

# **TWENTY POEMS TO INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM**



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## Builder or Wrecker?

I watched them tear a building down;  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a mighty heave and a lusty yell,  
They swung a boom and a side wall fell.

I said to the foreman, "Are these men skilled  
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"  
He gave me a laugh and said, "No indeed!  
Just a common laborer is all I need.  
And I can wreck in a day or two  
What it took the builder a year to do."

And I thought to myself as I went my way,  
"Just which of these roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care  
Measuring life by the rule and square,  
Or am I a wrecker as I walk the town  
Content with the labor of tearing down?"

- Unknown Author



## Climb 'Til Your Dream Comes True

Often your tasks will be many,  
And more than you think you can do.  
Often the road will be rugged  
And the hills insurmountable, too.  
But always remember,  
The hills ahead  
Are never as steep as they seem,  
And with Faith in your heart  
Start upward  
And climb 'til you reach your dream.  
For nothing in life that is worthy  
Is ever too hard to achieve  
If you have the courage to try it,  
And you have the faith to believe.  
For faith is a force that is greater  
Than knowledge or power or skill,  
And many defeats turn to triumph  
If you trust in God's wisdom and will.  
For faith is a mover of mountains,  
There's nothing that God cannot do,  
So, start out today with faith in your heart,  
And climb 'til your dream comes true!

- Helen Steiner Rice



## Compensation

I'd like to think when life is done  
That I had filled a needed post.  
That here and there I'd paid my fare  
With more than idle talk and boast;  
That I had taken gifts divine.  
The breath of life and manhood fine,  
And tried to use them now and then  
In service for my fellow men.

I'd hate to think when life is through  
That I had lived my round of years  
A useless kind, that leaves behind  
No record in this vale of tears;  
That I had wasted all my days  
By treading only selfish ways,  
And that this world would be the same  
If it had never known my name.

I'd like to think that here and there,  
When I am gone, there shall remain  
A happier spot that might have not  
Existed had I toiled for gain;  
That someone's cheery voice and smile  
Shall prove that I had been worth while;  
That I had paid with something fine  
My debt to God for life divine.

Edgar Albert Guest



## Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,  
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit,  
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
As every one of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about,  
When he might have won had he stuck it out;  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—  
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than,  
It seems to a faint and faltering man,  
Often the struggler has given up,  
When he might have captured the victor's cup,  
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,  
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out—  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,  
And you never can tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems so far,  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

- Unknown Author



## For Every Hill I've Had to Climb

For every hill I've had to climb,  
For every stone that bruised my feet,  
For all the blood and sweat and grime,  
For blinding storms and burning heat  
My heart sings a grateful song —  
These were the things that made me strong!

For all the heartaches and the tears,  
For all the anguish and the pain,  
For gloomy days and fruitless years,  
And for the hopes that lived in vain,  
I do give thanks, for now I know  
These were the things that helped me grow!

'Tis not the softer things of life  
Which stimulate man's will to strive;  
But bleak adversity and strife  
Do most to keep man's will alive.  
O'er rose-strewn paths the weaklings creep,  
But brave hearts dare to climb the steep.

— L. E. Thayer



# If

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too:  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream---and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think---and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same:.  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,  
And never breathe a word about your loss:  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings---nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much:  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And---which is more---you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling



## Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley





# It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done  
But he with a chuckle replied  
That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.  
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin  
On his face. If he worried he hid it.  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;  
At least no one ever has done it; '  
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat  
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.  
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,  
Without any doubting or quiddit,  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,  
There are thousands to prophesy failure,  
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,  
The dangers that wait to assail you.  
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,  
Just take off your coat and go to it;  
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing  
That 'cannot be done,' and you'll do it.

Edgar Albert Guest



# It is not the Critic That Counts

It's not the critic who counts,

not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled,  
or when the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena;  
whose face is marred by dust  
and sweat and blood;

who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again;  
who knows the great enthusiasms,  
the great devotions and spends himself  
in a worthy cause; who at the best,  
knows in the end the triumph of high achievement;  
and who at the worst  
if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly,

so that his place shall never be  
with those cold and timid souls  
who know neither victory or defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt



## Little Eyes Upon You

There are little eyes upon you  
and they're watching night and day.  
take in every word you say.  
There are little hands all eager  
to do anything you do;  
And a little girl who's dreaming  
of the day she'll be like you.

You're the little angel's idol,  
you're the wisest of the wise.  
In her little mind about you  
no suspicions ever rise.  
She believes in you devoutly,  
holds all you say and do;  
She will say and do, in your way  
when she's grown up just like you.

There's a wide-eyed little girl  
who believes you're always right;  
and her eyes are always opened,  
and she watches day and night.  
You are setting an example  
every day in all you do;  
For the little girl who's waiting  
to grow up to be like you.

Kimberly Sedlacek



## Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes



## Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant,  
gorgeous, talented, fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.  
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking  
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously  
give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,  
our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson



## Plain Old Oyster

There once was an oyster, whose story I'll tell  
Who found that some sand, had gotten into his shell  
It was only a grain, but gave him great pain  
For oysters have feelings, although they are plain

Now, did he berate the harsh workings of fate  
That had brought him to such a deplorable state?  
"No", he said to himself, "Since I cannot remove it",  
I'll lie in my shell, and think how to improve it",

The years rolled around, as the years always do,  
And he came to his ultimate destiny .... stew.  
Now the small grain of sand that had bothered him so,  
Was a beautiful pearl all richly aglow,

This tale has a morale, for isn't it grand,  
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand?  
Think...what could we do, if we'd only begin,  
With some of the things that get under our skin.

- Unknown Author



## Success

To laugh often and much

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends

To appreciate beauty

To find the best in others

To leave the world a bit better,  
whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived

This is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



# Teamwork

It's all very well to have courage and skill  
And it's fine to be counted a star,  
But the single deed with its touch of thrill  
Doesn't tell the man you are;  
For there's no lone hand in the game we play,  
We must work to a bigger scheme,  
And the thing that counts in the world to-day  
Is, How do you pull with the team?

They may sound your praise and call you great,  
They may single you out for fame,  
But you must work with your running mate  
Or you'll never win the game;  
Oh, never the work of life is done  
By the man with a selfish dream,  
For the battle is lost or the battle is won  
By the spirit of the team.

You may think it fine to be praised for skill,  
But a greater thing to do  
Is to set your mind and set your will  
On the goal that's just in view;  
It's helping your fellowman to score  
When his chances hopeless seem;  
It's forgetting self till the game is o're  
And fighting for the team

Edgar Albert Guest





## The Cork and the Whale

A little brown cork  
Fell in the path of a whale  
Who lashed it down  
With his angry tail.

But, in spite of the blows,  
It quickly arose,  
And floated serenely  
Before his nose.

Said the cork to the whale,  
"You may flap and sputter and frown,  
But you never, never can keep me down:

For I'm made of the stuff  
That is buoyant enough  
To float instead of to drown."

- Author Unknown



## The Proof Of Worth

Though victory's proof of the skill you possess,  
Defeat is the proof of your grit;  
A weakling can smile in his days of success,  
But at trouble's first sign he will quit.  
So the test of the heart and the test of your pluck  
Isn't skies that are sunny and fair,  
But how do you stand to the blow that is struck  
And how do you battle despair?

A fool can seem wise when the pathway is clear  
And it's easy to see the way out,  
But the test of man's judgment is something to fear,  
And what does he do when in doubt?  
And the proof of his faith is the courage he shows  
When sorrows lie deep in his breast;  
It's the way that he suffers the griefs that he knows  
That brings out his worst or his best.

The test of a man is how much he will bear  
For a cause which he knows to be right,  
How long will he stand in the depths of despair,  
How much will he suffer and fight?  
There are many to serve when the victory's near  
And few are the hurts to be borne,  
But it calls for a leader of courage to cheer  
The men in a battle forlorn.

It's the way you hold out against odds that are great  
That proves what your courage is worth,  
It's the way that you stand to the bruises of fate  
That shows up your stature and girth.  
And victory's nothing but proof of your skill,  
Veneered with a glory that's thin,  
Unless it is proof of unfaltering will,  
And unless you have suffered to win.

Edgar Albert Guest



## The Victor

If you think you are beaten, you are.  
If you think you dare not, you don't.  
If you like to win but think you can't,  
It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost.  
For out in the world we find  
Success begins with a fellow's will.  
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are out classed, you are.  
You've got to think high to rise.  
You've got to be sure of your-self before  
You can ever win the prize.

Life's battles don't always go  
To the stronger or faster man.  
But sooner or later, the man who wins  
Is the man who thinks he can.

- C. W. Longenecker



# What Will Matter

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.  
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten will pass to someone else.  
Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.  
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.  
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations and jealousies will finally disappear.  
So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire.  
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end. It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?  
What will matter is not what you bought but what you built, not what you got but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success but your significance.  
What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught.  
What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.  
What will matter is not your competence but your character.  
What will matter is not how many people you knew,  
but how many will feel a lasting loss when your gone.

What will matter is not your memories but the memories that live in those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.  
Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.  
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice. Choose to live a life that matters.

Michael Josephson



## **Winds of Fate**

One ship sails east and another west  
While the selfsame breezes blow.

'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale  
That bids them where they go.

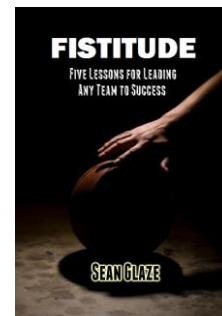
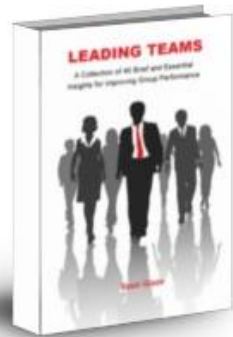
As the winds of the air are the ways of fate  
As we voyage along through life.

'Tis the set of the soul that decides our goal  
And not the storm and the strife.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox



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I hope these poems are useful for inspiring your team...



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