

The
Journey
from Here to There

Tracey Olivier

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ISBN 1515060535

Editing: Elaine Young
Cover design and illustrations: Ruth Brophy
Cover image: [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If I had to list every person who has made an impact on me during this journey, it would be a whole book in itself. I am so grateful to everyone who has left their heartprint on my life. You know who you are and are welcome to take full credit. I would like to specially mention a few people who have been my champions, dream catchers and fellow travellers.

First, thank you to my Mom and Dad. It all started with you. Thank you for everything you have done to make me into the person I am today.

Then to my darling husband Gary, who loves me more than I deserve and believed in me even when I couldn't see past the giants. You have sacrificed so much for me to have gone on this journey. I will never be able to repay you and I am grateful that you are the kind of man that I don't need to. I love you more than words can say. You are a King among men.

To my boys Ivan, Hayden and Daniel, I love being your mom.

To the following mentors who came into my life at just the right time to open up a path or hand me a torch: Rob Wilson, Maria Stein, Brad Sadler, Lars Lofstrand, Patrick Kuwana, Amon Kasambala, Jenny Hitch and Adam Bright. You expected and called greatness out of me.

To Nic Engel who created the tipping point by ordering the book, which spurred me to pick it up and finish it. Thanks Nic.

To the brilliant Elaine Young, who was my only choice for editor, not only because you are truly gifted, but because I love working alongside you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To Ruth Brophy, precious friend and uber talented designer, you were also my only choice for the cover and illustration of this book. You just get me! I love you my sista!

To Libby and Adele, thank you for your honesty and feedback in reading the very raw first draft.

To my friend and colleague Sam, what a privilege it has been to journey with you along this stretch of the road.

Last but not least, my book club buddies. I know you tease me because I always bring this kind of book to book club, but I am hoping that you will at least (or have to) read this one....



FOREWORD

How I bless Tracey Olivier for this deep and very challenging little volume! Certainly this fine young author has thoroughly challenged me and made me look afresh at my own life, at where I am, and where I should be, or would like to be. She has brought for me a creative and disturbing and very positive challenge. And I believe she can do the same for you.

The hard fact is that we all have a *Here* – a place where we are right now which was perhaps once a path that was going somewhere. But now the well-worn path has become a rut and a place of discontent, frustration, even unhappiness maybe.

And deep down in that hidden and often secret world of our inner lives we have a longing for a *There* – another place where we would like to be and where life will be filled with joy, happiness, satisfaction and fulfilment.

But usually we stay stuck, gripped by the rigid flanks of the rut, and we just don't know how ever we could move from Here to There.

Dear reader, I have good news for you. Tracey Olivier in this powerful and potentially life-changing little volume shows any sincere person how it is possible with intentionality and by activating her guiding principles to move out from your comfort zone where you have become a static settler to becoming an excited pioneer moving into a new and fulfilled future for your life.

I really do want to encourage you to let Tracey lead you into this new place.

She will ask you to become deeply aware in new ways of your dissatisfaction, discouragement, and even depression where you are right now. And then will show you how to recognise the territory you are in and face the giants or forests obstructing your way. She will help you see where you are and then where you want to go, as you catch a vision of the real person you want to be, and can be.

One thing she won't allow you and that is to see yourself as a victim

who can do nothing about the prevailing negative circumstances around you, or negative emotions within you. She will force you to see and identify the negatives crippling you, and then even show you how to turn these to positives from which you can learn into springboards for progress to your *There*.

Tracey speaks of a place called The Valley of Insight, as the place where we see what needs tackling, including sometimes unforgiveness, and then she gives us maps, tools and a compass enabling us to tackle them. It is all very practical and helpful. You will also be shown how to work on those things over which you have control, rather than letting the things over which you have no control trap you in Bunyan's 'Slough of Despond.'

Especially important, I think, is Tracey's stress on the importance of the compass which shows you True North. For Tracey this True North is her faith in Christ.

Beloved Reader, moving from your *Here* to your *There* will be immensely helped if you can develop a True Faith in Christ and activate it. I know Tracey pretty well, and I know her life is immeasurably enriched and empowered by her faith. Why not write her at tracey@traceyolivier.co.za, and allow her to share more about both entering a personal relationship with Christ, and then developing it? After all our God is the Final *There* to which we all need to move. And with Him 'nothing is impossible.'

So I urge you to master and activate this little volume and allow Tracey with her consummate sensitivity and skill to help you on this inspiring and life-changing journey from your present *Here* to your New *There* – a place of joy, peace, fulfilment, happiness and usefulness.

If you allow this book to do that for you, you will forever bless both the author of the book and the Final Author of the author!

Michael Cassidy

A reader's response

Prior to reading *The Journey From Here to There*, I was facing some very daunting decisions regarding my journey forward in business. The emotional turmoil I was experiencing was to be expected, but was intense to say the least. As I read this book, I could suddenly see where I was in my life. The way the book described where I was at and the emotions in that place, fitted me perfectly. It challenged me to make the necessary courageous decisions and move forward. Every person reading *The Journey From Here to There* will see exactly where they are along their journey and be encouraged and motivated to move beyond their current comforts into the place of destiny.

Adele Benvie



PREFACE

This is a book about a journey - a journey out of the familiar, often uncomfortable place called Here...to There, a place where we often only go in our dreams. It's a journey I have been on for the last ten years and one which I would like to take you on, if you'll allow yourself to look up from your present circumstances and consider the possibilities that lie before you.

My journey began with a dissatisfaction with 'where I was' and a conviction that there had to be more to life than this. Setting out on my journey to follow my dreams, I had little idea of the nature of the territory that lay before me and how sometimes my There would be like a mirage in the desert - always around the next sand dune. But the process strengthened me, taught me what it takes to reach my destination, and gave me a burning passion to encourage others on the same road.

As I journeyed, I learned what paths to take through the wilderness, what maps to consult and what tools to use to keep myself on course. In the process I went from being directionless and clueless to being hopeful and then focused - and if I can do it, so can you. The aim of this book is to encourage you to take the journey because you are worth it, and you have GREATNESS inside you even if you don't think so.

Establishing where you are and where you would like to go is the start of the journey. This is the easiest part. It's in the land between Here and There where we normally get stuck (or come unstuck!) or get lost and want to give up. My hope is that this book will give you the insight and the tools you need to navigate successfully through to the other side.

What gives me the right to help you with this journey? Well, I have walked it myself and continue to walk it. My story is not extraordinary; I am a very ordinary person with a very ordinary life. People often call me brave, confident and adventurous, but I am not really. I just found my PATHS and acknowledged my passion, and this unlocked my purpose - to encourage and equip others to do the same. The result is a life that is full of adventure and achievements I didn't even think were possible.

Join me in the adventure of a lifetime!



INTRODUCTION

In 2005 I had my “annus horribilis”¹. It started off as a great year, with a dream-come-true trip to Dublin, Ireland with my husband. It slowly unravelled from there with wave upon wave of personal tragedy and disappointment. These ‘events’ weren’t as devastating as those many others have had to face, but to me they were no less challenging. To complicate things, it wasn’t the circumstances I faced that were the problem, but rather the state I was in - and I wasn’t able to withstand the storms because of it.

Maybe it’s because I was so desperate, maybe it’s because of the way I’m wired, but that crisis made me take a good, hard look at my life and I realised that I was on auto-pilot. I was wandering around and around, creating a well-worn path on the outskirts of a life that was designed for so much more. Every day I’d been growing increasingly miserable as I wore that rut deeper and deeper...and when each wave of unexpected circumstance hit me, it created a moat in which I was literally drowning.

One day while at my corporate job, I suddenly started to cry and I realised that the dam wall, which I’d been patching up for ages, had burst. I headed for the ladies’ and into a little cubicle to try to pull myself together, but I couldn’t. The force of my pent-up emotion was pushing down the façades, and now there was no holding it back.

After months of feeling as if I was drowning, all the emotion and litres of tears flowed for what seemed like hours. Standing there, I held onto each side of the toilet cubicle and let out a silent scream. Then I cried out for help. I had come to the end of myself and I didn’t know what to do next....

Suddenly I was flooded with peace as I felt strong arms pulling me from those deep waters, holding me close, then placing me in a wide open space. I now knew what I needed to do. The answer was a whisper, but it was filled with hope.

This was the start of my journey - one that has taken ten years and which still has a way to go. But now I am at a vantage point in the journey where I can look back and see the layout of the land as it were, and I long to share with others the lessons I have learned along the way.

1 A Latin phrase for “horrible year”.

After that game-changing encounter in the toilet cubicle, something literally shifted inside me. No more was I going to be a victim to my circumstances; no more was I going to be moved and swayed by every little wind, wave or storm that came my way. I saw a path that seemed to lead up a mountain and there was a glint of something glorious and wonderful in the future that seemed to beckon me.

I was set for a journey that would be exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. Each small step I took required courage and often was met with some resistance. I sometimes slipped and fell, feeling as if I was climbing two steps and sliding down five, muddy, bloody, but free with every step of the way.

When it all got too much I would go to Psalm 18 and read it out loud, imagining myself as the one crying out to God while *“the cords or bands of death surrounded me, and the streams of ungodliness and the torrents of ruin terrified me”*. (Does that sound familiar? The fear and anxiety that feel like cords wrapped around your chest, the ‘overwhelm’ that makes you feel as if you’re being pulled under a torrent?)

I could so relate to verse 6: *“In my distress [when seemingly closed in] I called upon the Lord and cried to my God; He heard my voice...”*

I love the next few verses which describe how my powerful protector, Father God himself, comes hurtling down from heaven - breathing fire from his nostrils and shooting arrows and lightning bolts - to rescue his child.

Then my favourite part: *“He reached from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me... He brought me forth also into a large place; He was delivering me because he was pleased with me and delighted in me.”*

I can just see the Father holding his dripping, rescued child and bringing him into an open space to recover. Psalm 18 is still my go-to psalm when I am pressed in on all sides, when fear and anxiety threaten to engulf me. I picture this lovely, strong, fierce Father coming to the rescue, scattering the obstacles in His way and rescuing me to place me in a safe, open space to recover and get back on my feet.

The Journey from Here to There

At the Global Leadership Summit in Chicago a few years ago, Bill Hybels described leadership as the process of taking people from “Here”

to “There”. One point that stuck with me was that “Here” needs to be uncomfortable enough, and “There” attractive enough, to justify moving out of our comfort zone. Most of us are averse to pain and discomfort, which is why we often dislike change; but this is counter-productive because we avoid the stretching that accompanies growth. Leaders have to not only create a clear and compelling vision of the “There” and why it is better, but they have to help people see why “Here” is no longer desirable.

What has that got to do with us in our private lives? Everything! Whether we acknowledge it or not, we lead ourselves every day through a process of self-talk aimed at helping us realise our goals - even if these are self-defeating and negative because of our state of mind. Whatever our personal outlook on life, it doesn't come naturally to change the way we see things. So, as in Bill's illustration, we need to understand what is *bad* about the place we're in, and what's *good* about the place we're headed for - otherwise we won't move at all. That's the reason for the title of this book, which I hope will stay with you as you prepare to make your own journey.

Let me tell you briefly about my own journey from Here to There. I had a pretty good life growing up in Johannesburg. School wasn't great, but it was something we had to do. Because I failed Shorthand and Typing, I failed matric (horror!). That dealt a major blow to my morale and to prove them (and myself) all wrong, I was determined to be the first one in my class to get a job. As it turned out, I did get one very quickly and worked hard, earning a number of promotions. I duly met and married my husband and we moved down to Durban where I stayed at home for seven years bringing up a family. When I went back to work, it was in the training department of a large corporate and I was very happy - or so I thought.

As time went on, I wore a deep rut for myself - the one that led to the crisis I described at the beginning of this book. As I later realised, the disharmony within me had begun to shake my foundations and when life started to happen around me, it rocked me to the core. That experience had the fortunate effect of 'waking me up' and it set me on a journey that has been sometimes exhilarating, sometimes downright painful, but altogether remarkable.

I left the corporate world and started working with some small training providers. That phase of my life showed me what I loved and what I really

didn't, and I discovered talents I didn't even know I had. In 2008 I decided it was time to "plant my own field" and start my own business doing *ad hoc* training for other companies.

Before I go on, let me just say that owning your own business is the quickest way to grow as a person, because your business will reflect what is going on inside you like nothing else does. It will push you to face things about yourself that you would like to hide from and ignore.

To my dismay, 2008 was when the recession hit and all the companies I had spoken to tightened their belts. What was I to do? As it happened, I had already created a course for people who were keen to find their purpose, because the journey was still fresh in my mind. Twelve people did it and most of them asked me to coach them. At first I was very reluctant to do so because I wasn't (and didn't feel) qualified. But they were persistent and eventually I agreed, with the proviso that they acknowledged that I wasn't qualified. They were all satisfied that my journey had qualified me enough for their purposes.

With that, I started my coaching journey and realised that I absolutely loved it! And word got out. At about that time it occurred to me that, because I am a team player, I needed to keep people around me - a difficult task in a one-woman business. So I approached a few people in my circle who were in a similar position and suggested that we meet once a month to connect, encourage and bounce ideas off one another. Before we knew it, the benefits of this little meeting brought more people and it grew. Then someone asked for advice on how to do a business plan. Because of my connections with the training world, I got my brilliant ex-boss, Maria Stein, to do a talk - and the little group grew even more.

That is how KBN (Kingdom Business Networking) was born. The network grew over the years and with the help of a super-talented administrator, Belinda Peck, KBN grew to six chapters with an average of twenty-five people at the larger groups. In all this, I just kept doing what I do naturally and best: connecting and encouraging people.

In 2010, I decided it was the "year of the pen" and before I knew it, I was the editor of a Christian business magazine called *Connect*, which had contributors from all over the country and the world. Things were happening... we were growing, we had an office, I was making a difference...but I wasn't making much money. Which is generally a problem if you're self-employed!

In 2013 my husband and I were visiting family in Australia when we stopped at a little church and spontaneously knelt down and said a little prayer. While we were praying, a very clear and distinct thought entered my mind: “Surrender!”

That got my attention and by the end of the day, through some really interesting turns of events, my husband had been offered a job. Over the next few days we faced the decision of whether or not to leave the country of our birth - a country I’d thought I would never leave, a country I love with all my heart - and to start afresh. The salary was fantastic and we had both of Gary’s sisters there. During this time I caught myself breathing out a sigh of relief and thinking, “Now I can lay down the magazine and no-one will think that I failed”. I immediately recoiled in shock....I hadn’t even realised I was in disharmony over the magazine!

When we got home, we just couldn’t get peace about the move and decided not to pursue it. But my territory was still about to change. By then I was aware that despite succeeding in its core mission, the magazine’s season was over. I was in what felt like a very dry place, having to make a huge decision. Life has a way of helping you along once you have an awareness of something. Not long after I returned from my trip to Australia, my second-in-command resigned, the office space I rented no longer had Internet, and it wasn’t worth the rent for me alone. I knew what I needed to do, but the intense feeling of letting people down by stopping the magazine weighed heavily on me.

It took me a few months to finally make the decision and it was excruciatingly painful to do. But once I had done it, that peace that transcends all understanding flooded my heart and mind - and taking each action step after that was much easier than I had imagined.

By then I had already started doing a coaching programme with Adam Bright to get qualified in the thing I really loved doing (and to shut up the nagging giant that always tells me I am stupid). I was also still running KBN and developing the lovely ladies who facilitate the meetings.

While I was letting go of the one side of my business as editor of *Connect*, the opportunity arose for me to become an in-house coach alongside my mentor, Adam. Instantly I went from being a confident ‘settler’ to being a pioneer and having to break new ground all over again. Although I had been coaching all this time, I was scared - I had brand new tools to apply, a brand

new way of doing things and a brand new team to fit into instead of lead! It was great to be part of the team again, but it was all new and uncertain and I felt as if I was starting from scratch again.

I realised that a large part of my identity lay in my work - and now that work had changed, I felt as if I was in a forest where I couldn't see the wood for the trees. I didn't know who I was anymore and it was a terrifying place to be. My future seemed obscured, the path didn't always seem clear, and I was bumping into accusing giants daily. I doubted my ability, my decision and my worth constantly and it was hard work to gain enough clarity every day to get to the next step. Fortunately I had great friends, fantastic tools and a top-notch coach to help me navigate my way through this.

One of the big turning points for me was finding out my strengths using the Strengthfinders test. Once I knew how I was wired and how to leverage my strengths, I gained a whole new perspective. Understanding my driving needs for the first time, I shifted from just surviving to contributing and building a legacy. In just a few months, I was earning better than I had in years, I was growing my capacity for business, my marriage was improving and even my relationship with my kids was shifting. I also had the courage to commit to the goal of writing this book - a task I had been putting off for three years.

As I write this, I am conscious of the scenery changing again as I contemplate yet another new journey of growth. Like the other journeys, I know it will have all the same territories again - the wilderness, the giants and the forest - but I am excited and ready for it because I know what to expect. I have the map, I have the compass and I have some tools that will get me through. I am ready to step off the RIM of my latest comfort zone into the unknown. I hope that as I do, you will have the courage to start a journey of your own from Here to There.

Living on Purpose

It is sad how little time we (and I include myself) spend taking stock of where we are and where we're going. Then, when we get to a destination we don't like, we act all surprised and offended with life! "How did this happen?" we say. "This isn't fair!" But if we are not intentional about the paths we choose, we still choose by default.

Who in their right mind goes on a holiday without knowing where they are going or where they are leaving from? Why then do we do this in our lives and expect to magically come out with a fairytale ending? I believe each one of us is intelligently created and that we are designed not only *on* purpose but *for* a purpose. If this is true, then it is up to me to find out what I am designed for so that I can be useful and add value to those around me. I also believe we were designed to contribute; this is why it feels so fulfilling and satisfying when we do something that is bigger than ourselves.

Society today has convinced us that life is all about what we want and what makes us happy. Because we tend to think that it's what we have that makes us happy, we strive to fill up our lives with 'stuff'. But guess what - it's been proven that experiences, not stuff, bring real happiness!

Commenting on a study by Dr Thomas Gilovich, Jay Cassano² says, *"It's counterintuitive that something like a physical object that you can keep for a long time doesn't keep you as happy as long as a once-and-done experience does. Ironically, the fact that a material thing is ever present works against it, making it easier to adapt to. It fades into the background and becomes part of the new normal. But while the happiness from material purchases diminishes over time, experiences become an ingrained part of our identity."*

He then quotes Gilovich himself, who says, *"Our experiences are a bigger part of ourselves than our material goods. You can really like your material stuff. You can even think that part of your identity is connected to those things, but nonetheless they remain separate from you. In contrast, your experiences really are part of you. We are the sum total of our experiences."*

If this is true, then those who stay forever in the same rut will have very limited experiences, very limited memories and very limited happiness!

What does the Journey look like?

While the "Here to There" concept is important to understand, it is the land in between that often stops people from reaching their full potential. If you know in advance what the land in front of you will look like, and what to do when you're feeling alone or outmatched or outwitted by your giants, you will have more power to keep going and reach the other side.

Life is a series of journeys from Here, through the challenging land in between, to There. In a sense we never arrive - but that shouldn't discourage

2 <http://www.fastcoexist.com/3043858/world-changing-ideas/the-science-ofwhy-you-should-spend-your-money-on-experiences-not-things>

us from starting in the first place. From my own journey and those I have taken with others, I have noticed not just a horizontal pattern (like the Comrades Marathon route when viewed from the side) but a vertical one. This vertical pattern is also circular and its rings get shorter as it reaches the apex. That's because growth is constant and it occurs in cycles, like the rings on a tree. Every time we get to a point where we are comfortable and what we have learnt becomes part of us, there is a little niggles inside us that calls us to start the journey again and reach an even higher level. That niggles may be purely internal (and we may choose not to listen to it) or it may come in the form of an external event, like a challenge or a new opportunity.

I recently read a post on Lance Wallnau's Facebook page which describes exactly how I see this process:

"Imagine you are winding your way up a mountain. It feels like you're going in circles but you're not...you are going in 'cycles'. How do you know the difference? Cycles that wind up the mountain yield a different view. You see things differently. Your perspective changes. You are growing. Personal mastery leads to Career mastery.

*"You climb by cycles upward or stagnate by circles in the wilderness. You know the difference by the change in you and the vision you are seeing. Also, the cycles get shorter each time. Networks get more strategic. Decisions yield greater consequence. Earnings are your highest, as you near the summit."*³

What I want you to take away with you

This book is a map for those who have found themselves treading water in the moat, crying out in the wilderness or running from their giants, but would like to climb the mountain to a place where they can arise and shine.

While it should not replace a life or business coach, it will give you some understanding of where you are and maybe even shed some light on why you find yourself there. It is about helping you understand the journey process and literally giving you a map and a compass to guide you through some of the common places we all face.

This book is written very visually because I am a picture person, and when people speak to me I am forming pictures in my head as they speak. I hope the descriptions and images will help you to recognise the territory you're in, and that the tools will make a difference to the way you deal with the

³ Lance Wallnau, 3 March 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/LanceWallnau/posts/10153149945074936?fref=nf>

challenges there while keeping you focused on the end goal. And remember: you really don't have to journey on your own. Get a coach, mentor or friend to walk alongside you, and by all means get in touch with me personally at tracey@traceyolivier.com to let me know how you're doing.





CHAPTER I

Starting the Journey

Many journeys begin with the opposite of movement. Often people are simply “stuck” - they feel overwhelmed and anxious, powerless to make changes in their lives, and even worse, optionless. Taken to an extreme, it’s a recipe for suicide.

There are various reasons for this situation and most of the time people aren’t able to identify why and where they got stuck. Most don’t even know that they *are* stuck; they just think, “Life sucks”.

The good news is that being stuck doesn’t have to be the end of your story. It can lead you to a brand new, exciting destination! But to get there you need a few tools. For any journey into the unknown you need:

- To know where you are now and where you want to go
- A map to guide you to your destination
- A compass to keep you on course.

Before the days of GPS, people would use a map and a compass to find their way. The purpose of a map is to give a visual representation of a certain area, which is essential in navigating unknown territory. The compass tells you what direction you are heading in, which orientates you in relation to your map and prevents you from getting lost.

Both the map and the compass are useless unless you know exactly where you are and where you want to go. It is vitally important to understand where you are before you can set off on your journey. Once you have established where you are, you mark it off on your map. The next thing you need to know is where you are going.

In my experience, journeys often start off with a restlessness which stirs us to look to the horizon for a new destination. The best place to view the landscape is from a high point. As we look from this high place, we can see where we are and in the distance we can see the outline of where we want to go. Normally there is a great distance between the two and the lie of the land in between may be vague. At this point we have to fill in the blanks and this is where vision and dreaming come in.

An example of this would be the biblical story of Joseph, who had several dreams of the great leader he would become. But there was a long road between the dream and its fulfillment! Being the child of his father's favourite wife, he was favoured by his father and this caused huge resentment amongst his brothers - made worse by his dreams which showed his brothers bowing down to him. Having three boys of my own, I am pretty sure this must have gone to his head!

When Joseph announced to his brothers and parents his interpretation of the dreams, it didn't go down well with the family and even his father rebuked him. This was obviously the last straw for the brothers and when Joseph was sent by his father to check up on them, they seized the opportunity to 'sort him out'. Their intent was to kill him, but one of the brothers convinced them to put him in a pit, with the intention of fetching him later. When he returned, the others had sold Joseph into slavery.

So Joseph's journey began, and it wasn't what he had expected or hoped for. He found himself in a pit, then in slavery, then in prison where he was literally forgotten for two years after giving the butler the meaning of his dream. The Bible doesn't tell us what he felt during each stage, except that he knew God was with him. But we can see by his actions that he didn't give up hope. At each stage he stuck to his values and excelled in what he was given to do. Every circumstance he faced built his character and matured him as a person. It enlarged his capacity, it tested his attitude, and it honed his skills. It made him the person he needed to be to carry out the important future role God had planned for him.

You see, when we discover our dream or purpose and we realise what we are destined to be, we can stand on a high place and clearly see There. The problem is, we often don't see the road that leads to There. It may have ditches of disappointment, valleys filled with terrifying giants, harsh wilderness and a dark forest before we come out at our place of destiny.

This surprises us and many turn back and choose the easier path of business-as-usual. But the journey is what grows and refines us for the moment when we get to shine. Most importantly, it humbles us and builds our character by showing that we are only part of a great design

- not *the* answer the world has been waiting for. We learn that we are designed for contribution, and that we shine brightest when we are giving and bringing life to others.

Living 'Here and Now' as we journey to 'There and Then'

While we are on our journey, we also need to remember to engage with the present. If we live for There only, we miss out on all the joy and gems of the moment. Life is for living and enjoying and learning in the Here and Now, as well as journeying to the Then and There. We need to strike a balance by planning and living for the future while we embrace the Now and make a difference where we are.

One of the first things I realised on my journey was that there is a way, a high road, a path less travelled. I realised that living on purpose is about being firstly self-aware and then aware of what is happening around you, but fixing your eyes on something more solid and true. It's about finding your true north.

For me, my faith is my true north. It gives me my solid ground, a rock to stand on in a world that is a shifting sinking sand of popular opinion and trends. From this my values guide me, like a rope that I can hold onto when the storms come.



CHAPTER 2

Are you a Victim or a Victor?

I have had the privilege of working with a great team for the last eighteen months. A tool they introduced me to is the Triad, a concept derived from Anthony Robbins' theory of the Emotional Triad⁴. The Triad helps you to understand and manage your internal state and the way you view the things happening around you. Victorious living depends on your awareness and management of three questions:

- **Focus** - What are you focusing on?
- **Meaning** - What meaning am I creating out of this? What does the thing I'm focusing on right now mean to me? How am I interpreting it?
- **Action** - What am I going to do about this?

For example, my geyser just burst. I could react to this in one of two ways:

Focus:	Oh dear, this is a pain but hey, geysers burst and thank goodness I'm insured.	Oh man! Why do these things always happen to me? My life sucks. What else can go wrong?
Meaning:	I am empowered to sort this out. I will choose not to let this ruin my day.	I must be doing something wrong, I am a victim of my circumstances.
Action:	I will call the insurance and the plumber and get it sorted.	I will take it personally and feel like I am under attack. I'll still have to call the insurance and plumber and get it sorted, but now I feel as if there is a conspiracy against me.

4 Anthony Robbins, 1992, *Awaken the Giant Within: How to Take Immediate Control of Your Mental, Emotional, Physical and Financial Destiny!*

What we focus on, we become. When my husband taught my boys how to ride a bike off road, he told them not to focus on the parts of the road that would make them fall, but rather on where they wanted to go. Whatever your focus is, this is where you will constantly be drawn to. This is why so many people have exactly what they don't want in life!

It is interesting to me that the word for care, worry or anxiety in Greek⁵, is the word “merimna” which comes from the word “merizō” which means “to divide or fracture a person's being into parts”. So when we are anxious and worried, we are fractured - and if we are fractured, it is very hard to focus on what is important and achieve it.

If you don't like what you are seeing or experiencing, you need to identify what your primary focus is. Then you need to shift your focus to what you *do* want and create a clear picture of it so that you will be drawn that way.

Understanding where your focus lies is vitally important to living your life as a victim or victor. The problem with living as a victim is that we're often rewarded by people surrounding us and meeting our needs, which keeps us in a disempowering cycle. Victimhood slowly becomes our identity: we have a “story” that draws people to us and we get our needs met by them in an unhealthy way. It's also unhealthy for the rescuer because constant rescuing is exhausting and emotionally draining, so the rescuer eventually moves on - which then “confirms” the victim's “story” and makes the cycle bigger and deeper. Sooner or later the cycle begins again with “fresh” rescuers who will also get tired and move on. Each time this happens, the victim feels more and more helpless until he or she is like a black hole of negativity, bitterness and helplessness. Let's be honest: most of us avoid people like that. Not surprisingly, they blame everyone for where they are.

In Andy Stanley's book, *The principal of the path*, he speaks about the fact that when we choose a path, that path always has a destination - yet many are surprised when they land up somewhere they don't like. They chose to walk that path but blame everyone and everything for the result.

Some people have been abused as children and later battle in other areas of their lives because of it. Although they are justified in being angry

5 <http://biblehub.com/greek/3308.htm>

and bitter about what happened, they are the ones who suffer if they refuse to forgive and stop the blame cycle.

Jesus told a parable that I often use when dealing with a person who has cause to blame. It speaks about a servant who comes to the master and reports that an enemy has sown bad seeds among the good seeds, and now the field is producing them both. The servant asks if the bad seeds should be removed, but the master tells him to leave them until harvest time when they can be harvested and separated. The weed will be destroyed and the good crop will be stored and enjoyed.

I have used this story (albeit a little out of context) as an analogy for what happens in cases when hurt and devastation are sown in a young person's life. When we are young, our brains often cannot process this trauma, and its weeds grow along with all the good things we are learning. The weeds often only reach maturity in our adult life and they make us do things, or choose certain paths, that are not the best for us. When the harvest time comes and our "weeds" are revealed through various circumstances, people often seek help from coaches or other professionals.

Moving from victim to victor is a scary process because you have to take responsibility. Blame suddenly has no place in your life, even if something or someone has hurt or taken from you.

To help people break out of a blaming mindset, we have a tool that we call the "blame strategy". In it, we first get a person to "blame in full" - they can blame the parent, spouse, whoever, for all the damage and hurt they've caused. But then we get them to look at the good things that have been produced from the negative experiences. For example, they might realise, "I am strong and independent. I have a drive to succeed". When we can see that some positives are linked to that person or event that caused us pain, then we are playing the whole blame game. We can accept that the pain played a role in developing our positive characteristics. It also helps us to empathise with our tormentors and see that they too may have been broken. That helps us to forgive, and forgiveness is one of the greatest liberators on earth.

We all need to sort through the good and the bad, deal with the limiting beliefs that have formed because of our past experiences, and celebrate the

good that came from them. I am reminded of the passage from Romans 8:28 which says, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”*.

A victim gets his identity from the story that makes people feel sorry for him, but a victor understands that the story of what happened isn't the main thing. The main thing is what was learned and how it can be used to make better choices and set others free. A victor's identity is founded on something much greater than himself.

Bear this in mind as we turn now to a path and a journey that can not only transform our mindsets, but change our circumstances too. Are you ready?



CHAPTER 3

Making Sense of the Path

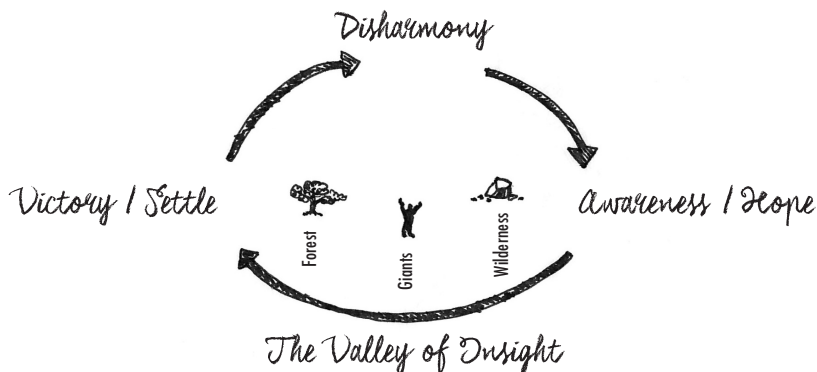
When you are preparing for a major overland journey, you start by looking in detail at the territory you are likely to encounter along the route. This makes it easier to recognise the challenging bits when you reach them, and to build in extra reserves and support to help you through them. Reaching your destination always makes the often bumpy ride worthwhile - even when you have to go through several days of bumpy ride, because you're always closer to point B than when you started!

So what DOES lie ahead of us on the journey from Here to There? And what happens after we reach our destination? Let's explore this through the concept of the GROWTH CYCLE.

The Growth Cycle (our map)

The first time I heard about the Growth Cycle, it was presented as having four stages: disharmony, discovery, fidelity and celebration. I remember coming away from that talk with the four parts of this process stirring in my mind, and for days afterwards. In my own growth journey, and that of people I was coaching, I had noticed a similar process taking place.

Below is my own version of the growth cycle, beginning with Disharmony and ending with Settling...and then guess what? Starting the



process all over again, because that's how we're wired and how life happens.

In the initial stage of **Disharmony**, you know something isn't right, even if you can't put your finger on exactly what it is. This leads us to search for the source of the disharmony (or discomfort or dissatisfaction), which leads to an awareness which brings hope. Once you know what needs to be changed or acknowledged or achieved, you have a There to look forward to - you have a vision and a direction. The journey begins.

Along your route you are likely to experience challenges in various forms. I call this in-between land the **Valley of Insight** because it has steep sides which sometimes obscure your end point, and it builds your self-awareness and determination. If you can survive here, your goal is virtually in the bag because this is where the fight takes place.

The Valley of Insight has three phases: the **wilderness**, the **giants** and the **forest**. These are not necessarily separate from each other, but they each present a distinct challenge and require specific tools to navigate. Once you have made your way through the valley, you come out into an open space and celebrate your **Victory** before you **Settle** into your 'new normal'. Eventually this becomes a comfort zone and disharmony will start to manifest again, spurring you on to start a new cycle of growth.

The next few chapters will deal individually with each of the phases in the growth cycle.

RIMS (our compass)

Moving through territory (or not moving) requires you to make decisions. Every step of the journey involves many small, daily decisions. Do you take the road to the left or the road to the right? What is to be gained if you choose one path and not another? Some of our choices don't make a huge difference in the greater scheme of things, but if we are more aware and intentional when choosing our paths, we can get There more quickly.

To help you identify where you are in your journey, what's really going on and what you should do next, I use a tool I call RIMS - an acronym for Recognise, Investigate and Move. At the end of each chapter I will highlight the RIM which will help you to orientate yourself in the territory, then move to its 'rim' from where you can move forward.

Here's how it works:

- **R – Recognise:** This is how you recognise the territory you are in. The question here is: What is happening around me? What is my main focus?
- **I – Investigate:** This is how you identify what is going on inside of you and what meaning you are attaching to what is happening around you. The question here is: What does what I'm seeing mean to me? Does this make me feel empowered or disempowered and why?
- **M – Move:** Here is where you take action and move onto the next part of your journey. At this point you have a decision to make: What am I going to do about this?



CHAPTER 4

Disharmony

Most journeys start with **disharmony** - a lack of harmony or agreement in some aspect of life. Synonyms for disharmony include discord, friction, strife, conflict, hostility, acrimony, bad blood, bad feeling, enmity, dissension and disagreement.

At some point in our lives we have all experienced a sense of dissatisfaction and a lack of harmony with where we are currently. We find ourselves saying things like, “There has to be more to life than this” or “There has to be another way”. Many of us try to figure out who or what is causing us to feel this way and we look for something to blame it on - our job, spouse, children, house and so on. This often makes us decide that it’s time for a new job, a new house or even a new spouse. “If only this changed then I would feel better, life would be better,” we say while feeling sadness, fear or even anger at the thought of things staying the same. In this space, it is easy for us to feel that our whole life is ‘horrible’ and to feel lost, trapped or hopeless, depending on how long we have been ignoring the disharmony.

This stage is when people often approach me for coaching. They may have spent a fairly long time feeling unsettled, unsure of what’s causing the disharmony and somewhat ashamed to admit it even exists. But it does, and it’s real! In most cases, these feelings are a sign that change is needed, or that the person has stopped growing - that life has become too certain and some variety is needed.

Most people’s solution to disharmony is to identify a culprit and do whatever they can to get rid of it so they can have the harmony again. But the disharmony is normally the symptom and not the cause - so you can get rid of your job and get a new one, but it won’t be long before that familiar old feeling is back.

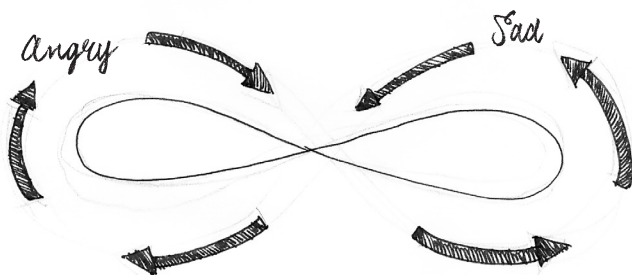
The good news is that when you listen to that stirring and start to look at your life carefully to see what needs to be changed, you often realise that only one area of your life needs changing. When I coach someone and we work through what is causing the disharmony, I tell them that this is just

a call to begin a journey. We look at all the things that are creating ‘noise’ in their life and without fail, there is an ‘aha moment’ which points to where that person would like to be. They have an awareness of what they don’t like about Here, and what they want There to look like.

If disharmony is a nudge telling you that it’s time to grow, then the right response is to look inside to see where the growth needs to happen. Most of us are pain averse; we will do anything we can to avoid pain of any kind. So when the disharmony comes, we want to find the quickest, most pain-free way to make it disappear, as in the example above. The problem with shortcuts is that they are only a temporary solution - that same disharmony will come back and each time it does, it will be louder.

The noise of the disharmony increases as you see the same scenery over and over again, as if you are wandering around the same mountain with the pathway just getting deeper. That, my friend, is called a rut. You can quieten the noise with each quick shortcut, but all of those paths will lead you straight back to the place you will recognise and learn to hate (until you decide to face up to it, deal with it and choose to grow).

In the coaching world we call this vicious cycle the “crazy eight”, where you are in a ‘holding pattern’ going from a disempowered (sad) state to an empowered (angry) state and back again.



As you can imagine, this pattern will keep you busy going nowhere. The way we often deal with this monotony is to create some ‘safe problems’ - so we pop out the bottom of the crazy eight and start bad habits like procrastination, addictions and other behaviours to ‘distract’ us from the boring holding pattern. These behaviours develop and grow because they are meeting needs in our lives, even if in a negative way. (By the way, that’s exactly what happens when we live our lives as victims.)

What we really need is to grow. Once coaching clients have identified the ‘real’ problem, we help them to break out of the crazy eight by “running to the pain”. Once the real issue is dealt with, the crazy eight goes away, and with it all the safe problems (addictions).

Get someone from outside your life to help you identify your crazy eight. You need someone who can be objective and who is prepared to ask you some tough questions to find the real problem.

It might be that you are in a job you know in your heart is not the best for you, but you are too afraid to make the move to pursue the job that you were born for. Maybe you have to make a decision about a necessary ending of a toxic friendship or a business partnership. Maybe you have to face up to the fact that the business you have birthed is needing a new leader to take it to the next level, or needs to be taken off life support and allowed to die so that you can live again.

The reason for the disharmony isn’t hard to find when you ask the hard questions. The truth is never surprising or shocking because deep down you’ve always known what needs to be done...but it was just too hard, so you avoided it. Avoidance can work for a while but eventually, just like a wound that won’t heal, the only way to deal with it is to open it up, pull off the scar and get all the muck out. For those who are willing to undergo this ‘surgery’, the pain of making the change has outweighed the pain of staying the same - the crazy eight has driven them crazy! - and they are ready to make that shift no matter what.

The purpose of the Disharmony stage is to push you out of your comfort zone. It is a catalyst for growth. If you refuse to grow, you run the risk of creating a rut. You will go into a crazy eight or maybe a few. The way out is to acknowledge the disharmony, look at where you are and

consider where you want to be and what could possibly be done to get you There. The next step is to seek awareness.

RIM check - Disharmony

Recognise: Where are you right now? You feel overwhelmed, frustrated, anxious or trapped. You have a sense of being stuck and going around in circles. Most of your life is in 'zombie mode'. You are in auto-pilot and when life happens, you react to it.

Investigate: What don't I like about where I am right now? What would I like more of in my life? Am I blaming? Who or what am I blaming for where I am right now? Who or what am I blaming for keeping me from what I want? Where would I like to be?

Move: It's time to grow. Shift from blaming. Do the noise chart exercise over the page. Get a coach. Look for the core problem and do something about it.

THE NOISE CHART EXERCISE

1. Make a list of every single thing that is making 'noise' in your head and heart right now. Don't think about it, don't try to figure out what to do about it, don't try to fix it. Just write down every worry, concern, irritation, frustration and all the things that make you feel angry or sad. Write until you cannot write anymore.
2. Now go through the list and group the items into categories such as "relational", "business" and "personal".
3. Now look at them and group them into two sections on a new page:
 - Things I have no control over
 - Things I have control over.
4. For the first list:

Ask yourself whether you really don't have any control over them (this is where a coach comes in handy, because it might be hard to determine). If you honestly can't control a particular area, why are you spending energy on it at all? What I personally do with these types of 'noises' is to draw a little envelope next to them and send them heavenward to be sorted. I then consciously choose not to spend any more energy on them.
5. For the second list:

Take each 'noise' and ask what needs to be done to address it. If I can't do something about it on my own, who could I ask to do it? Then I make a list of action points, put some dates to them and I DO THEM.

If you are waiting on others, call them, meet them, talk to them. If there is a delay, find out what's causing it and set a deadline date that you are both clear on.

A word of caution here: Making a list of things to do makes you feel that you have achieved something (which you have), but don't stop there. Put it into your diary and get it done. Get someone to hold you accountable so that you don't procrastinate. If a task feels too big, break it down, see if someone can help you, and ask for help!



CHAPTER 5

Awareness that leads to Hope

Once you have identified what has been causing your disharmony and you have an **awareness** of what you want, what you can do, and who you want to be, there is a moment of intense **hope**. Realising all the possibilities elevates you above your circumstances and you can suddenly see into the future with more clarity.

One of my favourite moments in the coaching process is when a person has that moment of awareness - what Oprah calls the 'Aha moment'. It normally comes when they are at their most uncomfortable point, having pushed towards the pain of facing up to the issues they have been trying to avoid. Then it happens: the recognition, the pause and then the realisation sinks in. Eyes light up (and sometimes well up) and then the whole body awakes to the awareness of what's really going on and what can be done about it.

Sometimes people have a monumental moment and you can literally feel the "BOOM!" in the room. At other times it comes in waves as they start to connect the dots and the excitement builds as they begin to see the possibilities. In my diagram I have Awareness and Hope as the same stage because the moment you have your 'Aha moment', hope is ignited.

With awareness comes a rush of information. What comes out of a person's mouth right then are the bravest, truest words they have uttered in a while. Understanding 'where they are' usually comes with an understanding that whatever has held them back for years is a lie. Discovering the truth can bring up some strong emotion. I have been on both sides of this awareness as a coach and a client. At this point, a decision has to be made. You either have to stay the same or move forward. If you just have the awareness and you do nothing about it, things will get worse, not better.

A good friend of mine, Lars Lofstrand, once asked people in his workshop to raise their hands if they thought knowledge was power. Of course we all did, because we had heard that saying many times before. He then told us we were all wrong - that only *applied knowledge* is power. He

was right. Knowing something can be very powerful, but until you apply it, nothing will change. In fact it becomes disempowering because now it hangs over your head. (Like knowing that smoking is bad for you and could kill you, but choosing not to stop smoking. That knowledge now creates worry and stress.)

Once you have made the decision to make the changes and to turn your awareness into action, this brings hope. You are now able to dream about what the future could look like and you start to draw pictures in your mind. At this point you don't really have all the answers to how you are going to get There, but it's alright. It is important for you to engage with your feelings and get a very clear vision of where you are going, as these will carry you through to the end.

I love Emily Dickinson's little poem on hope:

*"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all."*

Sometimes hope can be quite fragile too. Hope often looks far into the future and there are certain expectations that come with it. When these expectations are not met, this can often lead to great disappointment. There is an old Hebrew proverb that says, "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire is fulfilled, it is a tree of life*".

What is really important to remember is that this is only the start of the journey, and the hope embodied in the end goal is often very far off. If I had to draw a picture of what the Awareness/Hope phase would look like in profile, it would be an elevated place (your current reality) where you are looking across to another elevated place (your desired future). From your viewpoint it doesn't look that far, and because you are feeling so elated and your eyes are only on the There, you might not see the Valley of Insight you need to go through. This is where you need to guard your hope, because this is where you can lose it most easily.

A few years ago when I was going through a particularly tough time, it seemed to me that life and all the circumstances around me were like a thick, black, tar substance that was sucking me in. I felt like an empty bucket with a hole in it, through which the tar was slowly seeping in and sinking

me. I realised that if I continued like this I wouldn't last long, so I found a tiny piece of hope. It came from my mouth, like a tiny piece of gum, and it said, "There must be a way...". I stuck that piece of hope in that hole and started filling my bucket with things that refreshed me. For me it was reading scriptures, spending time with loved ones, taking time out to just breathe. I took myself for a lot of coffees where I just sat and people-watched and dreamed of what could be. I also connected with people who were doing well on their journey and had lots of hope and wisdom.

As I fed my bucket with hope and faith, eventually I realised that Hope Floats. Now I could say, "There must be a way...", and then complete that sentence with my dream, desire and hope. Essentially what I was doing was shifting my focus from my circumstances to what I wanted for my life. As the Bible says, "*As a man thinks, so is he*".

At the time I was in my corporate job, feeling guilty and frazzled from trying to juggle a career and bringing up three boys. I wanted to be with them, but I still wanted to work. So my little phrase was a variant of this: "There must be a way to be there for my kids and still earn a good living making a difference". The answer for me was to have my own business, which eventually was the case a year or two later, and I have never looked back. It hasn't been an easy journey, but boy, have I grown!

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines hope as "1. to desire with expectation of obtainment. 2. to expect with confidence." In a Facebook post on hope, Brené Brown writes that, "*Like most people, I always thought of hope as an emotion - like a warm feeling of optimism and possibility. I was wrong. I was shocked to discover that hope is not an emotion; it's a way of thinking or a cognitive process. Emotions play a supporting role, but hope is really a thought process made up of what [researcher] CR Snyder calls a trilogy of goals, pathways and agency.*"⁶

She argues that hope happens when: 1. We know where we want to go, 2. We know how to get there, are persistent, and can tolerate disappointments and try again, and 3. We believe we can do this.

Without hope we lack vision, without vision we perish. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. That sounds like depression to me. When people feel depressed, they have no hope for the future. If we lose hope, we get lost in the busyness of life, we stop looking for a hope and a future, we kick into auto-

⁶ Brené Brown, date, <https://www.facebook.com/ttinnypocket/posts/1620685208149588:0>

pilot and life just carries us along. We get into a rut.

You were not designed to live in a rut. You were designed to live a vibrant, passion-filled, purposeful and useful life. You have TAGS - Talents, Abilities, Gifts and Skills - that were woven into your DNA and link up to your passion and a purpose (more on that in Chapter 8). Besides that, you are designed for community, so “opting out” of your destiny will have a ripple effect on the people in your community. When I say community, it is everyone in your circle of influence.

Did you hear that? There are people waiting for you to ARISE AND SHINE! You were created to contribute to others, and when you live in this way, you are fulfilled because you are doing what you were designed for and others are benefiting from it.

We need to feed our hope constantly so that it can grow. In 2008 I was clear on a vision of what I wanted and as I wrote and even drew pictures of what this vision looked like, it inspired me. But the vision was so big (and expensive) that I didn’t have the means to do anything about it right then.

So I called together a “dream team” and I just shared my dream with them. They threw a lot of questions at me and had their doubts, and that was fine with me - it wasn’t why I had got them together. I just needed to speak out my vision and speak life into it. I had a short-term, a medium-term and a long-term plan. My long-term plan - my “big, hairy, audacious goal” as Jim Collins would call it - was a big, two-storey building which could host conferences, coaching and training while entrepreneurs could come and enjoy the community and conveniences of a big office, at a fraction of the cost. (This was way before business hubs were around, and even when they started popping up I wasn’t discouraged.)

In the meantime I was coaching and doing workshops, and in due course KBN and *Connect* were born. Although for many years my big dream appeared to have dropped off the map, all my experiences have led me to the place where I am currently in discussion with an organisation that is doing... wait for it...*exactly* what the original dream was, but on an international platform - and they feel I have what they need to be part of their vision. The point is this: do not despise the small beginnings and also don’t be too prescriptive in what you think your There should look like. Dream big and dream constantly, but hold your dream with open hands. Everything I have

experienced, learned and even failed at along the way has prepared me for a time such as this.

The purpose of the Awareness/Hope phase is to lift you up to a place from where you can find your purpose and direction. The danger of gaining awareness is that it can cripple you if you don't act on what you've learned, and you can develop a victim mentality. You can also lose your way by placing your hope on the wrong things, which will lead to a sick heart or depression. So, once you are aware of what you need to do, the key is to take action and remain focused. Figure out your Blueprint (see overleaf) and set some clear goals to make your way There.

RIM check - Awareness/Hope

Recognise: Awareness feels like a hope-filled oasis. You feel energised by knowing what the issue is and what needs to be done to fix it. There is a sense of relief and joy. The ideas will be flowing and your creativity will be heightened. It's as if you have climbed the tree of hope and can now see from a much better and more hopeful vantage point.

Investigate: What have I just realised? What has become clear now that I have this awareness? What does There look and feel like?

Move: Dream! Write it down. Get pictures or words from the Internet and/or magazines that symbolise that dream and put them somewhere you can see them daily. Make it as clear and vivid as possible. This will build hope, faith and give you courage and clarity when you go through the Valley of Insight. If money, time and resources were not an object, what would you do right now? What do you need to know to get There? Who do you need to be in contact with to open a door or give you more information? Now check your Blueprint.

IS YOUR BLUEPRINT MAKING YOU BLUE?

According to Adam Bright, each of us has a specific Blueprint - our expectation of how our world should be. This co-exists with our current reality, which is what our world really looks like. The path between the two is called growth, or as he likes to call it, "running to the pain". If we have an unrealistic blueprint we will feel cut off from it, leading to a "sick heart". (Hope deferred makes the heart sick.)

When we experience this 'disconnect', we have three options:

1. Blame.
2. Change the blueprint.
3. Change our current reality.

We can blame people or things in our lives, but this leads to excuses and it disempowers us. If a problem is never our fault and always beyond our power to change, we can't ever get on top of it. Look at the negative circumstances you listed at the end of Chapter 3 and ask yourself: What am I blaming? What is the blame game doing to me?

When you realise that blame is not a viable option, you have two more options. Either change your blueprint so that it's more realistic, or change your reality - or maybe a little of both.

I will never be an *Idols* contestant - I just don't have the talent for it. If I had that as an expectation, I would be miserable. This road would only lead to unhappiness and disappointment. I could either limit my love for singing to times when I'm alone in the car (with the windows up) and find another Blueprint, or I could go for some voice training because maybe there is some talent there and if I were to put in the hours, I might actually be good. Or I could do both - learn to sing better *and* realise I'm not *Idols* material and be content with that because that's not who I am.



CHAPTER 6

The Valley of Insight

The first time I heard this phrase was on a training video which featured a company that, at the time, had a cutting edge way of working within their teams. They didn't have 'bosses' as we know them. Whatever the project required, they would gather the right people for the job and whoever had the most experience with the product would be the project leader. They would start the project by introducing the team members to each other, after which the project leader would remind the team that they were about to go through a process. During that process they would have excitement (hope) and then encounter the **Valley of Insight** where they would try different things and most of them would fail. Each failure would take them further until they would start to 'climb out of the valley' and, after some tweaks, eventually complete the project with success. Reminding everyone that there was going to be a valley kept the team from being discouraged and giving up too soon. I loved the concept and have used it ever since.

I always warn people that while they are trying new strategies that are going to change their lives, things won't always go the way they hope. If they don't know this 'valley' is coming, they will take the negative feedback as a sign that the coaching or the new habit isn't working.

We live in a culture where failure is mostly discouraged and there is a lot of shame attached to it. In fact, we often create labels for ourselves when we do fail. My mentor, Adam Bright, often says that "failure is only feedback".

It is important to remember that preparing for the Valley of Insight doesn't mean that you should focus on it or expect the worst in it. The point is to keep your eyes fixed on your *There* and journey *out* of that valley.

Growth isn't easy. When you start doing exercise, the exercises may be simple enough, but your body isn't used to doing them and you don't have the right fitness levels yet, so it's hard - and you may even have sore muscles you never knew you had! In life, we've become used to doing things in a certain way - moving these muscles but not those, and only so far. It can take us many years to get into a valley (rut), so it will take some time and energy

to get out again. When we realise this, we may be tempted to avoid the pain and give up. This is when you will need to remember the hope (the dream, the goal) and that will need to be your focus.

As you make your way out of the valley you will make mistakes and you will fall back into some old habits. There are some areas in the Valley of Insight where you may get stuck. In my journey I have discovered three in particular - three roadblocks that can cause you to go around in circles and become bogged down. The three parts of the valley are the Wilderness, the Giants and the Forest. Making your way through this territory will lead you into Victory, or your Promised Land.

I. The Wilderness

The **wilderness** is a place where it is dry, hot and barren. The heat is on; there seems to be no water to refresh you and the pressure is sometimes unbearable. Isolation is another key risk in the wilderness.

The purpose of the wilderness is to test what you really believe and to help you grow. In the wilderness you have to face all the “stuff” you are made up of, so it’s not a pleasant place. I have pondered whether there are ways we could avoid this section, but then I remember my own and others’ experience here - and I can confidently say that avoiding and bypassing the wildernesses in your life, no matter how painful they are, is never a good thing. Those who have chosen or (like most of us) have been forced to go there, know the pain and the value of these precious seasons. In refusing to have our excess baggage peeled off, we end up wandering around aimlessly in neutral, if not high-tailing it back to the safety of old habits and mindsets. Not a good idea!

The most vivid picture of the wilderness experience is the story of Moses and the Israelites. The Israelites were slaves for hundreds of years until they were led out of slavery by Moses. They left Egypt excited about the future, each with a picture in mind of the land that had been promised to them. They hadn’t gone far before disillusionment crept in; the journey was taking longer than they had hoped and things were not going as they had expected. There was a shortage of food and water and their excitement for the future gave way to complaining and blaming.

Sound familiar? If you have stepped out of any comfort zone, you will have experienced this disillusionment in some form or another. When the

heat is on, we often start to focus on what is going wrong and what we don't like about the journey. (We talked about this in Chapter 2.) If you keep your focus on the negative circumstances and draw negative meanings from them, you'll soon find yourself on the highway back to your original destination with its spirit-killing holding pattern and safe problems. Your focus will determine your destination. If you see yourself as a victim, you will blame, and if you see yourself as a victor you will stay committed and run to the pain in order to grow. We always have a choice. It starts with your focus.

The Israelites' journey should have taken a few weeks considering the distance they were covering, but instead they landed up taking forty years because of the hardness of their hearts. It is easy to read this story and think, "how foolish", but this is what a rut looks like. We start to focus on how tough things are in our lives and all the things that are going wrong; then we start to think it means that we are failures or that life is unfair to us or that we will never amount to anything, or whatever other story we tell ourselves. The more we focus on that story, the more entrenched it becomes in our minds and eventually it becomes part of our identity and way of life. We make decisions based on that story and so that story becomes our reality, leaving our dreams to taunt and haunt us. When you are in your wilderness, watch out for the stories you tell yourself when things go wrong. If they're fitting into an old, familiar pattern you identified as part of your disharmony, get help.

The wilderness will often teach you what you are not made of. It shows the real stuff that lies quietly in the dark corners and it exposes your fears, weaknesses and failings. The craziest part is that this is the very time God will often choose to step in and say, "Okay, you! *Now* I can see the raw beauty of who I made you to be. Now that all your self-importance and self-sufficiency is smashed to smithereens, I invite you to step into a much better dream than you envisioned, because it involves something much bigger than you." Picasso said it best: "*The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.*"

A very special friend of mine, Patrick Kuwana, once said that our accuser and enemy, Satan, stands in front of two specific places where he doesn't want us to go. The first is the wilderness, because he knows the richness and importance of this place. He even met the ultimate leader, Jesus,

in the wilderness to discourage and tempt him from his path. If Satan fails to keep you from entering the wilderness, he will try to keep you there forever so that you wander around and never step into the next season or level in your life - your Promised Land.

Although the wilderness is a very necessary part of the journey, we must not be tempted to lose our way and make this our home. We need to fully engage with the process, learn our lessons even if they're painful, and keep our focus on our There. It's the place where we realise that we are nothing without the One who created and designed us; we stop looking to ourselves alone for the answers; and we cry out to the One who actually has all the answers.

Each time I've come to this place, I've had to lay down my dream at the altar and surrender my small and selfish treasure. Each time, what has happened has astounded me. It is like the story of the granddaughter who had a cheap pearl necklace that she treasured and was very proud of. She wore it often and eventually it started to peel and look a lot worse for wear. When she was about to turn sixteen, her grandfather asked her for the necklace. At first she was very reluctant to give it to him as she was afraid he would throw it away because it was so tatty. After much convincing, and only because she loved and trusted her grandfather, she eventually gave it to him - albeit with much sadness. On her birthday, he surprised her with a beautifully wrapped box and as she opened it, she began to weep. Inside the box was a real pearl necklace.

Often our dream is just like the cheap string of pearls: it is limited by our limitations and is normally centred on what we want and need. When we get to the place where we surrender it to God, He takes that version of our dream and shows us what the dream could look like if it was focused not only on what we want and need, but the needs of others too. This makes the dream way bigger than we can handle on our own, and it teaches us to depend on Him and others around us. Together, I've learned, we really can do more.

RIM check - The Wilderness

Recognise: You feel isolated. The excitement has dried up and it feels like the ideas have dried up too. You are working hard and trying to figure out where to next. You really didn't expect it to be so hard and now you are starting to doubt your decision to leave Here (wherever that is now). You feel as if no one cares. The whole purpose of the wilderness is to expose and test your heart.

Investigate: What is my reaction when things are going wrong? Do I have a sense of entitlement? Do I feel that it's unfair that I should go through this wilderness? Am I bitter or angry about anything? Do I still have a clear picture of where I'm going?

Move: Who do I need to ask for help? Find people who will encourage you and give you a different perspective. When you are in the wilderness the temptation is to withdraw, but don't do it. Isolation is a dream killer. Get around positive and successful people and just listen and ask questions. They have all come through the wilderness, they know the way. This is where what you wrote down in the awareness and hope stage is vitally important. It will encourage and fuel you. Just keep moving.

2. Facing the Giants

If the purpose of the wilderness is to test our hearts and expose our “stuff” so we can face it, what is the purpose of the **giants** that block our way from time to time in the valley? Well, that “stuff” - the lies we've believed about ourselves and the world, our destructive practices and our emotional strongholds - often surfaces in the form of ‘giants’ that block the way and prevent us from going through. They make us want to retreat and give up. They convince us of who we aren't: losers. And worst of all, they make us settle on the edge of our Promised Land where we can see it but never get to experience its fruits.

As human beings most of us fear pain and spend our lives trying to make ourselves as comfortable and secure as possible. The problem with this is that growth always involves our leaving our comfort zone. Anyone who lives a life of purpose will tell you that this is when they feel the most alive, and that's because I believe we were made for this.

We all admire people who push past the giants and we often put them on a pedestal, thinking that they can't have faced the same fears and limitations as us. But they have! The only difference is that they choose not to believe their giants; they choose to step up and face them; they even choose to pick a fight with them, and sometimes it doesn't go well. Sometimes the giants smash you to the ground and rub your face in the dirt while they taunt you with "See you are a failure, just stay down". The ones who win are the ones who just keep getting up.

This is why we (okay, maybe it's just me) love those movies where the underdog just keeps getting up every time he gets knocked down. I remember watching a movie as a kid and crying as the hero kept pulling himself up after being knocked down time and time again. It was agony to watch, and at some point I think I was shouting, "Just stay down, just stay down", it was so painful to watch. But he would just keep getting up, to the point where the opponent was telling him to stay down because he felt so bad.

We love to watch tenacity like that, but it is often different when we are in that ring and we are being knocked down and having to pull ourselves back up again. It teaches us that it's not about how good we look while in the ring, only that we don't give up.

So how do you deal with giants and bullies? When he was younger, my brother was bullied by a cousin. I think they were about the same age, but the cousin was bigger and every time we visited them, he would pick on my gentle-natured brother. Until one day when my brother punched him in the face. I am not sure who got the bigger fright, but both of them burst out crying and went running to their parents. I think my cousin lost a tooth that day, as well as the urge to bully my brother ever again. My brother gained his respect and was never again afraid of visiting there.

What are the stories you are telling yourself today? Are they a repeat of what the giants are saying? What decisions are you making today to avoid the giants? What are you *not* doing today because of what they have said?

We all have those voices that tell us to stay small, to be afraid, not to dream, that we are stupid, that we are worthless, that we will never amount to anything. If we listen carefully to those voices we will recognise them from the past - perhaps a thoughtless, frustrated phrase from a teacher we had, or the unthinking response of an exasperated parent lashing out in the heat of

the moment. The problem is that those words stick and take root in us and later become giant trees with a destructive root system that touches every part of our lives and stops beautiful things from growing.

The wilderness creates the perfect environment for all these voices to come to the surface; it exposes them and highlights them, and instead of quietly taunting us, they stand before us and call us to face them. This particular phase of the journey is really hard, because most of us have done an excellent job of convincing ourselves and others that we are doing okay... but the giants know our weak spots.

Let me tell you about two giants I have personally faced. I'm sure you'll recognise them!

Unforgiveness

I met with this giant from a very early age. It is a particularly mean one because you feel so justified by having him in your life - yet he makes you incredibly small by creating a victim out of you. To illustrate, when someone does something to offend or hurt us, we look at our wound and that becomes our focus. We show people our wound and they agree with us how terrible it is...and before we know it, our journey to becoming a victim in life has begun. This road only has one destination and it is not pretty. It leads to the land of bitterness. Bitterness is a destiny killer and a dream killer, and it leaves you barren and prickly.

The walls you build to protect yourself from this giant not only leave you isolated from your best life, but they attract thorny brambles that will keep the very thing you need - the life-giving dream igniter - from coming near you. In other words, the wall you build to keep the hurt out, also traps you. Nelson Mandela understood this when he said, *"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison"*.

No matter how justified you feel in your unforgiveness, you are the only person who suffers by holding onto it. There is a saying that goes, "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies". If you want victory over the giant, you have to let go of the right to be angry and bitter towards the one who hurt you. When you let go, you will not lose everything like you expect; you will gain your life back.

I faced this giant over a long period when a friend of mine was being very mean to someone close to me. I was bitterly angry at the way the friend was treating this person - it was so unjust. At one point I could hardly look at the friend without having some very powerful emotions come over me. The worst part was that I had to see him often. I tried everything because I knew it wasn't good for me, him or anybody.

For some of you this next bit might sound strange, so feel free to put it in whatever box you need to, but please hear the heart behind the lesson. I speak to God daily and I fully expect to hear back from Him as I believe He is alive and well and interested in me as His daughter. I don't hear a booming voice - mostly it sounds like my thoughts, just cleverer. Sometimes it comes through my reading for the day, a song on the radio, a word of encouragement or confirmation from a friend and even sometimes strangers. Sometimes He has to draw pictures because I am a very visual person.

I would chat often and desperately to God about the above situation and ask Him to remove this giant of unforgiveness. I made the decision to let it go but every time I would see my friend, my blood would literally boil.

One morning while having a particularly tender moment, I imagined that I was walking on a pathway and came to a beautiful mountain with two paths leading up it. There was a man (who I recognised as Jesus) standing at the intersection of these two paths. We greeted each other and spoke about how exciting my future was, and how my journey would see me climbing the beautiful mountain in front of me. He then pointed to the huge bag I was carrying on my back and said that if I wanted to travel on this path (and he pointed to a path that looked lush and beautiful, with huge trees and beautiful fruit making the branches hang low), I would have to leave the bag behind. Although there was much fruit along it, it was also a very challenging path and I would not make it to the top because the bag would weigh me down. If I wanted to hang onto my bag, I could use the other path, which eventually led to the same destination. As I looked at it, I saw it was flat and barren; there was very little fruit on the small trees; and it looked like a path that many had gone on. Suddenly the decision was easy: I wanted a full, exciting life of adventure. I did not want a safe, barren life.

From that moment I was free, and letting go of my unforgiveness was as easy as taking a bag off my back and dropping it on the floor. I also realised

that praying for God to take away something that I chose to carry was silly. My lesson to you is this: *you* hold the key to those high walls. This giant will feed off your misery and that's how he grows, so just stop feeding him. Stop playing the victim. Take back your life, shift your focus to the life you want, and stop carrying the bag.

Fear

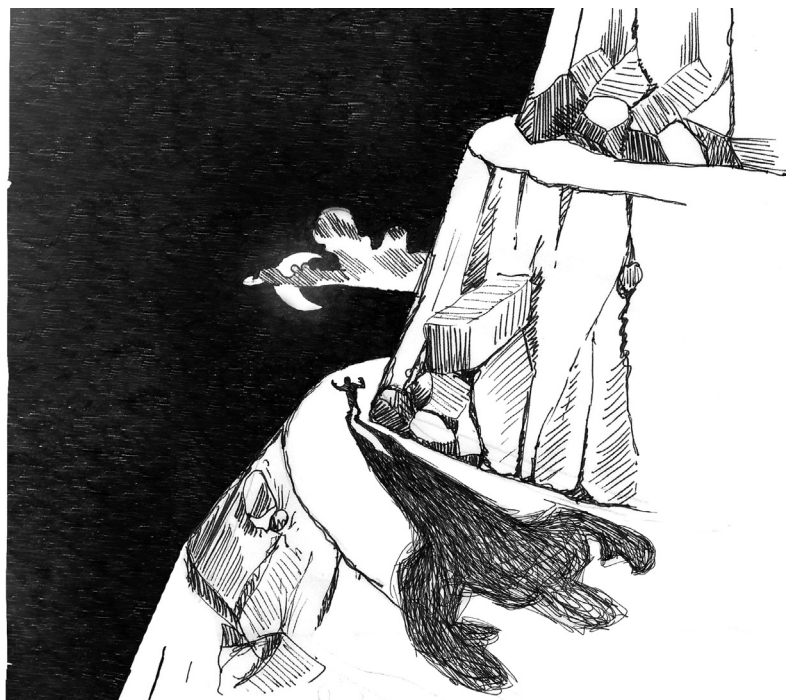
Another giant that has bullied me into many a corner has been fear. FEAR = false evidence appearing real. Most of the things we fear will probably never happen. This giant is all about deception - just like in the movie *Mulan* where the little dragon frightens them by standing behind a rock and casting a shadow, making him look huge. This giant takes something small - like a little doubt about whether we can succeed - and magnifies it by a hundred "what ifs". Before we know it, we are paralysed in fear and the "what if" becomes a reality.

Beware that the same fears you have in starting out a journey will rear their ugly heads again all through your journey. Each time you come to another level of growth, you will be met with the same giant - or his brother or cousin. But meeting them doesn't mean giving in to them!

When I started my journey I faced my fear of failure and started my own business, then I faced more fear in creating *Connect* magazine. In the almost five years of running the magazine I became confident. I was respected and recognised for my accomplishments, and I was in a place of strength. So in mid-2014 when I decided to lay *Connect* down and join the Catalyst team as an in-house coach, I was pitched into a whole new growth phase...with the same old giant taunting me.

Even though I had been coaching people all along, I was suddenly in a team where I was the junior and I was learning new tools and techniques. I remember thinking, "What if I don't have what it takes, what if I mess these tools up with a client, what if I disappoint my new team?" I felt as if I was starting right at the bottom again.

I remember sitting in a team meeting with lots of anxiety, when Adam told us how he was facing fear of failure again as he was stepping up to a new level in his life. Luckily he knew that facing the same lie again was a sign of new growth. Because he had defeated that lie once before, he knew what to



do to defeat it again. As he said that, I burst into tears (mostly ones of relief) because I'd been thinking I'd gone backwards. In that moment I realised that it was just a new level I was stepping into and the same stinking giant was standing in front of me again.

I took Adam's advice and thought about how I had defeated the giant the last time. Then, instead of hiding, I stepped up and out in front of the giant (who now looked much smaller) and moved him out of my way.

When facing the giant of Fear, my weapon of choice is the same weapon he uses on me. So I'll say, "What if I *do* have what it takes, what if I bring freedom and breakthrough to my clients, what if I become a valuable part of this team?" I promise you, once you start on those positive "what ifs" you will take on any giant. In fact you will run after them and wipe them out properly. Even as I write this I can feel the ultimate weapon rising, Courage. This weapon will en-Courage you. It makes you unstoppable.

Let's not hide and pretend that we don't have giants in our lives, let's not allow them to bully us and push us back or make us act small. Let's not believe the stories they tell us. Unless we face them, we will always live under the tyranny of their lies. They will keep us captive and hiding from taking the land that is meant for us; they will have us running away from our inheritance.

Facing the giants is a very vulnerable moment where we have to face our failings and shortfalls, fears and limitations - and in the midst of that, find the truth of who we really are and what we really stand for.

RIM check - Facing The Giants

Recognise: You are facing the lies, fears and doubts of your past, present and future. They look huge and terrifying. The temptation is to run and hide, but this will ensure that you stop growing. Remember you are only seeing their shadow; the closer you get, the smaller they actually are.

Investigate: Why are you afraid? What is the worst that can happen if that thing you are worrying about actually happens? Will this really happen and how many steps are there before it gets to that point? What is your favourite way of self-sabotaging?

Move: Play the "what if" game with a positive spin. Instead of saying, "What if this fails?" say, "What if this succeeds? What if I change people's lives in the process? What if I am meant to do this, what if I love this and I make loads of money too?" Keep going until you are in a frenzy! Then punch that giant in the nose and move on up! The whole point of this territory is for you to come to a place of wholeness and face up to the lies that have prevented you from living the life that you were created for.

3. The Forest

I am the only woman in my household. Because I am surrounded by men, most of the movies I get to see are targeted at a male audience. In one of *The Hobbit* movies, the heroes enter a forest and are cautioned not to leave the path under any circumstance. As we all expect, they do get off the path and before long they are confused. They all but forget the mission they are on and are captured by giant spiders.

The **forest** is similar. It is the last part of the Valley of Insight. We have journeyed through the wilderness and have had our hearts tested and tried... we have established our true north and dependence on the source of our faith...and we have faced the giants head on and defeated them. In that we have established an emotional wholeness where we are not swayed by fear, insecurities and the lies that used to hold us back. What could be left for us to face?

As we journey through the rest of the valley with our heads and hearts purified and strengthened, it can be like plunging into a deep, dark forest where we can't see the wood for the trees. Why is that? We've discovered who we are, we've come face to face with the ugly "stuff" in our lives, we've identified the lies and emotional baggage that have been holding us back... and now comes the crunch. We need to live differently - but how? This is when it often feels as if we can't see the wood for the trees.

This pans out in two ways: how we see things and what we do. When we understand that we cannot live in blame, it requires a new way of being. When we understand that taking offence is no longer an option for us, it changes how we respond to situations. When we realise that judgement is not ours to pass, we see people and their actions from a totally different perspective. We have to start by taking off our own masks, then changing our expectations of "them". Living differently is actually about finding the YOU that you were created to be.

If, as Ephesians 2:10 says, we are "God's own handiwork" and "recreated in Christ Jesus" so that we can do "good works" which He planned beforehand, then it stands to reason that we are lovingly designed with purpose and were made perfectly to carry out a specific assignment. Once we establish who we were designed for and for what use, all that is left is to embrace that truth and live it with everything that we are.

When I step into the eternal realm one day and meet my Father and the lover of my soul, I want to face Him knowing that my life was lived well and that I accomplished all that was available to me, whether in family, work or play. I want to know that I completed my assignment well.

An equally important part of staying on the path is keeping your focus. Because we're out of our comfort zone and doing lots of new things on our

journey, we have a tendency to get a little over-zealous in our mission to change the world. We can get involved in too much and overextend ourselves, shifting our focus from our There and ploughing into a spider's web of fruitless activity. Again, the challenge is to look past the trees, out of the woods and at the high place at the end of the valley. We need to get our bearings, find the path again and stay on it. Remember: Life creates more life, so make sure that you keep the main thing the main thing.

RIM check - The Forest

Recognise: I know what I want and I know how to get there, but now I can't see the wood for the trees. I'm finding it difficult to implement my self-management tools and to change some of my habitual actions and reactions. And/or: I've got so busy doing what I love that I don't know if I can manage. I feel like I've lost myself and I don't know who I am anymore.

Investigate: Just like a plant that has become overgrown, ask yourself if all the life that is happening can be sustained by the roots you have put down. Am I getting involved in things that are keeping me from doing what I am supposed to be doing? Am I working on my dream and agenda or on someone else's? Have I got distracted with something that seemed right at the time, but now is keeping me from what I know I should be doing?

Move: Some pruning in your life may be necessary. Stay focused on the path, delegate if necessary and don't get distracted and pulled into other people's agendas. Go back to the plan, get back on the path, refocus and push through to There.

Leaving the Valley of Insight

The purpose of the Valley of Insight is to discover who you are, who you are not, and who you can rely on. It's about dependence, wholeness and identity. As we have seen, the Valley of Insight has three stages, and leaving the valley requires you to face each of them (in no particular order). The length of your stay in the valley depends largely on how quickly you can recognise which stage you are in, identify what meaning you are creating out of the circumstances or surroundings, and take action to move yourself towards your There.

If you are serious about growth, you will experience these stages at every new level you reach in your life. Although this may make you feel as if you are not progressing, know that you are! You may pass the same scenery again but you are not going around in circles - you're moving upwards in cycles, and each time you are learning. Only if you refuse to learn will you get stuck in a rut.

The stages of the Valley of Insight are all opportunities for learning: learning about yourself and learning about the One who sustains you. Look around at the scenery so that you can recognise where you are and realign yourself with your goals, but don't set up camp there. Look for the path of awareness and the oasis of hope and it will lead you back onto the path again.





CHAPTER 7

Victory and Settling

In each area of our lives, we can choose to go through and face the lessons that each stage in the Valley of Insight has for us. If we choose to make the necessary adjustments in order to grow, we will eventually come out on the other side - our Promised Land if you will - and have **Victory**. This is a high place where you can celebrate and enjoy your new position, and from where you can mentor others. Our victories in life, when shared, will inspire and ignite others to start their journeys.

As a coach, I help people achieve personal breakthrough so that they can push past the limitation that is preventing them from performing at their peak in life and business. The secret to success is not in the moment of breakthrough, as lovely as it is to be a part of that. The secret of succeeding and growing is the consistent change in behaviour after the 'Aha moment'. This is what makes for lasting victory.

How do we change for good? I can teach people how to change and tell them through practice and willpower to keep doing the activity they know they need to do, but it is only when they start thinking differently about their situation - when their paradigm shifts - that their behaviour changes. Then, instead of being pushed towards the goal by a list of dos and don'ts, they are being pulled towards it. This is when you know you will see lasting change.

RIM check - Victory

Recognise: There is a sense of things working and although you still have to be very intentional, they are happening much more naturally now. There is a sense of achievement and flow happening as you feel like you are doing what you are born to do.

Investigate: What have I achieved? How do I feel about it? Who do I need to thank?

Move: Celebrate! Take the time to stop and look back and celebrate what you have achieved. Encourage others who are coming up the same path.

Once you are doing the right things, you need to consistently and intentionally keep at that activity or behaviour until it becomes a part of who you are. That's when you move from Victory to **Settling**. There have been many areas of my life where I have tried to do things differently, then soon felt the sting of defeat and got fed up, then tried again. (Remember our crazy eight?) It wasn't until I understood the real problem and underwent a paradigm shift that the activities and behaviour shifted - and then I had to deliberately continue the behaviour. What we do over and over becomes a habit.

Pioneers and settlers are what history is made of. We always see the pioneers as the heroes because they have all the excitement of discovering new and interesting territories; but at the end of the day it's the settlers who establish the towns, cultivate the lands and create community. Once we have pioneered new territory in an area of our lives, we need to settle on it to ensure we don't lose ground again. This means living intentionally and with purpose in mind.

When we're in this phase of the journey, we can romanticise it, but the truth is that some days are just about showing up - putting one foot in front of the other, faithfully plodding on, ploughing the land and watching over it even though it looks like nothing is happening. Being a settler is about building on the land that you have taken until eventually you don't even have to be intentional about it anymore and you do it without thinking. And sometimes, no sooner have you got to that point than you start to feel that familiar feeling of disharmony, calling you to something more.

Growth doesn't really have an end, because as long as we have breath in us there is opportunity to develop ourselves and make a bigger impact. It doesn't have to be dramatic or even seen by many, but it is important, even if it is only for one other person. This is when life becomes fulfilling and meaningful.

RIM check - Settling

Recognise: Your new territory has become established and it feels comfortable. You can do things without even thinking about them. There are some systems in place and you can very easily slip into auto-pilot.

Investigate: What systems do I have in place to support my new way of doing things? Am I still growing? Am I still looking for opportunities to grow? Am I resting on my laurels?

Move: Look up, there is still more to see. Don't stop here. Get ready to go!



CHAPTER 8

Living according to your purpose

The following scripture from Ephesians 5:15-17 has been an important part of my journey:

“Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people), making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil. Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understanding and firmly grasping what the will of the Lord is.”

I love that! There is a sense of destiny and purpose in those passages. People are often looking for their purpose ‘out there’ when it is right inside us. When you look at an iPhone, you can quickly see from its functions what its purpose is. To use it as a paperweight or a hammer would be silly and ineffective. But how do we recognise and acknowledge our purpose in the world? Most of us shy away from thinking this way because it’s a rather ‘out there’ thing to do and we can’t relate our little selves to the people who are obviously living their purpose, like Angus Buchan or Richard Branson.

Part of the problem is that society has created a “hero or zero” culture, so everyone wants to be the hero and we have a certain picture in our head about what the hero looks like. What this does is disqualify everyone who doesn’t match up to that picture. So a firefighter qualifies as a hero, but a mother with small children doesn’t.

The word *hero* comes from the Greek “heros” which means “hero, warrior” - literally “protector” or “defender”. (I think a mother fits this perfectly!) According to Wikipedia⁷, a hero is “*a person or character who, in the face of danger and adversity or from a position of weakness, displays courage or self-sacrifice - that is, heroism - for some greater good. Historically, the first heroes displayed courage or excellence as warriors. The word’s meaning was later extended to include moral excellence.*”

We always imagine heroes to be those who “have it all together” and are strong. But the real heroes are those who, against the odds, choose to put one foot in front of the other day in and day out - who choose the high road no

7 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

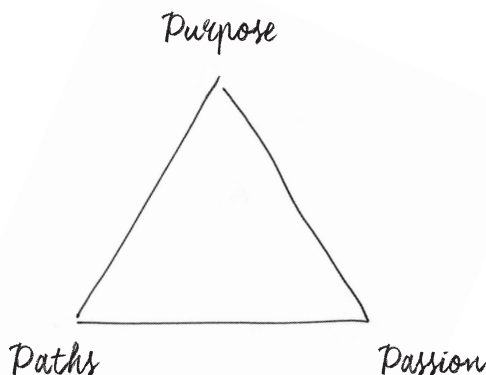
matter the cost, and who daily lay down their dreams and desires to contribute to others. Our purpose and destiny are never just about ourselves. I believe we are designed on purpose for a purpose that is bigger than ourselves, and it is in the laying down of our own lives in the pursuit of this greater plan that we get to enjoy the benefit of it too.

How do you work out your purpose?

Because “Why?” is the biggest question people have, books on Purpose are always bestsellers. We all want to know what we are here for and where we fit in. Actually, your purpose is very simple: discover who you are and then give yourself away. Once you understand your What and How, you can figure out the Who and When...and then the Why (your purpose) will be easy to figure out.

I sometimes use the diagram below to help people work through this process. In it I use “PATHS” to represent the What and How, “Passion” to represent the Who and When, and “Purpose” to represent the “Why”.

Let’s start with PATHS. Until now I have always labelled this corner TAGS - for Talents, Abilities, Gifts and Skills/Strengths. As I placed this diagram (call me OCD) I thought a word starting with a “P” would be nice. Call it divine inspiration, but PATHS actually fits better.



This section answers two questions, the How and the What, and addresses the question of your ‘design’ or how you operate. Let’s look at what each letter stands for:

- **P - Personality.** This is how you are wired. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? The DiSC profile test is great for working this out. DiSC stands for Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness. Understanding which category you fit into will help you understand yourself and others better. There are some free versions of this test online, and one of the best is this one: <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/ue/disc-profile.php>
- **A - Abilities.** These are your natural abilities. Are you naturally great with numbers, words, languages, etc.? List all of these things, even if you have never used them in a work context. Because these are natural to you, you will often overlook them.
- **T - Talents.** One of the best tools for unlocking people’s potential in life, love or business is the *Strengthfinders* assessment. Discovering these talents will open and unlock your unique way of doing things. My colleagues and I have a process that unpacks these strengths or talents and helps our clients to understand the large feedback report they receive after doing the assessment. We then help clients address areas where, as a result of other elements, their strengths are being ‘overplayed’ to such an extent that they look like weaknesses; then we help our clients to create strategies to manage them. You can access the *Strengthfinders* assessment online. There is a cost involved but it is worth it.
- **H - Habits.** Sean Covey said, “*We become what we repeatedly do*”. What are your habits? Some are good, some not so good. List all of these, but pay close attention to the habits that are creating *positive* results in your life. Then look at the habits that are creating *negative* results. If you don’t like these results, then you need to change what you are doing. It’s a version of insanity to keep doing the same thing and expect a different result. Remember RAFT: the Result comes from an Action which started as a Feeling that originated from a Thought. As Charles

Reade once said, *“Sow a thought, and you reap an act; Sow an act, and you reap a habit; Sow a habit, and you reap a character; Sow a character, and you reap a destiny”*.

- **S - Skills.** What are the skills that you have learned over the years? Make a list of all of them, whether you have used them in the workplace, in volunteering or in church. All of these skills point to your What and How.

Once you have listed and discovered all your PATHS, you will have a pretty good idea of How you best operate and What you are really good at. Now, let's move on to the other corner of the triangle: Passion.

PASSION is a powerful word and we love to use it, but most people don't really know its meaning. Its Latin root is “passio” which means “to suffer” or “suffering”. Think of the Passion of Christ. When you are passionate about something, you are prepared to suffer for it. If you are passionate about your business, spouse, children or career, you will suffer through whatever it takes for them. In the growth cycle, “running to the pain” is all about passion. The passion is what gives you meaning for the suffering you have to face.

The two questions to ask here are Who and When. Who are you most passionate about? Is it women, children, men, entrepreneurs, corporates? Then drill it down even more. If it is entrepreneurs, what kind of entrepreneurs? Is it the start-up phase or it is to help them go to the next level? If it is women, what kind of women? Career women, moms at home, abused women? The more specific you are, the better.

The When question is about when you feel a “righteous anger” about something. When does something “get your goat” or “make your blood boil”? When do you feel a sense of injustice and say “It just ain't right”? Passion will move you to action, or it should. This is why we are inspired and motivated by passion.

I remember once watching a performance by a guitarist and a violinist. Every now and then in the session they would “jam” and when the violinist just “went for it”, the performance was literally breathtaking. As we left, all I wanted to do was learn how to play the violin. Have you ever watched a performance where you have been so moved that you've been inspired to action? True passion moves us; it requires something from us, whether it is

emotion or action. Your passion will require something of you too; it will move you and when you are living it, it will inspire others too.

So figure out who you are passionate about, and who the people you are called to contribute to using the PATHS you were designed with. When Moses was met by God at the burning bush, Moses felt insignificant and not up to the job. “How am I going to do this?” was his question, but God asked him what was in his hand. What is in your hand? Look at your PATHS and look at your Passion - what do they point to? PURPOSE!

A few years ago when I started this journey, my mentor and friend, Maria Stein was sharing a revelation she had had about God asking her this same question - “What’s in your hand?” When I was starting my own business, I stood at the brink of my exciting new future and asked myself what I had in my hand. I had a laptop, a cell phone and a car. What I didn’t include and what I should have, was the experience and knowledge I had gathered over the last few years which led me to that point. At the start of each new cycle of growth, we need to regroup and ask ourselves this same question. When we do, we realise that nothing has been a waste.



CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

There have been three times in my life when I have let out a scream that literally shifted something inside of me, and which affected the outside of me too. I only realised this as I started writing this book. The first was the silent scream I described at the beginning. That scream released all the hopelessness and anxiety I was drowning in at that time. It made me let go of the façade that everything was okay, and surrender to the only One who could shift me - from the inside outwards - from victim to victor. The mask came off and for the first time in a very long time, I saw where I was... in a moat created by a life that was going around in circles on auto-pilot. It made me look and see that there was so much more, and also that I was created for so much more. The key was surrendering to the Designer to show me that path.

The second and third screams were deeply spiritual and personal, but I want to share them with you. You may not share my belief and I don't think you need to, to get what you need out of the lessons I learnt, so read the following with an open mind. Each occurrence was a bit odd even for me, but the results have been life-changing and I would do what I did all over again if the chance came again.

The second scream happened in the most unlikely place and took me totally by surprise. We were at a church leaders' weekend away and I wasn't actually expecting to be very involved as I had a little baby. One evening one of the teenagers offered to look after Daniel so I could attend the evening worship session. I arrived during the worship and settled at the back to enjoy it without a baby tugging at my attention.

A distinct thought came into my mind. (Now don't freak out, but this is how the conversation went in my head and you promised to keep an open mind.) "Tracey, I want you to go and kneel with your forehead against the stage," was the thought.

"No ways, I am not going, what on earth will people think?" My heart was racing.

“I am only going to do this once, it is now or never,” came the next thought.

“Can’t you do it here, whatever it is?” I replied. “These people are going to think that I am mad.”

I knew this was serious so I took a quick look around. Most people had their eyes closed so I thought that if I quietly sneaked up, no-one would notice. So I quickly went up and knelt with my forehead plastered to the front of the stage. The guest speaker was playing the guitar above me to the left, a good friend was on the keyboard above me to the right, and all my leaders and friends were behind me while I knelt there with my face burning red hot and my eyes tightly shut.

The next thought nearly stopped my heart. “I want you to put your head back and let out that scream.”

I wanted to run away. Surely not! Not right here, right now while the worship was so tender and quiet. At this stage I was pleading for there to be another way, but I had a deep sense that it was a now-or-never moment.

I realised that I was probably going to do this and sound like a feeble lamb, totally embarrassing myself and my poor husband who was probably wondering what on earth I was doing anyway. What happened next I can’t even explain.

I put my head back and it was as if years of rage ripped out of me. That scream was like a roar. Then I wept and again that peace that transcends all understanding flooded me. This scream released years and years of anger and fury that had been pent up inside of me without my even knowing. I probably gave the poor people around me such a fright, but I don’t know because I was totally unaware of anyone else at that time. When I stood up, I was different: I felt younger, lighter, and free.

The third scream also happened in a church meeting. (I know!) It was during the worship at a conference and a gentleman stood up and spoke to the women in the congregation. While the music continued, he apologised to those who felt like they had had their voices silenced, where men in their lives had told them to keep quiet. (Bearing in mind that I was and still am quite a chatterbox, I did get this pretty often.) He had seen a vision of wells with a stone over the top of them.

The man encouraged women who identified with this to come forward.

Thankfully, this time I had some company and hey, this wasn't my first scream so I was experienced. All jokes aside, it still wasn't a walk in the park, even though it was quite an expressive church. We raised our hands and together let out a loud scream. Again, I literally felt the shift and the tears flowed, as I knew I would never be the same again. My voice was back.

Now I am not saying you should have three screams in your journey (but hey, if you feel like it you can let rip), but these three moments marked three definite internal shifts that moved me along my journey. First, surrender; second, letting go; and third, finding my voice. I suppose you could say that they were all about getting back to basics - me being authentically me and God being authentically God, making sure I don't miss my destiny.

Authenticity is something I am passionate about. Every time I've had the opportunity to share my story or to speak at an event, people have come, sometimes with tears in their eyes, to thank me for being open about not just the highlights but also the struggles in my journey. It gives them hope that they can also do this.

When we constantly live in a masked state where we always appear to be getting it right, it communicates to others that they can't step up until they are perfect and have their act together. Most of us never have our entire act together, let's be honest, so when we create the impression that we do, people disqualify themselves from living their dreams because they're not "there yet".

I went along to a speakers' forum for a while and at first I was in absolute awe of being in the room with such amazing people - a little star struck, if I must be totally honest. I very quickly realised that for most of them, the persona on the stage and the real person were sometimes very far apart and I was totally disillusioned. There was one man, however, who was edgy and honest and ruffled many feathers because he broke all the rules with his unpretentious manner. There was no "three steps to the left, tilt head to the right, cheesy grin" stuff with him, but when he spoke people listened; they identified with what he said because he was authentic and people knew it.

Don't be afraid to be authentic on your journey. In fact, your success depends on it. You'll need people you can be real with to help you along the way, and I guarantee you'll find a beauty in yourself that you never knew existed.

The journey so far hasn't always been easy, but I wouldn't change anything. It hasn't been horrible either. As I look back over the territory I've been through, I see the meaning and purpose in it, and I see so much more beauty than ashes.

Our lives are created on purpose, for a purpose. I believe each of us has an incredible destiny that is worth fighting for and worth the journey - no matter how many wildernesses, giants and forests we must face. It's an incredible adventure and it is not to be journeyed alone. I trust that this book has encouraged you to take the next step, inspired you to find your purpose, ignited you to live your passion, and equipped you to navigate through each of your valleys of insight as you cycle onward and upward on the mountain you've been called to.

