

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD



5 PILLARS FOR TRANSFORMING YOURSELF AND HUMANITY

*A practical guide from Baha'i-inspired, changemaker rapper
Colby Jeffers*

What does it really mean to build a better world?

Through story, reflection, and action, ***Building a Better World*** invites readers to align their inner life with outward service and become protagonists of meaningful change.

Inside this book, you'll explore:

- 5 pillars for personal and collective transformation
- Stories from music, service, family, and community life
- Reflection questions and action steps to apply concepts
- A vision of building a better world rooted in unity, justice, and service



Colby Jeffers is a rapper, educator, and changemaker from Phoenix, Arizona. A member of the Bahá'í Faith, he creates uplifting hip hop music centered on themes like unity, justice, love, spirituality, and service to humanity. Through his albums, writing, and his 'Better World' concert series, Colby aims to inspire individuals and communities to work toward collective transformation. He lives in Phoenix with his wife, Mallory, and their three sons—Noble, Justice, and Cyrus.

An invitation to build—not just dream about—a better world, together.

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

5 Pillars for Transforming
Yourself and Humanity

COLBY JEFFERS

CONTENTS

ABOUT ME.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	3
WARM UP: LET'S TALK ABOUT A BETTER WORLD.....	9
PILLAR 1: BETTER KNOWLEDGE.....	15
PILLAR 2: BETTER PRINCIPLES.....	31
PILLAR 3: BETTER CREATIVITY.....	47
PILLAR 4: BETTER MOVEMENT.....	73
PILLAR 5: BETTER POWER SOURCE.....	89
CONCLUSION: A BETTER WORLD STARTS WITHIN.....	109
LET'S BUILD A BETTER WORLD—TOGETHER.....	113
A VISUAL JOURNEY.....	115
MY DISCOGRAPHY.....	131
BETTER WORLD ALBUM - SONG LYRICS.....	133
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	171
ABOUT THE BAHAI FAITH.....	175
NOTES.....	177
REFLECTIONS & NOTES.....	179

ABOUT ME

My name is Colby Jeffers. I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, and I've spent the better part of my life using hip hop as a tool to **uplift, educate, and inspire humanity to contribute to the betterment of the world.**

As a rapper and changemaker, I've released several albums of music that reflect themes I hold dear—**oneness, unity, justice, love, spirituality, and service to humanity.** Whether performing at home in Phoenix or touring across the country, I strive to create experiences that move hearts and spark reflection.

My creative work is inspired by a blend of influences—hip hop pioneers, changemakers, and faith-driven artists—and I'm constantly working to sharpen my craft so that I can use my voice to **serve a higher purpose.**

I'm also a member of the *Bahá'í Faith*, which deeply informs both my personal life and artistic expression. Its teachings on the oneness of humanity, the harmony of science and religion, and the importance of unity, justice, and service have profoundly shaped my vision and work. The *Bahá'í Writings* also place great value on the arts—as a means of elevating the human spirit and advancing civilization—which has inspired me to see music not just as entertainment, but as a **tool for spiritual growth and social transformation.**

Outside of music, I'm a **husband and father**, and I'm actively involved in community-building efforts, especially among youth. Through the *Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program* and my rap writing workshops, I've had the privilege of mentoring young people to recognize their own potential to transform their lives and communities. In 2020, I was honored to receive the City

of Phoenix's *Martin Luther King* "Living The Dream" award, which affirmed the power of combining **artistry with service**.

This book, like my *Better World* concert series, is an **invitation—to reflect, to grow, and to act**. It's a glimpse into my journey and a call for us all to rise together in *building a better world*.

INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this book, there's a good chance you care deeply about this world and the people in it. The current state of humanity—with so much injustice, division, and suffering—is sure to bring sadness, anger, and frustration to any conscientious soul. But this heartfelt concern also **demand**s a response.

***What can be done to improve the state of the world?
What can I do to contribute to the betterment of humankind?***

If you're someone who sees yourself—or aspires to become—an active participant in building a better world, then this book is for you.

Building a better world isn't something for a few people to work on while the rest of humanity watches. **It's the responsibility of all of us. It's why we were created.** Regardless of age, race, nationality, gender, religion, or any other aspect of our identity, first and foremost, we are human beings—with souls—created by an All-Loving, All-Powerful Creator. That Creator calls us to contribute to the advancement of human civilization and has blessed each of us with a unique set of talents and capacities to develop and offer in service to humanity.

Since becoming awakened to this reality, **my life has been completely transformed.** Contributing to the betterment of the world is my dominating passion and guiding light in all of my roles—as a husband, father, artist, community member, and servant of humanity. While the journey has been full of tests and challenges, it has also brought tremendous personal growth and a continual flow of divine confirmations.

Whether you're new to this journey or have been walking the path

of service for some time, I hope this book offers **fresh insight and inspiration** for your own efforts to build a better world.

For me, this book has been a long time coming.

While I've come to discover that communication is one of the gifts God has blessed me with, I wasn't always conscious of it. In fact, I was an incredibly quiet and reserved adolescent. *Fear of rejection and not fitting in* caused me to rarely speak up in school or group settings. But as I grew older, I slowly began to realize that when I used my words to communicate, **they had power**.

I consistently received high marks on my essays and writing-based projects in school. I was praised for my communication skills in sales, conversations, and presentations at work. And eventually, this gift found its way into a passion for music. Now several albums into my musical journey, I've realized that while I love refining rhyme schemes, flow, and wordplay, **what I value most is clearly conveying a lyrical message that educates your mind, uplifts your soul, and inspires you to build a better world**.

After over 10 years of making music, in 2024, I made the conscious decision to pursue my long-time dream of turning music into a career—striving to make a living through my art. I turned to God in prayer, asking Him to open the doors and guide the way.

As I reflected on the condition of society and my efforts as an artist, I returned to those essential questions:

***What can be done to improve the state of the world?
What can I do to contribute to the betterment of humankind?***

From one perspective, it feels like the world is falling apart. But from a spiritual lens—particularly through the Baha'i teachings I've embraced in my life—what we're experiencing isn't only destruction. **It's the necessary disintegration of old systems**

that no longer serve humanity, making way for the birth of something new. Something better.

It was from this place that the *Better World* campaign and concert tour was born.

I felt called to create spaces where communities could come together, connect, reflect, and be inspired through music that aims to make the world a better place. Thus far, the concert tour has traveled through dozens of cities, bringing together thousands of participants. It has been one of the most powerful experiences of my life—and yet it feels like the momentum is just beginning.

I've been striving to operate in a mode of learning, continuously refining the concert experience to maximize its positive impact. The concert blends uplifting musical performance with elevated conversations about building a better world. It includes a presentation of **Five Pillars for building a better world**, inspired by the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and my personal experiences, along with a collection of spiritually uplifting songs.

The feedback has been incredibly encouraging. Attendees have described the *Better World* concert as:

“Uplifting.”

“Joyful.”

“Spiritually energizing.”

“Educational.”

“Empowering.”

“Inspiring.”

On multiple occasions, audience members have requested that the ideas presented in the concert be documented in book format. And as someone who loves creating—and who believes in harnessing the power of communication to uplift, educate, and inspire—I knew in my heart *I had to respond to the call.*

That's why I wrote this book.

Through my journey as a husband, father, rapper, youth mentor, and member of the Bahá'í Faith, I've come to believe that *building a better world is not only possible—it's already in progress*. It's happening every day through the choices we make, the way we treat each other, and the way we align our lives with spiritual and moral principles.

As a member of the Bahá'í Faith, my music, writing, and service are deeply inspired by its teachings—especially the call to **unity, justice, and service to humanity**. Throughout this book, you'll see quotes from the Bahá'í Writings that have moved and shaped me. I share them not to preach, but simply as words that have guided my path, in the hope they may offer *insight or inspiration* to you, too—no matter your background or beliefs.

Of course, the thoughts I offer throughout this book are solely my own individual reflections and hold no official authority. They are drawn from my personal study and lived experience, and are not presented as official interpretations or positions of the Bahá'í Faith.

This book is structured around five pillars—five key areas I believe we can strengthen to become more effective agents of change in our families, communities, and the world. These pillars are grounded in spiritual insight, lived experience, and a belief in our collective capacity to **grow, create, and uplift**.

Here's what you'll find inside:

- **Five core pillars** for building a better world, each one grounded in spiritual principles
- **Real-life reflections and stories** to bring those principles to life
- **Prompts and practices** for you to reflect and take action
- Lyrics from songs I perform during the *Better World* concert

This book is a **conversation**. A **collaboration**. A **journey we take together**.

I'm sincerely grateful you're reading this. I hope it resonates with you and proves worth your time. But most of all, **I hope you finish it feeling more inspired, more empowered, and more committed to becoming the person—and building the world—you were created for.**

WARM UP: LET'S TALK ABOUT A BETTER WORLD

An Invitation to Reflect

Before we dive into the Five Pillars, I want to begin the same way I start every *Better World* concert—by asking a few simple but profound questions.

These questions open the door for **dialogue, connection, and reflection**. They're not just warm-ups—they're *soul-level invitations*. The kind that help us look at the world honestly and think deeply about our role in it.

Take a moment to sit with each one. You might grab a journal or write directly in this book. The more **thoughtfulness and intention** you bring to your reflections, the more you'll open the door to insight, growth, and meaningful transformation.

This is the beginning of a conversation that continues throughout the book—and beyond.

Question 1: What are the biggest obstacles currently blocking humanity from building a better world? What do you see in the world today that seems to stand in the way of peace, unity, justice, or progress? What systems, mindsets, or habits might be keeping us stuck?

Your Reflection:

Some reflections from my own journey...

During my concerts, I've heard people say things like: *greed, racism, political polarization, apathy, materialism, or a lack of spiritual awareness.*

For me personally, one of the biggest obstacles I've come to recognize is **disunity**—this tendency we have to divide ourselves into “us” and “them.” When we lose sight of our shared humanity, it becomes easier to justify systems of inequality, injustice, or indifference.

But the good news is: *if these are human-made problems, then with humility, unity, and higher guidance, we can also be part of the solution.*

Question 2: What does humanity need most, right now, to build a better world? Think about our collective needs. What kinds of values, attitudes, or changes in perspective might help us move toward healing and unity?

Your Reflection:

Some thoughts I've gathered along the way...

This question often sparks answers like:

love, spiritual education, unity, justice, truthfulness, servant leadership, hope, or compassion.

In my own heart, I believe we need a **spiritual revolution**—a renewal of purpose and principle that goes beyond surface-level change. *Humanity is craving meaning and direction.* I believe the times are calling us not only to return to spiritual foundations, but also to rise with **new understanding—anchored in unity, guided by purpose, and open to transformation.**

Question 3: How can humanity build a better world? This question zooms out from what's wrong to what's possible. We just reflected on *what* humanity needs. Now let's think about *how* change actually happens? What kind of action—or transformation—is needed?

Your Reflection:

Some insights I've found powerful...

I've heard people share about:

grassroots community building, youth empowerment, spiritual education, music and the arts, social justice movements, environmental stewardship, and prayer.

Personally, I believe it takes **both inner and outer transformation**. We need to align our hearts with higher principles, and then bring those principles into our families, communities, and systems.

Question 4: What are some of your noble aspirations in life that contribute to building a better world? Let's bring it close to home. This is about you. What dreams, goals, or gifts do you hold that could be used to uplift others? What does your soul long to do?

Your Reflection:

A few thoughts from my heart...

This question lights people up. I've heard aspirations like: *becoming a teacher, creating music with a message, building a vibrant community, raising kind children, launching a meaningful initiative, mentoring youth, or using your voice to amplify the stories and needs of others.*

For me, I've come to see my noble aspiration as being a **connector**—someone who uses the power of music and spiritual insight to bring people together, awaken the spirit within, and help reconnect us with the Source of our true selves. *I want to be a channel for light. And I want to help others believe they can be one, too.*

These questions aren't just philosophical—they're *personal*. They help us tune into the world's needs and our own calling at the same time.

Thank you for reflecting. Thank you for caring. The fact that you took the time to think about these questions already says something powerful about *who you are* and *what you're capable of*.

So now, with hearts open and spirits stirred, let's dive into the Five Pillars—**core areas for building a better world**, rooted in spiritual truth and brought to life through action, creativity, and community.

PILLAR 1

BETTER KNOWLEDGE

*“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.
Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures,
and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”¹*
— Bahá’u’lláh

*“Knowledge is as wings to man’s life, and a ladder for his ascent.
Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone.”²*
— Bahá’u’lláh

Exploring the Pillar: Better Knowledge

The betterment of the world begins with a single spark: **the awakening of knowledge within each soul**. Every human being is like a mine—within which lie gems of potential, gifts, and spiritual qualities that, when discovered and refined through education, can shine forth to benefit not only the individual but the whole of humanity.

Knowledge is transformative. It empowers us to ask questions, to investigate reality, to build technologies, create art, explore science, and strengthen our communities. It allows us to imagine something better—and begin building it.

But knowledge comes in many forms—and to be truly transformative, it must be **holistic**.

We often associate education with academic learning: reading,

writing, math, science, technology, etc. While these are essential, they are not, by themselves, sufficient. When it comes to building a better world, there's one type of knowledge that we might say is the most important.

There are different ways to describe this type of knowledge, often called *spiritual* or *moral education*. It's the knowledge that speaks to the heart and soul of who we are as human beings, addressing the most essential questions, such as: *Why are we here? What is our purpose? How should we treat one another? What does it mean to live a meaningful life?*

What's beautiful is that the answers to these questions are not hidden. In fact, they are **widely accessible to all of us**. Throughout history, Divine Messengers have appeared in every part of the world to illuminate humanity with spiritual truths—with sacred guidance on how to live our lives.

Each appearance of a Messenger of God—whether *Abraham*, *Zoroaster*, *Krishna*, *Moses*, *Buddha*, *Jesus*, *Muhammad*, *the Báb*, or *Bahá'u'lláh*—is like the arrival of spring after a long winter. **These spiritual springtimes bring about a blossoming of hearts, a renewal of civilization, and the awakening of new capacities within humanity.**

Though their names and rituals may differ, **their truths are shared**—especially in how we can cultivate our spiritual and moral potential, and contribute to the betterment of the world. *Light from the same Sun.*

This realization reframes what *education* truly means. It's not just about filling our minds with facts. It's about **refining our character, deepening our purpose, and aligning our actions with the greater good**. It's about seeing ourselves as part of a *larger human story*.

So if we wish to build a better world, we must prioritize **better knowledge**—not just information, but *wisdom*. Not just success,

but *significance*. We must educate not only our intellects, but also our **hearts**.

My Story: Better Knowledge

Growing up, I always did pretty well in school—at least when it came to grades. While I certainly had my share of struggles like most kids do, particularly in terms of being quite shy and reserved in my early adolescence and youth, academics came fairly naturally to me and gave me a sense of direction and accomplishment. I maintained a 4.0 GPA through high school and earned a full scholarship to study *Global Business* with a focus in *Marketing* at Arizona State University. There, I continued to excel academically, graduating with a 4.0 GPA as well. At the time, I didn't think too deeply about what *knowledge* actually meant. I was driven more by a desire to succeed—checking the boxes, passing the tests, and making my way toward a “*successful*” future.

Looking back, I've come to recognize that the traditional education system often emphasizes **performance over purpose**. While I was thriving academically, there wasn't much focus on helping students build meaningful friendships, uncover their deeper passions, or learn how to use their gifts in service to others. Even upon graduating college, I honestly hadn't really reflected on the **deeper purpose of knowledge**—why I should be seeking it, what it was ultimately for, or how it could be used to contribute to the betterment of the world.

Though I was raised in a Bahá'í family and had internalized some key spiritual concepts like the oneness of God, religion, and humanity, I wouldn't say I was fully living those teachings in a conscious way. But something began to shift in my early twenties. A few significant experiences sparked what I now see as a major transformation in how I understood knowledge—not just as a tool for personal achievement, but as a **means to understand the world and contribute to its betterment**.

One of those key experiences was a service trip with *International Student Volunteers* to Costa Rica during the summer of 2009, just after graduating college, where I spent a few weeks immersed in community and environmental projects. It was the first time I had focused entirely on service—not for pay, not for recognition, but simply to help others. That experience stirred something deep within me. A seed that had been planted in my heart from my Bahá'í upbringing—that *serving humanity is the highest expression of our energies*—began to sprout. The joy and fulfillment I experienced nourished that seed, and **I could feel something beginning to shift in me.**

Later that year, I applied for a promotion at *Discover Financial Services*, where I was working at the time, and was turned down. After receiving the news, I remember thinking to myself, *Do I want to stay on this corporate path? Or is it time for a change?* The disappointment became an invitation to reflect more deeply on the direction of my life.

Around that time, I had a conversation with my grandfather Ken. He listened closely as I shared my dilemma, sat quietly for a moment, and then offered a simple but powerful piece of advice: *“It seems a door closed. Well, education can only open doors. Maybe think about going back to school?”* That encouragement set me on a search for graduate programs. I knew I wanted to pursue something more meaningful—**something aligned with my desire to contribute to positive change.**

As I scrolled through the various options, nothing really stood out—until I came across a program titled *Master’s in Social Justice and Human Rights*. It immediately jumped off the screen. I dove into the description, and everything I read spoke directly to my soul. I remember thinking to myself, *This sounds like a program that will help me do something to change the world!* That realization gave me clarity, and I moved forward with applying. Enrolling in that program became another major turning point.

Graduate school helped me fall in love with learning in a new way. I began reading books—not just to fulfill assignments, but out of a **genuine desire to understand the world more deeply**. As we explored complex texts and “deconstructed” them in class discussions, I found myself especially drawn to those that examined the most pressing challenges facing humanity, particularly through the lens of justice.

This deeper understanding created another shift in me. I wasn’t just learning for the sake of knowledge—I was learning in a way that was **awakening a desire to act**. I started to see how understanding itself could be a powerful motivator for change. The more I understood the injustices and imbalances shaping society, the more compelled I felt to do something about it.

My transformation continued to accelerate. A friend introduced me to *AmeriCorps*—a national service program where individuals dedicate a year to full-time community service—and as I read about it, *it was speaking to my soul*. *AmeriCorps*’ mission—to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering—resonated deeply with me. It felt like another clear step toward fulfilling my desire to make a meaningful, positive impact in the world.

I applied, was accepted, and decided to transition from my job in the corporate business world to spend the next year serving full time as a teacher in adult education with Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County, an organization dedicated to empowering adults to improve their quality of life through literacy. They provide free educational services to help adults learn to read, prepare for the GED exam, or learn English as a second language—equipping them to pursue higher education, job training, and sustainable employment. In this environment, I deepened my understanding of both service and social responsibility in ways that went far beyond academics.

While teaching English language learners, some of my favorite

moments came from forming genuine friendships with my students. One afternoon, a group of students from various parts of the world and I organized a soccer game at the park. I remember pausing to take in the sight—a circle of people from all over the globe, representing different cultures, backgrounds, and languages, laughing and bonding over a sport they all loved. It struck me that while many immigrants in this country seek to learn English for academic or economic reasons, language is also what helps human beings form social and spiritual connections with one another. In that game, even though the students were still beginners in their journey of learning English, they all shared the universal language of play and soccer, which transcended nationality, culture, or words spoken. That shared joy not only deepened their friendships, but also carried back into the classroom, creating an even richer and more connected learning environment.

Another memory that left a lasting mark was working with an older student who had never learned to read. All she wanted was to sit with me and practice simple books so she could improve her skills. Over the year, she progressed from struggling with very basic words to confidently reading beginner-level books. One day she arrived to class beaming—she had just read a book to her grandchildren for the first time. In that moment, I saw so clearly how even small acts of teaching and encouragement can open new doors in a person's life.

During my year of service with *AmeriCorps*, while my job was to teach, one of the biggest takeaways was **how much I learned from those I served**. I gained a deeper appreciation for the struggles people face and the power of education to transform lives. That connection—*soul to soul*—is what makes service truly transformative.

Some of the most meaningful learning I've ever experienced came through those one-to-one relationships, especially in grassroots community-building efforts. I saw how powerful it was to walk

alongside others on their journeys and how **service itself is one of the greatest classrooms for the soul.**

Another important lesson during my time with AmeriCorps was realizing how much I'm influenced by my environment. I'm a very adaptable person, and I've noticed that in competitive environments—whether sports, games, or school—I tend to get pulled into that competitive mindset. Being in an environment where the primary objective was **to serve and contribute—not to compete—brought out a different side of me**, one that feels more aligned with who I truly am.

During this time, I also began seeking out the wisdom and teachings of changemakers from history—people who had walked paths of service and helped transform society in profound ways. Leaders like *Martin Luther King Jr.*, *Mahatma Gandhi*, *Mother Teresa*, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, *Nelson Mandela*, *the Dalai Lama*, among many others, became sources of profound inspiration. Their lives offered powerful examples of how **knowledge, when infused with purpose, could change the world.**

I also began learning from artists and activists, and from ordinary people making extraordinary contributions in their communities.

It was also during my year of service with AmeriCorps that I met my future wife, Mallory, who was part of my *Literacy AmeriCorps* service team cohort. As our friendship developed, I learned that she came from a Christian background. During our conversations, she would ask me the kind of questions no other friend had ever asked me before—things like, “*What’s your religion?*”, “*Do you believe in God?*”, and “*What do you think happens after we die?*” But the way she asked them—with such openness and sincerity—made it feel like she genuinely wanted to explore these questions with me, not judge or debate.

Our conversations pushed me to reflect more deeply on my beliefs and return to the Bahá'í Writings to uncover insights that

I hadn't thought about in years. Our friendship blossomed into a relationship, and when Mallory eventually met my Aunt Lollie, Lollie was so impressed by her curiosity and spiritual openness that she suggested we participate in a "study circle" together—specifically, Book 1 of the Ruhi Institute, titled *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*.

At that point, I had only vaguely heard of the *Ruhi Institute* and was still on the fringes of the Bahá'í community. But with how much I was enjoying my conversations with Mallory, how much I loved and respected my Aunt Lollie, and how open Mallory was to the idea, I agreed to give it a try. That decision was a **huge blessing**.

Studying the *Ruhi Institute* together gave us a **systematic way to explore spiritual themes and build our relationship on a strong foundation of shared values and purpose**. Over the years, continuing our studies through the *Ruhi* sequence formed a deep spiritual bond that shaped our eventual marriage and family. And not long after completing Book 1, Mallory formally embraced the Bahá'í Faith herself.

Around this time, my appetite for knowledge reached new heights. I found myself reading more than ever—sometimes hundreds of pages a day. I devoured books on personal development, history, spirituality, and social transformation. And I felt a strong desire to truly investigate the principle of the *oneness of religion* taught in the Bahá'í Faith.

I read and studied the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Holy Bible*, the *Qur'an*, the *Tao Te Ching*, Buddhist scriptures, Zoroastrian texts, and several books from authoritative figures of the Bahá'í Faith, including the *Báb*, *Bahá'u'lláh*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Shoghi Effendi*, and the *Universal House of Justice*. This period became a **profound spiritual deepening** that strengthened my certitude in the Bahá'í Faith and broadened my perspective on humanity's spiritual heritage.

It was also during this intensely transformative period that I began **connecting the dots between music and my desire to contribute meaningfully to the world**. Since my youth, I had always loved music—most specifically hip hop—but now I found myself seeking out artists and songs whose messages aligned with the principles I was beginning to live by.

Songs like “I Can” by Nas, “Changes” by Tupac, and “One Tribe” by Black Eyed Peas, among many others, showed me the **power of music to uplift and inspire humanity to overcome the challenges we face and work for a better world**.

I also discovered Christian-inspired rappers like Lecrae, Andy Mineo, and Dee-1, who were delivering spiritually elevated messages with lyrical excellence. And perhaps most significantly, I found Bahá’í-inspired rappers like Nabil & Karim and Diversoul, who showed me it was possible—and incredibly powerful—to share the beautiful teachings of the Bahá’í Faith through the medium of hip hop in a way that could connect with all of humanity. **Their work lit a fire in me to do the same.**

As I continued my studies and service through the *Ruhi Institute*, it became a **new kind of school for me**—one rooted in the study of sacred texts, reflection, discussion, and action. I wasn’t just learning concepts; I was understanding how to live them.

As I progressed through the sequence of courses, I began serving in the community—first as an animator of junior youth groups, then as a tutor for youth study circles, and even supporting other communities for a time with their efforts as a regional coordinator. The process gave me both **spiritual insight and practical tools for transformation**.

What struck me most was how this method of learning helped me *read reality*. Through home visits, mentoring young people, and engaging in community-building efforts, I began to truly understand the needs, challenges, and potential of my

neighborhood. This was **knowledge not just from books, but from relationships, service, and experience.**

Working with youth especially brought these insights to life. I was inspired by their openness and thirst for truth—their willingness to explore big questions and take steps to serve. It wasn't always easy. Some faced intense hardship, from family separations to housing instability to the loss of loved ones. And even beyond those challenges, accompanying junior youth and youth was often very testing in day-to-day ways—requiring **patience, creativity, and perseverance.**

But I'm so grateful for those tests. They helped me put spiritual concepts into practice and strengthened my character and spiritual capacity. **Walking alongside young people through both joyful and difficult seasons taught me so much about the power of true friendship and the mutual growth that comes through walking a shared path of service.**

There have been so many transformative moments on this path of service, profoundly shaping my knowledge and understanding of how to build a better world.

One early memory from my experience working with junior youth is when I was visiting the home of one of the members of our group and noticing the kind of television content they were exposed to—content that felt jarring and inappropriate. That moment hit me hard—not because I hadn't seen that kind of media before, but because I realized *how much it could shape a young person's mind.* It really made me think about the type of media that I was consuming in my life and to be more conscious about what I choose to let into my mind and spirit.

But it also **motivated me to be someone that creates music and media that is not only pleasing to the ear, but edifying to the soul.**

It was in this phase that I started creating music. From the

beginning, I had the goal and intention to **use music to uplift, educate, and inspire humanity**. As I began exploring this new passion, I discovered that music was one of the most powerful ways for me to process and express what I was learning.

As I deepened my understanding of spiritual, intellectual, and social concepts—and gained insight through experience in service—I found that **writing lyrics helped me internalize those lessons in a deep and personal way**. It became more than just self-expression—it became a **means of understanding, reflection, and connection**. Music gave me a way to **move hearts, spark thought, and share meaningful messages**—strengthening my ability to communicate from the soul and contribute to the conversations that matter most.

Today, I've come to realize that **education is a lifelong experience**—one that unfolds far beyond a classroom or academic setting. It happens in every aspect of our lives. I learn through reading, through parenting, through meaningful conversations, through the media and arts I engage with, through prayer and reflection, and—perhaps most profoundly—through **service to humanity**.

But I've also come to understand that **knowledge isn't just something we receive**—it's something we can generate through our experiences, and something we're called to **share for the benefit of others**. Whether I'm writing a song, reading a book, serving in my community, or simply talking with my kids, I try to approach every experience as an opportunity to learn—and to share that learning for the betterment of the world.

Because ultimately, I believe **the most powerful knowledge is the kind that helps us see more clearly, love more deeply, and serve more effectively**. And that's a journey I plan to stay on for life.

If you asked me what kind of knowledge the world needs most, I'd say it's the kind that **awakens us to our divine purpose**: to know

and love our Creator, to develop our spiritual capacities, and to serve humanity.

Everything else—science, art, history, technology—**should serve that purpose.**

Reflection & Action: Better Knowledge

Knowledge becomes truly powerful when it leads us to reflection and inspires meaningful steps forward. The following questions and actions are designed to help you explore what resonated most from this chapter, apply it to your own journey, and consider how you might contribute to the growth and transformation of those around you.

Reflection Questions: Better Knowledge

Reflect on the following questions using a journal, voice memo, or simply by writing in the space provided below each one.

1) What stood out to you most in this chapter about the concept of “better knowledge”? Was there a particular story, quote, or idea that helped deepen your understanding of what true knowledge really means?

2) How has your own experience with education shaped your view of knowledge—both its strengths and its limitations? Think about what you've learned in school, family, work, or spiritual settings. What types of knowledge have had the biggest impact on your life?

3) What does “lifelong learning” look like for you? Are there ways you currently seek knowledge beyond traditional education? What motivates you to keep learning?

4) How might our world change if knowledge was pursued not just for personal gain, but for the betterment of humanity? What would shift in our schools, workplaces, media, or community life?

5) If every person is “a mine rich in gems of inestimable value,” what role can you play in helping others discover and share their inner gems? Think about how you might support others—especially young people—in uncovering their talents and purpose.

Suggested Actions: Better Knowledge

Put your insights into motion with one or more of these practical steps toward better knowledge.

▣ Create a Personal Learning Plan

Write a list of topics that inspire you—whether spiritual, social, artistic, or practical—and commit to deepening your understanding of one or more of them over the next 30 days. Choose one or two books, podcasts, or study materials to guide your journey, and set a time each week to reflect on what you're learning.

▣ Share What You Learn

Start a practice of passing on your insights. You could post a thoughtful reflection online, start a conversation with a friend, or create something artistic (like a poem, video, or song) that communicates a meaningful concept you've been studying.

▣ Reevaluate Your Learning Environment

Take stock of what kind of knowledge you're exposed to daily—on social media, in entertainment, at work, or in your conversations. Ask yourself: *Does this content help me grow spiritually, intellectually, or morally?* If not, consider curating your environment more intentionally.

▣ Support Someone Else's Growth

Offer to accompany someone—especially a young person—in their own learning journey. This might be inviting them to participate in a study group, supporting their exploration of a topic they're curious about, or mentoring them in a skill or subject you're passionate about.

▣ Start a Devotional or Study Gathering

Gather a few friends or family members for a regular space where you can explore spiritual themes together. Whether it's a weekly devotional, book club, or study group (such as a Ruhi

PILLAR 2

BETTER PRINCIPLES

*“All men have been created to carry forward
an ever-advancing civilization.”*³

— Bahá'u'lláh

*“O Son of Spirit! Noble have I created thee, yet thou hast abased thyself.
Rise then unto that for which thou wast created.”*⁴

— Bahá'u'lláh

Exploring the Pillar: Better Principles

Principles are like a compass in our hearts. They guide the way we live. Whether we realize it or not, virtually everything in our lives is influenced by a principle.

Every thought we think, every word we speak, every action we take—it's all guided by something inside us: a belief, a value, a principle. As human beings, *there's always a reason behind what we do.*

That's why it's so important to pause and reflect, asking ourselves: *What principles are guiding my life right now? And are those principles ones I truly believe in?*

When it comes to building a better world, there are many principles worthy of our attention and reflection. One that stands out as especially vital is the understanding that **building a better world is a fundamental part of why we were placed on this earth.**

It's not just a noble idea or a side pursuit—it's **woven into the**

very purpose of our creation. And it's not something reserved for a few heroic individuals while the rest of us watch from the sidelines. *Each of us has a vital role to play.* That realization gave meaning to every role I carry—whether husband, father, artist, or neighbor.

As a husband, how I treat my wife can either help build a better world—or not. As a father, the way I raise my children can either contribute to the good of society—or not. As a neighbor, how I engage with those around me matters. As an artist, the music I create carries influence. **How I speak, how I serve, how I create—all of it plays a role.**

When we truly internalize the principle that *we were created to contribute to the betterment of the world*, we begin to see its profound implications—touching every aspect of our lives and guiding each role we take on with greater intention and purpose.

This principle is what inspired the very first song I ever wrote, *Change the World*. In many ways, that song laid the foundation for my entire journey as an artist. The message was simple but powerful: **We each have the power—and the responsibility—to be agents of change.**

But what other principles should be guiding our lives?

To answer that question, it helps to reflect on our human nature. Most would agree that human beings are complex. We're still in the process of understanding ourselves. One concept that has been incredibly helpful—explored in the Bahá'í Writings and other spiritual texts—is that **human beings have a dual nature.**

One part of us is like the animal world, with certain material requirements. We need to eat, drink, sleep, find shelter, and connect with others. These are essential for survival. *But if we focus only on these needs, we tend to become self-centered.* And the more self-centered we are, the worse off the world tends to become.

But there's another side to us. Some call it the *soul*, the *spirit*, or our *higher nature*. This is the part of us that can think beyond ourselves. It understands morality. It reflects on how our actions affect others.

Our higher nature gives us the capacity to embody spiritual attributes—love, forgiveness, generosity, truthfulness, justice, unity, and more. This is where our true power lies. It's *the source of our nobility, the compass of our conscience, and the wellspring of qualities that uplift and unify humanity.*

The more we are guided by our higher nature, the better the world will be. But it's not easy. It takes effort. It's a challenge we face every day—*sometimes every moment.*

It's a divine challenge. A reminder that yes, we struggle with selfishness—but *we also have the power to rise.*

Better Principles isn't abstract. It's practical. It's about **aligning the values we say we believe in with the way we actually live**—and letting that alignment shape every part of our lives.

My Story: Better Principles

When I began the journey of reshaping my life around the idea of building a better world, one of the biggest shifts wasn't external—it was internal. If *Better Knowledge* was the foundation—laying down truth and insight—then *Better Principles* became **the framework**. They gave shape to how I would build, how I would live, and what I would prioritize. **It was a reordering of values. A re-centering of what I believed life was truly about.**

What used to drive me—achievement, recognition, personal success—began to feel hollow unless it was rooted in something deeper. Through those series of experiences in my early twenties, I started to wake up to the reality that my choices, actions, and even thoughts were being shaped by a set of underlying

assumptions. And that if I wanted to live a meaningful life, I needed to examine those assumptions and replace them with something more enduring: **Better Principles**.

These *Better Principles* became my compass. The “*why*” behind the “*what*.” And one of the first and most transformative principles I embraced was **service**—not as an occasional act, but **as a way of life**. I realized that I had spent much of my life, often unknowingly, operating from a self-centered framework. *What’s in it for me? How will this help me succeed?* But when I began striving to live by the principle of service, **everything started to reorient**.

The purpose of working out, for example, shifted from just wanting to look or feel good to keeping my body healthy and strong so I could be more useful in my roles—as a father playing with my children, as an artist performing energetically, or as a mentor actively serving out in the neighborhood. Even my aspirations around earning income became less about comfort and more about contribution: *How can I sustain a life of service? How can I create something of value that truly helps others?*

This principle really came alive to me in the field of service and action. Coming up with an idea for a song is great. Actually writing it is wonderful. But to me, **the magic comes when you actually share the song with others**. Whether it’s posting the song on social media or digital streaming platforms and receiving a positive message about how the song brought someone inspiration, or performing live and seeing the joy and upliftment it brings to the audience—when I feel that my music has been of service to others, **it brings the principle of building a better world to life**.

This inner shift also awakened in me a profound sense of **purposefulness and responsibility**. Once I internalized the belief that *building a better world is part of why we were created*, it transformed how I viewed every role I play—not as a title or task, but as **a sacred trust**. I began to notice how many people

were striving for influential positions in large organizations or institutions to change the world—yet in my own neighborhood, I saw a glaring need right in front of me.

There were junior youth in my community—young people full of potential—but so few opportunities or mentors truly investing in their growth. That realization compelled me to act. **It's what gave me the motivation to form a junior youth group—not just to start it, but to sustain it through the ups and downs.** I saw it as my responsibility to offer consistent care and guidance, helping these young souls build their capacity to contribute to the betterment of their community.

That same sense of responsibility shapes how I approach **fatherhood**. It's my job to help my children understand why they were created, to nurture in them a love for service, and to walk that path alongside them.

And it's also what fuels my mission as an artist. There are plenty of musicians making popular, polished music—but I feel called to make music that not only sounds pleasing to the ear, but also **awakens, educates, and inspires people to believe in their power to help build a better world.**

That sense of purpose may be weighty, but it's also incredibly **empowering**. It gives every action—no matter how small—a sense of **eternal significance**.

If I could give advice to my younger self, it would be this: **really value inner character above outer achievement.** As human beings, we were created to develop our spiritual qualities—qualities like *honesty, trustworthiness, service, and sacrifice*. These are the qualities that benefit us in both this world and the next. *Material success may offer temporary rewards, but spiritual qualities offer eternal growth.* And here's the interesting thing: when we prioritize the development of spiritual principles, we often find that outer success follows. **It's not always in the form**

we expect, but God’s confirmations have a way of flowing when our priorities are aligned. I’m grateful that God helped me get back on that path.

One practice that’s helped me stay grounded is asking: *Is this a noble goal?* That single question has become a spiritual checkpoint for me—a way to measure not just what I’m doing, but the intention behind it.

And it holds even deeper meaning because Noble is also the name of my firstborn son. That name came to us during one of the most sacred moments of our lives. While my wife, Mallory, and I were on *Bahá’í Pilgrimage*—a nine-day spiritual journey to the Bahá’í Holy Land in Haifa and ‘Akká, Israel, where the Shrines of the *Báb* and *Bahá’u’lláh* are located—we took part in guided visits to these holy sites and other places connected to the history of the Faith. For Bahá’ís, Pilgrimage is a deeply personal opportunity to connect more intimately with the Faith and its Founders through prayer, meditation, and reflection in these sacred spaces. While there, we were praying to be blessed with a child. At that point, we had been trying for our first for about two years with no success, so our prayers were deeply heartfelt and fervent.

During a moment of meditation in that sacred atmosphere, Mallory heard a voice say to her, “*You will have a baby, and you should name him Noble.*” It was a moment of divine inspiration that filled us with awe and joy—and it forever linked our journey into parenthood with the spiritual principle of **nobility**.

The word *noble* isn’t about pride or superiority. It’s about **remembering that every human being is created noble by God**, with a higher nature that longs to serve, to love, to uplift.

Striving to live nobly means choosing that higher nature over the pull of ego—**choosing generosity over selfishness, humility over self-importance, integrity over convenience**. I remember a youth camp activity where we were invited to create symbolic

“masks” representing aspects of ourselves that might be holding us back from our true self. I realized that, even in many of my acts of service, I was still subtly asking, *How does this benefit me?*

The activity helped bring that inner tendency to the surface. It humbled me. It reminded me that **true nobility requires ongoing self-reflection and purification of motive**. It’s not just about doing good things—it’s about doing them for the right reasons.

I fall short often. But I try to keep that question close: *Is this a noble goal?* Not just for me, but for the kind of world I hope to help build—for my family, my community, and the generations to come.

Another principle that has profoundly shaped me is **unity**. Not just in a philosophical sense, but **as a practical guide**. In a culture steeped in individualism and competition, I used to measure myself against others constantly. *Was I more successful? More recognized? More “ahead”?*

But the principle of unity helped me realize that **comparison is a trap**. *We rise higher when we rise together*. Collaboration isn’t just more enjoyable—it’s more powerful.

One of the most meaningful examples has been my friendship with a member of my junior youth group, Brian. All of the friendships formed within that group were incredibly special, built through countless meaningful conversations, service projects, youth camps, and other complementary activities that created lasting bonds and memories—often forged through some of life’s biggest ups and downs. Brian was one of the most consistent and dedicated members, and what made our connection unique was our shared love for the art form of rap. As he got older, that shared passion naturally led us into collaborating on music, and we’ve since released several songs together. We’ve even toured together, performing side by side. Every time we step on stage, it brings us back to that beautiful friendship that sprouted within the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program and has blossomed into

something even greater—**rooted in shared purpose, mutual growth, and years of walking a path of service together.**

That same spirit of unity has come alive through countless moments of grassroots outreach—**knocking on doors, visiting families, and connecting with people from all walks of life.** Those one-on-one conversations taught me that unity isn't just about shared beliefs—it's about *shared humanity*. Some of the most joyful and transformative experiences I've had have come from listening, learning, and building trust across lines that might have otherwise divided us. **That, to me, is the heart of unity.**

One more principle that has left a lasting imprint on me is **courage.**

One example in my life sticks out that taught me the importance of this virtue. At the time, Mallory and I had been together for over a year, and she had already expressed that she was ready for marriage, but she wanted me to be the one to propose to her. She even told me that she already knew the ring she wanted to use—her late great-grandmother's ring, which was in her mother's possession.

I knew in my heart that Mallory was the right person for me, but I kept hesitating—telling myself I wasn't quite ready because I was still living at home, finishing graduate school, and hadn't yet launched my career.

Inspired by our studies in the *Ruhi Institute*, we had decided to try and deepen our understanding and practice of various spiritual virtues. A friend introduced us to *The Virtues Project*, which offered simple definitions and practical ways to cultivate each virtue. We committed to choosing a new virtue card each week, striving to practice that virtue intentionally, and then reflecting at the end of the week on what we had learned.

Just three weeks into the practice, I pulled the virtue card for “*courage*,” and I immediately felt in my soul **why I needed to develop it.** Deep down, I realized it wasn't timing or circumstances

that were holding me back—it was *fear*. And this virtue was now staring me in the face.

That week, I leaned into courage. I reached out to both my parents and Mallory’s parents and received their blessing, secured the ring, and knew I wanted to propose that Sunday during our end-of-week reflection. I just wasn’t sure exactly when the moment would come—until Mallory unknowingly set it up perfectly. As we reflected together on how we had practiced our virtue for the week, she suddenly asked, “So, *what was the most courageous thing you did this week?*” “YES!” I thought to myself. Pretending to ponder for a moment, I reached into my pocket and replied, “Well, *did I tell you I spoke with my parents and your parents and asked for their blessing to marry you?*” Mallory’s jaw dropped in surprise, and then she excitedly accepted the proposal. We were married shortly after, and she’s been my greatest supporter and partner in all aspects of life—marriage, parenting, music, and service.

That experience taught me that courage isn’t the absence of fear—it’s moving forward with faith despite it. I’ve had to practice that courage many times since—in sharing a new song, performing in front of a crowd, stepping into fatherhood, or reaching out in the community. In each case, *leaning into courage, guided by spiritual principle*, has led to powerful confirmations and growth.

There are so many *better principles* that can guide our lives—and they all work together. Some of us may feel especially drawn to one or two—maybe it’s *truthfulness* or *justice, compassion* or *perseverance*. For others, it might be *generosity, loyalty, love, or devotion*. And that’s the beauty of it: **we don’t all have to prioritize the exact same virtues in the same order.**

What matters is that we’re **consciously striving to be guided by better principles**—principles that reflect our *higher nature*, rather than our *lower impulses*. When we each commit to

growing in the qualities that elevate the human spirit, the whole of humanity benefits.

These virtues aren't just abstract ideals—they are the spiritual architecture of a more just, loving, and unified world.

The most beautiful thing I've learned is that **principles aren't meant to constrain us. They're meant to free us.** Free us from confusion, from ego, from fear. They give us a foundation to stand on when the world feels chaotic. They help us align our intentions with a greater purpose. They make our lives not only more meaningful—but **more impactful.**

And the more I commit to living by principle, the more I experience **a quiet kind of strength.** A peace that isn't based on everything going right, but on knowing I'm walking the path I was created for.

That doesn't mean I always get it right. But it means I know what I'm aiming for. And I believe that **when enough of us aim our lives in that direction, we'll build a better world—not in theory, but in reality.**

Reflection & Action: Better Principles

Before we move forward, let's take a moment to pause and reflect. The principles we choose to live by shape not only who we become, but also the kind of world we help build. *What principles are guiding you right now—and how might they evolve?*

Reflection Questions: Better Principles

Reflect on the following questions using a journal, voice memo, or simply by writing in the space provided below each one.

1) What are some of the key spiritual principles explored in this chapter? How do these principles act as a moral compass in your life, and in what ways have you seen them shape your choices or character?

2) When have you tried to live by a higher principle, even when it was difficult? Reflect on a specific situation where you were challenged to act according to your values, rather than your impulses or fears. What helped you stay grounded, and what did you learn from the experience?

3) How might our communities transform if more people lived by spiritual principles? Consider how daily life—at home, at work, or in the neighborhood—would be different if unity, generosity, or service were more widely practiced. What kind of cultural shifts could this bring about?

4) Which principle feels especially important for you to focus on right now? We all have different areas where we're being stretched or invited to grow. Which virtue do you feel called to cultivate more intentionally in your current season of life?

5) If you were living more fully from your higher nature, what would change? Picture yourself guided entirely by better principles in your daily life. How would your relationships shift? How would you approach your work, your goals, or your creative expression differently?

Suggested Actions: Better Principles

Put your principles into practice with one or more of these meaningful steps.

▣ Identify a Guiding Principle

Choose one spiritual principle—like *service*, *unity*, or *courage*—that resonates with you right now. Write it down, reflect on it throughout your week, and look for ways to practice it in daily life.

▣ Create a Personal Virtue Practice

Set aside time each week to intentionally cultivate a specific virtue. You might draw a virtue card, journal about how you practiced it, or reflect on a time you were tested in that area.

▣ Reflect Before You Act

Before making a major decision—big or small—pause and ask yourself: *Is this a noble goal?* Let this question help shape your intentions and align your choices with your higher values.

Closing Thoughts: Better Principles

When we anchor our lives in better principles, we begin to live with deeper integrity, purpose, and unity. These inner foundations give us strength to face life's challenges, and clarity to walk a path of service and meaning.

The more we commit to aligning our lives with spiritual values, the more we contribute to a world that reflects them.

PILLAR 3

BETTER CREATIVITY

*“In this wonderful new age, art is worship.
The more thou strivest to perfect it,
the closer wilt thou come to God... That is to say,
when thy fingers grasp the paintbrush,
it is as if thou wert at prayer in the Temple.”⁵*
— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Exploring the Pillar: Better Creativity

The first two pillars of building a better world—*Better Knowledge* and *Better Principles*—are generally not too surprising to most folks. But when I introduce the third pillar, *Better Creativity*, people often pause. I see raised eyebrows, hear thoughtful “hmm”s ripple through the room.

Why? Because many people have an interesting—and often conflicted—relationship with the word *creative*. I’ve heard many people say, “I’m not creative,” or “I wish I was more creative.” Our society tends to make creativity **synonymous with the arts**, and tends to only praise the most talented of artists, leaving most of the population feeling like creativity simply isn’t for them.

Additionally, we don’t often connect *creativity* with *spirituality*, or with *building a better world*. But a conversation I once had with fellow Bahá’í-inspired rapper, Karim Rushdy, changed how I view it forever.

He said to me, “The words *create* and *creative* actually come from

one of the Names of God: The Creator. When we create, we are reflecting God.”

Now, it seems obvious. But in that moment, **it kind of blew my mind.**

I now see that **creating something is a sacred act.** When we show love to someone, we are reflecting the *All-Loving*. When we forgive someone, we reflect the *All-Forgiving*. When we show generosity, we are reflecting the *All-Generous*. And when we create, **we reflect The Creator.**

That’s powerful.

In the Bahá’í Writings, we’re told that *art is worship*. That means our creativity—whether painting, building, cooking, singing, gardening, storytelling, parenting, or any other creative act—*can be sacred*. Especially when done with **excellence**, a **spirit of service**, and the **intention of giving glory to the Creator**, creativity becomes **a pathway to the Divine**. *How beautifully elevated!*

When it comes to building a better world, **creativity is actually quite essential**. Most would agree that the world we are seeking is not just a few minor tweaks away. **The better world that we want to create is actually a new world**. It’s something humanity has never seen before.

A world built upon the *oneness of humanity*, where every individual can thrive and contribute their share toward the advancement of civilization. A world where *justice, unity, cooperation, and peace* are fully manifest. That kind of transformation requires more than strategy. **It requires vision. Imagination. Creativity.**

Building this new world has two interrelated aspects. First, we need to be able to **identify and let go of the things that are holding us back**. These could be outdated systems, toxic mindsets, and harmful structures that create division, inequality, or oppression.

But we can’t just deconstruct—we must also **construct**. The

second process involves **integrating new, uplifting ways of thinking** and building systems, structures, and institutions founded on the *oneness of humanity*. Ones that empower individuals, uplift communities, and nurture the capacities of all people to contribute meaningfully to the transformation of society.

This kind of change doesn't just happen through traditional artistic channels. **Creativity is not limited to a canvas or a microphone**—it's needed in every sphere of life. It's about **creatively applying our knowledge, principles, and unique talents in our everyday lives** to positively transform ourselves and our environment.

And while there are many important ingredients for creativity to flourish, two that I've found particularly essential are **enthusiasm** and **encouragement**.

Enthusiasm is defined as “*strong excitement of feeling*,” but its origins are in the Greek word *enthousiazein*, which means “*to be inspired or possessed by a god*.” This connects beautifully to creativity, where we are often tapping into something deeper than ourselves.

Albert Einstein put it this way: “*Art is standing with one hand extended into the universe and one hand extended into the world, and letting ourselves be a conduit for passing energy*.” So there seems to be something *sacred* about being a channel—one that is **inspired and motivated**—and this allows a Divine current to flow through us.

Encouragement is just as important. Fear is one of the biggest obstacles to creativity—especially the fear of sharing your work with others. And *courage* is the virtue that helps us overcome that fear. We often think of courage as an internal trait, and it is, but it's also something we can **receive from others**.

The word “*encourage*” literally means “*to give courage*.” When we cheer someone on, uplift them, and express belief in their

abilities, **we are giving them courage**. When we create a collective environment of encouragement, people feel safer to share, and **their creativity is able to flow more freely**. And when that creativity is released, it's like *magic*—something sacred and beautiful waiting to be discovered.

Tapping into our creativity is something everyone is called to do. Whether you're raising children, organizing community gatherings, designing lesson plans, solving complex problems at work, or simply striving to bring more light into the lives around you—**your creativity is needed**. It's how we apply the *Better Knowledge* we've awakened to and the *Better Principles* we hold in our hearts.

By using our creative gifts in service of something greater, we become active participants in shaping a more just, beautiful, and united world.

For me, one of the most potent creative vehicles I've been able to use to channel my powers of expression has been **hip hop**. It's allowed me to **share truth, uplift hearts, and contribute to building a new world** through rhythm, rhyme, and purpose.

Born from struggle, hip hop emerged as a **voice for the voiceless**, particularly for Black and Brown communities that had been marginalized. Over time, it evolved into a **global force for joy, resistance, and truth**. And for me, it became a *spiritual tool* to contribute to the betterment of the world.

Legendary emcee and hip hop philosopher KRS-One defined hip hop like this:

“Hip is to know, it's a form of intelligence. To be hip is to be up to date and relevant. Hop is a form of movement—you can't just observe a hop, you gotta hop up and do it. Hip and hop is more than music. Hip is the knowledge. Hop is the movement. Hip and hop is intelligent movement.”

This definition resonates with me deeply. It captures the essence of why **hip hop is more than just a genre**—it's a **force for awareness and action, a powerful vehicle for change**.

Creativity, when aligned with purpose and principle, becomes one of the most powerful tools for transformation. It helps us imagine the world anew—and then express, build, and embody that vision.

My Story: Better Creativity

I've come to realize that I've always had a creative spirit—**it just took time, purpose, and faith for it to fully come alive.** If *Better Knowledge* laid the foundation for my path, and *Better Principles* shaped the framework, then **Better Creativity has been about the design**—how to bring *beauty, meaning, and functionality* into the structure of my life and service.

Growing up, I found myself naturally drawn to creative expression. Like most kids, I loved consuming different forms of art—TV shows, movies, video games, and music—but I also loved **producing** art, especially through drawing and using my imagination to create something new. As I got older, that creative energy began to take clearer shape. When I think back to high school, I can remember a couple of school projects that involved video or media production, and **how much I came alive during those assignments.**

Around the same time, as digital cameras became more widely accessible—and shortly after, smartphones with cameras—I received one as a gift. I remember the joy of tapping into my creativity by taking photos with friends and making playful, lighthearted videos together. As a big sports fan, I also started creating sports highlight videos featuring my favorite athletes, and even made reels of myself and my friends playing on our home basketball court.

The early days of *MySpace*, *YouTube*, and *Facebook* became exciting outlets where I could share these creations, and I was drawn to the ability to **express myself and connect with others through what I made**. I also began creating slideshow-style tribute videos—first for my grandparents’ memorials when they passed away, and later for friends who had lost loved ones. One of my favorite assignments while working at *Discover Card* was making farewell videos for longtime coworkers, blending photos, interviews, and music to honor their contributions. **Looking back, I can see these were early expressions of a deeper creative impulse—one that sought not just to entertain, but to connect, uplift, and tell stories that mattered.**

I remember consuming a lot of music growing up, mostly through the radio and MTV. I listened to a mix of genres like pop and alternative rock, but **my favorite by far was hip hop**. There was something about the *confidence* the artists exhibited and the *power of their expression* that captivated me. As I got older, and with the growing influence of the internet, I remember going online to look up the lyrics to the songs I liked and practicing rapping along—catching the flow and matching the delivery. That was my first real experience with engaging in the art form of rap myself.

At the time, I was mostly exposed to the artists dominating mainstream media, but I specifically remember being drawn to *Eminem* and *Tupac*. I practiced rapping some of their songs, fascinated by their flow, communication style, and the *emotional intensity* behind their delivery.

As my desire to serve humanity deepened, my ears gravitated toward music that carried that same aspiration. Just as I studied the words of great changemakers, I began searching for modern artists doing the same through music—**music that offered insight, encouragement, or a call to action**. Sometimes that meant discovering new artists, and other times it meant digging deeper into the catalogues of mainstream singers and rappers I

already listened to. I began to uncover those *hidden gems*—songs that weren't always the radio singles, but shared personal stories, reflections on injustice, or messages of hope and healing.

A big shift in my creative journey came when I went from **merely being a consumer**—a listener and fan of music with an elevated purpose—to **becoming a creator myself**. Up until that point, I had been soaking in music that inspired me, especially hip hop with powerful lyrical delivery and themes of transformation. Then, in a moment of divine inspiration—and what would become a series of divinely guided steps—I realized that **I, too, had the power to use my creativity to change the world**.

One morning in 2009, I felt a spark of creative inspiration and decided to write a song. I had never written a rap or created a beat before, but **something just poured out of me**. I was already familiar with digital media from my experience creating tribute and highlight videos, so I downloaded a basic beat-making program and arranged an instrumental using pre-made loops. The lyrics for my song “*Change the World*” started to flow, and **my creativity came alive**.

After writing the lyrics, I drove to *Radio Shack*, bought a cheap USB mic, and returned home to record my vocals straight into my computer—no training, no experience, just spirit.

I loaded the song onto my iPod and felt compelled to share it. I've always had a natural desire to share my creativity, drawn to the connection and conversation it can spark. At the time, I was still working at *Discover Card*, so I brought my iPod to work and played the song for a few coworkers. Most of them laughed at the poor sound quality, but they were also genuinely supportive. They appreciated the uplifting message and said I had a pretty decent flow. Still, it was clear that I was a long way from creating something that could truly move someone. At that time, I lacked the vision, understanding, and resources to take my creativity

to the next level—and so, **for a time, that’s where the song creation ended.**

A year or so later, I attended a Bahá’í conference in 2010 where I saw a performance by the incredibly talented artist, *Shadi Toloui-Wallace*. She shared how, when she first began writing songs, it was out of a desire to create music that reflected her values. So she learned some basic chords on the guitar and began writing simple songs—**discovering in the process just how powerful creating music could be.** She encouraged all of us in the audience to reflect and think about also creating music of our own.

That moment stuck with me. It helped me realize that **creativity doesn’t have to begin with elite training or vast resources—it can start with the simple desire to offer something meaningful to the world.** I wasn’t quite ready to dive back into creating, but her testimony resonated deeply.

This was during the period when I was rekindling my connection with the Bahá’í Faith and community, which was **awakening my spirituality in a new way.** That spiritual reawakening led me to seek out more *spiritually grounded music*—particularly within hip hop. I discovered a host of amazing *Christian rappers* expressing their faith through powerful lyricism. I also found rappers drawing inspiration from the teachings of *Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Yoga,* and other spiritual traditions. And perhaps most profoundly, **I discovered Bahá’í-inspired hip hop**—music that resonated on such a deep level, *reflecting my own beliefs* and offering a glimpse of what was creatively possible.

Fast-forward to 2012—**an experience that completely changed the trajectory of my life.** During graduate school, I met an incredible soul named *Franklin Ngalim* through an online Peace Education course I was taking. Franklin was from *Bamenda, Cameroon,* and led an environmental nonprofit called *The Greens.* We started chatting on Facebook and felt an instant connection. When my wife *Mallory,* who’s also passionate about education

and environmentalism, suggested we go volunteer with The Greens, I figured it couldn't hurt to ask.

When I shared the idea with Franklin, he replied with intense enthusiasm: “YES! *You can be our first ever international volunteers!*”

Over the next few months, we applied for visas, organized our travel, and raised funds to make the trip possible. In June 2012, we boarded a plane to Cameroon. After a long journey, Franklin welcomed us and brought us to Bamenda, where we were greeted with an incredible outpouring of love. The neighborhood held a full community-wide welcoming celebration in our honor—joyful, heartwarming, and uplifting beyond words. The singing, dancing, and laughter made us feel instantly at home, as if we had been embraced by an extended family.

During the welcoming celebration, I witnessed a youth performing with his guitar—his voice was one of the most captivating I had ever heard. His name was *Awu*. He had recently joined The Greens as a volunteer and was working on a theme song for the organization.

Immediately, a thought popped into my mind: “*I wonder what my song ‘Change the World’ would sound like with Awu singing the chorus?*” It was my very first day meeting everyone, and with so much going on during the joyful welcoming celebration, I felt nervous about bringing it up directly. But after reflecting on it more that evening—and feeling the desire continue to well up—I decided to share the idea with Franklin the next day. Franklin lit up.

“WHAT?! *You also make music?!*”

I explained I didn't really consider myself an artist, but that I had written a song a couple of years back and always wondered what it might sound like with a real vocalist. Franklin made a bold proclamation:

“New objective! If we don’t produce this song by the end of your time here, this trip has been a failure!”

His belief in me felt electrifying. It was one of those moments when *someone else’s confidence in you sparks your own.*

The next day, Franklin arranged for me to meet with Awu. I had written the lyrics from memory into a notebook and shared them with him. Awu began strumming his guitar and crafting a melody for the chorus: “*I can, you can, we can change the world.*” **It was pure magic. I could feel something divine unfolding—this was exactly what the song was meant to be.**

Awu added verses of his own, and we began sharing the song with small groups of friends around the neighborhood. Everyone encouraged us. Franklin then booked us a session at one of the top music studios in Bamenda. It was the first time either of us had ever set foot in a professional studio. We met the lead sound engineer, Doby, a tall and imposing figure. After a brief greeting, he asked us to share the song. Nervous but excited, we performed “*Change the World.*”

When we finished, Doby turned to me and asked, “*Are you a Bahá’í?*” Taken aback, I responded, “*Yes... are you?*” He replied, “*No, I’m a Christian. But I’ve studied the Bible, the Quran, and the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, and I appreciate Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings of oneness. I could hear it in your lyrics.*” **It was a soul-stirring affirmation. Music, I realized, could be a channel for spiritual truth. And I was being guided by something far greater than myself.**

Throughout the recording process, the encouragement continued. Doby built the instrumental from scratch, layering sounds and rhythms that brought the song to life in a whole new way. It was incredible watching it all come together step by step—I had brought the initial theme and lyrics, Awu had added a soul-stirring melody to the chorus, as well as his own verses inspired by the vision of changing the world, and now Doby

was shaping the sonic landscape and guiding us through the recording process. Experiencing the fullness of that collaborative creation was transformative. Doby said more than once, “Bro, you are a rapper. Keep pursuing this.” Franklin, Awu, and many others expressed how much the world needed a song like “*Change the World*.” That experience shifted something deep within me. **For the first time, I began to see myself not just as someone who appreciated meaningful music—but as an artist who could help create it.**

The production process for *Change the World* went all the way to my final day in Cameroon, meaning I had to wait until about a week after returning home to Phoenix to hear the finished mix. When the email finally arrived, I remember playing it for the first time and thinking to myself: “Wow... *this is my song!*” Again driven by that natural desire to share my creativity and connect with others, I decided to enhance the song’s impact by creating a slideshow-style video—a skill I had developed by that point. I uploaded it to YouTube, eager to share it with the world. The responses began pouring in: “*This is amazing!*” “*So inspiring!*” “*The world needs this kind of music!*” Each comment felt like another confirmation—**this was the path I was meant to walk.**

Over the next two years, Awu and I continued collaborating remotely and completed an eight-song album, also titled *Change the World*—**my first full project, and another major milestone.** During this time, my family began connecting with many of my new Cameroonian friends, thanks in part to the growing popularity of Facebook there. As these friendships deepened, my dad, Richard, developed a growing desire to visit Cameroon himself and meet all of these wonderful people he had come to know online. My mom, Monica, didn’t feel she could endure such a long journey, but she wanted to support my dad—who didn’t want to travel alone—so she generously offered to fund a trip for Mallory and me to join him. She also offered to cover the cost of a plane ticket for my longtime friend, Brian Roth—a professional

cinematographer—so he could help us film a music video for *Change the World*. Brian had recently moved back to Phoenix from New York after working for several years in the film industry, and he had already offered to help me if I ever needed support with creating videos. **It felt like more divine timing, and a fountain of generosity flowing from multiple directions**, opening the door to an experience I will treasure for the rest of my life.

When we arrived in Cameroon in December of 2015, we reunited with Franklin, Awu, and several other friends and began brainstorming ideas for the *Change the World* music video. It was Mallory who suggested featuring people from all walks of life singing the chorus—“*I can, you can, we can change the world.*” Everyone loved the idea. We filmed dynamic shots of Awu and me performing our verses, then spent days moving around the community in Bamenda, inviting people of all ages and backgrounds to sing the chorus on camera. Later on, when we had returned home to Phoenix, we continued the effort, filming family and friends to interweave into the final cut.

The final result was a **vibrant, cross-continental celebration** of the universal desire to make the world a better place—beautifully showcasing faces and voices from a diverse cross-section of humanity. And the response we received on the music video was **more powerful than I could have imagined**. Comments and messages poured in from around the world. I could feel it: **combining the power of music, video, and social media was awakening a creative power in me I never knew existed**. Being an artist for positive change was no longer a distant possibility. **It had become a living reality.**

These experiences continued teaching me the **power of support and encouragement in creativity**. Each of us possesses unique talents and capacities, but when we receive the genuine backing of others, we're able to reach new heights and make a greater impact. I was humbled by the outpouring of support I was receiving—not just in Cameroon, but from the people closest to me. My parents

have always been my biggest fans and supporters, championing my creative pursuits with unwavering encouragement and never once discouraging me from following my artistic path. Their support has been both genuine and overwhelmingly generous, a constant source of strength in my journey. Likewise, Brian has been an extraordinary friend, offering not only moral encouragement but also his professional talents. Starting with *Change the World*, he's been the gifted cinematographer behind nearly all of my official music videos. **When I reflect on the love and support I've received from my parents, my dear friend Brian Roth, and so many others who have walked alongside me on this journey, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and awe for the way their belief in me has helped shape the artist—and person—I am today.**

After completing *Change the World*, my passion for creating music only grew. I found myself constantly writing lyrics, brainstorming new song ideas, and connecting with more artists in my local community. During this time, I was continuing to deepen my connection with the *Bahá'í Faith* through the *Ruhi Institute* courses, various forms of community service, and my own personal study. **All of this began to shape and influence my creative process**, and it naturally led to the development of my next project—*Wizdome*.

As I continued shaping the vision for *Wizdome*, I became more aware of the sound quality I was aiming for—something **polished and professional** that could stand alongside mainstream releases. For a short time, I attempted to record and mix the music myself, but I quickly found it incredibly challenging to achieve the level of quality I was envisioning. I reached out to Bahá'í artist *Nabil Moghaddam* (half of the duo, *Nabil & Karim*), who graciously helped guide me through the technical realities of music production in order to help me get the type of sound I was looking for. He explained what it would take to reach a professional standard—recording in a proper studio environment

and hiring skilled sound engineers for mixing and mastering. That kind of quality, however, came with a cost, and **I didn't have the disposable income to fund it on my own.**

A few artist friends suggested trying something relatively new at the time: a crowdfunding platform called *Kickstarter*. The idea of crowdfunding brought on a wave of doubt and anxiety. *Would people really be willing to support me? Was I asking for too much?*

Pushed by a deep desire to use music as a force for positive change—and encouraged by all the support I had received up to that point—I decided to give crowdfunding a try. I launched my first campaign with cautious optimism, unsure of what to expect, and was blown away by the response. **Over 80 people contributed more than \$6,000 to bring *Wizdome* to life.** That support meant everything. It showed me that people not only resonated with the music I was creating but also **believed in my mission to use hip hop as a tool to uplift, educate, and inspire.**

That project also marked a shift in how I approached the creative process itself. Through the making of *Wizdome*, I began to see music not just as a tool for social change, but as a **meaningful way to deepen my understanding of the Bahá'í Writings.** Each song became a vessel to explore spiritual themes, express my reflections, and share my personal experiences engaging with the world around me. It also expanded my collaborative reach—I began working with a broader range of artists and producers, learning how to shape a cohesive album that felt both *spiritually rich* and *musically compelling*.

After completing the *Wizdome* album, I organized a concert to celebrate its release, marking **the first time I ever hosted my own concert space.** While I had performed “*Change the World*” at a few events and gatherings, this was the first time I curated an entire show from start to finish. **Planning and performing the *Wizdome* album release unlocked a new creative energy for me.** I saw how live performance could become an extension of my music's

purpose—a space to foster connection, elevate consciousness, and bring people together around meaningful ideas. **That first show lit a spark** that would carry into future performances and projects, expanding not just my artistry, but also **my capacity to serve through music**.

Over time, **my creative process has continued to be refined**—shaped by experience, reflection, and a desire to be of greater service through my art. While each song unfolds a bit differently, most often my process looks something like this: I begin with a clear concept—usually one that emerges from spiritual study, a personal reflection, or a theme I’ve been exploring through service. I then turn to the Bahá’í Writings to deepen my understanding, research the topic more broadly, and offer prayers for guidance and clarity.

From there, I search for a beat that captures the emotional tone of the message—whether *uplifting, reflective, intense, or joyful*—and begin experimenting with different flows and melodies. When it’s time to write the lyrics, I open up a *Google Doc* and start brainstorming rhymes, listing key ideas, and gradually shaping the verses until they feel aligned. Some songs pour out quickly; others take weeks or even months to complete.

But throughout it all, **the process has become a way for me to deepen my connection with spiritual themes**, express my understanding of the world, connect with others through shared struggles and hopes, and offer something that **inspires hearts and minds toward building a better world**.

Creativity has opened so many doors—both internally and externally. Each of my nine albums has felt like a distinct creative lane. *Change the World* was my collaborative debut and carried strong themes of spiritual and social transformation. *Wizdome* was my first solo album—fully rooted in Bahá’í teachings and shaped by a more intentional creative process. *LIT* was a lyrical remix project that infused spiritual lyrics into mainstream songs.

Release the Power was a collaborative effort with youth, created during a Ruhi Institute camp. *Created Noble* and *I Hope I Do It Justice* were inspired by my sons, *Noble* and *Justice*, exploring themes of fatherhood, identity, and virtue. *Holy Days* was a devotional offering honoring the sacred commemorations of the Bahá'í calendar. *Be Happy* focused on joy and happiness, featuring a wide range of collaborations. And my latest release, *Better World*, offers fresh takes on some of the top songs in my catalogue—**remixed and remastered**—compiled to accompany a music tour and book release focused on this shared campaign to build a better world.

Each project has helped me explore different dimensions of creativity while staying rooted in the same purpose: to uplift souls and contribute to the building of a better world.

There's much more music in the works, with ongoing projects unfolding across these creative lanes—and likely new ones waiting to emerge as fresh inspiration flows.

Of course, the creative journey hasn't always been easy. **Writer's block is a challenge that reappears from time to time.** There's always that lurking fear—*what if the creativity runs dry?* I've learned not to force things, and having multiple creative lanes has helped me stay flexible and inspired.

Then there's the challenge of discouragement. While the majority of feedback I've received over the years has been overwhelmingly positive and uplifting, every now and then a comment comes through that stings. Constructive feedback can be helpful, but when someone blatantly criticizes something I've poured my heart and soul into, **it can definitely take a toll.** In today's digital world, that kind of negativity can feel amplified—but thankfully, the encouragement and love I've received far outweigh the rest.

I also try not to be controlled by competition, but that can be difficult—especially in a society that's constantly judging and

comparing, particularly in the world of artists, singers, and rappers. Thoughts of self-doubt can creep in when I catch myself comparing my work to the many amazingly talented artists out there. **But I strive to remind myself that God has blessed me with my own unique talents and capacities.** *My role isn't to be better than everyone—or anyone, for that matter—but simply to make my own contribution to the betterment of the world.*

There are also specific questions that arise from the particular art form I've chosen to pursue—rap. Hip hop is more than just a genre of music—it's a powerful cultural movement that was born out of the struggle, resilience, and creative genius of Black and Brown communities in the Bronx in the 1970s. It emerged as a response to systemic injustice and economic neglect, offering a voice to the voiceless and a means of reclaiming dignity and power through rhythm, poetry, and art.

At the same time, it sits within a larger history of American music that includes a painful legacy of cultural appropriation—where Black art forms have often been exploited or co-opted without due recognition or respect. **Being aware of this history is important.** It calls for humility, responsibility, and deep respect—not paralysis, but purposeful action. As someone who is White-passing and from a more privileged socio-economic background, I often reflect on questions like: *Am I honoring the roots of this craft? Am I doing justice to the culture of hip hop? Will I be rejected for what I choose to rap about, or for where I come from?*

I'm grateful that many of hip hop's pioneers have left the doors open wide for people of all backgrounds—with the guidance to **be authentic, to bring your own voice and style, to strive for excellence in the craft, and to use the platform to uplift others and contribute something positive.** That's the path I'm striving to walk.

The confirmations on this path of Better Creativity have been profound. I've received countless messages and comments from

people who were moved by a song or performance. One teacher in the Philippines invited Awu and me to perform “*Change the World*” with his school’s orchestra because our message aligned so closely with their mission. At my *Better World* concerts, attendees have described the experience as joyful, inspirational, empowering, and spiritually uplifting.

Every time someone tells me my music gave them hope, helped them feel closer to God, or made them reflect more deeply on their life—that’s all the confirmation I need to keep going.

Creativity also extends far beyond the art form of music. It has also become a part of every role I play. **As a parent, I’m constantly thinking creatively about how to engage, guide, and connect with my children.** As a community member, I use creativity to organize events, inspire action, and foster unity. Through blogs, podcasts, videos, social media, and emails to my fans, I’ve found that creativity is a way of being. *A way of giving. A way of worship to the Divine Creator.*

And it’s not something I do alone. Some of my most powerful experiences have come through collaboration—whether it’s co-writing songs with other artists, building tracks with sound engineers and producers, or developing visual content with cinematographers and editors. **It often takes a whole team to bring a song idea fully to life, and I’ve come to deeply appreciate the unique contributions of everyone involved in that process.**

My touring efforts have also opened up amazing opportunities for collaboration, especially with fellow artists who share a vision of using live performance to uplift and inspire.

One unforgettable collaboration was the creation of my song “*Treasure*”—a tribute to *Bahá’u’lláh* that shares the journey of discovering and embracing Him as the Manifestation of God for this age. I thought it would be cool to hear the stories of multiple people on one song, so I reached out to several friends from the

Bahá'í community with an interest in rap, and five—Joel, Bill, Kishan, DJ, and Jose Maria—responded with interest. We gathered together, shared our personal experiences, studied relevant Bahá'í Writings, and let the creativity flow.

After listening to a few beats, we chose one with a beachy, oceanic vibe that felt right. We did a group brainstorming activity, which led to a chorus that everyone felt energized by. Over the following days and weeks, each of us wrote our individual verses, and we later reconvened to finalize the song. What began as a simple idea blossomed into a powerful collaborative piece.

That track opened doors for live performances at local events, a special music video to honor the Bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, and even a mini regional concert tour across the Southwest. **It was a beautiful example of how unified creativity can lead to something far greater than the sum of its parts.**

There's something incredibly powerful about joining forces with others who are also striving to build a better world through their creative gifts. **These partnerships remind me that creativity is magnified when it's collective.** Each person brings something irreplaceable. Together, we create something none of us could have made on our own.

I remember another example of learning this lesson in a vivid way while participating in a workshop hosted by my dear friend, *Karim Rushdy*, who is also the founder of *The Rap Camp*—an initiative aimed at helping young people use rap for positive change.

In one activity, Karim had the youth pair up and write raps about one another. When it came time to share, you could sense the fear and nervousness in the room—an all-too-common feeling when someone's about to present something they've created. That's when Karim paused and offered some wisdom that stuck with me deeply. He said: "*Let's talk about what is praiseworthy. In our society, we often praise talent first. 'Wow, that artist is so good!'*"

Or the opposite, ‘That artist isn’t very good.’ But when talent is the first thing we praise, it can create fear—‘What if they don’t like me? What if I’m not as good as the others?’ That blocks creativity. But there are many other things we can praise—especially one spiritual quality that helps us overcome fear and allow creativity to flow: courage.”

He continued, “Instead of praising talent, we’re going to praise courage. Encourage means to give courage. And when we praise each other’s courage, we open the doors for creativity.”

The results were powerful. Every single youth got up and shared their rap. The room erupted with cheers. You could feel the shift—the confidence, the enthusiasm, the energy. **I saw firsthand how a creative environment rooted in encouragement becomes fertile ground for expression, growth, and joy.**

That experience reminded me how often fear stands in the way of creativity—and how simple acts of encouragement can break that barrier wide open. Whether it’s in a youth workshop, a studio session, a community gathering, or a conversation with my kids, I’ve seen how offering praise for courage—and for other capacities of the human spirit like sincerity, effort, and perseverance—helps unlock people’s creative potential.

That’s the kind of culture I strive to build: one rooted in love, upliftment, and the belief that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

Because to me, **that’s the ultimate expression of creativity—not just making something beautiful, but something meaningful.** Something that brings people together, elevates the spirit, and moves us all a little closer to *the better world we long for.*

Reflection & Action: Better Creativity

Creativity is one of humanity’s most sacred gifts—a power that allows us to reflect the Creator, express our inner truths, and shape a better world. The following questions and actions are designed to help you reflect on your unique creative potential, explore how creativity shows up in your life and community, and take inspired steps toward using your gifts in service of something greater.

Reflection Questions: Better Creativity

Reflect on the following questions using a journal, voice memo, or simply by writing in the space provided below each one.

1) What does creativity mean to you, and how has your view of it evolved over time? Reflect on how your personal definition of creativity has been shaped by your upbringing, schooling, faith, or life experiences.

2) In what ways do you currently express your creativity—either artistically or in everyday life? Think beyond traditional art forms—consider how you problem-solve, parent, communicate, or serve with creative intention.

3) What fears, doubts, or limiting beliefs hold you back from embracing your creative potential? Be honest about internal or external barriers that block your flow, such as perfectionism, comparison, fear of judgment, or lack of time.

4) How could your creativity be used to uplift others and contribute to building a better world? Explore how your unique talents—big or small—could be channeled into service, connection, healing, or community transformation.

5) How might our world transform if creativity were more widely embraced as a sacred tool for building a better world? Imagine schools that nurtured artistic expression alongside academic achievement, workplaces that encouraged innovation and collaboration, and communities where everyone's unique gifts were honored. What kinds of systems, cultures, or relationships might emerge if creativity—especially when guided by spiritual values—was woven into the fabric of everyday life?

Suggested Actions: Better Creativity

Put your creativity into practice with one or more of these meaningful steps.

▣ Make Something with Purpose

Choose a topic that inspires you—like unity, justice, joy, or healing—and create something that expresses it. Whether it's a poem, a drawing, a video, a recipe, or a social media post, focus on intention over perfection. Let your creativity be a channel for uplifting hearts and minds.

▣ Try a New Creative Medium

Step outside your comfort zone and explore a new form of creative expression. If you usually write, try painting. If you typically sing, try photography. The goal isn't mastery—it's discovery. You may be surprised by what emerges when you follow your curiosity.

▣ Collaborate on a Creative Project

Reach out to a friend, family member, or fellow community-builder and create something together. It could be a song, a flyer for an event, a community art mural, or a short video. Focus on the process of co-creating, and notice how your creativity multiplies in collaboration.

▣ Cultivate a Culture of Encouragement

Identify someone in your life who's trying to express their creativity and find a sincere way to encourage them. Praise their courage, ask thoughtful questions about their process, or offer specific positive feedback. Your support might be the spark they need to keep going.

▣ Set a Sacred Creative Practice

Designate a small block of time each week to engage in creativity with a spiritual mindset. Say a prayer, reflect on an uplifting quote, and then write, draw, or brainstorm ideas as an offering to the Creator. Let this become a devotional act that nourishes your soul and contributes to the world.

PILLAR 4

BETTER MOVEMENT

*“The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct.”*⁶

— Bahá'u'lláh

*“All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition.”*⁷

— Bahá'u'lláh

*“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”*⁸

— Bahá'u'lláh

*“To every generation of young believers comes an opportunity to make a contribution to the fortunes of humanity, unique to their time of life.”*⁹

— The Universal House of Justice

Exploring the Pillar: Better Movement

We've explored knowledge, grounded ourselves in principles, and awakened our creativity. But what happens if we have the knowledge, principles, and creative ideas, but don't take any action? **Nothing. Without movement.**

It's through **movement** that real, meaningful transformation and progress happens. This transformation takes place in our surroundings, as well as within ourselves.

When I say “movement,” I don't just mean physical activity. I'm

talking about **action**—which implies putting forth effort and taking initiative. Our potential becomes reality only through *volition*. And it's through movement—especially **spiritually motivated movement**—that our learning, values, and creativity are activated.

Each of us has a responsibility to act within our own lives to build a better world. But there's also another meaning to the word *movement*. It also means being part of a collective. A movement is a group of people united by a shared vision, working together to create transformation. When our participation moves beyond our individual efforts to a collective process, **our powers for change multiply exponentially.**

To most effectively harness our collective power, **we must aim to continuously strengthen our unity.** The greater our unity, the more power we have. And the kind of power we seek is not about domination or control—it's a power **rooted in service, fueled by love, and aimed at uplifting one another.**

For a movement to achieve meaningful transformation, **it must grow—both in depth and in reach.** Not for numbers' sake, but because the challenges of our time require the participation of everyone. *We must cultivate an outward-looking, inclusive orientation—welcoming people from all backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life.* Everyone has something meaningful to offer. **Everyone has a place in this movement.**

At the same time, **we must grow in capacity.** This means nurturing skills, expanding understanding, and becoming ever more effective at addressing the needs of our communities. It means continually learning—**consulting together, planning together, acting together, and reflecting together.** This cycle of learning strengthens our ability to respond with wisdom and flexibility as new realities arise.

In the context of spiritual development, it's also important to

reflect on the relationship between **being and doing**. Spiritual growth and effective service are not separate—they strengthen one another. *As we act with purpose and integrity, our character is refined. And as we develop spiritual qualities, we become more effective agents of positive change.* This fusion of inner transformation and outward service is what makes a movement truly transformative.

We must also approach this movement with a **long-term mindset**. The better world we seek will not be built overnight. It requires **consistency, patience, and perseverance**—qualities strengthened in an environment of encouragement and mutual support. When we are motivated by **genuine love rather than ego**, we commit more fully. And with that commitment, we can build on the foundations laid by generations past and offer an even stronger foundation to those who come after us.

A Word to the Youth

If you're between 15 and 30, this message is especially for you.

Every age group within a community has a vital role to play in building a better world. The elders carry deep wisdom and experience. Children offer joy and purity of heart. Adults often bring skills, resources, and responsibility. But of all the age groups, **one has the most capacity for movement: The youth!**

The Bahá'í Writings describe the period of youth as “*the choicest time in human life.*” You have vision, energy, and time ahead of you. You haven't yet been bound by the limitations adulthood often imposes. And you're often surrounded by peers who also feel a longing to make a meaningful contribution.

Youth have the power to change culture, challenge injustice, and build new systems. *You are not just the leaders of tomorrow—you are leaders today. You are not the future—you are now.*

History has shown us this time and again. The civil rights movement, women's suffrage, environmental action—*young people have been at the forefront*. You've been the spark. The energy. The moral clarity that moves entire societies forward.

Of course, today's world is full of forces trying to pull youth—and all of us—toward **distraction, division, and despair**. But those forces can be resisted. **And they can be transformed.**

The more youth direct their energies toward **service** and toward **building a better world**, the stronger they become—and the stronger this movement becomes. While youth are often at the forefront, **the rest of the community must continually offer support, encouragement, and their own contributions**. *A movement thrives when each part of the body works together.*

When we tap into our collective power and **align it with purpose**, our actions become a source of *hope and healing*. We awaken the hearts and minds of others. So many people are longing for solutions to the challenges we face—*yearning for a more just, peaceful, and unified world*—but often don't know where to begin.

A movement rooted in love, unity, and spiritual principles becomes magnetic. It draws others in—not through pressure or persuasion, but **by the sheer power of its sincerity, joy, and clarity of purpose**. When we maintain those spiritual qualities at the heart of our movement, **we become a beacon—inviting others to join in building a better world, together.**

A united movement, rooted in love and guided by purpose, working to build a better world for all humanity— is truly irrepressible.

My Story: Better Movement

If the first three pillars helped lay the **blueprints** of my life—the ideas, values, and creative frameworks that gave shape to my vision—then the fourth pillar, **Better Movement**, was about **building upward**. This is where I began to pour the concrete, raise the beams, and bring the structure to life. No matter how strong your foundation or how beautiful your design, if there's no motion—**no action**—then the structure remains a dream on paper. **Movement is what brings transformation into the real world.**

Looking back, I see clearly how it's been consistent movement—ongoing, purposeful action—that has driven transformation in my life. When my grandfather told me that “*education can open doors*,” I could've simply agreed and carried on with business as usual. But instead, **I allowed that insight to move me**. I researched graduate programs and found one that sparked something deep within me—the *Social Justice and Human Rights* program at ASU. I enrolled. I committed. And as I engaged with the coursework and community, **my understanding of the world and my responsibility within it expanded immensely**. It wasn't just about that initial decision to apply—it was the continual engagement, the willingness to keep showing up, that reshaped how I viewed myself and my purpose.

The same was true when I learned about AmeriCorps. I could've easily said, “*That sounds cool*,” and left it at that. But instead, **I applied. I committed to a full year of service**. Each day spent serving others at the adult education center added a brick to the foundation I was building—of **perseverance, agency, and dedication to community upliftment**. Through over 1,700 hours of service, it became clear: *it's not enough to care or to believe—we grow when we move, when we do, when we keep doing*.

One of the earliest movements I made toward building a purposeful life was when I learned about writing a **personal**

mission statement. After reading *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, I was inspired to reflect deeply on my talents, passions, and purpose—and then put those reflections into written form. The process itself was transformative. **It took my scattered thoughts and dreams and turned them into a clear direction for action.** The mission statement I wrote in 2010 still inspires me today:

“I will be a man who works towards excellence and displays the utmost honesty and integrity. I will develop positive and meaningful relationships with my family, friends, colleagues, community, and Creator. I will live with a spirit of service to humanity, and work for peace, love, unity, and understanding, aiming to inspire others to do the same. I will maintain a healthy mind, body, and spirit, help make our world a better place, and love the life I live.”

That foundational declaration laid the groundwork for my artist mission, which emerged soon after: **“To uplift, educate, and inspire humanity to build a better world.”**

Writing it all down was movement in itself—a commitment to action. And it’s something I still do to this day: documenting my goals, intentions, and daily to-do’s as a way to **stay grounded, focused, and in motion.**

That written commitment—to live a life of **service and spiritual integrity**—became a compass for my next steps. It helped me recognize when new opportunities aligned with my purpose, and gave me the **clarity and courage to act on them.** One of the most meaningful expressions of that alignment came when I reconnected with the Bahá’í community and began studying the *Ruhi Institute* courses. The concepts stirred my soul, but study alone didn’t bring about change. It was **movement**—stepping into the role of a junior youth animator in the Sunnyslope neighborhood, then becoming a youth tutor, and now a children’s class teacher—that **transformed those teachings into lived reality.** Sunnyslope is not only where these first steps took root—it’s where my family and I still live today, remaining actively

engaged in ongoing community-building efforts alongside our neighbors. Serving others week after week, year after year, has helped me to **internalize the spiritual principles I'm striving to embody**. That twofold transformation—**personal growth and social contribution**—was only possible because **I kept moving. I kept acting.**

Even creatively, **movement** has been the spark that transformed passing ideas into real, beautiful expressions. I've had so many moments where I felt a creative nudge—a lyric swirling in my head, an idea for a song, or the inspiration to collaborate. Like when I first heard *Awu's* voice and imagined the possibility of blending our sounds. I could've let that moment pass, chalked it up as a “cool idea,” and moved on. But I didn't. **I acted. I reached out.** And we created “*Change the World*”—a song that still reverberates in my life and in the lives of those who've heard it. And time and time again, with every album, every song, every stage I've stepped on, the **magic has always come through action**. Not just the first step, but the ongoing practice of putting creative intention into motion.

And while **personal action** has deeply shaped my journey, it's when that action is **embedded within a collective** that transformation seems to multiply. Whether it's been community-building efforts, collaborative music projects, or shared experiences in **fatherhood and marriage**, I've come to see that **real movement—lasting, culture-shifting movement—happens when people unite around a common purpose.**

In my role as a junior youth animator in Sunnyslope, I wasn't just serving a small group of youth in my neighborhood. **I was part of a global process of grassroots transformation.** Our group's experience was connected to tens of others across Phoenix, hundreds across the country, and thousands across the world—all studying the same materials, learning from each other, and **building a new culture of empowerment.** Insights from one neighborhood would travel through this system and benefit

countless others. *That's the kind of movement that doesn't just shift individuals—it shifts generations.*

Becoming a husband and father has also placed me in a shared experience with **billions of partners and parents** across time and culture. But rather than approaching these roles passively, **I've sought to walk this path with intention**—and I've found deep strength and insight in doing so alongside others. Some of the most meaningful conversations I've had have been with other husbands and dads, as we reflect together on how to be present, supportive partners and how to raise children who are spiritually aware, service-minded, and confident in their unique gifts. These conversations have been full of **vulnerability, learning, and love**. We share wins, talk through struggles, and offer each other encouragement to keep striving toward what really matters. That sense of shared purpose—of walking the path of fatherhood not alone, but in community—has helped me stay grounded and grow.

The same has been true in my creative life. While writing and performing music can be deeply personal, **the moments that have brought the most power and joy have been rooted in collaboration**. Whether it's co-creating with fellow artists or rocking the stage together with those who've joined me for the *Better World* concert series, I've found that when there's **a shared vision and a spirit of unity, something transcendent happens**. Each person brings their unique voice, but the collective message becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Audiences don't just witness a show—**they feel like they're part of a movement**.

And when other artists have shared how performing in these spaces awakened something new in them—how it rekindled a sense of purpose or gave them a rare chance to offer their art in a spiritually uplifting setting—**I'm reminded again how vital this collective rhythm is**.

The *Better World* concert is more than just a space for musical performance. **It's a gathering space, a workshop, a community**

dialogue. We open with conversations about what holds our world back and what we need to build something better. I walk the audience through the idea that no one is just a passive attendee—**we’re all part of the experience.** Head nods to the beat, hands in the air, call-and-response chants—it all adds up to a **shared energy that you can feel in the room.** There’s something powerful about collectively exploring questions like: *What’s holding us back? What do we need to build a better world? How can we each contribute?* The answers don’t just come from the stage—they **emerge from the room, through energy and elevated conversations.**

And when we break the barrier between performer and audience with a **rap-writing activity,** the shift is electric. Watching people who have never written a lyric before stand up, take the mic, and **speak from the heart—that’s movement. That’s transformation.**

There’s also a profound **reciprocity** that emerges through the music itself. The love and encouragement shown when the audience gets into the music—or when they echo a chorus like “*Get down with the movement!*” with the response “*Calling all youth!*”—it creates a **surge of collective power.** Artist and audience become one. And after the music stops, the movement continues. Conversations organically spark—**real, uplifting dialogue about how we can work together to build a better world.** I’ve found these post-concert exchanges to be just as soul-stirring as the music. And seeing more and more artists step into this path of **spiritually motivated service** has been deeply inspiring. **The more voices that join in, the stronger the current becomes.**

Movement isn’t easy. There are always obstacles—both real and imagined—that try to hold me back. *Fear, laziness, anxiety, doubt*—they each take their turn whispering reasons to stay comfortable, to hold back, to wait. Sometimes it’s an external barrier, but more often, it’s a **battle within my own mind.** What I’ve found is that **the key is simply to move—to take the step, even when it’s**

small, and let momentum carry me forward. That's when things begin to shift.

I remember the first time I ever performed on a mic in front of an actual crowd. It was at an open mic event at Arizona State University. Up until that point, I had shared my music here and there with friends or in small, informal settings, but I had never stood on stage and performed in front of an audience. Around that time, I had come across the “*Education Is Not a Crime*” campaign, which shed light on the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran—particularly how they were being denied access to higher education. I was so moved by the campaign that I felt inspired to contribute by creating a song of the same name. I found the open mic opportunity, reached out to the organizers, and they welcomed me to perform. As the day approached, I practiced the lyrics again and again, wanting to deliver the message clearly and with heart. When I got there, it was a small gathering—maybe a dozen college students—but my heart was pounding. The nerves were real. The message was heavy. I stumbled a bit during the performance, but I kept going. And when I finished, the crowd met me with warmth and encouragement. The hosts even came up afterward to say how powerful they found the song. **That experience didn't just confirm the value of the message—it confirmed how empowering it can be to step through fear and move.** That moment of action helped unlock a whole new dimension of my artistic journey.

Sometimes the call to move comes with **unexpected challenges**. I remember back in May of 2020, when I launched the Kickstarter campaign for my “*Created Noble*” album—a project centered on fatherhood, inspired by my firstborn son, Noble. The day after I launched the campaign, George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police, sparking a nationwide movement for racial justice, with a specific emphasis on police brutality toward the Black community. One aspect in the emerging discourse was the need to center and amplify Black voices in that moment. I was

filled with questions. Was it appropriate for me, a non-Black artist, to be promoting my music at such a moment? Was this a noble goal, in *this* moment? I prayed. I reflected. I ultimately decided to pause the campaign and redirected attention to organizations led by and supporting the Black community. That experience taught me that **movement must be rooted in principle**. Sometimes that means pulling back. Sometimes it means changing course. But when the intention is pure, the guidance always comes.

The theme of movement isn't just about my own steps—it's about **helping others step into their own paths of service**. Whether it was youth in my junior youth group becoming animators themselves, or fellow artists like *jeph.ilosopher*, *Peyt Spencer*, *Brian*, *Karim Rushdy*, and others joining me on the road with the *Better World* concert tour, I've witnessed how **action can multiply**. When people feel invited into a movement that's **spiritually grounded, welcoming, and purposeful**, they don't just participate—they thrive.

Ultimately, the **Bahá'í community-building efforts** have shown me the deepest example of **collective movement**. Through the framework of the *Ruhi Institute*, I've been able to serve in many different ways—**accompanying individuals across all stages of life**. Whether it's offering spiritual education to children, empowering young teens through junior youth groups, or facilitating study circles with youth and adults, each path of service has helped me contribute to the **spiritual and social development of my community**. And in each case, **I know I'm not alone**. These experiences are part of a **global tapestry—connected through a system of learning and reflection** that makes our **collective action more powerful, more effective, and more enduring**.

Movement isn't just about doing more—it's about aligning our steps with our highest aspirations, and inviting others to do the same.

When we walk this path together, fueled by purpose and love, **we don't just move. We build.**

And together, **we become a force for the betterment of the world.**

Reflection & Action: Better Movement

Movement brings our learning, values, and creativity to life. The following reflection questions and action steps are designed to help you explore what resonated most from this chapter, translate insight into **purposeful action**, and strengthen your contribution to a **collective movement** for the *betterment of the world*.

Reflection Questions: Better Movement

Reflect on the following questions using a journal, voice memo, or simply by writing in the space provided below each one.

1) What does “movement” mean to you? Reflect on how you define movement in your own life. Is it about action, service, collaboration, or something else? Consider the distinction between movement as individual effort and movement as collective participation.

2) Can you recall a time when you took purposeful action that led to growth or transformation? Think back to a moment when you acted on a value, belief, or creative idea—and how that movement impacted you or others. What motivated you to move? What helped you keep going?

3) What are some of the internal or external barriers that keep you from moving? Identify the fears, distractions, or habits that might hold you back from acting on your ideals. How can you begin to address or overcome those barriers—one small step at a time?

4) What are some ways you can be part of a movement for positive change in your community? Explore practical ways to align yourself with a collective effort. Whether it's through your neighborhood, faith community, artistic expression, or workplace, how might you contribute to a movement rooted in service and unity?

5) How might the world transform if more people moved together with shared purpose and unity? Imagine the cultural, structural, and spiritual shifts that could occur if collective action was guided by love, principle, and long-term commitment. What would change in our schools, neighborhoods, governments, or creative spaces?

Suggested Actions: Better Movement

Channel your inspiration into action with one or more of these steps to strengthen your movement.

▣ **Take one small step toward a goal or project you've been putting off.**

Even a single action—writing a message, making a call, starting a draft—can reignite momentum and move your vision forward.

▣ **Join forces with others on a community-building effort.**

Whether it's volunteering, organizing an event, or participating in a local initiative, find a way to collaborate toward a shared goal rooted in service.

▣ **Reflect on your personal mission and write it down.**

Clarify your purpose by creating (or revisiting) a personal mission statement that inspires you to take consistent, meaningful action.

▣ **Identify a movement you admire and find a way to support it.**

From justice work to environmental stewardship to spiritual education, there are countless movements seeking positive change. How might you contribute?

▣ **Invite someone to join you in taking action.**

Movement multiplies when it's shared. Encourage a friend, family member, or colleague to take a step with you toward building a better world.

Use the space below to jot down which action(s) you'd like to take, any steps you plan to try, or reflections on how you'll move forward.

PILLAR 5

BETTER POWER SOURCE

*“Take courage! God never forsakes His children
who strive and work and pray!”¹⁰
— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

*“The true worshipper, while praying, should endeavour not so much to ask God to fulfil his wishes and desires, but rather to adjust these and make them conform to the Divine Will. Only through such an attitude can one derive that feeling of inner peace and contentment which the power of prayer alone can confer.”¹¹
— Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi*

*“Service is the magnet which draws the divine confirmations. Thus, when a person is active, they are blessed by the Holy Spirit.”¹²
— Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi*

Exploring the Pillar: Better Power Source

We can acquire knowledge, internalize noble principles, spark creative ideas, take inspired action, and even contribute to a collective movement for the betterment of the world—but **without one final element, it’s like a fire without fuel**—bright at first, but eventually it burns out. There’s one more critically important pillar that powers it all.

Let’s consider another analogy: the *smartphone*.

It’s an incredible piece of technology—one that has completely transformed modern life. With it, I can send messages across

the globe in seconds. I can capture and store thousands of high-quality images and videos of nature, family, and community. I can access the accumulated knowledge of humanity with the tap of a finger. The potential packed into this small device is astounding.

But what happens to all of this amazing potential when my phone's battery runs out of power? Just like that, all of its potential is gone.

A phone without power becomes a lifeless brick. Until it's recharged.

And in many ways, *we're the same.*

Each of us is a spiritual being, imbued with immense capacity to contribute to the betterment of the world. When we activate our knowledge, align with our principles, express our creativity, and engage in movement, the possibilities are extraordinary. But we are still *finite* in our energy. And building a better world—while noble and inspiring—is not easy. It demands a tremendous outpouring of *love, forgiveness, resilience, and perseverance.*

Forgiving someone who's wronged you? That takes serious strength. Showing love to someone you clash with? That's difficult. Working for justice in a world soaked in injustice? That can leave you feeling *angry, bitter, discouraged, and hopeless.*

In these moments—when we feel tired, overwhelmed, or disconnected—we're reminded of a simple truth: **we can't do this alone.**

To sustain our efforts and avoid spiritual burnout, we must stay connected to something greater than ourselves. That's where this fifth pillar comes in:

Better Power Source.

Whether we call it God, the Divine, the Creator, or a Higher Power—it is the same Source of energy and life available to us all. And **our power is limited when we try to do life without that connection.** God is the ultimate source of power—*unlimited,*

loving, and always available. And the beautiful thing? We all have equal access to this Power Source. Always. Day or night. No matter who we are or where we're at on the journey. All we need to do is tap in.

And this Power Source created us to contribute to the betterment of the world, and has promised us divine assistance whenever we make an effort towards this noble aim. **How freeing and empowering is that?** *We are never alone.* We just need to keep showing up—with *sincerity, faith, and effort.*

This isn't about religion in the dogmatic sense. It's about *spiritual reality.* About *plugging into the Source of love, wisdom, clarity, and strength* that uplifts us in times of joy and carries us through trials.

One of my all-time favorite quotes from the Bahá'í Writings sums it up perfectly: “*Take courage! God never forsakes His children who strive and work and pray.*”

This quote offers a powerful—and beautifully simple—framework for attracting divine confirmations. The process may be mystical, and at times filled with tests and uncertainty, but the path is clear. **We are called to strive toward noble goals, to work diligently with our full effort, and to pray consistently as an act of communion with our Creator.** Like a spiritual formula, each element is essential. If we strive and pray but don't work, we'll lack momentum. If we work and pray but don't strive for something meaningful, we might succeed in action but miss the deeper purpose. And if we strive and work without prayer, we risk veering off course. But **when all three are present—striving, working, and praying—we open ourselves to divine assistance** that can guide, uplift, and confirm our efforts in powerful and often awe-inspiring ways.

Because here's the truth: even the most righteous movement will face opposition. Even the most creative work can become

exhausting. Even the strongest principles can be hard to live out. Even the best knowledge won't always show us the next step.

But when we are connected to our spiritual Power Source, we tap into more than willpower—we access divine strength.

That's why spiritual practices—like *prayer, meditation, fasting, reading sacred writings, creating with purpose, reflecting, and serving*—are not just feel-good extras. **They're lifelines.**

Let's return to the smartphone analogy. Has your phone ever hit 1% battery while you're in the middle of something important, with no charger in sight? That moment brings *anxiety, stress, even panic*. But when you finally plug it in and watch the battery start to fill up again? *Relief. Calm. Reassurance.*

That's what *tapping into the Divine* feels like. *It recharges the soul.*

Among the many beautiful titles used to describe God—*The All-Loving, The Most Generous, The All-Wise*—one that's always resonated with me is **The Omnipotent**. A Source with *infinite, unlimited power*, able to do anything. That title perfectly encapsulates this final pillar.

There are many ways we can uplift and motivate ourselves: reading an inspiring book, listening to an uplifting song, having a deep conversation with a trusted friend. These are beautiful and necessary. But they offer only temporary boosts. **What do you do when you've turned the last page of the book? When the song fades into silence? When your friend isn't available to talk?** Those moments reveal the limits of these forms of motivation. When we tap into *The Omnipotent*, we connect to **an infinite source of power**—one that is always available and never runs out.

The more we build the habit of connecting daily to this power—through *prayer, study, service, creative expression, and devotion*—the more *resilient, courageous, and purposeful* we become. We

begin to realize that this energy is not scarce. It's *abundant*. Always available. Endlessly flowing.

And this is what makes connecting to the Better Power Source **absolutely essential** in the pursuit of building a better world. When the road gets long—and it will—we need *an energy source that doesn't run out*. We need *clarity* when the path forward is foggy, *courage* when opposition arises, and *hope* when progress feels slow. *Spiritual power doesn't just help us survive difficult moments—it sustains us over a lifetime of service*, and even empowers us to pass on that same spiritual energy to the next generation. This Better Power Source is what fuels the long arc of transformation—from the individual to the family, the community, and ultimately to the world.

With this kind of power flowing through us, **we don't just survive—we thrive**. We become *true agents of transformation*. We become *channels of divine energy*. And **when we're connected to this Better Power Source, no force in this world can stop us**.

My Story: Better Power Source

If the first four pillars laid the *foundation, form, and framework* of my life—**Better Knowledge, Better Principles, Better Creativity, and Better Movement**—then this final pillar, **Better Power Source**, is what **animates the entire structure**. I often imagine it like a home: no matter how skillfully it's designed or how beautifully it's constructed, it won't come alive until it's filled with energy. The electricity running through the walls powers the lights, warms the rooms, and makes everything function as intended. But beyond that physical energy, the spirit of the home—its atmosphere, its purpose—is just as essential. A house can be lavishly furnished, masterfully built, and stunning in every material way, yet still feel empty if it lacks the animating forces of joy, peace, love, or hospitality. On the other hand, a simple, humble structure filled with those spiritual qualities can feel warm, alive, and fulfilling.

Spiritually speaking, that invisible current—the true energy and spirit of a home—is the soul’s connection to the Divine. **And the more I’ve learned to consistently plug into that Source, the more illuminated, grounded, and vibrant my life has become.**

That’s what spirituality has become for me—not just a part of life, but the animating force flowing through it. My knowledge, my values, my art, my service—all of it draws strength, clarity, and resilience from that spiritual current. I’ve come to see that my energy is finite—I get tired, overwhelmed, and depleted. But when I stay connected to God’s infinite power, that energy can be continuously renewed.

That’s why I’ve learned the importance of staying consciously aware of the state of my *spiritual battery*—regularly checking in, noticing when I’m charged and when I’m depleted. Over time, I’ve begun to recognize the things that most intensely drain my energy: taking on too many responsibilities at once, skipping my prayers or sacred reading, getting overly focused on outcomes or external validation. I used to be especially prone to overcommitting myself. But I’ve come to understand that before accepting a new responsibility or opportunity to contribute, it’s essential to consult with the relevant parties and get a clear read of reality—my own capacity, my family’s needs, and the broader context. Sometimes, that means making adjustments to what I had originally hoped to do—postponing a goal until a better time, restructuring my commitments, or even declining an opportunity if it doesn’t align with my current reality. **This practice of thoughtful consultation has helped ensure that my contributions can be carried through with excellence, rather than stretched thin and spiritually depleted.**

Prayer is the most essential way I plug into the Better Power Source. Reading sacred Writings helps sharpen my clarity and makes the power channel more efficient. Engaging in creative expression, especially through music, activates my imagination and inner fire, making the spiritual charge within me more potent.

And service allows me to channel that energy outward—uplifting others, strengthening community bonds, and contributing to collective transformation. But prayer is where I return most deeply to the Source. *It's my reset. My realignment. My daily reminder of who I am and why I'm here.*

My relationship with prayer has evolved over time. As a child, I memorized a handful of Bahá'í prayers—*beautiful words that laid a foundation*. But I didn't yet understand prayer as a living conversation with the Divine. During my youth, I drifted even further, and prayer fell out of my daily rhythm. It wasn't until my passion for justice and service began to blossom—and I found myself drawn back into the life of the Bahá'í Faith and the *Ruhi Institute* process—that I began to rediscover prayer in a more powerful way. Slowly, I started to internalize its purpose. I began asking not just for outcomes, but for clarity. I started to understand that *the highest form of prayer isn't about convincing God to bless my plans—it's about aligning my will with His.*

Now, prayer flows through every part of my life like a quiet current of connection. There are so many things I find myself praying for, depending on the season or situation—peace when I'm anxious, strength when I'm tired, healing for myself or loved ones who are ill or in pain, and protection from harm. I often lift up prayers of gratitude when I pause to recognize the many blessings that surround me, and I also seek forgiveness and mercy when I reflect on my shortcomings and mistakes. One of my most fervent prayers is for my children—that God may guide them to become *spiritual giants for humanity*, and that they discover their unique calling in contributing to the betterment of the world. I pray for unity for my family, friends, community, and humanity. I pray with my children in the mornings and evenings. I pray before concerts, songwriting sessions, and community meetings. **In every moment where I seek to align my actions with purpose and service, prayer becomes the bridge between my heart and the Divine.**

One of the anchors of my daily spiritual practice is the short Bahá'í Obligatory Prayer, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. It reads:

“I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”

I love how this prayer resets my perspective—it reminds me of my purpose, re-centers me in humility, and grounds me in my true station as a servant of God.

After reciting this prayer, I often sit in silence, listening. And when I listen—*really* listen—I always hear something. It's often a quiet whisper in my spirit—a connection to the Higher Being, that Better Power Source—gently guiding my steps with words like: “I am with you at all times,” “Strive to bring joy to all,” or “Focus on serving, and the doors will open.” **These inspirations never fail to lift my heart and steady my steps.**

Beyond personal prayer, I've also come to deeply appreciate the power of *devotional gatherings*—when a group of souls comes together to elevate their collective spirit. I often think of prayer as a *conversation with God*, and devotional gatherings as a *community's conversation with God*. These spaces are simple and reverent—centered on the reading of sacred writings, with no rituals or designated leaders. Just voices rising together in praise, reflection, and longing. Whether I'm praying with my family, alongside other families, or in a room full of diverse hearts, **there's something profoundly unifying and energizing about sharing in that spiritual experience.** *It's like the light gets stronger when we turn toward it together.*

There have also been pivotal moments in my life when a single prayer led to profound transformation. One of the most significant of these turning points came shortly after I had completed both my graduate studies and a year of service with AmeriCorps. I

found myself wondering—if I could devote a year to serving my community through AmeriCorps, what would it look like to dedicate a year of service to my community through my Faith? At that time, I was in the early stages of reintegrating into the Bahá'í Faith and becoming involved in the *Ruhi Institute* process. It was during a visit with my wife Mallory to the Bahá'í House of Worship for the North American continent, located in Wilmette, Illinois—just 30 minutes from where Mallory grew up—that I found myself deep in prayer, seeking clarity. In that sacred space, **I felt a powerful yet peaceful call to dedicate a year of full-time service to the Bahá'í community-building efforts in my hometown of Phoenix.** It wasn't a loud declaration—it was a quiet, confident knowing that rose up during that sacred moment of communion with the Divine. I acted on that inspiration, and the decision brought tremendous spiritual growth, deepened purpose, and meaningful connection with my local community.

Another deeply personal confirmation came during our pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Holy Land in 2016. Mallory and I offered heartfelt prayers at every sacred site, asking to be blessed with a child. As I shared earlier in this book, those prayers were answered in a truly miraculous way with the conception and birth of our first son, *Noble*. Since then, we've been blessed with two more sons—*Justice* in 2020 and *Cyrus* in 2023—each one a beautiful reminder of the **power of sincere prayer** and the loving responsiveness of God.

A more recent spiritual milestone came towards the end of 2023. Mallory was pregnant with *Cyrus* and working full time as a teacher, but she felt a strong desire to be home with the children during their early years. For our family, one of us has always stayed home with the kids while the other worked full time, and we've traded off depending on the season. This time, it meant I would need to take on the role of full-time provider. Over the years, my music had grown in stages—from a fun experiment, to a passionate hobby, to a legitimate part-time business. But it was still nowhere near enough to support a family. Even so, I

had often wondered: *could this ever become a full-time career? Was it possible for me to make a sustainable living through music that uplifts and serves?* After discussing the idea thoroughly with Mallory and receiving her full support, **I turned to God in prayer:** “*If this path is aligned with Your will, please confirm it. Show me the way.*”

I had become more and more comfortable performing over the years. I had hosted a handful of my own concerts and even had some limited experience with touring—and I really loved the energy of live shows. I’d also occasionally received invitations from fans who wanted me to perform in their communities, but due to life circumstances, it usually wasn’t practical. Now, with the pursuit of doing music full-time, I had a feeling that hosting more concerts and touring could help make this dream a reality. I started locally, organizing a few *Better World* concerts in and around Phoenix—and they went great. Then, I began exploring possibilities outside Arizona. Around that time, I was in conversation with *jeph.ilosopher* about doing a collaborative concert in the Maryland/Washington DC area. He started asking around and discovered there was real interest. I was excited—but when I checked flight prices, I began to question if it was financially feasible. **That’s when one of the potential concert hosts, with beautiful generosity and no hesitation, offered to cover my flight using her travel points.** That single act opened the door. We ended up performing four concerts in three days, and the support and encouragement we received was incredible.

Then came Texas. A new fan had reached out with an invitation to perform in her community. When I shared the vision of my newly launched *Better World* concert series, as well as my aspirations to be an artist full time, she offered to cover my travel expenses so I could bring the concert to several other cities. That led to an eight-concert tour across Texas. In every location, I was met with generosity—whether it was help covering tour expenses, free venues, home hospitality, or concertgoers contributing to

support my mission when they learned I was striving to make a living for my family through music. **These weren't just kind gestures—they felt like clear confirmations** that this path, walked with sincerity and reliance on God, would be supported. **Time and again, I've seen that when we strive to serve with purity of intention, the doors truly do open.**

Since then, the *Better World* concert series has expanded to many other regions across the country—and beyond—and continues to grow. With every tour and every concert, I'm continually humbled by the love and support of the community. *I see it all as Divine confirmation—a loving and unmistakable response to my prayer to guide my path and show me the way.*

It's not just the big moments that reveal the power of prayer. In fact, **some of the clearest confirmations have come through seemingly ordinary situations** while serving in the community. When I think about my years of serving as a *junior youth group animator*—and later accompanying others on this path of service—I'm struck by how many times I turned to prayer for clarity, strength, and guidance. And time after time, doors opened.

I remember accompanying *Jorge* and *Brian*, two youth who had been in my own junior youth group and were now leading groups of their own (the same Brian referenced earlier in the book). Several members of Jorge's group were also on the school's soccer team, and a scheduling conflict with practice had caused attendance in the junior youth group to steadily decline. We weren't sure what to do. I prayed sincerely, asking for guidance. That very week, soccer practice was unexpectedly canceled, and several group members who had been missing returned—bringing new friends with them! It gave us an opportunity to consult as a group about possible solutions. We decided we'd try explaining the purpose and importance of the junior youth program to the soccer coach to see if there was any flexibility with the practice schedule. The following week, we met with the soccer coach, who graciously agreed that on days when

both junior youth group and soccer practice were scheduled, the youth could attend the group first and then join the second half of practice. **It became a perfect synergy—and it felt clearly orchestrated by a higher hand.**

A similar experience happened while accompanying *Brian*. His group had also started dwindling in size, and one week, only a couple of junior youth showed up. I knew that if the size of a group dropped too low, the energy and motivation often faded, and the group could fizzle out altogether. I shared this with *Brian* and emphasized that we needed to act quickly. I used the analogy of a defibrillator, saying, “*This group needs a jolt of energy if it’s going to stay alive.*” That week, we had a consultation with the youth about revitalizing the group. We happened to be studying the text *Breezes of Confirmation*, which talks about the need for noble goals and consistent effort to attract the help of God. During the discussion, one of the junior youth said she had friends in another after-school club called *Garden Club*. She even knew the teacher and wondered if we could invite them to join our group. *Brian* and I encouraged her to go for it. She asked, “*Should we go ask her now?*” We said yes, and the group got up and walked to her classroom. The teacher welcomed us in, loved the idea, and invited us to their next meeting. **It was such a clear confirmation.** On our walk back, *Brian* spotted a literal defibrillator mounted on the wall. His eyes lit up. He turned to me and shouted, “CONFIRMATION!”

Sure enough, the next week we had several new members join the group and were invited to participate in multiple service projects with *Garden Club*. **The consultation, the noble intention, the courageous action, and the divine confirmation—it all came together.** Experiences like these deepened my faith in the power of prayer and taught me that God responds when we turn to Him with sincerity and purpose.

One of the clearest confirmations I’ve experienced in the realm of music came through the creation of my song “*Justice.*” At the time,

I was working on a deeply meaningful project—my album *I Hope I Do It Justice*—which was inspired by my second son, *Justice*. The project wove together themes of fatherhood, marriage, hip hop, and spirituality, but I knew I also wanted to write a song explicitly about the theme of *justice* itself. Our son's name *Justice* was partly chosen in response to the global conversations on justice that had intensified around 2020, and I wanted this project to reflect both the personal and societal dimensions of that principle.

But the task felt daunting. *Justice* is such a profound and weighty theme. The discourse around it can be charged, complex, and often divisive, and I wanted to approach it with great care and spiritual depth. For months, I couldn't write a single lyric. During that time, I immersed myself in study—reading several books on justice from different perspectives to better ground my understanding. But it wasn't until I turned to a compilation of the *Bahá'í Writings* on justice that something shifted. The clarity, beauty, and power of those words stirred something deep within me. **Then one night, it all came together. The lyrics poured out of me in a creative flow that felt unmistakably guided.** It was one of those moments where I could feel the hand of the Divine at work in the process.

These experiences, and countless others, have deepened my trust that when our intention is pure, the path becomes clear. **When we turn to the Divine with humility—striving to be a pure channel—and then take action, guidance begins to unfold.** I think of my pilgrimage, the growth of those youth groups, the birth of my children, and my journey into full-time music—not as separate victories, but as *chapters in a larger story of learning to rely on God's confirmations.*

One story that's stuck with me over the years came from a friend in the Bahá'í community during the early announcements of the construction of the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (*'Abdu'l-Bahá was the son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, and was a perfect example of service, humility, and love in action.*) My

friend shared an analogy about three workers laying bricks for the foundation of the structure, each with a different level of understanding. When asked what they are working on, the first might say, “I’m *laying bricks*.” Another might respond, “I’m *building a foundation for a sacred structure*.” And another might proclaim, “I’m *constructing the Shrine of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who was the Perfect Exemplar of the Bahá’í teachings. This shrine will be a place where people will come on pilgrimage for generations—to offer prayers, express gratitude, and connect to peace, purpose, and light*.” The task was the same. **But the understanding transformed the experience.**

That story has shaped the way I see my work—not just as music-making, parenting, or teaching—but as sacred labor. Every beat, every word, every act of service is part of building something greater: **a divine civilization rooted in justice, unity, and love.** Because when I sit down to write a song, I could approach it as “just making music.” Or I could approach it as “crafting something that people will enjoy.” Or even as “trying to make a living from music.” But at the deepest level, what I aspire to is this: *engaging in the sacred process of creating art that uplifts and inspires humanity, gives glory to our Creator, and contributes to building a better world.* **When I hold that perspective, music becomes worship. And the studio becomes sacred ground.**

And just as importantly, I’m also contributing to the construction of something eternal—the development of my soul and its spiritual capacities, which will continue on its journey beyond this earthly life. *This, I’ve come to understand, is how we begin building our true home in the next world.* This understanding is so vital, because when we perceive the *sacredness* of our actions, we begin to see how it’s all connected to the Divine. And the more connected we are to that Source, the more we can draw upon its power. **That Better Power Source has promised to guide, protect, and confirm in ways beyond anything we can imagine.**

This final pillar has reminded me that **I was never meant to**

power this life on my own. When I stay connected to the Divine—through prayer, reflection, and conscious alignment—**my perspective shifts. Challenges don't disappear, but they become more meaningful. Difficulties feel purposeful.** Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the load, I'm uplifted by the Source. I begin to see that it's not just about *doing* more—it's about *being plugged into something greater.* **And that connection changes everything.**

This is the power source that fuels it all. Without it, the house is dark. But with it—everything shines.

Reflection & Action: Better Power Source

Our efforts to build a better world are fueled by more than just knowledge, principles, creativity, or action—they are **sustained by a connection to something greater.** The following questions and actions are offered as an invitation to reflect on what *fuels you at the deepest level*, and to explore how your *spiritual connection* can be nurtured, renewed, and shared. Whether through *prayer, meditation, reflection, creativity, or service*, take time to consider how your *inner power source* can support your *outer contributions*—and **illuminate the path ahead.**

Reflection Questions: Better Power Source

Reflect on the following questions using a journal, voice memo, or simply by writing in the space provided below each one.

1) What does “spiritual power” mean to you? Think about times when you've felt uplifted, renewed, or strengthened beyond your own capacity. What were the circumstances, and what helped you feel that way?

3) How do you typically respond when you feel spiritually depleted or disconnected? Reflect on your current habits, and whether they help or hinder your ability to recharge spiritually. Are there new habits or boundaries you could explore to protect your inner energy?

4) Can you recall a time when your connection to a Higher Power gave you clarity, courage, or confirmation? What happened, and how did it shape your perspective or decisions?

5) How might our communities transform if more people regularly tapped into a higher source of power and purpose?

Imagine what would shift in family life, community efforts, social discourse, or institutions if more people were spiritually grounded. What kind of culture might emerge?

Suggested Actions: Better Power Source

Let your soul’s energy shine with one or more of these steps to stay charged by the Better Power Source:

▣ Establish a daily spiritual habit.

Choose a consistent time each day—even just a few minutes—to engage in prayer, meditation, or reflection. Start small and make it sustainable. Let this be your daily recharge point.

▣ Memorize a sacred quote or prayer that inspires you.

Find a passage that resonates with your heart—something that reminds you of your purpose or centers you in divine strength. Repeat it in moments of stress, decision-making, or gratitude.

▣ Create a “soulful space” in your home.

Designate a small area—a chair, a corner, a windowsill—for

Closing Thoughts: Better Power Source

When we draw upon the power of the Divine, we find the strength to keep going—even in the face of difficulty. **Our energy is renewed, our vision is sharpened, and our hearts are lifted.** Let us strive to stay connected to this *Better Power Source*, not only for our own growth, but so we can be **radiant lamps—shining light and hope into the lives of others.**

CONCLUSION: A BETTER WORLD STARTS WITHIN

If you've made it to this point in the book, I want to take a moment to say: **thank you.**

Thank you for caring.

Thank you for reflecting.

Thank you for exploring the possibility of building a better world—from the inside out.

We began this journey by asking some big questions:

- *What are the obstacles to a better world?*
- *What does humanity most need right now?*
- *How can we actually bring about transformation?*
- *And what is our unique role in that process?*

Throughout the five pillars, we've taken those questions and turned them into a spiritual framework—one that's both practical and purposeful.

The Five Pillars, Revisited

Let's remember what each pillar invites us to do:

1. **Better Knowledge** – Seek learning that uplifts and enlightens, especially knowledge that helps us know and serve our Creator and our fellow human beings.
2. **Better Principles** – Align our lives with spiritual values

like love, justice, unity, and service—living from our higher nature rather than ego.

3. **Better Creativity** – Use our God-given gifts to create beauty, express truth, and uplift others. View creativity as an act of worship and contribution.
4. **Better Movement** – Take action. Turn our insights and intentions into consistent deeds that move the world toward unity and justice—especially in community with others.
5. **Better Power Source** – Stay plugged into the Divine. Draw strength from prayer, spiritual practice, and inner alignment so we can sustain the work and stay anchored in truth.

Together, these five pillars form a foundation—not just for activism or art, but for **a life of purpose, impact, and connection**.

They remind us that building a better world is not someone else's job. It's not for someday. It's not too big, too far away, or too late.

It begins **with us**.

And not just the “ideal version” of us. It begins with us as we are—imperfect, evolving, sincere, and willing to grow.

An Invitation to Act

This book isn't the end of the story—it's a launching pad.

My hope is that it gives you language, tools, and inspiration to keep building—one day, one choice, one creative act at a time.

And I invite you to stay connected with me and others walking a similar path.

If you've been moved by anything in these pages, I'd love to hear from you. Share your reflections. Send a message. Start a conversation. Let's build together.

"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." - Bahá'u'lláh

That's not just a quote. It's a **promise**.

Each one of us is a lamp with the capacity to shine light.

When we come together, our lights merge—illuminating the darkness with collective brilliance.

And when we shine with love and purpose, there's no limit to how brightly we can light the path toward a better world.

So now, the question is...

What's your next step?

Whatever it is, take it boldly.

Take it prayerfully.

Take it *together*.

The world is waiting.

LET'S BUILD A BETTER WORLD—TOGETHER

If this book has sparked something within you—an idea, a question, or a desire to contribute—I'd love to stay connected.



Scan the QR code above to explore a few simple ways to stay connected, including leaving a review for this book, listening to the *Better World* album, and receiving updates about future concerts, music, and reflections.

To scan the code, open the camera on your phone, point it at the square above, and tap the link that appears.

One of the ways this connection has taken shape is through the *Better World* concert series. These events combine live music, community building, and meaningful conversations to inspire action and connection. Each concert is an opportunity to gather with others around the shared purpose of contributing to the betterment of the world.

If you're interested in hosting a *Better World* concert in your

community—whether at a home, school, community center, faith-based center, or public space—or if you'd like to collaborate on any aligned project, I'd love to hear from you.

Email: colbyjeffersmusic@gmail.com

Social: Stay connected on all platforms @colbyjeffers

Let's co-create something beautiful.

Let's uplift hearts.

Let's build something better—together.

A VISUAL JOURNEY



Baby Colby arrived on the scene back in 1987.



I've always enjoyed expressing myself through creativity.



This is the family that raised me and helped shape my values. They have been a continual source of support and encouragement throughout my life, and I'm deeply grateful for all they have given me.

Left to right: Monica (mom), Ashley (sister), Richard (dad), Emery (brother), and me.



I took piano lessons for a short time as a kid, but my creative potential in music wouldn't fully blossom until later in life.



My first experience dedicating myself fully to service during a volunteer trip to Costa Rica.



Serving alongside my AmeriCorps cohort during a year that shaped my path—and where I met my wife, Mallory.



My grandpa Ken encouraged me to keep pursuing my education at a crossroads in my life, and my aunt Lollie later introduced me to the Ruhi Institute—both of which deeply shaped my path.

Left to right: me, my dad, my aunt Lollie, my paternal grandpa Ken, and my maternal grandpa Ata.



Reconnecting with my Faith in young adulthood deeply shaped my perspective, creativity, and every sphere of my life.



Earning my graduate degree in Social Justice and Human Rights deepened my understanding of the world—and my responsibility within it.



My relationship with Mallory helped me blossom in many ways—most especially in my spiritual growth. Here we are at her favorite place on Earth, the Grand Canyon.



Our marriage is rooted in service and a shared spiritual purpose.



Mentoring this junior youth group deepened my commitment to service and my desire to contribute to the betterment of the world.



In Cameroon with Mallory and Ngalim Franklin—a service trip that would shape my life and music in profound ways.



In Cameroon with Awu,
when *Change The World* began to truly come to life.



My first time in a professional music studio—recording in Cameroon with Awu, Ngalim, and producer Doby. Their encouragement gave me the confidence to believe my voice and my message truly mattered.



My second trip to Cameroon—this time adding my dad and my best friend Brian (the cinematographer behind the majority of my official music videos). During this trip, we filmed the music videos for *Change The World*, *Paradigm*, and *The Movement*.



Behind the scenes of the *Paradigm* music video—Brian capturing the vision. His friendship, skill, and steady support have helped bring so many creative ideas to life.



Recording at TallCat Studios in Phoenix—home to every album I've made since *Change The World*. Their care and professionalism have helped elevate my music to its fullest expression.



My first time ever performing on a mic—sharing *Education Is Not a Crime* at an open mic at Arizona State University. I was nervous, but stepping into my voice in this way was deeply empowering.



Performing at my *Wizdome* album release show—the first time I ever hosted and curated my own concert from start to finish.



Performing at one of the first *Better World* concerts in Phoenix—before it became a nationwide effort. This moment marked the beginning of one of the most transformative creative initiatives of my life.



One of the greatest joys of this journey has been witnessing people of all generations come together, united by joy, inspiration, and a shared desire to build a better world. Captured here at a *Better World* concert in San Jose, California.



One of the most rewarding aspects of the *Better World* concert tour has been the chance to collaborate with artists who are also dear friends—people who share a deep commitment to using creativity in service of humanity. This moment captures the first *Better World* concert outside of Arizona, in Bellevue, Washington, with Karim Rushdy (left) and Peyt Spencer (right).



That same spirit of collaboration carried into other regions of the tour. Here I'm performing alongside Jeffrey Garber (jeph. ilosopher) at a *Better World* concert in the Mid-Atlantic region.



Full-circle moments on the *Better World* tour—performing in Edmond, Oklahoma with Brian, once a junior youth I mentored and now a powerful artist in his own right.



Mallory and I on Bahá'í Pilgrimage in the Holy Land, offering prayers for guidance, gratitude, and the hope of being entrusted with a child.



Awaiting the birth of our first son, Noble. Fatherhood has profoundly shaped my spiritual growth, sense of responsibility, and creative expression.



Mallory and I as new parents with Noble, learning—day by day—what love and responsibility look like in practice.



Our growing family—Mallory, Noble, Justice, Cyrus, and me. Being a husband and father are sacred roles through which I strive to build a better world, and I'm deeply grateful for the love, support, and joy they bring into my life.

MY DISCOGRAPHY

Over the years, music has been my main creative tool for sparking reflection, spreading hope, and encouraging action toward building a better world. Each project in this discography marks a chapter of that journey—rooted in purpose, shaped by collaboration, and guided by the spiritual principles at the heart of this book.

Change The World (2013)

An international collaboration with Cameroonian artist Awu—a blend of pop, hip hop, and African folk. This album aims to inspire you to make a difference in the world, one step at a time.

Wizdome (2017)

My debut solo album, diving into social and spiritual themes like unity, justice, and enlightenment—interwoven with personal experiences and reflections on the world around us.

LIT (2018)

A “lyrical-remix” album, where I reimagined popular mainstream beats and infused them with spiritually-conscious lyrics—flipping familiar songs into uplifting anthems with a purpose.

Release The Power (2019)

A collaborative project centered on empowering youth and helping them recognize their inner spiritual potential. A celebration of energy, purpose, and youthful spirit.

Created Noble (2021)

An album dedicated to my firstborn son, Noble—focused on the concept of nobility, fatherhood, and striving to contribute to the betterment of the world.

Holy Days (2022)

An inspirational hip hop album celebrating the holy days and festivals of the Bahá'í Faith. A creative way to bring spiritual joy and reverence to these sacred occasions.

Be Happy (2023)

A joyful, feel-good album packed with positivity and spiritual inspiration—featuring collaborations with a multitude of talented artists from around the globe.

I Hope I Do It Justice (2024)

Dedicated to my second-born son, Justice—this project explores themes of fatherhood, hip hop, spirituality, and justice. One of my most personal and timely works to date.

Better World (2026)

My latest release—created alongside this book and the *Better World* concert tour. This project brings together many of my previously released songs, with several receiving fresh updates and remixes to breathe new life into their message. A soundtrack for anyone committed to building a better world.

Listen to the music:

All of these albums are available on every major streaming platform under my name—**Colby Jeffers**. You can also explore more at colbyjeffers.com.

BETTER WORLD ALBUM - SONG LYRICS

Pillar 1 - Better Knowledge

“I Believe”

Originally from the album: Change the World (2013)

Background: This song emerged from a deep dive into the sacred texts of the world’s major religions. As I studied their teachings, a profound harmony stood out—revealing to me that they all originate from one Divine Source. By highlighting the central spiritual messages of these faiths, the song invites reflection on the oneness of religion and the unity of humanity—a core principle that has guided my journey to build a better world.

Song Lyrics:

[Verse 1]

Yeah, I believe,
This one goes out to all of the believers,
All of the worshipers, clergy, all the leaders,
Priests, bishops, yeah, all of the ministry,
Mullahs, rabbis, all with divinity,
I can’t forget about the monks and the gurus,
And all the common folks, this is for you too,
For those who worship in a mosque or a chapel,
Or in a synagogue, church, or a cathedral,
Or if you pray at a vihara, temple, or a dome,
Or if you like to keep it simple and just pray at home,
If you believe in God, Yahweh, or Allah,
Or if you call it Jehovah, Dios, or Brahma,
Or if you read from a scripture or a holy book,
Like the Bible, the Quran, or the Talmud,

Or if you're down with the Bhagavad Gita,
 Or the Tripitaka and its many sutras,
 How about the Hidden Words and the Book of Certitude,
 Or the many more, I know I missed a few,
 If you like to say Shalom or Hallelujah,
 Or Allahu Akbar, I'm talking to you,
 Or if you greet with an Alláh-u-Abhá or Namaste,
 Then open up your ears to what I am about to say,
 We think we have different religions but they're really one,
 No matter where we get our light it's from the same sun, yeah,
 No matter where we get our light it's from the same sun
 We think we have different religions but they're really one,
 No matter where we get our light it's from the same sun,

[Verse 2]

You might be thinking that I'm crazy, but just wait a minute,
 Open your mind and let some of this information in it,
 Let's take a look at some of God's Manifestations,
 An exploration into all their situations,
 Their main purpose was to educate humanity,
 To teach us about God and our spirituality,
 They each were perfect mirrors reflecting the light of God,
 To help the world understand this life and the life beyond,
 Abraham taught us that there's just one Creator,
 And not to worship things of this world 'cause there's
 something greater,
 And Moses introduced us to the basic laws of God,
 To never kill, cheat, lie, loot, steal, or rob,
 Krishna taught us that to love God we must be devout,
 And that in this life what goes around, it comes around,
 I'm talking karma man, Buddha taught us Dharma, man,
 Spiritual enlightenment, that's how we reach Nirvana, man,
 Zoroaster taught us that we can choose bad or good,
 That means we have free will, we decide our livelihood,
 And Jesus taught us that we should show others love and peace,
 And that if someone strikes you you should turn the other cheek,

Mohammed taught us to submit unto the will of God,
And that this life's a struggle, that is what He called Jihad,
The Bab prepared us for the one whom God made manifest,
And for this He took 750 to the chest,
So that Baha'u'llah could bring God's message for today,
And now the quest for global unity is underway, yeah, yeah,
And now the quest for global unity is underway,

“Springtime” ft. Diversoul

Originally from the album: Be Happy (2023)

Background: Inspired by a metaphor shared in the Bahá’í Writings, this song compares the coming of God’s Divine Messengers to the renewal of spring. Just as the earth blossoms with new life, so too does human society advance spiritually and socially when a Manifestation of God appears. The track is both an ode to that divine renewal and a joyful tribute to the vibrant energy of the material spring season.

Song Lyrics:

[Chorus]

If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the springtime, yeah,
If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the springtime,
The world has become a new world,
Souls are quickened,
Spirits renewed, refreshed (spirits renewed, refreshed),
Truly it is a time for happiness (a time for happiness),

[Verse 1 - Colby Jeffers]

Yes! It’s the time for re-birth, rejuvenation, renewal,
A time I prefer, sun shining on my skin and I feel that breeze,
Birds are singing out their songs, it sounds like these words, yo,
If you do not smile now, for what time will you await?
This is the springtime, embrace it, we cannot reverse,
To the winter, too cold, and my back and knees hurt, yeah,
Religion’s like this cycle, seasons reoccur,
Every time the Message is renewed we see the green emerge,
New life, fresh and bright, the spirit mirrors the Earth,
The Word of God like an ocean of light to immerse
Your soul in and clean the dirt time to align with this cycle
and go in,

Come out like a clean shirt, beaming bright like the future,
 All the Prophets referred to this Day that we are living, and that's
 why you see me grinning, yeah,

[Chorus]

If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the
 springtime, yeah,

If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the
 springtime,

The world has become a new world,

Souls are quickened,

Spirits renewed, refreshed (spirits renewed, refreshed),

Truly it is a time for happiness (a time for happiness),

[Verse 2 - Diversoul]

Don't you know things go in cycles,

Diversoul, springtime revival,

Been through these departures and arrivals,

Yet I know, I know, deeds is most vital,

That's just the set up,

I feel it man, you're fed up,

Life keeps coming and it don't let up,

Andy said though, you gotta keep your head up,

Q said bro fall off your bicycle then get up,

Shine bright, give light for the Most High,

The vibe's right, know that I am most kind,

I wear a smile on my heart like most times,

And only little smirks from the lips for the dope rhymes,

Life is hard, sometimes you get clotheslined,

Tough to reach those with hard hearts and closed minds,

They show no signs, no signs, before the show time,

Until I shine bright, give light it's go time,

[Outro Chorus]

If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the
 springtime, yeah,

If you do not smile now, for what time will you await...This is the
springtime,

Pillar 2 - Better Principles

“Change The World (Remix)”

Originally from the album: Change the World (2013)

Background: This was the very first song I ever wrote—born from a moment of inspired reflection at my bedroom desk in 2010. A few years later, during a volunteer trip to Cameroon with The Greens (an environmental nonprofit), I connected with fellow artist Awu, and the song blossomed into a heartfelt collaboration. The message is simple but powerful: each of us has the capacity to make a difference. This song planted the seed for my journey in using music as a vehicle for service.

Song Lyrics:

[Chorus]

I can, you can,
I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,

[Verse 1]

I woke up this morning with a dream to change the world,
Just want to bring a smile to every boy and every girl,
I can't do it by myself, on my own and all alone,
The world needs changing now, so let's all get in the zone,
Every woman, every man, come and join me lend a hand,
It's time to step it up and lead our children to the promised land,
The golden age of unity, freedom and equality,
Peace on earth is possible, just need a new mentality,
So open up your heart and open up your mind,
Open up your spirit and guess what you will find,
Instead of us vs. them, always focused on the enemy,
You'll see that your enemy is just like you and me,
The world is one country, mankind its citizens,
Time to come together ya'll, all seven billion,

Turn war into peace, turn hate into love,
Turn your frown into a smile, go give somebody a hug, 'cause,

[Chorus]

I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,

[Verse 2]

Do unto others as you'd have done to you,
Changing the world starts with the golden rule,
We gotta celebrate diversity and show love universally,
'Cause everyone on earth is part of one community,
Black, white, red, tan,
Rich, poor, woman, man,
Atheist, Christian, Muslim, Jew, Baha'i, Buddhist, Sikh, or Hindu,
What if you were judged for the language that you spoke,
What kind of feelings do you think it would evoke,
To be put down 'cause of your race, or face religious persecution,
Time to rid the world of prejudice and start a revolution,
Talking no more hunger, no more pain,
No more violence, and no more slaves,
No more hatred, and no more greed,
No more homeless, or broken families,
No more pollution, no more disease,
No more corruption, no more poverty,
No more discrimination, kids need an education,
Gotta give hope to the up and coming generation,
Look towards the future and forget about our sins,
Take a moment to reflect, 'cause the power is within, hey,

[Chorus]

I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,
I can, you can, we can change the world,

“NBA (Noble Being Always)”

Originally from the album: Created Noble (2021)

Background: This track blends two of my passions—spirituality and basketball. At the time, I was really focused on developing my lyrical wordplay, and this song provided the perfect canvas. The concept of nobility at the heart of the track is inspired by the Words of Bahá'u'lláh—“O Son of Spirit! Noble have I created thee...”—which I echo directly in the lyrics. Exploring that spiritual truth through the metaphor of basketball allowed me to craft something both playful and powerful, using language to highlight the importance of living from our higher nature.

Song Lyrics:

[Verse 1]

When I was a little itty bitty boy, had a dream,
 Make it to the NBA, Phoenix Suns, that’s my team,
 But the sun I was meant to chase had a different beam,
 Sun of Truth, still rising like a Phoenix, that’s my destiny,
 Lowly passions of the world, feeling foul, that’s a hack,
 When I’m tempted, call me John Stockton, I think I’ll pass,
 Everybody’s bound to hit a wall, that’s a brick,
 My soul’s safety net is God, go to Him, swish,
 “O Son of Spirit”, He’s telling me,
 “O Son of Spirit! Noble have I created thee”,
 Let your spirit rise, no time to be abased,
 Welcome to the NBA, Noble Being Always, ay,

[Chorus]

Noble Being Always, ay,
 Noble Being Always, ay,
 Made it to the NBA,
 Noble Being Always, ay,
 Noble Being Always, ay,
 Noble Being Always, ay,

Made it to the NBA,
Noble Being Always, ay,

[Verse 2]

Let my soul guide the way, that's my resolution,
Bad habits hit the bench, that's a substitution,
When I need a break, call a timeout,
Meditate, pray to God to assist, dimes,
How can I be a warrior,
Mold me into purest form, like I'm Klay/clay,
Shower confirmations on me, make it rain,
Steph Curry, just like him, learning from my Father's ways,
Hit this 3 pointer, Noble Being Always, ay,

[Chorus]

Noble Being Always, ay,
Noble Being Always, ay,
Made it to the NBA,
Noble Being Always, ay,
Noble Being Always, ay,
Noble Being Always, ay,
Made it to the NBA,
Noble Being Always, ay,

Pillar 3 - Better Creativity

“New World”

Originally from the album: Created Noble (2021)

Background: This song was sparked by the track “Choices” by legendary Bay Area rapper E-40, where he uses a clever back-and-forth style with the words “nope” and “yep.” That concept lit something up in me. I asked myself, “How could I make my own back-and-forth style song inspired by building a better world?” Drawing from the Bahá’í vision of building a new world, I crafted my own version using the refrain “Leave it!” and “Need it!” to represent the twofold process of transformation—letting go of outdated systems, patterns, and ways of thinking, while embracing new, uplifting principles and structures based on the oneness of humanity. The lyrics flowed out naturally, and I’ve loved using this song as a tool in concerts to invite audience participation—encouraging others to reflect on what we must release, and what we must cultivate, to co-create a better world.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

Need it...

Leave it...

Need it...

[Verse 1]

Do we need hate? (Leave it!)

Should we take time to meditate? (Need it!)

What about all the prejudice? (Leave it!)

Universal love, is it relevant? (Need it!)

People only thinking ‘bout themself, (Leave it!)

Taking time to help a brother out, (Need it!)

Every system built on white supremacy, (Leave it!)

Recognize our oneness as the remedy, (Need it!)

School to prison pipeline, (Leave it!)
School to educate bright minds, (Need it!)
I can't do it, (Leave it!)
Make a dream, then go and pursue it, (Need it!)
Greedy chasing money everyday, (Leave it!)
Work hard, make a living wage, (Need it!)
Fresh beats, filthy lyrics, (Leave it!)
Music that is lifting up my spirit, (Need it!)

[Pre Chorus]

You know what they say,
Out with the old in with the new, (let's go!),
It is a new Day,
We're breaking the mold,
I thought that you knew?! (let 'em know!),

[Chorus]

Building that new world up,
Leaving that old world, what?
Building that new world up,
Leaving that old world, yup,
New world, new world, (Need it!)
Old world, old world, (Leave it!)
New world, new world, (Need it!)
Old world, old world, (Leave it!)

[Verse 2]

Always trying to fight, (Leave it!)
Teaching kids to always do what's right, (Need it!)
1 trillion dollar student loan debt, (Leave it!)
Take charge, educate your own head, (Need it!)
Police brutality, (Leave it!)
Legal system guided by morality, (Need it!)
Hospital visit got you bankrupt, (Leave it!)
Plant based eating got your health up, (Need it!)
Isolated feeling all alone, (Leave it!)

True friends I can lean on, (Need it!)
Division, (Leave it!)
Unity, world-embracing vision, (Need it!)
I'm better than you, (Leave it!)
How can I help you? (Need it!)
Forget God, no need to pray, (Leave it!)
Feed my soul, praying everyday, (Need it!)

[Pre Chorus]

You know what they say,
Out with the old in with the new, (let's go!),
It is a new Day,
We're breaking the mold,
I thought that you knew?! (let 'em know!),

[Chorus]

Building that new world up,
Leaving that old world, what?
Building that new world up,
Leaving that old world, yup,
New world, new world, (Need it!)
Old world, old world, (Leave it!)
New world, new world, (Need it!)
Old world, old world, (Leave it!)

“I Hope I Do It Justice”

Originally from the album: I Hope I Do It Justice (2024)

Background: This title track weaves together the multiple roles I cherish—father, husband, artist, changemaker, Baha’i—and the high aspirations I hold for each. “Doing it justice” means striving to honor these responsibilities with integrity and intention. The song is a heartfelt expression of hope, humility, and purpose—the very spirit that fuels the “Better World” vision.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

Justice,
I hope I do it justice,
Justice,
I hope I do it justice,

[Verse 1]

I grew up privileged in this social system,
Now I see that but at first I missed it,
I don’t wanna be another white passing man,
Sitting on the sidelines, wanna take a stand,
Help dismantle all of the oppression,
See, when we’ve all become one we’ve won, that’s a leaven (eleven),
That’ll lift up humanity,
Use my voice to change the world to heaven that’s my dream,
Blessed with a great woman, that’s my wife,
She brought me back to God to waken up my spirit, saved my life,
Then I found my calling working with the kids,
And the youth to help them mine their gems, that’s a gift,
Now I’ve got three of my own,
Lead them down the right path, that’s my noble goal,
To sacrifice my selfish ways, and show them all what love is,
I hope I do it justice,

[Chorus]

Only get one life to live,
 So I'm trying to give all that I got to give,
 Before it's time to meet God, and I'm brought to Him,
 I hope I do it justice, yeah,
 Cause God the only One that can judge my life,
 But He also knows I know what is wrong from right,
 You judge a lamp by how bright it shines a light,
 I hope it I do it justice, yeah,

[Verse 2]

They say it is easier said than done,
 It's not words, but deeds for which we will be judged,
 I'll never be perfect, but I gotta bring myself to account on
 the daily,
 To amount to why God made me,
 Too often I, got my eye on my Apple, instead of the apples
 of my eye,
 Outsmarted by my phone, I think I really need to monitor my
 time screen time,
 I keep yelling at my kids to stop yelling,
 Be more patient I impatiently tell 'em
 Nothing humbles me like being a father, that's a blessing,
 And I hope it I do it justice,
 A true father is an educator,
 Family comes first, no responsibility is greater,
 Than teaching you right from wrong and how to worship
 Our Creator,
 I hope it I do it justice,

[Chorus]

Only get one life to live,
 So I'm trying to give all that I got to give,
 Before it's time to meet God, and I'm brought to Him,
 I hope I do it justice, yeah,

Cause God the only One that can judge my life,
But He also knows I know what is wrong from right,
You judge a lamp by how bright it shines a light,
I hope it I do it justice, yeah

[Verse 3]

So many greats in the past and the present of Hip Hop,
I'm studying and learning from the legends,
Of lyricism and flow, rhymes and rhythms,
And the originality it takes to captivate your soul,
Bring authenticity, use similes and imagery,
Like birthing new ideas in your mind with my delivery,
And when I rap it's coming from my soul, I do it spiritually, yeah,
I hope it I do it justice,
So many greats in the past and the present,
Of the Faith of Baha'u'llah,
To bring me inspiration, yeah,
But how will live up to all the lofty expectations,
Of sacrifice and selflessly serving, that is the station,
Of a true Baha'i,
And if I am being honest with you,
Well mine feels infinitely distant from my true design,
May God help me to improve my shine,
I hope it I do it justice,

[Chorus]

Only get one life to live,
So I'm trying to give all that I got to give,
Before it's time to meet God, and I'm brought to Him,
I hope I do it justice, yeah,
Cause God the only One that can judge my life,
But He also knows I know what is wrong from right,
You judge a lamp by how bright it shines a light,
I hope it I do it justice, yeah

[Outro]

I hope I do IT justice. It is everything in this life. It's being a husband, a father, an artist, an agent of positive change, a Baha'i, a child of God, all of it. I'm just trying to be a good human being while I'm on this Earth. I hope I do it justice.

Pillar 4 - Better Movement

“So Powerful”

Originally from the album: Wizdome (2017)

Background: A reimagined version of my earlier track “Light of Unity,” this remix features updated production and a new verse inspired by the global push for racial justice in 2020. The chorus draws directly from the Words of Bahá’u’lláh—“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”—and the song itself is a tribute to the power of unity and the sacred responsibility to dismantle injustice. It’s a reminder that spiritual awareness must move us to action—where the power of knowledge and creativity converge.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”,

[Verse 1]

We live in dark times, we need some sunshine,
Things are falling apart, I think I know why,
I’ve got this jewel of a truth and it is sublime,
But it is not mine, this gem is divine,
We’re looking down low, instead of up high,
So many don’t know they have been deprived,
They have been kept blind, so let me supply,
The Revelation that I found, I hope that you find,
All the dissension, all of the world’s strife,
All the contention, afflicting mankind,

The root cause of it all is our disunity,
Listen to this phrase that just sums it up so beautifully,

[Chorus]

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, again,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”,

[Verse 2]

The world is diverse, so many people,
We may be different, but we're all equal,
So many races and nationalities,
But we're all human, that's our commonality,
So many beliefs and different opinions,
But there's only one God, only one religion,
Revealed at different times, and different places,
The situation determined the revelation,
That's why there's different laws, and different systems,
All kinds of customs and different traditions,
But they came from One Source, rays of One Light,
And when we see this the world will become so bright,

[Chorus]

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, again,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”, yeah,

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”,

[Verse 3]

Feels like we've never been more divided,
But never been more united,
I guess we're all just deciding which side of history we want to be on,
2020 the worst year in a while, but really helping us to see what
we've been missing,
Clearing up our vision,
Took a virus to show us how sick of a system that we live in,
A torrent of brutal murders of Black lives,
Captured by the lens of a camera to let the light shine through
the Pupil of the Eye,
To help the rest of us to see, most especially the whites, you can
take it from me,
Racism and white supremacy the true enemy,
So lock arms, serried lines, feel the power of the unity, yeah,
Feel the power of the unity, yeah,
Feel the power of the unity,
And lock arms, serried lines, feel the power of the unity,

[Chorus]

"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole
earth", yeah,
"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole
earth", again,
"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole
earth", yeah,
"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the
whole earth",

“The Movement (Remix)”

Originally from the album: Wizdome (2017)

Background: This song traces back to 2013, when my friend Kishan and I created a fun call-and-response chant to get youth in our community energized for an upcoming youth conference—one of 115 youth conferences across the globe organized for Bahá’í youth and their friends spanning throughout 2013. The chant later evolved into a full song and music video during my second trip to Cameroon in 2015, where I collaborated once again with my friend Awu—who added his soulful style to the chorus and a powerful bridge to the track. Now with an updated beat and bouncier delivery, this latest remixed version of “The Movement” has become a staple at *Better World* concerts, inviting youth to rise up and move together for change.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

Get down with the movement,
Get down with the movement,

[Chorus]

Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),

[Verse 1]

I’m ‘bout to raise the roof spitting some truth,
If you’re a youth, what I’m about to say’s directed to you,
Yeah, the young ones, living in your prime,
Open up your eyes, it’s your the time to shine, check it,
You have the powers that can bring about change,
They can also bring pain, homie, let me explain,
Think about our generation, what is our purpose?
Why were all of us created, what should we worship?

Media and marketers trying to trick your brain,
They'll have you living a lie, if you ain't on your game,
Sleepwalking from the womb to the tomb,
Got the world thinking that our generation is doomed,
So wake up wake up, get down with the movement,
Calling all youth, help us make an improvement,
Let's use our powers for good, let's change society,
Come on and join us, let's build a spiritual dynasty,

[Chorus]

Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),

[Verse 2]

If you wanna change the society, change yourself,
Turn off the T.V., take a book off the shelf,
You gotta stimulate your mind, activate your brain,
Intellectual capacities you must obtain,
Your thirst for knowledge, your love for the truth,
Language, arts, and science, mathematical proofs,
And don't forget your meditation and prayer,
That's how we learn to put our faith and trust in the Creator,
Use your talents and abilities in service to others,
And if you work for peace and unity you'll surely discover,
That service to humanity is just like service to God,
And living only for yourself, that's a big façade,
So wake up wake up, get down with the movement,
The world needs you, no excuses,
I hope you feel the Holy Spirit that is guiding me,
Change yourself, change society,

[Chorus]

Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),
Get down with the movement (calling all youth),

Pillar 5 - Better Power Source

“Justice”

Originally from the album: I Hope I Do It Justice (2024)

Background: This was one of the most challenging—and ultimately rewarding—songs I’ve written. For months, I struggled to find a way to approach such a profound and often charged topic. I immersed myself in books and, eventually, a compilation of Bahá’í Writings on justice. That’s when the lyrics finally began to flow. The song explores justice not just as a social issue, but as a spiritual principle—one that calls us to see with our own eyes, to uplift others, and to align our lives with truth.

Song Lyrics:

[Chorus]

Justice seems so far away,
I hope we meet you one day,
So veiled, might not even recognize your face,
Shine your light upon the world, we pray,
Justice seems so far away,
I hope we meet you one day, one day,

[Verse 1]

One day, one day, we’ll see everyone is made,
From the same dust, just go check the DNA,
It’s the same dust as the stars way out in space,
And just like the stars, we were made to shine our rays,
All connected we’re a constellation, like the Milky Way,
One day it’ll only be we, no more they,
One day we will see we are the same,
And feel each other’s pain,
Any injustice and humanity will raise up as one,
And we’ll break all the chains of oppression,
No more weight/wait,

One day, we'll use peace instead of weapons,
 One day, we will put away the guns, and the blades, and the bombs,
 No more violence, because that will never bring,
 The type of justice that we hope to create,
 One that'll never fade,
 A justice that will last until the end of our days,
 Where injustice finds a place in books of history where it
 should stay,
 Praying we can turn the page, 'til that day,

[Chorus]

Justice seems so far away,
 I hope we meet you one day,
 So veiled, might not even recognize your face,
 Shine your light upon the world, we pray,

[Verse 2]

We pray, we pray, because Justice comes from God,
 That's one of His names,
 Out of all of His creations, that's His favorite thing,
 When we're working to bring justice, He will come to our aid,
 Helping us find a way,
 We pray to God help the light of Justice to shine,
 We say we want justice,
 But without the Divine we may keep on coming up short,
 Try adjusting our aim,
 And no longer equate justice with wanting law and order in a
 system that was unjustly made,
 For a few to benefit while the rest are in pain,
 Or thinking justice and revenge are the same,
 We pray for God to help us create,
 The type of justice that empowers everyone to see the part
 they can play,
 Choosing truth and righteousness and to remove every trace,
 Of prejudice off the face of the Earth as we birth a new Day,
 Where the Daystar of Justice awaits, 'til that day,

[Chorus]

Justice seems so far away,
I hope we meet you one day,
So veiled, might not even recognize your face,
Shine your light upon the world, we pray,

“Strive. Work. Pray.”

Originally from the album: Created Noble (2021)

Background: Inspired by a simple yet profound quote from the Bahá’í Writings—“Take courage! God never forsakes His children who strive and work and pray!”—this track became a kind of spiritual anthem for me. It encapsulates the heart of Better Power Source: putting forth effort, seeking guidance, and trusting that divine confirmations will follow.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

Strive, work, pray, yeah

[Chorus]

Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,

[Verse 1]

Eyes open up see a ray a light,
Feeling rested look around see beauty to every side,
See my beautiful wife, see my beautiful son,
I reflect on my life, see it’s a beautiful one,
Then I turn to the One that gave it all to me,
Offer up a prayer that I can heed the Will of God, the way it’s
supposed to be,
Then I speak my praise and gratitude, Thank you Lord,
Ask for joy and happiness, to master my moods, yeah,
Not dwelling on the unpleasant things of life,
Powers illumined, my spirit is gladdened, with God as the refuge,
anxiety passing,
God never forsakes his servants,
Who strive, work, pray, so I take courage, as I,

[Chorus]

Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,

[Verse 2]

Now I'm diving into the Word a boundless ocean,
Inexhaustible riches the more I'm devoted the more I'm benefiting,
But all these gems that I'm finding ain't just for me,
I recite 'em, memorize 'em, then I put in work to translate 'em
into deeds,
See me striving when I'm out in the streets,
I pray to God to guide my spirit to a soul I could teach,
So I can build peace, make friends outta strangers that I meet,
No enemies,
Only looking for what's worthy of praise,
That's the way I'm making friends with the entire human race, yeah,
But I can't just do one, can't do some, I gotta do the sum,
Strive plus work plus pray, soon as sun up, see me,

[Chorus]

Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,

[Verse 3]

Nothing sweeter than the state of prayer,
When life has got me overwhelmed I throw my hands in the air,
And I let go, then you know, that I get that energy like glucose,
That inner peace 'cause God and I, we grew close, as He shows,
That eternal flow to people when we conversate,
He will change a gnat into eagle when we strive, work, pray,
So we strive to be the light, and we seek always to do what's right,
And we work, put our feet to the dirt, and the greatest
effort we exert,
And we pray, to attain that heavenly state, burn away all the veils
so no shade,
But just grace, we do it for your glory, that's the Greatest name,
You see my action's like a prayer when it's service,
When you put in work for God, that's the highest form of
worship, amen,
That's all I do,

[Chorus]

Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
Strive, work, pray,
All day, all day, yeah,

“Omnipotent” ft. Brian, Reflectionz, & Ally Black

Originally from the album: Release The Power (2019)

Background: This song emerged from a youth empowerment training in the summer of 2017, based on the Ruhi Institute’s *Book 5: Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth*. Over 10 days of study, service, outreach, and creative expression, a small group of youth from across the Phoenix area—including Brian, Tony, and Ally—felt inspired to channel their reflections into music. What began as a spontaneous creative activity during the training evolved into a full album project after the camp ended, driven by the dedication and artistic passion of the youth themselves. “Omnipotent” became one of the most powerful songs from that collaboration, celebrating the limitless attributes of God and the spiritual power available to those who rise to serve.

Song Lyrics:

[Verse 1 - Colby Jeffers]

Hey! Throw your hands up,
Woo, who we praising?
I’m not a fighter, call me the true lover,
Devoted friend reaching the presence of the Beloved,
Awe struck at the sparkling beauty,
Feel the fire, feel the blaze, feel it flowing right through me,
Burning veils, burning wrappings, walking through the trappings,
As the flame burns from my heart to my skin, I feel it deep within,
Let that fire of love burn ‘til nothing remains except the
True Friend,
Revelations, everlasting, down from the Kingdom, spittin’ it quick,
I call it fasting,
‘Cause every time I’m turning my eye unto the Divine I’m
feeling so fine,
Material needs not bothering me, intoxicated by the choice wine,
The spirit of life, drink up your cup,
Yeah, throw your hands up, all love to the Most High,

Your wondrous utterance, we listen, we arise,
In Your Name we glorify, hey,

[Chorus - Colby & Ally Black]

Can I get a hallelujah?

Feel the Holy Spirit running through yuh?

Who we praising?

The Most Generous, The All Merciful,

Divine Providence, The All Powerful,

Divine Countenance, The All Glorious,

The All Bounteous, we victorious,

'Cause we turn our face unto the Cause,

And we lifting up our hands giving all the praise to God,

Feel the love flowing infinite,

And we know we powerless without the power, yo, of the
Omnipotent,

[Verse 2 - Brian.]

I opened up the window and the light come right in,

You can find me riding to where the Most High be,

Asking God to enlighten me with this light in me,

Burning veils so I can see His dynasty, please define me,

'Cause I've been struggling with my Faith like who should I
praise if I wanna be saved,

'Cause if the rapture was today I'd be afraid of where
I would go,

Please save me, I give my trust to You,

And these sun rays shine deeply on me,

I'll reflect it right back out onto the community,

I'll disconnect negative energy with the powers You send me
through my written verses,

Got me feeling perfect with purpose, I stay searching,
dispersing His gift,

Rehearsing, reversing curses so I can I lift this message
to heaven,

I'm breathless by the beauty, now listen to this, ay,

[Chorus - Colby & Ally Black]

God is glorious, Alláh-u-Abhá!
So open up and feel the Glory, Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá, praising,
The Most Generous, The All Merciful,
Divine Providence, The All Powerful,
Divine Countenance, The All Glorious,
The All Bounteous, we victorious,
'Cause we turn our face unto the Cause,
And we lifting up our hands giving all the praise to God,
Feel the love flowing infinite,
And we know we powerless without the power, yo, of the
Omnipotent,

[Verse 3 - Reflectionz]

I feel empowered, used to be a coward,
Let me see if I can shake it, let me see if I can break it,
By these deeds not words,
Let your voice be heard, let these demons deter,
Now everybody up,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let's go door to door,
Let's see the universe begin to be restored,
This is heated, won't be beat, no matter what I won't be seated,
So let's feel the unity, be the unity, building unity, see the unity,
Let the definition mean something more than you and me,
Examine close use your scrutiny and truthfully, hey,
Let it take you higher places, let it twist you up and rewind,
And when you hit the ground you'll see why,
This is so important every morning every night,
As I let the divine feed my soul, open up and take a bite, hey,

[Chorus - Colby & Ally Black]

If you feel us throw hands up!
Everybody out ya' seat, lemme see you stand up! Praising!
The Most Generous, The All Merciful,
Divine Providence, The All Powerful,
Divine Countenance, The All Glorious,
The All Bounteous, we victorious,
'Cause we turn our face unto the Cause,
And we lifting up our hands giving all the praise to God,
Feel the love flowing infinite,
And we know we powerless without the power, yo, of the
Omnipotent,
Of the Omnipotent,
Of the Omnipotent,
Of the Omnipotent,
Of the Omnipotent,

“Free”

Originally from the album: Created Noble (2021)

Background: The chorus for this song came during a trip to Ontario, Canada in 2018 while assisting with The Rap Camp, a program dedicated to youth empowerment through hip hop. Stored in the vault for a few years, it later emerged as the perfect closing track for the album—and for my concerts. The song celebrates the joy, peace, and power that come when we release our spiritual capacities and live with intention and integrity.

Song Lyrics:

[Intro]

Haha, yo,
Alright so check this out, yo,
When I say Be,
You say Free,
Be/Free, Be/Free,
And when I say Think,
You say Peace,
Think/Peace, Think/Peace,

[Verse 1]

F to the R to the double E,
There's a ton of these,
Troubles that we got hovering like a cloud, you cirrus (serious)?
Nope! Cumulonimbus, so,
Hand me my umbrella please,
That's a clear mind clear soul to cover me,
From the rain and the thundering,
Shut all these bad energies, train my brain,
That's my shuttle to peace,
Look down at the puddle and see,
The subtle reflection of the sun,
Funneling one ray of light up to my eyes,

That's hope, as I float, as I fly over what is bugging me,
 Took a sting from the bumbles, and they humble me,
 So I flee, then I'm humbly praying like a mantis,
 Stand with strength through the suffering,
 Overcome all the struggles under me and I'm free,

[Chorus]

So when I say Be,
 You say Free,
 Be/Free, Be/Free,
 When I say Think,
 You say Peace,
 Think/Peace, Think/Peace,
 When I say Be,
 You say Free,
 Be/Free, Be/Free,
 When I say Think,
 You say Peace,
 Think/Peace, Think/Peace,

[Verse 2]

P to the EA to the CE,
 If I want it for the world, gotta feel it inside of me,
 Positive Energy Activates Constant Elevation,
 Of individuals all the way nations,
 Purifying Every Action Completely of Ego,
 Practice Empathy, Acceptance, Compassion that's the Ethos,
 Purposefully Engage All the Community Entirely,
 Produce Expressions of Art that Cause Enlightenment,
 Protect the Environment Actively Conserve the Earth,
 People Everywhere Are Created Equal across the world,
 With peace, there's prosperity,
 Peace needs solidarity,
 Peace, it's the dream,
 It's the end and the means,
 Yeah, peace, you can teach it, you can make it, you can build it,

Peace, you can learn it, you can add it to your skillset,
Peace, from the West to the East,
All of the war can just cease,
Spiritual powers released,
Now that's PEACE,

[Chorus]

So when I say Be,
You say Free,
Be/Free, Be/Free,
When I say Think,
You say Peace,
Think/Peace, Think/Peace,
When I say Be,
You say Free,
Be/Free, Be/Free,
When I say Think,
You say Peace,
Think/Peace, Think/Peace,

[Bridge]

When I remember who I was created to be,
Break loose from the chains, that's free,
Released from the prison of self I become,
A pure channel of the Divine, that's freedom,
One day these ruinous wars shall cease,
To make way for the Most Great Peace,
When the whole world all becomes one,
The Most Great Peace shall come,

[Chorus]

Now when I say Be,
You say Free,
Be/Free, Be/Free,
When I say Think,
You say Peace,
Think/Peace, Think/Peace,
When I say Be,
You say Free,
Be/Free, Be/Free,
When I say Think,
You say Peace,
Think/Peace, Think/Peace,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book—and the movement behind it—could never have been built alone. It’s the fruit of countless conversations, collaborations, prayers, and Divine confirmations. I’m overwhelmed with gratitude for the many souls who have supported me on this path.

To my wife, **Mallory**—thank you for always believing in me and standing by my side with unwavering love and encouragement. You’re often the first person I share a new idea with, knowing you’ll respond with honesty, insight, and heartfelt support. Your belief in me has given me the courage to pursue my dreams, and without you, none of this would be possible.

To my children, **Noble, Justice, and Cyrus**—you are three of my greatest inspirations. Your joy, curiosity, and wonder push me to grow and remind me of the sacred responsibility we have to future generations. I hope to make you proud and support you fully in the beautiful paths you choose to walk.

To my parents, **Richard and Monica**—thank you for always supporting my artistic and service-oriented aspirations, even when the path wasn’t clearly defined. Your faith in me—both practical and emotional—has been a constant source of strength. I’m especially touched by how joyfully and sincerely you share my music and mission with others.

To my family—**Emery, Liz, Ashley, Orlando, Elijah, Shayden, Zakai** and all my extended relatives—thank you for being so supportive of my endeavors and creative projects. It means a lot to know I always have my family’s encouragement behind me.

To those who have shaped my musical journey:

Franklin—you were the first to truly believe in my music and what it could become.

Awu—your brotherhood and collaborative spirit, especially on *Change the World*, helped spark this creative path in a way I'll always hold dear.

Doby—your words in that very first studio session gave me the confidence I didn't know I needed.

Tom—thank you for providing a creative and comfortable space to record my vocals over the years, and for all the uplifting conversations we've shared along the way.

Nabil, Karim, and Leksai—your mixing and mastering gifts helped bring my sound to life.

Jeffrey, Peyt, Karim, and Brian—thank you for joining me on the *Better World* concert tour. It was such a joy to collaborate with each of you and to rock the crowd together. I'm grateful for the mutual support and encouragement, and I look forward to future performances and collaborations together.

Brian (Roth)—beyond your creative genius behind the camera, capturing nearly all of my music videos with creative excellence, your friendship has been a steady light in my life. Thank you for always showing up with love, laughter, and encouragement. I couldn't imagine this journey without you.

And to the many other artists I've collaborated with over the years—thank you for sharing your light. Creating with you all has been one of the great joys of this journey.

To everyone who has supported the *Better World* concert series—whether by hosting, organizing, donating, sharing, or simply showing up: thank you for helping bring this vision to life in real spaces with real people.

To every fan, friend, and supporter—whether you streamed a song, offered an encouraging word, backed a campaign, or simply shared the music with a loved one—please know how much that support means to me. Every small act has helped move this mission forward.

To the amazing young people in the very first group I mentored in the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program—**Vincent, Will, Jorge, Jesus, Brian, Daniel, Anthony, Chris**, and so many others—you shaped my understanding of what true service looks like. You showed me that mentoring is just as much about growing as it is about guiding.

To my broader community—**Bahá'ís, changemakers, educators, artists, activists, and friends**—thank you for being part of this journey. Whether through a thoughtful conversation, a shared project, or simply showing up with heart, you've helped shape this movement in real and meaningful ways. I've learned so much from all of you and continue to be inspired by your example.

To **you**, the reader—thank you for joining in. For caring. For striving. For picking up this book and leaning into the call to build a better world.

And finally, to **God**—thank You for the confirmations, the guidance, the inspiration, and the infinite opportunities to serve. Every step of this path has only been possible through Your assistance. I offer this work as an act of devotion and gratitude, in the hope that it brings light to others.

ABOUT THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

If the Bahá'í Faith is new to you, here's a simple introduction—shared not to preach, but to offer insight into the source of inspiration that's guided so much of my journey.

The **Bahá'í Faith** is a global spiritual movement centered on the belief that **humanity is one family**, and that **God has always guided us through divine messengers**. These Teachers—like Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad—each brought spiritual truths suited for Their time and place. Bahá'ís believe that **Bahá'u'lláh**, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, is the most recent in this line of Divine Educators, and that His message is one of unity, justice, and peace for this era of global transformation.

Bahá'u'lláh's teachings speak to the spiritual and practical needs of our time: the equality of women and men, the elimination of prejudice, the harmony of science and religion, the need for universal education, and the oneness of humanity. These are not just lofty ideals, but guiding principles for action.

There are no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. Instead, Bahá'ís gather in communities around the world to pray, study, consult, and serve together. This collective life is guided by elected **spiritual assemblies** at the local and national levels, and, globally, by the **Universal House of Justice**, which provides vision and direction for the worldwide Bahá'í community. A major component of this community-building process is the **Ruhi Institute**, a global educational initiative that empowers people of all backgrounds to study the Bahá'í Writings and apply them in service to their communities.

The Ruhi Institute offers a sequence of courses that help participants reflect on spiritual concepts, develop habits of service, and build capacity for community transformation. As people study together, they often arise to take action—facilitating **devotional gatherings** to nourish the spiritual life of their neighborhoods, mentoring **junior youth groups** that empower adolescents with purpose and moral clarity, or offering **children’s classes** that nurture virtues and a love for learning.

I personally found my footing in this framework. It gave me a way to live out my values—not just as beliefs, but as a pattern of life centered on prayer, study, and service.

Bahá’í life is about striving: praying daily, studying the Writings, refining our character, and joining with others in acts of service. It’s about contributing to the spiritual and material advancement of society, starting right where we are.

And it’s not exclusive. The Bahá’í Faith honors all religions as part of one ongoing, unfolding story of God’s guidance to humanity.

If you’re curious to learn more, I encourage you to visit **www.bahai.org**, or—if you’re in the United States—**www.bahai.us** for connecting with Bahá’ís in your local area.

NOTES

1. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, Lawh-i-Maqsúd
2. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, Tajalliyát
3. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, CIX
4. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic no. 22
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Additional Tablets, Extracts and Talks*
6. Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *The Advent of Divine Justice*
7. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXVII
8. Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*
9. Universal House of Justice, *Letter to the Bahá'ís of the World*, 8 February 2013
10. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*
11. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, To an individual believer, 26 October 1938
12. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, To an individual believer, 12 July 1952

