

Contact: Lisa Frenkel Riddiough
lisa@lisariddiough.com
510-715-6496

LETTERS TO LIVE BY:
An Alphabet Book with Intention
by Lisa Frenkel Riddiough
Illustrated by Asa Gilland

A social-emotional concept picture book that teaches readers the power of setting intentions and embracing mindfulness in our everyday.

Appreciate art, become brave, and choose compassion. Pairing big ideas like generosity, respect, and joy with the letters of the alphabet, this beautiful book encourages children to make the most of each day and leave their mark on the world.

Praise

****STARRED REVIEW****

“Creative, humorous, and thought-provoking, this is a vocabulary-rich ABC book meant to be discussed one-on-one and in groups. Recommended especially for elementary school libraries.”

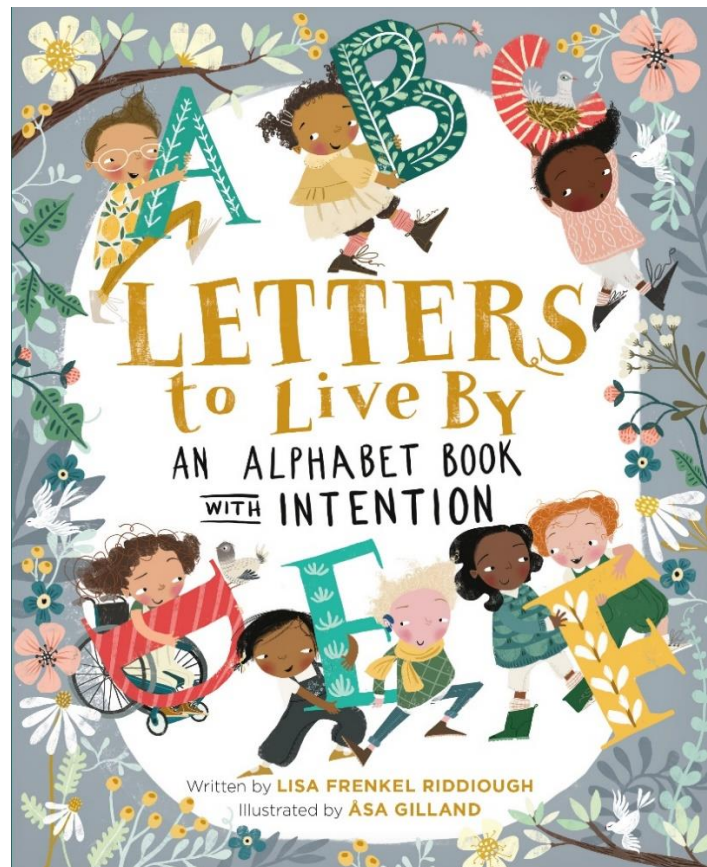
-School Library Journal

“Succinct, yet masterfully written with playful and intriguing illustrations. A must for every classroom and household.”

—Kerry S. Teeple, *The Toledo Blade*

“This thoughtful, upbeat book is philosophical and yet very accessible for younger kids.”

—Kendal Rautzhan, *Books to Borrow . . . Books to Buy* column



LETTERS TO LIVE BY:

An Alphabet Book with Intention

Running Press Kids | January 11, 2022

Hardcover | 9780762473083 | \$17.99

Picture Book (ages 4-8) | 32 pages

Illustrations by Asa Gilland



Lisa Frenkel Riddiough is a Northern California-based writer whose projects include picture books, middle grade, grown-up short stories, and personal essays. She earned her MFA in writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University. Lisa is a former sales executive, an avid squirrel watcher, a frequent baker of chocolate pound cake, and an exclamation point enthusiast! *Letters to Live By* is her debut picture book!!

An interview with

Lisa Frenkel Riddiough

1. What inspired you to write this story?

I wrote this book in as a note to self. It is very personal for me. There is always so much room for improvement! I knew I wanted alliterative phrases that could be both intentions and action items that could be accessible to younger readers. I was reminded of a phrase that one of my kids' teachers used to say. Mr. Greenebaum, of Piedmont Middle School, sends his students home at the end of each week with his signature line, "Rest up, have fun, read something, and practice peace." I first heard this at back-to-school night and, as a picture book writer, "Practice Peace" stuck with me. I think it was because I was going through a turbulent time in my life and

was looking for peace. I am still looking for peace – it is an ongoing practice. Anyway, I loved the content, meaning, and alliteration of the phrase. Combine this with my love of the alphabet, and an idea was born. Could I find 25 more meaningful alliterative pairings? It turns out, that this was very easy for me. Every single letter's phrase comes straight from my heart. The book is me. I work every day on all 26 of these intentions.

2. When did you start writing?

I used to write stories and poems as a child. But I was a slow reader and struggled with concentrating. Soon, I gave it all up for “easier” things, like math. But the stories kept circling in my head, and I eventually started to write them down. In my mid-forties, I began taking creative writing classes through UC Berkeley Extension. When I began, I didn't know anything about craft. Ten years later, I am beginning to understand how to make a story work, how to draft and revise, and how to make a “practice” of writing. I wish I'd known earlier that the writing life was open to me. Better late than never is for real!

3. What advice would you give to young or beginning writers?

Your writing matters! What you have to say matters! Your stories matter! You are making something from nothing. That is miraculous. You are learning how to say what you have to say, and the more you write the easier it will become. One day, someone who you don't know will read one of your stories. It will affect them in a personal way. That day might be years from now, but the wait will be worth it. Believe me when I say that it is never too late to start.

4. Why did you choose to write for kids?

I write in several genres: short fiction, personal essays, poetry, middle grade, and picture books. I love all it. But writing for children is the nearest and dearest to my heart. I was a slow reader as a child, but, luckily, my father read to me. I can remember very specific details of sitting with him as he read. For example, when he read *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (it was probably 1968-ish), I was sitting on the floor playing with a stapler - of all things. When Augustus Gloop fell into the chocolate river, I was so shocked that I accidentally stapled my thumb. Charlie Bucket's journey has stayed with me for decades (the staple was removed immediately). I believe that all the questions that we have in life can be found in middle grade novels. Sometimes, there are even answers. I wish that reading and writing hadn't been such a burden to me when I was younger. Sometimes it just felt too hard. Today, I am making up for it by writing books for young readers that are accessible to the type of reader I was. My love of the alphabet, with its built-in structure, has been the perfect starting point.

What do you do when you're not writing?

I plant pansies. I drink half-caf iced mochas. I dance to seventies music. I bake desserts topped with rainbow sprinkles. And I collect books!