

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF THE  
SOMETIMES I CRY IN THE SHOWER & THURSDAYS IN THE GROTTO

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# *DIGEST OF THE* **BROKEN ROAD TRAVELER**

FIFTY-TWO TRUTHS, TENETS,  
AND TEACHINGS TO HEAL  
THE TROUBLED SOUL

AUTHOR | SPEAKER | SURVIVOR

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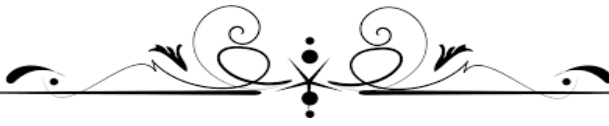
**R. GLENN KELLY**



# DIGEST OF THE BROKEN ROAD TRAVELER



Fifty-Two Truths, Tenets, and  
Teachings to Heal the Troubled Soul



*PRESENTED TO*



*FROM*



*DATE*





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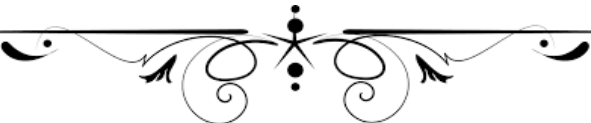
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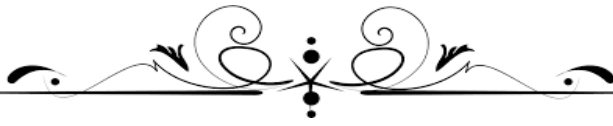


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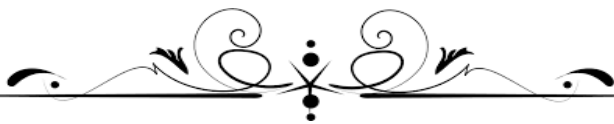
## DEDICATION

To my son and best friend, Jonathan Taylor Kelly...  
in memoriam.

*If flowers grow in heaven, Lord, I'll ask a few from thee.  
Place them in my child's arms and tell him they're from me.  
Whisper that I love him and when he turns to smile,  
place a kiss upon his cheek and hold him for a while.  
For remembering him is easy, as I do so every day.  
But the ache to touch my child again shall never go away.*

*Dad*





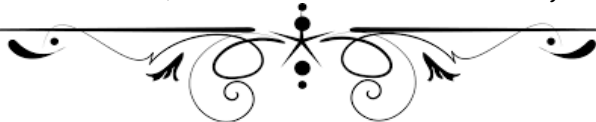
## INTRODUCTION

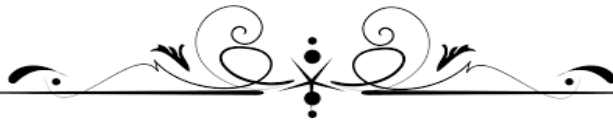
**D***igest of the Broken Road Traveler* is a collective offering of fifty-two inspirational teachings to help you rediscover faith, love, and true self after life-changing hardships and heartaches. Each tenet is conceptually presented through Waypoints and Exits, or off ramps, along the highway of your broken soul's journey.

While you'd always like to cruise at breakneck speed along your life's route, the ugly, unexpected collisions, roadblocks, and delays certainly take their toll on your heart. It's only by taking the exits to some faith-healing byways that you recharge your soul. And in doing so, you'll rediscover your inner strength and once again return to your travels with a renewed sense of hope and healing.

As *The Broken Road Traveler*, I've had my share of emotional traumas, hardships, and grief. A previous career placed me where I constantly witnessed, first-hand, man's ghastly and unspeakable inhumanity to man, and in ways that deeply scar the psyche. I've survived spousal infidelity and horrific emotional abuse in one failed marriage and an unwanted divorce in another. Along with demoralizing career interruptions, I've lost both of my parents far too soon for me, and far too young for the both of them.

Then, in the year 2013, I unexpectedly lost my beloved teen-aged son and only child to a rare congenital heart defect. Absolutely nothing could drop one to their knees more than this. With all that and more, had I not detoured from my broken road for



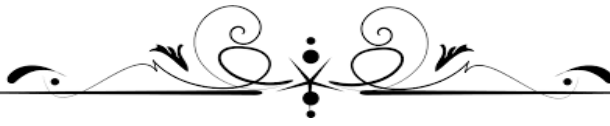


a time, I would've surely crashed and burned long ago. Thankfully, at each rest stop along my life's journey, I've found comfort in faith, hope, and wisdom.

Now, I offer what I've learned to you. If only one of the fifty-two tenets, truths, and teachings in this book inspire hope in your difficult travels, it will be well worth your read.

Exit now and enrich your soul, and again find your life's journey filled with God's Divine peace and purpose.





# Digest of The Broken Road Traveler

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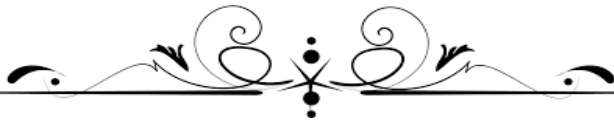
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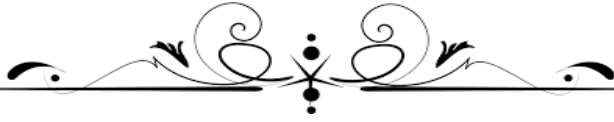
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# Waypoint One

**REAWAKENING YOUR  
TRUE SELF**



## EXIT ONE ~

### FRIENDS NEVER WALK ALONE

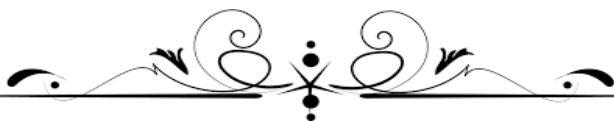
You're truly blessed with a dear friend in your life. All too often, however, this constant comrade remains unnoticed in your daily grind. Still, this special someone does so much to positively guide even your most important decisions. Or at least tries, anyway. After all, you often let your ego speak loudest and abandon your companion's good advice, don't you?

Still, this stubborn friend of yours never gives up. They've been with you from the beginning and will be with you until what you now believe is the end. Let it give you comfort, however, in knowing that your friendship will continue beyond a time when your end becomes a new beginning.

This remarkable friend stands with you in quiet solitude as you look out across the ocean, whether witnessing an exquisite sunset or an incoming squall. To them, it's all the same. If you'll listen, this friend whispers in your ear whenever you look into the eyes of a newborn child, who looks back at you with some profound and unspoken connection. Knowing all your secrets, your friend never judges or shares with others. No one else knows your truth.

In society, there are those who make it their life's effort to connect and commune with their special friend. They know the worth can never be overexaggerated. Once they've communed, the important answers in life come and the veils of lies and sin are

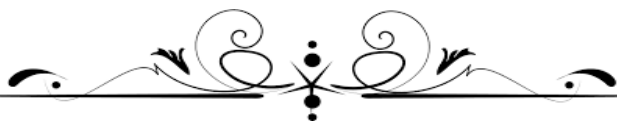




pushed aside. With the revelations of such a dear friend, it's impossible to know why the entire human race is not in constant pursuit of a closer bond.

You know that important person, don't you? In fact, everyone does. But just to ask the question; who is that? Yes, it's your inner you. It's your true self. It's your soul, and it's always there for you as a constant companion. It has a spiritual connection and is always willing to share that without asking for anything in return.

As you read this, something deep inside you smiles and sends a warmth through your body, as if to say hello again. Answer your dear friend. Since the very beginning, the great truths of life dwell within these miraculous exchanges and will continue long after your end becomes your new beginning.



## EXIT TWO ~

### NEVER STOP SHORT OF YOUR DREAMS

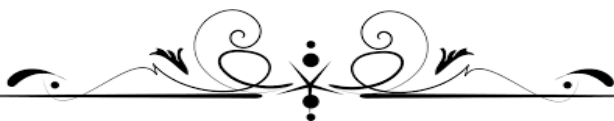
There was a young farm hand who worked hard, got married, and saved up enough money to buy their own property. After discussing the mutual designs with his wife, the young man quit his job and went to work on building their house. He was pleased when it was completed. Now, the proud couple could have their own piece of land to farm and a warm home where they would raise children.

The only thing the couple's property lacked was water and, being a good distance from any town, a well would have to be dug to get it. So, he brought in a well-digging company. Unfortunately, no matter how hard the engineers tried, or how many holes were dug, the crew kept coming up dry.

What was the young man to do? Without water to support his family's home, the dreams of the newlywed's future were crushed. Yet, there was no going back. He had quit his job and invested everything they had on the farm. All he knew now was that he couldn't give up on their dreams.

He spoke with the head engineer but was told all was lost. The money the young man had paid for the digging service was now all spent on failed attempts. So, they had no choice but to give up. As a matter of fact, the engineer told the young man, they were just about to pull the digging drill from the last hole in the field.

The young man was going to call his wife with the devastating

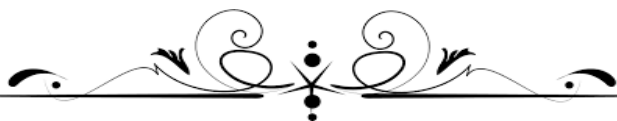


news when something inside told him no. Instead, he went to the head engineer and asked him how deep they had gone down in the last hole. The engineer answered they had gone a thousand feet. The young man asked how far just a single turn of the rig would take the drill down. The engineer told him it would only go down four inches.

The young man then pleaded with the engineer to fire up the rig and give it just one more turn. The engineer declined, reminding the young man that all his money had been spent and that only four more inches couldn't matter. Yet, he persisted, explaining that he wasn't ready to give up on his future. He would find more money, if he had to, but begged the engineer to give the drill just one more turn.

Something inside the engineer stirred and, against his better judgment, he radioed out to his crew, ordering them to give just one final turn of the drill before pulling out. Ten minutes later, the crew radioed back to say that they had finally struck water, and both men fell to their knees.

Don't give up on your dreams, even when you've been digging for a long time. You may only be inches away from your reward. If you quit, however, that which you seek will forever remain unrealized just below the surface. And when you meet someone who seems to keep digging but has yet to find their water, help them give their drill another turn. One more shot, after all, just might be the one that fills their well.



## EXIT THREE ~

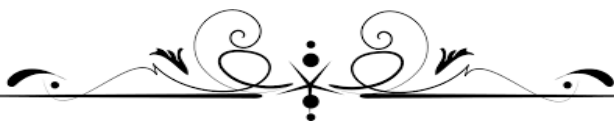
### SELF-WORTH, SELF-ESTEEM, AND EGO

When you're walking a path of hope and healing, there is a great deal of external influences, both good and bad. Interacting with others can have either risk or reward, since what they say or do can have tremendous sway on your essential growth efforts.

Inside the mind, however, you have little choice in interacting with me, myself, and I, or *self-worth*, *self-esteem*, and *ego*. And, as contact can't be avoided, you must come to find a greater understanding of your own day-to-day control over your emotional journey.

First is the true you of *self-worth*. Anyone with a nurturing, loving childhood will have a strong, positive foundation of self-worth. It was molded through faith and familiarity with God, and from mentors who lovingly nurtured you with a sense that you are *good* and that you *matter*. It would be rare for your true self to be significantly altered throughout life. Like the foundation of a home, self-worth remains solid, regardless of what else changes around it.

While *self-esteem* may seem similar, it is absolutely *not* the same as self-worth. Self-esteem is fluid and flexible. It may change day to day or even minute by minute. It's your opinion of yourself at the moment, mostly centered on your current successes and failures in daily life. For example, if you received a raise at work,



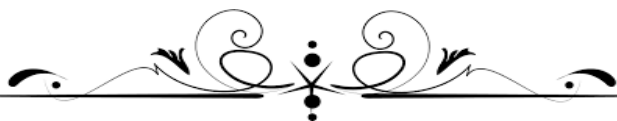
your self-esteem will be high. If you were passed over for a promotion, your self-esteem will likely be low. And if self-worth is the foundation of your home, self-esteem can be considered the furnishings inside, like carpet, drapes, and nick-nacks, always changing with current styles and fads.

Then, there is *ego*, or Edging God Out. Ego is your desire to have others see you as someone who deserves admiration. Often driven by low self-esteem, you fail to look inward for approval from self-worth, or your true self. That's where the spirit of God dwells within you. Instead, you seek constant approval from others. And with your need for affirmation from others, you are edging God right out of your life.

If self-worth is your home's foundation and self-esteem is the furnishings inside, then ego is the housepaint and landscaping outside. It's what you want others who can't see inside to believe what you are, even when you're not.

While you move through your journey of growth and healing, there is no one more influential than you, your true self that is your connection to God. And with awareness and understanding of self-worth, self-esteem, and ego, you can now recognize the good influences from the bad.

And whatever risks or rewards you face along the way, *never* Edge God Out of your life.



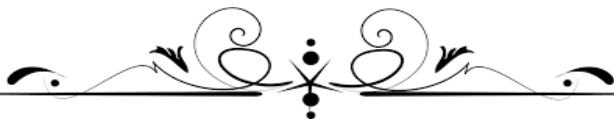
## EXIT FOUR ~

### MAKE YOUR BED, MAKE YOURSELF

What's the first thing you do when you wake in the morning? Do you bolt to the kitchen and make coffee? Do you head straight into the bathroom to shower or brush your teeth? Maybe you need to check your emails and texts. Or do you rise from the warmth of your covers and make your bed? No? Well, when striving to recover that strong foundation within yourself, making your bed right away can be an amazing stimulus for emotional growth.

Making your bed every morning can provide benefits in so many areas of your life. Doing this simple but sometimes annoying task will give you a needed sense of pride. It may seem a small thing, but it will motivate you to perform other pesky and often overlooked deeds. And it can be incredibly motivating to look back over the day and find you've scored far more accomplishments than slights, right?

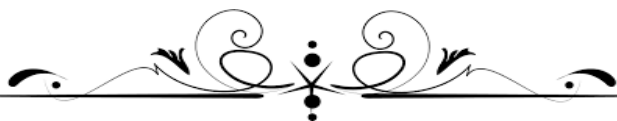
Your conscious mind might tell you that it's senseless to make your bed. After all, you're just going to climb right back between the sheets in a few hours. But making your bed will boost your understanding that it *is* the little things in life that matter. It's a multitude of little things done right that make up the very spiritual base of who you are. And here's something else to think about; if you can't do the little things in life, can you really count on yourself to do the big things?



These small tasks, like making your bed right away, can actually be difficult for some. They fail more often than not. After all, the moment after waking can certainly be the most trying time to do things that aren't appealing to the mind. Yet, that's precisely why making your bed is so important. What begins as an attempt to achieve such a minor success can result in a positive feeling of finding self-esteem in personal sacrifice. Then, doing the big things will seem natural.

When times are emotionally tough, it might be simple to ask, *Why bother making my bed? Why should I shower? What reason do I have to get out of my sweats today?* But these thoughts only encourage laziness in your mind and take away what control you do have in a sometimes-chaotic world.

So, if you sincerely want to begin taking back control of your life, why not start by making your bed?



## EXIT FIVE ~

### BE THE ONE YOU TURN TO

Do you need someone to turn to in troubled times? Never forget that the best person for this is very often you. That's right. No one can give you better advice than you.

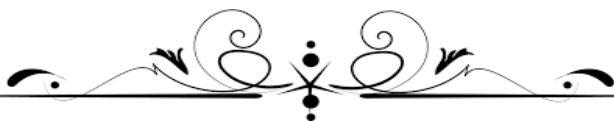
Listen, everyone has that mentor or two in life who always seems to have the perfect answers. But are they always there? At 3:00 am, when despondency fills your thoughts and you just need a kind, positive word, you're pretty much on your own.

Well, who knows you better than you? Even before this most recent heartache or hardship, you've surely been through other trying times. And with each passing trauma, you're the one who learned what it took to stand back up and climb the mountain. Even if that knowledge initially came from another wise soul, you're the one who opened yourself to learn. You were the one taking notes and then taking positive action to move forward.

Maybe you don't feel like you can be there for yourself. Stop for a moment and recall times in the past when a troubled friend came to you for help. Can you remember a point when midway through your words of support, you realized that the wisdom you were offering could apply to some troublesome problem of your own?

Further, it's likely you might also think back and realize that when you were giving sound advice to someone else, it seemed like you were on autopilot. You didn't have to think about putting your





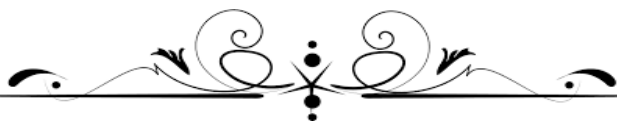
thoughts together before the words just flowed from your mouth.

Just where does your good guidance come from? It's certainly not coming from your conscious mind, especially when you're the one going through the hardship. Right now, that mind is anxious, afraid, and maybe even filled with anger and noisy static. See, it's rapidly moving between thoughts, like when you frantically spin the radio dial in search of a song, any song, that'll make you feel good.

Don't turn to your mind in times of trouble. Instead, turn to your soul. Your soul is the part of you that's deeply connected to God. Call it gut if you will. "*Go with your gut*," it's often said. And there's much truth to that. See, your gut may be wrong from time to time, but with all confidence, know that your gut will never, ever lie to you.

None of this means you shouldn't turn to other mentors and trusted guides in your life. There can be many harbors in a stormy voyage. But remember, you are a very wise soul. You're experienced. You've been through the fire before, haven't you? And, of great importance, you're always available for you.

You can certainly be the one that you turn to.



## EXIT SIX ~

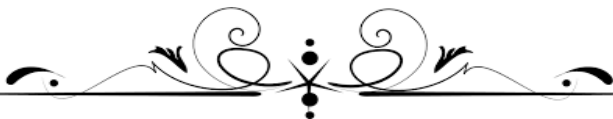
### LET THE WORLD KEEP THE CHANGE

Since they were just toddlers, Shelly and Reanna had been the very best of friends. As they grew, they did almost everything together. And on one fateful day, they would both attend a funeral. Sadly, it was Reanna's, and Shelly was devastated.

See, as the two teenagers went off to college, they both chose the same school. Reanna had a tougher time with the stress of higher education, however, and fell into using illegal drugs. She said it made her feel so much different, like she changed into somebody stronger. She often tried to convince Shelly to do drugs as well, but Shelly refused, of course, telling Reanna that she didn't want to change who she was at all.

Being best friends, there wasn't a day that went by that Shelly didn't plead with Reanna to get clean. She would try to convince her that drugs would destroy her relationship with her friends, her family, her faith, and, of course, herself. But Reanna wouldn't listen. She said she didn't understand why her best friend didn't want to change things too and get high with her.

One day Shelly felt she'd broken through. After presenting her friend with several brochures from a local addiction clinic, Reanna agreed to go. Unfortunately, Shelly had no idea it was just another ruse to get her off her back. That night, Reanna would overdose on pain killers and die all alone.



After the funeral, a distraught Shelly researched and discovered just how prevalent drug use was among students in college. Just in her school alone, there were so many deaths and dropouts attributed to substance abuse that she decided to take a stand. So, under the frequent escort of her friend, Eric, Shelly hit the campus quad each evening and approached every drug-addled student she found there.

Night after night, Shelly made connections among the addicted students. It might've taken her three or four kids, but she always came out with one who claimed a desire to shake the addiction. Yet, she would find out later that they either dropped out, wound up in the hospital, or worse yet, were in the morgue.

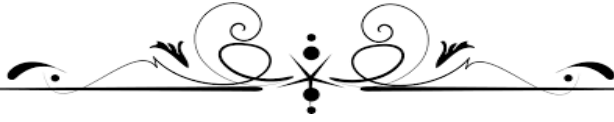
With all the tears and lost causes, Shelly still carried on. And many times, Eric found himself cheering her on at night only to hold her while she cried the next day. He saw so many shattered hopes for Shelly that he asked her several times to stop trying to help the others. She consistently refused his ever-increasing advice, however, until one morning when the failures finally reached a tipping point in Eric's mind.

*"Shelly," Eric said, "you've got to stop. No matter how hard you try, or how many students you talk to, it's just not working."*

*"I can't," she quickly replied. "I won't. I'll make them see."*

A worried Eric came back, *"Shelly, listen. I know what you're doing here, but it's like trying to empty the ocean with a bucket. I hate to say it, but you're not going to change the world."*

Shelly then looked at him and replied, *"I'm not trying to change the world at all, my friend. I'm trying to show the world that it cannot, will not, ever change me."*



## EXIT SEVEN ~

### CHISEL AWAY WHAT'S NOT YOU

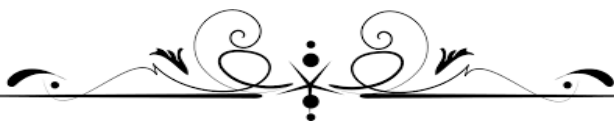
In the year 1501, Michelangelo, the greatest artist that ever lived, accepted a commission to carve a marble sculpture of the biblical David. It was to be placed atop a high buttress in the Florentine Cathedral in Italy. He started his work on a mass of uninspiring marble, chiseling away chunk by chunk until he got the desired David he sought.

It took four years for Michelangelo to carve the famous sculpture out of an 18-foot-tall, misshaped marble block. In fact, other artists, including the famous Leonardo da Vinci, refused the opportunity, regarding the stone to be an inferior mass of marble. It simply wasn't worth the effort.

On the very first viewing of his completed work, an admirer asked Michelangelo how he possessed the talent to carve such a beautiful and perfect David from a mere block of stone.

Michelangelo answered only by saying, "*A beautiful and perfect David already existed within the marble. To set him free, I only removed that which was not David.*"

Don't always seek a better you from outside. The better you is already there. Perhaps you just need to chisel away that which is not you.



## EXIT EIGHT ~

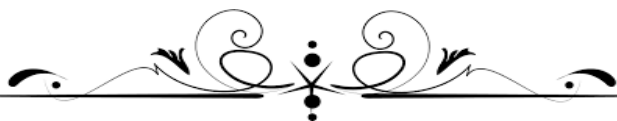
### DIAL IN THE GOOD STATIONS

You've surely experienced driving between towns in your car when the radio station you've been enjoying fades out. Why? Because you're moving away from the source of the broadcast. The antenna that sends out the radio frequency is back in another town that you've purposely left behind.

If you do nothing with your radio dial, you might soon only hear annoying static. Or maybe you begin to hear several frequencies battling with each other and belting out nothing but a confusing garble of inaudible noise. Knowing there's a new town on the horizon, though, you begin retuning your dial, searching, finding, and then leaving it set to some new program that moves you.

Your soul is very much like your car radio. It, too, receives frequency signals from broadcast stations found along the waypoints of your life. Your conscious mind is the driver that listens to what's being offered, based on where you are in life and where you've set your listening dial.

You can choose to listen to a myriad of stations as you move along your life's journey. Some will broadcast programs that offer faith, hope, growth, and joy. Other stations transmit only despondency, doubt, confusion, and fear. Others, still, offer nothing but mindless dribble. Life is filled with endless offerings for a being granted free will by the Father.



To that end, your soul receives all those signals, whether good or bad, and presents them to you as a choice on your radio dial. What stations that you, the driver, or the conscious mind, tunes or retunes to is solely up to you.

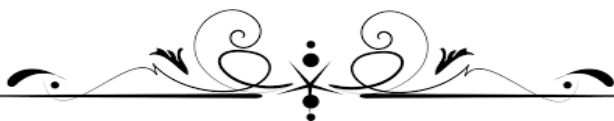
Sadly, most drivers have absolutely no idea they even have a radio dial, or that they can change the station at all. They just go about life while accepting and listening to whatever's being played at the moment.

Some desire positive support but are only tuned to negative frequencies and wonder why they can't find happiness. It's like expecting to hear rock music when the radio dial is set to a talk show format.

Some drivers move between waypoints and, as their signal fades, just accept the mind-numbing static that plays. Because of this, their journey seems boring and meaningless, but they just keep driving along.

As they approach the next town, however, their radio begins picking up a fresh signal on the same dial setting. Soon, a new program plays loud and clear. Unfortunately, this one is negative, with nothing that offers the driver hope and happiness. And, with no understanding of how to change the station, their life becomes a very sad journey.

How can you learn to change the radio station along your life's journey? Train your conscious mind to always be aware of what's playing. Focus on changing your thoughts from bad to good. Begin to become aware of when it's fading or playing something that doesn't serve you well. In those moments of realization, consciously



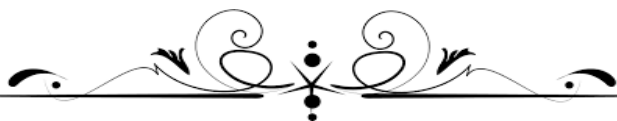
adjust your radio dial.

You certainly want to change your dial to something pleasant and inspiring, right? But do it ever so gently, at first. Don't try to force it. It's actually better to let a bad broadcast play out than it is to fight against it. That only creates anxiety and tension in your mind. And if you remain consciously aware of what's playing, you can take away as much positive growth from the bad as you can from the good.

Using your conscious awareness is always the best way to keep your radio dial tuned to what you want and need to hear. To that end, when you do hear it, remember to express gratitude and appreciation to your soul for making available that which you desire to hear.

With conscious effort, you can tune your soul's radio, and your mind's radio dial, into an inspirational way of experiencing life. You'll have a full understanding that your soul takes in all frequencies and offers them freely for your use.

Tune your dial to a station that's aligned with positive growth.



## EXIT NINE ~

### THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT DAYS

As you journey through life, there will always be highs and lows. Oddly, it's not as much human nature to grow and learn from the highs. Instead, nature dictates that, for survival, we take more from the lows. It actually builds more character, hence the age-old adage, *"I never met a kind man with an easy past."*

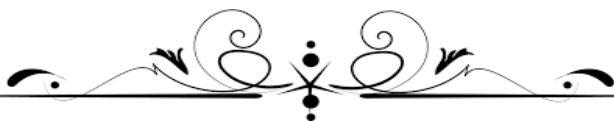
The highs, however, can certainly be memorable and fantastic. The day you married your true love. The birth of your child. Landing your dream job. Each would lead anyone to say, with honest conviction, *"That was the best day of my life."*

All the best days of your life, however, pale in comparison to the most *important* days of your life. And it was Mark Twain who told us long ago that we have two of them.

In one of his more powerful and life-steering quotes, of which he had many, Mr. Twain said, *"The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why."*

When facing the most difficult times, nothing helps more than knowing why you're here. Many feel as if they have a particular calling, such as service to others, whether that be a soldier, an artist, a janitor, or a priest. At your very core, however, know that the reason you're here is to know the unconditional love of God, be a good steward to his world, and discover the two most important days of your life.





## **EXIT TEN ~**

### **WHEN IT'S ONLY YOUR SOUL WATCHING**

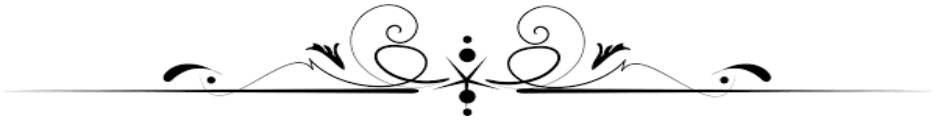
The true test of a soul's character is what he or she does when no one's looking. Do you always do the right thing when it's just you, knowing you won't get any credit for your good behavior?

Not too long ago, a personality model built around a simple shopping cart began circulating through social media. The short, written piece was titled, "The Shopping Cart Theory." In this theory, the anonymous author posited that returning or not returning the cart when done shopping was the ultimate test of good versus bad moral character. You be the judge.

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#### **The Shopping Cart Theory**

To return the shopping cart is an easy, convenient task, and one which we all recognize as the correct, appropriate thing to do. To return the shopping cart is objectively right. There are no situations other than dire emergencies in which a person is not able to return their cart. Simultaneously, it is not illegal to abandon your shopping cart. Therefore, the shopping cart presents itself as the apex example of whether a person will do what is right without being forced to do it. No one will punish you for not returning the shopping cart. No one will fine you or kill you for not returning the shopping cart. You gain nothing by returning the shopping cart.

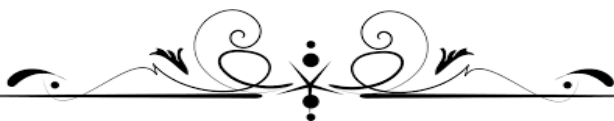


You must return the shopping cart out of the goodness of your own heart. You must return the shopping cart because it is the right thing to do. Because it is correct. A person who is unable to do this is no better than anyone who can only be made to do what is right by threatening them with a law and the force that stands behind it. The Shopping Cart is what determines whether a person is a good or bad member of society.

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While the end of the theory gets a little heavy, there's value in the overall concept. When no one's looking and no one but you can judge your good or bad deeds, what do you do? Well, return the cart.

There's absolutely nothing better than doing the right thing ....especially when it's only your soul watching.



## EXIT ELEVEN ~

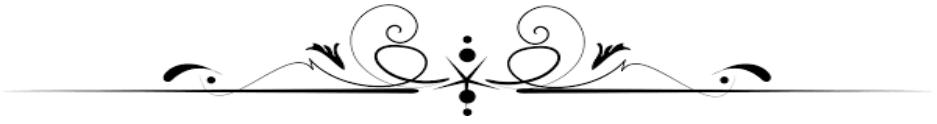
### PAST TRAUMA IS NO FUTURE EXCUSE

According to a national council on mental well-being, over seventy percent of adults in the United States have experienced a profound hardship at least once in their lives. Such personal happenings might be the passing of a loved one, a recent diagnosis of poor health, being the victim of a crime, or so many other emotionally traumatic events.

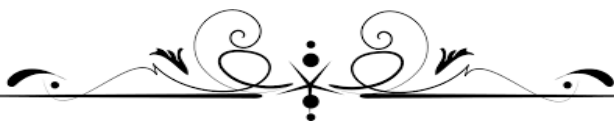
All of those examples, and more, can be mentally and physically draining on the heart. And during the whole ordeal, you can sometimes feel like there's just nothing left to give others, or just as important, yourself. Yet deep inside, you know you should be processing your painful feelings so that you can stand back up, adjust, and begin moving forward again in life.

There's an absolute need to face your profound grief, but there's nothing wrong with taking a little time to curl up in a fetal position, either. In fact, it could be beneficial in preparing your soul for the challenging work ahead. But it must end in a reasonable amount of time. The traumatic event might be a temporary cause for a highly emotional delay, but it's certainly not an excuse to stay stuck in grief forever.

It remains your sole responsibility to ensure that painful emotions don't destroy the positive opportunities that will surely come your way. But opportunities require mental and physical



efforts, and it might seem easier to use your pain as an excuse for avoiding them. Early on, that's perfectly fine, and even somewhat expected. But that must come to an end. What's happened to you in the past, no matter how life-changing it was, is no future excuse for letting a joyous life of peace and purpose pass right by you.



## EXIT TWELVE ~

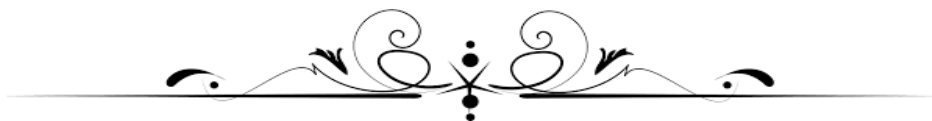
### NO DEED WITHOUT PURPOSE

A purposeless man was asked to clean a boat. He had just experienced the death of his dear wife, but in his deep despondency, felt an urge to stay busy. Running the only marine cleaning service in his seaside village, he was called upon by a fairly new resident who was expecting a visit by his adult children. Although his boat was lightly damaged and dirty, his kin would surely expect an outing on the water.

The purposeless man arrived at the dock outside the man's home to find him nowhere about, but the boat already lifted from the water. So, he settled into his task at hand. Starting on the deck and cabin areas, it took several hours before he began working on the outside.

As he made his way underneath the craft, the purposeless man noticed some damage, as well as a hole that went all the way through the hull. Having the proper materials available in his bag, he easily plugged the hole and repaired the blemishes before completing his cleaning job.

When unable to find the owner around his property, the purposeless man simply shrugged and walked away. The man could find him later and pay...or not. It really didn't matter. The job had no other purpose than to keep him from thinking about his loss and pain.



Three days later, the boat owner came to the shop of the purposeless man and presented him with a big check. Actually, it was a great deal more money than what would be expected for such a job. The purposeless man was surprised and said, "Sir, this is way more than I normally charge for cleaning a boat."

"But this is not just for the cleaning job," the man replied. "I owe you so much more. You repaired the hole."

"Oh," the purposeless man answered. "But in truth, it was such a simple repair, and making more money from you was not my purpose."

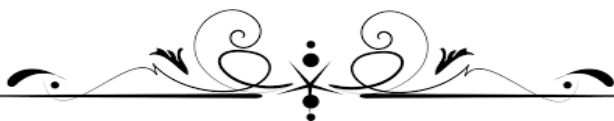
"Not your purpose?" the boat owner came back. "You don't understand. You were to clean my boat, yes. But the next day the hull repairman was to come by. He didn't. My children unexpectedly did, and I, on the other hand, was not yet home."

"Did they take the boat out?" the purposeless man asked.

The boat owner took a deep breath and answered, "Yes. They took the boat out. And when I came home and saw their luggage there, but the boat gone, I was beside myself with dread and panic. I surely thought they had gone to their death. Imagine my joy and relief when I saw them safely return to the dock.

The purposely man then said, "You must've been relieved."

"Indeed," the man came back, "It was then that I examined the boat and found that you had repaired the hole. It is true that I did not hire you for that purpose, my friend. But you saved my children and, for that, I could never pay enough to have witnessed the true purpose in your heart."



## EXIT THIRTEEN ~

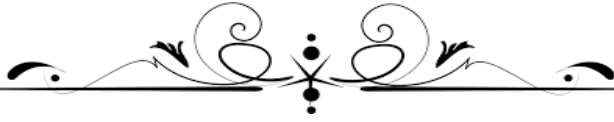
### FILL YOUR LIFE TO THE BRIM

The good Pastor didn't start his sermon from the pulpit this Sunday morning. Instead, he walked in before the congregation to stand behind a table laid out with a couple of odd items. Looking out over his curious flock, he then looked down and slowly moved a large, empty glass jar before him.

Reaching into one smallish box on the table, he began removing handfuls of candy jawbreakers. As gently as he could, he began filling the jar with these gobstoppers until the huge balls of hard candy reached the top. He bent over to set the box on the floor and, standing back up, asked the crowd if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. He asked if they were sure. They were.

The Pastor then picked up the only other small box on the table. This one was filled with colorful jellybeans, which he began pouring into the jar. He had to shake the glass container several times, of course, to get the oblong sweet delights to drop down between each jawbreaker. When he had filled the gaps from bottom to top, he set the box on the floor and again asked his assemblage if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. He asked if they were sure. Seeing that only the jar remained on the table, the congregation still agreed that it was.

The Pastor raised his eyebrows and replied, "*Oh, really?*" and reached under the table to lift yet another small box. This one held



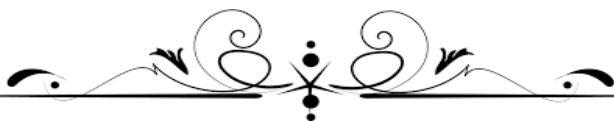
a bag of sugar, which he opened and slowly poured into the jar. When the sand-like sugar moved down between the jawbreakers and jellybeans, eventually filling the jar to the brim, the Pastor asked once more asked if it was full. The congregation laughed and responded with a unanimous "yes."

*"Now, my brothers and sisters," said the Pastor as the laughing subsided, "I want you to understand that this jar represents your life. These huge jawbreakers inside are the important things, like your faith, your family, and your health."*

He then grabbed the jar near the bottom with both hands and, with an embellished grunt, lifted it to his eyes. Peering into the jar and then around to the group for dramatic effect, he continued, *"The jellybeans inside are the other things that matter to you but are not so big. They could be your job, your house, your savings, and your car. The sugar? Well, that's just everything else in your busy life. It's the small stuff you like so much but could certainly do without. You see, if everything else in this jar was emptied out and only the jawbreakers remained, know that your life would still be full."*

Setting the jar back down on the table, the Pastor took a more serious tone and commanded, *"But hear me, folks. If you put the sugar in this jar first, let it be filled to the brim with only a multitude of life's smaller desires, then guess what? There's no room for the jawbreakers, or even the jellybeans. It's been filled with only desires. And could that be the truth in your life, friends? Are you spending all your time, all your energies, focused only on the small stuff? Have you placed all that inside your jar before the big things that are truly important to you?"*





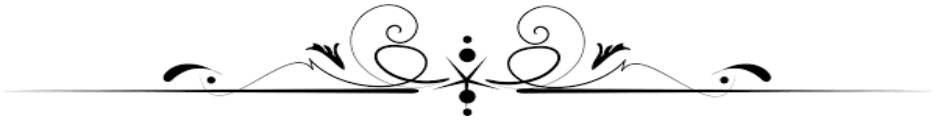
No one in the congregation said a word. The good Pastor knew he had their minds going at that point. Then, without a word, he purposely walked from the table over to the kitchen window at the side of the nave. Once there, the curious congregation remained silent as he nonchalantly poured tea from a gallon jug into a big, plastic cup. When it was mostly full, he took the cup and walked back to his table.

Just as he arrived there, he began slowly and carefully pouring the tea into the jar, not allowing a drop to spill as it soaked into its sugary contents. But while doing so, he began speaking again, this time in a softer, more passionate tone, *"Pay attention, my friends, to the big gobstoppers that are critical to your true faith and happiness. Give honor and humility to God, the Father. Teach and play with your children. Pay attention to your health and live long. And my goodness, please go out to dinner once in a while with your spouse, huh? There'll always be time later to do the laundry or mow the lawn. Set your life's priorities. Fill your jar, your life, with the big things first. Then, dear people, may you squeeze in all the little things you have room for."*

The last drop of tea from the Pastor's cup finally dripped inside the jar, filling it up to the very brim. Still looking down at it, he dipped an index finger into the mix, pulled it back out, and stuck it in his mouth with a childish grin.

Then, somewhere mid-pew, a laughing church member yelled out to the Pastor, asking if the jar was finally full. In response, the Pastor stood straight up, laughed, and said he believed that it was now.

Then another member yelled, *"Pastor, I get it. But what in the*



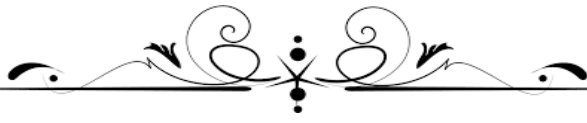
*world does the tea represent?"*

The Pastor paused, looked back down at the jar for a moment, back up to the congregation, and answered, *"I'm glad you asked. See, no matter how full your life might seem, how much you've managed to cram into your jar, know that there's always, always room to have a nice glass of sweet tea with your Pastor."*



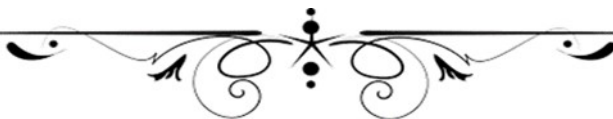
## WAYPOINT TWO

SELF-CONSCIOUS OR  
CONSCIOUS OF SELF



*“It’s your road and yours alone.  
Others may walk it with you, but  
no one can walk it for you.”*

*~ Rumi*





## EXIT FOURTEEN ~

### EGO CONSCIOUS VS SPIRIT CONSCIOUS

Are you aware that you're not really a body that has a soul, but a soul that has a body? What this affirms is the undeniable truth that you flourish from the inside out. You should also know, then, that the more you seek outside validation for your ego and self-esteem, the less you're able to realize internal peace and purpose.

Without a doubt, it's natural and normal to want love and appreciation from others around you, but you must ensure you're seeking that acknowledgment for the right reasons. The validation that you strive for, however, should largely come from within. This begins with not being ego-conscious, but instead, being spirit-conscious.

When you're ego-conscious, you have a heightened sense of yourself that's solely based on how you believe others see you. You see yourself through the poor lens of ego. Ego-consciousness may lead to fear-based attitudes of control, jealousy, competition, guilt, shame, insecurity, and more, and all because of a threatened self-image.

Your ego actually operates by subscribed labels and beliefs that you put on yourself and, many times, you purposely share with others. Unfortunately, if you don't live up to those labels, the result can be regret. For instance, if you were to tell someone that you're always on time, just to be impressive, then you run the risk of disappointment if you show up late in the future. Then, knowing



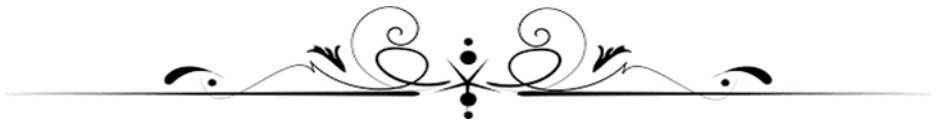
the lesser opinion another now feels for you, you lower your own self-esteem.

Phobias actually give a very strong example of how ego-consciousness impacts the male psyche. First, consider that the strongest typical phobia for a female is creepy-crawly things, like bugs and rodents. The strongest fear in most men, however, is that others are going to discover that he's not everything that he purports himself to be. In other words, he's not actually as masculine and brave inside as he displays to others on the outside.

If you solely make decisions based on your ego, you're severely limiting your experience of life. For instance, if you were to take a personality test that resulted in labeling you an extrovert, then you might find it necessary to act as an extrovert at all times. However, in socializing, there will be times when being an extrovert is inappropriate and can cause discomfort for yourself and others.

When you are spirit-conscious, you can raise your self-esteem to a whole new level. But being spirit-conscious requires serious patience and practice to overcome the urge to see things through the lens of your ego. In order to live from this place of inner peace and freedom, you must first believe that you are the creator of your own reality, and your beliefs and decisions directly impact the course of your life.

It is also important to accept that while you are in the driver's seat of your life, your spirit is acting as your back-seat driver. If you make a decision that is not in your best interest, your spirit will attempt to redirect you. When you realize this, and something doesn't go the way you planned or imagined, it's easier to let go because you trust it was not in your spiritual best interest.



So, you're not a human having a spiritual experience right now, are you? You're already spirit. You're just having a human experience. Consider this in how you live your life. Will it be ego-conscious or spirit conscious? The latter will take you to heights you've never imagined.



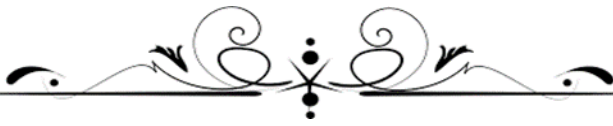
## EXIT FIFTEEN ~ YOUR NORMALCY BIAS

There will be times in the troubled mind when it's perfectly healthy and emotionally healing to head for a mental safe zone. When pain and confusion are the rule of the day, it's actually wise to enjoy a little normal, just to help bolster your strength for the journey ahead. Does such a zone exist? Yes. It's a coping mechanism in the human mind often referred to as the *Normalcy Bias*.

So, just what makes up this Normalcy Bias? Well, many mental health clinicians consider it destructive when used to avoid facing potential future disasters. In such a manner, you're fully aware of a catastrophic event that may come but choose to disregard the thought and go about your normal, routine life. For instance, some Californians ignore the probability of an earthquake, even when history and science reveal the pending possibility of one happening where they live. As a result of their Normalcy Bias, these blissful souls may fail to prepare for the disaster and will be woefully unprepared if and when it strikes.

For you, however, the Normalcy Bias takes on a somewhat different influence. Yet it's equally accepted and can be very beneficial to your healing journey. Your emotional earthquake has already happened, hasn't it? And there's a good chance you had no dire warnings or early forecasts of such a life-altering event. It shook you to your very foundation. Now your exhausted brain, suffering with anguish, confusion, anger, and grief, is screaming





for something, anything, that seems normal again, if only for a moment.

That screaming that you hear is your subconscious mind. It's in survival mode. That's what it does. Much like a soldier who loses a limb in combat but feels no immediate pain, your subconscious mind wants to stop you from experiencing an overwhelming onslaught of both physical and mental pain. If successful, it just might give you the time to register and rationally sort out what took place without pain getting the upper voice.

You've been through a lot, and the return path toward peace and purpose will require a great deal of hard work. Give yourself a break when the mind screams for normal. Resume a hobby, go for a nice walk, or paint the house. Do whatever feels normal for you. It will help. But make it a break, and not a means to avoid the painful realities and moving forward. Remember, that amazing someone you were and will be again is waiting for you.



## EXIT SIXTEEN ~

### YOU ARE THE HOST WITH THE MOST

You are a spirit who has a soul that exists in a body. Simple enough, right?

Your body is your corporeal connection to this realm. It's the miraculous vehicle through which you travel about in the natural world. It's within this body of flesh that you speak and communicate. Further, you see, hear, feel, taste, and smell all that's around you. Every single interaction that you share with others is through your body. And it's also the host of your divine connections.

Your soul is the realm of decision. It consists of your *mind*, your *will*, your *emotions*, and your *personality*. Your mind is where you imagine. Your will is what you want. Your emotions are what you feel. And your personality is the coming together of those subparts.

The soul is eternal, and every human being has one, including the wicked. It gives you animation and consciousness. It's where you experience God's glorious gift of free will. To that end, the very breath of life is in your soul. Your soul is actually the liaison, or go-between, for your body and your spirit.

Your spirit is your wonderful connection with God. It's the innermost part of your very being, the center of you, and the source of your true identity. No one but your spirit truly knows your thoughts and it shares that with no other of this earthly realm.

Your spirit is connected to God's Holy Spirit and knows His



thoughts. The Holy Spirit knows God's will, intentions, and desires, and perfectly understands God's nature and power. Everything there is to know about our infinitely complex God, the Holy Spirit already knows. He's not learning about God. The Holy Spirit knows God. After all, only He can fully know Himself.

It is the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, which shares what He knows about The Father with your spirit. He shares God's revelations and mysteries with your innermost being. It's in that place of inner oneness that sacred secrets are being revealed to your soul. By the Holy Spirit, you have the privilege of an eternal connection with God Himself, if you choose to listen.

No matter how the highs and lows make you feel in body and soul, your connection in spirit always remains inside you. You are a spirit who has a soul that exists in a body.



## EXIT SEVENTEEN ~

### STREAMING YOUR EMOTIONS

Emotions flow through you like a stream meandering through a lush forest. Your feelings, both of joy and sorrow, maintain balance and give life to the beautiful flora and fauna of the eco-persona that is you. Do all things possible to not interrupt that flow.

What enters the body and mind, be it food, water, air, sunlight, etc., or even through the five senses, is designed to be taken in and then flow back out through some form of useful energy. That could be by breathing, thinking, moving, loving, growing, and healing, along with so many other needs of the body and mind. And what you can't immediately use is expelled as waste, or sometimes stored away for possible leaner times ahead. It's simply amazing, and God's design for that miraculous container that carries His spirit.

This natural process of your in-and-out flow is largely controlled by the subconscious mind. That's the part of you that automatically beats your heart and directs your lungs to expand and contract, along with a myriad of other effortless functions. It knows no malice. The subconscious simply acts on your behalf in ways it's programmed to do, and without your conscious control. There may come times, however, when your *conscious* mind, beset with some painful heartache or hardship, tosses a nasty varmint into the mix.

Imagine, if you will, a busy little beaver who builds a dam across a lovely forest stream. Once the normal flow of the water in that



stream is slowed, or sometimes even halted, it begins to build up behind the jam. And when that happens, the waters flood the land behind and suffocate all the beautiful life that once thrived there. It's not so hard to envision this quickly changing a flourishing and delightful landscape into a dark and stagnant pool of rot and stench.

That dammed-up pool of lifeless stagnation is exactly what happens when you repress your emotions, both good and bad. And because of a false ego, many souls go through life with a little blockage already in place, right? It's usually constructed right there at the heart, where it stops you from appearing soft and vulnerable to others. Even to yourself. Think EGO!

One day, however, both unannounced and unexpected comes the torrential rains of new heartache and grief, brought on by some traumatic event that suddenly brings deep sorrow into your life. The rains of this new anguish begin pouring down into your emotional stream like Noah's forty days and forty nights. Then, they begin to wash downstream. These aren't peaceful waters, either. These are swift, roiling torrents of pain and anguish that are ferociously seeking their natural outward flow.

It's all too much, isn't it? It seems so overwhelming and confusing, and you feel a need to just shut it all down. So, you quickly put that busy beaver of yours to work and quickly build a dam across the stream. Maybe there's already a foundation there for him to work with, too. Regardless, with your dam now in place, your emotional flood from this new experience begins to build up behind it and quickly submerges the beauty that once blossomed inside you.



Without this natural flow, you're in trouble. What's at stake in the flooding is your self-esteem, your confidence, your relationships with your friends and family, and maybe even your desire to move forward at all. You're purposely drowning out all that is your true self. And even if it were to stop right there, you're now faced with living a horrible life of emotional stagnation and rot. Not good.

There's yet more to come, however, when experiencing profound heartache and grief. Your emotional waters continue to build behind the dam, you see, until the pressure is just too much to bear. Then, your dam bursts, blown wide open from the pressure, and violently explodes as if made of fragile, little twigs and leaves. The result becomes an escaping cascade of raging, raw emotions that rush downstream, seeking, needing, drawn to, its natural outward flow. And it now carries with it all the destructive debris of anger, guilt, and remorse. And you have absolutely no control over it.

These destructive and painful emotions are flowing out whether you like it or not and headed toward all that you once held dear. Uncontrolled, your outward blast of caustic emotions will destroy everything it moves through, including faith, passion, inspiration, and your potential for an amazing life of peace and purpose. The collateral damage is bad as well. It will likely destroy friendships, your career, and the positive impacts you once had on so many other souls in your life.

After the unthinkable has happened in your life, you must face and process your emotions. That doesn't mean you have to do so externally. That's a misconception shared by so many. But emotions



must be allowed to flow in. Even though unpleasant, they will nourish your soul. Afterward, those emotions must be allowed to flow out in some manner. How is up to you. Just don't let that busy little beaver anywhere near your stream.



## EXIT EIGHTEEN ~

### SUFFER YOUR BENT WING

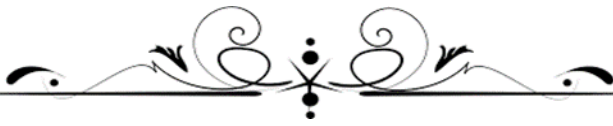
When God created the Heavens and the Earth, he also created His angels. One very special angel was named Aniela. In every way that is His design, she was a beautiful and perfect angel. At first, she understood that. She knew that she was God's manifested perfection, even though she came into being with one very bent and useless wing.

God then created Adam and Eve, who would leave the Garden and procreate. Before long, His children began to flourish across the land and, over time, Aniela watched as all the other angels came and went at His bidding. Joyously, they flitted and flew back and forth to serve those in this wondrous new realm.

Aniela, however, was rarely asked to help. When she was, other angels had to burden themselves by carrying her along. And every mission God sent her on seemed to be ones that were so overwhelmingly heartbreaking that she often doubted her success on return.

More and more, Aniela began to question not just her success, but herself. She felt she wasn't as useful as all the other angels. Worse, she began to despise the look of her bent and malformed wing. Actually, this precious child would come to question the very meaning of own her existence. How could she be everything she saw in the other angels? How could she serve as one of God's helpers when she couldn't even do something as basic as fly? Why





was she an angel at all?

So, one fateful day, flustered with all the doubts and anxieties she'd been through, Aniela walked up to the feet of God at the throne. She looked up into His gentle gaze and meekly asked why she was not like the other angels. She asked why she had to face so many challenges when, in fact, it was her duty to help and guide His earthly children.

In an almost silent swoosh of air, God reached out his arms to take Aniela up and gently place her on his lap. Lovingly looking down into her eyes, He calmly explained, *"My precious Aniela. An angel's gift is not in having beautiful wings or the ability to fly. No, my child. It is the ability to heal. And the angels who will become the greatest of all are the ones who have been through sufferings like no other. For when an angel truly knows, truly has experienced the pain and suffering of others, healing becomes a miraculous act. You, my perfect angel, were created for just that great purpose."*

If you've been through the fire and faced the toughest of life's struggles, then you are now one of God's healing angels on Earth. Always remember that there is a reason for your suffering and a purpose for your life. You were made to go through it and become a healer of others who are just beginning to travel a difficult journey.



## EXIT NINETEEN ~

### TRANSITION THE CHANGE

Change and transition. They are not the same, but each so necessary in life. Change, you see, is something that happens to you even if you don't want it. Transition, on the other hand, is internal. It happens inside of you. It's what happens in your mind as you come out of the change. Change can happen very quickly, while transition is usually a slow process.

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A very lonesome Ryan sat on his back porch swing staring out at the clouds. Shep had finally passed away from old age and Ryan wasn't sure now what he'd do with himself. For years, Shep had been his loyal companion, and even with the dog's advanced years, Ryan wasn't ready to lose his friend. So, in his loneliness and despair, he just sat, day after day, and looked out at the sky until dark.

As if out of nowhere, a Calico cat suddenly sauntered across the porch and leaped onto Ryan's lap. Surprised, he gave the unknown kitty a little scratch between the ears and put her back down on the wooden floor. Instead of moving on, however, the cat jumped right back up onto Ryan's lap and turned around, as if joining him in looking out at the clouds. Deciding to let her be, for now, he just casually scratched the cat's head as they both silently sat until dark.

Ryan didn't think much of the cat, but for weeks he found her



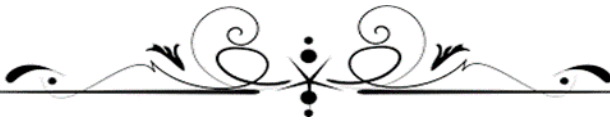
waiting on the porch for him each day to come and sit on the swing. When he did, the cat took her place on his lap and softly purred as they looked out together at the sky. Over time, Ryan began to take comfort in the cat's company and thought he might take her as a pet, wondering if she would ever be what Shep had been to him.

The very next day, Ryan decided to take the cat as his new companion. Excitedly, he moved her from his lap and stood to retrieve an old tennis ball that Shep once loved to fetch. He showed the ball to the cat and then tossed it across the yard, but she paid no attention to it. *Okay, he thought, maybe it'll take some time.*

Ryan then grabbed the frisbee that always got his old dog's heart going and showed it to the cat. He loved throwing it so that Shep could leap high and catch it in the air. But the cat didn't blink an eye and made no attempt to run after it once flung from the porch. Hands on hips and even more frustrated, Ryan began to wonder about his new pal.

*Maybe a walk in the park, Ryan thought. Yeah. That was it.* There was nothing he and Shep enjoyed more than taking a long trek through the woods. So, he hurried to the local pet store and bought a collar and leash that would fit the cat. He couldn't wait for the afternoon. It would be the kind of companionship he had missed so much since change came to his world.

When the collar and leash were placed on the cat, however, Ryan was once again met with great disappointment. No matter how patient he was, the cat would fight and struggle against the leash, loudly screeching in protest with each tug. Several times, she ran back and forth against the tension, making Ryan feel like he was flying a kite against a powerful storm. Sadly, there would not



be a nice walk that day.

Ryan was beyond frustrated now. As a matter of fact, he was done with the cat. She would never replace Shep. What must he do? Could nothing fix the horrible hole in his life? So, he picked up the cat, carried her around front to the street, and put her down, pointing an index finger out with a stern command of *shoo*. The cat simply walked away and did not look back.

Sitting on his porch swing the following day, a lonesome Ryan contemplated the unwanted change to his life. Shep was gone and nothing was going to take his place. He must accept that. And, as if experiencing an epiphany, he finally did accept it. Right then and there, Ryan decided in his heart that he was not going to spend his life in wasted despair for what was. His only concern, however, was the thought of being without companionship for the rest of his days.

Just then, as if out of nowhere, a Calico cat suddenly sauntered across the porch and effortlessly leaped onto Ryan's lap. Not surprised, he gave the kitty lots of loving scratches on her head and they both silently sat until dark.



## EXIT TWENTY ~

### HEED NO WORDS OF LIMIT

Young Thomas Edison came home one day to hand his mother an envelope from his school. He told her, *"My teacher gave this to me and told me to give it only to you."*

His mother's eyes were tearful as she opened the envelope and read the letter inside to herself. When Thomas asked what the letter said, she read it aloud to him, *"Your son is simply a genius,"* she began. *"This school is too small for him, however, and doesn't have good teachers for his proper education. Please teach him yourself."*

As time went by, Thomas Edison became renowned as one of the greatest inventors of the century. On a rather difficult day, just after his dear mother's passing, he was going through her belongings. Noticing an old envelope in the corner of a box, he opened it and removed the paper inside.

Reading the yellowed page, he saw the words, *"Your son is addled, unable to clearly think, and is mentally confused. We do not want him to come to school here any longer."*

Thomas Edison sat for just a few moments and then searched for his diary. Once found, he wrote down the words, *"Thomas Alva Edison was an addled child that, by a hero mother, became the genius of the century."*

Did Thomas Edison have a learning disorder? Maybe. But obviously, it didn't hinder him from becoming one of the most



brilliant and well-known inventors of all time. He gave the world the light bulb, the telegraph, the phonograph, and the telephone.

Imagine if young Thomas had opened the envelope and read that note before handing it to his mother. Would he have been grossly limited by his teacher's opinion of poor intelligence?

Thomas Edison's mother obviously had no idea what her son would grow to become. Yet she did not want anyone putting limits on him. That, she wisely knew, could only be done by her precious son, himself.

The only limits you face are the ones that you place on yourself. Never allow another's opinion to limit what you can or cannot do. And if it's you who believes you have a limitation, why not write it down on a piece of paper and put it in an envelope? Then, shove it in an old box in the attic and forget about it. You might be wonderfully surprised years later when you happen to come by it.



## EXIT TWENTY-ONE ~

### YOU'VE BEEN YOU FOR A VERY LONG TIME

Regardless of the nurturing received since birth, your ancestors still play a large role in how you emotionally react to adverse and difficult times today. And no matter what the modern social influencers claim, your own soul has incarnated into a biological vessel that's either male or female. To that end, there's nothing that can erase what centuries of human survival have implanted in your genes.

The part each sex has played over these vast years has never been the same. Yet each has always been complimentary to the other. While the more recent past has been less difficult to mankind's survival, those lessons-learned by your ancient descendants have been passed onto you. If better understood, there's no doubt you'll embrace them for the amazing importance they bring to your own daily life.

To look at just a few, today's female is typically an empathizer, with the instinct to recognize and compassionately respond to another person's feelings, thoughts, and needs without spoken words. The purpose of this intuitive sense is to predict and react to the needs of another. This was paramount in rearing a newborn child who couldn't speak yet required so much attention.

A woman's traits for outward emotional expression and social skills came from times when groups of men would leave the village for long hunts, or to go off to war. The remaining women would



then gather in numbers to protect the children, as well as the vulnerable village. The need for scanning the faces of others to recognize gestures of calm or danger was important. And openly showing her own mood at any given moment allowed other women to read her as well, giving the whole group an almost hive-like mentality.

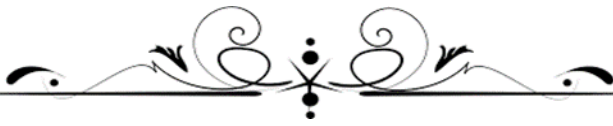
As was the norm for so long, a young woman would often be given to marriage outside the village and forced to live among relative strangers. The ability to study faces helped her gauge her conformance to the differing social norms. Recognizing or anticipating unspoken expectations made adjusting to the new environment much easier for her.

In just these few cases, you can see why women tend to be more intuitive, empathetic, expressive, and social. She picks up nuances in facial expressions and wants to talk about things. She feels and expresses empathy and compassion for even those she doesn't know very well. A woman is more open to seeking counsel in times of emotional trouble and is more likely than her male counterpart to arrange or attend social functions.

Males, on the other hand, would develop early systemizing and mechanistic skills with their need to build shelter. He would be the hunter of food and, therefore, the inventor of weapons. The hunt itself brought heavy fear, anxiety, and other negative emotions that had to be suppressed for the important task. It also meant long periods of solitude when stealth, concealment, and absolute silence were mandatory in downing an allusive and often dangerous prey.

With his larger size and greater strength, males participated in the physical defense of his people against other invading groups,





and even in establishing or maintaining a hierarchy within his own village. The need to build more infrastructure as the tribe increased in size necessitated the creation of designs and sound shelter construction methodologies. Systemizing, mechanizing, and more internal thought became a part of life for man.

You can see why men tend to hold their feelings inside and can be less emotionally intuitive, social, and empathetic than their female counterparts. When today's man faces tragedies in life, he tends to internalize and self-contain painful emotions. He's likely to be more stoic and express little or no outward feelings. Men will typically deal with profound negative events by focusing on goal-oriented activities that involve thinking, doing, and solving.

When traumatic, life-changing events befall the male, he often-times realizes he had no control over the event. Because of this, he may throw himself into work or tasks, which give him a sense of accomplishment and that feeling of control he needs. He'll spend a great deal of time trying to understand why something happened and how to prevent it from happening again. This may give the outward impression that a man has less compassion, empathy, and emotions than his female counterpart.

Neuroscience studies have shown, however, that males actually experience more daily emotions than females. He's just more likely to internalize those emotions and process them in ways not visible to those around him. Before the age of around eight or so, a male toddler is actually an emotional monster. After that age, however, he begins to internally hold his emotions inside. Is this Nature or Nurture?

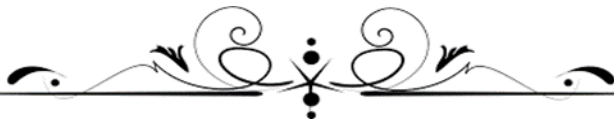
So, here's the deal. When a great tragedy strikes a couple, such



as the loss of a child, or the loss of a job for the primary provider, emotional pain will come to both the man and the woman. And both may emotionally respond in ways that seem almost alien to the other.

Could these responsive differences cause difficulties in the relationship? Maybe. That is, unless the couple realizes that their partner is only responding in ways that have been programmed within their DNA since the beginning of time. While she may want to talk about it, he'll want quiet contemplation. When she's constantly brought to tears, he's out in the workshop building a shelf.

Will the couple's relationship survive? It will, as long as both respect that each sex has survived some very brutal conditions over the years because of who their ancestors were. And God has insured that their lessons would always dwell in you today. Embrace the fact that you've been you for a long time.



## EXIT TWENTY-TWO ~

### YOU KNEW WHAT I WAS

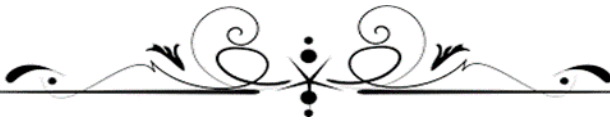
An old and lonely man was awoken early one morning by a howling wind outside his home. Not much for television or radio, he had missed the recent forecast of a rapidly advancing cold front coming through his village. Shivering as he got out of bed, he warmly dressed and went outside to gather wood for the first fire of winter.

As the old man neared the woodpile, he spotted a snake that had also been surprised by the quick drop in temperature. It was almost frozen, unable to move, and very near death. Being a compassionate fellow with many hardships behind him, the old man took pity on the serpent and brought it inside his home.

Building a fire, the man spread a quilt across the hearth and laid the fragile snake within range of the warmth, praying that it was not too late. He then went about his usual morning routine, but after a short time, decided to check in on his guest.

Walking up to where the serpent remained bed down on the hearth, the old man saw that its eyes were still closed. Curious, he reached out a hand to nudge its long, slender body when the snake suddenly popped open its eyes. Then, with lightning speed, it struck out and sank its venom-filled fangs deep into the man's hand.

Screaming in pain, the old man stared at the snake with disbelief as he dropped to his knees. As the poison raced through his body, he collapsed to the floor before painfully whispering out, *"Why? Why I ask? I took you in when you were in need. I saved your*



*life. And for that, you would still take mine. Why, oh why, would you bite me?"*

Then, whether his dying mind was playing tricks or the snake actually spoke, the old man's eyes closed for the last time as he heard, *"Oh, I am indeed grateful for your compassion. But I am a snake, my kind sir, and you knew what I was when you took me in."*



## EXIT TWENTY-THREE ~

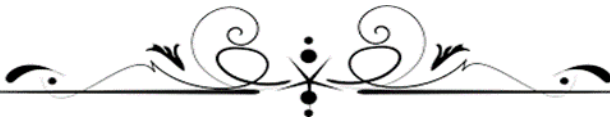
### THERE'S GOOD IN BAD EMOTIONS

Atticus, the anonymous Canadian poet once wrote, *"I've never met a strong person with an easy past."* If you want a life full of deep faith, unconditional love, and emotional strength, it's certainly not going to happen without the risk and reality of facing discomfort, conflict, and loss along the way.

When things are good, the emotions that flow within you are pleasant, uplifting, and bring positive growth in your spirit's journey. On the other hand, when life is not so good, the emotions felt can be painful and sometimes even caustic to your well-being. The one thing that there's no getting around, however, is that negative emotions are also intended to bring positive growth in your journey.

First off, negative feelings exist to keep you safe and include the primary emotions of sadness, anger, fear, and disgust. You experience them as an involuntary response to some outside trigger. Of course, one would not usually go in search of feeling a negative emotion. You'd never say to yourself, "Hey, I think I'll go make myself fearful for a while." No. A frightening event just happens, and you have no choice but to feel it and react with fight-or-flight hormones to save your life.

What about some lesser but frequently experienced painful emotions? Remorse and regret can be tough, can't they? But they are great teachers of the heart. Feeling deep regret is your way of



telling yourself that you should have done something but did not, and should do it the next time. That is, of course, if there is a next time.

What about guilt? Like the others, you feel guilt for some poor action you've taken in order to grow and have a future clear of repeat offenses. Does that sound familiar? In most cultures, guilty findings of a crime results in incarceration in a prison that may be called a *Correctional Facility*. There, the goal is to correct the offender's behavior so that he or she might again be a productive member of society.

A prison might also be referred to as a *Penitentiary*, where guilty parties must show appropriate *penitence*, or regret, for their criminal act. The same future goal, of course, is to rejoin society as a productive member.

The takeaway here is that negative emotions aren't exactly joyful, but extremely important to your spiritual development. Even if you've yet to face a life-suffering event, eliminating, or avoiding all bad feelings now will only create a weakness within you for certain future grief or trauma that's too intense to ignore.

That said, it's the strength derived from hardship and heartache where you'll find that there's good in bad emotions.



## EXIT TWENTY-FOUR ~ GOOD FOR THEM IS GREAT FOR YOU

As a newborn, you were biologically pre-wired to be kind. There's also a good bet that you're still that way today. Yet maybe some difficulties in life have worn that inherent ability down just a bit. After all, life's not exactly been kind to you lately, has it?

So, you've found yourself being a little unkind of late. But that's just not who you are. And if you're willing to try a little kindness again, you might as well know the positive impacts it'll have on your journey.

At a basic level, kindness toward others helps you relate and maintain positive relationships with friends, family, and even perfect strangers. Were you aware, though, that aside from improving personal relationships, kindness can actually make you a healthier person?

Have you ever noticed that when you do something nice for someone else it also makes *you* feel better? When you do good for another, your brain releases a hormone called serotonin into the mind, giving you an instant feeling of well-being and satisfaction. It also triggers a dump of endorphins, another hormone that has an almost opium-like quality on your mood. This is often referred to in clinical circles as a "*Helpers High*."

Speaking of highs, one really cool thing about kindness and feel-good hormones is you can actually experience them from watching someone else be kind to another, even when you're just a bystander. Neuro-researchers call this "*moral elevation*," which has



been proven to inspire optimism and make folks want to be kind as well. It's an amazing, natural domino effect.

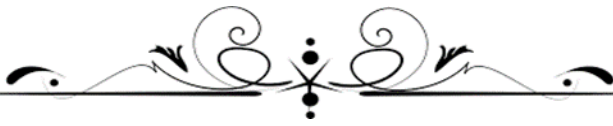
That said, the byproduct of the do-good hormones dumping into your neuro system is that they also help out with anxiety. While there are several ways to reduce anxiety, like meditation, exercise, prescription and natural meds, it turns out that being nice to others can actually be one of the easiest, healthiest, and most inexpensive ways to keep it at bay.

Acts of kindness toward others can also positively affect the fitness of your precious heart. That's because doing good releases another hormone called oxytocin, which then causes the release of yet another chemical called nitric oxide. This causes your blood vessels to dilate, or expand, thereby reducing blood pressure. Oxytocin is actually known in clinical circles as a "*cardioprotective*" hormone for its heart-defending properties.

Inflammation in the body is associated with all sorts of health problems, such as diabetes, cancer, chronic pain, obesity, and migraines. According to a study of adults aged 57 to 85, voluntarily helping another soul actually had the strongest impact on lowering that in the body. That means that oxytocin is the best medicine for reducing inflammation, and kindness towards others, even in small acts, will trigger a healthy oxytocin dump.

Sure, it's often tough to do good things for others when you're traveling down your own broken road. But a little kindness is an easy, healthy, and inexpensive step in the right direction. Don't take kindness for granted. Share a smile. Make a donation, volunteer, or find some genuine way from your heart to help someone else, even if it's just opening a door for a stranger, because what's good for them is great for you.





## EXIT TWENTY-FIVE ~

### EMERGE STRONGER FROM STRUGGLE

A boy was riding his bicycle and decided to take a different route home. In doing so, he came upon an extremely steep incline and made it halfway up before the exertion turned him back. The hill was quite a struggle, so he decided he'd rather go back to his usual, easier trek home.

Stopping at the bottom of the hill to catch his breath, the boy took a seat on the ground and noticed a bush with dozens of silky cocoons right beside him. What most drew his attention were two that were fairly close to one another.

Gazing at the first casing put the lad in a state of awe. He witnessed an emerging insect push its way through an incredibly small slit in the casing. It seemed impossible. Yet, it burst free and gingerly pranced a few inches away on thin legs to unfurl its wings. Then, after it slowly fanned them up and down a few times, a gorgeous new Monarch butterfly took flight.

With great anticipation, the thrilled boy turned his attention to the other cocoon with a slit in its casing. He waited and watched as the soon-to-be butterfly moved and pushed and squeezed against the thin slit but seemed to make no headway. Fearing that the butterfly would soon die from its efforts, the boy took out his pocketknife and widened the cocoon's gap.

With the ease created by the boy's cut, the butterfly emerged but appeared feeble and unable to stand on its tiny legs. Still, he



expected to see the spreading of beautiful wings at any moment. After all, had he not come along and helped, this butterfly would have surely died.

Instead, the butterfly's wings would not spread. The boy continued to watch and wait, however, thinking that nature just takes its time with such things. Not long after, however, he witnessed the undeveloped butterfly make a single attempt to crawl away from the cocoon, lose its balance, and fall to the ground.

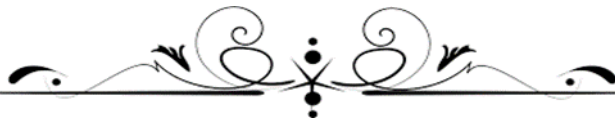
Thinking only for a moment, the wise boy got back on his bike, turned it toward the top of the hill, and peddled with all his might. Reaching the top, he briefly stopped to flutter his arms a few times like a butterfly and acknowledge the soreness in his legs.

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The second butterfly was unable to live because it did not experience the necessary toil of emerging from its cocoon. It needed the pressure of squeezing through the narrow gap to force special fluid in its body to move into and expand its legs and wings. Without nature's designed labor, it was unable to fly or live.

It's often the emergence from life's struggles that give you the strength to become something truly beautiful.





## EXIT TWENTY-SIX ~

### THE HEART AND SOUL OF YOUR LION

Alexander the Great once said, *"I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep. I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion."*

When faced with life's difficulties, two of the more popular bits of advice you're often told are, *"listen to the little voice in your head,"* and *"follow your heart."* Both are well-meaning, as the intent is to seek your own intuitive guidance. To look within.

The two sources of inner knowing, however, couldn't be more diametrically opposed to one another. It's like seeking wisdom from both a lion and a sheep. The lion, of course, is your heart, or actually, your soul. The sheep is your conscious mind. In short, your lion *feels* and your sheep *thinks*.

That sheep is the little voice in your head that tells you, *"you can't do this," "they'll laugh at you,"* or *"you don't deserve it."* It's chock full of the things that you've read, heard, and experienced in the past. And when it comes to making a decision, it needs to classify it as either right or wrong, good or bad, reward or regret.

Unfortunately, your sheep considers the world while purely in its survival mode. Hesitation, anxiety, and disbelief largely originate from there. The lion, your soul, operates through its spiritual connection to God and knows your true abilities, as well as your divine purpose in life. Your brave lion says, *"I want to do this," "I'm going to speak up for that,"* or *"I deserve it."*

The lion is modest, however, and doesn't have a roar that



screams out you should or shouldn't do something. It's well connected to that gift of *free will* from the Father, you see.

Guidance from your lion is more a steady undertone that's always there, but just below the constant bleating of your sheep. It can be a physical feeling of warmth, or an emotional feeling of excitement, for the possibilities of a decision. You sense what's right and wrong throughout your body, don't you?

As a baby, you survived by the natural inclination to follow your heart. Your sheep didn't make decisions. It wasn't even alive yet. You didn't have the experiences of life or the supposed "wisdom" that the mind would need for making choices.

Instead, your infant decisions were based on your feelings, or your lion - your heart and soul. If you felt happy, you giggled. If you were tired, hungry, or angry, you cried. At no time did you consider how it *looked* to others. You only knew your lion.

Over time, the instinct to follow your heart began to fade. It happened as social "norms" were learned and your personality became based on not how you feel, but how you think. Not only did this come from society, but also from the expectations of behaviors from your family and friends.

So, while your lion *knows* what to do, the sheep *thinks* it knows what to do. Well, at first, anyway. Maybe it's sure one moment, but not so sure the next. Then, it's sure again. The sheep constantly goes back and forth between decisions based on survival, which creates fear and anxiety, and most times, inaction. Anytime you feel caught up in such an internal struggle, you can bet the sheep, the conscious mind, is responsible, and not the lion. Not your heart and soul.



Once you realize the sheep, this little voice in your head is just trying to survive, a whole new world opens up to you. Yet you really have no choice but to *listen* to it, do you? It's there. You constantly hear it, even now as you read these words. But listening is far, far different than *following*, isn't it?

How do you follow instead of listen? Well, it's easier said than done. Listening to your mind, your thoughts, your sheep, is deeply ingrained in your life, after all. Start by doing what feels natural to you. Maybe that's more involvement in the church or learning to play the piano. It doesn't really matter what your feelings-based decisions are.

When you do things that intuitively bring excitement and purpose to your life, you begin to live once again within your heart and soul. You are closer to God. While you may have to listen, stop believing everything said by your sheep. The more you stop paying attention to all the doubt and fear it offers, the more you'll find it no longer controls you.

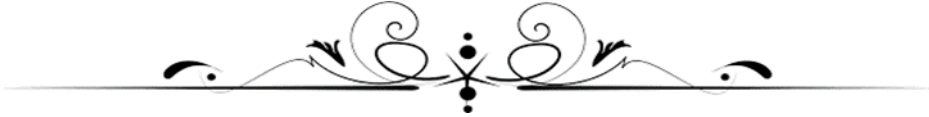
Living your life from your heart and soul, the lion, will feel right. You'll soon begin to *trust your gut*, or your feelings and intuitions, instead of the doubts offered by your sheep. Do this and watch the world unfold in awesome growth, peace, and purpose, instead of living a cold, rigid existence built on fear and anxiety.

You can do this...with the heart and soul of your lion.



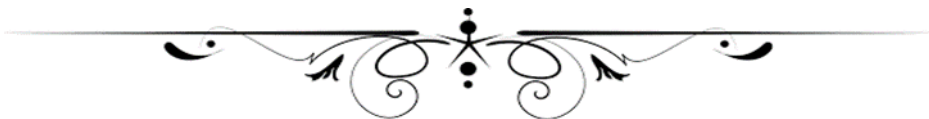
# **WAYPOINT THREE**

**REVELATIONS OF  
HARDSHIP**



*"I will stay with it and endure through suffering hardship, and once the heaving sea has shaken my raft to pieces, then I will swim."*

*- Homer.*







## EXIT TWENTY-SEVEN ~

### DON'T LEAVE AN EMPTY LIFEBOAT

There are those rough times when you just feel like your boat's adrift on the waters of life. A recent storm, or emotional struggle, has fouled your engine and you seem at the mercy of the sea.

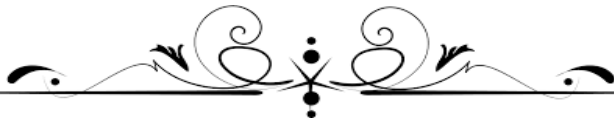
In the loneliness you wait, praying that someone will come along to find you. After all, that's always been the case. Surely, it will be now. So, you patiently stand atop your deck and wait for help.

Off in the distance, you spot a shoreline. Yet from all you can make out there's no one you can see there to offer any help. So, you decide it's safer to remain on your troubled ship. Help will come. It always comes.

Then, one day you realize that your boat is taking on water. It's leaking a little around the seams from all the stress squeezing against its troubled hull. Thankfully, the leaks aren't so bad at the moment. There's not so much water coming in that you can't just bail it out and stay afloat until help arrives. After all, it always comes.

As time goes by, you seem to be bailing more and more water. It gets a bit exhausting, but that's okay. You can certainly keep it up until salvation arrives. It shouldn't be much longer, should it? It always comes.

Life, however, isn't always that easy. While you bail and wait for help, feeling grateful just to stay afloat, other little storms come



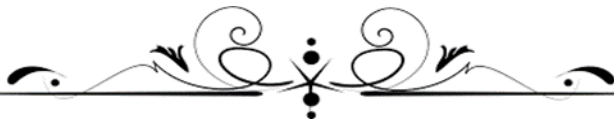
along and rain down on you. Soon, you find your boat taking on more and more water, and bail as you might, you begin to wonder if you're really in trouble.

Maybe no one's coming to help you, you begin to think. Maybe you should take your lifeboat and head for shore. No, you tell yourself. It would be only you, and there's no savior you can see off on the distant shore. In such troubled waters, it would certainly be a risk to row your lifeboat all by yourself.

So, you remain. Your boat's still above the surface, after all, and you're surviving. You'll just stay right where you are until someone comes along to help you. They will. They always do.

Suddenly, the storms intensify and it's too much. Your fragile boat, with you desperately clinging to its railings, is quickly overwhelmed and sinks to the bottom of the sea.

Across the water, along the distant shoreline, curious beachgoers walk down to the water's edge to pull a lifeboat onto the dry sand...and ponder over its emptiness.



## EXIT TWENTY-EIGHT ~

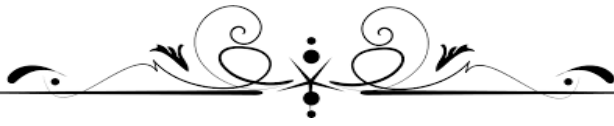
### BE PREPARED TO WORK FOR IT

It's easy for society to get wrapped up in the concept of grief being related only to the passing of a loved one. In fact, when someone or something deeply cherished, be that a person, a thing, a concept, or even a lifestyle, is taken against your will, you grieve. Aside from death, grief can come from such happenings as an unwanted divorce or separation, being fired from a job, being the victim of a crime, or a major diagnosis of ill health.

Put another way, if you're forced to redraw the blueprints of your life without that which once filled your future plans, you hurt inside. With the loss, you're left with unfulfilled comfort, security, and hopes for life yet to come. And only moments ago it all seemed right, didn't it? Then, your future was suddenly ripped away. That hurts. And now, you must face that pain and acknowledge that it's perfectly acceptable and absolutely necessary to grieve.

Like it or not, you must now redraw the blueprints of your future. But it's not easy. In fact, it's hard work. Actually, the clinical term *Grief Work* was first coined in 1944, by a psychiatrist named Erich Lindemann. In his *Grief Work* concept, he rationally laid out all the difficult tasks that must be performed and accomplished to healthfully move your heart forward after a traumatic, life-changing event.

Grief work requires true exertions of both physical and mental effort. In fact, it can sometimes seem no less strenuous than digging a ditch or solving an almost unsolvable problem. Yes, if a



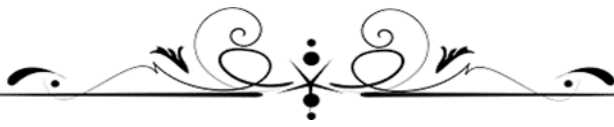
loved one has passed, you will certainly grieve for them. But in all instances of loss, whether person, job, or lifestyle, you grieve for yourself, and that's the really tough part.

Make no mistake, grief work must be actively performed to ease your hurting heart. And it takes so much more than just sitting back and expecting your pains to fade away. It's more than just saying, "I'll be alright." It means you must perform mental tasks and purposely exercise specific courses of action in order to progress forward.

It all sounds so intense, doesn't it? Well, it is. But in doing your grief work, over time you'll release your more intense and debilitating emotions. The caution, however, is that it isn't a light switch. Traumatic, emotional pain can't just be turned off. It's work that will truly take time and effort. But if you earnestly set yourself to the job, you will begin to experience your present life in a healthier mental and physical state.

Is there a one-size-fits-all toolbox for grief work? No. You and your life's hardships are far too unique. But it begins with acknowledging and facing your pain, not deeply shoving it back inside. After that, you'll recognize your tools as they come before you. In fact, you'll find a great many of them to use within the chapters, or Exits, of this book.

In truth, you may never fully stop grief's heartache. But with purposeful effort, the pain will no longer interfere with your daily thoughts or dictate how you live your life. Just be prepared to work for it.



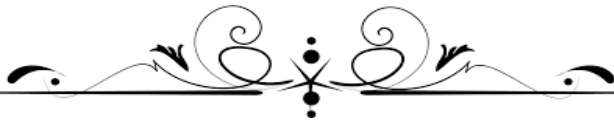
## EXIT TWENTY-NINE ~

### YOUR FIRST STAGE OF MOVING FORWARD

Really bad things sometimes happen to really good people. You know that. That's why you're here. And maybe the painful feelings have become so debilitating that it just stops you cold in your tracks. It's certainly understandable. But you're meant to face that hardship, let the harshness and emotions soften, not harden, your soul, and grow as a person from the experience. That's what healthfully moving forward is all about.

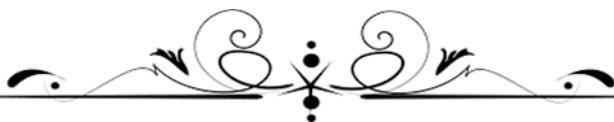
It's in moving forward that well-meaning folks might want to measure and gauge your progress, mistakenly setting up stages, phases, and various timelines where you "should" emotionally be at in any given moment. Yet each human being is as unique as snowflakes and fingerprints, with no one-size-fits-all progression plan for healing. Along your journey, however, you'll probably meet those who measure your advancement and then errantly present the results in a misguided attempt at support.

In your wonderful uniqueness, you don't fit into any model or broad-ranging mold of emotional healing. Healthfully moving forward after an unfortunate suffering never happens along any linear timelines. It doesn't progress in stages, or phases, or some prescribed chronological order. As long as you're not harming yourself or others, however, you'll move forward at your own speed and in your own time. If you are being harmful, however, please seek professional assistance now.



Regardless, could it be so bad if you allow someone to suggest that your emotional healing has stages, checkpoints, or goals to reach? The answer might well be yes! If you're introduced to such a model and assured that it's a proven method of measuring progress, what happens when you fail to reach a stage or move along a prescribed timeline? You could become depressed and unsure of yourself, right? You might think there's something wrong with you. After all, it seems you can't do what you've been told others have done before you. These failings could impair and delay the true healing processes of your hurting soul.

Be you. In good times and in bad, know that there is no one else like you. Certainly, seek out the support of others when needed, but be careful of those who think you should be farther along than you are. And know that in many popular healing models, acceptance of your loss is wrongly considered the final stage of recovery. If there is one sure thing in heartache, however, it's that acceptance *must be* your first stage of moving forward.



## EXIT THIRTY ~

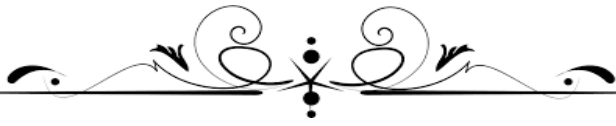
### RISE AGAIN IN THE MOURNING

If someone you deeply cherish is taken or goes away against your will, you *will* feel emotional pain. Why? It's because you've experienced unconditional love, and that love never, ever wants to go unfelt or unexpressed. Unfortunately, you're left believing that there's no way to experience that feeling of love again without the physical presence of the one you've lost. You have massive amounts of love inside and now there's no way to let it out again, right?

One somewhat relevant and heart-moving quote actually comes from Jamie Anderson, the author of the *Doctor Who* television series. This talented and obviously empathetic man once wrote, *"Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go."*

On the other hand, Alfred Lord Tennyson once wrote, *"It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."* These are powerful words as well, and ones better taken to heart. See, one of God's greatest desires for your soul is to experience the amazing feeling of true, unconditional love. There *is* no greater purpose in life than giving and receiving it.

Love is the very foundation of a purposeful life filled with abundance and bliss. No matter what other pleasures life may bring, love is the highest, most passionate part of your journey. You



have a tremendous spiritual urge for unconditional love. It not only pleases the hearts but also nourishes the soul. To that end, your ability to give and receive love is the very keystone that defines who you are. Nothing you've "accomplished" by the end of your travels will ever matter as much as the way you've loved another.

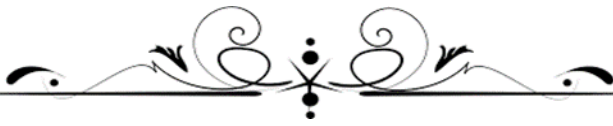
What if you're the one who's avoiding love because of the pain from possible loss? You simply can't, however, avoid the chance of grief. After all, there's no rainbow without the rain. Love and grief do not, and cannot, exist without each other. It's just an innocent consequence of your need to give and receive it. And it's simply not possible to live your life without feeling love. If you allow the blessings that come with it, you must also recognize the blessings that come from grieving the loss of another.

When you consider that love is God's gift and desire for you, He also provided a divine means to soften the terrible pains of loss. For this, there is mourning. Mourning allows you to continue openly giving your love to someone no longer with you.

While grief and mourning are often confused, they have very different and purposeful meanings. Grief is your "internal" processing of the painful emotions that come from losing someone you love. Mourning is your "external" expression, or honoring, of the love you have for the one no longer physically by your side. Grief only becomes mourning when it overwhelms you inside and spills out where others can see it.

In most societies around the globe, there are many mourning rituals for when a loved one dies. These include church and funerary services, the wearing of black attire, and even the more modern celebration of life gatherings of friends and family. But



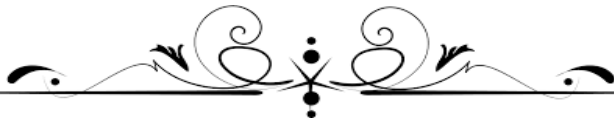


true mourning is the continued outward remembrance and honor of the love still felt for someone no longer physically here.

Mourning your loss allows you to recognize and express the love you are graced to experience in life. To mourn your lost loved one is life-affirming and life-giving, and ultimately ensures that the love you share will never be gone. See, love is both the cause and the antidote for the pain of living a joy-filled life. Just as your greatest gift from God is your capacity to give and receive love, it's also a gracious gift to know you can openly mourn your life losses.

Understanding not to just grieve, but to openly, genuinely mourn the loss of a loved one provides you greater spiritual strength by not only surviving the pains but also being positively transformed by it. How ironic it is that to ultimately go on to live and love well, you must allow yourself to accept the physical loss of a loved one.

You must mourn to honor and express that unconditional love for the one who is gone or face the pains of never feeling that blessed love again. So, keep it alive and rise again in the mourning of love.



## EXIT THIRTY-ONE ~

### YOUR SHIP IN A STORM

Throughout time, shipwrecks have certainly been a testament to both man's triumphs and horrors. The frightening tales of disaster, often recanted by anguished sailors, can be nothing less than horrific. So, too, can the strife of surviving personal devastation be just as horrific. Life's struggles, especially in grief and love loss, can often make you feel like you're on a ship in a storm.

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Just moments ago, you were smoothly sailing across a sea of glass when out of nowhere you're suddenly struck by a raging, unexpected storm. Without warning, you're broadsided by giant waves that violently smash your sails and flood the very deck you stand on. Now, when only moments before you had smooth sailing, you're fighting just to keep your head above water.

As the angry seas wash all around, you grab for pieces of wreckage to hold on to. Anything. You must, because the huge, powerful waves just keep crashing down. Each one pushes you under. At times you think you'll never make it. It's just so much. You can't seem to catch your breath as the winds and rain churn on, and the waves just keep crashing down. All seems lost, and each time you think, *this is it!* You're going down for the last time.

Somehow you manage to hang on, though. Somehow you manage to catch your breath. Then, as each moment seems an eternity, the winds and rain slowly begin to lighten. Not much, mind



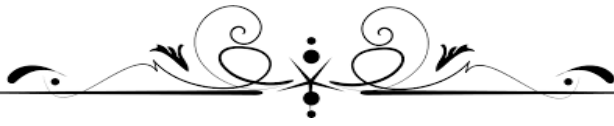
you, but a little now. The waves don't seem as high either, and it takes a few more moments before the next one pushes you back under. In between, you watch for the next wave. You anticipate it. And when it comes, you've learned to take a deep breath, hold on fast, and wait for it to wash over. When it's gone, you simply tread water and wait for the next one.

The winds wane even more as time goes by. The rain and thunder stop and those ugly waves become even smaller and farther apart. Almost surprisingly, you feel the deck begin to rise beneath your feet and you no longer desperately cling to just pieces of wreckage.

Those waves keep coming, of course, but you know how to handle them. Now, you realize, you have the strength and time to begin righting your ship. You can mend and re-set your tattered sails and make way toward safe harbor. There, with faith, love, and support from others, you'll rebuild your ship and adjust your course.

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Storms will come into everyone's life. Strong storms. Ugly storms. But with faith, no storm can sink a ship built with a strong foundation.



## EXIT THIRTY-TWO ~

### CARING FOR YOU

One day, you answer a knock at your front door and come face-to-face with you standing on your front porch. You see a handwritten note attached to the shirt that simply reads, “This is *Yourself*, or ‘You’ for short. Please raise and care for this blessed soul. Thank you.”

What would you do? You’re now fully responsible for taking care of Yourself. Well, you’d absolutely do all you could to give You everything needed to be well. That’s what you do for someone you care for, right? Someone you deeply love? You go above and beyond to give them all the very best you can give.

So, to begin with, you’d feed Yourself only good, nutritious foods. You’d make sure You stays healthy. That means making doctor’s appointments and getting Yourself to every one of the visits. If medicine were needed, you’d rush right out to the pharmacy and pick up You’s prescriptions and always make darn sure that You took them exactly as ordered by the doctor.

You’d absolutely nurture Yourself with loving guidance and morals. You’d challenge and reward Yourself. You’d set Goals. You’d make sure You fits well in society. You would be raised with a foundation of God and an involvement in the church. And you would do all you could to make sure You can make it in a sometimes-difficult world.

Certainly, you love Yourself, right? In raising You, there’s nothing you wouldn’t do or sacrifice out of love. Do you really do that for the true You now? Give it some thought.



## EXIT THIRTY-THREE ~

### BE SOFT LIKE WATER

What follows is an excerpt from my book, *Thursdays in the Grotto*, taken from the chapter, *Judge Me By My Enemies*.

To set the stage at this point, the two intersecting characters in the story are Dan and Aiden. Dan is a spirit who has temporarily incarnated into the body of Danuwoa Ross, a Native-American man of Cherokee descent who is on death row for murder.

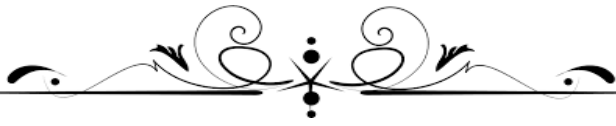
With God's permission, the spirit came to Earth to help Aiden Huff in recovering from an ugly, downhill spiral after a tragic event took his son's life. Simply calling himself Dan, the spirit easily escapes his prison confinement and awaits within a hidden grotto for Aiden's path to lead him to his faith.

Although it would take much of the story before Aiden found trust in Dan's spiritual identity and guidance, he would eventually settle in to listen. The following excerpt finds Dan teaching Aiden to face life's hardships by sometimes being soft, like water.

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*Descending the carved stone steps from the forest above, Dan turns and moves the large rock back into place as Aiden continues down into the hot spring chamber below. When Dan rejoins him, he finds Aiden kneeling at the stream's edge with his fingertips just skimming the water's surface. At the same time, he's looking up in continued awe at the fiery moss that provides the only dim light in the room.*

*When Dan reaches his side, Aiden half-jokingly asks, "What*



*is it with you and water, Dan? Is it something you spirits just get into or somethin'?"*

*"Aside from man, Aiden Huff, water is one of God's most magnificent elements in this dominion. It makes up the majority of your human body as well as the majority of your planet. It exists both in the sky above and the ground below. It can create life, sustain life, and extinguish life."*

*Aiden looks up to Dan and cynically says, "Yeah. Like how forty days and forty nights once extinguished life, huh?"*

*"Yes, Aiden Huff. Yet it is His word that water shall not be used in such ways again."*

*Still trailing his fingertips across the stream, Aiden says, "From what I learned, the grottos in these hills were actually carved out by water."*

*"Yes. It is very powerful, Aiden Huff. In fact, one of your most discerning ancient philosophers, Lao-Tzu, understood the influences of water very well. He taught that nothing in your world is softer than water. It is so soft, in fact, that it cannot ever be damaged or destroyed. Yet, for overcoming the hard and unyielding, such as the stone that is this mountain, nothing is greater. And you, Aiden Huff, would do well to be as water."*

*Puzzled, Aiden stands and asks, "Me, be as water? How's that?"*

*"Water is gentle, Aiden Huff. Soft. Even so, it does much to transform the hardness around it. To be as water, however, you must first understand it."*

*"It's water, Dan. What's to understand?"*

*Dan wryly smiles and says, "I would like you, Aiden Huff, to*



*quickly reach your hand into the stream and grasp a handful of water."*

*Aiden looks over to Dan with a sarcastic grin yet kneels to obediently plunge his hand into the stream.*

*"Grab it now, Aiden Huff. Clinch your hand tightly around the water and bring it to me, please."*

*Pulling his hand from the stream, Aiden holds his closed fist up before Dan. Bringing his own two hands over, Dan gently pries open Aiden's fingers, and together they look at his wet, empty hand.*

*"It appears you do not hold any water in your tight grasp, Aiden Huff. Now then, leave your hand loose. Be soft like the water and place your open hand into the stream."*

*Aiden looks at Dan with a smirk and says, "Yeah, Dan. I know I can scoop out water in the cup of my hand."*

*"Continue to amuse me, Aiden Huff."*

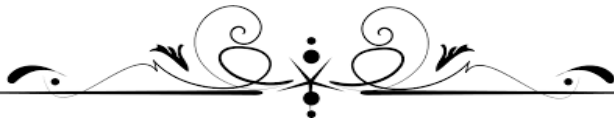
*Aiden shrugs and reaches down in the water once again to submerge his hand. Removing it and balancing the water in his palm, he lifts his cupped hand for Dan to see.*

*"Thank you. Drink from it now, Aiden Huff. Take of the energy that the water freely offers."*

*After Aiden complies by sipping a bit of the water, Dan instructs, "Now, discard the remainder here on the ground at my feet."*

*"Why not just pour it back in the stream?"*

*"You may, but it does not matter, Aiden Huff. The water will return to source regardless of what you do to it." Dan then points to the flowing stream and continues, "You see it there, heated to steam which rises and floats away. You have taken water from the stream*



*and consumed it within your body. And, if it is your will, you may carelessly throw the water to the ground. It does not matter. Regardless of what virtues or ills come to pass, water, like spirit, shall always return to source and shall always be."*

*Looking at his hand, Aiden tilts it sideways and pours the remaining water back into the stream. Standing, he says, "So, Ian's gone from here, but he returned to what you say is source, then?"*

*"Yes, Aiden Huff. Ian returned to source."*

*"Does he remember what happened to him?"*

*"Of course. He remembers and cherishes all of his experiences here."*

*"How he died?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Was he scared?"*

*"Only for a brief moment before his spirit was released."*

*"Was he in pain?"*

*"All fear and pain instantly vanished even before Ian transitioned."*

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**End of Excerpt**

**Remember, when life seems so hard, be soft like water.**





## EXIT THIRTY-FOUR ~

### PAUSE BETWEEN THE NOTES

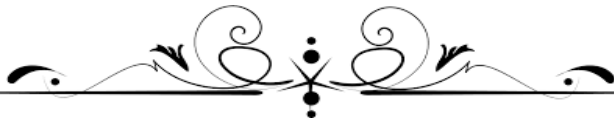
The great pianist and composer, Artur Schnabel, was once asked by an admirer, *"How do you handle the notes as well as you do?"* The artist answered, *"The notes I handle no better than many pianists, but the pauses between the notes, that is where the art resides!"*

Life is beautiful, isn't it? Without question, your journey is far more exquisite than even the most moving piece of music, be it Brahms, Beethoven, or Bach. Each experience you encounter along the way is like a musical note in your soul's concerto, with the Heavenly Host as both your audience and Conductor.

The beauty of your life, however, strikes divine chords not only when times are wonderful, but also when times have been tough. It's in your labors to heal, to grow from pain and adversity, to learn of unconditional love, that the strings of your soul radiate in ways that inspire your own spirit, as well as the heart of the Father.

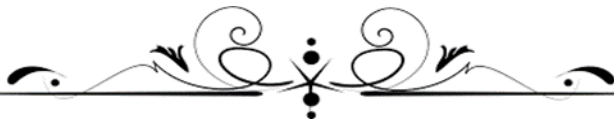
Recovering from some of life's challenges can certainly take great effort, can't it? As you struggle, it can seem much like that concert pianist who swiftly moves back and forth across the keyboard. At times, the artist seemingly touches many keys all at once to drive the right hammers, that strike the right strings, which make the right notes for the sonata. Yet, there are always pauses between each note. Even when they seem undetectable, they are there.

What the pianist, Schnabel, reminds us of is that it's not just



action that creates the delights of life. It's also the purposeful pauses taken along the journey that creates a soul that's lovely and whole. Without even the briefest of pauses, your life, like music, would be nothing more than a constant drone of uninspiring, meaningless noise.

What is that pause between the notes in the opus of your life? Well, that's up to you. Every one of God's children is as unique as snowflakes and fingerprints. That means only you will know for sure. But if there were some wise hints to be offered, they might be, "*Feel more. Think less.*"



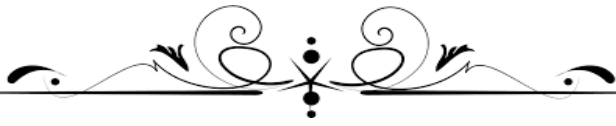
## EXIT THIRTY-FIVE ~ BE PATIENT WHEN ASKING WHY

One Saturday morning, a loving and faithful father watched from his garage workbench while Joshua, his teenage son, and a group of neighborhood friends played basketball. He saw his child begin to slow, miss a step or two, and then sit down to catch his breath. Seeing this, the father lowered his face and whispered a quiet comment to God.

A little over sixteen years earlier, Joshua had been born with a heart defect so severe that he wasn't supposed to even survive his first night on Earth. Known as Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, it meant that the two left chambers of his heart never fully developed before birth. Even worse, Joshua's rare blood type meant a donor heart would be a relative impossibility, and things certainly looked bleak.

Through God's intervention, however, Joshua would survive. As only He can do, a surgeon miraculously appeared who, over time, stabilized and then rebuilt the infant's walnut-sized heart. There would be difficulties, though. The newborn's reformed heart would not be as efficient as a healthy one, which meant that throughout his life, Joshua would easily tire from any strenuous physical exertions.

Joshua would also need an internal pacemaker, which, together with the reduced levels of oxygen in his blood, meant no soccer, football, baseball, or any organized sports in the future for this



young boy. For the father, he would have to bear witness over the coming years as his precious child underwent numerous high-risk surgeries just to remain alive. See, the modifications made to his little heart when first born would strain from his own body's growth, and surgical interventions had to be made as Joshua aged.

For the longest time, it seemed as if life always revolved around hospital stays. If Joshua wasn't going through another painful, life-threatening procedure, he was recovering from one. At the same time, it seemed the next one was already in the planning stages.

The father's heart broke for his son and the pains he was forced to endure. He hurt for his child's limitations in life, too. He also ached for the pains he went through himself. What must he have done in his past, he often wondered, to make life turn out so tough for him? Why would God put him and his son through all this? Where was His good grace, he often asked himself?

While all that was going on, however, Joshua not only grew, but he thrived. Unless rapidly recovering from a surgery, which he somehow always did, you would've never known of his physical shortcomings. Even with his half-heart, he grew to be a big, husky boy whose looks might easily intimidate some. But instead, he had a deeply loving and nurturing personality that attracted friends by the score.

After each school day, and usually throughout the weekends, Joshua's throng of friends usually occupied his driveway or backyard. He might've had physical limitations, but he seemed to be the Pied Piper of other children. And his troubled heart never stopped him from playing. He just needed to take it a little slower than the others boys and take breaks from time to time.

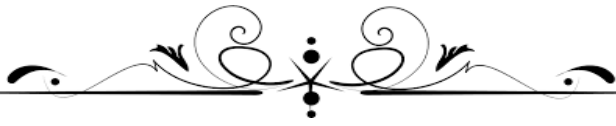


As the father of a vulnerable child might do, he kept a watchful eye on how his son's playmates treated him. For obvious reasons, Joshua's very best friend, Christopher, seemed to garner most of Dad's scrutiny. He knew this boy came from a broken home. His parents had divorced, with the father moving out of state and his mother living a lifestyle devoid of the church.

The mother's well-known routine included illicit drug use, lots of alcohol, and frequent late-night parties. But Christopher was his son's best friend and Joshua wanted him around as often as possible. He was, however, thankful that young Christopher never invited his son home to play. It would certainly not be allowed.

As the years passed and puberty kicked in, Christopher became absolutely huge in size as well. He also became a little more angry, vulgar, and somewhat aggressive with the neighborhood boys. The father just knew the poor influences of this young man's home life were catching up to him. For some reason, though, Christopher never got angry or aggressive toward Joshua. As a matter of fact, when the other boys were not around, these two would often just sit on the back porch and talk.

This one-on-one talking would go on for years, and although the father kept his distance, it seemed that Joshua oddly did most of it. An attentive Christopher would most often just give lots of silent head nods. If that were reversed, however, the father might have some concerns. After all, Christopher couldn't have a lot of good things to impart to Joshua, could he? Even so, the father kept watch, and would certainly intervene if ever needed. Sadly, he wondered when the need would come to someday separate these two boys.



He hated thinking that thought for his son. It was obvious in watching Christopher grow, however, that he seemed destined for a rough life ahead. Without God, a good family, and a strong mentor in his life, he would probably turn to a life of drugs, crime, and prison. It was a shame, but the father had a professional career where he had seen it all before. He just had no time to raise another family's child. That wasn't his job, he told himself, and life was tough enough with Joshua.

The days of watching his son play with Christopher and the others seemed to be growing tougher for the father. He began to feel sadder for himself and his son. Not only did they have to endure the medical traumas throughout life, but surely Joshua's friends were tiring of his limitations. They must talk about that when he's not around, the father thought. They probably laugh and make fun of his slowness. He was sure Joshua wondered that, too, and that made him sad for his son, and for himself as well. Where was God's good grace?

How about Joshua's best friend, Christopher, the father also wondered? He certainly must be getting tired of purposely slowing down and taking his own half-steps just to keep his slow friend in the game. It must also be demeaning for him to always take Joshua as a teammate, knowing full well that the other boys would easily beat them. Or how about when Christopher had to turn down invitations from the others to go climb the town water tower or ride bikes over to the mall? These were things Joshua couldn't do. How long, then, would Christopher turn down the others to stick around with this poor, impaired kid?

So, the father watched. And on this Saturday morning, as he



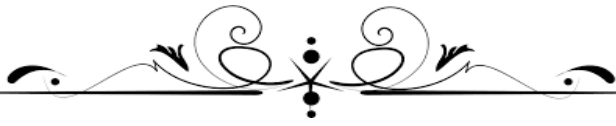
again saw his exhausted son sit down on their driveway, he lowered his face in despair and softly whispered, “God, where is your perfection? Where is your love for this child? Where is your good grace and love for me?”

Just a few short months later, young Joshua sadly, unexpectedly passed away. He had undergone a routine, exploratory heart catheterization, although nothing in surgery is *routine*. The heart cath went well, but the teenager’s tired and frail heart simply gave out afterward in the recovery room. The attending physicians desperately tried but were unable to revive him, and he went home to the Lord.

As the medical staff moved away, themselves emotional from the loss, a heart fallen father was left holding his son’s lifeless body in his arms. When the pain was too much, he stood and left the room to be alone in the hallway. There, he lowered his face again and, this time in anger, whispered, “Where is your grace, God? Where is your perfect plan for my son’s life, huh? I give up. What grace could there be in creating a child to go through so much, only to take him so young?”

Just a few months after that, a despondent father and mother packed up their home and relocated a few towns away. In his grief and anger at God, the father just couldn’t stay in a home once filled with their loving child’s memory. Instead, as sometimes happens, the father chose not to face his pain, but to try moving far, far away from it.

So extreme was his avoidance of grief that it took Joshua’s father a decade before he would even consider visiting his late son’s grave. On his son’s twenty-sixth birthday, however, something



inside told him it was time. So, he and the mother drove into town, pulled into the cemetery, and silently stood at the foot of Joshua's grave. When the father felt her grip tighten in his hand, he looked to the mother and, seeing the tears stream down her face, lowered his own and quietly whispered, "God, I'll never understand the greater plan. I just don't get your meaning in all of this. Tell me, Lord. I must know."

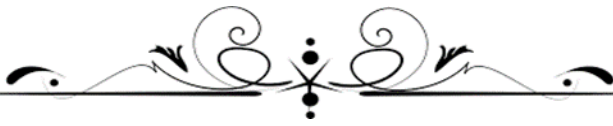
Suddenly, the sound of bagpipes playing Amazing Grace from across the cemetery pulled the father's attention away. A funeral service was just completing, and he found himself hoping it wasn't for someone he knew. Out of curiosity, he began scanning the crowd when his eyes locked on a big, handsome young man wearing a sharp suit and tie. He stood right beside the pastor and was giving blessings to those departing the service. Was that Christopher, the father wondered? Sure enough, it was.

Since the service was complete, the father felt compelled to make his way toward his son's former friend. Out of the corner of his eye, Christopher also caught a glimpse of him approaching and immediately recognized his old friend's father.

As the two came together, the young man widely grinned and grabbed the father in a great bear hug, nearly lifting him off the ground. When they separated, the father asked with concern if Christopher had lost a family member. He grimaced but said no, although he was familiar with the family who had just buried a loved one. With obvious pride, he went on to say that he was now an Associate Pastor at his church, and the Senior Pastor had allowed him to lead the funeral services that day.

Astonished, the father admitted that the last time they were





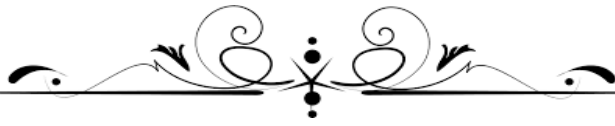
together, he would have never imagined Christopher being a Pastor and committing his life to God. He was certainly pleased but couldn't help but ask what happened in the young man's life to turn him to the Lord. After all, he told his son's best friend, he didn't exactly come from a loving, nurturing childhood.

Christopher smiled and simply replied that he was raised with a very special soul who taught him well about life and about God. He stopped talking for a moment, however, when he caught sight of a young child running toward him. Christopher waved, and then turned back to the father to ask if he could later tell him more about his mentor, perhaps over a cup of coffee. Right now, he said, he had to leave and care for another church family. The father happily agreed.

Just then, the young child arrived and wrapped his arms around his father's legs. When Christopher picked him up in his arms and asked if he was ready to go, the toddler gleefully answered yes and turned to smile at the man standing with his father.

A proud Christopher gently turned the child in the crook of his arm before saying, *"I can't wait to talk more, sir. You and I had a very special blessing in our lives, ya know? For now, say hello to my son. His name is Joshua."*

As Christopher turned and walked away, a loving and faithful father dropped to his knees, lowered his face, and whispered a quiet comment to God.



## EXIT THIRTY-SIX ~

### FIND GROWTH IN EVERY HEARTACHE

Robert F. Kennedy was quoted, *“Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live.”* The truth is that personal trials and heartaches never discriminate. No one is immune. But there’ll never be a wasted pain or hardship that befalls you. The unfortunate and crushing devastations in life will, if allowed, actually nurture faith, humility, and strength in your soul.

For every pain you must endure, make all attempts to patiently do so. The suffering you bear, especially when done with reflection, will build character, cleanse your heart, expand your soul, and take you into a personal existence far more tender, kind, and considerate than ever before.

Where many might choose to feel sorry for themselves and ask God, *“Why me?”* you’ll grow in your faith by turning to the Father for strength. Others might allow distresses to break them down and make them bitter, drifting from the important things in life that matter most. Not you. You’ll use adversity as a stepping-stone to grow closer to your essence of eternal worth. You’ll find growth in every heartache.



## EXIT THIRTY-SEVEN ~ GETTING OVER “GET OVER IT”

Never be upset that close friends, and sometimes even family members, seem to think you'll just get over the hardship you're going through. It's a natural response for them. What's more, it's usually not their fault. You can find out why by reading the following excerpt from my book, *Taking Your Griefcase to Work, Chapter Thirteen - Grief Response from Workmates*.

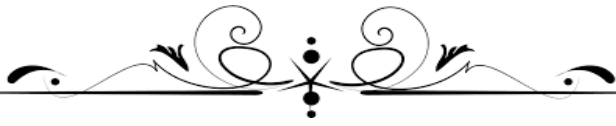
Please note that while your grief and despondency may not come from the loss of a loved one, the excerpted chapter certainly applies across all emotional hardships. In the same vein, the workmates and workplace in the chapter to follow can be easily exchanged for interactions with others during your social and civic events away from the job.

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### CHAPTER THIRTEEN ~ *Grief Response from Workmates*

#### *Are We Over it Yet?*

Whether we return after the passing of our loved one to a hostile, indifferent, or compassionate workplace, the one commonality in all three is that we're going to come face-to-face with others. Further, our leaders, teammates, associates, customers, and more will unwittingly play a pivotal role in our grief-healing journey. For that reason, it's wise that we devote some time here to mannerisms



and behaviors that we might expect from those we spend so much time with during our day.

First and foremost, we must recognize that those at work will naturally “get over” our loss and quickly move forward on their own. That’s not to say that they’re dispassionate or cold toward what we’ve experienced. On the contrary, they may truly care and hurt for us. But nothing has really changed for them, has it? They don’t go home at night to a world that’s turned upside down as we do. They don’t awaken each morning to our ugly realism of the unwelcomed changes in life, either.

Simply put, the folks that we work with don’t face our grief twenty-four hours a day. They may have genuine sympathy, and they may deeply grieve for us, but it’s just a basic human instinct to move away from hurt as quickly as possible. And that’s fairly easy to do when they only confront the pain when they confront us, right? Since they don’t experience our seemingly never-ending triggers and relentless reminders of profound loss, their minds easily and swiftly move on from the pain.

Another important aspect to consider is that our workmates, whether boss or coworker, simply don’t share the same high level of personal connection we have with our late loved one. Even within the family unit, the level of intimacy, or closeness, plays a large role in the amount of emotional impact felt from the death. Not to be cold or heartless, but we probably don’t feel the same depth of hurt over the loss of an extended family member that we feel for our own spouse or child, do we? And those in our workplace typically don’t share the same level of intimacy, or closeness, we have with our family members. As a result, our coworker’s grief is more for

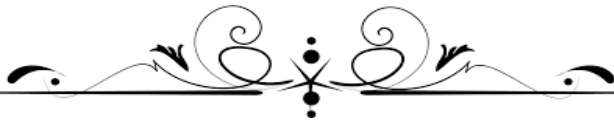


us, the survivor, and not the deceased spouse or child. Then, as we begin to show signs of moving forward, our coworkers become more relieved and their concern for us rapidly diminishes. If only they knew we're only giving a false perception of being okay. After all, perception is reality to the observer, isn't it?

In that light, we can also inadvertently help our workmates quickly move on from our loss, too. See, we're prone to put on a brave face in front of others and hide our pain. We do this to show everyone that we're okay, even though we're not. It's the grief *mask* we wear in public. We tend to put it on whenever we leave the house, right? Well, our coworkers see our mask and soon believe, because they want to believe, that we are better. They want us to be better, don't they? They care for us and hurt for us, and when we're better, they're relieved and can move forward themselves. Sadly, when we put on our masks so often in public, we end up being the only one who knows what the pain is doing to us.

Another common pitfall in returning to work after loss comes from the personal influences of death itself. Mortality is such an uncomfortable subject for most folks, isn't it? No one really wants to think about death unless they must. It's scary and unknown. And often, when a coworker is faced with our loss, the thoughts of "what if that were me" pops into their heads. That's scary too, and something that just needs to be put right out of their mind. But it can't be when we're around. We're there and our loss creates a constant reminder for some that bad things can happen to anyone at any time, and no one wants to think of that.

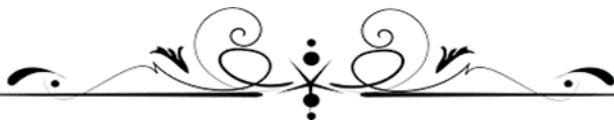
The easiest way for someone we work with to avoid the what-ifs is to simply avoid us whenever possible, right? So, we shouldn't



be surprised, or even angry, if we see an approaching workmate duck into an adjacent doorway just to avoid coming in contact with us. We might notice someone oddly cross a warehouse floor, or suddenly pull a mobile phone out and pretend to take a call when we come near. It may seem dispassionate, but it's an unconscious mental defense mechanism when they're faced with something uncomfortable. We should try to be understanding, if possible. It's a tough time for us, no doubt, but forcing an uncomfortable coworker into interaction with us can have some influences that do little for our healthful grief healing.

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End of Excerpt



## EXIT THIRTY-EIGHT~

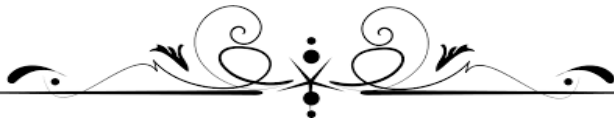
### DRINKING POISON TO MAKE ANOTHER SICK

Anger is a common and often healthy emotional response when someone has harmed you in some way. Think of the founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. The anger born from the death of her daughter by an alcohol-impaired driver has positively changed society as we know it. Holding onto anger and resentment, however, is truly like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick.

Anger becomes an internal toxin when you refuse to let it go. And you only keep the anger alive in your mind by going over and over the issues that created the feeling. Not only can anger's poison emotionally impair you, but it can also harm your physical health as well. Beyond self, it can also sour your relationships with others.

How do you let go of anger? Well, it's a process. First, it's important to acknowledge your anger instead of just ignoring it or sweeping it under the rug. Sometimes, you simply hold onto it because you're afraid of facing some underlying feelings. Feeling angry, as opposed to feeling hurt, gives you the illusion of being empowered. But in many ways, holding onto anger is disempowering. It takes a lot of energy to keep churning anger, and it takes away from other positive areas in your lives.

Forgive and forget? No. Letting go of anger and forgiving is not at all the same as forgetting what happened. Whether you forgive or not is up to you and your faith. But know that forgiveness doesn't



mean that you're saying whatever happened was okay. It means that you've decided to let go of the hurt you feel when you are ready to do so. It also means you're ready to move on, whether or not you decide to keep this person in your future life.

If holding onto anger becomes habitual, it can certainly make you a bitter soul in life. Anger episodes can quickly build up and holding onto them can become a rather heavy burden. The strain will place an emotional barrier between you and others. For many folks, however, this becomes a defensive mechanism used to shield their heart from ever getting hurt again. They just become an angry, bitter person.

Find healthy ways to face your anger and not hold onto it. Someone may have harmed you and caused the heartache that you feel today, but why allow them to continue to do that? If you remain filled with anger and bitterness for them, isn't it just like drinking poison yourself and hoping it'll make them sick?





## EXIT THIRTY-NINE ~

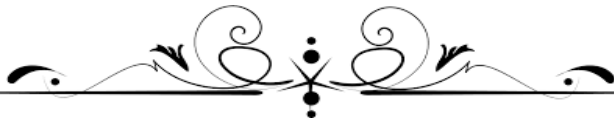
### RETURNING TO A STATE OF EASE

You *are* unique. There truly is no one exactly like you. Not unlike so many others, though, your mind can become rather chaotic when something horrible has happened, right? But take heart. Unless you purposely fight against it, as some do, your soul will intuitively seek a return to a life that's filled once again with a wonderful, natural sense of ease.

You might well be one of a kind, but to seek and experience an emotional state of ease is an internal drive for everyone. It's your soul's desire for you. What's more, it's also encoded in your very DNA. Since the days of Adam and Eve, every endeavor undertaken by the human race, individually and in assembly, has been intended to bring comfort and ease while living life here on Earth.

Either way, being at peace simply makes your soul and your heart happy. And God wants that for you. The anxieties and grief that follow a traumatic, life-changing event, however, will certainly challenge that ease. In reality, it puts you smack in the middle of a state of *dis-ease*. That's okay, though. Some early unease is normal and natural. After all, you've experienced profound suffering of the heart.

Although normal and natural, you absolutely *do not* want to remain stuck in a state of *dis-ease*. There are some pretty intense emotions in anxiety and grief that purposely cause some powerful chemicals, like adrenaline and cortisol, to be released into your



bloodstream. These booster juices, as well as others, are solely used by the body and brain for very brief fight-or-flight responses. They are intended only to get you out of immediate trouble. But over time, like all good things, too much of this supplemental boost is not a good thing. Long-term emotional anguish leads to a constant wash of these chemicals. Over time, they always become caustic and begin to eat away at your physical and emotional health.

The common medical term we use today, *disease*, actually originated long ago from some very wise physicians and philosophers. Even without our high-tech medical equipment of today, these thought leaders of yore recognized that the physical body was prone to illness when the mind was in a long-term state of distress. Persistent *dis-ease* in the mind, they found, was frequently the cause of physical *disease* in the body. That remains true today.

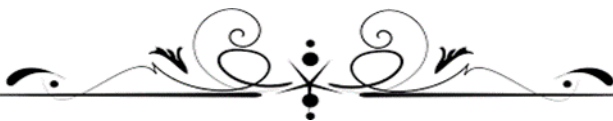
In a world so filled with war and chaos, it's easy to forget the true meaning of God's peace. When times are tough and your mind spins from a heavy heart, remember that your soul's desire for you is to move forward again to a state of ease. And making peace with what has happened is a lot like forgiving. You absolutely don't have to forget about it, but you don't want to let it eat you alive, either. So, take a breath. Take a pause. Purposely seek returning to a state of ease.





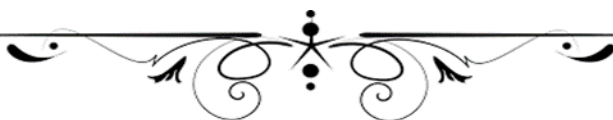
# **WAYPOINT FOUR**

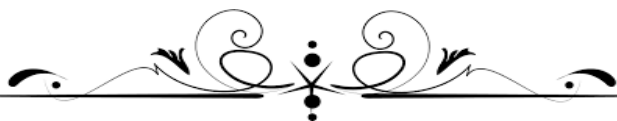
**REAFFIRMING FAITH  
AND SPIRIT**



*“What you are is God's gift to you. What you become is your gift to God.”*

*~ Hans Urs von Balthasar*





## EXIT FORTY ~

### FIND GRACE IN ALL THAT I AM

According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted of 230 countries around the globe, approximately 5.9 of the world's almost 7.9 billion inhabitants believe in God. That's a lot of conscious minds who understand that God is all around them. He's in everything and everyone. Yet very few beings know God's name, or that knowing His name can benefit them every moment of every day.

Most of humanity tends to have a somewhat abstract view of God that's structured around his incommunicable attributes, like all-being, omnipresent, and a self-derived aseity. But this is not, however, how God primarily reveals himself in Scripture. Coming before Moses, God showed the world that He is not as He is in Himself, but instead, as He is toward His children on Earth.

In Exodus 3:13, God speaks to Moses through the burning bush. There, He gives him the ultimate mission of freeing the Israelite people from Egyptian bondage. But Moses asks God, *"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"*

God replied, *"I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."*

Then Moses said to God, *"If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask*



me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”

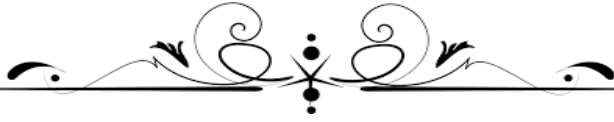
God replied to Moses, *“I Am That I Am.”* He then added, *“Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I Am has sent me to you.’”* God then said, *“Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I Am to be remembered throughout all generations.”*

So, when Moses asked God for his name at the burning bush, God gave him the answer, *I Am*.

Move forward now to today’s fast-paced world, where even the most faithful often wish for ways to stay better connected and find strength through faith. Even those of little or moderate faith wish for a way to become closer to Him. Well, as a child of God, made in His image, you have His spirit inside of you right now, don’t you? And one way to feel closer to God is to purposely invoke His name, *I Am*, every time you say it.

Whether you realize it or not, you actually do say the words *I am* many times a day. You say it when someone asks you how you’re feeling, or how you’re doing. You say it when you tell someone your profession, or what you’re currently up to in your life. You also use it when talking about yourself to yourself. The difference in using it in self-motivating ways instead of uninspiring or even demoralizing ways is how you phrase your *“I am...”* response.

If someone asks how you’re doing, don’t come back by just saying, *“I’m okay.”* Instead, try, *“I am well.”* Or maybe, *“I am great.”* If a new acquaintance asks what you do for a living, don’t respond by saying, *“I’m just a waitress.”* Instead, come back with, *“I am a*



waitress and a darned good one.” And don’t say the *I’m* contraction. Proudly announce the words *I am*. It not only makes you feel better, but it also goes down to nourish your soul and strengthen your connection with God.

Just imagine how much better it’ll make you feel to purposely respond to the how are you question with, “*I am just great!*” Maybe you’re not really doing great at the moment, but if you tell yourself that you are, your soul hears you loud and clear. Your subconscious mind hears you as well. And knowing that it habitually reacts to the environment around you, a little self-motivation can certainly boost and inspire a low self-esteem.

Over time, you’ll come to enjoy every opportunity to answer a query with the inspiring words, *I am*. You’ll look forward to the way it makes you feel, and you will, without question, know that it thrills your spirit and strengthens that important bond with God. So, go forth and find grace in all that *I Am*.





## EXIT FORTY-ONE ~

### FROM WHERE DO I PEDAL

A very elderly and content woman contemplated the journey that led her through such a rich and purposeful life. She recalled being a child and how much it had been like sitting on the front seat of a tandem bicycle. Early on, her parents and mentors shared time on the rear seat, pedaling hard and giving her direction.

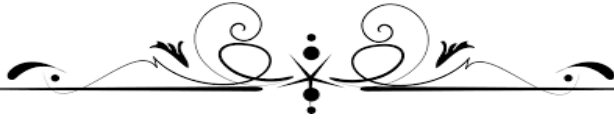
As the child grew through adolescence, however, her parents were sadly taken in a car accident. For a while, she would live with caring relatives before going off to college. It was there that she looked back from the front seat of her bike and thought no one was behind her. No one was helping pedal or guide her along the way.

Thrilled at first, the woman proudly took the lead but soon began taking a lot of shortcuts, avoiding the difficult routes, and winding up in poor destinations. At that time in her life, things seemed boring and aimless, with no joy or destination in her future.

Then, one day the young woman's solo pedaling got a little easier. Her travels also seemed to take her to nicer places. Turning, she wasn't surprised to notice Jesus sitting in the seat behind her, effortlessly pumping away with his sandaled feet.

With a compassionate smile, Jesus asked the young woman if they might change places. She accepted his offer and took a back seat to the Lord that day, knowing somewhere deep in her soul that it was not just okay, it was right.

When the young woman allowed Jesus to sit up front, she



recalled how they no longer took shortcuts. He knew pathways that took her the long way around but had so much joy and growth to offer. He led them up steep mountain trails, along some very rough and rocky roads, and sometimes did so at breakneck speeds. During their lifelong travels together, it was often all she could do just to hang on.

Even when it all looked like madness, Jesus said *"Pedal, my child."* When the woman would say, *"I'm scared"*, He would simply turn back to touch her hand, and a warm confidence would flow through her heart. When she would become anxious and ask, *"Where are you taking me?"* Jesus would just smile. He never answered, but she soon learned to trust Him.

A life without destination and joy soon became a wonderful adventure for the woman. Jesus took her to people with gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy. But he said to her many time, *"Share your gifts or they will become too heavy for you."* So, she shared with all whom she met along the way and found that in giving, she was also receiving. Because of this, her burden remained light.

Contemplating her amazing life, the elderly woman knew that with Jesus, she learned to have faith when taking her two-seater bike onto difficult paths. And even now, when she feels as if she can't go on, He turns, smiles, and just says, *"Keep Pedaling, my child."*



## EXIT FORTY-TWO ~

### ALLOW YOURSELF A FEW SIDEROADS

What follows is an excerpt from the book, *Thursdays in the Grotto*, taken from the chapter, *Byways and Roadside Attractions*.

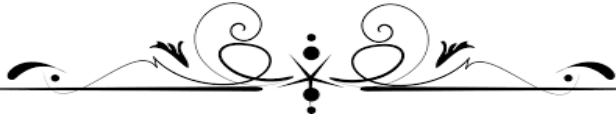
To set the stage at this point, the two intersecting characters in the story are Dan and Aiden. Dan is a spirit who has temporarily incarnated into the body of Danuwoa Ross, a Native American of Cherokee descent who is on death row for murder.

With God's permission, the spirit came to Earth to help Aiden Huff in recovering from an ugly, downhill spiral after a tragic event took his son's life. Simply calling himself Dan, the spirit easily escapes confinement and finds Aiden hiding in a mountain cave.

Although it would take much of the story before Aiden found trust in Dan's spiritual identity and the guidance offered, he would eventually settle in to listen. The following excerpt finds Dan explaining to Aiden that a life's journey may be pre-planned before birth, but there can be many detours along the way.

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*With the wave of his hand, the glowing white orb in the center of the room fades away and Dan begins, "The spirit that now embodies Danuwoa came again in your time to experience a second incarnation among the proud culture of the Cherokee Nation. Yet very early in his travels, Danuwoa would intersect with another embodied spirit who*



*had grossly strayed from his own path. The enticement of evil became too powerful for Danuwoa and he, too, strayed."*

*"And straying from the path is a bad thing? I thought we all had free will?"*

*As Aiden's words finish, Dan waves a hand again and the image of a vast street map displays across the cave wall. On the map, a long, blue line extends from one red-dotted location to another on the stone.*

*Dan looks to the map and says, "Let us call it a route, for now, Aiden Huff, and not a plan. As you see, there is a beginning and an ending destination to the chosen route. But as you also see, there are many alternate routes along the way, are there not?"*

*"Yeah, I get it. There's highways and byways. A direct route and lots of sideroads. The sideroads just take a little longer to get where you're goin,' right?"*

*"Correct. Some sideroads are much more problematic and far more difficult to travel. Some, however, can be tremendously exciting, and an unplanned detour or occasional alternate route can add great value to one's growth. Or it may detract from it as well. And some sideroads, Aiden Huff, can lead so far off the main route that it is not possible to find one's way back."*

*"We map it out before we come though, right? So, don't spirits already know which routes to take when they get here?"*

*"Yes and no, Aiden Huff. Once your spirit embodies within a mortal, you are no longer aware of the route. You are no longer aware of the plan."*

*"Well, how does that make any sense? Map out my trip, get in the car, and chuck the map out the window. Gonna be a good drive, huh?"*

*Dan broadly smiles and says, "Ah, but coming here as spirit and*



knowing the plan would remove the original desire to grow in love from the experience, Aiden Huff. If you already know the growth of the journey when you incarnate, why do so? To put it simply, you arrive here at the beginning and are pointed in the proper direction. It is because of this that the journey truly becomes the destination.”

“And I can choose to take the highway or get off on a byway and see the world’s biggest ball of yarn, right?”

Slightly nodding, Dan answers, “A wonderful way of putting it, Aiden Huff. Free will. But you should largely keep the journey to the planned route.”

Changing his glance from the map to Dan, Aiden asks, “So, are you here to get Danuwoa back on his route?”

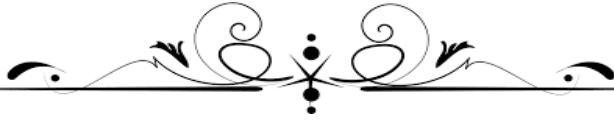
“If possible, Aiden Huff. Unfortunately, Danuwoa may have detoured so far off the main route that there is no return. If that is the case, he will forever remain separated from the One.”

“Whaddya mean? His spirit can’t go back?”

Returning to a compassionate smile, Dan replies, “The singular purpose of any incarnation by spirit is to progress toward higher levels of unconditional love. When spirit and the mortal have transgressed in ways that are so far against love, such as with Danuwoa, spirit cannot rejoin with the One. Hate simply cannot exist in love, Aiden Huff.”

“So, he’d be stuck here. But what happens when Danuwoa dies, then? When his body dies?”

“His spirit will exist in Purgatory, Aiden Huff. He will not be able to return to the One. Instead, the disembodied spirit shall forever roam this dominion unseen, unable to interact with others, and unable to feel love for eternity.”



*"A ghost?" asks Aiden.*

*"No. A heavenly detached, disembodied spirit."*

*"And that is Hell?"*

*"A true Hell. Yes, Aiden Huff."*

*"So, the spirit of every evil person that ever existed on Earth is doomed to Hell when they die?"*

*"No, Aiden Huff. Remember that some of spirit embody only to assist others in their journey. Should that include intentionally incarnating as one who hates or does evil deeds in support of another's spiritual growth, well, that is certainly within His allowable purposes. Danuwoa's spirit, however, was here for good intent, but fell too deeply within the addictions of hate."*

*"He took a dead-end street then, huh?"*

*"You may say so, Aiden Huff."*

*"So, is he pretty much headed for Hell, then?"*

*"Not if I am properly intervening. You see, I have been allowed special privilege to make yet another attempt at turning Danuwoa's spirit from hate."*

---

From there, Dan and Aiden move on to another topic. You get the gist, though, right?



## EXIT FORTY-THREE ~

### COWARDS, VILLAINS, AND FAITH

There are times in life, ugly times, which can change a personality. If those times come too often, or too heavy, you might find that you've become unrecognizable to everyone, including yourself.

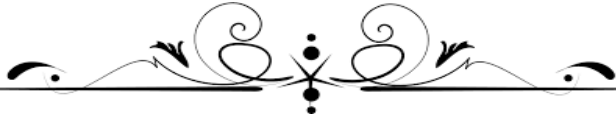
Don't despair. With faith, you can once again bring yourself back to a place of peace and purpose. The true accounts of two errant men that follows will verify that it's been done by even the most implausible of people.

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Over the centuries, their association has been written about and read many times. They were teacher and student, with one literally altering the course of his life to follow the other. It was a true giving and receiving experience where the teacher unselfishly guided and provided for his apprentice.

Then came the teacher's hour of need. Although guilty of no real crime, he was arrested. Suddenly, it was neither safe nor wise to be known as this man's follower. A crowd gathered and someone singled out the student, exclaiming to all that this man was an associate of the captured man. Then, the apprentice became afraid for his own life and repeatedly shouted "*I do not know this man.*"

The student fled from the accusers, attempting to keep himself safe. He succeeded but, in reality, there was no place to escape the guilt and shame that came from being a coward. A few hours later,



his devoted teacher was badly beaten, flogged, and put to death.

You could assume the apprentice never amounted to much in life. After all, the shameful label of *coward* should have remained with him for the rest of his time. Instead, this denying apprentice would become one of the most acclaimed leaders of all time in his mentor's teachings. He actually rose above his shame to become someone who was admired and followed by so many others.

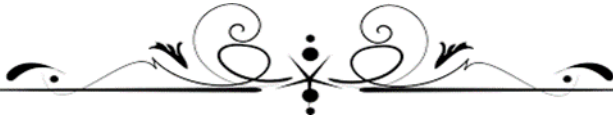
Now, there was another man during these times that was admired by many and was certainly no coward. And although he never met the teacher before his death, this villainous man made it his life's mission to destroy his work. He went as far as finding, arresting, and putting to death those that dared follow the teacher.

Like the coward who would become a prominent leader, this heinous man also turned out to be another who defied man's reason. On the road to town one day, a chance encounter with faith caused a change in his heart. As a result, he would become one of the world's most famous and admired authors.

How is such a powerful, positive change possible? How could a coward rise from such guilt and shame to become a man of courage? How could a villain become an ally and a man of faith? Well, according to the testimony of both, each was visited by the teacher in the flesh *after* he was savagely put to death, and that altered their lives forever.

It was the Apostle Peter who shamefully denied Jesus three times in his hour of need. Yet Peter would become the first official leader of the Christian Church. It was the Apostle Paul who first sought out and persecuted Christians. Paul would then go on to



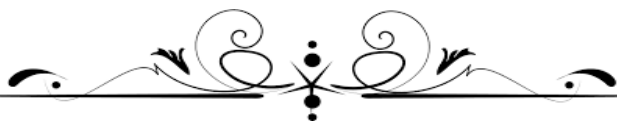


spread the Christian Church to the outermost regions of his known world and authored more books of the Bible than any other man.

---

These are amazing stories for sure. When you think about them, however, if God created the universe, who else is more capable of transforming hearts and turning cowards into men of bravery and villains into allies?

If life has taken you to a place inside where you don't want to be, or into a broken person you never imagined, faith will change your heart.



## EXIT FORTY-FOUR ~

### LIVE LIFE LIKE A DOG

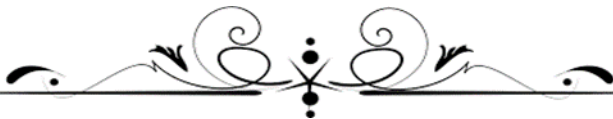
Rupert certainly had a rough day. His faithful dog Caleb, a fourteen-year-old Labrador, had to be put down. It seems that time had caught up with the old fellow and his organs were failing. Sadly, the veterinarian could do nothing to stop the fatal decline and recommended immediate euthanasia. So, it was done. And at the end of the day, a grief-stricken Rupert lay down his head to sleep.

In his sleep, Rupert was comforted by one of God's angels, who exclaimed to the saddened soul that Caleb was well and very happy sitting at the side of the Lord. With despondency in his voice, Rupert professed that he would be sad without his companion and asked the angel why God had given dogs such a brief life.

The aura around the angel brightened as he softly answered Rupert, *"My child, your own soul came to God's Earth to learn of unconditional love, and how it can bring you the blessings of a good life. But dogs already love unconditionally. They have no lessons to learn, but only lessons to impart. And Caleb has done so with you now. You know that in your heart. So, his need here is complete."*

Just as the angel began to fade from his dream, Rupert remarked, *"I will miss him dearly. Without him, I'm not sure how I'll live."*

*"Rupert!"* the angel quickly replied. *"Have you learned nothing from him? You'll live just as Caleb lived. You'll give love deeply. You'll*



*expect and appreciate being loved by others. You'll live brave, yet kind, and have a humble and simple existence. Yes, you will live as sweet Caleb did, Rupert. You'll live life like a dog."*

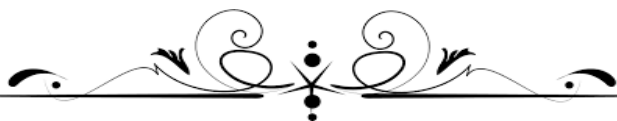
What our souls can learn from our faithful companions:

- ~ Love unconditionally
- ~ Be forever faithful and loyal
- ~ Never pretend to be someone you're not
- ~ When your loved one comes home, run to greet them with joy
- ~ Appreciate attention from others and let their touch thrill you
- ~ If what you want is buried, don't stop digging until you find it
- ~ Find peace in the simple joy of a long walk
- ~ Take every opportunity to go for a joyride
- ~ Let the fresh air and wind in your face be pure bliss
- ~ When you're happy, dance and wag you're your entire body
- ~ Run, romp, and play every day
- ~ Thrill in taking naps
- ~ Stretch before rising
- ~ On warm days, just lie back for a while in the grass
- ~ On hot days, lie back for a while under a shady tree
- ~ Never bite when a purposeful growl will suffice

And most importantly:

- ~ When someone you love is having a bad day, sit close, be silent, and gently nuzzle them.

Why not do your best now to live life like a dog?



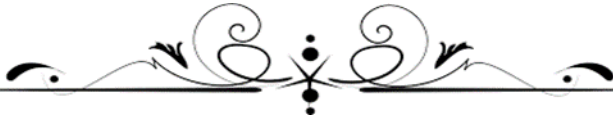
## EXIT FORTY-FIVE ~

### REMAIN ROOTED WITH OTHERS

The Sequoia trees of California, known as the Giant Redwoods, are beyond spectacular. They tower as high as three hundred feet above the ground, yet, strangely, they have unusually shallow root systems. In order to grow so large, however, each tree sends out a web-like root system just below the ground's surface to draw in the readily available moisture found there.

One would think the Sequoia's shallow root system would be a huge vulnerability for such tall trees. After all, common sense says that any storm with heavy winds could certainly bring any of these poorly anchored giants to the ground. Since the trees grow in tight clusters, however, rarely do they topple over. Why? Because they flourish in groups where their intertwining roots provide support for one another against the storms.

When you are together, either as a family, a church, or a community, you give and receive this very same support. The storms of pain and suffering come to all, but just like those giant Redwoods, you can be supported in difficult times by the touch of one another. The knowledge that you have God, family, and friends keeps you from ever being toppled to the ground. Never forget that you'll remain rooted with others.



## EXIT FORTY-SIX ~

### HELP IS ALREADY THERE

As a big storm came ashore along the coast of Louisiana, old Pastor Jim Moreau walked out the front door to check things out. With the hard rain coming down, he noticed the murky water from the nearby lake already lapping at the top steps of his church.

Just then, two men in a flat-bottom boat motored up as one man yelled, *"Pastor! Jump in. We'll take you to higher ground."*

*"No, thank you,"* the pastor humbly yelled back. *"I've been a pastor in this parish for over thirty-five years. The good Lord will always protect and provide for me."*

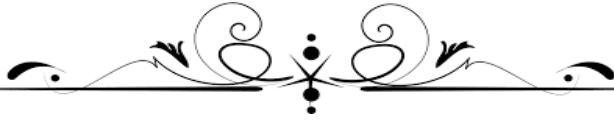
*"Okay,"* replied the man, and the two men pulled away in the boat. Soon after, the flood waters moved up and inside the church, forcing the good pastor to move to the second floor. Opening a window to get a look at the conditions, he saw a fire department boat with several rescuers pull right up to him.

The fireman in the front yelled out over the spattering rain, *"Climb out, Pastor. We're here to take you someplace safe."*

*"No, thank you,"* the pastor humbly yelled back. *"I've been a pastor in this parish for over thirty-five years. The good Lord will always protect and provide for me."*

*"Okay,"* replied the fireman, and the rescuers pulled away in the boat.

Soon after, the flood waters moved up and over the second



floor, forcing the good pastor to move out and onto the roof. There, he watched a Coast Guard helicopter, fighting hard against the wind and rain, descend above him.

As a young Guardsman began lowering a basket on a cable, he yelled against the noise, *"Pastor, climb in the basket. We'll fly you to safety."*

*"No, thank you,"* the pastor waved his arms and yelled back. *"I've been a pastor in this parish for over thirty-five years. The good Lord will always protect and provide for me."*

*"Okay,"* replied the Guardsman, as the basket was raised and the helicopter flew away.

Soon after, the good pastor was overtaken by the flood waters and found himself standing before the presence of God.

*"Heavenly Father,"* the pastor began, *"I had been a pastor in that parish for over thirty-five years. I surely thought you would always protect and provide for me. Why did you allow me to die?"*

*"My word, Jim,"* God simply replied, *"I sent you two boats and a helicopter. What else did you want, man?"*

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Pay attention. When life brings trouble, know that help is already there.



## EXIT FORTY-SEVEN ~

### THE HUMAN JOURNEY OF SPIRIT

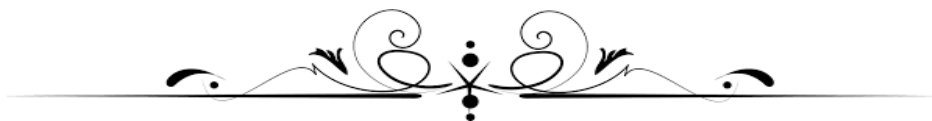
Young Ian had a tendency that didn't so much alarm his parents but certainly caught their attention. Whenever he was around an infant at a family or social gathering, he seemed drawn to the baby. He could often be seen looking long and lovingly into the face of a newborn, and unashamedly doing all he could to hold the child, even though barely old enough to carry the weight. At around the age of six, Ian's mother finally asked him about his special affinity for infants, to which he replied, "*Mom, I'm just trying not to forget God.*"

French philosopher, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, once said, "*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*"

You may have come across those words before, and they caught your attention. It just seems that something about this truth resonates on a very primordial chord inside every human being.

You know, deep in your soul, that you're made up of more than just the sum total of your past and present here on Earth. There's always that sense that the future is out there, and no matter the ups and downs, it *will* be better. More than just hope, it's a comforting sense of being part of something grand and far more infinite than just breathing and being alive.

When that truth comes to mind, however, you ponder it for a



brief second, maybe take some momentary comfort from it, and let it slip back down inside you. Life is just too busy to contemplate things you don't quite understand, right? You've got a lot to deal with, and thoughts of your spiritual side do little to help your daily life. Or does it?

Numerous passages in the Bible speak to His divine plan for you. God gave you life on Earth so that you could experience unconditional love and learn from your mortal existence. And although you may not remember it now, you came into being with innate wisdom and knowledge of your infinite and spiritual self. Your spirit, which is your essence and connection to God, was meant to be the internal compass that helps guide you through your journey of life.

Through nurturing and a busy life that unfolded as you grew, maybe you forgot your spiritual connection to the Father, and just how magnificent you truly are. Over time, you begin to believe that who you are is only the role that you play each day. You become your successes and failures. You become the opinions you've developed in a sometimes-harsh world. You become your job, your home, and your responsibilities.

Although life can get tough, you occasionally return to that comforting feeling of being a part of something much bigger. Maybe it's then that you wish you could take a spiritual journey outside your mind, outside your body even, to get some answers. That's certainly a wise and inspirational thought. But you don't need to take some temporary, ethereal trip outside yourself to accomplish the mission. You only need to travel inward and connect





to your spirit, and therefore with God.

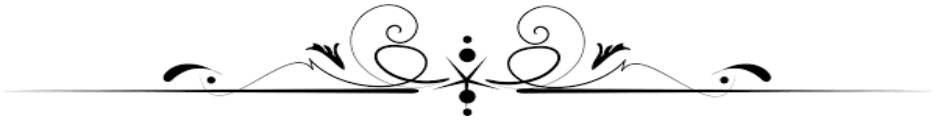
Your spirit, your true self, is always there. It just gets muted over time, if not nearly dismissed. You don't need to reconnect. You just need to make your connection stronger. But this can't be done with thought. Thought is a focused stream of information that you're always hearing in your mind. No matter how hard you try, it's nearly impossible to control it.

While thought does have tremendous value in your life, it's not the path to knowing yourself as a spiritual being on a human journey. Connecting with spirit actually requires using your five senses, because the spirit resides not in the mind, but deep within the cellular makeup of the physical body. Your body, maybe what you call your "*gut*," holds your soul. That soul connects you to your spirit and, therefore, your connection with God. Your spirit always knows from whence it came.

So, to get inside and reconnect with your soul and spirit, use your senses. Allow your body to feel itself from the inside out. Don't consult your mind for what it thinks about it. Don't send it down into your gut to check what's going on and come back with a report.

Instead, tune into the sounds reaching your ears. Feel the sensations happening inside you. Experience your breaths as they enter and exit and the gaps in between each one. Allow yourself to land inside and sense your very being by filling the whole body with your full attention. For a time, simply experience what it feels like to exist.

When you feel a stronger connection to your spirit, to God, within the body, your ego disappears for a time. You are now



enhanced by being a part of the infinite and divine. The “me” agenda fades because you’re experiencing a stronger connection to your true self.

It’s then that you should seek the spiritual guidance, the compass, to carry on with daily life. Doing so, you return to it stronger and full of faith. And from that point forward, you will understand that you are not a human being who had a spiritual experience, but instead, a spiritual being having a human experience.



## EXIT FORTY-EIGHT ~

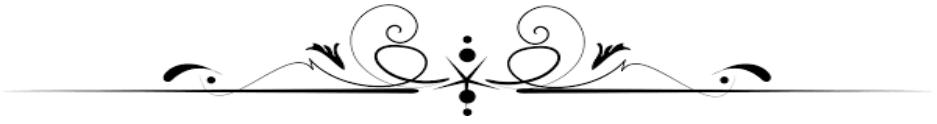
### BELIEVE WITHOUT SEEING

So many people approach the world from an angle that they could only fully BELIEVE in God if they saw Him. If that sounds familiar, nothing could keep you farther apart from the Divine source who offers every joy in life, including faithful counsel, welcome miracles, and unconditional love.

A sad reality of not wholly believing in God because you can't see him is not really believing in your own abilities, goals, and desires. If you can't trust that there is God, then you don't really trust that you have a soul or a spirit. And with that lack of trust, you'll never confidently follow your own inner guidance. Therefore, a great future is just a dream you don't truly expect in your life.

When it comes to your faith, you believe there is electricity, but you can't see it. You believe there is gravity, but you can't see that either. You believe in these unseen truths because you've witnessed the result of their existence. It only takes a moment of reflection, or even a quick look around, however, to also witness everything that only God can do or has done. Yet, without seeing Him, you still don't fully believe.

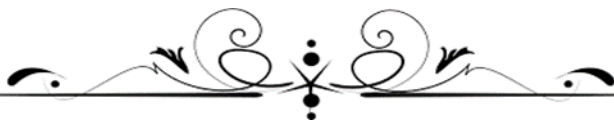
Only when you believe without seeing will you find a clear path to your life of peace and purpose. Through this belief, you'll connect with your soul, your spirit, and therefore, your true self. And with this comes that glorious connection with God, where good



counsel, miraculous events, and unconditional love come to stay in your life.

With what has gone on in your life, isn't it more important to focus on believing that hope, healing, and love are possible? The opposite means getting caught up in anger, guilt, and mistrust in yourself and others.

Never again say, *"I'll believe it when I see it."* Instead, say, *"I'll see it when I believe it."* You must learn to live more from your faith and trust in your direct connection to God. To do so, recognize that the power to believe without seeing is always in you.



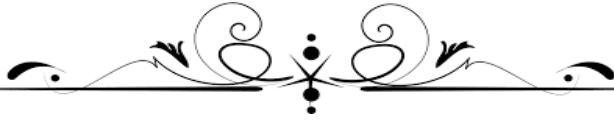
## EXIT FORTY-NINE ~ EXPERIENCE HIS GIFT OF LOVE

Love is the meaning of life. To experience unconditional love is the passion and the purpose that God appointed for all his children. While here, you'll love and be loved. Yet such a central core concept to your faith can be confusing at times. After all, people tend to misunderstand each other when they say, "I love you."

Love is actually a spiritual experience that allows seeing the real soul in not only others but in yourself. With love, you see and feel beyond the exterior veil. To love is to recognize and connect with the Divine within. And with that connection comes a natural sense of dedication, compassion, and caring for your loved ones, as well as for yourself.

To feel love in His intended way is like coming home to find your authentic self and discovering that you're not alone. But it also takes you deeper. It penetrates the very depths of your own soul and excites your spirit. And, in kind, you can touch the soul within another. Once that's done, you understand that you're not separate from them, but connected through God's Holy Spirit. With that, there can no longer be a separation.

Life is all about relationships, including with yourself, and love is the point of it all. Life is imperfect. Everyone is flawed and living is unpredictable. No one is without mistakes, after all, and yes, time and energy are wasted when you stray from the path. But love



makes it all worthwhile and allows you to forgive yourself and others.

Unconditional love is the ideal form. It's the perfect, all-forgiving love felt between a parent and a child. It's the inherent knowledge that you would give all for another's safety and salvation. But maybe you've yet to find someone who loves you without judgment or reservation. Don't despair. Take the imperfect love as it comes and never deny the unconditional love you have for them.

*It is better to give than to receive* absolutely holds true in your existence here in God's earthly realm. Accept and appreciate love in all its human imperfections. It's through you, not another, that unconditional love is manifested. That's how you truly experience the divinity in it. Accept the love you're given, even if not perfect, and then take strength in the joy of feeling and giving it unconditionally to another. You're living a life He desired for you.

The meaning of life is love, and there's no greater joy than to unconditionally experience it. Yet you'll benefit in either giving or receiving, not just both. And who's to say that, over time, your giving doesn't spark the perfect receiving of love from another? After all, You can only expect the very best when you experience His gift of love.



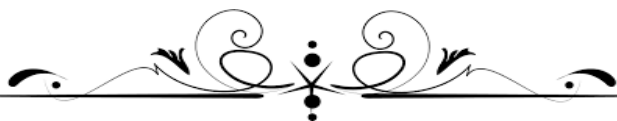
## EXIT FIFTY ~

### YOU ARE THE CHOSEN ONE

Andrea is the mother of Janice, her late daughter, who spent only nine short years here on Earth. To this day, as much as she dearly misses her sweet girl, she feels immense grace in knowing that God chose her to be with that child. Before Janice came into her life, as He set about the designs of her existence, God *chose* who her mother would be. He actually, wonderfully, *chose* Andrea to watch over and nurture His newly arriving, precious spirit. Just how incredible is that?

It doesn't matter if your grief or despondency comes from the passing of a loved one or some other profound, life-changing loss. If you take the time to breathe, it'll absolutely help. You must consider all things, including the good, about what once was but no longer is. Above all else, you will come to find that you were blessed, chosen by God, to share in that which is now gone, even if only for a short time.

As for Andrea, she knows that she hasn't lost Janice at all. Her memories will always live within her mother, who cherishes the divine experience that child brought to her life. Andrea was chosen, blessed for nine grace-filled years, to look into the eyes of God's creation and experience unconditional love. The blessings of Janice and of God will never go away. Andrea was a chosen one. You are a chosen one too.



## EXIT FIFTY-ONE ~

### COMPLIMENTS OF GOD, ADAM, AND EVE

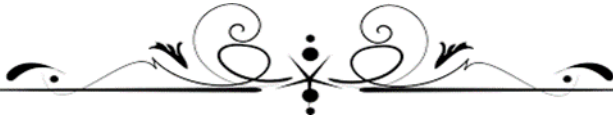
A sad outcome of hardships experienced in life can be a strain on a marital relationship. The difference in the ways that a man and a woman approach a difficulty, as well as process and express their feelings, can sometimes put a couple at polar with each other. Suddenly, when facing a life crisis, the partner that you always counted on for emotional strength and support can seem like a complete stranger.

Yet, realizing that it was the differences that attracted you to your loved one in the first place will actually strengthen your mutual bond, regardless of any life challenge. After all, it's a good bet that you found someone who was not only physically attractive to you but could do things in life that you couldn't do. After all, that's the way it's been since the time of Adam and Eve.

God didn't want Adam to be alone, so He created Eve as his helper in the Garden. While He could have simply created another Adam, God, in his infinite wisdom, knew Adam needed Eve not only to help but to do the things he could not do, like carry and birth a child.

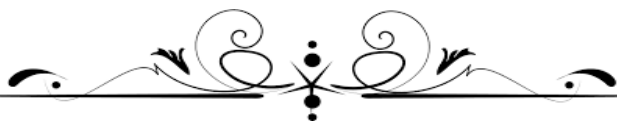
Even though Eve was referred to as a helper in Moses' writings, the term meant one who was equal and complimentary to the other in biblical times. Further, God did not create Eve out of a bone from Adam's head, so that he might lord over her. Nor did He create her





out of a bone from Adam's feet, so that he might tread upon her in life. No. God created Eve from a rib he took from Adam's side, so that she would walk beside him at all times. They were equal partners in a realm where each needed and complimented the other.

Remember God's purposeful creation of both man and woman when times are tough, and you seem to be pulling when your partner is pushing. It may well be your spouse's differing state of being that ultimately leads you back to peace and purpose. If so, know that your joyous help, in good times and in bad, is compliments of God, Adam, and Eve.



## EXIT FIFTY-TWO ~

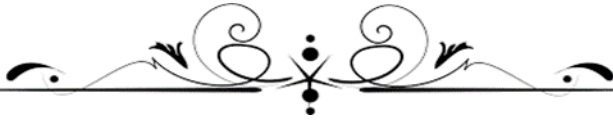
### HE NEVER SAID LIFE WOULD BE EASY

So, how do you respond when your life turns to custard? What about when you do what God requires but things still don't turn out fine for you? How about when you've nurtured what you surely thought were heaven-sent dreams, only to find them as dreams deferred to some later time? If you've followed in your faith, why can life sometimes seem so hard? Where's your life of promised ease?

No matter how many times you re-read scripture, you'll find that God never promised that life would be easy. He never said that your days would be filled with love, happiness, and light. There was no promise that you wouldn't experience loss, failure, or pain along the journey. He never said that your road would be smooth and paved in gold.

What God promises, however, is that no matter what you face, or what fears cloud your mind, his loving arms remain open no matter where you may go or how far you may wander. You will never, ever be alone. He promises that He will forever stand by your side and walk with you during the toughest of times.

God never gave you a literal road map, instruction manual, or a set of plans. But He did give you the Bible and His commandments as the values you should live by. He gave you places of support and worship, along with loving family and friends to turn to in times of



despair. He gave you miracles and blessings, stories, and kind strangers to find you whenever you need them the most.

God never promised you easy, but He promises that you'll never fight alone. He promises that He will never be more than a prayer away. He promises that when you accept His son's death and resurrection as redemption and deliverance, you can be forever physically, spiritually, and emotionally near to Him.

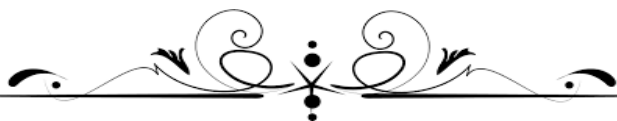
You are not meant to have a perfect, pain-free life. You are not supposed to have all the answers or to have the entirety of your existence figured out. You are not to never fall, make mistakes, or even momentarily lose your faith. Life was not meant to be easy. If it were, there would be no growth.

God created you in His image to live, love, and honor him while finding your own individual meaning. Realizing that you will be challenged, shaken, and exhausted by the weight of the world, you can delight in knowing that you will never do so alone. No matter what you face in life, His unconditional love will pull you through.

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May God bless you and keep you,

*R. Glenn Kelly*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R. Glenn Kelly is first and foremost a bereaved father. Sadly, in June of 2013, he would lose his sixteen-year-old son and only child, Jonathan, to a rare heart defect. After the loss, R. Glenn used his study of faith and emotions to begin his own personal healing travels along the broken road.

After authoring his first of several emotional support books, R. Glenn accepted numerous invitations to publicly speak at Fortune 500 companies, television networks, radio programs, and podcasts. He has been an advisory board member at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, where his late child lost his life, and served as a Board of Directors member for numerous national and international bereavement support organizations.

Through his broken road travels, R. Glenn has studied and collaborated with renowned doctors and professors who specialize in emotional trauma, thanatology, and anthropology. In Keynote Addresses, workshops, and one-on-one sessions, he has helped thousands of troubled souls who are, "going through the fire." He's been down the broken road and back. He knows well the healing waypoints and the exits.

Today, R. Glenn writes and travels to publicly speak, while also creating and recording support productions from his "EmpathGrowth" studios. He considers serving others as the true legacy left behind by his son and hero, Jonathan Taylor Kelly.





# CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

R. Glenn Kelly is a dynamic and experienced Keynote Speaker, Workshop Presenter, Grief Coach, Corporate Trainer, Author, and Bereaved Father to Jonathan Taylor Kelly.


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- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Simply search for “R. Glenn Kelly” on Facebook.com, LinkedIn.com, Twitter, and others

## Other Books by R. Glenn Kelly

- ***SOMETIMES I CRY IN THE SHOWER: A Grieving Father’s Journey to Wholeness and Healing***
- ***THE GRIEFCASE: A Man’s Guide to Healing and Moving and Moving Forward in Grief***
- ***GRIEF HEALING 365: Daily Inspirations for Moving Forward to Your New Normal***
- ***GRIEF IN THE WORKPLACE: Recover Hidden Revenue and Productivity Loss Driven by Employee Bereavement and Grief***
- ***THURSDAY IN THE GROTTO – An inspirational fiction novel about recovering from the loss of a loved one***
- ***TAKING YOUR GRIEFCASE TO WORK – Returning to Work After the Loss of a Loved One***

All books are available in paperback and eBook at Amazon.com, [rglennkelly.com](http://rglennkelly.com), B&N.com, and retail bookstores everywhere. Audio versions of *Sometimes I Cry in the Shower* and *The Griefcase* are available at Audible.com.



# DIGEST OF THE BROKEN ROAD TRAVELER

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## FIFTY-TWO TRUTHS, TENETS, AND TEACHINGS TO HEAL THE TROUBLED SOUL

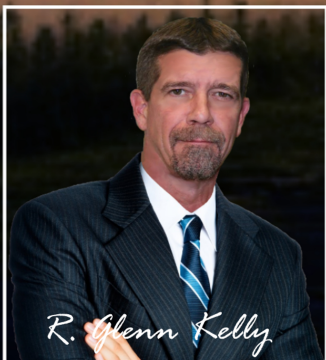
Digest of the Broken Road Traveler breaks down life's heartaches and hardships into approachable discoveries of self and faith along the highway of your life's journey. If only one chapter, one paragraph, or one sentence resonates within your soul, your life will positively change forever.

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*"Not since I read the book 'As a Man Thinketh,' by James Allen, circa 1890, has there been a comparable book for today's world, in today's language, with the same provocative insights and allegories of resilience that are embedded within its pages. It is proactive living at its core; recognizing the individual empowerments of body, mind, soul, and spirit that, when in harmony, create healing, joy, and abundance. Where Aesop's Fables meet Man's Search for Meaning, R. Glenn Kelly covers it all with this delightful tome of guidance, healing, and self-realization. I HIGHLY recommend this book for anyone of all ages. It's a primer for surviving being human."*

~ Mitch Carmody, Author, Artist, Founder of Heartlight Studios

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