



Typesetting & Formatting Examples

Table of Contents

Saray Deray	Number 367	Fiction
Damon L. Johnson	Deep Into the Bitcoin Rabbit Hole	Non-fiction
Chalon J. Harris	The Night the Doorbell Rang	Fiction
Tony Walker	You Don't Define Me – Workbook	Non-fiction
Yumi Takagi	Empowered by the Storm	Non-fiction
Jessica Moore	The Warrior	Fiction
Nuzhat Chalisa MD	Diabetes Beyond Numbers	Non-fiction
Susanne Weegmann	In His Presence	Non-fiction
John Hornbeck	A Gift of Hope	Non-fiction
Tracy Love	Be Legendary	Non-fiction
Michael Wedaa	International Travel Secrets	Non-fiction
Jessica Ainsworth	Facebook Advertising	Non-fiction
Brett Preiss	The (un)Lucky Sperm	Non-fiction
Nicole Yeates	Holding On to Hope	Non-fiction
Shauna J. Harris	Speaking of Sex	Non-fiction
Bobbie Herron	Look At That!	Non-fiction
Laurie Sudbrink	Leading with GRIT!	Non-fiction
Sam Jones	Sex, Truth & Freedom	Non-fiction
Joanna Mark	Talk to Strangers	Non-fiction
Bhavana Ghesota	The Art of Slow Travel	Non-fiction
Maureen Gibbons	Happy First	Non-fiction
Gareth Ainsworth	The Highland Games	Non-fiction

NUMBER 367

The background of the cover features a person in tactical gear walking away from the viewer across a vast, yellow, sandy landscape. In the distance, a city skyline is visible under a large, glowing yellow dome. The sky is dark and filled with swirling, ethereal patterns.

SARA DERAY

AGENTS OF THE DOMES BOOK 1

CHAPTER 3

AFTER THE DIM OVERHEAD LIGHTS OF THE BAR, the strong gleam of the sun reflecting off the metallic skuysten paneling of the buildings around us made my sleepy eyes water, but the warmth was far less impressive. I buttoned my jacket tight around me, reaching for my scarf, only to find it wound around Arian's neck. I glanced over at him, deliberately ignoring me, and I let him wear it. He needed it more than me, with that skinny neck of his.

"If the dome is supposed to be temperature controlled, why is it still so fucking cold in winter?" he complained loudly, gesturing at the enormous top shell of the dome over our heads.

It was made out of a nearly indestructible nanocarbon composite, a transparent, insulating material strong enough to withstand just about anything nature could throw at it. Occasionally, on the days when the hot sun blazed dangerously bright behind its protective UV shield, the transparent surface allowed you to see the real sky, but on most others, it was nothing more than an opaque display, the daily temperature and weather inside the dome carefully controlled by the ruling council.

They controlled most things inside the dome, business permits, the size of buildings, the public transit that ran past us on a single metal track, splitting the medium-size dome into eight walkable sections. Even the clean sidewalks we walked on, down to the carefully plotted grass and foliage that lined them, were matters

regulated by the ruling council. Each dome had its own council; governments that regulated more than one small area of land were a thing of the past. Connections between domes were usually based on trade, not political connections, with the exchange of services and people the primary sources of contact between them. A few rare domes were even isolated entirely.

"Quit complaining already, will you?" I said, smacking him on the back of the head. I was way too tired to put up with his shit right now.

"Why? And be stoic like you? Complaining's way more fun. Come on, café's right up ahead."

It was our usual haunt, the perfect escape from a full night waiting on others and the best cup of joe you could get since synth coffee had replaced grown beans. While most coffee chains were decent, if a little overpriced, the Rose Café was something special. The line of coffee brewers that ran the place had been making coffee for centuries, and when the geographical location once known as the 'coffee belt' had all but disappeared, they'd taken the new synth coffee under their talented wing. Arian had introduced the place to me after a particularly hellish night serving drinks to a raucous bachelorette party, and I rarely got my coffee elsewhere.

We passed through a path of flowerpots leading to the doors and swung inside, bypassing the patio out front in favor of the warm indoors. It was a small building, constructed from the usual skuysten paneling, strong and sturdy and easily produced inside a dome, with several large windows cut out in its frame to let in the light. I walked past the tall, antique wooden counter that presided over the establishment while Arian got in line to place an order for us both and claimed our usual booth in the back. The booth was small and tucked away, the perfect place to space out after a hard night, free of interruptions from other patrons.

Well, almost none.

"Hey, Gavin, your new friend Adam is here again," Arian called over to me. With a groan, I opened my tired eyes, leaning forward in my chair to glance around. He was right. Adam, a tall, eccentric man, his long brown hair held back in a clip and an expensive suit gracing

his narrow frame, had just arrived and appeared to be settling in at a table outside. His briefcase and kid gloves were carefully selected to match his attire, and I knew by now that the slim, silver framed glasses on his nose were solely to impress people, not to improve his vision.

Damn, it's cold to be sitting out there. That obnoxious suit must be warmer than it looks. It was either that or he was secretly a Mod, but I'd confirmed his regular human status back when we'd first met.

It had been after a double shift at the bar. Adam had gotten in line behind me, hand resting lightly on my bare shoulder as he informed me he was bored and asked if I could recommend a new drink for him to try. For a moment, my mind had told me he was a Mod, and I'd gone stiff from head to toe, ready to move out of line and leave, before the feedback suddenly disappeared. Nothing more than exhaustion making my head go haywire, it seemed. That had pissed me off even more, and I'd been ready to tell him just what he could do with his boredom, but his open, honest face had surprised me. I'd found myself telling him that he could just order whatever I got before I turned back around, ending our short conversation.

He seemed unperturbed by my abrupt manner and had sought me out ever since, gesturing me over to his table with the lure of free drinks, to share about his day and discuss how hard it was to find trustworthy banking in today's economy. I thought he was the strangest human being I'd ever met. But he was refreshingly straightforward, despite his ostentatious appearance and formal manners, and he would accept a grunt for an answer on days when I was particularly tired or entertain me on days when Arian had gone home with a patron from the bar.

I recognized the look in his eyes now, as he caught my gaze and gestured me over to his table.

"And how are we doing today, Gavin?" he asked as I swung out the doors of the café, shivering slightly at the change in temperature before dropping into the seat across from him.

"Fucking cold out here. Don't you ever sit inside?" I asked.

"Not when there's so much to see out here." He laughed at the skepticism on my face. "I spend my days in an office, Gavin, and

while it's a very nice office, it still means I spend most of my day indoors. I like to start my morning outside when I can."

I grunted in response.

"Oh, come now, Gavin, I thought you were looking a bit more awake today. Is it going to be just grunts, then, or are you feeling up to a bit more?" He tapped his elegant gloved hand on the table, ignoring the near glare I sent him before I propped my feet up on a free chair next to him. "Come on. Entertain me."

We both knew what that meant.

Adam had found out about my strange skill by accident. We'd been approached by a salesman one day while sitting at a table outside, the greasy-looking man peddling a new data pad and searching for buyers among the customers of the many establishments lining the street. It wasn't a common practice, but I'd seen it enough times to suspect him. He'd snapped up Adam's freely given attention, raving about how it would be the first in a new generation of personal processors and if he only bought it *right now*, he would be the envy of the dome. Between lack of sleep from my twelve-hour shift, the heavy-handed sales tactic, and watching Adam give the man's bullshit way more attention than it needed, I'd gotten pissed off and acted rashly. I took the pad he'd given Adam, held it long enough to confirm my suspicions, then informed the salesman that repackaging the old Data Pad Model IV.C chip into a shiny housing didn't make it a new product, and that he could be smart and walk away or be walked.

I'd been surprised when Adam hadn't pursued it outright when it happened. He'd just taken my hands as the stranger had stormed off, looked from them up to me and said, "What an unexpected puzzle you are, Gavin," and then moved on in our conversation.

I should have known it wouldn't end there. It had become a sort of game we played. It started the day Adam brought a new briefcase—an asinine thing made of antique leather with real gold plating on its digital padlocks—and asked me if the materials in it were genuine. I told him he should cut the bullshit and ask if he wanted to know something.

"You first," he'd replied with a smile.

"It doesn't look real," I lied. "You've been ripped off."

He regarded me carefully, then smiled, silver eyes glinting with amusement behind his glasses. He reached over and tapped me on the forehead, arching a brow, and I knew my cover was blown. I still didn't know how he knew, how he'd put it together and if that meant he'd met other people like me. But I was curious to know. Not curious enough to ask outright, the cautious side of me still clinging to the possibility he didn't quite know what I did, but curious enough to keep me going to his table when he came into the café.

In the following days and weeks, he continued to bring me items to identify. I let him ask his questions, and it had escalated into what we did now, a form of people watching. I glanced over at Adam waiting patiently for me to get on with it, then looked around us for my first target. There was a woman walking across the street toward us now, a phone in one hand and a muffin in the other. I focused on her for a moment, only to reject her as a possibility a moment later.

Synthetic textile suit, fibers from a non-plant-based chemical source. A cheap fabric, multipurpose, sturdy. The data pad in the left hand — commercial grade, carbon fiber reinforced polymer composite body, coated in metallic-effect pigment, used to inhibit corrosion but more to make it look shinier, metallic, all-around more expensive than it is. A small measure of silicon, no other large metals present; suggests an old processor core, nothing new or particularly powerful. This was the same calculation that had given me away with the salesman. Standard company-issued hardware. Antimicrobials in trace amounts at the bottom of the shoes.

Those were all common materials in any standard employee, except for the antimicrobials. She likely worked in vertical farming, where they commonly sprayed that on the floors to discourage outside bacteria. Overall, she wasn't a subject Adam would find interesting. Too predictable, too straightforward, not enough crazy-ass guesswork. *Boring.*

The man coming up behind her was more interesting. His cheap shirt was askew, his worn jeans were rumpled, the synth coffee in his hands looked like a lifeline, and his face was glued to the ground as he mumbled to himself, the odd tear streaking down his face. *Breakup? Fired?* He held a paper in his hands, though. *Rare, paper like that. Only used for special occasions. Not e-Paper, lab-made cotton blend.*

Linen finish. Traces of pigments, not dye, in the ink. Calligraphy? I'd held something like it in my hands only once before; if I had to guess, I would say he was holding a wedding invitation. From what I'd made out from his clothing, whoever it was, they were far wealthier than him.

"That guy." I pointed him out to Adam, who sat up at attention from where he'd been watching me think, his one habit that still made me uneasy, and looked at the man I was pointing to. "Can't say for sure about this one, but I'll guess it. He's going to a wedding soon. He's crying, though, and not happy tears. Heartbreak, I'd guess, maybe long-time unrequited love with the bride or groom."

"Oh, you scored us a good one this morning!" he smiled at me, ignoring my quiet disclaimer that I might be wrong, then stood up from his seat, walked out past the flower beds bordering the patio and approached the man.

What on earth is he doing? I ducked down, picking up the data pad he'd left behind with his morning news feed and holding it up in front of my face, letting my eyes peek over the top as I pretended to read. On the sidewalk, Adam had approached the man and now spoke to him quietly. The man was nodding, clearly startled, and then his face crumpled, and Adam held his arms out like it was his own heartbroken son and led him over to our table.

Wait! Why is he bringing him here? I thought, but kept my face carefully blank as they approached. Adam had never done this before, always content to sit and watch me make educated guesses about the people passing us by, without once interacting with any of them.

"Gavin, I hope you don't mind, but this man needs a pick-me-up like I need a refill on my coffee."

"No problem." I made to stand up, but Adam was already pulling out another chair, gesturing for the man to sit.

The man held out a hand for me to shake. "Hey, man, thanks for sharing your table like this. I'm Bill."

"Gavin." I took it, no sign of him being anything other than ordinary human registering as he wiped at his watery eyes. *Seriously, why did Adam bring him over here?*

DEEP INTO — THE — BITCOIN RABBIT HOLE

Take a Journey into the World of
Crypto and Discover the 3 Keys
to Unlock Your Financial Destiny



DAMON L JOHNSON

present any tangible proof that he is the real Satoshi.

It is commonly believed that we might never find out who Satoshi Nakamoto is and most Bitcoiners want to keep it that way. However, it is clear that this person inadvertently changed the course of history, bringing forward the first digital currency based on blockchain technology. Because of Satoshi's innovation, he launched a new generation of cryptocurrency enthusiast.

CHAPTER 5

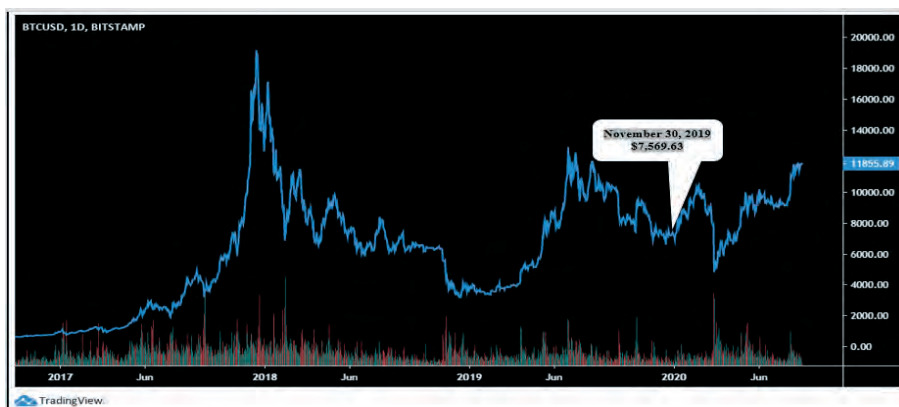
Key #2 – Build and Work in Bitcoin

The 7 Superpowers of Bitcoin:

#5 – IMMUTABLE

Immutable refers to the power of Bitcoin that makes it resistant to change. It creates the ability for the Bitcoin blockchain ledger to remain a permanent, indelible, and unalterable history of transactions. Immutable transactions make it impossible for any entity such as a government or corporation, to manipulate, replace, or falsify data stored on the network. Since all historical transactions can be audited at any point in time, immutability enables a high degree of data integrity, both in its technical and primary definition. With Bitcoin immutability, we can prove that the information we present, and use, has not been tampered with.

Today is November 30, 2019. The price for a full bitcoin is \$7,569.63 and bitcoin's market cap is \$136.8B. We are still early. Bitcoin still not dead.



(1)

Here in Cleveland, Ohio, on Lake Erie, it is beginning to get cold and grey as we slowly march towards Winter. That can also describe my crypto mood. I am twenty-one months into my crypto journey, and it has been a roller coaster ride so far. I seem to get seasonal depression and it feels like we are still in the extended crypto winter of 2018. Just a few months ago in the Summer, the bitcoin price peaked at \$14K, but every day since, it has slowly grinded down fifty percent to the \$7K range of today. Yes, this is better than the \$3K range of last year but come on. The chart experts say that we should bounce up off this fifty percent price retracement. But you know what, right now, price is still no longer a daily concern for me. In fact, I really consider the price action as noise. Once you look past the noise you will discover the signal. Last year at this time is when I noticed all the investment and building in the crypto space that the big institutions were supporting. That momentum has not stopped. Therefore, I still have confidence that the orange coin number will go back up.

November 30th is another family birthday. This time it is my only sister's birthday. I never know what gift to give anyone. Traditionally I will get her a birthday card and a gift card to her favorite store for her birthday but this year I have a new idea. You guessed it, I

created a bitcoin wallet address and sent \$100 USD worth of bitcoin (BTC) to it. Who does not like money, especially the best form of money? I still got her the birthday card and gift card too, but this gift of bitcoin will prove the most valuable when I give it to her. But that is just it. I am saving it for now. I will surprise her later.

Although I have been on my crypto journey for twenty-one months, I still have not really shared my journey with my family and friends except for with my wife and one of my sons and that is only because my son found crypto on his own journey around the same time as I. Last week was Thanksgiving and I still do not find Bitcoin as table conversation yet. I remember stories of how everyone was discussing Bitcoin on Thanksgiving of 2017 right before the Bull Run of 2017. However, not this time for me. I have my conviction, but I am still not ready to be responsible for advising others on Bitcoin and crypto. The last thing I want is for someone to follow me off a cliff. Every time I think about sharing my journey publicly with my friends and family, the price of bitcoin continues to go down and for a new person, that is all they are going to see and probably get discouraged and turn against it forever. They are not going to know of the seven superpowers of bitcoin. Therefore, right now, I continue my journey alone.

2019 has been one of those years. Next week is the second annual Blockland Solutions crypto conference in Cleveland, Ohio, but I do not have a ticket this year. The conference is being held in the Huntington Convention Center, right next door to my job. I hear it is another year of impressive guest speakers. My bank is in cost saving mode, so attending unnecessary conferences are out of the question. I am only glad to see that Cleveland is still pressing forward with their aim to be a premier hub for blockchain companies. Who knows, one day Cleveland, Ohio may become the Silicon Valley of the Mid West.

Speaking of Silicon Valley, my Director who got me the tickets for the Blockland Solutions conference in 2018, decided to leave the bank this Summer and he took another Director's job with another bank in San Francisco. He was falling down the Bitcoin rabbit hole too. He was glad to be out West around all the innovators

in the Bitcoin and crypto space. He told me that he was scheduling meetings with companies to bring an idea to life that he had surrounding blockchain and the banking industry. He certainly went to the right place for forward thinking. If you look at most of the crypto startups in the US, most seem to come out of Silicon Valley. That seems so appropriate. Crypto is a disruptive technology designed to be an alternative to the fiat monetary system and fundamentally challenge countless industries. I feel that over the next twenty years, the crypto space will compete with incumbent financial services and banking institutions and crypto businesses are poised to capture the customer growth.

Before my Director left for California, I was basically a unicorn at my bank. You see, I was a Black male Manager, I reported directly to another Black male Director, who reported directly to another Black male Executive Manager. I was the only person in the company that could say that (probably ever). Once my former Director left for Silicon Valley, he was replaced by a White female, so my unicorn status was broken. I had it for about a year and a half. It is exceedingly rare to find Black men in high leadership positions in traditional banking, especially a succession of them.

This is why I say that building and working in the twenty-first century crypto ecosystem is the second key to solving the problems that I laid out in the crypto space. Learning and education is the first key and, building and working in Bitcoin is the second. Participation in the creation of the infrastructure and foundations of the crypto ecosystem is another way that underrepresented women and minorities can gain exposure to the Bitcoin and crypto space. Start your own crypto company or build your own Bitcoin application. If you are not an engineer or technology professional, just take a marketing job, sales position, or administrative assistance position within these new crypto companies. These new companies will have demand for all positions, and it will give you exposure to the industry and give you a competitive advantage. This is a brand-new world that is awakening. Racial diversity and financial inclusion are a good thing for cryptocurrency and blockchain. However, the industry has a lot of work to do and we can help it. Women and minority STEM students have a great opportunity now to enter the

crypto space.

I believe that crypto has the potential to allow Black people and all underrepresented citizens to opt out of what some described as a racist financial system on Wall Street. I believe we, as Black people, need to make sure we use censorship-resistant and scarce-money systems such as Bitcoin. Additionally, Black people and all underrepresented people must be part of the development of this new technology. For generations, Black voices and influencers have been suppressed and overlooked in just about every business industry. Black people and Black communities have constantly had to fight for an end to racial, social, and economic oppression. There is a crypto meme that says, “Bitcoin Fixes This”.

My fellow Black Bitcoiner and **#BlackExcellence** – author Isaiah Jackson, founder of KRBE Digital Assets Group and author of “Bitcoin & Black America” said that he believes that,

“Black investment in digital assets would create a more resilient system than Black Wall Street.” (56)

Black Wall Street was a Black business district that was burned down by white mobs during the Tulsa race massacre of 1921. Isaiah went on further to say,

“You can’t burn down cryptocurrency and blockchain technology.”

I purchased and read Isaiah’s book, *Bitcoin & Black America* as soon as it came out in July of 2019. I love that he dedicated his book to **#BlackExcellence** – Ermias “Nipsey Hussle” Asghedom, may he rest in peace. Nipsey was another young influential Black voice in the Black community who understood the importance of Bitcoin. Isaiah’s book was another influence that encouraged me to tell my story and encourage others in the Black and Brown community to adopt bitcoin. I felt that if more diverse voices were heard coming out of the Bitcoin community, the more the minority community would trust and believe the message.

In the crypto world, there are many metaphors and analogies. The

building of the internet is often touted as the closest analogy to the building of the Bitcoin and crypto ecosystem. The internet was a fundamentally disruptive and paradigm shifting technology, which forever changed the way the public interacted, communicated, and conducted commerce with each other. So far, crypto is exhibiting the analogous societal change, and thus I expect its growth trend to mimic that of the internet.

I remember when I joined my bank in 1995, not many people had email addresses or an internet connected computer, unless it was at work. However, five years later in 2000, just about everyone I know had the internet at home and a personal email address. My first personal email address was scum5@compuserve.com, a young internet company that has gone by the way. Once the main infrastructure in the crypto ecosystem is built, I expect the same type of exponential growth. We are just waiting to see what that killer app or infrastructure will be that will spur the mass adoption. You may be the one to build it.

Currently, reports vary about user adoption of crypto in the US. However, in the surveys that I have seen, the crypto adoption numbers have always been between approximately two percent and five percent. Although Bitcoin is eleven years old and has come a long way, it has yet to see that exponential growth in terms of user adoption. Bitcoin developers are currently working through issues of scalability, privacy, and ease of use, which are all things the internet had to overcome as well, before it reached its full maturity. If you are old enough to remember, the cell phone had similar issues when it hit the market, but today practically everyone around the world has a cell phone. Wonder if you were one of the first employees to work at the first cell phone company. How would your life be different now if you would have made the right decisions and knew the cell phone would be a tool used by everyone in the world. Assuming Bitcoin's growth story follows that of the internet and the cell phone, Bitcoin is positioned to achieve user adoption between twenty percent and fifty percent by the year 2030, right there in the middle of my 2020 – 2040 time frame when I say that the mass adoption of Bitcoin and other digital assets will create a new class of wealth for the current and incoming genera-

tions of new financial investors and entrepreneurs. As a result, we must make sure that diverse voices are represented, unlike what happened with the internet and cell phone twenty years ago when it was really created by one demographic and benefitted by one demographic.

I encourage minority voices such as **#BlackExcellence** – Pariss Athena (as known on Twitter) to join the Bitcoin and digital asset movement. Pariss Athena is the creator of the Twitter hashtag **#BlackTechTwitter** and she is the founder of Black Tech Pipeline. With her platform that helps to elevate the profile of Black people working in the tech industry, and to draw more Blacks into it, she can really be a catalyst for Black technology professionals getting into the Bitcoin, crypto, and blockchain space as technology professionals.

The building of the Bitcoin and crypto ecosystem is also analogized with the Gold Rush of the 1840s and the building of the West. When building the wild West, the companies that gained the most were not the ones who were mining for gold, instead they were the ones who sold the actual and proverbial picks and shovels. A current pick-and-shovel company is a company that sells products needed for a larger, overarching industry to operate.

Subsequently, many multi-billion-dollar companies have been built by providing tools as “pick and shovel” opportunities, a reference to Mark Twain's famous line,

“When everyone is looking for gold, it's a good time to be in the pick and shovel business.” (57)

The metaphor dates to the mid-19th century. At the time, a man by the name of James W. Marshall had famously discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in California. Word of his discovery spread quickly, drawing in some 300,000 prospectors to the West Coast and sparking what we now know as the California Gold Rush.

You would have thought that it was the gold miners who were the wealthiest people out West but instead it was the companies that supplied the gold miners with picks and shovels and jeans! Levi

Strauss was a big winner of that time. The Levi's story is the stuff of legend. During the California gold rush of the late 1870s, Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss wanted to cash-in on the action, but they did not grab their tin pans and head for the hills. The two men invented the work pants we know today as jeans.

Levi's sold picks and shovels and pants, of course. Those who set up shop early selling mining tools saw a steady stream of income without having to roll the dice on any single mine. Hence the birth of the investing term "picks and shovels." This important business metaphor can help our current builders in the crypto space to navigate the waters of their business model. The Pick and shovel business model is less glamorous sometimes, but the consistent upside has a larger chance of success. There is no difference today. We are at the early stages of building the new digital asset economy. Many of the pioneers have started laying the foundation but there is so much work to be done.

For the twenty-first century gold 2.0 rush, technology engineers are needed. Company founders are racing to become that next Amazon or Google. Crypto jobs are opening, and the demand is filling them quickly. New skill sets are needed. This is a great opportunity for the new generations of tech-savvy young professionals who are ages 16-36 and may aspire to be entrepreneurs, academics, and thoughts leaders in the burgeoning digital business and fintech space. It is time to follow the lead of the early entrepreneurs and the big institutional Wall Street investors.

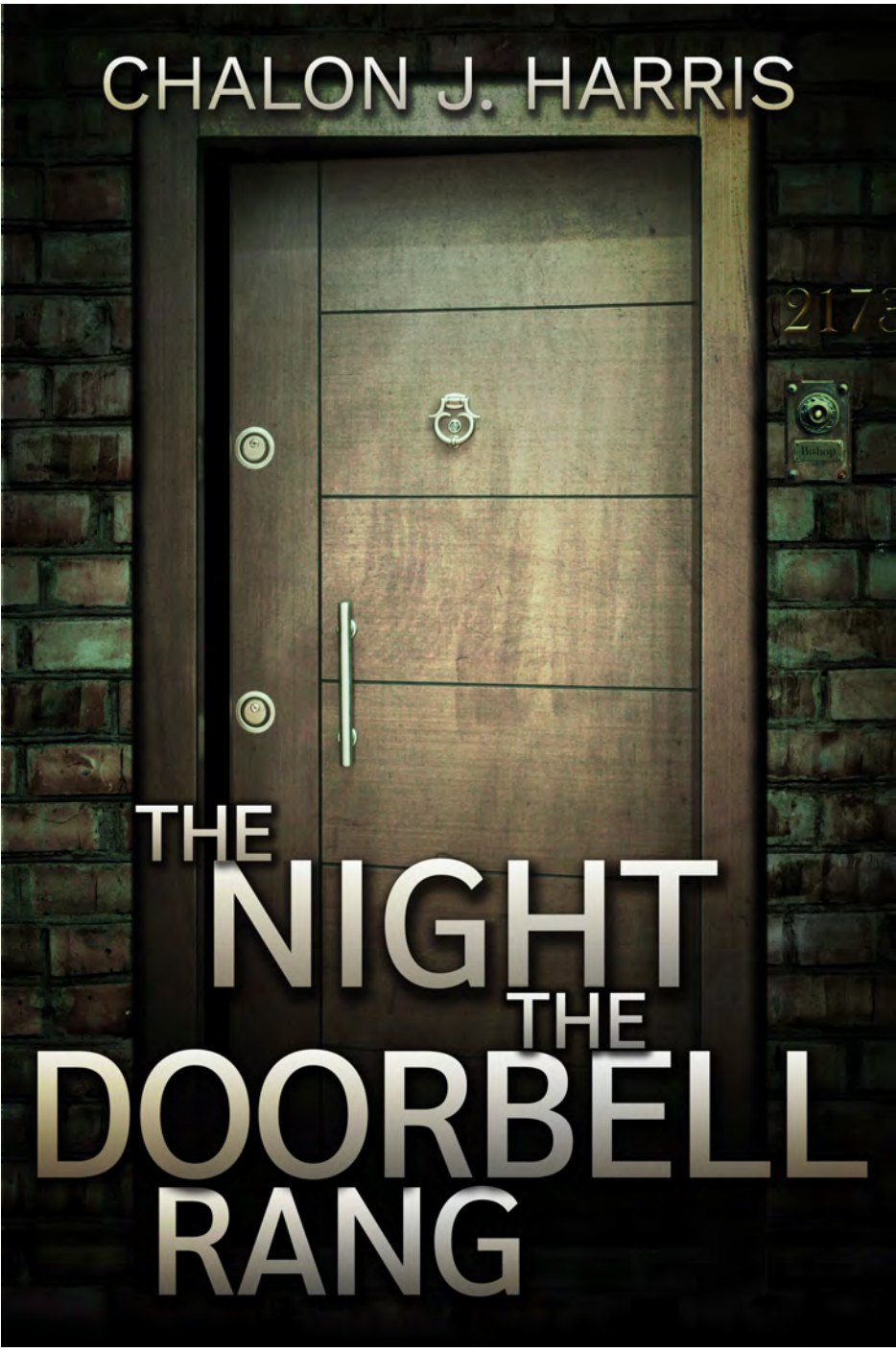
The big guys got into the game early and now they have a head start. However, this does not have to continue to be a problem. This is only a problem now because the average guy is being left behind. Now is the time to level the playing field. It is time for women and minority STEM students to aggressively adopt blockchain development. We need representation in the infrastructure building, the application building, and the code and smart contract development.

On November 30, the end of 2019, we see that the building of the digital asset economy has been quietly underway for a while. Give yourself one point for each company below that you have heard about before reading it today. These are one hundred US pick and

shovel companies in this new digital asset economy. Thousands more companies are waiting to be built or waiting for engineers to make them go. These are also one hundred US companies that have a marketing department, a sales department, human resources, communications, investor relations, technology support, and everything else you will find in a traditional company. The only difference is that these companies have chosen to position themselves toward the future and build their business around a technology that was built for the twenty-first century internet. Therefore, whether you build your own crypto company or app or just work for one of these companies, you can gain valuable knowledge and exposure to this young growing industry at the ground floor level. To most people, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

As described in TechCrunch Crunchbase: (58):

#	Company	Founded	Description
1	Abra	2014	Abra is a digital wallet which supports bitcoin and over 50 fiat currencies.
2	Airswap	2017	AirSwap is a decentralized trading network powered by Ethereum.
3	Algorand	2017	Algorand is a scalable, secure and decentralized digital currency and transactions platform.
4	Augur	2014	Augur is an open-source, decentralized prediction market platform.
5	Ausum Ventures	2018	Ausum Blockchain Fund is a hybrid venture and hedge fund comprised of early-stage startups and crypto-assets for social good.
6	Bakkt	2018	Bakkt is a financial services company that focuses on digital currency that specializes in concurrency, rewards, and loyalty points.



CHALON J. HARRIS

THE
NIGHT
THE
DOORBELL
RANG

THE
NIGHT
THE
DOORBELL
RANG

CHALON J. HARRIS

(inside title page)

1

I REMEMBER THE DOORBELL RINGING. I thought I was dreaming still, but when it rang a second time, it startled me awake. I opened my eyes and the bedroom was dark. Hazy silhouettes of the dresser and nightstand came into view. Glancing toward the window, even with the curtains drawn I could tell there was no sign of the sun rising anytime soon. I turned to the bedside clock and checked the time. The brightness made my eyes hurt, and the well-lit numbers were a blur.

2:17 a.m. Who the hell was ringing the bell at almost 2:30 in the morning? I looked over at Jerry — Gerald, when I was upset with him — who was still sound asleep. He let out that rumbling snore, the one that always came after a few evening beers.

They must have had the wrong house, and I had no interest in getting up. I rolled over and pulled the blankets back over me. Just as I begin to doze off, the bell rang a third time, quickly followed by a fourth. “Jerry, wake up.” I grabbed hold of his arm and shook him.

“What time is it, Cheryl? It’s not even daylight yet. Are you okay, honey?”

The doorbell rang again and snapped me out of my sleepy fog. “Jerry, it’s almost 2:30 and someone is ringing the doorbell.”

“Probably some kids playing a prank,” he said before rolling over away from me and pulling the covers up to his neck.

Jerry hated being woken up. He said it stemmed from his time as a young man in the Navy when he’d be woken up throughout the night for emergency training drills, followed by his twenty-six years as a police officer at the Boston Police Department. Thirteen of those years had been spent as a homicide detective, where he would receive phone calls at all hours — “callouts,” as the guys on the force had called them. It seemed most of the murders those days took place in the middle of the night. Even though his title was Homicide Detective, he and his team worked on all the violent crimes in Boston’s West End area.

He’d resigned from the force two years ago, at age fifty-four. Jerry loved his job and could have worked well into his sixties, but after the gruesome and very publicized murder of fourteen-year-old Jenny Wilson went cold, he had never been able to forgive himself.

And even though Jerry’s career had exposed him to the worst in people, he wasn’t callused by it. I loved that about him. We both believed that overall, people are good. Some just choose the wrong path or are products of their environment. But that doesn’t account for most people. I think that’s why Jerry was able to remain so kind and selfless.

"It has rung four times now. Kids playing pranks don't stay on the porch and keep ringing. Honey, I'm worried."

Jerry and I lived in a modest suburban home in the suburbs of Nashua, New Hampshire, about thirty-five miles outside of Boston. Our house sat in the quiet neighborhood of Riverbend Gated Community, which never had too many strangers passing through. No reason to. It wasn't a convenient route between the main highway and the city. Plus, the gates were closed and locked by security guards every night. Only residents living within the safety of the tall wrought-iron gates and fences were given a code to enter after ten. It was one of the reasons I felt so safe living there—knowing that after a certain hour, people who didn't belong there couldn't be there.

The doorbell rang again. "Oh my gosh," I whispered to myself. "Jerry, what if something happened to one of the kids? You need to see who it is."

Kerry, at age thirty-five, had recently given birth to our first grandson, Noah, and was living with her husband in Milford. We were delighted to learn we were going to be grandparents. As Kerry got up there in age, we were starting to wonder if it would ever happen.

Our son, Kyle, was what we liked to call 'our adult child.' Just four years behind Kerry in age, Kyle raced dirt bikes most of his waking hours and financed his fun by working a security job at night. Jerry offered him a job at the PI office many times, but Kyle said working those hours took away from

his time on the track. We always supported our children and the paths they had chosen for their lives, and racing wasn't any different. Kyle was a single guy with no kids, living on his own, and supporting himself with an honest living. Safe, happy, and healthy—all a parent could hope for. But no matter how old your kids get, when the doorbell rings in the middle of the night, it will create that knot in your stomach.

Jerry groaned and threw the blankets off. "Okay, I'm going to go check it out. I won't be able to go back to sleep anyway thinking someone could be hurt."

As he got up, I gave him a quick smack on the butt. I always loved how his butt looked in boxer shorts, even as an outline in the darkness. Patting his cute butt was something I'd done since he began courting me all those years ago. He gave me that shy little giggle that he never allowed anyone else to hear and told me, "Oh, you're gonna get it when I get back." Even with the dim moonlight shining through the curtains, I could see the gleaming bald spot that Jerry denied was on the crown of his head. It made me smile. I loved all his little imperfections.

He grabbed his old and tattered blue robe from the foot of the bed and wrapped it around his broad shoulders. While tying it closed, he used his foot to produce his brown corduroy slippers from under the bed. I watched as he started shuffling to the door. As he stepped into the hallway, I snapped back into the moment. "Take a bat with you."

"I would if we owned a bat, honey." He chuckled as he disappeared into the darkness.

I didn't know why I said that. I knew we didn't have a bat. But I was scared, and I didn't know why. We just didn't get people knocking on our door unannounced, let alone in the middle of the night. We should have owned a bat. Or one of those big mean dogs, like a Chow or Doberman

We had a dog. But our sweet little sixteen-year-old Maltese, Shadow, wasn't much of a deterrent for intruders. I had gotten Shadow from the rescue shelter on a whim after hearing Sarah McLaughlin singing on the TV with all those sad-looking cats and dogs flashing across the screen. I cried and cried and told Jerry we needed to save them. Jerry was allergic to cats, so I opted for the cutest little doggie that caught my eye. I called her Shadow because, in that shelter, she was so little and scared that she would take refuge in the shadow of the bigger dogs. And Jerry quickly came to love her as much as I did. He spent each evening sitting on the couch with her on his lap while he drank his beer and watched the news. But with her eyesight failing, she relied more on her hearing. Her bladder wasn't doing too well, so we kept her confined in the kitchen at night with a baby gate in the doorway and those doggie pee pads on the floor.

I reached toward the nightstand and turned on the lamp. It was much brighter than the illumination of the clock, and my eyes hadn't adjusted yet.

Not knowing what to do, I sat up straight, pulling the blankets up to my neck. I was worried. Nothing good happens at two in the morning.

I heard the faint creaking sound of the stairs as

Jerry walked down. I'd been wanting to tell him to fix those stairs for months, but he was so tired these days, and he'd been working so hard, I hadn't had the heart to bother him with it.

When I heard the front door open, the sound of low, mumbling voices traveled up to the second story and faded as they entered the room. The words were so quiet, I held my breath in an attempt to hear who it was and what they were saying. But all I heard was the bass tone of men's voices. Men. Was there more than one man ringing the bell, or was I hearing Jerry's as well? It was hard to tell.

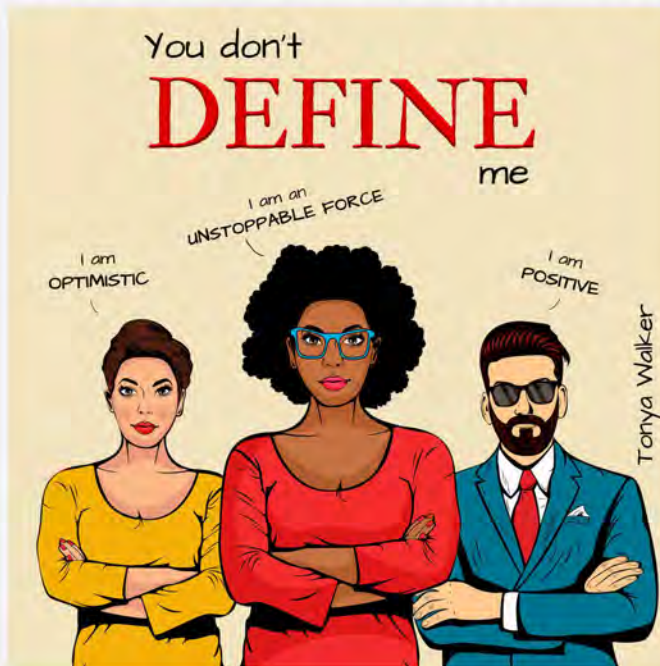
Jerry was going to be so tired in the morning. He'd play it off and tell me he was fine, but he could never hide the bags and dark circles under his eyes when he hadn't gotten enough sleep. Maybe I'd make him that breakfast he liked so much, waffles with strawberries and whipped cream. *Do we have whipped cream? I'll make sure to check in the morning.*

I was tired, and my mind was wandering, so I got up and went to the window, hoping I could see who was out there. The night was clear enough to see all the stars in the sky, even with the streetlights on. I couldn't see the front door from the second story due to the overgrowth of the trees. It was the beginning of fall, and the leaves had just begun to take on their beautiful array of oranges and reds. But at this point, they hadn't started falling off just yet.

There was no car parked in front of the house, which I found odd. Not only was someone here at two in the morning, but they'd walked here? Something didn't feel right.

YOU DON'T DEFINE ME I DEFINE MYSELF **WORKBOOK**

EXCERCISES AND PRACTICES TO HELP YOU DEFINE YOURSELF



New Life Portfolio

Create the life you want opposed to the life that someone else wants

Begin Again

Discover the gifts and talents within

The New You

Let us go on a journey that will change your life forever
and

Define Yourself

Written and Created by Tonya Walker

YOU DON'T DEFINE ME

I DEFINE MYSELF

Our mission is to help people to redefine their life by bringing awareness of what is on the inside of them

GOALS

1. Motivate people through positive change
2. Boost self-esteem and self-confidence through positive affirmations
3. Promoting the social growth of people so that they can thrive and succeed in life
4. Teach people to believe in themselves



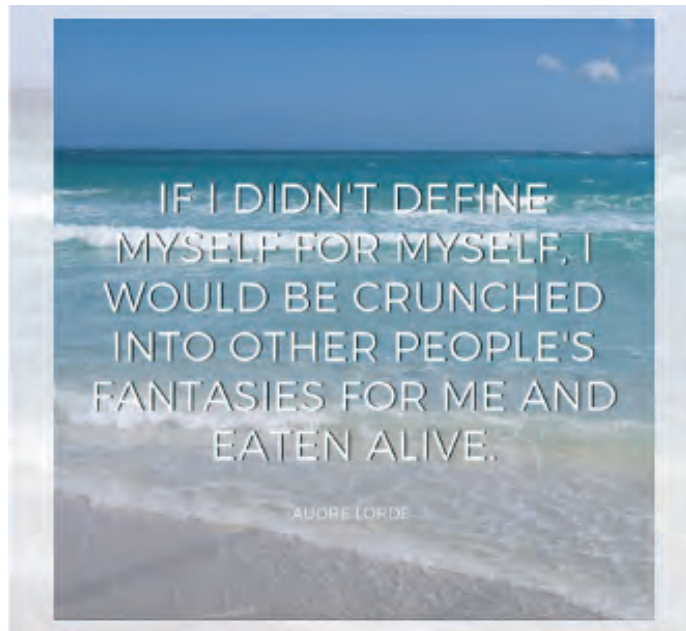
STEPS

1. Discover where you are in life
2. Make goals to help accomplish your vision
3. Create steps to accomplish your goals
4. Create habits around your steps

LIFE ASSESSMENT

And the Lord answered me, and said: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Habakkuk 2:2 & 3



Write down 3 issues that you want to see improved in each area. On the first line, write the issue. Write a positive word on line 1 (the opposite of the issue). Create a positive affirmation on line 2 for the area that you can repeat daily.

Health

1. _____
 1. _____
 2. _____
2. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
1. _____
2. _____

Family and Friends

1. _____
1. _____
2. _____
2. _____
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
1. _____
2. _____

Love Relationship

1. _____
1. _____
2. _____
2. _____
1. _____

MODELING

Research who is successful at doing what you want to do. Write down three things that you found that will help you accomplish your goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

After your research is complete – Take Action

ACTION STEPS

1. Listen to What they are Saying – Let it Soak in by Mediating on it Daily
2. Create a Vision for What You Want To Achieve
3. Set Your Mind on the Finish Product
4. Create Affirmations to Speak Daily about the Finished Product
5. Set Small Goals Weekly to Work on your Vision
6. Set Steps to Accomplish your Goals Weekly
7. Create Strong Habits around Your Vision
8. Set a Deadline
9. Visualize the Finished Product Daily
10. At the End of Each Day Create a Heart of Gratitude
11. Don't Tell People until It's Complete Unless They Are Helping You!

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:6

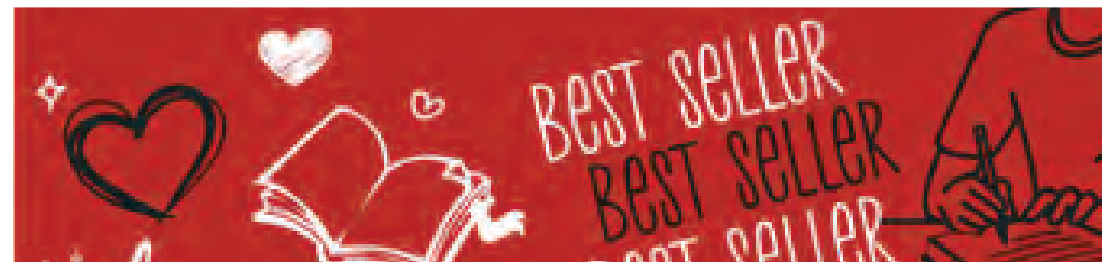
COLLABORATE YOUR MIND

I want this – I chose this – I have chosen to love this

Follow the example below and write down what you want, choose, and have chosen to love.

Example:

1. I want to write – I have chosen to write – I love writing – I can take the pain of discipline to write – I'm the best – I'm the greatest – I am an expert at writing # 1 New York Best Selling Books & International books in several different languages.



2. _____

3. _____

MIND EXERCISE

Everyone Works on the Body, but who Works on the Mind

Ways to Open your Mind

1. Go for a walk
2. Write down your thoughts in a journal
3. Read a book
4. Meditate – Breathe deep for one minute
5. Seek a quiet place for three minutes and sit
6. Go to the gym
7. Talk to a friend
8. Repeat a positive quote over and over again



MUSIC IS A GREAT WAY TO FEEL AND VISUALIZE YOUR DREAMS

Everyone Works on the Body, but who Work on the Mind

Ways to Open your Mind

1. Create a song from your *Life Assessment Worksheet*
2. Write the song as if it is already created & write it as if you really love and want it
3. Put Music to the words
4. Create a Powerpoint presentation to go along with your song

*CREATE A SONG
SING THE SONG
GET IT IN YOUR
SPIRIT*

Examples on the following pages

EMPOWERED *by the* STORM

How to Use Adversity to **DISCOVER**
YOUR SUPERPOWER , Become
RESILIENT & Live the **INSPIRED LIFE**
YOU DESERVE



YUMI TAKAGI

EMPOWERED

- by the -

STORM

How to Use Adversity to
DISCOVER YOUR SUPERPOWER,
Become **RESILIENT** & Live
the **INSPIRED LIFE YOU DESERVE**

Yumi Takagi

Empowered by the Storm

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Cover Design: Kenneth Ryan V. Monteclaro

Editing: Cherie Asher

Formatting & Typesetting: Black Bee Media

ISBN: 978-0-473-54546-8

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 The Power of the Storm	5
Chapter 2 The Power of Decision	13
Chapter 3 The Power of Habit	21
Chapter 4 The Power of Gratitude and Affirmations	27
Chapter 5 The Power of Focus	33
Chapter 6 The Power of Belief	41
Chapter 7 The Power of Prayer and Meditation	47
Chapter 8 The Power of Imagination	55
Chapter 9 The Power of Thoughts	61
Chapter 10 The Power of Words	67
Chapter 11 The Power of Surroundings	73
Chapter 12 The Power of Movement	79
Chapter 13 The Power of Letting Go	87
Chapter 14 The Power of Serving Others	93
Chapter 15 The Power of YOU	97
Next Steps.....	104
Get a Free Gift.....	106
My Appreciations	107
About the Author	109
Can You Help?.....	110

INTRODUCTION

“How can I carry on like this?”

*“You never know how strong you are until
being strong is your only choice”*

— Bob Marley

It was about 4 years ago that I felt that the storm of my life was a never ending storm. The breakup of my 21 years of marriage was too much to handle for a naïve, part time working, Japanese mum. It all happened suddenly and I needed to leave Qatar where our family was based. I had two options, either go back to Japan, or move to New Zealand where I had spent most of my adult life. Since I was more familiar with New Zealand’s working society and had more close friends there, I chose New Zealand. I thought it would be easier for me to get a place to live and a job. I stayed at my friend’s house for half a year. I am grateful that I could live there but I was very miserable.

Every day I had to push my heavy body out of my bed and think about what could happen next. How to find a job at my age and with no skills, how to pay a mortgage, how to even go outside without feeling humiliated. I was so broken. I had no direction. I was hurt, so hurt that my body was aching every day. Every day I was saying to myself, “I can’t go on like this anymore. How long do I have to be like this?”

If I could go back and meet that small, sad version of myself, I would hand her this book and say, “Follow what this book says and you will be okay.”

This book is about how to find your *superpower* to get through the most difficult time of your life. How to bounce back from the bottom of your life and jump higher than your previous life. Your storm may be different to mine. Your storm may have been losing a job, a business, or losing a family member or a tragic health issue. Whatever your storm is that has rocked your world, I hope that this book helps you to find your hidden power to build hope and strength and to harness your potential to rebuild your life again.

All the ingredients to build that power are in our daily lives. It is

very basic and simple, but it is so easy to overlook these facts. This book will explain to you how to find those ingredients and transform yourself, and I will empower you by sharing my life story. This book will tell you how I overcame and thrived from the rock bottom of my life. I searched every day for over 2 years to find all these tools. But I found that it was just little tweaks I made in my daily life that changed my life. It all started from my decision to change my mindset, focus, and habit.

When I look back at my life, I had some other storms too. A health threat, losing my job and dealing with financial problems. I learnt so much from going through every storm in my life. It moulded me little by little. I now know that life doesn't happen to me but happens for me. I always find something good comes out of every storm. And this huge storm I went through really gave me a lot of lessons! The biggest one was how to find my *superpower* when I felt there was no power.

If you are going through your storm, even if your storm is in a different shape or form from mine, you may be feeling hurt and like there is no more power left inside of you. I experienced that, too. Maybe you're thinking there is no power to even think. You might be saying, "No, don't tell me what to do, or I will close this book now! Why me, why do I have to do anything?!"

I get it. I have been there. I was saying the same thing all the time! But you know what? I discovered that I am the only one who can change my life. No one will change my life. I am writing this book for myself 4 years ago. I wish I could give this book to her so that she could come out from the storm quicker and she could even enjoy her storm!

My guiding light was my faith in God, but I understand not everyone believes in the same God, or in fact have any faith, and that is okay too. I believe that these tips in my book will help you to find your own guiding light to get through your storm.

You might feel a bit overwhelmed while you are reading it. That is okay. But please don't just read it and forget about it. I would like you to try at least one of the tools I introduce in this book. Every

chapter has got some tips and tools that you can immediately start using today. Take your time to prepare them and apply them one by one. I didn't do all of them all at once. I had to process each time. Just take one step at a time. Read it many times so that key words will stick in your brain and remind you.

Please send me a message if you have any questions **on Instagram or our community page on Facebook**. I can assure you that when you apply what I wrote in this book, you will find your life is changing and you are discovering a stronger, wiser, and greater version of you!

QUOTES HELP ME TO RISE ABOVE

In every chapter of this book, I added some awesome quotes from successful people. Quotes really helped me move out of my storm. I used to write in my notebook, on post-its, and on my iPhone and read them throughout the day. I reminded myself how I should be thinking and who I should be. I still do that till this day. Every day I read some great quotes to inspire myself to be a more powerful and better person.

So many great, successful people have been giving us awesome quotes to wake us up. I hope you will also be inspired as I have been, and they help you feel charged to keep going forward.

CAN I HELP YOU?

I am passionate about helping people to find their *superpower* so that they can get through any difficult situation and reach their dream. I would like to contribute to making changes in the world.

I would like to know your feedback, your pains, and wins. Please follow me and chat to me. I would love to hear your story!

Website: www.lovejoypowerzclub.nz, Instagram [@superpoweryumi](https://www.instagram.com/superpoweryumi) or Facebook at facebook.com/lovejoypowerzclub

Enjoy reading!

CHAPTER 1

The Power of the Storm

“Turn your wound into wisdom.”

—Oprah Winfrey

“What is going on? Please tell me this is a dream!” I was not sure what was happening to me 4 years ago. It was a storm, a hurricane size storm had landed on me.

Everyone has some form of a storm in their life at some time. It can be small; it can be big. It can be short and quick; it can be long and unrelenting. You can dread it or embrace it. Some storms are created by something which is out of our control, others are consequences of our actions in the past. Whatever the form is, the storm will affect you in some way. Sometimes it breaks, takes away, or changes things.

The biggest storm of my life came 4 years ago, it came out of the blue, and I was not prepared: it was like a hurricane. It completely broke, took away, and changed my entire life. When we say storm, it usually gives us a negative feeling. We feel fear, anxiety, and insecurity. However, usually after the storm, it creates a new, cleaner, better order, and it builds something new. When I changed the perception of the word storm, I found the things around me started to change in a better way and it seemed life was moving in my favour.

There is huge power in the storm; however, we usually don't see it as a positive thing. If you change your attitude and mindset to see the storm as an opportunity to gain power and wisdom, you will find strength and thrive. In this book I am going to share my story and how I found the positive power in the storm when I didn't know there was any. But to do that, I need you to believe that you can use the storm to give you power and wisdom. Belief is the fundamental thing to gain this truth. The storm can give you a favourable power to make you stronger, mature, and more beautiful. In this chapter I

will share my story about how I first felt about my storm, and then how I transformed the power of my hurricane to my advantage. How I thrived after the storm by changing my mindset.

THE HURRICANE

My storm felt like it came on suddenly. My marriage of 21 years shattered in an instant. Until then, I was a happy expat's wife who travelled with our son and lived in many countries to support my husband's career. I left my career for my family when my son was 2 years old. I had never thought about divorce or "what if". I have to admit that I was very naive. There were many obstacles during our marriage; however, I thought we were doing so well overcoming all those life problems together and that we would continue to go through the future together as a family. When the storm came, I lost everything. My storm felt as if it was the size of a hurricane. It destroyed everything. I lost houses, many mutual friends, and trust from people. My separation was a very evil and horrible one. One day my ex-husband became my worst enemy in the world. I felt as if the whole world was crumbling around me, everything seemed to be against me. I was not prepared physically or mentally. The shock was so great that I felt it throughout my body. Every day I felt like my body was chilled. My body felt too heavy to move. I couldn't sleep, I was constantly afraid of everything. Nothing tasted good anymore; I was constantly thirsty even though I was hydrating all the time.

I was living in Qatar at that time when my ex wanted me to leave the country. I didn't have much choice but to leave the country to get out of our toxic marriage. I only had a small amount of money and I had to rely on the kindness of my friends to travel back to New Zealand. On the day I was leaving Qatar, breaking from my horrible reality, I got into a really bad situation with my ex. At the airport check-in counter we started to have a big, ugly scene, and I got so scared that my hands were shaking. I was sweating profusely and could not see my phone screen. Everything looked fogged up and blurry. The strong, exotic aromas that we usually could smell at the airport disappeared as though I had lost my sense of smell, but the sound

of other people became louder, echoing in my head. All of a sudden, I remembered the words *panic attack*.

All those things I was experiencing were linked to a panic attack. I wanted to sit down to calm myself but I couldn't. I wanted to run away from my ex because the situation was so ugly and humiliating. I felt like everything was hurting me. I was late to the departure gate and had to hurry, otherwise I would miss my flight. This only made me panic more, and the sweating got worse; it was dripping from my chin. When I got to the plane, my shirt was drenched with sweat as if I had just had a shower. But the calmness finally surrounded me – it was then that I finally felt safe and peaceful and away from the confronting, humiliating situation. However, that was only the beginning of my journey into this storm.

SEARCHING FOR THE EXIT

My storm was huge, so huge that it affected all areas of my life. The worse parts were my finances and emotions. I had very little money so needed to think about how I could survive with what I had. My brain was full of negativity. "I can't work, I don't know how to get a job. How can I ask to get a job, there is no one I can ask for help ...". It is interesting that when you have so much negative energy in your brain, your reality aligns with it allowing nothing positive to happen. However, God (The Universe, Higher Power – whatever you want to call it – I will call it God in this book) is great. He provided me with many great friends who surrounded me. They helped calm me down and uplift me when I was low. I had a few weeks of just taking life very slowly, taking one day at a time, waiting for my brain and body to emerge from this panicked state it was in.

I lost 5kg in a few months, I lost a lot of my hair, I lost total confidence in myself, and lost my self-esteem. My body was so skinny that my skinny jeans didn't look skinny anymore. Many of my friends suggested that I go to counselling, but I didn't have the money to go. There were a couple of free counselling services, but I didn't feel strong enough to share my story with anyone at that time. I felt ashamed that I had failed. How could I tell anyone that an over 50 year old woman had lost everything: job, husband, and future. How

JESSICA MOORE



THE WARRIOR

BOOK ONE OF ELYON'S ARMOR

JESSICA MOORE



THE WARRIOR

BOOK ONE OF ELYON'S ARMOR

The Warrior

Book 1 of Elyon's Armor

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Edited by Julie Breihan

Cover Design by 100Covers

Formatting & Typesetting by Black Bee Media

*To my amazingly supportive family, for always
believing in me, especially when I didn't believe in
myself.*

ISBN 978-1-7358180-0-9

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One -The Beginning of the End.....	1
Chapter Two - The Palace	19
Chapter Three - Training Begins.....	33
Chapter Four - Belial.....	47
Chapter Five - The Mission.....	51
Chapter Six - The Team	63
Chapter Seven - Encounter	77
Chapter Eight - Belial, Again.....	85
Chapter Nine - The First Battle	87
Chapter Ten - The Beast	97
Chapter Eleven - The Belt	105
Acknowledgments	113
Now it's your turn.....	114

CHAPTER ONE

The Beginning of the End

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

— John 8:32 ESV

LIFE CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE. When I was younger, I never thought my father would die in a war that's been going on since the creation of Mythica. I couldn't have imagined that my twin sister would die of a sickness that had been thought extinct.

Yes, life can be very unpredictable, unfair, hurtful. My mother tried to keep her faith in Elyon, the creator of Mythica and all its creatures, but I had long since broke all connections to Him. He may have created the world, but that didn't mean I had to follow Him or His ways. Everyone talked about His goodness and love, but I couldn't understand how someone who claimed to love us and to be filled with nothing but good would allow such pain and destruction to happen.

My father died in a war that had nothing to do with him. It was the age-old battle between Elyon's son, Paladin, and His arch nemesis, Belial. My father didn't ask to fight; he was forced from our home and taken from us.

Helia, my sister, left us not too long after. I had to watch as the life slowly faded from her. It had started with a cough, then there was the blood and the fevers, then the bruises. It ended with hallucinations. She would imagine our father coming home and sitting down for a meal, or she would think she was flying with me on Shilla's back when we hadn't even left the house. The light that was once constant in her eyes completely left. She was gone long before she died.

As she was dying I could feel her pain. I could feel the overwhelming sadness she felt when she still knew what was happening. She was my twin, my other half. Watching, feeling as life was taken from her almost broke me. Most days I wished it had. I didn't want to live in this world without her. If not for Shilla and my mother, I would have long since ended my pain permanently.

Some days were harder than others. There were times when I would go about my chores on the farm and get so caught up in the work that I didn't think about the blackness in my heart. Sometimes I felt free from everything, soaring above the clouds, the warmth of Shilla keeping the frigid wind from chilling me to the bone.

Other days that dark spot in my heart would grow larger and larger, to the point the pain was almost too much to bear. Whenever that happened, I would fall into a state of fogginess, curling up in the corner of my room, not knowing who came or went or how long the darkness lasted.

It hadn't been one of those days, but it was close. Almost five years since Father left for war, three since Helia had died, and two since the messenger came confirming Father's death. The grief still hung on my shoulders. The hole left in my heart never grew smaller, as others told me it would. Instead, it filled with hatred toward Elyon, stretching bigger and bigger.

I had been working out in the barn, putting in fresh hay and filling the feeds, when I could feel my mother's watchful eyes from the door. I didn't have to turn around to see the sadness they held, deep brown reflections of my own. That sadness was always there when she watched me.

"Zalan, my dear boy, why do you carry so much?"

It was the same question she asked over and over. The anger inside me began to boil. We'd had this argument a thousand times, and yet she persisted. She meant well; I

knew that. So I took a deep breath and counted to ten before responding. I could feel the anger ebb slightly. I turned to answer.

"It's the weight that was placed on my shoulders. I didn't ask to carry it."

"But why won't you ask for it to be lifted? Elyon never intended for you to hold on to it."

"Then why did He take them from us? Why did He cause this hole in my heart?"

Tears sprang into her eyes. I went back to my work to keep the tears from my own eyes. I hated how easily I cried. I was seventeen years old, for Paladin's sake. A grown man shouldn't be brought to tears so easily.

"The ways of Elyon don't always appear to make sense or be fair. But He promises that if we put our trust in Him, one day we will see the good that comes out of everything."

"Mother, you know I can't put my trust in Him anymore. I trusted Him to bring Father home. I trusted Him to let Helia live. And He betrayed me."

My shoulders stiffened as I heard her feet shuffle back toward the house. She never pushed hard, but I knew the argument wasn't over. She would bring it up again. I sat on the bench on the other side of the barn, looking out over the pastures that our sheep were grazing in.

Why did You take them from me? Tears were falling down my cheeks. Why did You have to cause so much pain? How can You call yourself a just Lord? The blackness in my heart grew a little more.

Elyon didn't care about us. He didn't care about the pain He caused. It would have been better if He had never created life in the first place.

I had been so deep in anguished thought I hadn't heard or seen Shilla approach until she spoke, causing me to jump about two feet off my seat. "You look like you were forced to

eat a swamp bug seasoned by the Brownies.”

My face scrunched up with the memory of those blasted creatures tricking me into eating their so-called delicacies. It might not have been so bad if the bugs hadn’t still been alive.

“You always know how to make me feel so much better, don’t you?” It was meant as sarcasm, but a smile was already spreading across my face, evidence of the truth behind my words.

“Someone has to tell you as it really is.” She chuckled, the sulfur her laugh caused creating a small puff cloud above us.

“Is your fire damp? You don’t normally smoke from a chuckle.”

Dragons often didn’t smoke at all. The flame they held within didn’t have the normal properties of fire.

“Are you feeling all right? Or is it just your dark soul trying to escape?”

“Dark soul?” She made a show of mock shock. Then her eyes grew slightly more serious. “I have Dragon Drought.”

Dragon Drought was the common cold for Dragons. Shilla had had it once before. It caused their fires to smolder for a few days. Shilla hated not being able to use her fire. It would be days before I stopped hearing her complain.

“I do not want to talk about it at all.” I doubted she meant that. “It is almost day’s end and the sky is perfect tonight. I do not want to miss the best part.”

I tilted my head up to the sky. I hadn’t realized so much time had passed, but Shilla was right. The first sun was already creating a show. If we wanted to see all its beauty we needed to hurry. Without another word I jumped onto her back. She took a few paces out into the field so as to not damage the barn, again, and took off. After my mother threatened to sell Shilla’s hide for knocking down half the barn, Shilla made sure she was always far enough away

when she spread her wings.

There was no place better to watch the sunsets than on the very top of High Peak Mountain, and I was one of the very few to get that privilege. You could not climb the mountain unless you wanted to fall quickly to your death. The only way up was to fly. My best friend happened to be a Dragon, one of the few creatures that could fly that high.

Shilla and I made a tradition of watching the two suns set every night since I lost my sister. It was the one time I didn’t feel completely weighed down with grief. The way the colors would blend and move together gave me a sense that there was still some small hope in the world. Shilla would say it was Elyon’s design and that He purposefully made something so beautiful to give hope and light to the world. I didn’t believe it. I thought Elyon created it just to spite us. I was sure Elyon was a monster pretending to be a shining light, and in reality, He was actually blinding us to the truth of His cruel ways.

Shilla didn’t question my faith like my mother did, yet she would occasionally talk about Elyon. We had an unspoken agreement to let the other believe and feel what they wanted, but I knew she always hoped I would change my mind. Shilla and I had been friends ever since the beginning of time, ever since I first ran into her, quite literally, as she was trying to take one of our sheep. I had been playing “hide and find” with Helia.

I turned around to hide and found myself flat on my back. I had no idea what I had just hit. When I managed to get to my feet, Shilla had a sheep between her teeth. She hadn’t quite learned that our sheep weren’t for eating, that we used them for their wool. When I screamed, she spun around so quickly her tail caught me and threw me almost all the way back to the barn. Other than having the wind knocked out of me, I was fine.

Shilla flew off, but her parents eventually found out

DIABETES BEYOND NUMBERS

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING DIABETES
MANAGEMENT

Nuzhat Chalisa MD, FACE



DIABETES BEYOND NUMBERS

**A COMPLETE GUIDE TO
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DIABETES MANAGEMENT**

NUZHAT CHALISA MD, FACE

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING DIABETES	5
Diabetes Basics	
Risk Factors	
Insulin Resistance	
Prediabetes	
Types of Diabetes	
Metabolic Syndrome	
CHAPTER 2 GLUCOSE MONITORING	11
Diagnosing Diabetes	
Signs and Symptoms	
Glucose Monitoring	
Target Glucose Levels	
Hypoglycemia	
CHAPTER 3 DIABETES MANAGEMENT PLAN	25
Diabetes Care Plan	
Doctor's Visit	
Understanding your Labs	
Blood Pressure & Lipids	
Eye & Foot Exam	
CHAPTER 4 DIET MANAGEMENT	31
Basic Principles of Diabetic Diet	
Types of Nutrients	
Adopting a Good Nutrition Plan	
Reading Nutrition Labels	
Portion Sizing	
Carbohydrate Counting	
Meal Planning	
Healthy Cooking	
Eating Out	
CHAPTER 5 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	51
Benefits of Exercise	
Aerobic & Anaerobic exercise	
Personalized Workout Plan	
Best time to Workout	





CHAPTER 6 PHARMACOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES.....63

Types of Diabetes Medications
Oral Pills
Injectable Medications
Insulin Types
The Basal Bolus Regime
Injecting Insulin
Insulin Pumps



CHAPTER 7 WEIGHT MANAGEMENT85

BMI
Goal Setting
Diet Diary
Tracking your Progress
Weight Loss Medication
Bariatric Surgery



CHAPTER 8 DIET PLANS & WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAMS93

Type of Diets: Which one is Better
Weight Loss Programs
Intermittent Fasting
How Fasting helps Lose Weight

CHAPTER 9 COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES99

Acute Complications
Diabetic Ketoacidosis
Diabetic Non Ketotic Hyperosmolar State
Diabetes and Heart Disease & Stroke
How Diabetes affects Kidneys, Eyes and Feet
Diabetic Foot
Diabetic Gastroparesis
Psychological Problems with Diabetes
Diabetes Distress



CHAPTER 10 DIABETES IN WOMEN 117

Managing Diabetes during Menstruation
Planning for Pregnancy
Gestational Diabetes
Diabetes Management during Pregnancy
Diabetes Management around Menopause



CHAPTER 11 DIABETES IN MEN 121

Erectile Dysfunction
Hormonal Issues



CHAPTER 12 DIABETES IN THE ELDERLY 123

Risk of Hypoglycemia
Glucose Targets
Screening for Chronic Complications
Physical Activity for Seniors
Simplify Medication Regime

CHAPTER 13 DIABETES AND TRAVEL 129

Packing for your Trip
Traveling Tips
Traveling across Time Zones



CHAPTER 14 GENETIC AND CULTURAL DISPARITIES IN DIABETES MANAGEMENT..... 133

Risk of Diabetes in Different Ethnic Populations
Disparities in Diabetes Management

CHAPTER 15 DIABETES AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC..... 137

How does COVID-19 impact Diabetic Patients?
Are Diabetics at an Increased Risk?
Risk of Lung Infection in Diabetes
What Precautions should Diabetics Take if Someone has COVID-19 in their Home?
Treatment: What do we Know?



UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which you have too much glucose in your blood because the body is not able to process glucose properly.

What is Glucose?

Glucose is the simplest form of sugar. Glucose is your body's main source of energy.

To understand diabetes, let us first understand how glucose is normally processed in our body. Glucose in our bodies comes from two sources: (1) the food we eat, and (2) our own glucose manufactured in the liver. When we eat, the carbohydrates in our food get broken into simple glucose. The glucose is then absorbed from the gut and goes into the bloodstream. From here, glucose has to enter the cells. To enter the cell, the glucose needs insulin.



What is Insulin?

Insulin is a hormone made by a gland called the pancreas. The pancreas releases insulin in response to eating. Insulin serves as the key that opens the cell doors, allowing glucose to enter. Without properly functioning insulin, glucose cannot enter the cell.

What Happens in Diabetes?

When you have Type 2 diabetes, the cells become resistant to the action of insulin so the glucose cannot enter into the cells. As a result, most of the glucose remains in the bloodstream, leading to high blood glucose. Since the insulin is not working properly, the pancreas works harder and harder to overcome the effect. As a result, after a while, the pancreas is burnt out and cannot make any more insulin. That is when people with Type 2 diabetes require insulin injections because medications that work through the pancreas are no longer effective.

RISK FACTORS FOR DIABETES

Contrary to common misconception, diabetes is not caused by eating too much sugar. Development of diabetes involves a complex interaction between genetic, biological, and environmental factors. No test can show who would develop diabetes but certain risk factors increase your chances of developing diabetes, especially if you have the underlying predisposition. You may be at increased risk of diabetes if you are:

- Over the age of 45
- Overweight or obese
- Not physically active
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Asian American, African American, Hispanic, or Native American
- Have had gestational diabetes

Age: Your risk of diabetes increases with age. Therefore, it's recommended that everyone above age 45 should be screened for diabetes.

Weight: Your weight is an important risk factor for diabetes. People who are overweight and obese become insulin-resistant early on, which predisposes them to develop diabetes.

Race: Certain ethnic backgrounds have a higher risk of diabetes than others. For example, Native Americans, Hispanic, African Americans, and South Asians have a much higher risk of diabetes compared to Caucasians.

INSULIN RESISTANCE

Insulin resistance means that the body's cells are less sensitive to the action of insulin. Why does someone develop insulin resistance? Insulin resistance comes from a combination of their genetics and lifestyle. Many genetic factors predispose them to insulin resistance such as having a family history of diabetes and/or belonging to certain ethnic groups.

Women with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) also have insulin resistance. This is due to an excess of hormones, which opposes the actions of insulin. Because of this, women with PCOS are at a higher risk of diabetes.

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that is diagnosed during pregnancy and goes away after pregnancy. Women with insulin resistance have a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes. Women who have gestational diabetes have increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes down the road.

Sedentary lifestyle and lack of physical activity can also cause insulin resistance. During physical activity, muscles use up energy. When a person is not physically active, muscles become resistant to the action of insulin. Insulin resistance is directly proportional to the amount of body fat, specifically visceral fat.

The interesting part is that over 90 million people in the United States have insulin resistance, but not everyone with insulin resistance develops Type 2 diabetes. Why is that? This is because, under normal circumstances, the pancreas will work harder to make more insulin to overcome insulin resistance. This way, enough insulin action is available to keep glucose in a normal range. However, after a while, the pancreas starts giving up, and, consequently, glucose starts trending up. This is when a person develops prediabetes. If no intervention occurs, the process continues and the person develops diabetes.

Each individual's pancreas has a different capacity to fight insulin resistance.

Therefore, some people develop diabetes earlier than others. The development of diabetes also depends on if intervention is done early on. Increasing physical activity and losing weight can make cells more sensitive to insulin and prevent or delay progression to diabetes.

PREDIABETES

Prediabetes is a condition when your glucose level is above normal but not in a diabetic range. About a third of individuals in the United States have prediabetes. However, 90% of those with prediabetes are not aware they have it.

Why is it important to know if you are prediabetic? It turns out that by making appropriate changes in your lifestyle when in a prediabetic state you can delay or prevent diabetes completely. In 1996, the National Institutes of Health conducted a large study called the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). The purpose of this study was to see if lifestyle intervention with diet and exercise would delay or prevent the onset of diabetes in people who are at high risk for the disease. Results of the study showed that lifestyle intervention and metformin were very effective in decreasing the onset of diabetes. It was seen that by losing 5-7% body weight by lifestyle intervention decreases the risk of developing diabetes by 58%. This is by far the greatest amount of risk reduction seen compared to any diabetic drugs to date.

TYPE OF DIABETES

Diabetes is broadly classified into Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5% of all diabetes. It is autoimmune mediated, meaning the body's own cells called autoantibodies destroy the beta cells in the pancreas, resulting in complete insulin deficiency. Type 1 diabetes also used to be called juvenile diabetes because it is usually diagnosed at an early age. However, adults may also develop Type 1 diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes, on the other hand, is caused by insulin resistance meaning the body is making insulin but it is not good quality and so, not allowing glucose to enter the cell. In Type 2 diabetes, some insulin is still working so there is a relative insulin deficiency. This type of diabetes can be treated with oral medications as well as with other injectable medications and insulin.

OTHER FORMS OF DIABETES

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes develops during pregnancy. It usually goes away after delivery of the baby. During pregnancy, several hormones are secreted that increase insulin resistance. For women who already have insulin resistance, it gets worse during pregnancy and leads to development of gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes usually develops in the second trimester of pregnancy. Screening for gestational diabetes is done at 24-28 weeks with a glucose tolerance test. Gestational diabetes will be discussed in detail in a later section of the book.

LADA

Latent autoimmune diabetes in adults is an autoimmune diabetes that is a form of Type 1 diabetes but presents and behaves like Type 2 diabetes. It is therefore mistaken for Type 2 diabetes in many cases. LADA develops slowly over many years compared to classic Type 1 diabetes that develops quickly.

MODY

MODY stands for Maturity onset diabetes of the young. It is an uncommon form of Type 2 diabetes that is caused by a single gene defect. MODY behaves more like Type 1 diabetes. It affects young people with a family history of diabetes. This type of diabetes responds very well to oral medication and does not require insulin.

Secondary Diabetes

Diabetes can also occur as a result of other medical conditions and medications. Some conditions that can lead to diabetes are inflammation or surgical removal of the pancreas, pituitary or adrenal disorders, hemochromatosis, transplant surgery, infection, or malnutrition. Certain medications, such as steroids and immunosuppressive medications used in transplant patients, can also lead to diabetes.

METABOLIC SYNDROME



You may have heard the phrase “Metabolic Syndrome.”

Metabolic Syndrome is a combination of metabolic disorders that render you prone to develop Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. You may have metabolic syndrome if you have three or more of the following risk factors:

Table-1

Diagnostic criteria for Metabolic Syndrome	
Any 3 of 5 criteria constitute the categorical cut points	
Diagnosis of metabolic syndrome.	
Elevated waist circumference	> 102 cm or >40 inches in men > 88 cm or >35 inches in women
Elevated Triglycerides	> 150 mg/dl
HDL	< 40 mg/dl in men
HDL	< 50 mg/dl in women
BP	> 130 mm Hg systolic > 88 mm Hg diastolic
Fasting glucose	> 100 mm Hg

It is not clear whether Metabolic Syndrome has a single cause. It appears that it can be precipitated by multiple underlying risk factors. The two most important of these risk factors are abdominal obesity and insulin resistance. Metabolic syndrome is associated with a 5-fold increased risk for diabetes as compared with people without the syndrome

If you have Metabolic Syndrome, you must discuss it with your doctor. By taking appropriate measures to lose weight, increasing physical activity, and a eating a balanced diet, you can combat Metabolic Syndrome to prevent diabetes and certain other conditions.

GLUCOSE MONITORING

DIAGNOSIS OF DIABETES

Now that you have a clear understanding of diabetes, let us see how you can find out if you have diabetes based on guidelines from the American Diabetes Association, the European Association for Study of Diabetes, and the International Diabetes Federation. Four tests can be used for diagnosis of diabetes. Not all four tests are needed for diagnosis. Usually if one test is abnormal, it is advisable to either repeat it on a different day or do a different test. However, if your doctor determines that your blood sugar is high, and if you have symptoms of diabetes, you may not need to repeat or do a second test. Diabetes can be diagnosed by HbA1c, fasting glucose levels, random glucose levels, or a 2-hour glucose tolerance test.

Hemoglobin A1c

HbA1c test, also called glycated hemoglobin, is a test that reflects your average glucose in the past 2-3 months. It measures the percentage of hemoglobin that is coated with glucose. Hemoglobin is the oxygen carrying protein in your blood. The higher the amount of glucose in the blood, the more will attach to hemoglobin. The higher your HbA1c level, the poorer your glucose control and the higher your risk of diabetes complications. There are certain conditions that can make HbA1c falsely high or low, in which case a different test may need to be done. Your doctor will be able to recognize these factors. For diagnosis of diabetes, HbA1c of less than 5.7 is considered normal. HbA1c between 5.7 to 6.4 is consistent with prediabetes, and HbA1c of 6.5 or above is consistent with diabetes. You do not need to fast for the HbA1c test.



supernatural life & mindset change



IN HIS PRESENCE

Honor GOD with your LIFE

Suzanne Weegmann

supernatural life & mindset change



IN HIS PRESENCE

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CONTENT

Acknowledgment.....vii

Introduction.....ix

Part 1: Foundation

Chapter 1: IN HIS PRESENCE..... 1

Chapter 2: GOD IS SEARCHING 9

Chapter 3: HEALED RELATIONSHIP..... 19

Part 2: Examples

Chapter 4: ABRAHAM – My Friend 31

Chapter 5: JACOB – My - Fighter..... 39

Chapter 6: JOSHUA – My Leader 49

Chapter 7: GIDEON – My Hero 61

Chapter 8: JESUS – My beloved Son..... 73

Chapter 9: PAUL – My faithful Servant 93

Part 3: Heavenly Inspired

Chapter 10: INTERCESSION..... 105

Chapter 11: FRUIT OF INTERCESSION..... 115

Chapter 12: IT IS YOUR TURN 129

A white dove is shown in flight, wings spread wide, against a dramatic sky. The sky is filled with dark, swirling clouds, and a bright, ethereal light source is visible in the center, creating a halo effect. A faint rainbow is visible in the background. The overall mood is one of peace and hope.

Part 1

FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 1



In HIS PRESENCE

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1.Thessalonians 5,16-18)

*I*n this book we want to look at scriptures and biographies. How did people live their lives in the presence of the LORD? What can we learn from their lives, and how can each of us live in just such a close relationship with our Father in Heaven?

Many believers know those verses very well. The words show us GOD's will and desire for our life. If we look into our own lives or into the body of Christ, many do not live in their full destiny. There is a great difference between what GOD has for us and how we handle our daily life. Do you agree with me? How do we get to this

place GOD has made for us in this noisy world, where everywhere there is a new message to read, something new to hear or speak about?

Have a look at the first words. "Always be joyful." This is not a suggestion; this is a command. Do you know why?

Joy is a great power that motivates us to endure, to break through things, to climb with GOD on every mountain and over every obstacle and circumstance that comes our way. There are many verses in scripture about joy. In Nehemiah 8,10, the Israelites had to work hard to build up their city again and to fight against the enemies who wanted to kill them and burn their city down. Amid all this trouble, where discouragement tried to weaken the people, Nehemiah stood up. He stood up against all depression and confusion. He said something very important:

Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength! (Nehemiah 8,10)

We see that there is no excuse for bad thoughts and the fact that too often the enemy can steal our joy. Perhaps you think, oh, you do not know the things I am confronted with. You are right, and for this reason, I want to share my testimony with you.

I am not the kind of person, that denies problems. For the last eight years I have been a single Mom of two wonderful kids. Now they are eleven and thirteen. When I left the marriage we had built together, I had a job with less income. Night after night nightmares were robbing

my peace and sleep. Questions were torturing my mind. Where would the money come from to pay the bills and debts off? How can I be a good mom and work full-time? How can I get a better job and use my gifts? And as a Christian believer, there is always the question, what does GOD want me to do for his Kingdom?

There were times when I had 10 € per week, to buy our food. All the money I earned went to pay off the apartment, car, bills, debts, and school. And there was emotional torture, to be single for some people is cool; for me it was torture for a long time.

The DECISION is YOURS

In all this, I had to make the decision that circumstances are circumstances, but I have to set my eyes on the LORD.

Robbing joy and peace is the beloved game of the enemy. He will never stop this game unless we decide to leave the circle and no longer give him the chance to hold us back from our heavenly blessings.

This acknowledgement is important for our life with GOD.

*And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away. - And it is impossible to please God without faith. **Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.** (Hebrews 10,38 and 11,6)*

Do you want to please GOD? Do you want to come into his holy presence? The decision is yours. GOD has done everything for you, he gave JESUS for you. JESUS said, "It is done." There is nothing we can do further to

accomplish what he did. It has to be our heart's desire to please GOD and honor what he did for us. No matter how sad your situation is, he has a way for you and a plan for your life. Never give up seeking his face and presence.

It is a pleasure for GOD when we worship him in our darkest hours as King David did. You know for sure that his life was not perfect although it is written that he was a man who pleased GOD.

Let us look deeper into the verses in Nehemiah 8. What did he say in all the negativity around him? Go, celebrate! Wow, we must understand with our heart and not with our mind that joy is a great power; how much more is the joy of the LORD a very great power!

In GOD's presence, we get distance from our circumstances and sorrows. They are not gone, but we get another perspective on them. When we lift our eyes to GOD, and seek his face, we step into the heavenly realm.

Our prayer time should always start with telling GOD how much we love him, and how thankful we are for what he did for us. Tell GOD what He is for you--your thoughts and emotions about him. This gives you the possibility to see how strong your relationship is. The more you can tell him what he means to you, the better you know him.

Our Soul sometimes lies very well, and we think we live so close to GOD. The most important thing in our life with GOD is to be honest, with ourselves and with GOD. As in our daily life, we trust those who are honest with us. It is the same with GOD. We are made in his image. If you want GOD to trust you, start today to be honest with him.

A tax collector came to the temple and prayed a simple prayer.

But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, "O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner." I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 18,13-14)

JESUS makes it clear, what the Father honors is a prayer from a pure and honest heart, just the truth. GOD knows everything about us; he is not interested in rituals or long stories. He wants us to share with him what is on our heart. So be honest with him and tell him the truth; it is unnecessary to brighten up your words when you talk to him.

Why do I say talk and not pray? I want to show you that it is easy to pray, and it is not a stupid, boring waste of time. In the second part of the book, we will look at people who lived their lives so normally with GOD.

This is the perspective for every believer in JESUS Christ. Our relationship with GOD has to become a close friendship, a Father-Child relationship, that is so familiar that you can share everything with him. This is the point when GOD starts to share his thoughts and plans with you, and this is the point where heavenly intercession begins.

GOD is not interested in special rules and man-made rituals, he only wants you to be honest with him.

What GOD makes angry is a religious spirit. JESUS

always confronted people who had a heart of stone but a lot of rules and scripture phrases in their mind. Do you understand why he was so angry about this? He is still angry about people who act in this way!

Those people behave as if they obey GOD, as if they believe in his word, as if they love GOD. In their hearts is no love of GOD; otherwise, JESUS wouldn't have called them whitewashed tombs. People who have only the laws and rules in their mind, give a view of GOD how he never described himself in his word. For this reason, JESUS was so angry with them. Many people search for a loving Father in heaven but get instead a hard and lawful Father.

JESUS said that if we do not gather together the harvest, we destroy it. So many people were destroyed and couldn't come to JESUS because others represented a Father that doesn't exist.

When I came to JESUS, I always prayed that I would know him as he really is. It is still my greatest heart's desire to know more and more how GOD really is. The more you get this desire for your own, the more GOD will open up secrets to you. He will take you to heaven and show you what is necessary for you.

Another aspect is that some people think they could sell GOD's spoken word. I want to tell you, this desire is witchcraft and has nothing to do with GOD and the Holy Spirit. You can't produce a prophetic word, GOD is sovereign. It belongs to him when he gives you a word, a picture, a dream, or a vision. When he gives it, it is always to bring you or the person you are speaking to nearer to the heart of GOD.

There is never rejection, discouragement, or something

evil in it. GOD speaks to his children in a way that they understand him.

When you want to pray for others, always start with honoring GOD as JESUS taught us.

TEACHING about PRAYER and FASTING

When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. (Matthew 6,9-13)

This is so important because we always have our own opinion on how things should work out. If we focus on JESUS and the Father and let the Holy Spirit guide us, we go in the Spirit to a higher place. As I mentioned, you start then praying in the heavenly realm because you do not pray what you feel or think.

In 1 Samuel 16,8, it is written that man only looks with his eyes, but the LORD always looks into the hearts. We can only see things with our physical eyes; this is how we make our decisions most of the time. We judge situations and things on how they look instead of seeking the Father and asking him to give us his view above all.

GOD likes to bring us to a higher place where he can share everything with us. It depends on us if we are

ready to be silent and wait for him. I want to encourage you to seek him and his presence with all your heart; it will refresh your prayer life if you know him well, and it will bring you closer to his will and your destiny.

Dear FATHER in HEAVEN,

I come into your presence and lay down all my desires and questions and sorrows and what is torturing and blowing up my mind. I pray that your Holy Spirit will guide me into the Holy of Holies and that I will know you better and better. You are the only one who is worthy of all praise and honor. Today I make the decision to stay and rest in joy. I will celebrate your goodness no matter what circumstances tell me. I pray that you cleanse my heart with the blood of JESUS so that I can hear and see with my spiritual eyes and ears what is on your heart. JESUS, let me feel what your heart is beating for, I want to know you more and more.

JESUS, in your Mighty Name, Amen.

CHAPTER 2



GOD is SEARCHING

The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2.Chronicles 16,9)

GOD is searching for people who want to hear his voice and obey. Again and again, we can read in different scriptures, that when we are seeking the LORD, GOD gives a direct answer. In some cases, the people were surprised that GOD talked to them or visited them, in others, people were waiting for an answer. In this chapter, I want to show you a few examples where people got their calling from the LORD. You will see that it is something totally personal; GOD is doing it every time in his way and in his time. There is no formula that we can use to step into our destiny.

A GIFT of HOPE

Finding Faith
Behind Barbed Wire



JOHN HORNBECK

The True Story of a World War II Prisoner of War

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Table of Contents

Dedication	iii
Claim Your Free Gift of History	vi
Preface Roy's Story	1
Chapter One "A Different Flavor of Fear"	5
Chapter Two In the Beginning.....	17
Chapter Three Man and Machine	27
Chapter Four Mission Flight Journal	39
Chapter Five In Enemy Territory	49
Chapter Six Will I Ever Sing Again?	59
Chapter Seven Interrogation at Oberursel.....	73
Chapter Eight "My Five-Day Vacation"	89
Chapter Nine "...We Will Shoot You"	99
Chapter Ten The Worst of Times.....	109
Chapter Eleven The Dog Days of Summer	123
Chapter Twelve The Brutality of Man and Nature	135
Chapter Thirteen The Cold March to Christmas.....	147
Chapter Fourteen The Winter of Despair	161
Chapter Fifteen Hell, on Two Rails.....	175
Chapter Sixteen "Deliberately Turning the Screw"	189
Chapter Seventeen On the Edge of Starvation	203
Chapter Eighteen An American Flag in the Stalag	215
Chapter Nineteen "Don't Fence Me In."	229
Chapter Twenty Operation Revival.....	241
Epilogue The Rest of The Story	247
Claim Your Free Gift of Inspiration.....	249
Endnotes	250
Acknowledgments	254

Claim Your Free Gift of History

“A Gift of Hope Historical Timeline”

We would like to offer our readers a gift that could help you place the personal story of Roy Shenkel into historical context.

This free document provides a chronological listing of key events of the World War II European Theater during the period within which “A Gift of Hope” takes place.

This quick reference will help answer your questions, and link major historical events with Roy’s prison camp experience.

To Receive your FREE “A Gift of Hope Historical Timeline” via email
go to

WWW.Bit.ly/JLHGIFT01

(If you are reading the paperback version of this book, copy the web address above to the address line in your browser)

Preface

Roy’s Story

A boy raised a small hand at the back of a classroom at a local elementary school. The teacher standing up front asks: “Mike, do you have a question?”

“Yes. Mr. Roy, did your parachute open?”

Roy, with a big friendly smile, answered: “I wouldn’t be standing here if it hadn’t.”

Roy had just described his B-17 being shot down by a German fighter and passing out after he jumped from the plane. Then, waking up tumbling through the sky wearing a chute that hadn’t opened.

With that perfect prompt from Mike, he resumed telling the class about getting his chute to open and breaking his leg when he hit the ground. And his surprise when he saw a group of children standing in the field where he landed. The camp bread made of sawdust and laced with shards of glass. The hunger and starvation he faced in the prison camps, and the record-breaking cold winter.

He didn’t tell the entire story. Other incidents were too violent for children this age. A member of his crew surrounded by flames just before he jumped. The interrogation camp where Germans put him in solitary confinement to break him. The prison camp guard raising a rifle and pressing the muzzle into his forehead. And the people he knew and suffered with and got close to and who sometimes died.

The story he told this class was the G-rated version. These children were too young for the more horrific details. But they loved his story, and he loved them.

This is the more complete story. It still doesn’t include everything. For example, I have reams of information about his early life and his training, including original documents going back to his first drivers’ license and selective service card. I have left most of that out. At some future time, I will donate these documents to an appropriate museum.

I have intentionally focused this book on Roy's story between April 6, 1944 and May 13, 1945. The day that a German rocket took down Roy's plane, to the day that a different B-17 flew him out of Stalag Luft I as a repatriated American. The dates on the back of his Prisoner of War medal.

I learned Roy's story through many channels. He told me a significant part of his story for two years when we sat and talked about it almost every single day. I would come home and furiously jot down notes.

I pulled details from some journal entries. But, surprisingly, they proved less valuable than anything. He had explained to me that the journals from during his imprisonment could never include the real story, or the German guards would have destroyed them. He said that the same was true of the letters he sent home, designed only to reassure his mom that he was okay.

But the stories he told others were amazing. Hundreds of talks to school and church groups, VFW clubs and community organizations. Some on video. But mostly just general conversations.

A surprise source were silly little scraps of paper with his writing scattered all over his house. Although not meaningful on their own, each scrap would prompt additional conversations. Things like the copy of a scribbled note from a fellow prisoner. Originals of letters he sent home to mom. Curiosities like the one pound note from the Bank of England that had the names of four different people scribbled on it. Fresh stories cropped up everywhere. Even notes scrawled in the margins of World War II books in his private library.

It was my honor to know Roy. I knew him as the father of my wife, Sandra. I knew him as a surrogate father to me, after my father died. I knew him as a friend and a family member. And I served as his caregiver in his later years. During the forty years I knew Roy, it was also my honor to hear and experience the bigger story of his life. So why tell this story?

I'm in a writing group of veterans and family members of veterans in Kansas City. In a gathering at the VFW National Headquarters in July 2019, I presented five hundred words of an early draft of a chapter for this book. One veteran asked a question: "Why write this book? What makes his story different from the

story of every veteran returning from war?" Good question. In fact, a brilliant question. And a question that every author should ask themselves about every book they write. I thought about this, and my answer is layered.

First, I discount one implication of the question. I don't know whether there is such a thing as "every veteran", any more than there is "every woman" or "every man". Each combat veteran has their own story, and each story is different. Made up of their life before going to war, what they endured during war, and their experiences after their return. Even soldiers in the same unit may have different stories because each soldier sees through the unique perspective of his or her eyes.

Plus, there is an additional difference. Many of the books written about the prisoner of war experience focus on what happened. But this story dives deeper. Feelings and emotions. Fear, weakness, depression, loneliness, hunger, thirst, separation, and even a loss of humanity. Plus, in Roy's case: hope, faith, and freedom.

Every person who went through their own special hell would feel and express those emotions differently. So, in my humble opinion, there is no such thing as "every other veteran".

A quick word on faith. For Roy, faith was an extremely important element in his stories. As you will discover in these pages, Roy discovered faith in the German prison camps, and in a most unique way. In fact, he carried the same bible with him for seventy-four years. A bible I still have.

I understand how some people can wonder how you keep faith when so many terrible things happen in the world. Roy's answer was that a stranger brought faith to his doorstep during the most terrible times of his life. That stranger changed his life for the better.

One hope in writing this book is to encourage others to write their own stories, or at least share them with family members. Why? Once the time for this generation passes, we lose them forever. And that will be a loss for all of us.

Roy and I had an odd conversation before his last trip to a hospital. This took place over lunch at a veteran's home, along with another veteran from Korea. When his guest left, Roy turned to me and said, "I'm sorry you've had to put up with me constantly

talking about the war.” At first, I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know what prompted that remark, except that the Korean vet had been sharing some of his memories with us.

I told Roy that I should apologize to him for asking so many questions. Roy just shook his head, insisting that he enjoyed all our talks. And then asked me why I was so interested.

“Roy, I don’t know. Your stories fascinated me. They are laced with so many lessons about life and dealing with hardships. Maybe someday I’ll write them in a book.”

In his usual self-effacing manner, he laughed and said, “Who in the world would want to read about me?” That was about two-and-a-half years ago. My answer? Almost anyone. Including hopefully you.

Chapter One

“A Different Flavor of Fear”

“But one more thing I’ll tell you. A Queen dies hard. She doesn’t want to go, no more than any man inside her. You may not believe this. If you don’t, it’s only because you haven’t been up there, and you haven’t watched combat hardened men cry as a ship goes down; cry as much for the machine as for the men. Because, you see, when ten men claimed her for their own, she was no longer just a machine. She was their bomber. That made her special, and it made her come alive.” ¹

*8th Air Force pilot in post mission briefing
following Schweinfurt raid on October 14, 1943
Mission 115*

April 6, 2017

I woke in a panic, smelling smoke. There is no smoke. No fire.

It’s 1:30 in the morning. I often wake in the middle of the night. Always with a sudden start. I get out of bed slowly. Since I’m in my 90s, it takes a little more time for all the moving parts to work.

My doctors think it’s just me getting up to pee in the middle of the night. So do my friends, and most of my family. As a result, I’ve been prescribed new medications and taken off others. I’ve been told to drink more water, to drink less water, and to never drink after 6:00 at night. None of it helps.

Seventy-three years later and the nightmares won’t stop. Last night was a recurring one. I’m standing near my waist gunner position in a B-17, trying in vain to get my parachute on, surrounded by flames. Often, the dreams fool my brain, and my sense of smell detects something that isn’t there. It’s as if I’m back in that dying plane.

“Roy.” Then a little louder, “Roy. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. Go back to sleep, son.” One of my great grandsons staying over last night.

Endnotes

- 1 John Rodgers, *The Green Lady and Friends: Stories of Warbirds*, (Self-Published, 2016), Page 10
- 2 Quote from video interview of Sergeant Eugene Albert Burlingame. He was at the same training at the Amarillo Army Airfield as Roy. Burlingame's plane was shot down over Berlin. Arriving a little more than a month after Roy did, Burlingame was a POW at Stalag Luft 1 from March 18, 1945 to liberation. This is from the Eugene Albert Burlingame Collection (AFC/2001/001/43898), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Full video at <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.43898/mv0001001.stream>
- 3 Author Unknown, *Axis Nightmare* in "Thunderbird", Volume 1, Number 1, (Tampa, FL, MacDill Field Quarterly, Spring 1943), Page 26
- 4 Roy did not actually keep a formal flight diary. As he told me, even if he had done so, it would not have made it home from the war with him. Any such document would have been confiscated at Dulag Luft Oberursel, and probably be used during his interrogation. Instead, the following is a reconstructed report of what happened during his missions prior to the final mission to Zagreb. It is compiled from the conversations between us, as well as some details from various reports including MACR (Missing Air Crew Reports). Roy reviewed all of this and confirmed its accuracy.
- 5 Norman Bussel, *My Private War: Liberated Body, Captive Mind: A World War II POW's Journey*, (New York, First Pegasus Books, 2008), page 93
- 6 Kay Hughes, *Searching for Stanley: Unforgotten Hero of World War II*, (iUniverse, 2011), page 221 Footnote 21
- 7 Joe Pryor, Progress note for a Jefferson City News Tribune article (Jefferson City, MO, June 4, 2007), Notes on the Miller County Museum and Historical Society. See full notes at <http://www.millercountymuseum.org/091102.html>
- 8 Judgement of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals, Sub-Section titled "Murder and Ill-Treatment of Prisoners of War" under the Section titled "War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity", Nuremberg, 30th December and 1st October, 1945; from. From The Avalon Project at Yale Law School. <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/judwarcr.asp>
- 9 Dr. Robert J Ursano, THE LANCET Extreme medicine, Vol 362, December 2003, www.thelancet.com. Appearing on the internet at <https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673603150623.pdf>
- 10 Roy discovered later that, in addition to Dale Luther, at least three other members of his crew were at Dulag Luft. James Little, Lloyd Powell and William Bagley. However, if they were there at the same time, in that environment of solitary confinement he never saw any of them, including on the train as Roy's group left for Wetzlar.
- 11 Charles G. Janis, *Barbed Boredom: A Souvenir Book of Stalag Luft IV*, (Irvington, NJ, self-published by Charles G. Janis, 1950), page 10. (This was a small book that was in Roy Shenkel's personal library at home. The quote opening this chapter was one of many passages that Roy had highlighted. Roy also made notes in the margins of the book. Those notes often added details to what the author had written. This was one of several older books on this period of history where Roy had written copious notes in the margins.)
- 12 Harry Spiller, *American POWs in World War II: Twelve Personal Accounts of Captives by Germany and Japan*, (Jefferson, NC and London, McFarland and Company Publishers, 2009), page 39
- 13 Gregory Hatton, #1628 / *U.S. Against Germany – Case 1*, Ex-POW Bulletin (Olathe, KS, American Ex-Prisoners of War, August 1992)
- 14 Regulations 462 and 504; Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht, Prisoner of War Department, Berlin-Schoenberg, 31 December 1941
- 15 This tribute to Aubrey Teague was written by Sergeant James Hunter Cox, a ball-turret gunner on a B-24 shot down near Budapest Hungary in May 1944. He was transported to Stalag Luft IV in July 1944 and would have been at that camp most of the time Roy was there, but James was in Compound B. He left the camp on the Black March in February 1945. Quote on page 77 of The Shoe Leather Express by James O'Donnell.
- 16 Colonel Jimmie Dean Coy, *Those Who We Serve: A Gathering of Eagles, Book Four*, (Mobile, AL, Evergreen Press, 2013), page 218. This paragraph is a quote from Roy Shenkel, in *Part 5 – Prisoners of*



BE LEGENDARY

FROM THE
BARBERSHOP
TO THE
ENTERTAINMENT
INDUSTRY

LIVE
YOUR
DREAM

WRITTEN BY
TRACY LOVE

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>1</i>
--------------------------	----------

Section One *Creativity & Inspiration*

<i>Chapter One - Inspiration</i>	<i>9</i>
--	----------

<i>Chapter Two - Why Is Cutting Hair So Special</i>	<i>13</i>
The Hair Industry	
The Barbershop and You	

<i>Chapter Three - Creative Power.....</i>	<i>21</i>
Create Your Flow	
Creative Push	
Healthy Habits	
You Are Who You Surround Yourself With	

<i>Chapter Four - Being a Barber.....</i>	<i>31</i>
---	-----------

Section Two *Navigating Your Career*

<i>Chapter Five - What to Expect in School</i>	<i>41</i>
Barber or Cosmetologist?	
Getting Your License	
Requirements	
State Board	

Chapter Six - The Shop!53

- Creative Ability
- Finding a Shop (Questions)
 - Shop Business
 - Shop Scene
 - Shop Environment
 - Shop Expectations
 - Shop Standards
- Reference: Questions List
- My Experiences

Chapter Seven - Being Self-Employed91

- Building Your Credit
- Medical Insurance
- Accidental Insurance
- General Liability
- Retirement
- Saving Tips
- Pay Your Taxes

Section Three
Beyond the Shop

Chapter Eight - Starting a New Creative

Direction.....107

- Be Mobile or Freelance for the Sports, Music,
Tv/Film or Agency
- Starting a Business
- Marketing
- Branding

Chapter Nine - Hair Shows125

Chapter Ten - The Entertainment Industry135

- Surrounding Yourself with the Right People
- How I Got Started in the Music Business
 - From the Shop
 - To the Industry
 - Sean is my Kanye
- The Most Important Rules
 - Loyalty
 - Separate your personal life and work-life
 - Don't take anything personal!
 - Work Ethics
- Making it work
 - Maintaining Shop and Celebrity Clients
 - Handling the Pressure

Chapter Eleven - The Business Side161

- Understanding Your Value
- Financial Management
 - Setting Rates
 - Invoices
- On The Go
 - Life on Set
 - Housecalls and Travel
- Industry Options
 - Work for Yourself or Get an Agent
 - The Union
- From the Heart

SECTION ONE:

CREATIVITY
&
INSPIRATION

Chapter One

Inspiration

“

*The Highest Human Act
Is to Inspire.*

”

You can take many different routes in the hair industry. Whether you are a new barber or have many years invested. Whether you want to start a business, work in the entertainment industry, join the union for film and television, be a platform artist and travel to different hair shows, work for a specific product company, or even create one! Or maybe you simply want to just work in a barbershop and be the forever-lasting, everyone-knows barber. This is a career that is full of inspiration and opportunity. It all depends on you and finding what you like doing just as much as cutting hair. This book was designed to help you open your mind, line up your goals and get ready to turn them into something you can be proud of. Follow your curiosities...all of them and stick with the one you can't live without. This may take you some time and quite a bit of brainstorming, plus it can be a trial and error trying to figure it out, but this is all to be expected. Remember, overcoming obstacles is normal, it teaches you resilience and every lesson is valuable.

Like me, you may think you have an interest in something, but you discover halfway through it

that you like it, but you don't necessarily have a passion for it, so you lose interest and move on. Or maybe you created something and it didn't get as much attention as you planned, so you lost the excitement and let it go. Don't be nervous or discouraged by this. It's okay to dabble in a couple of things that interest you. This may be the way you take your career to the next level.

For me, I started to create a travel bag to make my life easier when I'm on the move traveling or doing house calls. I shortly discovered that I didn't mind making one for myself, but I knew I didn't want to create a business out of it. People always said I should open up my own shop, but I knew the amount of work it takes to do that, and I didn't have the time. I am not saying never, but I know it is not for me at the moment. I also made an oil for hair and beards that I love using on my clients, and who knows, maybe I'll push for a product line soon, but none of these things excited me the way cutting hair did. I knew once I figured it out, it would be something that I would feel the passion for, and it would be something that I couldn't stop thinking about. After all, there's a bigger goal we all need to accomplish for ourselves to fulfill our ultimate purpose that can teach and inspire other people along the way. Besides, that is what makes the world go around from generation to generation. The things that I have accomplished in my career I really aspired to and worked hard to achieve. I have always been driven to achieve my goals no matter the obstacles. I was undeterred

by the people who didn't believe in me or tried to stop me; they actually made me more focused. I know without a doubt, that if I had let them stop me, I would not be the person I am or be where I am today. And most likely I wouldn't have even written this book. I've learned to always bet on yourself and you will never lose. So, if you have a passion for something you want to do, or bigger goals you want to achieve, believe in yourself and don't let anyone distract or stop you; you can do it!

Throughout my career, it has taken me a long time to figure out what I wanted to do next. I have achieved much success and have accomplished many of my aspirations, but for some reason, I still felt unfulfilled. I knew there was still something that I wanted and needed to do. For me, I had to ask myself some questions and I had to seriously think about what it was that was missing in my life. I knew that once it hit me, I would be instantly inspired and I would know it immediately. It was like I could feel it right there, but I just couldn't put my finger on it. There were a lot of questions that I would often think about over and over again before I figured it out:

What could I do that I would love doing as much as cutting hair?

- * What else could I do that would make myself proud?
- * What could I do to set myself apart from everyone else?
- * What could I do to inspire other people?

* What could I do that I haven't done yet?

Questions like these would just flow in and out of my mind all the time, and more often than not, I could not answer them. I believe it's okay to not have every solution there when you need it; this is what makes us strive for our answers and grow with our intention. Plus, I believe timing is everything, and it is always perfect.

One day, March 31, 2019, to be exact, it finally came to me! Not too many people know the inspiration for this book came from the death of Nipsey Hussle, a modern-day philanthropist. I was so inspired by his tenacity and his mindset. He was such a genuine and respected person to so many people and was always giving back without seeking recognition for it. When he died, people of all classes, cultures, and ages came out and spoke about how he changed their lives. He had so many projects he was doing to encourage the youth and contributed to better his community. Everyone had their own story of what he did for them and why they loved him; he was such an inspiration to me. He made me realize my purpose wasn't fulfilled yet, and in my heart, I wanted to be the same way. I felt like there was something bigger than me that I needed to achieve to ultimately fulfill my purpose here on earth. And although he's gone way too soon, in some ways I feel his purpose in life was fulfilled as the inspiration he left behind will carry on forever through me and others he's touched; that will ultimately serve a greater purpose.

He said something that changed my life and motivated me to write this book:

"The highest human act is to inspire."

I saw this and I thought, He's right. How can I inspire people? What is it that I'm supposed to be doing here to ultimately fulfill my purpose? How can I leave a legacy? How can I reach my full potential? And it came to me—write a book! But honestly, people have told me before that I should write a book, and I always thought, what would I write? And where do I even start? But this time, it was like a light switch turned on, and as soon as I thought about it, all these ideas and thoughts just started flowing in my head. I couldn't stop them and I couldn't write them down fast enough. I was so excited; I felt it in my soul! I knew it instantly, and I couldn't believe that I finally figured it out. It took a lot of work, but Viola! You are now reading it! People ask me all the time how I made it to where I am and what better way to share my thoughts, experiences, and advice than to write a book. However, it wasn't easy. I didn't even know where to start other than to just start, and let me tell you, this was probably one of the hardest, yet most rewarding things I have ever done in my entire life.

I sincerely hope this book inspires you, enhances your creative purpose, and ultimately helps you reach your full potential.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SECRETS

TAKE SHORTER TRIPS, MORE OFTEN, FOR LESS.



MICHAEL WEDAA

the event of your death, losing a limb, hand, foot, sight, speech, or hearing.

Some countries will ask you to provide proof of health insurance as an entry requirement as to avoid the financial burden of medical bills left unpaid by a tourist. Countries such as Cuba offer temporary health insurance at the airport for a nominal fee. Saudi Arabia requires visitors to purchase insurance as part of the online visa application process. If you are traveling for an extended period of time, such as studying abroad, engaging in an internship, participating in a gap year, or simply trying out the expat life, the rules are a little different. Some countries will dictate how much coverage you need if you are staying for an extended period of time. For example, the twenty-six countries in the Schengen area in Europe require travelers to obtain health insurance after their ninety-day tourist visa period expires. Factors that determine the cost of the insurance are insurance limits and deductibles, age of the traveler, and duration of your stay in a particular country or region. For a great comprehensive article on the different types of medical insurance offered, go to <https://www.internationaltravelsecrets.com/travel-tools>.

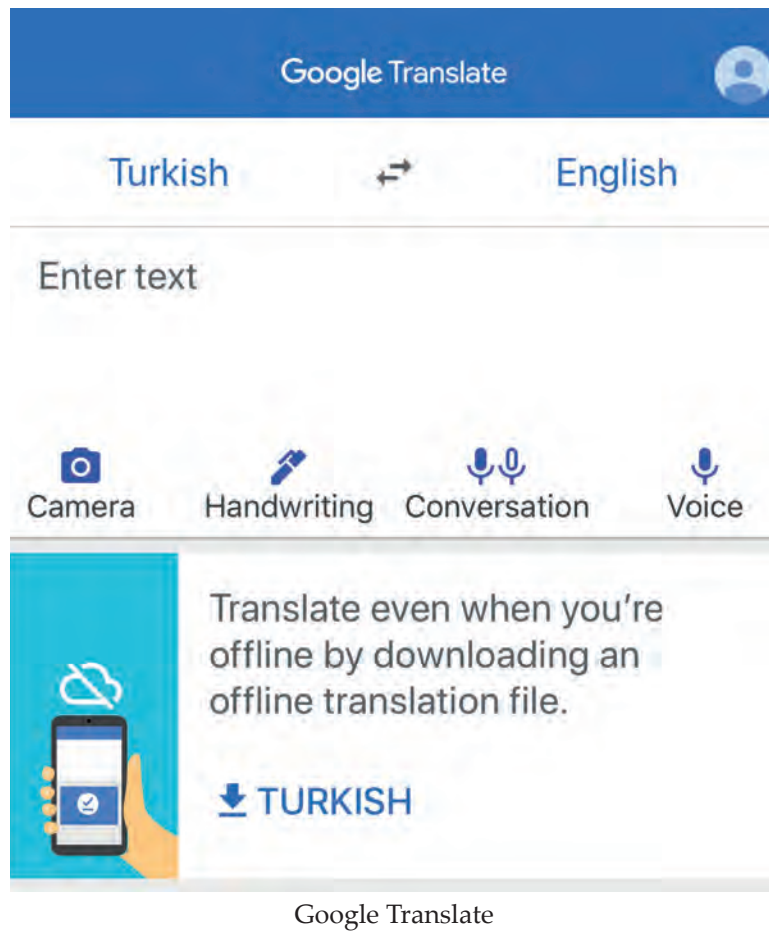
CHAPTER 18

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECRETS

Luckily, there are very few places on Earth where people do not speak some semblance of English. Usually your waiter, hotel clerk, taxi driver, etc. can call one of their coworkers over to translate or answer your questions. While this applies mostly to touristy locations, I have been surprised by the number of people I have found off the beaten path who can communicate in English at least at a rudimentary level. This will not be the case in some Central Asian countries such as the -Stans. Many of those countries were part of the USSR, so unless you are up on your Russian, you will be out of luck. In many parts of West and North Africa, the locals speak French instead of English as there are many former French colonies in the region. I have even had some difficulties communicating in some parts of China and Korea. So what do you do when you are in a situation in which you cannot find anyone who speaks English?

Enter Google . . . again. Google Translate is an app I use often when traveling to these areas. You can type or copy and paste text into the app, and it will translate it into one of over a hundred different languages. Ever sat in a restaurant only to look at a menu in a language you have never even heard of? This is especially difficult if the menu has no photos of the dishes. Google Translate has a function which accesses the camera on your phone, and if you hover your phone over the text of the menu (or sign, or map, or newspaper—you get

the idea), the words are transformed into English. The translation isn't always perfect, but you will get the gist fairly easily. Additionally, the conversation function allows you to speak into your phone, and your phone will translate your sentence into audio and text for the person you are speaking to. I use this with cab drivers, waiters, retail staff, etc. Never again do you have to worry about not knowing the language in a particular country or region.



CHAPTER 19

RANDOM TIPS

Traveling abroad involves more than arranging and booking your tours, flights, accommodations, and means of transportation; navigating the currency and needed documents; and planning your stay. These additional tips will help you further enjoy your stay and your time in the airport.

TSA Precheck vs. Global entry vs. CLEAR

If you plan to travel internationally at all, go Global Entry all the way. Global Entry includes TSA Precheck, and it only costs an additional \$15. TSA Precheck is \$85 for five years and Global Entry is \$100 for five years.

TSA Precheck allows you to keep your jacket, shoes, and belt on while you go through security in US airports. You also do not have to remove your laptop from your carry-on. The TSA website boasts that 95 percent of travelers wait less than five minutes in line. It takes just a few minutes to fill out an online application. You must then schedule a ten-minute, in-person appointment at a local enrollment center for a background check and fingerprinting. Once approved you will be issued a Known Traveler Number (or KTN) which you will have to add when purchasing airline tickets. More than 200 airports and seventy-three airlines provide TSA Precheck. Some airlines will automatically add it to your ticket if you have a frequent flyer account with them and you book directly through

the airline website, not through a third-party site such as Expedia. Also, check to see if any of your credit cards have TSA Precheck benefits. For applications, appointments, or more info, go to <https://www.tsa.gov/precheck>

Global Entry not only includes TSA Precheck but it also speeds up the customs process upon returning to the US on an international flight. Global Entry allows travelers to use automatic kiosks to scan their passports, scan their fingerprints, and complete a customs declaration of what they brought back from their trips. After doing so, travelers receive a printed slip and are directed to the baggage claim and/or airport exit. For more information, go to <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/trusted-traveler-programs/global-entry>

CLEAR, unlike TSA Precheck and Global Entry, is not a government program. It is a private company out of New York that places scanners in the country's busiest airports and even large event venues such as the Staples Center. CLEAR kiosks scan your fingerprints and eyes allowing you to go directly to the front of the security line at airports. The downside is that the cost is \$179 annually as opposed to the five years that the fees of TSA Precheck and Global Entry cover.

Negotiating

Do not be afraid to negotiate taxi fares and souvenir prices. Many cultures won't lend you respect if you don't at least try to negotiate. As with any negotiation, know in advance what your spending limit is or what you are willing to pay for something before you begin. Do not be afraid to walk away. If a shopkeeper or taxi driver keeps following you after you walk away, you are in their ballpark. Be firm yet polite. Also, know your currency conversions. We once walked around for twenty minutes trying to find a cab for 1,000 of the

local currency rather than the inflated tourist price of 2,000. After doing the calculation, we realized that we only saved ourselves \$1 which was not worth the time or the hassle.

When it comes to souvenirs, have a price that you are willing to pay in your mind before you begin the negotiation process. As with taxis, you may need to walk away in order to get a shopkeeper to come down to your desired price. You can always return and offer a higher bid if you really want to purchase the item in question. Personally, I avoid buying souvenirs as they tend to be pieces of junk that end up collecting dust in the garage. I only buy souvenirs that I get tangible use out of. I enjoy using the loose leaf teapot I purchased in Azerbaijan, the hand-painted cigar ashtray from Morocco, or the many t-shirts I have purchased from various locations around the world.

Best times of year to travel

By far the best times to travel are spring and fall. Not only is the weather milder, but destinations are less crowded and prices are lower. I try to avoid summer travel whenever possible since most people travel at that time because their kids are out of school. This causes tours and hotels to be sold out, resulting in a significant increase in price. For example, looking up a hotel in Prague, I see that the nightly rate is as high as \$81 in July and almost half that price at \$47 in May. Flights are also inflated: a one-way flight from Los Angeles to Prague is as much as \$570 in July but is 60 percent less at \$229 in May. In the summer, you can find me at home basking in the AC while planning my next trip for the fall. If your job or family situation only allows for a summer vacation, by all means, do what you have to do. Taking a trip under those circumstances is better than taking no trip at all. Be sure to use the flight booking secrets in chapter 2.

dinner rolled around. This made her understandingly apprehensive when I approached her and went to work with my best Spanish (no doubt with an atrocious accent and horrible grammar). Luckily, one of my clients happened to call me while I was conversing with the hostess. I asked her to speak Spanish to the hostess and tell her that she should meet me after work. I handed the phone to the hostess and they talked for at least ten minutes. The hostess finally agreed. We walked to the beach and up the wall of a fort and talked for a few hours while sitting on a 500-year-old cannon that helped protect the city from pirates in the past. I had such a great time getting to know her and learning about how she grew up. She was a great person, and I still message her to this day. At about 10 p.m., her mother called her and asked why she was out so late. We said our goodbyes and she jumped on a bicycle to hurry home. The following evening, I pulled a passionate all-nighter with another local I met at a bar. That encounter was not nearly as memorable as the first. The point is that you never know what you are going to get. Sometimes you will meet someone you will want to go visit again. I have also met some that have come to visit me in the US.



Proposing to our waitress in Galapagos

TripAdvisor for restaurants

Since Yelp does not work in most other countries, the TripAdvisor app is a formidable alternative. It shows you all of the restaurants in your area, and you can filter them by cuisine. Ratings from other customers can help determine food quality, restaurant cleanliness,

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **FACEBOOK** **ADVERTISING**



How to create **effective ads**,
generate leads and increase Your **ROI**

JESSICA AINSWORTH

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FACEBOOK ADVERTISING



How to create **effective ads**,
generate leads and increase Your **ROI**

JESSICA AINSWORTH

Optimizing Your Facebook Business Page

There are over 2.6 billion monthly active users on Facebook... does your company have a business page?

With over 2.6 billion users, can your business afford to NOT be on Facebook? Building a business page on the popular social media platform is a great way to reach new potential customers - for free. That's right; it's free to create a business page on Facebook. Take your social media marketing to the next level and build a page optimized for success.

Facebook pages help your brand or business promote and share value-added content as well as to assist in customer support. Did you know that two-thirds of U.S. adults report they use Facebook with a whopping 74% of users reporting that they check Facebook *daily*?!

Set yourself up for success on Facebook with these simple steps.

Manage Roles

As a business owner you may want to add team members to help manage your Facebook Business Page. To add team members or edit their roles, simply open the Settings tab from your Business page. From here, click on the tab called Page Roles from the left-side menu.

At the top of the page, you'll see three options: Assign a new page role, page owner and existing page roles. To add a new team member to your Business Page, simply choose the first option. You can use the search bar under

that option to look them up to be either their name or email address.

The roles you can assign to your team members are:

- Admin - Full access
- Editor - Publish content, send Messenger messages, respond and delete comments, create ads, see who posted and view Insights
- Moderator - Send Messenger messages, respond and delete comments, see who posted and view Insights
- Advertiser - Create ads, see who posted and view Insights
- Analyst - Can view who posted and the Insights
- Custom - Must be defined in Business Manager

If you're working with an agency, you may need to assign them the role of Page Owner for them to be able to create ads for you.

If you'd like to edit the roles of existing team members, you can do so in the Existing Page Roles section a bit further down the page.

6 Steps to Optimizing Your Facebook Business Page

1. Select the right type of page
2. Custom username
3. Images
4. Fill out all of your details - Don't leave any blanks!
5. Ensure your contact information is accurate
6. Remove/hide unused tabs

Select the Right Type of Page

When you first create your Facebook business page, you'll be able to choose from a variety of options such as:

- Local business or place
- Company
- Brand or Product
- Public Figure
- Entertainment
- Cause or Community

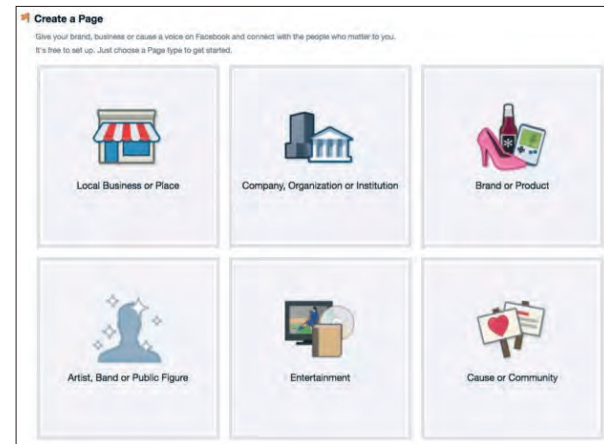


Figure-3

By selecting the right type of page from the onset, it can help enhance the way you communicate the message that your company wishes to show.

Create a Custom Username

You have the ability to create your own username. For instance, on Facebook, the Pendragon username is @

pendragonconsultingllc (so, go follow us!). However, if you'd like something different or want it to match other social accounts who don't offer the ability to be choosy, you do have some flexibility there. We've noticed in some cases that those who don't create a username for their page just don't end up with one at all. So, make sure that you've checked the box and create a custom username for your business page, so you don't end up with a random string of alphanumeric characters for your Facebook slug.



Figure-4

Images

All right. Now, what picture should you post for your business? Your hot new product? The CEO of your company? A staff photo? Logo? While the answer may differ depending on your brand and industry, the majority of businesses favor using their logo. This can really help you create brand awareness and brand recognition for your company. The trick to your profile and the cover

image is consistency. Again, in an effort to foster brand recognition and brand awareness, you want to present a consistent brand across your digital marketing efforts such as social media platforms and on your website.

Fill Out All Your Details - Don't Leave Any Blanks!

All right. This is one of the most common issues we run across when we take over the social media marketing for our clients - either missing or inaccurate information throughout their Facebook business page. Ensure that you input as much as you can into your profile, such as your contact information, set your categories (what industry are you in?), your about section, "our story," and even your open hours. Not only does this help users find you easier, but it also helps to instill confidence in the fact that you're a professional organization, not taking a half-hearted approach. Incomplete or inaccurate profiles may be a negative sign to potential buyers, indicating that you cut corners (though not always).

Ensure Your Contact Information is Accurate

This is not only important so that your potential customers can find you, but also for local SEO purposes. Counting as a directory listing (aka citation), you want to ensure you have accurate information to promote your local SEO and to avoid being downranked. If Google or the other search engines aren't clear on your correct contact information so as to provide accurate information to their users, they may end up downranking your website.

Remove/Hide Unused Tabs

While you won't have the ability to turn off *all* of the tabs, you do have the ability to turn off a bunch of them. If they're not relevant and/or you're not using them, turn them off, so they don't appear on your business page. Just one step closer to having that spiffy, professional page that demonstrates your brand's level of quality.

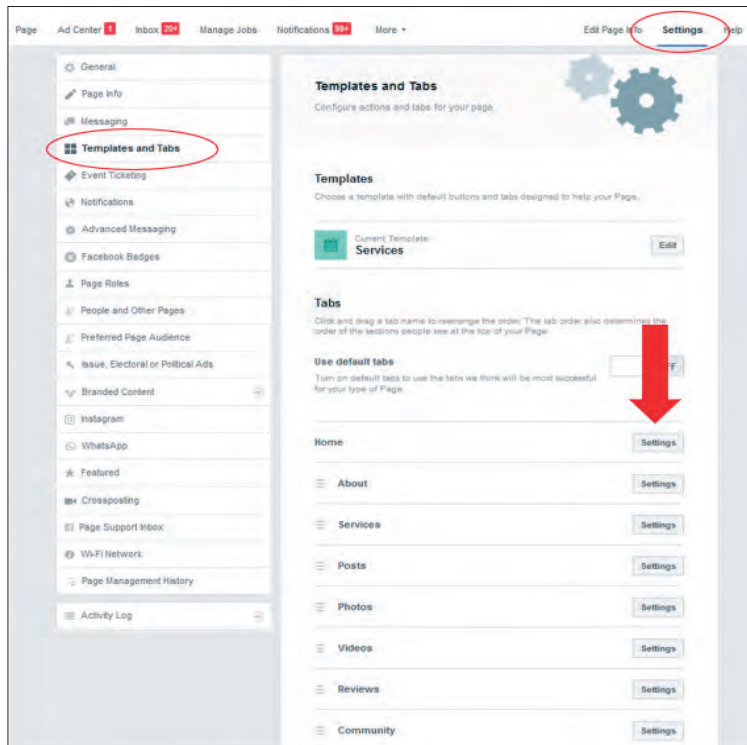


Figure-5

Linking Instagram to Your Facebook Page

Now owned by Facebook, Instagram is yet another free social networking site for you to capitalize on. You have the ability to simultaneously post to both Facebook and Instagram by linking your accounts. You can accomplish this by clicking on Settings from your Facebook Business Page and then clicking on Instagram on the left side menu.

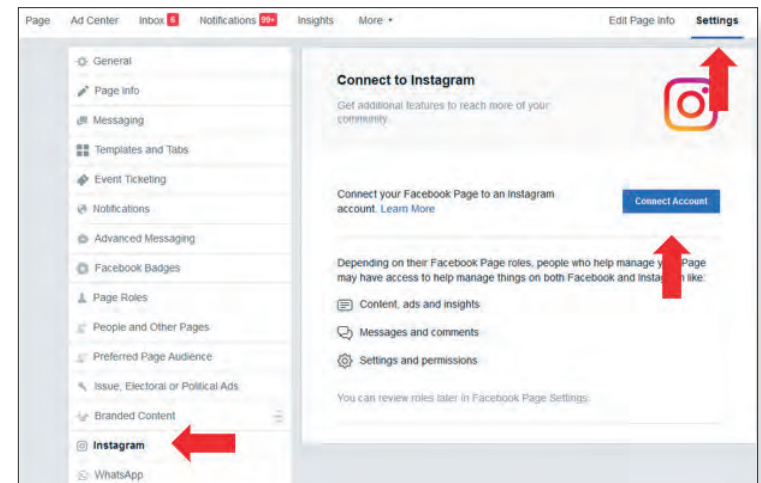


Figure-6

Once you've clicked on the Instagram tab, click on the blue button labeled "Connect Account." During this process, you'll be asked to provide your username and password to login to your Instagram account in order to establish the connection. You may also be asked to upgrade to a business account as many people sign-up initially as individuals and not businesses. That's it. It's really just that simple.

The (un)Lucky Sperm

TALES OF MY BIZARRE
CHILDHOOD



BRETT PREISS

The (un)Lucky Sperm

TALES OF MY BIZARRE
CHILDHOOD

BRETT PREISS

Contents

*It's always funny until someone gets hurt.
Then it is hilarious.*

Bill Hicks

Part I	Seeds of Fate	1
Part II	From Bratwurst to Broken Hill	3
Part III	Snippets of Memory	9
	1. <i>Caught in the Act</i>	9
	2. <i>Wroo Wroo</i>	11
	3. <i>Show Pony</i>	11
Part IV	Praying, Playing and Penance	13
	1. <i>Sister Stephen</i>	13
	2. <i>Birthday Surprise</i>	17
Part V	My Parents	21
	1. <i>Belts, Straps and Tyrants</i>	21
	2. <i>The Hose</i>	24
	3. <i>The Artist Awakens</i>	25
	4. <i>My Own Designer Label</i>	28
Part VI	Brothers, Bullies and Barbarians	31
	1. <i>Stuck in the Middle</i>	31
	2. <i>Boxing</i>	33
	3. <i>Australian Football</i>	35
	4. <i>Easy Target</i>	37
Part VII	First Kiss	39
Part VIII	The Painful Ring	43
Part IX	Behind Closed Doors	49
	1. <i>Who's the Boss?</i>	49
	2. <i>A Christmas Tale</i>	52

Part X	Pets	57
	1. Zoophobia	57
	2. Chatterbox	58
	3. Fishy Business	61
	4. Sandy	63
Part XI	Being Catholic	67
	1. Catholic Primary School	67
	2. Altar Boy	73
	3. Mum, the Heathen	75
Part XII	The Runaway Mother	79
Part XIII	City Cousins	83
	1. Country Mice and City Mice	83
	2. The Sem Tree Park	84
	3. Jack the Clipper	86
Part XIV	Mum, the Nurse	89
Part XV	Hot Santa	93
	1. Christmas Down Under	93
	2. Father Christmas	94
	3. Christmas Surprise	96
Part XVI	Dancing Lessons	99
	1. Dancing Queen	99
	2. Shall We Dance?	101
Part XVII	Piano Man	105
	1. Out with the Old	105
	2. Myste	106
	3. Girls Just Want to Have Fun	109
Part XVIII	Chuckling Laps	111

Part XIX	Puberty Blues	117
	1. What's Going on Down Under?	117
	2. Sucking Face	119
	3. Playing for the Other Team?	120
	4. How Embarrassing	122
	5. Revelation	123
Part XX	The Sperm Leaves Home	127
	1. A Taste of Culture	127
	2. The Caravan	128
	3. The Final Countdown	131
	4. New Year's Eve	135

Part III

Snippets of Memory

1. Caught in the Act

Have you ever wondered why we don't remember being babies? When we're just wee wiggle-bums and bubble-makers, we do recognise and remember who our family members are, to make sure we are safe, fed and bathed. But for some reason we seem to lack episodic memory – details of specific events – until we're about three or four years old. Probably a good thing, really; imagine remembering the sights and smells of your mum's birth canal, the constant reflux over your face and everyone else's clothes, and the taste of your mum's milky boobs. No thanks. I'm glad I can't recall any of that. Those first couple of years were basically spent building my brain, exploring my senses and trying to decode the outback dialect. However, at the age of three or four, as my toddler brain began to bring the scattered pieces together, I developed snippets of memory.

One early memory I have is quite vivid, probably because the incident involved happiness *and* pain; apparently the more senses involved, the stronger the memory. I was about three years old and I was lying on the bright, banana-yellow sofa next to my younger brother, Trevor – named after the actor Trevor Howard. Yes, my mother found it rather challenging to think of names for her little cherubs, so she simply chose the name of an actor or character from whatever she was watching on TV as her waters broke. This seems like a good time to introduce my eldest brother Mick (named after Mickey Rooney from the 1954 film *Drive the Crooked Road*) and my other older brother David (named after David Niven in the 1959 film *Separate Tables*). Bravo, Mum, for originality and lack of any family tradition whatsoever.

I still shudder at the thought of all the other names my brothers and I could have been given, thanks to Hollywood: Bing, Humphrey, Yul, Dick . . . or even Doris.

Back to the living room sofa. Trevor was only a year old and was enjoying his warm bottle of milk while Mum and Dad were busy in the kitchen. I was the third in line of the four boys in the family. (Yes, the middle child; need I say more?) I remember lying there enjoying the TV show – its black and white picture contrasting the Technicolor furniture – but also longing to suck that bottle of warm, delicious milk. I hadn't been weaned off it for very long. I couldn't resist. I pulled the bottle gently out of my brother's mouth and hands, popped it hastily into my own mouth, lay back on the sofa and enjoyed the trickle of something warm down my throat – something I still enjoy today. Warm milk is heaven for a toddler, a pleasure beyond measure. That was until my younger brother's legs began shaking, his fists clenched and his breath started puffing away. This was not a good sign. I turned my head to look at him, the bottle still locked in my mouth, when all of a sudden his face turned red and distorted, like he was about to poop. Instead, he let out a high-pitched scream that didn't quite shatter the front window – though it must have come close – but shattered my eardrums and froze my whole body.

Unfortunately for me, it also ignited my mum and dad, who both dropped whatever they had been doing in the kitchen and came running immediately into the living room.

'What the hell is going on?' shouted Dad.

'Brett's taken Trevor's bottle,' shrieked Mum as she ripped it out of my mouth – with my only tooth still stuck in the teat. She shoved it straight back into my brother's mouth to disable the alarm. 'He needs a bloody good hiding.'

'Little bastard. Get up and come here now!' bellowed Dad.

He yanked me off the sofa and held me dangling in the air by one arm as if he were holding up the biggest fish he ever caught, but with much less pride. My world was spinning

and so was I as Dad whacked my petite bottom. I must have blacked out from the pain as I don't remember anything after that. What I do remember, however, is resenting my little brother for making me lose both my tooth and my taste for dairy products. I also learnt one of life's important lessons: be very careful what you put in your mouth.

2. Wroo Wroo

Most toddlers are put to bed with a cuddly teddy bear or a soft bunny rabbit. Children need these things because as humans we desire peace, security and comfort. It is only natural. These warm, furry companions often replace the gentle love and touch of a parent, because parents are busy people. Hugging them mimics human interaction. It has been well researched for hundreds of years that a soft cuddly toy soothes a child's anxiety and provides a lot of health benefits. Putting a child to bed with a cuddly toy can also provide emotional comfort.

Guess what I had? Well . . . I was put to bed with a hard rubber boxing kangaroo called Thumper. Yep. The one on the cover of this book (it's the one on the right). How bizarre is that? What were my parents thinking?

Like all preschoolers, consonants were a challenge for me and I quickly christened it Wroo Wroo instead of 'Kangaroo'. Desperate for emotional comfort, I took Wroo Wroo to bed each night, hugging it tight. Even though I would wake up bruised, it became my comfort toy, my only friend, the transitional object to replace the mother-child bond. I needed that, because Mum's affections had suddenly moved to Trevor, the new kid on the block.

3. Show Pony

Another snippet of memory from those preschool years – this one a lot more pleasant – was the day my Grandpa Jack came to visit us. Jack was my dad's father, a lovely man with

a huge pot belly and a constant whiff of alcohol around him. It must have been my birthday, as he arrived with a gift for me. Little did I know then that this gift would not only change my life but also keep me sane among the insane. It was a toddler-sized piano and stool. Not the kind with black stripes painted on white keys; no, this gem was a little black grand piano with real black keys that actually played beside the white ones! My stool was the cutest thing ever. It was black with a bright yellow tasselled fringe all around it. The piano came with a little music book with coloured notes and a card with colours to place over the piano keys.

I took to it like a duck to water. I worked out how to play the first few tunes and impressed my parents with my potential talent. For a short time, I was their little entertainer and show pony whenever visitors turned up. It boosted my fragile self-esteem and it did wonders for my middle-child syndrome.

Part IV

Praying, Playing and Penance

1. Sister Stephen

It wasn't long before I had mastered playing all those tiny tunes, with my right pointer finger, from that little music book that came with my toy piano. It wasn't long, either, before I mastered driving everyone up the wall with my endless renditions of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. Mum, Dad and (especially) Grandpa Jack were all musicians, and they could see I had talent for the piano. They all agreed I would benefit from piano lessons, and they all agreed the neighbours would benefit from hearing some new tunes.

Yes, I was well on my way to becoming a piano star. We needed the money. Money was always at the heart of every decision in our household; I believe the first year's piano tuition fees were a Christmas, Easter and birthday present from Grandpa Jack. Thanks, Pops. You may have had hair growing out of your ears and nose, and the teeth of a serial killer, but I will be forever indebted to you for your faith in me as a budding musician; may you rest in the kind of peace I never allowed the neighbours. Mum and Dad apparently agreed they would continue paying after that if I stuck it out and liked it.

Liked it? Seriously? Even when I had nothing else, at least I had Wroo Wroo and my piano. They were all I needed.

Because we were born Catholics, my parents decided to enrol me for piano lessons at the local convent. I really didn't care at that age. I was up for any new experiences and banging away at the keyboard had me hooked. Not even my piano teacher, Sister Stephen – a little old nun with a dark

HOLDING ON TO HOPE



Finding the 'New You' after
a Traumatic Brain Injury

NICOLE YEATES

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a Traumatic Brain Injury**

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Holding On To Hope:

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ISBN: 978-0-6489949-0-9

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: How it Was	5
<i>Life before my brain injury</i>	
Chapter 2: A Once in a Lifetime Purchase	11
<i>The night everything changed</i>	
Chapter 3: My Near-Death Experience	21
<i>Secrets from the other side</i>	
Chapter 4: Yeates or Yates.....	29
<i>A double tragedy</i>	
Chapter 5: My Slow Awakening.....	39
<i>Climbing out of the dark</i>	
Chapter 6: Creating a New Reality	51
<i>The challenges after discharge from hospital</i>	
Chapter 7: Rehabilitation in Australia	61
<i>Sent to a special school</i>	
Chapter 8: Return to an Altered Reality	65
<i>Trying to be 'normal'</i>	
Chapter 9: Final Year of High School and Further Study	79
<i>Planning to beat the odds</i>	

Introduction

Chapter 10: My Accident, the 'Gift' That Keeps on Giving.....	87
<i>Adapting to change</i>	
Chapter 11: The Challenges of Work as a Rehabilitation Counsellor.....	95
<i>Developing the tools you need to manage independently</i>	
Chapter 12: Managing Life with a Brain Injury & Tools to Improve Your Life	105
<i>Learning skills and using resources to increase your productivity and reduce your frustration</i>	

This book is written with a solution-focused framework specifically for people who have suffered a brain injury and for their carers or support persons. I have based it on my lived experience with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and 33 years of trial and error that have helped me navigate towards a productive and fulfilling life. Throughout this book, you will discover strategies for managing many of the barriers commonly associated with a TBI or acquired brain injury (ABI), such as short-term memory and concentration issues, fatigue, isolation, and coping with a negative prognosis.

If you are the carer or support person for someone with a brain injury, this book will also provide you with strategies to proactively assist the brain-injured person during the acute and non-acute phases and to advocate within health care systems, while also taking care of you.

A severe brain injury at age 16 transformed my life forever. My medical team did not expect me to live, and even if I did, they predicted that I would never talk or walk again. The term in the '80s was 'vegetable', a label that nobody chooses. After my accident, my personality became extroverted and socially inappropriate. It was difficult for me to engage emotionally, and I trusted everyone. My ability to distinguish between good and not-so-good people was non-existent for years after

my accident, and I had to relearn how to do everything. I am still learning, but my filter for sorting this information has improved.

The people referred to in this book are mostly referenced by first name only because some of them are not a part of my life anymore, and I do not know if they would want to be included in my story. One consequence of brain injury is that your friends and family, and all who knew you, need to relate to or even love a 'new you'—the person they once knew but can no longer recognise because you have changed. Your brain chemistry is now different, and injury to the brain can cause significant personality and behavioural changes on many levels. Not all of your friends will be able to cope with those changes. If you are caring for a person with a brain injury, there may also be people who walk away for their own reasons. In my case, many did walk away. For me, that was one of the hardest parts of the journey. Hope for something better kept me going.

I have summarised some of the key learning strategies at the end of each chapter (from Chapter 4) and included some proactive strategies at the end of this book. This will help manage many of the commonly experienced barriers and limitations that can result from a brain injury. These are strategies that have worked for me and for many of my clients within their occupational rehabilitation journeys. Acquired injuries result in having to navigate life differently and find the 'new you'. I promise that if you commit to improving your

current situation and the challenges associated with brain injury by using the memory strategies and tips included in this book, you will increase your ability to reach your potential. My message is one of hope: hope that you will not give up trying to make the most of this precious life and that your best self will emerge, no matter the circumstances. When you hold on to hope, you can find a way. You can use the strategies in this book to enhance your life, and they will help you create the 'new you' on your own terms. Reading this book may be one of your first challenges in working towards improving your memory and concentration, so let's get started . . . one step at a time, or one page at a time.



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SPEAKING to SEX

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IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP,
SPICE UP YOUR SEX LIFE,
AND CREATE
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SHAUNA HARRIS



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Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Time For Some Changes.....	5
Chapter Two: Communication Is Where It's At.....	13
Chapter Three: What is Effective Communication?.....	25
Chapter Four: Put Down The Boxing Gloves.....	37
Chapter Five: Asking For Help.....	67
Chapter Six: Types of Intimacy.....	75
Chapter Seven: Date Night.....	89
Chapter Eight: Sexual Satisfaction	97
Chapter Nine: Stay Curious.....	117
Chapter Ten: Sex Does What?.....	125
Chapter Eleven: Initiating Sex.....	131
Chapter Twelve: Seven-Day Challenge.....	137
Conclusion	149

Chapter 2

Communication Is Where It's At

"Lack of communication can ruin the best of intentions."

Shauna Harris

I've read and heard many times in my life that it takes money to make the world go around. I understand what is being said here, that money is in fact the general medium of exchange but does it make the world go around? I have a different perspective here. If I had to choose a better substitute for what I believe makes the world continue to spin, it would be communication. There is not one single exchange that occurs on this planet successfully without some form of communication.

Communication, when done in an effective and intentional manner, can turn even the darkest of situations into a myriad of colors. Working with couples and learning through my own experiences have opened my eyes to the extreme importance of communication in the long term success of marriages and relationships. Even the strongest and closest of couples will not survive without a continuous effort in the communication department.

Life throws curve balls at a rapid rate of speed sometimes. If we have difficulties in being vulnerable and sharing what is going on in our inner worlds, the foundation that we have been making an effort to build to-

gether will crumble and fall. As individuals, we have the intrinsic need to be heard, to be loved, to be supported, to feel safe, and to be accepted.

Committing to a relationship means that making sure these needs are heard and met are a very important part of our job requirements. We have essentially signed on the dotted line to show up for ourself and for our partner. Just as in any other agreement that we make, we do it, we fulfill our promise, no questions asked! Well, that is not actually true in this situation at all. There should be, and definitely needs to be, a never-ending, steady stream of questions between the two of you until the day you are deceased. Do not allow your “Curious George” gene to ever get lazy. Never stop asking questions or being curious about your partner or spouse.

I am going to share with you some tips and strategies that you will be able to use right away. How would it feel to be totally heard and understood by your partner? How would it be for you to feel like you are on the same page with your partner? What would your relationship look like if communication with your spouse or partner wasn’t a constant challenge but rather something you both did and both enjoyed together? What if you were able to feel safe to be vulnerable? What would your relationship look like if needs were expressed freely without fear or reluctance? Take a minute to envision what that would and could be for you and the person whom you have chosen to go on this journey called “life” together.

Now that you have a picture in your mind of what things could look like, let’s dive in. It is time to expound upon how you can implement a few simple strategies and tips that will actually get you the kind of relation-

ship that you are striving for. You and your partner will be able to use these strategies and tips successfully for the rest of your lives.

Why is Communication So Important?

I would say that the most common reasons clients come to me to work through and resolve in their sex lives are:

1. Communication struggles
2. Mismatched sexual desire
3. “Boring” sex lives

What they don’t realize is that all three can be vastly improved with one decision. Do you want to improve your sex life? Obviously, you are reading this book so the intent is clear. When clients come to me, they have decided to seek some guidance but that decision needs more than just an, “Of course I do!” Making the decision is the easy part: you need to commit to the process; you need to be prepared to do the work. Nothing is more frustrating than when people want to make a change but don’t put in the work. I am going to give you all of the tools to be successful. You just need to add the intention, effective communication, and the commitment to take the steps to achieve the goal that you and your partner set.

I was in a long term marriage for over eighteen years and so you would think that I would have had my communication game on point. *I did not.* Communication was not a welcome guest at our table. It was done when absolutely necessary and it never was deeply connecting. I was a perfectionist and avoided ruffling feathers; I wanted to make things appear as though they were “good” at all times, even when they weren’t.

I sacrificed what was happening inside myself—my feelings, my needs, my dreams for an unrealistic and unattainable goal. When you don't speak out and make this a routine practice in your relationship, the expectation of you not having anything to say becomes the norm. And because feelings are fluid and are ever-changing, this was a ridiculous norm to accept.

A relationship needs to be a safe place to fall, a safe place to be raw and real and unapologetically you, without judgment. Even if there are reservations or uncomfortable spots that make it difficult to open up, these can be worked on and ironed out. Expecting hurdles in our relationship is reality and so if we know what to do when we trip over life or fall flat on our faces, it will be much easier to get up and recover with grace, and hopefully, a little more wisdom going forward. We were created to connect and connecting means sharing and trusting and supporting and accepting one another through our journeys.

Now, years later, I find myself in a completely opposite kind of marriage. It is one where communication is not only the norm, it is expected and expected on the daily. I found this to be such a weird and alternate universe at first. I was super skeptical and often internally questioned my husband's intentions, "Why do you want to know how I am feeling? What do you really want or what are you really after?" Coming from a place of fear, I often asked myself, "Does he have some weird underlying motive? Why is he so interested in what I have to say or what I think all of the time?"

It has been so interesting to me to be in a relationship where communication is expected and encouraged and feelings are shared whenever they come up. This normality was so different and challenging to me at

first. I questioned the intention behind the willingness to be so vulnerable. I found it to be so intriguing, yet incredibly overwhelming that someone would be so eager and so honest with what was going on behind the mask. And this wasn't a one-time deal or a short time thing either. I thought it would fade or get old after a period of time too but *nope!* My husband shows up for me every day and is genuinely interested in me and what is going on with me, both in my mind and in my heart. *What?*

I have now come to realize that this, this is what a healthy relationship looks like. I have heard this said and read it many times before and I am not sure exactly who said it but, "You end up with the people who you need, not necessarily the ones you think you need." I didn't think I needed to be held accountable for my vulnerability. Who knew? Something that I steered clear of and hid securely behind a brick wall was one of the most important things that I needed to learn.

Feeling safe to be vulnerable was an Everest for me to climb but my partner was so supportive and so willing to work within my timeline that the walls just continue to crumble. It is so much easier to just let go and express myself. The shared feelings that come along, are so strong and bonding, that they are truly life changing in relationships. Communication builds the trust we need to feel that desired sense of safety to allow ourselves to be vulnerable. I grew up thinking that being vulnerable was such a weakness and who wants to be perceived as weak? Not me, not ever. Through my inner transformation, education, training, and working with couples I now see the people who choose to be vulnerable often have super hero capes draped around their necks or an immense stamp of courage across

safe environment. The key here is to lead with your feelings. Why do we want to do this? Well, when you are vulnerable with your partner and begin conversations that are not accusatory, the defensive reaction is less likely to present itself.

We can also control the use of a well-timed and sincere apology. The power of this little beauty is seriously underrated. I didn't realize the potency and the weight that a simple, "I'm sorry" holds until my second marriage. I don't remember hearing those words very much at all until then. It wasn't a phrase that was typically used in a sincere way, so the power of it was lost on me until I learned otherwise. We all mess up therefore, we all need to apologize. The power that is packed into that little phrase isn't just the words though, it is the actions that follow. If we apologize for a behavior that continues and there is little effort to change, the apology loses its validity and creates a breach in trust. I do understand that changing behavior is a process sometimes and it needs time and effort but if there is integrity, intention, and a genuine effort to change then there will be change.

Emotions

When you are trying to connect with your partner, it is crucial that you lead with relevant emotions. Yes, you may be feeling frustrated, disappointed, even resentful but if you were to dig deep into those emotions and look behind them you would find the core emotions, or the root of what is coming up for you. Emotions can be divided into two categories:

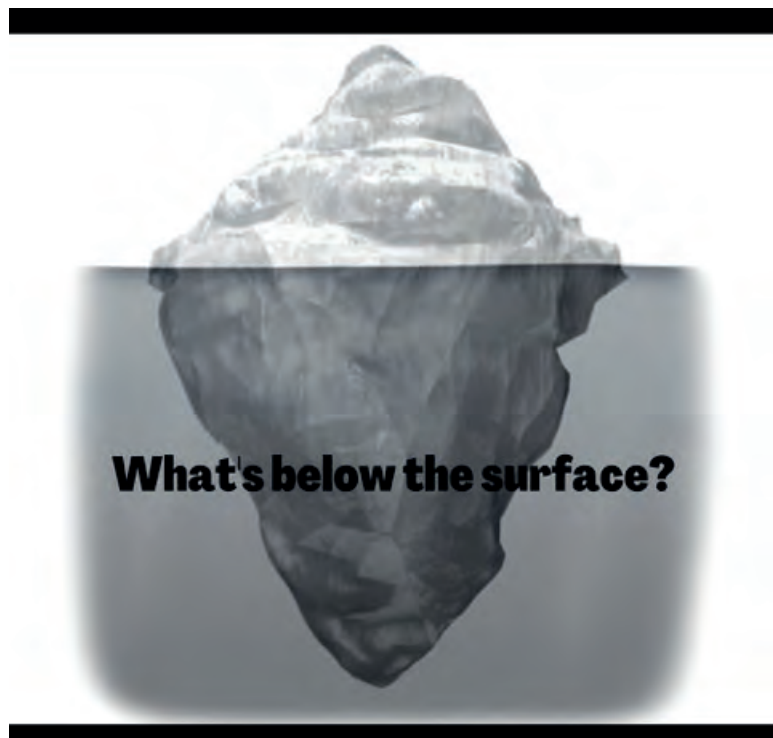
- 1. Primary
- 2. Secondary

Primary emotions are instinctive, whereas secondary emotions are more intense, usually longer-lasting and come right from the heart. We tend to see and feel the primary emotions first and run with that feeling. If we take the time to examine this, we can really understand what is under those initial fiery feelings. When anger rears its head for instance, yes, we are mad. We might even be furious, but if we can take a breath and sit with that anger for a minute, we will come to understand that the anger really is something more.

When we get into this habit of being responsive, as opposed to reactive, our communication skills become a lot more connecting and effective. So, we initially feel angry but after some self-reflection, we come to realize that we really feel disappointment, rejection, and maybe just downright loneliness. These are emotions that foster compassion and vulnerability in the very ones that we are trying to connect with. Some refer to primary emotions as surface emotions because it is what is seen on the surface, whereas secondary emotions are found at a deeper level. Take a look at the chart below.

PRIMARY EMOTIONS				
anger	fear	sadness	joy	love
SECONDARY EMOTIONS				
frustration	happiness	vulnerability	shame	
disappointment	shame	satisfaction	pride	
guilt	optimism	trust	depression	
enthusiasm	jealousy	hope	peace	
depression	confusion	regret	lonely	
pride	anxiety	confidence	satisfaction	

Sometimes the visualization of an iceberg works to illustrate this as well. Take a look at the photo here. What you see above the surface isn't the entire picture. There is always a whole lot more going on under the surface and if we aren't careful navigating around the iceberg, we might end up running into it. If we react to a primary emotion, it is very likely going to be a defense strategy that we will grab to combat the situation and protect ourselves. If we are approached with a secondary emotion, the tendency to show up with compassion, understanding, and kindness is a lot more probable. As with all icebergs and emotions, there is so much more than what we initially see. When we take the time to uncover what is beneath the surface, then and only then can we understand what the real issue is and where it is or might be coming from.



To sum this up and make sure we are all on the same page here, when we react, know that we are coming from our survival mode. It's fight-or-flight time and we might regret some of the actions we take or the words that we say. When we stop and breathe and allow ourselves a little more time to respond, we are coming from a more well-thought out place, our conscious mind. Goleman (1995) refers to this as emotional intelligence.

We have been programmed since we were born to do things a certain way and chances are we haven't changed much since our early years. The way we brush our teeth, the way we go through your morning routine, the way we tie our shoes, eat a sandwich, or the way we prepare our coffee or tea. We are very programmed individuals who thrive on routine. Even when those routines aren't working for us anymore we tend to fall back into the same patterns. Guess what? What isn't working for us needs to change. The sex life that has fallen into a rut or has become routine, needs to be switched up. What needs to change is the way we communicate with our partner. It isn't getting us where we want to be, and isn't resulting in the outcome that we want. You can do this by incorporating the changes above that I mentioned in your communication pattern and you can also do this by getting into the habit of using your conscious mind as opposed to your subconscious mind.

When we are in autopilot mode, we are using our subconscious mind. Have you ever pulled into the driveway and thought, I don't even know how I got home? I am sure we all have. It is just habitual, we have done it so many times that, it comes naturally. We need to snap ourselves out of our patterned behaviors to move

LOOK AT THAT!



Discover the Joy of Seeing
by Sketching

BOBBIE HERRON

Look at That!

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Illustrations and photos by Bobbie Herron

Edited by Wayne Purdin

Cover by Cutting Edge Studio

Sketchbook image by aopsan/Freepik.com

Formatting and typesetting by Black Bee Media

Published by FreedomWeavers Studio Press

Because this book is a celebration of the joy of seeing,
the font style, size, and ink color were chosen
with accessibility in mind.

ISBN: 978-1-7358730-0-8

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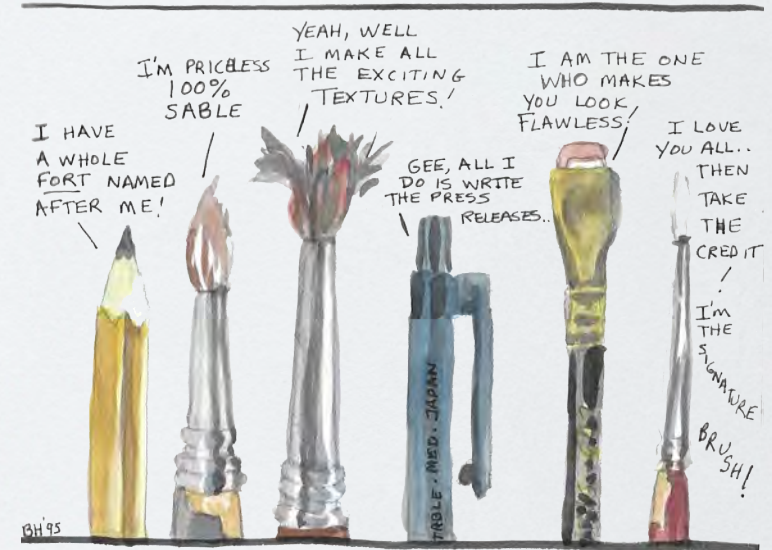
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue- Before you begin	5
Bare-Bones Quick-Start Guide	6
- Basic tools, warm-ups, and go!	
Curious questions and a promise	9
- Why bother, and why a sketchbook?	
Chapter 1- Simplest tools	13
- Part 1: Essentials: sketchbook, tools, accessories	
- Part 2: More about your tools	
Chapter 2- Sketchbook launch time!	27
- Design your sketchbook with me	
- Test-drive your new tools	
Chapter 3- Warm-ups for your hand, eyes, and brain	39
- Warm-up ideas	
- Learning to see better	
Chapter 4- Let's head out to sketch!	45
- Focus—draw—paint	
- Gallery of fun approaches	
Chapter 5- Ongoing inspiration	61
- Inspiring words	
- Essential Supplies Checklist	
- The Infamous Purchase Order	
- Aloft-With-Inspiration Store	
- Favorite People, Books, Resources	
Epilogue	68
- Acknowledgments, About the Author, Next Steps	

CHAPTER 1

SIMPLEST TOOLS



SIMPLEST TOOLS

KEEP YOUR TOOLS AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE.

There is an abundance of “how-to-sketch-paint-draw” books available right now. If you’re new to this marvelous pastime, the last thing you need is a deluge of details.

Instead, I’m going to hand you the same simple tool kit that my students used, containing only a handful of items and a small sketchbook, all tucked into a rugged zipper bag. With the Sketchbook Adventure Kit, people of all skill levels use the same simple tools for sketching indoors and outdoors. You never outgrow them.

THIS “SIMPLEST TOOLS” CHAPTER HAS TWO SECTIONS:

The “*Essentials*” section introduces you to the Kit ingredients.

Following “*Essentials*,” you’ll see the “*More about...*” section. Here, you’ll learn why sketchers and watercolorists make various choices regarding papers, drawing materials, and paints.

REMEMBER: THERE IS GREAT POWER IN A SIMPLE KIT

I can’t stress this enough. The fewer supplies you bring along with you, the more time you’ll have to pause, ponder, gaze, then begin sketching. You won’t waste time wondering which pen to use because you were smart enough to only bring two, not twelve.

Your most expensive art supply is Time. Use it wisely.

THE SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURE KIT ESSENTIALS

THE SKETCHBOOK

SIZE:

About 5.5" x 8.5" is good to start (also called “A5” size)

I like portrait layout—more about why later.

NUMBER OF PAGES:

Not too many! You want your sketchbook to be relatively lightweight and very portable, about 30 sheets (60 pages.)

PAPER WEIGHT/THICKNESS/COMPOSITION:

So many variables, so confusing! Basically, all you need to know is that the paper should be heavy enough to tolerate controlled amounts of water, but not so heavy that it becomes precious and intimidating. (You want it to be heavier than copy machine paper, lighter than cardboard!) Look for something labeled “watercolor” or “mixed media” if you plan to use watercolor too (and I hope you do!).

With watercolor, you’ll have better luck with paper made of rag (cotton, etc.) and not wood pulp (cellulose). Crazy, right? But there’s a good reason for it. (Google why and see for yourself!)

For your Sketchbook Adventure Kit, I recommend:

*Travelogue Artist Watercolor Journal “Large Portrait”
size (8.25" x 5.5")*

DRAWING TOOL ESSENTIALS

(Never forget, you can go a long way with the back of an envelope and a stolen pen. Or upgrade to a simple sketchbook and said stolen pen.)

THE SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURE KIT 6 DRAWING TOOLS ARE:

2 water-resistant pens (waterproof, permanent)

The ink doesn't "bleed" when you paint over it

Fine: Uni-ball Roller Micro (or any fine-liner), black

Bold: Bic Cristal 1.6mm ball-point pen, black

2 water-soluble pens

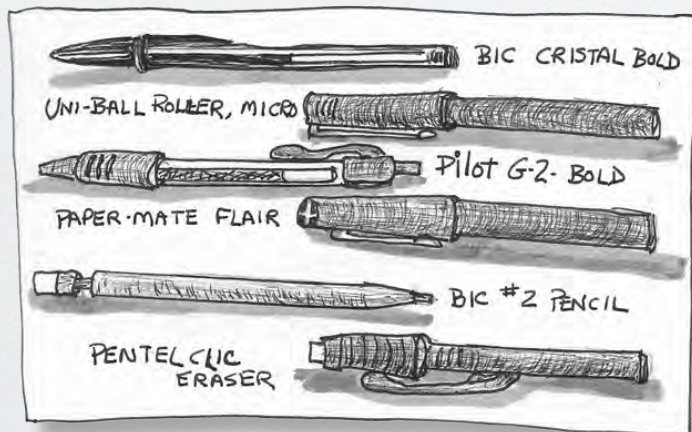
The ink "bleeds" when wet, and we use that to our advantage!

Gel Bold: Pilot G-2 Bold gel pen

Felt-Tip Bold: Paper Mate "Flair!" 0.7mm (not fine point)

1 pencil (preferably mechanical and cheap)

1 Pentel Clic™ eraser



PAINTING TOOL ESSENTIALS

THE SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURE KIT WATERCOLOR PALETTE IS:

Winsor & Newton Cotman Sketcher Pocket Box™

THE SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURE KIT 5 PAINTING TOOLS ARE:

1 round brush: size 6 or 8, good for a small, A5 size sketchbook

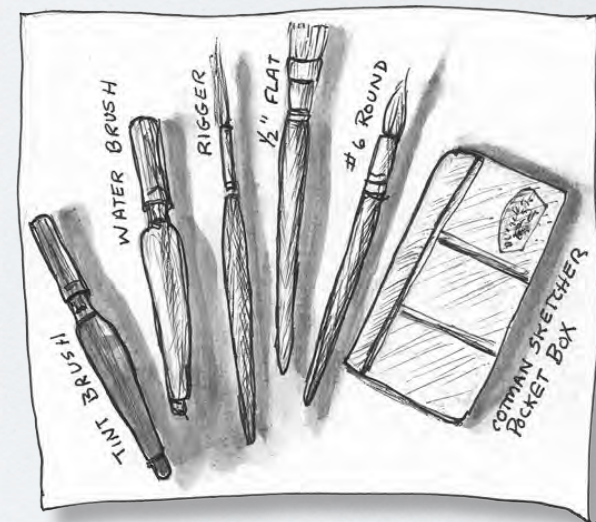
1 flat brush: 1/2"

1 rigger brush: optional, but such fun later

2 Aquash™ water brushes: one for use with just water, one for when you create a DIY tint brush

A NOTE ABOUT BRUSHES

Buy decent brushes that aren't so costly that you never use them, yet not so economical that they don't hold water well or don't come to a good point when wet. Make sure they are designed for watercolor.



ACCESSORIES ESSENTIALS

Collapsible cup or mint tin to hold water while painting

Small sponge to soak up excess water on the brush when painting

Wrist sock is just the cuff chopped off an old ankle sock. The same purpose as the sponge, wear it on your non-dominant hand wrist so you can quickly dab excess water off your brush when painting.

Tissues for dabbing, not crying!

Viewfinder: This helps you to pause and look for an interesting composition before you sketch. Make it from an index card and tape it inside the back of your sketchbook. (More on that later.) You can also buy a fancy one (see Purchase Order at the end of this book.)

The Sketchbook Adventure Kit sturdy zipper bag is:

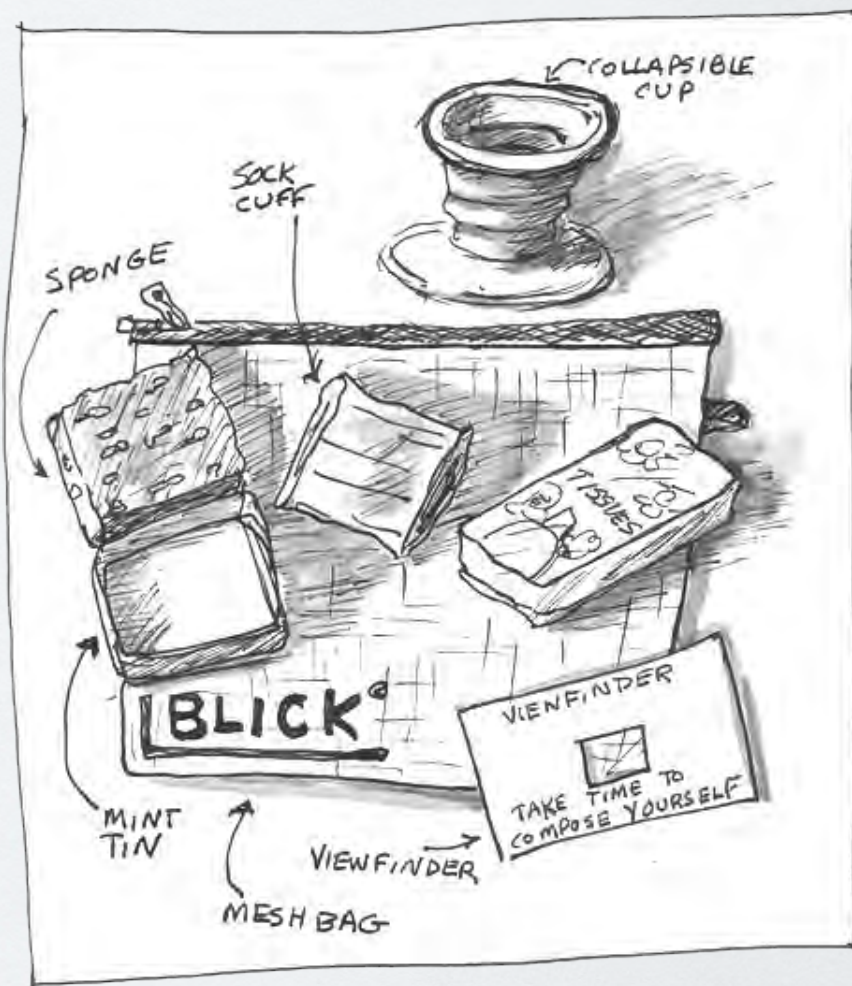
Blick™ Mesh Zipper Bag 7.5" x 9.5"

This durable bag holds all your supplies, including your sketchbook, so you're ready to go at a moment's notice.

Water bottle: (not in picture) for painting and for refreshment!

A timer (perhaps your phone):

It's surprising how helpful it is to use a gentle timer. It helps you pace yourself, so you know roughly when to pause or even stop. I like setting mine for 20 minutes for a small sketch.



"Truly inspirational – this book takes you on a courageous journey of looking inside, so you can be the kind of leader you were meant to be."

– Don Miguel Ruiz, Author of The Four Agreements

LEADING *with* GRIT

*Inspiring Action and
Accountability with*

**GENEROSITY RESPECT,
INTEGRITY AND TRUTH**



LAURIE SUDBRINK

● CONTENTS

PREFACE	xi
WITH GRATITUDE	xiii
INTRODUCTION	xvii
CHAPTER ONE	
<i>Freedom to Choose</i>	1
The Choice is Yours	2
GRIT® Self-Awareness Assessment	10
 PART I GRIT®—The Foundation	
 CHAPTER TWO	
<i>Truth — The Core</i>	17
Out of Touch	18
Where Does Our Truth Come From?	20
Becoming Aware	22
Prevent Ego from Interfering	24
There Are Many Paths to Find Your Truth	25
Look Objectively	28
It's Your Choice	29
Change Your Story	31
What Do You Want in Life?	32
Change Your Thoughts	33
The Impact of Truth	35
What SHIFT Will You Make?	37

CHAPTER THREE

<i>Integrity — Aligning to Your Truth</i>	39
Awareness, Intent, Attention	41
Your Actions Influence Others	45
Time Can Be On Your Side	48
Choices That Keep Us Whole	49
Competing Priorities	50
Accountability Is an Act of Integrity	52
It's Not about Being Perfect	55
Truth + Integrity = Trust	57
Why Do People Lie?	58
What SHIFT Will You Make?	61

CHAPTER FOUR

<i>Respect—It's a Two-Way Street</i>	63
Be Selfish	64
Consider Others	66
Ego in Disguise	68
What Information Are You Filling In?	70
Remain Open	73
Respect Other People's Choices	75
Accept It, and Let It Go!	76
Believe in Your People	78
You Can't Demand Respect	81
Bumps in the Road	82
Respect Your Journey	83
What SHIFT Will You Make?	84

CHAPTER FIVE

<i>Generosity—The More You Give, the More You Get</i>	85
---	----

Pay It Forward	86
Let It Flow	89
Overly Generous	91
Finding Purpose	95
Generosity at Work	97
And Now, the Rest of the Story	98
What SHIFT Will You Make?	100

CHAPTER SIX

<i>The Key to Efficient Change</i>	103
Overcoming Obstacles	105
The Five Steps of Change™	106
What SHIFT Will You Make?	118

PART II Communicating with GRIT®

CHAPTER SEVEN

<i>Can You Hear Me Now?</i>	121
Barriers	123
It Takes More Than Your Ears	125
Understand the Why	126
Empathy	128
Choose When to Listen	130
What SHIFT Will You Make?	131

CHAPTER EIGHT

<i>What Message Are You Sending?</i>	133
Speak Their DiSC® Language	135
Actions Speak Louder Than Words	137
Choose Your Words Wisely	138

THE KEY TO EFFICIENT CHANGE

Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you don't belong.

—Mandy Hale

I remember one of the company's vice presidents saying to me, "That's just management theory—no one does that in practice." I was asking him about one of the classes I was taking; the subject was change management. At the time, something didn't sit right with me, and only a few years later, as I went on to study change and worked with dozens of companies, training and developing people, I could see clearly that that VP and the rest of his team should have read the book from my management class! Too late for that company—the management team's resistance to change caused its demise. Yes, they made some changes—they remodeled, they changed accounting systems, they spent money on incentivizing people to be creative—but they didn't change their thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs, so they didn't change the way they did business. Naturally, people resisted the change. I'm not sure if they ever realized in hindsight what went wrong. Sadly, that's an all-too-familiar story many have witnessed.

It's either go forward, change, and grow or be stagnant, go backward, and die. That's what happens if we don't make the changes that are necessary for our companies or for our lives. This is the crossroad: Do you want to change or not?

Heraclitus, the self-taught pioneer of wisdom (c. 535–c. 475 BCE), knew then “The only thing that's constant is change.” Change is happening all around us today, arguably at a more rapid pace. Sometimes we don't choose the changes—recessions, bad weather, death—and we find ourselves resisting. Other times we feel more in control because we are driving the change: going to college, getting married, selecting a new job, making a move for a better quality life. You know what the difference is between the two? Our thoughts and beliefs. We tend to resist things that happen to us and accept the things we're in control of.

Any way you look at it, change is growth. Change stretches our brains, and our brains actually love the exercise of change. It's what keeps us young and happy, if we embrace it rather than resist it.

You can change your thoughts and beliefs about change. Think of change as improvement, and no matter how painful, believe that it is always leading to something better. Those first few days when you start working out and your muscles are screaming—you know it's leading to something better. It may not always feel that way, but trust in the laws of nature and remember how much our thoughts and beliefs control us. “Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change,” said Jim Rohn.

Okay, we all know that stuff happens! When something happens that you find yourself resisting, remember to stop and say,

“I chose this; I want this,” even if you don't believe it and even if it sounds crazy. Remember, your mind is a tool. Convince your mind that you chose the change, and you will feel completely different. Since you can't change it once it's happened, you may as well accept it and move on. The only way to change the future is by changing the present.

Some people really believe they can't change or that others can't change. I have heard this so many times when working with people. Contrary to this brainwashing, science says we can change. We are not hard-wired. Our brains and our hearts are muscles and have the

capability of being adjusted. Of course, there are some things we can't change, for example, our physical height, but there are many things we can change.

Overcoming Obstacles

If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you.

—Fred Devito

There are obstacles that can hamper change, and I've discovered through my own self-reflection, as well as through working with thousands of others, that many of us are limited by internal fears and insecurities. Remember the 1980s film *Ghostbusters*? Well, we need to be fear-busters—we've got to search out those fears and either use them to our advantage or annihilate them! We need to identify fears that could hold us back, and implement appropriate behaviors to move us forward.

Although we constantly hear that change is something that is avoided or resisted, be careful not to assume that everyone is resistant to change all the time. There are certain times in our lives or certain things that we may be more prone to resisting. Some people roll with the weather no matter what it is, while others complain and hole up inside, waiting for a nice day. One person gets news of a terminal illness and immediately is grateful for the life that's passing, while another gets angry and resentful. You might hear about the change in the office layout and be open to it, while your buddy next door is picking apart everything they're doing.

When we find we are resisting change, we need to respect that it is natural to go through a psychological change process as we give up the old and come to either accept or reject the new. Although there are lots of reasons for resisting the change—mostly feelings of loss (of control, status, trust, faith, security, love)—there can also be underlying, deeper reasons. And there can be good reasons to not accept the change!

Change can take time, and if we have a way to guide ourselves

and others through change, it makes it a whole lot easier. Respect differences in people, their experiences, their lives, and their unknown underlying reasons.

Many employees I speak with tell me it's not the change they are resisting, but how the change is rolled out. The few who are in charge are in control and enthusiastic about the change, as long as they are driving it. They don't think about how and what it takes to implement the change. Employees don't know why the change is happening, which of them it's going to affect, what might change, or if the change will be successful. Those few in charge steamroll in and implement the change, with little if any explanation or consultation. The fact is that resistance to change is an issue, especially in the workplace, because it's not being handled properly. So yes, in most companies, the top obstacle to a successful change program is employee resistance to change at all levels, including frontline personnel, middle management, and senior management. Leaders must understand how to effectively implement change—in themselves and in their team.

The Five Steps of Change™

The important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

—Charles Dubois

Like most things, it begins with us and a belief that we can change. Having a tool to guide us makes it easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable. The Five Steps of Change™—awareness, desire, knowledge, action, and perseverance—are guaranteed to make sustainable change. (See Figure 6.1.) There is one caveat—you have to follow the steps!

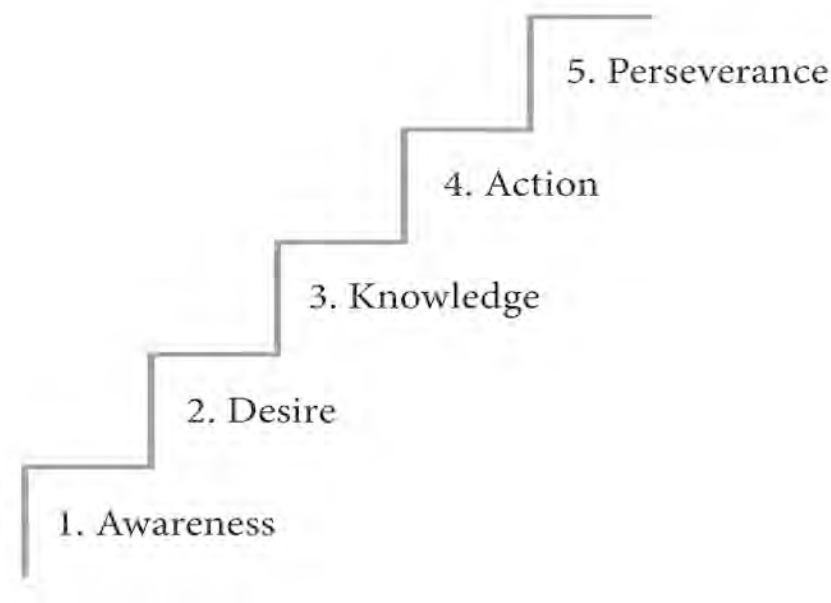


Figure 6.1. The Five Steps of Change™

Step 1: Awareness

The universe is not short on wake-up calls. We're just quick to hit the snooze button.

—Brené Brown

Change begins with awareness, and admittedly, being aware can be challenging. Are you aware that you are unaware? How do we become aware?

Think about a time when you've wanted to change. Not when someone else wanted you to change, but when you really wanted to make a change in your life. If you remember, there was a moment when you realized this. There was a moment of awareness that alerted you to your situation. Sometimes that moment of awareness we get does not come in a pleasant manner. For example, one morning as you get

dressed, you realize you have gained weight because your pants are snug; or you notice a large majority of your team at work is negative and disengaged from work. Normally, when you become aware in this manner, you judge it, and then you resist the awareness and go into a blame and excuse mode: Well, it's wintertime, and I just don't have time to exercise, and everyone keeps bringing in food; or everyone is so negative, and I've tried everything to get them empowered to do their work. It's the millennium generation—they just don't care.

Awareness might come to you more positively. The opportunity comes along to be promoted to manager because you've done such a great job at work. You have an awareness that you can behave differently to get that promotion. You might visualize yourself as successful at a future goal and realize you can make a change to get there. Athletes, musicians, and many very successful people, like Richard Branson, Donald Trump, and Wayne Dyer, can see themselves in a future state, which drives them forward and makes change easier.

The type of awareness that we're talking about here is self-awareness—the ability to be aware of your own values, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and actions. If you can be aware without judging yourself, every awareness can lead to a choice, your choice. If you could say, "Okay, I don't fit in my jeans. I know I've been eating more, and I need to make some changes to fit back into those jeans" rather than saying, "Oh, I can't believe these jeans don't fit. I hate the holidays and winter. It does this to me every year." Can you see the difference? In the first statement, you've become aware and have taken responsibility. In the second statement, you've become aware and blamed everything else and judged yourself negatively. Another example is maybe you've been told that others perceive you as rude. If you're aware with judgment, you react defensively by making excuses or blaming: "He needs to be talked to that way; it's the only way he'll listen to me!"

When we blame and make excuses, we become stuck where we are. When we judge ourselves this way, it's contrary to making any kind of positive change. If we're aware without judgment, we objectively consider the person's perception and agree or disagree. We can then decide if we want to make a change, whether it's to change our actual behavior or to change others' perceptions of our behavior.

So when you notice that your team of employees is negative and disengaged, can you imagine the difference in the thoughts that you could have? You could think, "Okay, there's negativity going on, and people are working on personal things rather than projects. Let me take a look at this to see how I've contributed and what we can do." On the other hand, your thought might be "I cannot believe how negative everyone is. It's ridiculous. I don't know what else I can do—it doesn't seem to matter. People just don't have any loyalty—they don't care about anything but themselves." Which option do you think has any chance of making a positive change?

Without being able to look objectively at yourself and your situation, it's almost impossible to focus on the right things to make change. The key to awareness when making change is to be objective about it. Don't judge and then play victim. In fact, lighten up about it. While it's important to be aware, it helps to not be too hard on yourself and to even have some fun with it. Take it from Maysoon Zayid, who is using humor to change the world: "We have to be able to be self-critical, but not to the point of being self-destructive." Being aware without judgment is necessary to keep moving up The Five Steps of Change™.

Step 2: Desire

It's always in the want to that people discover the how to.

—Victor E. Frankl

Changing habits begins with awareness, and desire is what gets you motivated. The desire is your want to; it's your passion, purpose, and commitment. It's your why or your driving force, and it comes from your heart. Without desire, change won't happen, and/or it won't last.

Once you're aware, you can then look at your motivation to make a change. You can objectively look at what it will be like if you don't make the change and what it will be like if you do make the change, rather than take it personally and get defensive about it. Is it

worth it to you to make the change? Does it align with your purpose, priorities, and passions? Do you really want the change? It reminds me of that country song that says, “How bad do you want it?”

People are motivated by either pain or pleasure. Consider the person whose pants were snug. She could choose to visualize how great she will feel when she’s wearing those pants again, how much energy she’ll have, and how happy she’ll be, or she might be more motivated by thinking about how sluggish and terrible she’ll feel if she doesn’t do anything and how much money she’ll have to spend on new and bigger clothes. Either choice is a consequence, and if we’re aware and truthful with ourselves, we’ll know which motivates us.

While we’re learning new things, we need to be aware of how we are reacting to the change. Are we resisting by complaining and not enjoying the growth at all, or are we embracing it by enjoying the progress we are making? Which do you think is more effective—and definitely more efficient? We learn, grow, and change faster when we believe in it, when we’re aware of how we feel about it, and when we choose it because we understand the value. Not when someone else tries to force us to change.

Have you ever tried getting someone else to change? It doesn’t usually turn out well, does it? Just think about a time when someone was trying to change you. Until you saw the benefit of making the change, you probably resisted or made a surface change to pacify the person—but it wasn’t a genuine or lasting change. People change only when they decide to make the change themselves. We can demand, bribe, or threaten, and sometimes people do change, for a short time, but you can almost guarantee that they are holding resentment, which will cause them to sabotage themselves or revert back to the original behavior. When you’re not looking, they’re probably doing what they supposedly changed, complaining about you, or doing personal things because they’re just not vested in it.

Should we give up on other people then? If you can’t change them, I mean? Just because we cannot change people doesn’t mean we cannot provide opportunities for awareness and help them see what’s in it for them to change. Then it is their choice. And we need to respect their choice. There are always consequences for our

choices, pain or pleasure—things that happen based on what we do.

You may not agree with their choice. Then you need to decide: Do you want to stick around this person, can you live with that, or do you want to leave or have them leave? You don’t need all the drama and suffering that usually happens because you can’t get the person to change. Accept it. When you respect others because you have learned to respect yourself, they will change if they want to. When you do not respect them, they may not change, sometimes just because you want them to and they are rebelling—in which case everyone loses. But make no mistake about it—you will not be changing them. They will not be changing you. We can give others the choice of change by providing the awareness, opportunity, and responsibility.

When you recognize something you really need to change and you find yourself resisting, it’s a good opportunity to hold up the mirror and dig deeper. Sometimes it’s just our ego trying to protect us. Sometimes it’s just your habit of resisting. Do your best to be open, and ask yourself what’s in it for you if you make the change. As crazy as it might sound, pretending you chose it and you want it—even though you feel like you didn’t or don’t—can help you accept the change.

Take the example of the manager with the awareness of his negative team and his own role in it. What will be the result if he doesn’t change? Well, he may not meet his goals and could ultimately be fired, or he’ll have to hire a whole new staff and hope they have better attitudes and work ethics. The latter, of course, will be very costly to do, and without changing his perspective, he is likely to see the same traits in the new employees. If he does make a change in attitude, he will probably have more motivated, productive employees and reach his goals. He’ll keep his job and might even be promoted. He’ll enjoy work a whole lot more. So if he accepts it, owns it, and even acts as if he chose it (or at least played a part in creating it), he can then move on to making the change. Then the question becomes what and how does he change.

SAM JONES

A PERSONAL STORY



SEX, TRUTH AND FREEDOM



MY JOURNEY INTO BDSM

SEX, TRUTH AND FREEDOM



MY JOURNEY INTO BDSM

SAM JONES

Chapter One

Not Good Enough

From the moment I was born, I was not good enough. I was a sinner. Unfortunately, that's what happens if you are born to a pair of Christian parents. You are a child of God, yes, but you're a sinner. It doesn't matter that all you had done so far was eat, poo and grow. From the moment you came out of your mom's belly, you were a sinner.

I was raised with the belief that it doesn't matter what you do, it doesn't matter where you come from, you begin in sin. And there is no way to get into heaven, to achieve salvation, without the help of somebody else—Jesus. There is no golden ticket for independence. You must believe that he is the one saving you and if you don't, then heaven is beyond your reach.

This belief is paralyzing. It pushes us, from the womb, into an eternal quest for salvation. It takes away any ounce of responsibility we may feel. It's as if all good and bad things are predestined. So, why make an effort? If my fate is already determined, then whatever I do in this life—love somebody, or leave them—doesn't matter. Nothing does.

Everyone in my family believed this. It was drilled into my head as a kid. When I look back upon the Sundays of my younger life, it seems like the only thing we did was go to church. Occasionally, we would play some games, but we never left the house. I was not allowed to use any form of public transport. We weren't supposed to let anybody else do our work for us.

Back then, I did not rebel. In fact, it was quite hard to determine this ambience as 'out of the ordinary' or regressive. I had no idea. For all I knew, this was how everybody lived their lives; how life was supposed to be lived.

I went to a Christian school, read Christian newspapers, went to a Christian church. Every aspect of my life was carefully curated for a good Christian girl.

There were people in my church that went to a Christian primary school, to a Christian high school, on to a Christian University. After they finished school, they would start working in a Christian Church or Christian school again. It meant that they would never have to be confronted with pagans, ever. Sounds tedious, I know. But church was a safe space, a comfortable bubble. They could remain within their comfort zone, all the time; talk about the same things, act the same way, and never have to question themselves. They might not have wanted to stick their heads out. And the fact is, that they didn't have to. My church was the unrelenting kind in its strict, unbending devotion. There is an age-old joke which sums up the attitude of my church.

"Peter shepherds some newcomers into Heaven and gives them a tour. At a certain point, he halts, tells the newcomers to peek into the room on his left. They see hundreds of people with both arms up in the air.

'Here', Peter says, 'are the evangelicals. They love to gather and sing all day long. A few of the newcomers smile and one of them joins them, singing along happily.

Peter continues, but then he gestures at the group to be really, really quiet. They tip toe for a bit, until they pass the small door on their right. Only then Peter explains, "Here are the members of this specific church (mine), and they think they are the only ones in heaven."

I could never come to terms with the idea that my destiny was beyond my control. I was uncomfortable believing that I had no part to play in my own life. It was MY life after all, wasn't it? It was also impossible to believe that my church, a church(!) would own the truth, have the monopoly over it, and everyone else would be wrong.

Being taught that you are born in sin says: you are not good enough. What a terrible thought to mould a life around. The institute you invest your faith in, regularly tells you, *you are not good enough*, on and on until the day you die. It could potentially ruin one's self-esteem. I know, because it ruined mine. And working with others showed me that some of the biggest self-esteem issues are caused by these demotivating Calvinistic mantras.



To pursue your dreams is the ultimate selfish act. That is what my church said. Since God was the only entity vested with decision-making power, it was wrong to take those charges upon yourself. He would decide what you were good for, what your life would amount to, and everything else that happened to you. Your job was simply to obey and accept.

Deo Volente means that it will only happen if God wills it. This doctrine is supposed to make us grateful to the Almighty. What it taught me, however, was that I could never do anything I could be proud of. The credit always belonged to the Heavens.

Take for instance, the prayer uttered before dinner. *Thank you God, for the food we eat, because you are the One giving it to us.* My mother's labor in the kitchen was attributed to God's own kindness. If a child was born with intelligence, talent for soccer, or any other 'gift', their success was the Almighty's. The hours of sweat, practice, and hard work

didn't matter, because God was doing the real work. This had its fair share in killing some innocent dreams.

I knew a guy once who desperately wanted to become a vicar. Unfortunately for him, he wasn't all that smart. He went to the lowest level of high school—a practical one, but he slogged extra hours trying to build his brain capacity. Instead of the usual age of 18, he started his Theology studies at 25 years of age. People erupted with their beliefs against him. He was “going against God's will” because he was not born smart enough to be a vicar. This incident stayed with me. It is testament to how much one can achieve if they start owning responsibility for their own life. Who knows what you can achieve if you just... keep at it. Fall, dust yourself off, rise again—over and over until you've made it. God is so much more than just an excuse.

He did make it, by the way. He's one of the kindest, friendliest, warmest, shepherd-like vicars I know; with a big heart, emphasizing that there is a space for everyone in church. He is one of the people who helped change the church into what it is nowadays: allowing women in all positions (even becoming a vicar). He is celebrating Christianity with different denominations and looks for what binds us humans instead of what separates us.

Christianity speaks a lot about punishment. It is about living with rules and within boundaries. The entire Bible, especially the Old Testament, is one big warning about what happens to those who transgress. The forbidden apple, the destruction of Eden, the casting out of Adam and Eve. The rules in question didn't even have to make sense. At all. You could just be living your life, but somehow you found yourselves blocking the path of His Divine Plans. It's not like you were wrong, but you were punished, nonetheless. Your fellow Jews supposedly threw stones at you.

This binary approach to right and wrong, places Christian

kids in boxes. There isn't much space for finding a new path, because you are so busy trying to be 'good' and to avoid punishment. We were not raised to ask questions. We were raised to obey. Our decisions would be made for us—by God, by our parents, by church elders. All we had to do was listen. The huge emphasis on right and wrong caused a lot of roadblocks in my younger life. In my forties, I can say that I have left that thinking behind, but earlier in my life, it put me too much into my own head. I would constantly worry about the morality of everything.

I always asked questions. Too many questions, I was told. That is probably where I first went wrong in the eyes of my church.

You may think that being a Christian wasn't fun at all, but it was. I think that every person longs to belong somewhere, to be part of a team. Church gave me that group. I was bullied in school, but I was still part of a group. I knew I could always go to church and I would still belong somewhere. Being a child in the second half of the disillusioned 20th century, that feeling of community was hard to come by. I am grateful I had it. It was a place that, I once thought, would never disown me.

I was a very optimistic kid, with a strong intuition. God and I chatted all the time. It was never about serious things like morality or punishment. It felt like a conversation with a friend or writing in a journal. We would talk about my day. I would tell him how happy I was, and about the things I enjoyed in my life. My 30-minute-long bike ride to school was never lonely. God and I would chat all along that bumpy ride, sometimes stopping to smell flowers, or inhale the freshly baked smell of bread at the roadside bakery. We were inseparable.

Sitting on the bench at the gas station, right now, I can't help thinking about what my family will think of these latest developments. I look backward to the path that led

me here. Would the fact that Daniel threw me out prove to them, that indeed, I am a sinner? I haven't visited a church in years, and here I am. They were used to me making my own decisions, taking my destiny in my own hands. But this? Leaving my husband, and especially with two little kids? I bet this will be hard to swallow, especially for my mom. Against all odds, she spent 20 years of her life trying to make something of her marriage. And even though she also saw that my marriage was not making me happy, she always told me that I should fight harder, work harder to make it a success.



My parents had the worst relationship ever, but because they were Christians, they were not allowed to divorce. There was no fair or easy way out. In all the memories I have of my parents, there is only one moment where I saw intimacy between them. When my maternal grandfather died, they walked to church hand in hand. The fact that I remember that says it all, doesn't it?

Instead of divorcing my dad, my mom allowed him in her presence and enjoyed the fact that he was taking care of her, that he was taking care of finances. He had a very good job, so she didn't have to worry in this regard. But she was so nasty to him. For us kids, that was really hard. Pitting one parent against the other, growing up in an atmosphere of constant anxiety and tumult is never easy. Yet, it took me a long time to realize how bad things were between them. I think a child always secretly craves for their parents to love each other, and maybe that's why I was in denial until I couldn't be anymore.

I was always pretty good at fixing everything—pretending nothing had happened and then just going all the way in and making an exciting entrance. Distraction.

Suddenly, everyone was happy again and could pretend nothing had happened. I had to do that quite a bit, really. It was like diffusing a bomb.

I never had a good example of what a relationship should be. My family never taught me. I didn't have a good relationship with my mother. So it was hard to find a good example of what I wanted my relationships to be like. I only saw what I did NOT want my relationships to be like. My mom was more focused on my younger brothers, who were significantly younger than us sisters. We were well into our teens, and according to our mom, could fend for ourselves.

The example she set for me, was that sex is something you give as a present to your partner. It also means that you can use it as a punishment. Is your partner not giving you the attention you want? Don't give it to him. We saw this happen as kids. So, in a twisted way, what we learned is that as soon as you have a partner, he needs to be nice and kind to you, needs to give you presents, or whatever is important to you, and only then you give him sex. With my parents I never saw the beauty of sex, the way it should be used: to create intimacy.

The parents of my best friend, Jenny, were always close and physical. They went to the same church as we did, so I saw them quite frequently. Whenever they were walking to church, I could see they were very passionate people. I don't know if they had a lot of sex, but there was intimacy and it was expressed physically. There was chemistry. It was something I never saw between my parents. They were the tiny things—touching each other, holding hands while walking, a hand on the hip.

My mom didn't let my dad touch her. My dad wanted to. He loves physical touch. He loves it when I hug him. He must have suffered so much for years, having to repress a need as basic and vulnerable as affection. My mom hates touching or kissing, and she passed the fear of touch on

to all of us.

Being raised without physical touch, I was uncomfortable with it for a long, long time. I learned to hug at some point, but believe me when I say that the first time that I could really give someone a hug without being scared or careful, was a major breakthrough. Until this day, when our family meets, we give each other air kisses from far away.

My mom blamed my dad for everything, telling me all the time what was wrong. She had to tell her story and she was constantly complaining. In a way, she was using me as a therapist. I often found myself downstairs, sitting on the couch, with a glass of wine, at fifteen years old, listening to my mom's complaints about how hard it was to live with my dad.

I never had a lot of contact with my dad. We weren't very close. The main thing I remember of him is a memory that makes me feel really sad. It's the memory that whenever if I saw him, it was when I was to be punished. My mom would use him when I was doing something wrong in her eyes. She told him to go upstairs and to beat the shit out of us. It probably sounds a little harsher than it was back then. For me, it was quite normal. I thought that every family worked like this. It's not exactly something you discuss with your peers, right? I usually also felt like I deserved the beating, so I took it without questioning.

When I look back, it's easy to see the influence that has had on the relationship with my dad. He worked a lot, and those beatings were the most I saw of him. Of course—he had to take care of a family with six kids. But building a relationship when most of what I saw of him was his punishing side, is hard.

Now that I know him better, I know that my father is the kindest, softest person on earth. Punishing us must have been hell for him. I can only imagine that he did it because he was terrified of my mother, and probably

hoping that he would be a good boy and get a pat on the head.



My dad will be devastated when he finds out that I left Daniel. My dad never understood why my mother left. I believe it was the best thing ever when she finally decided to kick him out of the house, not for him, but for her. And for sure for us. But my dad never saw it. I don't believe he was happy, but it never occurred to him that leaving her was even an option—it was one of the things you just don't do. Especially when there are kids involved.

My mom...well. My mom. I don't know what I can expect. Sitting on the bench at the gas station, all I want is to have her hold me and tell me I am going to be okay, that I made the right decision. I want her support.

I call her while waiting for my Master to pick me up and tell her that Daniel kicked me out. She knows we had decided to separate before, but this is unexpected.

My mom is sad. And angry with Daniel. Maybe because I don't tell her the whole story. Now she thinks he's to blame. I don't think either of us is to blame. I think back to how it all started, and how the hell we ended up here.

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Cover design by: Art Painter

Layout & Formatting: Arjen Broeze, Black Bee Media

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ISBN: 9798657212259

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018675309

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
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PART I SHIFTING MINDSET

CHAPTER 1: MINDFULNESS AND....SOCIAL HABITS?	11
CHAPTER 2: GOALS VS. CLARITY ON PURPOSE.....	19
CHAPTER 3: KNOW THYSELF.....	27

PART II CHANGING YOUR SOCIAL HABITS

CHAPTER 4: JUST SMILE.....	39
CHAPTER 5: STRIKING UP A CONVERSATION WITH ANYONE ...	45

PART III DEVELOP & MAINTAIN

CHAPTER 6: BE CURIOUS	63
CHAPTER 7: MAKE IT ABOUT THEM	67
CHAPTER 8: LISTEN TO THE OTHER PERSON.....	77
CHAPTER 9: OUTCOME OF MY JOURNEY	83
WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE BOOK?	88
FREE AUDIOBOOK.....	89
LET'S REBUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY	90
APPENDIX: MY JOURNAL ENTRIES	91

Not being scared of the feeling of rejection anymore, my mind was able to focus more on what I was doing in a meeting (being in the present) versus focusing on the future and whether or not I would get the job. I started to pick up on things that worked and didn't work and amplified the things that did. And what happened to me next was crazy—I kept getting job offers for the majority of my interviews! The focus of the mind can do so many amazing things.

To help increase your chances of being successful, the purpose of the first part of the book is to help you build the right mindset before you begin smiling at people, initiating conversations, making friends, and building a more exciting social and love life. Because the honest truth is, even if we are given step-by-step details of what we need to do to get what we want in our lives, we may end up never doing them because of the voices inside our heads. Perhaps we can't envision the person that we want liking us back, or maybe just when we are about to take action, we choose to flee because our fear tells us to not look the person we like directly in the eye. I hope that these next chapters increase the odds in your favor, so even if those emotional challenges arise, you're still able to make progress, even if tiny, because that is how we continually get better.

"If you get one percent better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done."

- James Clear

CHAPTER 1

MINDFULNESS AND SOCIAL HABITS?

The Oxford dictionary defines mindfulness as "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique."

Mindfulness, for me, is not too far off from the Oxford definition; however, I would like to reword it in a way that is more beneficial to people. My definition of mindfulness is the ability to be in the present by being aware and observing 1) the emotions and self-talk that are arising from the situation and 2) the specific decisions we make or actions we take from those emotions and self-talk.

What is important to note is that it is very difficult to be mindful in any particular situation. Our mind, heart, and body have developed habits over time that make it difficult for us to even recognize what we've just done. Haven't you ever noticed that when you're driving home from work, you don't tend to remember how you did it? While it's important for us to have habitual moments to let our mind and brain rest from time to time (i.e. tying our shoes, brushing our teeth, etc.), there are also times where it is important for us to recognize why we do what we do.

The Importance of Mindfulness

"Many people are alive but don't touch the miracle of being alive."

- Thich Nhat Hanh

This is probably one of the more important chapters in this book because whatever way you want to define it, being mindful is a crucial part to your success in every area of your life.

Research over time has shown the benefits of being mindful, such as sleeping better, relieving anxiety, improving attention, decreasing loneliness, and much more. While those benefits are great, the major advantage of being mindful is that it makes you more intentional in how you want to feel and be in any particular situation.

Being more mindful has allowed me to control my emotions better, make better decisions and have better reactions because I am aware of my emotions. I am becoming a better person every day, and I have never been more clear, patient, or joyful in my life than I have since I started building mindfulness as a habit. Interestingly, as I became more mindful, I began to notice that the majority of successful people in the self-development books I've read and podcasts that I have listened to give the same advice. While they may say it differently than one another, it all comes down to the same interpretation that mindfulness is important in any situation.

Mindfulness & Social Habits

Once I became more mindful, I started to see my bad and good social habits more clearly. I was able to stop myself more easily when the bad habits occurred and replaced them with new ones. For instance, I had become aware that my habit was to look down immediately when someone was looking me in the eye because of my fear of rejection. I also started to notice the amount of times I would look people in the eyes or smile would change depending on what music I was listening to at the moment. If I had been listening to some club pop music, I'd feel too cool and my natural habit was to act like others around me didn't exist versus if I had listened to more calming music. These observations and awareness allowed me to be more intentional in how I wanted to be in the next opportunity. If club pop music was making me feel too cool to talk to others, I'd cut it out and only play music that put me in a happy state.

The chart below provides further examples of some social habits that I used to have when I wasn't aware of what I was doing and the new social habits I replaced them with as I became more mindful. I hope that by reading these examples you will start to notice what bad social habits you may have that you never noticed

before. In addition, you can also read my January 25th, 2020 journal entry in the Appendix to see how I implemented mindfulness when I saw an attractive guy that day at the gym. The ending is bittersweet, but my intentions of the entry are to show the realities of life.

As we continue to accelerate and grow in a specific area, there will be other areas in our lives we begin to recognize that we still need to work on, but that doesn't mean we can't celebrate the tiny wins at the moment. In this incident, while I was brave enough to step out of my comfort zone with this guy I was attracted to, I had another strong habit of not fully living in the moment. I still worried more about getting rejected right then and there, but I was also driven by the sadness I had felt knowing that I had just missed out on an opportunity. Don't get me wrong. I am proud that I did something different, but I also knew I hadn't completely unlocked my full potential yet.

Old Social Habits (Without Awareness)	New Social Habits (With Awareness)
My heart would pound madly when I saw a guy I was attracted to and my natural reaction was to look down immediately when our eyes met each other.	I would calm myself, look down, count to five seconds, and (intentionally) look up at the guy and give him a big smile.
I would only smile once.	Smile twice. When I first locked eyes with someone, I would give out a small smile. But as the person got closer and closer to me, I gave out a bigger grin. I noticed that this led to higher response rates of either a nod, "hi," or that person starting a conversation with me.
I would get nervous every time I thought of something to say to a stranger but didn't know whether I should say it because I didn't know them. I would let the idea stir in my mind and would eventually miss out on the opportunity to talk to the person.	I started to just say things right away. I no longer gave myself the time to even think about it.
Naturally responding with "I'm good" when someone asked how I was doing.	I noticed that asking "how are you?" to an acquaintance rarely developed any connection further. The problem was the typical response "I'm good" didn't allow for further conversation. I decided then that when I would wake up in the morning, one of the questions I would think about is how I would respond when someone asked me "how are you?" and try to give a unique answer.

How Do I Become More Mindful?

If I had to make a guess, I would bet that most people are reactive instead of proactive in most areas of their lives, and being mindful is probably no different. There is no simple answer on how you can get better at being mindful, but I do know it's something you should start on NOW.

There are many books, apps, and courses that you can take to develop mindfulness. I was able to learn the most from listening to some podcast interviews that featured the work of Dr. Nicole LePera, an acclaimed clinical psychologist who pioneered the concept of total-system holistic psychology and from Jud Brewer, an American psychiatrist, neuroscientist, and author who studies the neural mechanisms of mindfulness.

Their work shows that we are constantly stuck in our feelings, thinking, and habits. We can experience similar situations thousands of times, and yet we will continue to have the same feelings, thinking, and habits over and over again—even if it doesn't work out for us—because we've just let our subconscious mind dictate our lives. While we need this part of the brain to help us with daily tasks that we want to conserve our energy on (i.e. brushing our teeth), we need to also be mindful of the habits that don't serve our needs.

While we can't control the emotions and negative self-talk that arise, we can take responsibility in how we handle those situations. Mindfulness is something that we should begin practicing today, even if there is no major event that is triggering us (i.e. getting into a fight with a family member, giving a speech in front of a big group, etc.). If we practice being mindful, conscious, or observant every day in moments when we're calm, we are actually able to see more clearly than when we are triggered. We are also able to establish consistency in building the mindfulness habits that will lead to better decisions. Just by being mindful in one or two moments of your day, you can increase your mindfulness in any situation. Remember the James Clear quote I shared with you in Chapter One?

"If you get one percent better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done."

Through learning and integrating Nicole LePera and Jud Brewer's work, I have found the following steps below help me bring

more mindfulness in my life:

Step 1: Observe and acknowledge your feelings, emotions, and thinking from a particular situation.

Step 2: Observe how your feelings, emotions, and thinking are impacting you, especially when it comes to your reaction and what actions you're going to take from it.

Step 3: Stop thinking about it by thanking your mind for telling you the information.

Step 4: Give yourself more love and kindness by either inserting a new school of thought or by stating a positive affirmation.

An example of me implementing the steps above was a time when I went into a work event where I didn't know anyone. When I had walked into the event, I found myself feeling hot in the face. I was nervous that I wouldn't be seen as cool or attractive because I showed up with no one (**Step 1**). These feelings, emotions, and thinking caused me to walk over to the most hidden corner so I didn't feel like a loser (**Step 2**). When I caught myself taking this action, I thanked my mind for trying to protect me (**Step 3**) and then I told myself that emotions are just emotions that eventually go away, but opportunities (of meeting new people at the moment) will be lost forever (**Step 4: Inserting a New School of Thought**). I also followed that up with "I am a fun person to be around" (**Step 4: Love and Kindness**). Once I became mindful, I refocused on the situation and mingled with people instead of hiding in a corner. I ended up talking to four people that day and exchanged contacts with two people! These steps may seem long in writing, but in reality, it takes seconds for your mind to go through them.

It is important to note that you don't judge or shame yourselves for your old feelings, thinking, and reactions. You need to know that those old feelings, thinking, and reactions will stick around for a while because you've been repeating these things for most of your life. Just remember we have a choice to create new ones, though.

"Four simple words that are so powerful. I have learned that I am not my thoughts. They are powerless unless I add fuel to the fire."

- Unknown

Summary

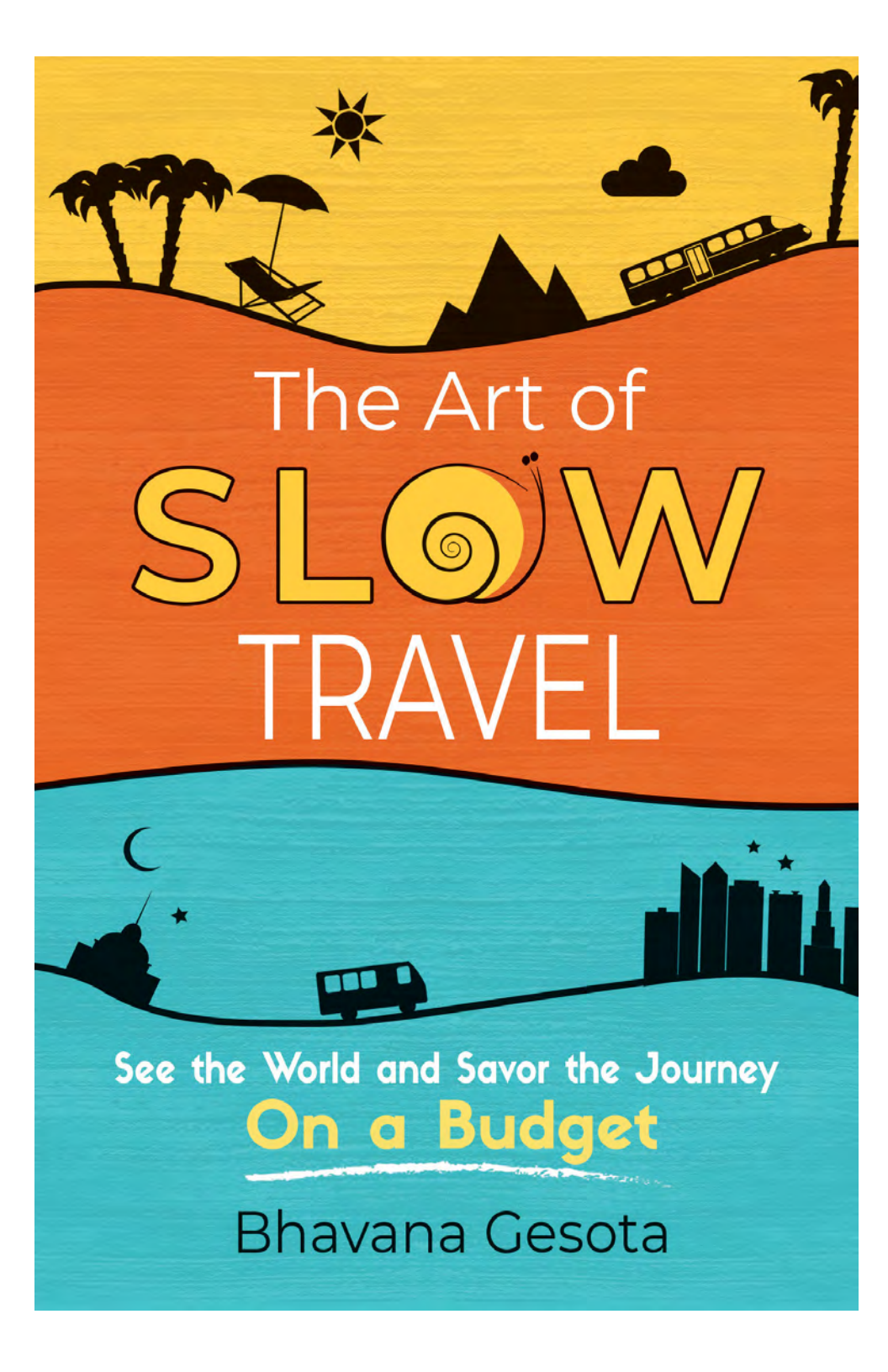
Mindfulness is the ability to be in the present by being aware and observing the emotions and self-talk that are arising from the situation and the specific decisions or actions that we take from those emotions and self-talk. Being mindful is a crucial part of our success in life because mindfulness makes us more intentional in how we want to feel and be in any particular situation, especially when it comes to our social habits. There are four steps for becoming more mindful that you should get started on today:

Step 1: Observe and acknowledge your feelings, emotions, and thinking from a particular situation.

Step 2: Observe how your feelings, emotions, and thinking are impacting you, especially when it comes to your reaction and what actions you're going to take from it.

Step 3: Stop thinking about it by thanking your mind for telling you the information.

Step 4: Give yourself more love and kindness by either inserting a new school of thought or by stating a positive affirmation.

A stylized landscape illustration. The top half has a yellow background with a sun, palm trees, a beach chair with an umbrella, pyramids, a train on a hill, and a cloud. The middle section is a solid orange band containing the title. The bottom half has a blue background with a crescent moon, a star, a lighthouse, a bus, and a city skyline.

The Art of **SLOW** TRAVEL

See the World and Savor the Journey
On a Budget

Bhavana Gesota

The Art of
SLOW
TRAVEL

See the World and Savor the Journey

On a Budget



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I believe being actively engaged in planning your slow travel journey paves the way to getting the most out of the experience. This notebook will give you the space to pause, ponder, and scribble about the critical points and questions you'll discover throughout this book. It also includes a complete resource list and a planning and packing checklist that you can use to check off items as you plan and pack for your travel.

Don't forget to return to my website for updated versions from time to time. Because, in travel, there is no full-stop. Only a new paragraph added or a section deleted.

Go to the link below to download your FREE Slow Travel Planning Notebook now!

author.bhavanagesota.com/stpn

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - How It All Began	1
------------------------------------	---

Section I - Flirting With The Idea

Chapter 2 - What Is Slow Travel?.....	9
Chapter 3 - The Why, Where, How & How Long	17
Chapter 4 - Can I Afford It?	25

Section II - Going On A Date

Chapter 5 - Planning the Nuts & Bolts.....	33
Chapter 6 - Unplugging Life at Home	45
Chapter 7 - Money Matters	53
Chapter 8 - Packing for the Trip	63
Chapter 9 - All About Flights	75
Chapter 10 - Accommodation	87
Chapter 11 - Earn While You Travel	101

Section III - A Romance Begins

Chapter 12 - Is It Safe?	115
Chapter 13 - Overlanding & Getting Local.....	123
Chapter 14 - Traveling to Places Where You Don't Know the Local Lingo?	133
Chapter 15 - Avoiding Cultural Faux Pas: Cultural Intelligence.....	141
Chapter 16 - Digitally Savvy, But Minimal.....	149
Chapter 17 - Food & Health.....	153
Chapter 18 - Money-wise on the Road.....	165
Chapter 19 - Cybersecurity	173

CHAPTER 5

PLANNING THE NUTS & BOLTS

MARCH 2002 - MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA

"I need to get visas for Greece, Turkey, Israel, and Egypt?" I grimaced.

My dream of spontaneously traveling overland through these countries for six months had ended with a resounding thud. To go on a date with the Mediterranean with my Indian passport, I needed to get all the visas ahead of time! The visa applications for each country required that I provide the date of entry, a physical address where I intended to stay, and produce proof of an arrival ticket.

I had none of these.

I only knew I was leaving San Francisco on April 1, 2002, for my first destination: Thessaloniki, Greece. At least I had that down! Then began the painstaking process of gathering paperwork for my visa applications.

I applied first for the Greek visa since I already had my ducks in a row for that one. Once I received that, I applied to the Turkish consulate with an approximate date of entry and the address of a hotel I found in the Lonely Planet guidebook. But without any proof of entry. Instead, I attached a copy of my flight ticket from San Francisco to Thessaloniki to the application form, pointed them to the Greek visa stamped on my passport, and wrote a letter.

"Dear Consul General of Turkey,

I plan to travel on a bus from Thessaloniki to Istanbul on <approximate date>, thus I am unable to provide you with proof of entry at this time..."

I crossed my fingers. They gave me a multiple entry visa.

I repeated the same for Israel. "...I plan to take a boat from Cyprus to Haifa..."

I crossed my fingers. They gave me a visa.

I repeated the same for Egypt. "...I plan to take a bus from Eilat to Dahab..."

I crossed my fingers and lo and behold, they issued me a visa.

P.S. In the end, I spent most of my six months living in Greece and Turkey. Israel ended up being a mere two-week sojourn. And Egypt to date still remains a mystery.

* * *

It's fine to flirt with an idea, but to take this flirtation out on a date requires a certain amount of research and planning. After all, you do want to make it an exhilarating and enriching experience, don't you? This is the point, however, when turning an idea into reality can feel daunting or overwhelming. There are so many details to iron out and things to take care of and plan, but don't let it demotivate you!

Just get started.

Begin by Researching Your Destination

In the late 90s and early 2000s, the Lonely Planet guidebooks were my bible for travel. Now, all the information is available in the digital form. Begin researching your travel destination at least three months before you plan to leave for things such as safety, accommodation, transportation, local markets, festivals, cultural events, travel advisories, etc.

Here are some of my most reliable and useful resources.

Local expat groups on Facebook

These have become my one-stop-shop for finding everything local and current related to my destination. When writing this chapter, I was in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico. I joined the San

Cristobal de las Casas Expat Community group on Facebook. It boasted a whopping 1,935 members, with new ones joining each day.

Some of these members have made San Cristobal de las Casas their home. Some are slow travelers, while some others are traveling through considering the possibility of buying property and settling there. Locals who are eager to meet other expats and travelers are also members of this Facebook group. It is a big market for them to advertise rental vacancies and other services.

Before I arrived at San Cristobal de las Casas, I was able to find a wealth of local information just by reading posts by other members or posting questions myself. I learned about the different neighborhoods, live music events, community activities, and approximate cost of renting an apartment.



The most significant advantage is that the information is current and comes from people who are living there.

For this reason, I will refer to this group throughout the book as I find it to be the most reliable for day-to-day life information.

If there is an expat group on Facebook where you are going, then join the group *before* you leave to help you with the planning. Simply search for "*expats <city/country>*" on Facebook. If there is one, it will show up.

Internet resources

There is no shortage of travel information available on the internet. It is a valuable resource for research that cannot be ignored, except that the amount of information available is mind-boggling. Sorting through it is a chore by itself. It's important to remember that the point of doing internet research is NOT to know everything possible about the destination but just enough to get started.

When searching, be as targeted and specific as possible to reduce the information overload. For instance, search for "consulate of Benin in New York" instead of "how to get visas for Benin." Throughout this book and where relevant, I will provide you with pointed search phrases that you can use for your research.

Limiting the number of websites to read about the destination is another way to reduce the overwhelm. Identify not more than two to three websites that you like, bookmark them, and refer to them as and when you need. I like using **TripSavvy** for destination-specific information and **Tripadvisor** and **Yelp** for reviews on restaurants, hotels, spa services, tours, etc.

Travel guidebooks and online travel forums

Instead of buying paper guidebooks and making your bags heavy, you can purchase digital versions of well-known travel guidebooks such as **Fodors**, **Frommers**, and **Lonely Planet** directly from their website or **Amazon**. If you search for “*Travel guidebooks <destination name>*” on Amazon, you will find a ton of other guidebooks written by independent travelers as well.

Libraries also offer a selection of eBooks on travel destinations. Check your local library if they have an online service to borrow books from.

I will admit that I have a personal bias for Lonely Planet guidebooks because they bring up fond memories of the times when I began my global travels and they were my North Star. I continue to remain loyal to them when I wish to get a guidebook.

The **Lonely Planet Thorn Tree** online forum is another excellent resource for travelers to ask questions and share experiences, but the responses may come from people who are no longer at the place you are inquiring about. So, the information could be old. Nevertheless, I still rate this to be a valuable forum, and it's free to join. I always learn something useful in this forum.

The Consulate

Always revert to your destination country's consulate for official information such as travel advisories, visa and vaccination requirements.

Making Sense of Visas

Most of us will travel to countries on a visitor/tourist visa. These are the most straightforward and uncomplicated to obtain. Each

country has its own unique visa requirements. Some will allow you to simply show up and stay, while others will require you to get a visa ahead of time.

Do you need one?

The answer depends on: What passport do you carry and where are you traveling to?

The best and most reliable way to research visa requirements is to check with your destination country's consulate.

When investigating visas, determine:

- Whether or not you can stay for the time duration you want to or longer on a visitor/tourist visa.
- Whether or not you can get a visa extension without leaving the country if you fall in love with the place and decide you want to stay longer. In some countries (e.g., Indonesia), this is possible using an agent.
- Whether or not you will have to leave the country after X months and return after Y days/months to get a new visa if you decide to extend your stay.
- Whether or not you are traveling to countries that are in a conflicted region. This might put the brakes on your travel plans and make you reconsider your destinations. Case in point, if you have traveled to Iran, then Israel will deny you an entry visa and vice versa.



Start investigating the visa requirements at least three months in advance to account for processing time.

Will you need to register at the local immigration authority?

While researching visas, inquire about whether or not the foreign country requires you to register at the local immigration authority once you land there. For example, suppose you plan to stay in Mongolia for more than thirty days. In that case, it is required that you register with the local immigration authority within seven days of your arrival.

Travel Vaccinations

Whether you like it or not, some countries have mandatory vaccination requirements and you will not have a choice but to get them before you enter the country. For example, Tanzania requires proof of a yellow fever vaccination before setting foot in their country. Whereas, other vaccinations are only recommended.

What are the mandatory and recommended vaccination requirements for the country you are traveling to? Check with **CDC**, **WHO**, or country-specific consulates for information.

Cheaper alternatives for recommended vaccinations

Compared to many countries, travel-related vaccinations in the USA are expensive if not covered by health insurance. As an example, a yellow fever vaccination in the USA can cost anything from \$150 to \$350. In contrast, it will cost you between \$0 and \$10 paid out of pocket without any insurance in Peru.

I tend to avoid recommended vaccinations and let my natural immune system deal with it. If you decide to get the recommended vaccinations, then:

- Check if your health insurance covers them. If not, I recommend you wait until you get to your destination, locate a reputable clinic, and get them there. It will save you money.
- If you are not from the USA, compare prices with what they will cost you in your home country versus your destination country and then decide.

Get a vaccination card

Whenever you get a vaccination, ask the clinic/doctor to fill out your vaccination card stating the vaccination name, the date administered, and the validity. If you don't have a vaccination card yet, make sure to ask for one when you go in for your next vaccination. Some countries want to see this upon arrival.



Ensure you get all the vaccinations you intend to have at least a month before you travel to factor in time for it to start working before you leave and in case more than one dose is required.

Health Insurance Considerations

How does health insurance work in your home country? Here are a few things to check and decide:

- Can you pause your current health insurance while away instead of making expensive monthly payments?
- Can you change your plan to a cheaper option while you are away?
- Can you completely stop your health insurance before leaving and cross that bridge when you return?

International travel health insurance

Most countries in the world, barring the USA, have an affordable health care system even if you are paying out of pocket. Every time I go to India, I make sure to get a full medical check-up done. While I end up paying out of pocket for this, it is still much cheaper and easier than getting the equivalent done in the USA.

Some countries like Thailand, India, and Mexico have become hotspots for medical tourism. They offer state-of-the-art medical facilities and treatments at a fraction of the cost in the USA. Even without health insurance and paying all the travel costs out of pocket, they are still affordable. Simply do an internet search for “*medical tourism <country name>*” and you will get a ton of information on medical tourism possibilities for the country you plan to travel to. Why not take care of medical issues while slow traveling?

My credit card provides emergency medical and dental, emergency evacuation, and repatriation benefits. For the rest, I prefer to pay it myself. For these reasons, I have never purchased international travel health insurance. Many travelers feel safer combining expenses paid out of pocket for everyday health care expenses with international travel health insurance for big-ticket and ongoing health concerns.

Before you purchase any health insurance package, be sure to read the fine print and ascertain the following:

- Will you have to pay upfront, submit all the receipts, and then get reimbursed? Or can the insurance provider make payments directly to the medical care facility?
- Does your credit card cover some medical expenditures like hospitalization or an emergency? If yes, then don't pay for it again in the international travel health insurance you purchase.
- Carefully check what's covered and what's not, the deductible, and the maximum coverage amount. If you have an existing health issue, is that covered?

World Nomads and **Truetraveller** are recommended for long-term travelers. They also let you buy insurance while on the road, a notable advantage if you didn't purchase before leaving. Other more traditional travel insurance providers are **HealthCare International**, **Cigna**, **Allianz**, and **Aetna**.

Driver's License

What you *don't* want is for your driver's license to expire while you are on the road. If it is expiring close to the beginning of your trip and online renewal while on the road is not feasible, get it renewed before leaving.

If you intend to rent or buy a car in your destination country, remember to check whether your home country driver's license will be accepted there. If not, then plan to get an international driver's license in advance.

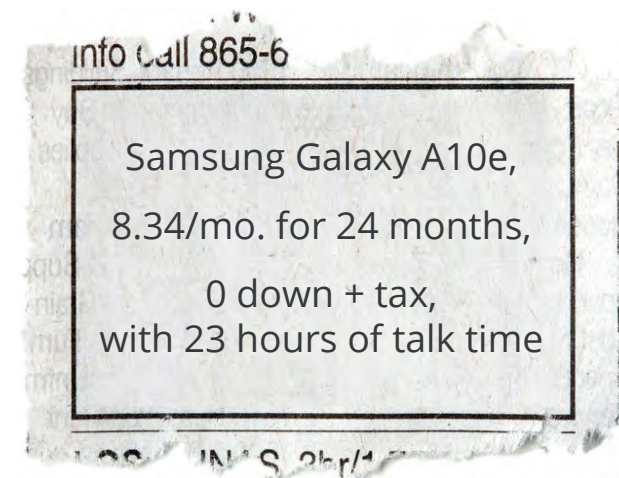
Smartphones

If you don't have a smartphone yet, I highly recommend you buy one. Smartphones with apps are useful on the road not just for information, navigation, and planning but also to keep in touch with friends and family around the world and for safety. There is no need to use those calling cards with long codes or using external devices like a magicJack for making international calls anymore.

Get your phone unlocked before you leave

Are you wondering what this means? Here is what it means:

Most of us buy a smartphone on a contract since these deals are very attractively priced. Here is a recent advertisement from T-Mobile.



This translates to:

You will not be able to use this phone with any other provider other than T-Mobile—in your home country or overseas—for twenty-four months.

This phone will be *locked* to T-Mobile for twenty-four months.

Phones purchased with these types of contracts remain locked even after the contract is over. This locking is detrimental to slow travel. Why?



If your phone is locked, you will be unable to use a local SIM card in your destination country.

If you were taking a short holiday abroad, this wouldn't be an issue. But as slow travelers, we tend to live in a country for several months. We need to make local phone calls without having to pay expensive roaming fees. To do that, you *must* have an unlocked phone with you.

How can I get my phone unlocked?

There are two ways to get a phone ready for your travels:

- #1 Call your provider *before* you leave and ask them to unlock your phone. Keep in mind that the new cellular provider in your destination country will *not* be able to help you. You must contact your provider at home since they'll be the only ones who'll be able to do it. If your contract is not yet over, you will have to pay off the phone's balance cost before your provider agrees to unlock your phone.
- #2 Don't buy a phone on a contract. Pay the full cost upfront and verify that the phone is unlocked with the cellular provider or the store you bought it from.

That is all you will need to take care of as far as your phone is concerned before leaving for your trip. I will go into more detail on local SIM cards in Chapter 22: Stay Connected!

Become Digitally Savvy

Sometimes, I dream of going back to the days when I used to travel with a paper Lonely Planet guidebook. If you feel similarly inclined, take a chance, land in a new place, and navigate with the help of a guidebook. Otherwise, I recommend becoming digitally savvy. Having a smartphone with a few snazzy apps will help make your travel trails easy and relaxing.

Throughout this book, you will find recommendations for apps and websites that other slow travelers or I have found useful in the **Resources** section. In all likelihood, you will discover new apps or websites as you move along on your travels that you find helpful. Make a note of them and be sure to pass them onto other slow travelers and me. If you have not yet downloaded your *free* Slow Travel Planning Notebook, then do it now for a consolidated list of all the resources from this book. Stay in touch with me to receive periodic updates as I discover new or better ones.

The Conscious Slow Traveler

#1 Give back to the travel community.

A rule of thumb on the slow travel track is to give back when you can. During your research phase and after you have lived in your new destination, you will have picked up an invaluable amount of local know-how. Just as you found information that made your travel planning and eventually living there smoother, remember to give back by replying to questions posted by others on online forums and the local expat group on Facebook.

Offer information, initiate community activities, and engage in a healthy exchange. That's how the world of slow travelers goes around. Give back to the travel community.

Resources

	App	Website	Cost
Destination research	Tripadvisor	tripsavvy.com tripadvisor.com yelp.com	Free
Traditional travel guidebooks	Guides by Lonely Planet	lonelyplanet.com fodors.com frommers.com	Purchase the guidebooks (digital or paper)
Travel insurance	Cigna Allianz Aetna Health	worldnomads.com truetraveller.com (for EU residents only) healthcareinternational.com cigna.com allianz.com aetna.com	Monthly or one-time payments
Travel vaccinations	CDC WHO Info	cdc.gov who.int	Free

HAPPY FIRST



HOW TO WIN LIFE IN THE MOMENT
at home, at work, at the gym,
and even in the kitchen

MAUREEN GIBBONS, MD

HAPPY FIRST



HOW TO WIN LIFE IN THE MOMENT
at Home, at Work, at the Gym,
and Even in the kitchen

MAUREEN GIBBONS, MD



Table of Contents

*In the midst of winter, I found there was,
within me,
an invincible summer.*

~ Albert Camus

Dedication	iii
My Wish for You	vii
Introduction	1

Part 1

Chapter 1—What Are You Made Of?.....	5
Chapter 2—Just a Bit of Weather	13
Chapter 3—Abundance.....	19
Chapter 4—Monsters Under the Bed	25
Chapter 5—Limitless Growth	31

Part 2

Chapter 6—Sleep and Relaxation	39
Chapter 7—Nutrition	45
Chapter 8—Activity	53
Chapter 9—Relationships	59
Chapter 10—Puppies, Cats, and Caps Lock.....	63
Chapter 11—Play	69
Chapter 12—The Job Dilemma	75
Chapter 13—Time in the Day.....	79
Chapter 14—Kindness.....	85
Chapter 15—Conversations.....	89

Chapter 1

What Are You Made Of?

Neither scientists nor clergy can deny the fact that there's an energy that underlies everything that is. Religion calls this God; science may simply call it "energy" and break it down into protons and electrons orbiting about one another. Further still into science, quantum theory has broken open enough of those principles to introduce concepts such as the God particle. Basic scientific education begins to explore the laws of the universe. As far back as 1789, Antoine Lavoisier discovered that matter can neither be created nor destroyed in chemical reactions—also known as the law of conservation of mass. Knowing this, the intellectual leap that your human form has been created solely of energy is not much of a jump at all. The fact that we are created from the same energy that makes up the sun and the trees and what some religions call God isn't a stretch either.

As we learn that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, we can see that energy is often defined by our human brains as light. There is no positive or negative light. There is only light and the absence of it. Some references call that energy "love." If we go by the same principle as the properties of light and love, there can then be no hate. There is only the absence of love. It may change form, but it can neither be created nor destroyed. Life is in flux. Living in an infinite universe, we are reminded that

there is no need to “create” love or light. No matter the amount we feel we need, that amount is already present in potential.

Another universal law is that disorder, or entropy, always increases in a closed system. The universe, however, is an open system; it is infinite. The transfer of energy isn’t perfect, and some scatters to the surrounding environment. This scientific premise becomes essential when we talk about taking the path of least resistance, also known in this book as “growing toward the sun.” Your happiness scatters and “infects” others!

I consider “happiness” to be the expression of that infinite, ever-present energy that creates our reality. Happy First is the concept elucidating how that underlying, immutable, positive energy relates to you and your world. You are made up of light and love and goodness. The expression of this knowledge is the path to living Happy First.

What I do not consider happiness is the solitary pursuit and attainment of external objects and accolades. Michael Neill notes that there is nothing wrong with wanting both peace of mind and a nice piece of real estate.¹

The two are not mutually exclusive, but it is possible to have wealth without happiness. We see the manifestation of the mindset that conflates wealth with happiness all the time. “If I’m wealthy, I’ll be happy.” I’m asking you to shake that sentence up. “I’m already happy, but wouldn’t it be fun to have a big bank account?” Can you feel the difference between those two sentences? You haven’t changed, but your verbal expression of your true nature has.

1 Neill, Michael, *You Can Have What You Want: Proven Strategies for Inner and Outer Success*, (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2006), 6.

As we delve a bit into what exactly you’re made of, I think it bears discussing that *you* means all parts of you. In my own personal example, I’m a human, a wife, a mother, a doctor, an athlete, a student, a coach, a teacher, an author, a homeowner, and a business owner. My most extensive roles throughout my day are wife, mother, and doctor—at least for right now. Conventional wisdom and thinking tell us we would do better to separate those roles. I recently separated the wife role to make sure I had enough time to dedicate to my marriage. Historically I’d neglected to give it the attention it deserves. Dedicating time to my mother role seemed to come more easily, often at the expense of other roles I also desperately wished to play. For decades, I partitioned out education and profession, studying and becoming a physician so I would have the ability to do that well. That delineation took time away from being a wife or a mother or friend, or an athlete. Although I love my job, the separation detracted from my ability to give from the wellspring of my innate energy to my family and myself. What I propose to you is to *decompartmentalize* and let things get a little messy. Maybe we should even encourage a little chaos, some entropy. The universe likes it, anyway!

In realizing the concept of “be you today,” I encourage you to be *all* of you today. I might be at home with our son today, but that doesn’t mean I’m not still a physician. You may have never gone to college, but that doesn’t mean you’re not a student. When we get down to what we’re all made of, it actually unlabels us. We all are reduced to the energy we’re made of. Instead of looking out at the world, thinking we have tasks to do and experiences to confront, you start from within and realize you’re projecting this ever-present energy onto the world. Although we come

from the same wellspring of power, no one else has the same energy signature that you do, not even your children. Theirs is overlapping, but each of us has his or her own unique energy frequency. Your spouse or child's world, for example, may be similar to yours, but it is not yours. You both live in the same house, with the same pets, but you often see things *very* differently!

This realization also can help with close interpersonal relationships. As an elementary example, you and your spouse eat dinner—same meal, same ingredients. You each may have very different opinions on the dish. You may resolve never to re-create this recipe again while your partner asks to have it every week. Your spouse's life comes from within *them*. They have a different experience of things as mundane as the plants in your front yard. None of us feel the sunshine on our faces in the same way.

Have you ever gotten into a discussion with someone about the weather? We have the same day in mind, a sunny, beautiful, warm day. One person says, "Oh no, it's too warm outside. I'm soooo hot." Meanwhile, you think to yourself, "Wow, it's amazing and so warm. I love it outside." Same day, same temperature. This is a rudimentary example to illustrate that your thoughts do, in fact, create your reality. Your perception is your reality.

The energy you bring to a situation can also change that situation. Have you ever walked into a room and thought, "Wow, these people look uptight and stressed"? What might have happened is that you walked in tense and brought that to the room. An exciting concept stated by many others but most clearly taken away from Gary John Bishop's last book, *Ask Gary Anything*, is that the love you feel inside is the love you bring to the table. No matter

how you slice it, you're not capable of feeling love until you're capable of allowing love to flow *through* you. Read that again. Everyone in the world can put it out there, but you will not be able to feel it until you can feel it. If you're convinced that life is a certain way, life is that way for you.

Decide the World Is Good

Many great scientists throughout the years have understood that we're all living our own unique experiences. As we dig into quantum physics in our personal, professional, and even entertainment lives, we discover that what we thought was solid may not be. What we thought was time may be an illusion. To paraphrase a sentiment often attributed to Einstein: Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

We often consider our perception to be the one true reality. The energy you put into the world *is* your world. The energy you came from is pure light, and your world is a manifestation of that light, plus or minus the limitations you've placed on it. Given that the energy that created you is pure happiness, it's no stretch to think that actual happiness is yours for the taking at any given time. It is what you are, in fact, made of! It's the first principle of your existence. Before your consciousness, before your form, there was your energy. There will never be another energy like you, and there never was another before you. You are a miracle of being, and it behooves you throughout any circumstance to recall the miracle that is your existence and live from that.

A life of Happy First doesn't mean a life free from struggle

or hardship; it doesn't mean that everything goes your way all the time, and you never have any lessons to learn. In fact, I believe the contrary may be true. The more lessons we have, the more we learn and grow. Sometimes extreme hardship is needed to help us break out of our preconceived notions of what we thought was our reality.

For example, I've struggled with using food as a drug for close to 40 years. There were a few years within this span when I felt a tremendous freedom. During that time, I didn't insulate and dull my existence with food. The growth process that led to the freedom was excruciating. Sometimes it felt like I was bleeding from my eyeballs or walking around without skin. That's the best way I can explain it.

Learning to live in the world without your crutch of choice—alcohol, food, relationships, thought tornadoes (when your brain goes down the rabbit hole of lengthy unproductive ramblings), gambling, sex, porn, whatever your poison—frankly hurts like hell in the beginning. Sometimes it hurts like that for a long time.

So Happy First isn't about being excited and happy-go-lucky all the time. It means showing up for real, as yourself, as *all* of yourself, regardless of what the world looks like on the outside. It means you show up without an arsenal of chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream and maybe just have a taste. This is pure honesty. So, when life looks you in the eye, you look at it right back. You are clear. You know that the energy you're feeling comes from you. You take responsibility for the fact that you are the creator of your life. You are not the creator of the energy of which you are made, but you are the creator of your today. When I say, "Be you today," keep that in mind.

Take responsibility for living from the point of your own true happiness. Notice, I do not speak of self-worth. It is a moot point. There is no way you can be unworthy. Your inherent worth is ever-present, just like your happiness.

Show Up for Real

In the subsequent chapters of this book, I will address what we traditionally consider to be external circumstances: sleep and rest, food, exercise, work, relationships, learning, school, and even pets. As you read on, I would like you to read from a point of Happy First. I'd like you to see that the circumstances in your life that appear to be insurmountable (and even the smaller challenges) are, in fact, of your own creation. Maybe we cultivated these circumstances for a specific purpose. Maybe there's a lesson you need to learn to prove to yourself what your reality is finally. I would like you to bring yourself back to the knowledge, the truth, that your happiness comes from within.

You're made of light and energy at your core. I want you to remind yourself, repeatedly if necessary, that there need not be drama, and you can remain detached from the outside if you remember that your truth is, in fact, *you*. To bring the discussion back to role decompartmentalization, integrating and accepting all the parts of yourself can cause immediate, positive change. Knowing you have a single perfect point of origin, and a singular energy flowing through you that creates you and your world, provides a new view on life. Zen monk and teacher Shunryu Suzuki says, "Each of you is perfect the way you are. . . and you can use a little improvement."

A man in a kilt is captured mid-throw of a stone at the Highland Games. He is wearing an orange t-shirt, a black and white plaid kilt, and red and white striped socks. A stone is suspended in the air above his head. The background shows a grassy field with a crowd of spectators and trees under a blue sky with clouds.

THE HIGHLAND GAMES

12 Week Training Log
& IATA
2021 Year Calendar

GARETH AINSWORTH

The Highland Games

Copyright 2020 Gareth Ainsworth

Edited by Jessica Ainsworth

Cover Design by 100 Covers

Cover Photo by Kristin Bishop

Author Photograph by

Todd I. Mason Jr., Capture Essence Photography

Map by BMR Williams

Formatting & Typesetting by Black Bee Media

ISBN: 978-1-7356885-6-5 (Paperback)

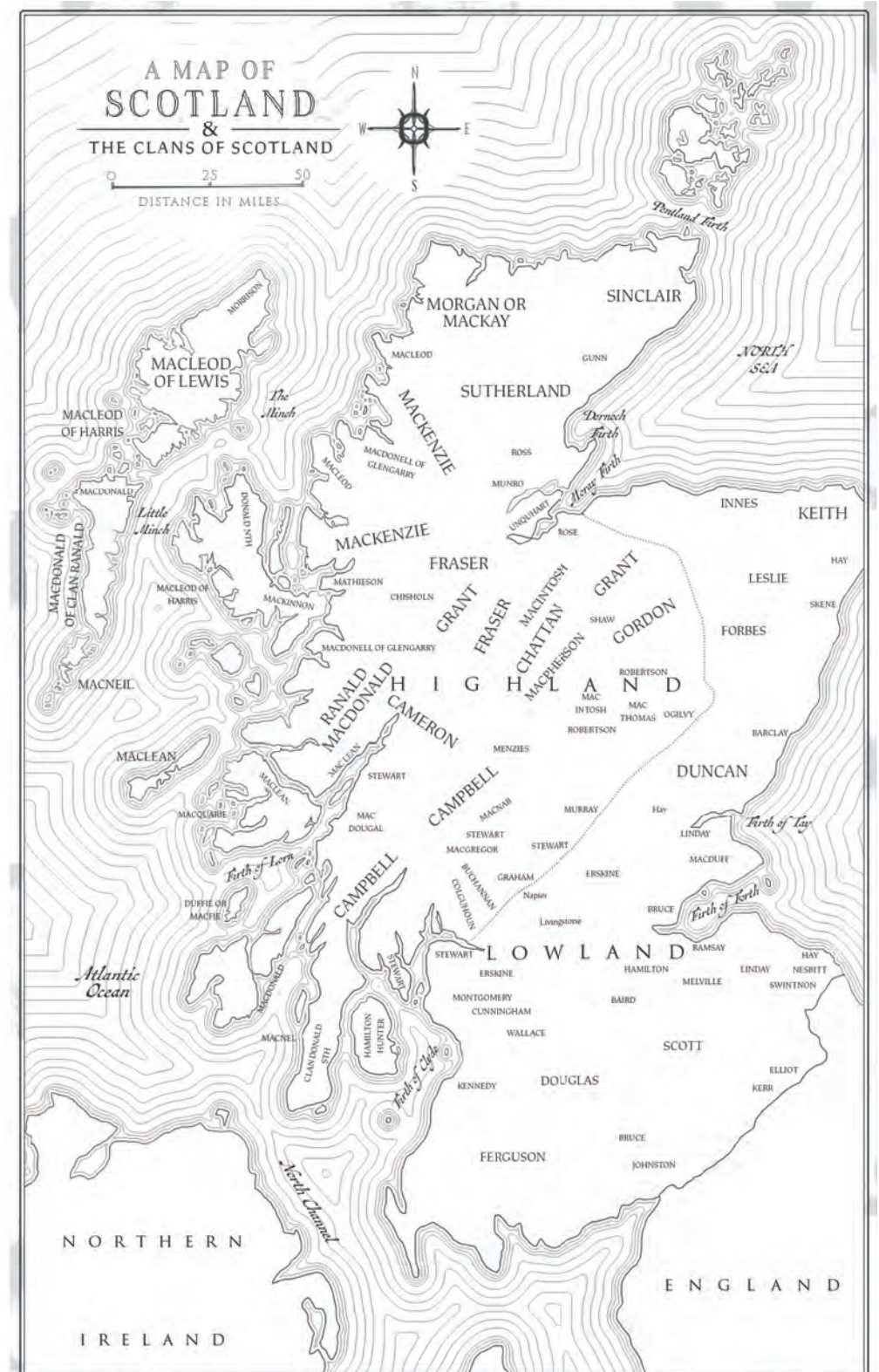
978-1-7356885-5-8 (Ebook)

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Introduction

Welcome to *The Highland Games: A Beginner's Guide to History, Kilts and Throwing*.

Whether you're thinking of getting started in the Games, have a general interest in it, or perhaps, you've been watching the 4th season of *The Crown*, we're glad you're here. This book is meant to introduce you and hopefully set you on your journey to loving the Games as much as I do. Well, maybe not as much as I do, but you get the point.

The Highland Games has been a journey for me, as it has for many. It's given me so much in my short time throwing. I have discovered a passion, an outlet and a community that embodies the spirit of the highlands and the betterment of their fellow human beings. It's a really uplifting and empowering sport for both spectators and athletes alike.

For over a thousand years, this incredible sport has survived so much and continues to thrive throughout the world today.

This book will take you through the history of the Highland Games, fill you in on all of the events (what

they are, who governs them, the different roles, etc.) and how to get started in them. You'll also learn about another important part of the Games and of history... the Kilt. I'll walk you through how to find your family's tartan, where to buy a kilt, how to wear it and I'll cover some of the accessories such as the sgian dubh and the sporran.

I've also started a podcast to help you continue learning and growing past this book, where we also talk to many Heavy Athletes and others within the community about their own stories and experiences in this great tradition. The Kilted Patriot podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and more! Check it out here:

<https://anchor.fm/kiltedpatriot>



The History of the Highland Games

For Centuries, the Scottish Highland Games have been considered to be one of Scotland's greatest cultural exports. Through a display of culture, heritage, strength and freedom, the Games offer activities that every family member can enjoy. Over a thousand years ago warriors would gather and test themselves in feats of strength. Through sheer defiance and determination through oppression, this time-honored traditions and the ancient values would be upheld. The Highland Games continue throughout the world to this day. The events include activities from heavy athletics, dancing, drumming, and piping that pay homage to Celtic and Scottish culture and as always, delicious food and whiskey.

However, where the Games began is often a point of contention. The Tailteann Games ran from 1820 BC to 1180 AD in Ireland. However, Scotland gives credit to King Malcolm III. In 1040 AD Malcolm, in need of a courier, summoned men from different backgrounds to a hill race. The goal of this activity was simple: the fastest man would be his messenger. As well as the honor of the newly bestowed position, the prize also included a purse of gold and a sword. Legend has it that three brothers joined the race and were favored to win. At the start of the race, the two elder brothers took the lead with the youngest lagging behind, begging the king to allow him to race. The king told him that he may but was too far behind to have a chance at winning. However, the youngest brother was quick to catch up and most impressive at running the hill. As he closed the gap between himself and his brothers, it is said he called out, "halves brothers, and I

Games Day Terminology, Etiquette and Overview

There's a lot that goes on at the Highland Games. Still with me? Great! Let's talk about some common terminology, etiquette and the Games day overview.

Terminology

The Trig

Let's start with "What's a trig?" Basically, the trig is a part of the throwing area or zone – This is where you start for all spins, glides and throws for the weights for distance, hammer and stones. The majority of the time in the United States, we'll see the "Box." Which measures up 4'6" wide and 9' long (7' 6" for the Open Stone). In the stone and weight events, you must start with at least one foot inside the box. For it to be counted as a *legal* throw, you must also complete the throw with at least one foot inside of the box. Both feet must always remain behind the wooden block at the front of the box.



The other form of a box, more often seen in Scotland and throughout Europe, is what is a “Winged Trig,” though it has been making its way into some U.S. games. In many people’s opinions, the winged trig is seen as more thrower friendly, as it is much easier to judge and there’s a little more room in width for the thrower. However, differing from the trig, the athlete must begin with both feet in the box and finish with both feet in the box. The measurements remain the same of 7’ 6” and 9’ in length, however the width is at 6’ 9”, due to 45-degree angles from either side of the trig leading to the box.

Hammer Cage

Wondering what a hammer cage is? Picture this: Chain link fencing, set up behind the box, to hopefully stop a runaway hammer!

Standards

Standards is another name for the height rig for WOB and Sheaf. See that piece of equipment in the image below? That’s a weight being thrown over the bar (Weight Over Bar) using the Standards.



Athletic Director (AD)

The Athletic Director (AD), is THE GUY. They spend so much of their free time volunteering organizing and running these Games/events, it is a “Labor of Love” as quoted by my friend and Athletic Director of the Covenanter Games in Pennsylvania.

The major roles of the AD include:

- Providing a safe field for both athletes and spectators
- Facilitate Classes of Athlete, whether it’s Pro’s, amateurs, women or Master’s. Known as Flights - They acquire the equipment, and implements needed for the event, to include extras in case of damages

Week 1 - 1

Events	Distance/ Height	Best of 5	Worst of 5
Braemar			
Open			
LWFD			
HFWD			
L Hammer			
H Hammer			
WOB			
Shaef			
Caber (Turn)			

Drills ran today
(e.g. battle drill/pick and carry)

Grid Consistency/Volume Training

Events	Current PR	80%	# of Reps

They that live longest see most

Notes: How did you feel today? (e.g. sleep, diet, etc.)

Notes: How did the session go? (e.g. Improves/Goals
for the next session)

Notes:

12-Month Highland Games Calendar

Use this calendar to keep track of the games you'd like to participate in and/or attend, as well as registration dates (registering for the event on registration day is encouraged as it can be competitive to get a spot).

You can also use the notes section to record PRs, goals, registration dates, etc.



JAN 01

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEB 02

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

JAN 01

FEB 02

MAR 03

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

APR 04

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

MAR 03

APR 04

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