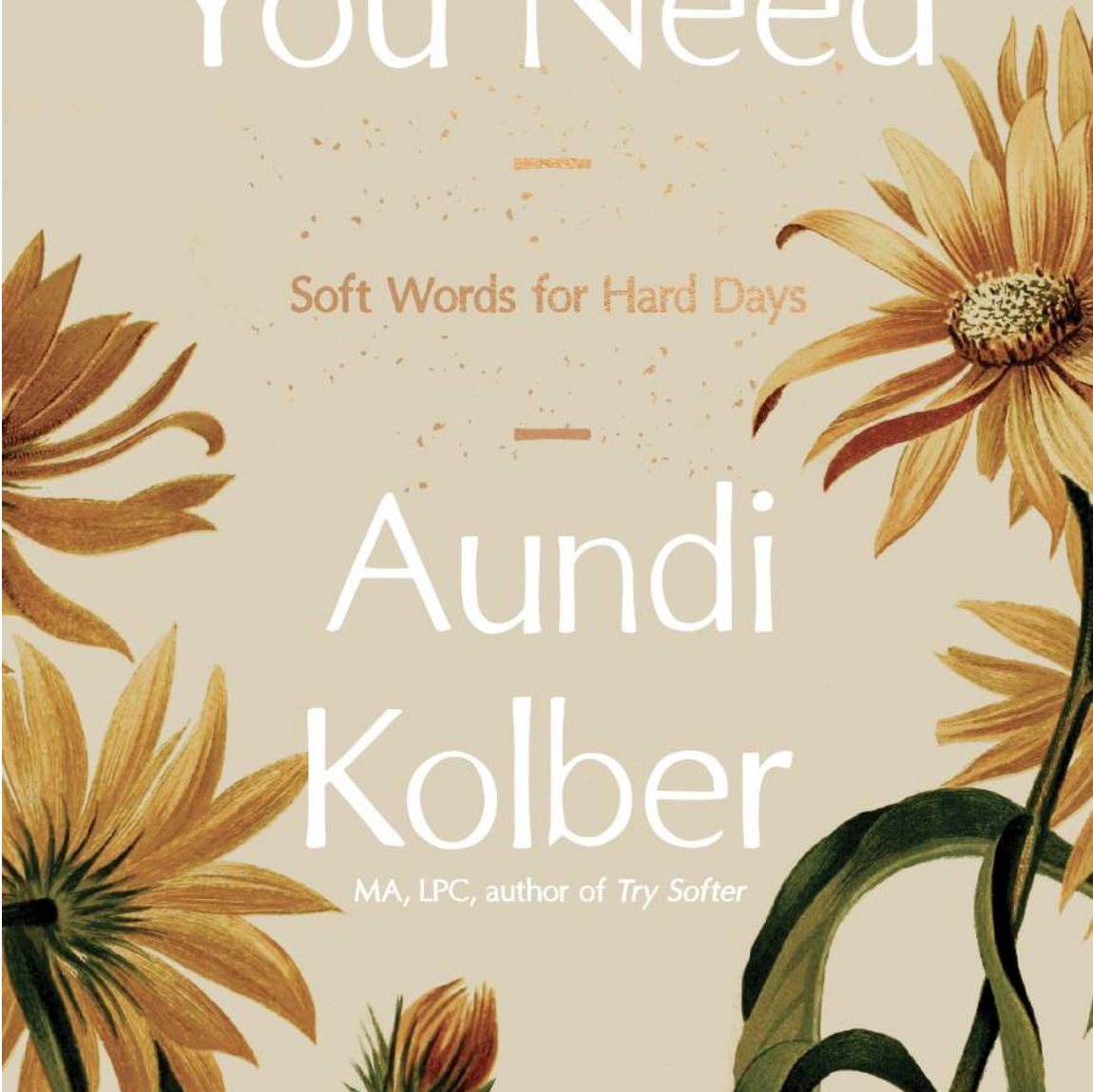


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TO:



WITH HOPE:





Take What You Need

—
Soft Words for Hard Days
—

Aundi
Kolber



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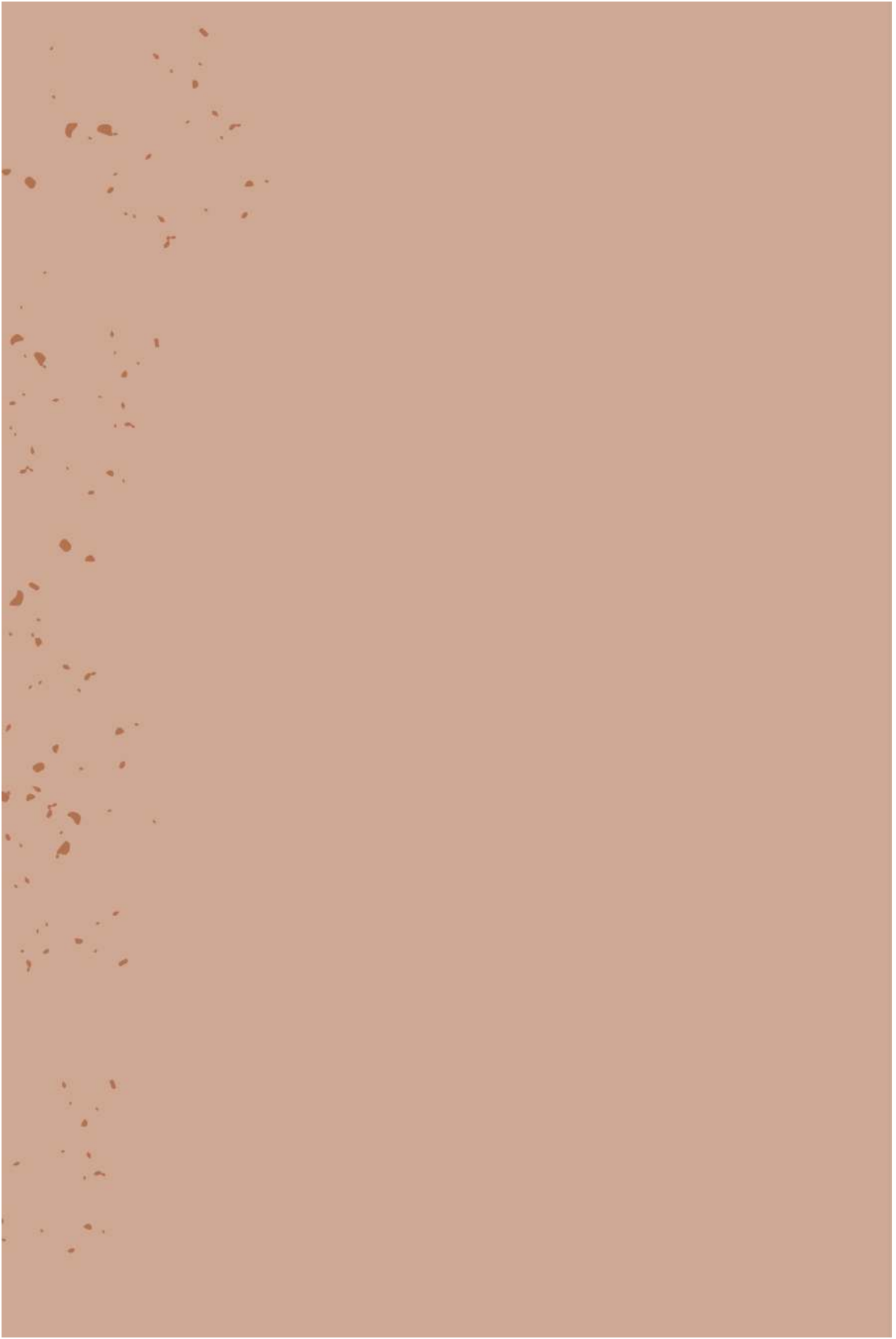
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For you, my dear reader—
may you come to know that your needs matter.



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Introduction



A Note as We Begin

READER, I AM DELIGHTED YOU'RE

HERE. I pray that the pages ahead will serve as a soft spot to land and perhaps even a place to gather courage for the hard, beautiful work of being human.

Maybe you wonder what I mean by *take what you need*. As someone who navigated a traumatic childhood by becoming hyperattuned to what others wanted from me, I once feared making a decision that would displease someone else. This was certainly not the only way I adapted to the trauma I experienced, but I often depended on this strategy to protect me. I wanted to keep the peace at all costs, so instead of *taking what I needed*, I took what I perceived others thought was okay for me to need. "Do you need help?" "Do you want to stay or go?" "Which restaurant sounds best?" Simple questions like these would fill me with anxiety and then a sinking

feeling as I set aside my own preferences in favor of what I thought I *must* say. I unconsciously transferred the terror I felt toward my father to almost everyone else, following the template he'd given me about having needs and a voice. I learned to bypass my body, mind, and spirit very early as a strategy to survive. The shame I carried for even having needs was profound.

In my work as both a therapist and trauma survivor, I've learned how incredibly common it is for us to internalize the belief that we don't have a choice or voice in our own experience. These misperceptions frequently arise in the aftermath of actually having bits of agency ripped away. This is often the cost of unresolved trauma: that even after the event ends, our bodies still carry the imprint of the pain like a thousand splinters never removed. It's not only trauma survivors who silence their inner voices. After trying to survive in a world filled with pain and destruction sometimes do so as well. How often do we disconnect from our internal compass—the part of us that knows if we're thirsty, hungry, sad, or alone—just to navigate all that comes our way? We've found that it's possible to re-claim connection to our God-given bodies and needs; in fact, it's foundational to healing and repair. It's more than okay to receive what we need so that we may participate with God in tending the wounds underneath.

I now recognize how essential it is to learn to tune in to the still, small voice inside of us that supports us in discernment. This is where we listen for *God with us*. This is what helps us know how to love our neighbors with integrity and authenticity. And this is where we can attend to the embedded wisdom placed within us. In my clients, my readers, my loved ones, and myself, I have witnessed this hope-giving truth: As we return agency, affirm dignity, and honor our ability to listen to our God-given needs, we tap into the softness and strength of healing. We create space for the work I do as both a therapist and author as a sort of hospitality—a way in which I can offer nourishment where there may be fear, pain, loss, or trauma. Many of us are starved for hope, care, attunement, and compassion. Many of us are hungry, but for more than just food. Through the years, I have witnessed and experienced this feeling of lack; I know how it aches to be in need in body, mind, or spirit. So what I can offer is what has been given to me in my own healing. Our God promises to set a table with good things for us (see Psalm 23:5-6), and my desire is to follow His example. I want others to know that not only can we partake of all the sustenance the Lord provides, but we can do so in the way and at the pace that will actually

support us. I invite *you*, dear reader, to take what
you need in the pages ahead.

When the day is long. When you are afraid. When you don't know what to say to someone you love. When you feel alone. When you're questioning everything. When you wonder if God is with you. When the bottom falls out. When you don't know what's next. When you do something courageous. When you don't know how to have hope. When you need to know you can't be softer. When you're learning to show up for yourself. When you're learning to listen to your body, mind, and soul. I hope you will honor your pace, engage what's helpful . . . and take what you need, in the way that you need.

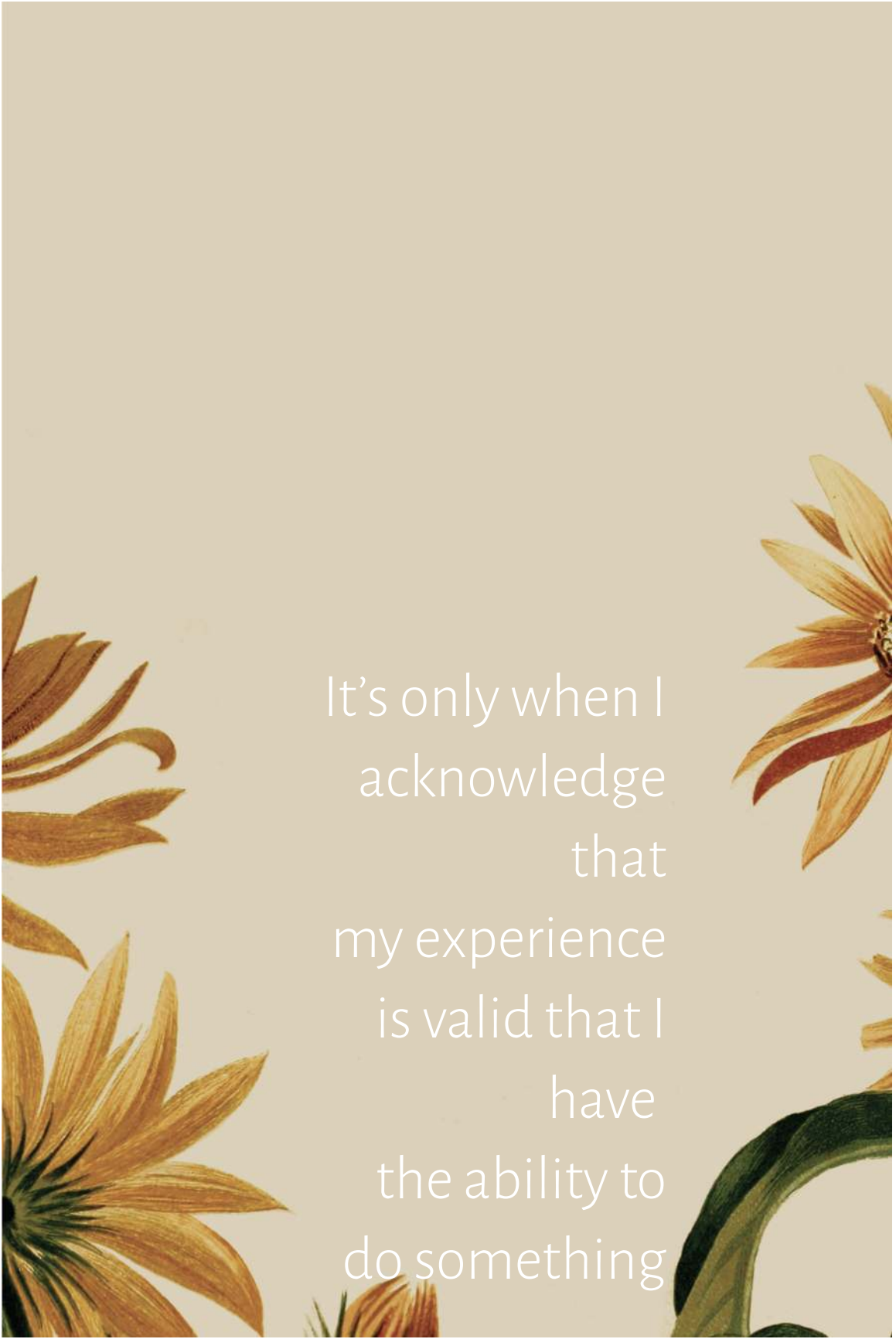
With deep hope,

Aundi



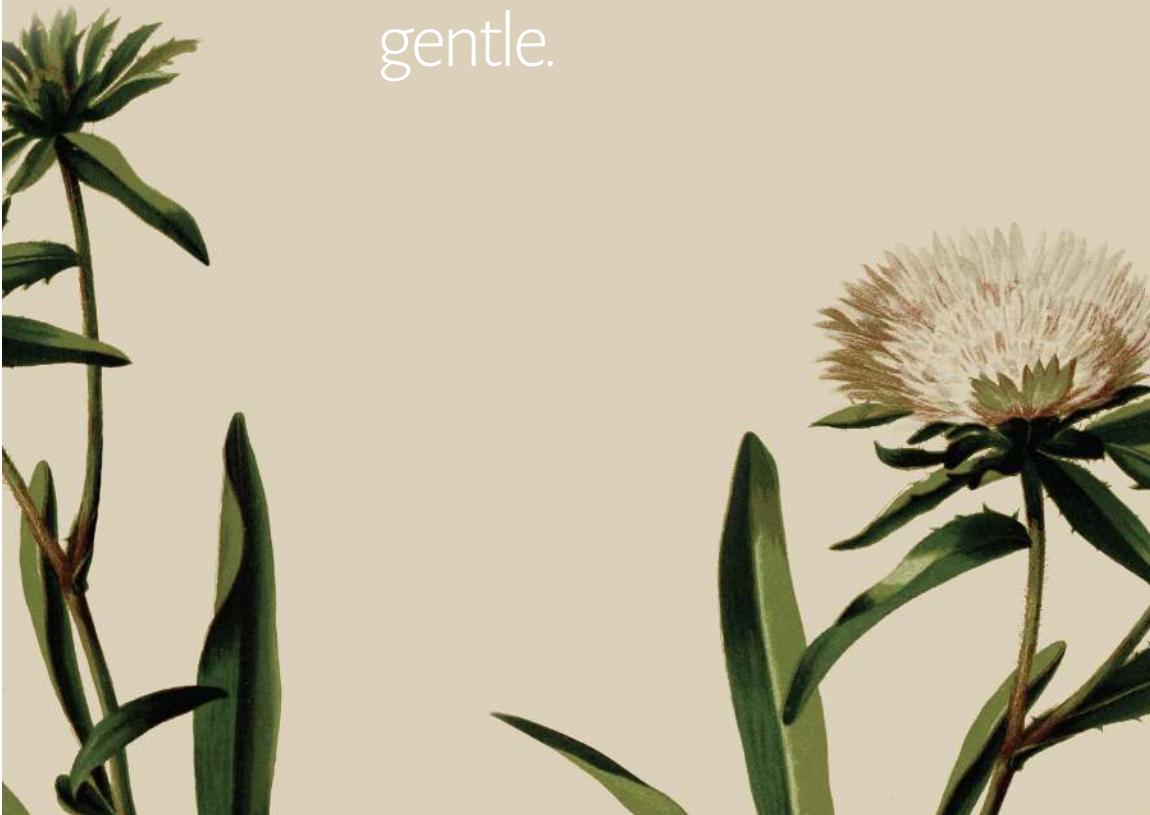
Take What You Need When . . .
Exhaustion Looms Large

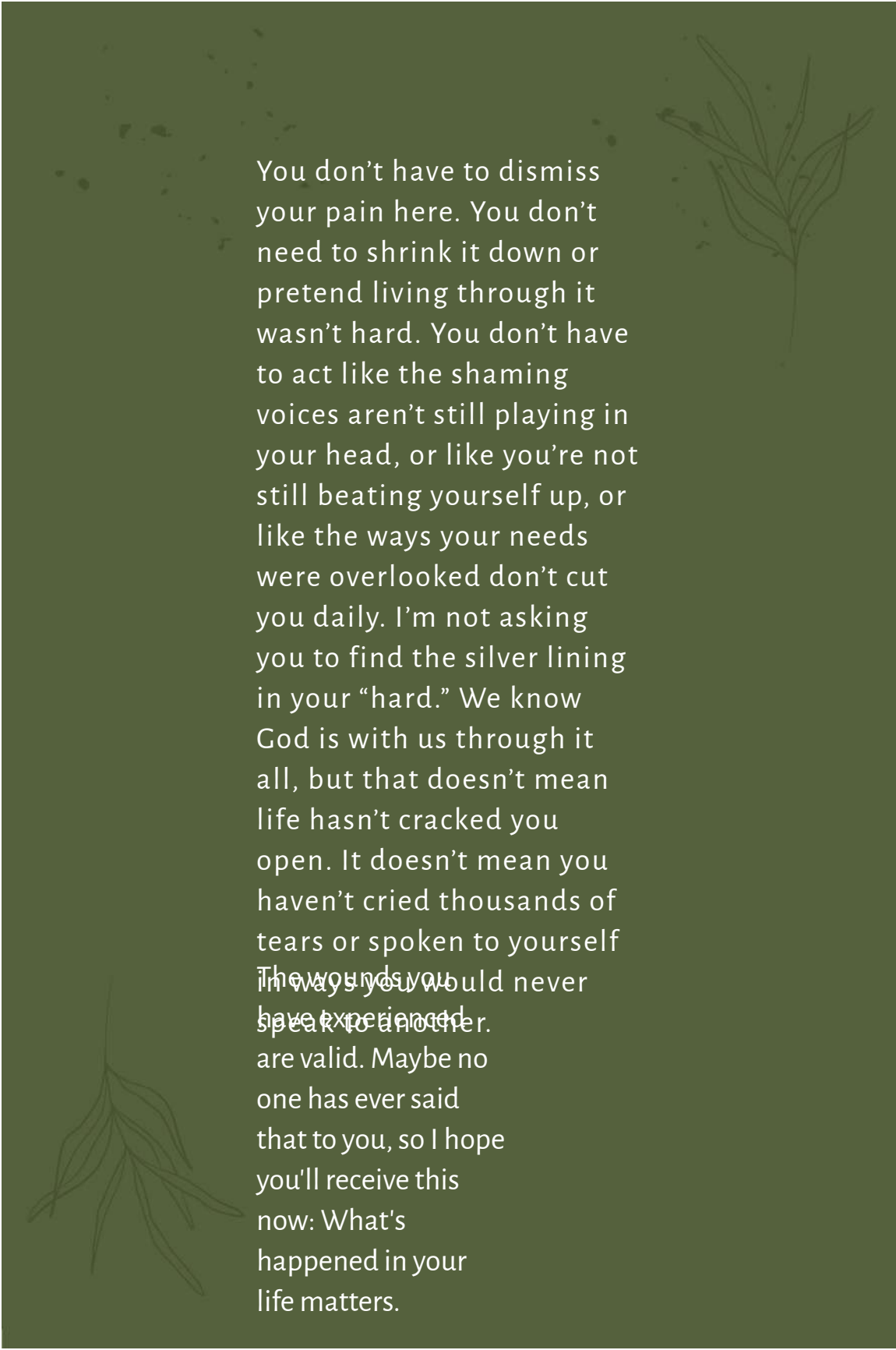
Perhaps you, too, know
what it is like to feel
overextended,
overburdened, and
overwrought, desperately
clinging to the idea that if
you just push hard enough,
if you just try a little harder,
you'll be able to regain
control, soothe your
anxious mind, and achieve
some measure of success.
productivity and
others' opinions, so
we learn to ignore
the messages our
bodies are giving us.



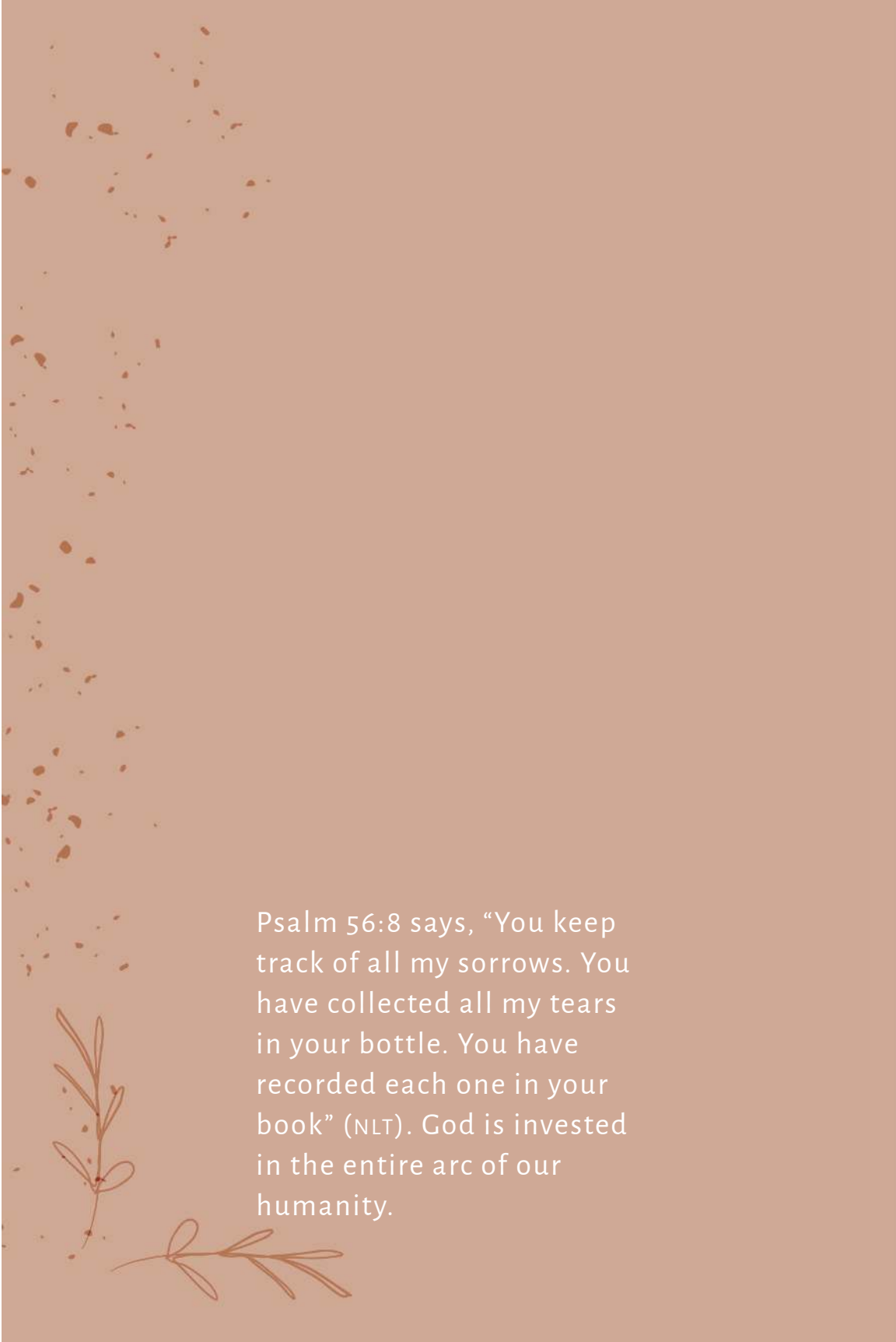
It's only when I
acknowledge
that
my experience
is valid that I
have
the ability to
do something

I believe
God's heart
for us is
outrageously
gentle.






You don't have to dismiss your pain here. You don't need to shrink it down or pretend living through it wasn't hard. You don't have to act like the shaming voices aren't still playing in your head, or like you're not still beating yourself up, or like the ways your needs were overlooked don't cut you daily. I'm not asking you to find the silver lining in your "hard." We know God is with us through it all, but that doesn't mean life hasn't cracked you open. It doesn't mean you haven't cried thousands of tears or spoken to yourself the ways you would never speak to another. The wounds you have experienced are valid. Maybe no one has ever said that to you, so I hope you'll receive this now: What's happened in your life matters.

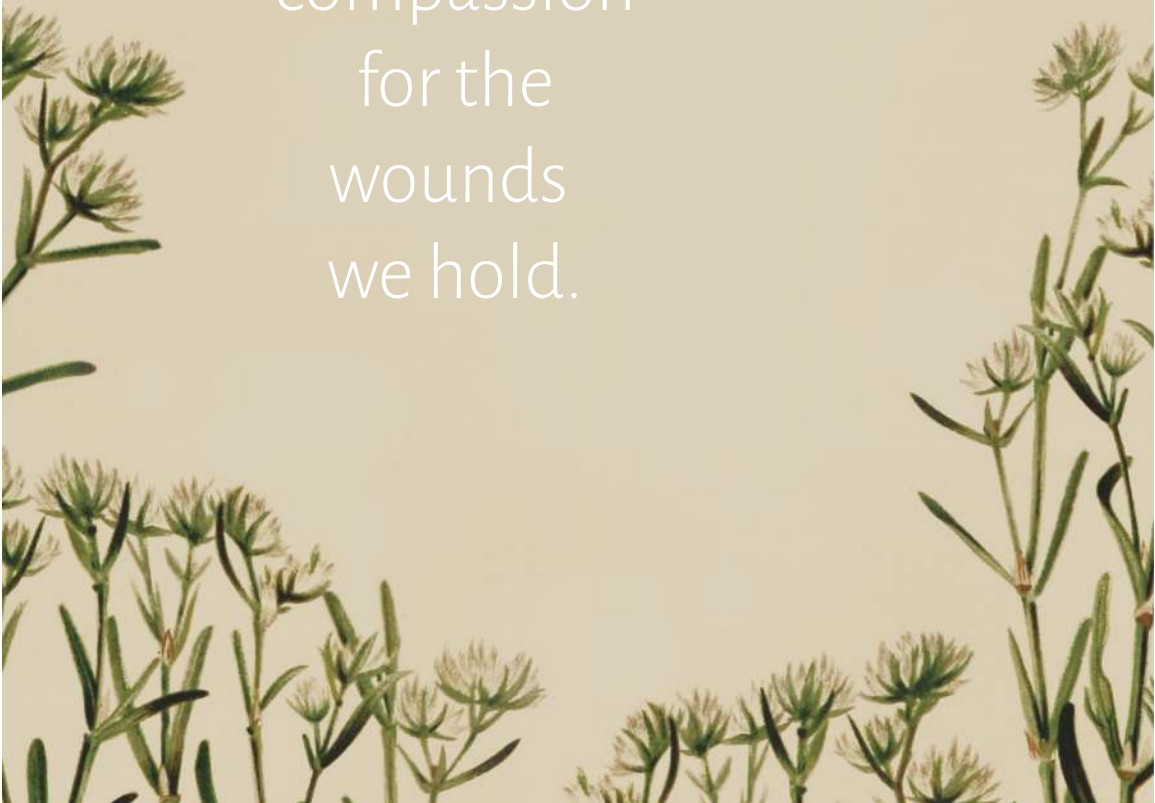


Psalm 56:8 says, “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book” (NLT). God is invested in the entire arc of our humanity.



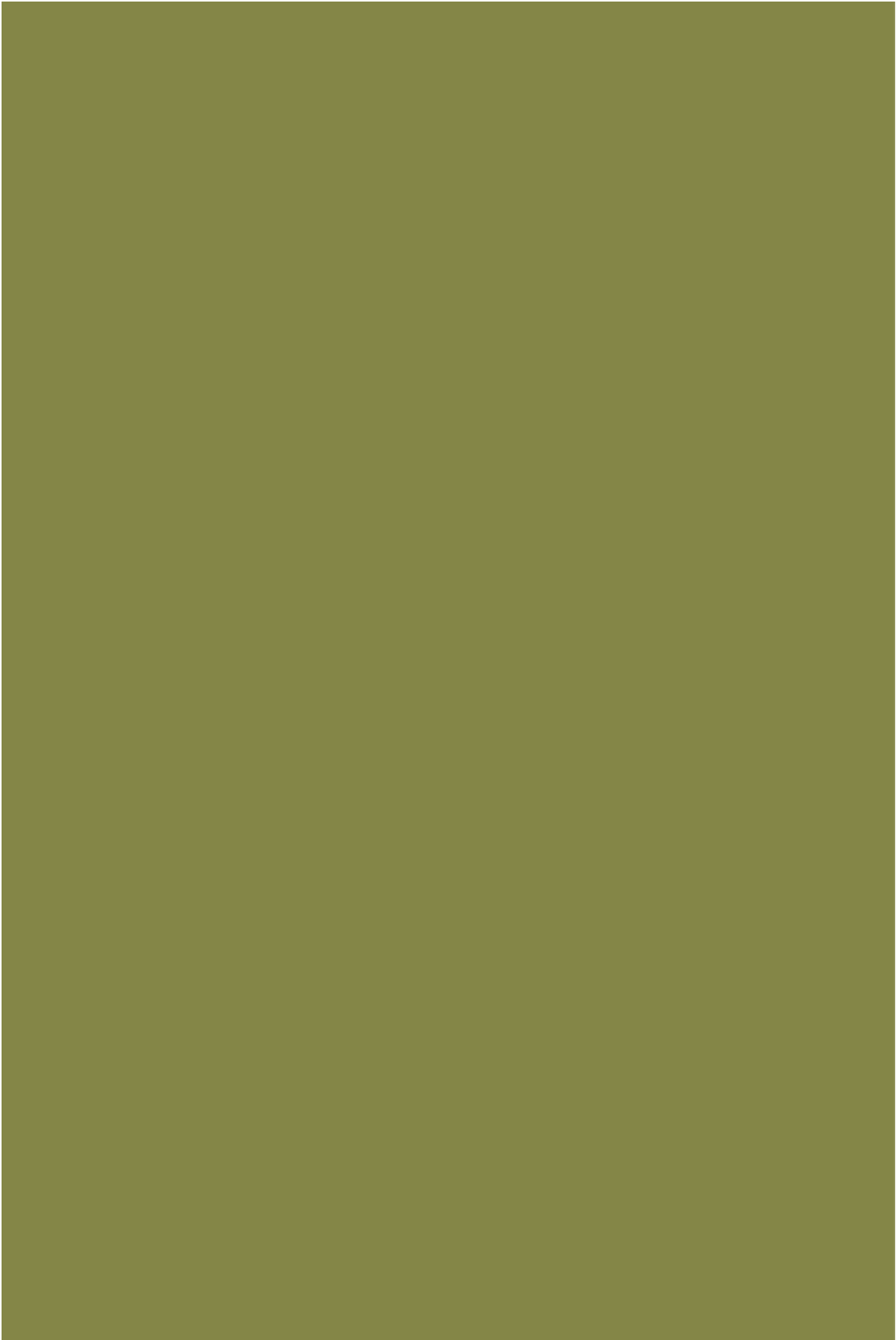
When we
deny the
reality of
our
experiences,
we don't
become
more of
who God
designed us
to be,
but less.

We can
learn to lean
in with
compassion
for the
wounds
we hold.



Dear one, I'm sorry you've experienced events that required you to survive rather than live. I'm sorry you've often felt alone and unseen. I'm sorry you've had to be so strong. And I'm sorry that you've never felt safe to be gentle with the parts of yourself that have needed tenderness so badly.





About the Author

AUNDI KOLBER is a licensed professional counselor (LPC), speaker, and author of the groundbreaking *Try Softer* as well as *Try Softer Guided Journey*, *Strong like Water*, and *Strong like Water Guided Journey*. Aundi is the owner of Kolber Counseling, LLC, established in 2009. She has received additional training in her specialization of trauma- and body-centered therapies, including the highly researched and regarded eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy.

Aundi is passionate about the integration of faith and psychology, and is a sought-after expert in both faith and secular settings. She regularly speaks at local and national events, and she has appeared on *Good Morning America* as well as podcasts such as *The Lazy Genius* with Kendra Adachi, *Typology*, and *The Next Right Thing* with Emily P. Freeman. Aundi reaches an audience numbering in the tens of thousands via email and social

media. You can find her at [@aundikolber](#) on Instagram or on her website at [aundikolber.com](#). As a survivor of trauma and a lifelong learner, Aundi brings hard-won knowledge around the work of change, the power of redemption, and the beauty of experiencing God *with* us in our pain. She is happily married to her best friend, Brendan, and is the proud mom of Matia and Jude.