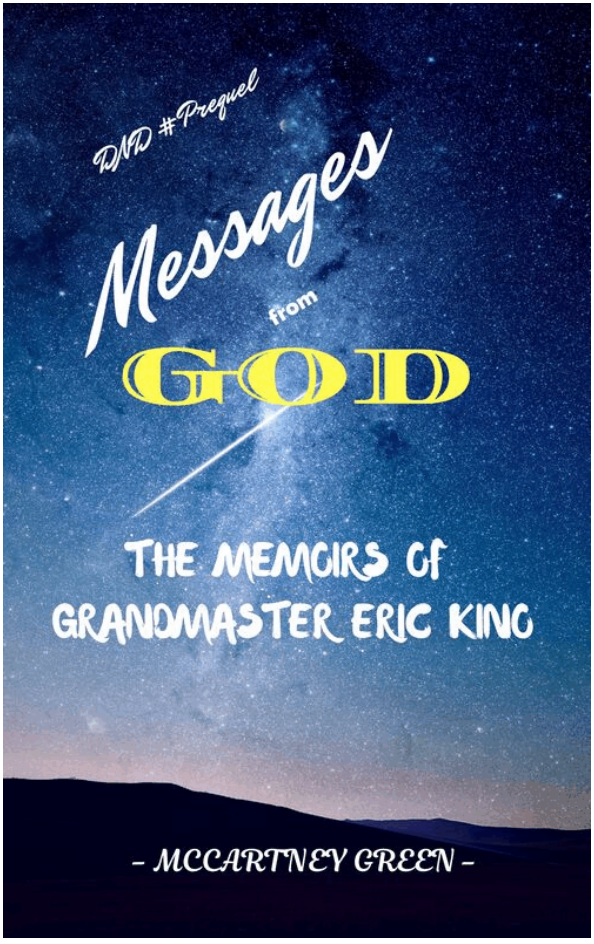

DND #Prequel
Messages
from
GOD
THE MEMOIRS OF
GRANDMASTER ERIC KING
- MCCARTNEY GREEN -

DND The Prequel

Messages
from
GOD

The Memoirs of

Grandmaster Eric Kino

McCartney Green

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Website Edition October 10, 2026

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I'm supposed to say that, but really, share, share, share. You may share this work in its entirety to any and all.

This is a work of fiction, or is it? Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are *used fictitiously*, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is either unintentional or a very cool synchronicity!

Table of Contents

		Page
Preface		4
Chapter 1 -	In the Beginning	7
Chapter 2 -	The Miracle of the Cave	20
Chapter 3 -	A Whole New World	39
Chapter 4 -	Stumbling Down the Correct Path	47
Chapter 5 -	Love Blooms and Replicates	63
Chapter 6 -	Heaven Sent	74
Chapter 7 -	Heaven Received	100
Chapter 8 -	The Meaning of Life	114
Chapter 9 -	Consequences	128
Chapter 10 -	Abundance and Prosperity/ The Law of Attraction?	135
Chapter 11 -	Some Interviews/Relationships, God, and Freedom	148
Chapter 12 -	Spiritual Alignment	168
A Prayer -		184
Continue the Journey		186

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"
Acts 2:17

Preface

Dear Reader,

If you knew me personally, you would know that I am not a fancy talker. I speak rather plainly, using short words to tell stories, or describe emotion. One person once described me as *Disney* rather than *Shakespeare*, which I used to think was pretty cool, but in light of the happenings in this world, I know that I would never want to be associated with Disney, the modern-day "Pied Piper." Not anymore. However, that information is for another day.

I began writing when I had an angel appear to me. It was a long time before I admitted publicly that it actually happened. But I simply cannot deny it, no matter how crazy people think I am. I've also audibly heard the voice of God, and I've had many supernatural confirmations. He's real. Really real. He's shown me that many times now, and I keep saying it, because I know many people just don't get it. In my plain way of speaking, this book is about many of those supernatural confirmations, written in allegory form. It is about my coming to the awareness that not only does God truly exist, but Jesus Christ is the true Son of God. They are one. They are real. Really real. You will read those words several more times throughout this work. Why? Because there are so many people who just don't get it. I want you to get it. God has shown me many visions. I've been led, I've been directed, and I've fallen short many times. I've had three amazing visitations for which I am so very grateful. I tell you these things not to brag, but to say how slothful a servant I've been, and to show I am repentant and trying very hard to serve the Lord and do His will.

The road has been long and somewhat painful but I'm grateful for every single inch of it. After writing eight full-length novels and six spiritual self-help type books, I thought I was done with writing. But God has spoken to me again, and because I want to do His will, I have finally come to rewrite this book and the others in the way He has directed me. The way I should have written them in the first place.

For years now the Lord has been whispering to me to pick up my laptop, and do what I've been called to do. I kept putting

it off. So many excuses. And then Covid came and took my loving husband—took him back to be with his Father. I too had Covid and was in a coma for almost three months. I didn't know my husband had passed. While I was in that coma, another angel came to visit me. A different one than the one mentioned above. The angel showed me many things, including what to do to heal. Once I woke up and began to heal, God put it on my heart to get to work and do what He has shown me.

Full disclosure. Once I came back to God, and read the Bible, really read it, aloud, from cover to cover, twice, only then did I begin to realize that with the Holy Spirit, I began to change to reflect what I was being taught by the spirit and Word of God. The fiction books I'd originally written, though filled with the lofty ideas of *love and honor, respect, hard work, and loyalty, were still not teaching us to try to live in a pure and holy way. They were far from it.

My original books totally ignored God and the idea of Jesus coming to earth and dying on the cross to pay for our sins. Though my original books were great emotional stories that taught people how to be good people, they also endorsed sexual relationships with pretty much no rules, no holds barred and no consequences. Though they contained the other, very honorable messages mentioned above,* I couldn't in good conscience promote them without a giant revamping. God gave us his laws to protect us. Satan uses sexual immorality to destroy us. (Yeah, he's real too.)

God had been prompting me to rewrite the original books for some time. I actually started re-writing my books from a Christian perspective a few years ago, but I didn't get very far. Life got in the way. Satan got in the way. The signs of the times, however, are coming into view. With life so up in the air here in the United States and evil taking over everywhere, God has been urging me to get this done.

Where to start? With an allegory. This is a prelude/prequel to the Christian drama novels, The DND - In Jesus' Name Series. Though it is a prequel, you really shouldn't read it until after the first eight books because it does have spoilers.

In Joy,

Susan Milner aka McCartney Green

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 7:21

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Romans 12:2

Chapter One

In the Beginning

(Written by Justin Lee)

Eric Kino was a teacher. Many would think he was merely a martial arts instructor, and he was, but as it turned out, that was just a means to an end, that end being teaching the world how to live a Godly life. He would become a world-renowned black belt hall-of-famer. He would become one of the richest men in the world, though that was not his focus. Even with those credentials, those privileged to have been taught by him would tell you he was much more than that.

My name is Justin Lee. I'm Grandmaster Eric Kino's friend and attorney. He and I have known each other since we were teens. Eric allowed me to pen the beginning of this book, to tell a little bit about him before he takes over telling his story. He allowed me to write this part because...well...because I asked him to allow me this boon. I wanted to tell you certain things about my dearest friend, because he is too humble to talk about himself and didn't quite know how to write these memoirs. Therefore, I volunteered to write the first chapter to get him started. His mission to write these memoirs was a calling, spurred by the constant questions he receives from hundreds of people daily. After much prayer and contemplation, he allowed me to help him get started. He has quite a story.

Eric was a native Hawaiian. He lived the spirit of Aloha, that being, in short, an honorable way of life. It's a school of thought that brings heart and mind together in seeking wisdom, having compassion, protecting the innocent, stepping up to do what's right, combined with humility. Yet, he would tell you, what really made Eric the man he is today was this: he had a relationship with Jesus, the Son of the Living God, the Christ, though he didn't always. As you read this story, you will discover how Eric learned that Jesus is real, really and truly real. He occupies space just like we do. He is not just a made-up fairy story. He is real, and he is the Son of God.

From the time he was ten and a half years old, Eric immersed himself in gathering wisdom. He voraciously read hundreds of books that had been written intending to teach and help and inspire. He found many precious nuggets in those books before he ever went to college. However, he has said many times, *"The most important book I've ever read was the Bible. It is more than just a book. It is encoded with power, filled with prayers, and when it is read aloud from cover to cover, it WILL work miracles in your life. It is supernatural. As a young teen, I did exactly that: I read the Bible out loud, and I began to understand its power. I've heard about people in prison who had nothing to do and so read the Bible front to back and it changed their lives. It changed my life too and I completely understand how that happens.*

"If you've never read it, I highly recommend you do so. If you are a Christian and have never read it this way, aloud, cover to cover, I highly

recommend you do so ASAP."

Those were Eric's words. Though Eric became a renowned teacher, and his title was "Grandmaster," he remained humble, for he knew the real "Master," who blessed him with his abilities, and he knew there was always so much more to learn.

Eric taught his students: "***Be always learning, always expanding, always awakening."***

What is awakening? It's a time in your life when you come to the realization that there is much more to learn and that there are things awaiting to be discovered. It's a time when you realize that what you believed to be true may not be true, and what you believed to be false may not be false. Awakening is a discovering and an admission that you don't really know everything. Awakening is an open mind, searching for the truth.

Eric said, "Awakening, becoming aware of truth and beauty in all their forms, happens in layers. Slowly but surely the light gets brighter and brighter. That light will always continue to grow, bigger and brighter because God's Universe is ever-expanding. Always, there is expansion and contraction and expansion again. Remember that, so when tough times come, you won't lose heart. Awakening never stops, so if you say, I am now 'awake,' believing you have finally come to truth, think again. And if you use the term 'woke', then you have a huge awakening to come."

Eric Kino did not profess to be perfect in any way, which you will see as he recounts his tales. As a teacher, his goals have been to bring light to the world by being an honorable man who gives his all,

a loving husband and father, a good and loyal friend, and, first and foremost, a servant of God. He teaches, but does not preach. His lessons come best through example. His students have learned to strive to be the very best—not in others' eyes or opinions, but in the eyes of God and in one's own heart.

Eric began every quarter of a new class with this statement:

"I cannot make you think the 'right' way. I cannot give you the 'right' thoughts or even the vibrational alignment you desire. When I say 'vibrational alignment,' I mean the happiness you seek. I CAN help. I can lead you there, through example, through love and compassion. I can show you the way and offer a little on-side coaching, but I cannot give it to you. You must walk there yourself. If I carry you, when it comes time to stand on your own, your legs will be too weak to hold you up. Like a bird breaking out of his shell, the journey to the goal is important."

Eric usually ended all his teachings with this reminder:

"Consider all possibilities but arrive at no conclusions."

This is something the Holy Spirit spoke to him many times over the years. Just as soon as he thought he understood it all, as soon as he said to himself, "Oh, I get it now, I believe this or that and I discard this or that," the words would come to him again:

"C*onsider all possibilities but arrive at no conclusions."*

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean

not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Miracles *do* happen. God *is not* dead. Heaven *is* real. This is how Eric came to know these things.

Eric was born in the Hawaiian Islands, on the island of Kauai, a beautiful place, a majestic place, a treacherous place. One definition of 'treacherous' is to "have hidden or unpredictable dangers." Eric says that describes Kauai perfectly. The breathtaking beauty of the island disguises the dangers lurking. The inner current, the palpable undertone of a contained power, humming beneath the surface of the island is always there. It is just background noise to many, yet to some, and definitely to Eric, it was loud—almost deafening, and it continually drew him to the sacred innermost reaches of the island.

There is a second call to all islanders. It comes from the sea. The constant ebb and flow, the pulsating life, the power that emanates from the ocean that surrounds the island calls to its inhabitants continually. They thrive in the oceanic ablutions. Hawaiians have a special relationship with all water (wai). For all water, the ocean, the streams, the rain, and the waterfalls, they are in a deep state of mahalo. It is a huge part of their lives, a blessing. To be wealthy is waiwai, lots of water. Swimming, surfing, paddleboarding, canoeing, snorkeling, free-diving, fishing are activities that keep natives "one" with water.

At the time that Eric was ten years old, the members of his family, aunts, uncles and cousins, lived in different homes on the land of his grandparents' plantation, a large and wonderful

place to grow up. They raised mostly macadamia nuts, pineapples, sweet potatoes and bananas. His grandfather and father provided many jobs for the locals, mostly native Hawaiians, but also migrant workers and even some of those who came to Kauai following the "call," that is, people of other races who had an inner urging to find wisdom and awakening on the island.

The Kinos lived in the spirit of aloha and in a state of mahalo, but were not religious. They did attend a nearby Christian church, and occasionally prayed, but really only out of tradition and for structure for the children, but not in a way that made him think God was real. They were well off, by most native island standards, though not by the tourist's standards. They worked hard and played hard. Life was good.

Though Eric was an only child, he had six cousins around to keep him company, four of them boys. His male cousins and he had many adventures into the sacred deep recesses of the island and that is how Eric came to the brink of death. That brush with death would herald a turning point in his life, a point where he would begin to be the man he is today. That turning point would lead Eric to testify that:

"I know beyond any doubt that there is much more to this world than we can experience with our five senses. God is real."

And also that:

"Spiritual alignment with the Lord is everything and brings only joy, true joy to those who can obtain it, experience it, receive it."

"Real joy, true joy, can only be found through a connection to our Creator. People think they will be happy once they achieve success in business, or in love, or in education, or financially, and though those things may bring satisfaction, they will not bring true joy."

"...Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

What could possibly have happened to Eric on the island to bring about this epiphany?

Eric and his cousins had been told many times to not go past the "second waterfall" to the north and west of the farm. Of course, that is exactly where they headed whenever they had more than four hours to themselves. All native Hawaiians know of the sacred inner sanctums of the island. It is their heritage and they honor their ancestors by keeping the sacred land pure. However, Eric and his cousins had an insatiable curiosity about what was beyond that second waterfall.

Each time, their attempt to get up and over the second fall seemed to be thwarted by one thing or another. Eric began to believe that it was not a coincidence that each time they tried to pass the fall, some peril would befall one of them, like a sprained ankle, or a broken finger. Later he would learn that:

There are no coincidences. Nothing is random. The Universe is not chaos. It is ordered and logical,

just sometimes not in a way we can understand from our current perspective as humans.

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."

Of Eric's four male cousins, only one, Kana, was the same age as him. Kana was brother to the only two female cousins. At twelve, the girls were the eldest of the bunch. They happened to be identical twins, yet they were as different as night and day. Kaiya was a reserved, quiet, stick-to-the-rules type of person. She wanted nothing to do with roughhousing with a bunch of boys. Her sister Kai, however, loved nothing more than being included in the boys' exploits, and they did occasionally include her.

All seven of the cousins were athletes, boys and girls, and all of them were schooled in the martial arts under Eric's father for a time, and so they were always up for a physical challenge. They loved climbing—anything: trees, cliff sides, and waterfalls. How does one climb a waterfall? The answer of course is, very carefully. Jokes aside, climbing waterfalls is a tricky and dangerous thing to do. Many falls on the island are small waterfalls that cascade over rocky cliffs to a pool below. Climbing those falls is like cliff climbing while someone dumps never-ending buckets of water over you, making the rocks slippery and hard to grasp with fingers or toes, even with rubbery climbing shoes. I myself have been waterfall climbing with Eric and his cousins. It is very tricky.

That December, when Eric was ten years old, they were out of school for Christmas vacation and

decided they would all go climb the "second" waterfall. Eric, fellow ten-year-old Kana, nine-year-old Mike, eleven-year-old Samuel and the youngest, eight-year-old Palani, who was brother to Samuel, were ready to go.

The walk to the second fall included getting to, up, and over the first fall, which would take approximately an hour. They gathered their gear and were just headed out when twelve-year-old Kai came running up, proclaiming her intention to join the expedition.

Samuel was the first to protest, reminding her that the last time she'd snuck off with the boys resulted in him being grounded. However, Kai's brother, Kana, was the loudest and the most adamant that she not come. Quite an argument ensued. While the others participated in a heated debate, Eric felt nothing but impatience. He didn't like having to wait for them to sort things out. The buzzing in his ears was loud and insistent that day. It called him out toward the center of the island and all he wanted to do was go. Just go. If he thought he could've gotten away with it, he would have just left them all behind right then and there.

Kai made some good points about females, and how at their age, she was close to being equal physically. Though they all knew that would change once the boys hit puberty. She reminded them that in sparring class she could hold her own against any one of them. She pulled on their consciences as she described how unfair it was that she was not allowed to do the things she loved just because she was a girl. That argument is something Eric would remember the rest of his life. He would also remember looking over at Kai, thinking, his cousin was pretty. She had

long, black hair and almond shaped eyes. She was about five feet. Probably only a hundred pounds. Small, but banded with muscle, and fast. She was really fast.

As Eric pondered these things, everyone quieted and looked toward him and he realized they'd asked him his opinion. He shrugged impatiently. He just wanted to get on with it, so he spoke, and what he had to say surprised the guys. He took her side. He reminded them that she was athletically adept enough to accompany them. The other boys argued against Eric's points. But he just wanted to go, and so, he said two things, two things that changed his life. He said he would act as her protector and he would personally take responsibility for her.

That's all it took. The guys quickly agreed and finally, the group moved out toward the lush green mountain that loomed behind them.

An hour later they were climbing carefully up the cliffside of the first waterfall. The water rushed stronger than usual since Kauai was headed into the rainy season. The water was cold, the rocks slippery and at times sharp. They moved slowly. Eric brought up the rear, positioning himself just behind Kai in case she misstepped. However, she didn't. All went well and the group topped the fall with no problems. They rested, drank water from the stream, ate a snack from their packs and started toward the second fall.

This one was trickier, and they had yet to succeed topping it. The two-tiered cliff side was steep and jagged. The water that fell from the top ridge landed twenty feet below in a pool that was high above from where they stood. As the water

filled that shallow pool, it spilled down again to the stream at their feet. It was beautiful and breathtaking. The water seemed to roar, though it wasn't a very large fall and Eric wondered if he was hearing the water or that sound in his head that seemed to always call, "Come here, come now, you must come. You must . . . " He thought maybe there was more to the message but he was never still long enough to hear it. Very soon, however, he would learn the entire message.

When they started up the second fall, all seemed well, but things turned south rapidly. Halfway up to the first pool, about twenty feet in the air, Palani slipped. He didn't fall, just slipped off to one side. Eric quickly moved up close behind him to help him regain his foothold and instruct him how to get to the next big outcropping. Because of that, Eric was now in front of Kai rather than behind her. He never even thought again about what he'd said, about being her protector.

They made it to the landing where the water pooled to spill over again, all but Kai. They were on the landing admiring the scenery, waiting for her to climb up over the edge. Eric saw her fingers top the rocks and he moved forward to take her hand and somehow, somehow, she just fell. Eric yelled and dove for her. She screamed. The cousins would never ever forget the sound of her body hitting the rocks on the way down, almost forty feet of hitting jagged rocks, and then the final thud.

Horrified, Eric looked around at the others. Kana, Kai's younger brother, was crying. The rest seemed to be in shock, wide-eyed and silent. Words ran through Eric's head, "I should have been behind her. I'd promised." There was nothing to do but get

down to her. They had no cell phones back then. They would have to run for help.

They started down one by one. Eric, in such anguish, nervously circled the small area waiting for his turn to climb back over the cliff's edge. The area at the top was like a small cave, about ten feet deep. In his anxious pacing, he neared the innermost point, and the ground gave way.

In so much shock from seeing Kai fall, he didn't even scream. He felt only despair and turmoil. In a way, he didn't even care that he was falling too, and even hoped he would die, rather than face the guilt and remorse and grief over what had happened to Kai.

Strangely, he didn't fall very far before he hit a smooth rock surface below. However, that surface was sloped at a steep angle and with no finger holds, he immediately started sliding. He tried to dig the toes of his climbing shoes into the rock, but the angle was just too steep and he half slid, half fell down, down, down, bumping knees and elbows and his chin on the way. It seemed to him he fell forever. He began to envision himself being swallowed up into the mouth of perhaps a great volcano. He smacked his head once or twice and began to feel lightheaded, kind of drowsy. He thought, "I just wanna close my eyes and sleep. Yes, sleep." He thought, "Maybe this is all a nightmare. Maybe I'll wake up safe at home in my own bed, with my father and mother down the hall asleep, and my cousin Kai safe in her home. Please, let this be just a dream."

However, when Eric hit bottom with a jarring thump, he knew it was no dream. He was dizzy and everything around him appeared blurry. The sound

of his moaning echoed off the walls. Looking around at his surroundings, he blinked hard, wondering if he was actually seeing what he thought he was seeing, because what he saw seemed to be incredible. A man. A man who seemed to have a white light glowing all around him. He walked toward Eric, smiling, then knelt down beside him where he lay, touched his knee and said, "Welcome, Eric. Don't be afraid. Everything is going to be okay." Eric passed out.

In the following chapters, Eric himself will tell, in first person, of the events in his life that have been great learning experiences. The things he learned are the things he's taught his students. The things he's learned are the things Jesus Christ taught him.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to help in the endeavor of a great man to tell the world how and why he is who he is and how and why he knows what he knows. Now, on with the story.

✝✝✝

Philippians 4:6

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Chapter Two

The Miracle of the Cave

When I awoke I had no idea how long I'd been unconscious. I only knew I was all alone. Sitting up, I checked my arms and legs to see if anything was broken. I was pretty banged up but appeared to be okay. Struggling to my feet and limping heavily, I began to pace the area where I'd landed.

I seemed to be deep underground. I could see no way out, and, for that matter, no way in. Even though I was only ten years old, I realized I must be at least the length of a football field, maybe more, beneath the surface of the mountain, because I'd fallen for so long. The strangest thing was that, though I was deep underground, there was miraculously light for which I could see no source.

I circled the place over and over, trying desperately to find an opening, a tiny crevice, something. The light had to be coming from somewhere. Strangely, I couldn't even see the point at which I'd entered the space. There seemed to be no way in, no way out, nothing.

Finally, with nothing else to occupy my mind, I sat down, leaned back against the wall and totally gave in to despair. I was sure that Kai was dead and that I was lost somewhere deep inside the Earth. I

wondered what was happening out there. Did the others even know that I'd fallen through some weird hole? Had they made it back to the farm and brought help for Kai? Was anyone even looking for me? If Kai was dead, were Kaiya and Kana and their parents lost in their grief and hating me for breaking my promise? Did the other cousins tell about the promise I'd made, and did they hate me too? I wouldn't blame them. I hated myself, and now, it seemed I would get just what I deserved. I would be trapped in this place and die a long, slow death of starvation and dehydration.

I admit, I was pretty scared. Terrified, actually. Panicked. Claustrophobic. I was lost in those feelings until the despair of Kai's death welled back up, and then I became willing to accept my fate, because facing the family in the aftermath of what had happened to Kai was something I thought I could *not* do. Therefore, I sat there on the stone floor, literally banging my head against the wall behind me as I cried over the happenings of the day.

I cried with great regret. I cried wishing with all my heart that I could do the day over knowing what I knew now, because now I'd be so much more careful. I was learning a huge lesson. Regret is heavy. Regret can be almost unbearable. I was learning that one should be very careful in one's decisions to avoid regret at all costs. It was a lesson learned too late in my short life, I thought, and that brought on a new wave of grief and tears. I cried. I cried because I couldn't change it, and I cried because I longed to feel my mother's arms around me and my father's voice at my ear. I cried like a baby and finally cried myself to exhaustion and to sleep. Here's what happened next.

~~~

I was dreaming. How could I be asleep and be dreaming and know I was dreaming? Wouldn't that mean I was awake? The boy I was didn't understand. Later, the man I would become would learn about lucid dreaming. In my dream, I sat upright as I watched an older man walk toward me. I felt amazingly calm as the man approached. I realized the man looked slightly familiar. It took me a moment to remember I'd seen pictures of this man in the family photo album. He was my great-grandfather and I was suddenly and powerfully enveloped in amazing comfort and love so that I was no longer scared or sad. My great-grandfather smiled at me and sat down next to me.

"Hello, my son," the man said.

I couldn't seem to speak any words, so I simply nodded my head and looked up into the eyes of my ancestor.

"I'm here to help you."

I nodded again.

"I want you to try to stay very calm and to use your mind to reach out to God. He is your Father. Simply search for Him in your mind, and then, just listen."

The man touched my shoulder. "Everything is going to be okay." That's what woke me up.

Everything is going to be okay? Hadn't I seen another man earlier? Hadn't he said those exact same words—*everything is going to be okay*? That first man had not looked like my great-grandfather. Still, it was coming back to me. I *had* seen a man. But had
~~~

I imagined the whole thing, or maybe actually seen something like a guardian angel?

My body was trembling as I sat up straight with my back against the rock wall and tried to do as my great-grandfather had instructed. I took a deep breath, blew it out, and began to meditate and pray. Meditation, I'd done plenty of times. Praying, not so much, but I tried. I reached out with my mind as counseled to do in the dream and cried out to God. I asked Him to help me. I begged Him for help. Immediately, though, it came to me that begging for help was not what my great-grandfather had said to do. He hadn't told me to cry to God or to beg or to try to make things happen the way I wanted them to happen. He'd said to reach out and then just listen. So, I took another deep breath and tried again. It was difficult, attempting to calm my frantic mind and do as I'd been told. I sat quietly, reaching out and listening, listening, listening. Still, nothing happened. I heard nothing. Nothing!

I did this for hours—for days, maybe. I lost track of time. It came to the point where I lay on my back, weak and hungry and thirsty; so very thirsty. I had no more tears to cry. I couldn't understand why my great-grandfather would take the time to come to me in a dream and tell me to do something that obviously wasn't helping at all. I tried with everything a young boy could muster to hear something—anything, and finally, in my ultimate despair, I simply gave up. I let go. I stopped hoping that I would be miraculously rescued. I accepted that I would die in this place. Honestly, I began looking forward to the moment when I would be free of my body and not feel so terrible anymore.

After that moment, the moment when I accepted

my fate, I prayed again. This time I prayed for forgiveness for letting down my cousin Kai, for making a promise so lightly without conviction, and for hurting my parents and family, because I knew they were going to be inconsolable. I expressed remorse that I'd wasted the short life I'd been given, that I hadn't made a difference in the world like I'd told my parents many times I was gonna do. Ironically, once I'd emptied my soul of all the burdens a young boy could feel, once I'd truly let go of *what was*, I actually began to feel gratitude for *what was*—for those things I'd always taken for granted.

I began to express my gratitude: for having such wonderful parents, for my family—my aunts, uncles, my cousins, for all the things I'd seen and done, and for the beauty of the world. I even remembered to be thankful for my dog, whom I'd suddenly realized I would never see again, and had to quiet the little hitch in my heart *that* thought created.

However, it was during the next stage of my grief I felt things begin to change. It was a surrender to the inevitable, and then, a whimsical thought ran through my mind. *"If I were able to live, I would do so many things so much differently. I would work hard to try to make a difference in the world. I would help others. I would fight against evil and darkness in any way I could. I would be slow to anger. I would try to teach people to be kind and strong and to live in aloha, and I would never, ever make a promise that I didn't fully intend to keep."*

My mind wandered to a silly movie I'd once seen where a man was drowning and asked God to save him. He made all kinds of promises about the wonderful things he was gonna do if God would just

save him. And then, not acknowledging that it was God who pushed him closer to shore, it appeared to the man that he might be able to save himself and he immediately started going back on his promises. I knew that was not what I was doing. I had accepted my fate. *This was not a bargaining session—not an "If You let me live, I will do such and such."* It was more like, *"Too bad it's over now, because I just realized how I would live my life."*

"I'm sorry, God," I whispered. "I'm sorry, Mom, Dad. I'm sorry, Kai."

As I lay there thinking of all the things I might have accomplished if I'd lived longer, the things I wished I'd had time to do, things I wished I'd had time to become, it seemed a light began to fill the space. Being weak, truly near death, I didn't realize this at first, and then, when I did actually notice the light, knowing death was near, I thought this was it. Finally, the pain and suffering will be over. I had the strength to raise my head, ever so slightly, and I squinted my eyes and—there he was, not my great-grandfather, but the other man, the one I'd seen earlier. He was smiling at me in a calm, peaceful way. I actually thought he was there to escort me to the other side.

However, that was not what he did. Instead, he knelt beside me and helped me raise my head and offered me water. I sipped that water and silently vowed that I would never forget just how sweet that water tasted.

The man then spoke. He said, "It took you some time to come around to it, young Eric, but you finally did."

I didn't understand. I had no idea what the man

was talking about. That's what I was thinking. *I have no idea what you're talking about.*

"Yes, you do," the man said, as if he'd read my mind. "Tell me," he said, "what you have learned."

At first, I thought I would tell the man that I didn't feel so good and that I didn't feel like talking right now, but then I realized even as I had those thoughts, that I actually did feel good. Amazingly, I felt great, I felt strong, and suddenly, I did feel like talking, and so I did. I told him I realized how much I loved my family, my parents, my cousins, my aunts and uncles, but even more, people everywhere. As an adult, I would say all of mankind. I told him that I learned to never make a promise lightly, and that I learned each life is precious. I learned that each person is responsible for the choices they make and that we must face up to what we do, even if it's difficult. And I told him that I'd learned to let go of what I wished for and what I wanted to make happen and accept what is.

The man nodded happily at me. "Good, very good," he said. "And were you honest and sincere about what you now want to accomplish in your life?"

I was confused. I hadn't told the man that part. But then, I realized the man was some kind of angel or magical person and he could read my thoughts. I was awed, and as can happen when someone is confronted with great power, I began to feel fear, but for only an instant. In truth, I felt safe and even loved and I wasn't afraid of him one bit.

The man smiled. "Do you still want to help others, fight the darkness of evil and teach the world?"

I nodded solemnly because I truly did want to, though I had no idea what I would teach the world or how I would fight the darkness of evil.

He smiled at me and said, "You teach what you know, and you know more than you realize. For example, your ability to let go and accept what was happening to you is exactly what made you able to change that circumstance. You found your faith. You decided to trust God. You let yourself be subject to His will, whatever that will may be, even if it's your own death.

"It was the vibration of you pushing against 'what is' that kept you in the state of 'what is.' When you finally let go, your vibration changed, and you stopped fighting against your circumstance. Once the vibration changed, you aligned more with God's vibration and the circumstance was able to change. Yet unlike what some may try to teach, it's not all about the vibration. You see, the change in your vibration had to do with letting go and trusting God. Your vibration became more in sync with God. And yes, there is a God and yes, He is very real and very much involved in your life."

He paused a moment and looked into my eyes, as if he were studying me. "Do you understand?"

I nodded my head. "I think so. What you said reminds me of something my father once taught us in a martial arts lesson. He said that instead of resisting your opponent, go with the flow of his energy. He said it was like being in a car swept away in a flood. You push and push and struggle to get the car door open so that you can get out, but the pressure is too great. You have to stop pushing against the water.

My father said you must become one with the water by opening or breaking the window and allowing the water in; then the pressure changes and suddenly, you can open the door. Not resisting will allow your circumstances to change. Go with the flow."

The man, whom I was beginning to think of as my angel, smiled at me. "That's correct," he said. "Your ability to let go and accept what was happening as part of a vaster plan was innate. That means it was instinctive to you. If you learn to listen calmly and carefully, you will begin to remember that plan."

I tried hard to understand what the angel was saying. A plan to remember. Stay calm. Listen carefully. I slowly nodded my head.

The angel smiled warmly at me. "You are young, but don't worry. You will eventually understand. So, tell me, at this moment, other than reuniting with your family, what is your most fervent desire?"

I didn't have to think about it for even a moment because I'd been so anguished over what had happened to Kai. I told him that my most fervent desire was for Kai to live.

He nodded. "I know. You may have your wish, Eric."

"Really?" I started crying right away. The tears just formed and fell over my cheeks. I couldn't hold it back. Then I began to think that I was dreaming again, because that was too good to be true.

He said, "You're not dreaming. This is real. Try to remember that. And yes, Kai will live, but it won't be easy. She will need your help and you will have

a difficult task ahead of you. You must fight; you must be strong; you must not tire; you must pray and meditate to calm your mind so you can hear the messages and know how to help, but if you do those things, you will have your wish."

I asked, "So, that means I'm not gonna die here? I'm really going back to be with my family?"

The angel's smile was filled with compassion. "Yes, young man, you are going to be with your family. Helping Kai will be your first mission. She will live, as you wished, and when you face trying times in your life, when you doubt God and doubt yourself, it will give you validation. You may always come back to this one miracle and remember that this meeting did actually take place."

My heart soared. I knew—I had a knowing—that what my angel said was true. The joy and relief I felt was indescribable and I couldn't wait to get back and see Kai all whole and well and alive.

The man—the angel—helped me to my feet.

"Who are you?" I asked him. "Are you an angel?"

"Sometimes I am called an angel. I am a messenger of God. I am also part of your eternal family. You have chosen a great calling. You chose it before you ever came to Earth and I have come to help you find your way." [Jeremiah 1:5]

Though these were amazing words, I, as a boy, didn't quite grasp them. Instead, I simply wanted to get back to my family and I wondered how far I would have to walk to get home. "Where am I?"

"You are in proximity to a very sacred place.

You were brought here on purpose so that this meeting could take place and I could begin teaching you. I know that you have heard the call to come to this place."

"Yes, I think I did," I told him. "I heard it saying, 'Come, come here.'"

"The call was, 'Come here. Come alone.'"

"You must learn to calm your mind, stay quiet and hear the messages in their entirety."

"You were told to come alone, for it is not given to some to find this sacred place. Your family will not walk the same path as you. They have a different call."

I puzzled over that for a moment, thinking this must have been why something always happened to keep the group from getting over the waterfall. Still very much a boy, I immediately became angry. "Then *you* made Kai fall?"

He looked sadly at me. "I did not hurt your cousins," he assured me. "I would never harm, only help. They were hurt by the dark forces that tried to keep you from finding your way."

"You see, in this mortal place, some have come to bring goodness and light. Whenever those people bring goodness and light, the dark forces gather to put it out. Sometimes they succeed. Sometimes they do not."

"Dark forces?" I asked.

"Do not be intrigued by those kinds of things. Just know that they too are real. It is good to know that there is an enemy. However, it is not good to dwell on such things. Do not fear. God will be with you. As for the enemy, you will learn more at a later time when you are stronger."

My mind had been jump-started by the idea of an enemy. "If you knew about these dark forces, why didn't you intervene so that I could get to you earlier?"

His answer was profound.

"I cannot interfere in the free will of others, even if those others have chosen a negative path. It is a universal law. Even God Himself does not break this law, for what good is a king who does not follow his own laws?"

I countered immediately. "But didn't you just intervene? I mean, I was pretty much as good as dead."

Again, his answer was profound.

"Don't worry, Eric, your free will is intact. Our meeting was planned during your pre-Earth life by you, by me, by others in our eternal family, and by God. You simply cannot remember that life."

I frowned and shook my head because I didn't comprehend.

The angel touched my shoulder in comfort.

"I'm trying to understand," I mumbled.

He went on:

"You see, free will is very important. That means everyone must have the right to choose right from wrong, to choose to love or hate, to do or not to do. What good is love if it is not given freely? And even though we should not interfere in the free will of others, there is nothing that can stop us from choosing to help. For choosing to help is our own free will as well."

He continued. "Though you cannot remember right now, you, Eric, have chosen to help those that must learn to help themselves." He shook his head. "But no more talk now. You must go. Your family is searching for you."

"They are? But—how do I get out of here?"

He smiled and spread out his arms. "You *are* out."

I looked around me and realized I was kneeling in a copse of trees, near a deep hole that seemed to close up right before my very eyes. I suddenly felt weak again. I was covered in dirt and blood from the scrapes I'd suffered in the fall. I was hungry and thirsty, though not quite as thirsty as I had been. I turned back to the man, expecting him to be gone, but he was still there.

The angel nodded. "I'm still here, but I can't stay and I can't come to you again in this manner. However, you will soon become proficient in prayer and hearing God's voice, sometimes still and small, sometimes very loud. You must learn more about Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and become His disciple. The Holy Spirit will then descend upon

you. Listen to Him. Feel Him. Pay attention to your dreams. They are important. Until then—"

"Live nobly. Live honorably. Live with integrity. Live with love in your heart. Do not lie. Do not steal. Be in control of your body. It is a temple. Keep it clean. Do not give in to lustful urges. These things will keep your vibrations high, and in that higher state you can hear God's voice, and once you can hear Him, you will always know what to do."

Those words, along with those that followed, would become a life creed not only for me but for all of my students.

He said, ***"Have love and compassion for all, yet have no tolerance for that which is evil, dark, or hateful. Do not be deceived. Remember this—anything that seeks to take away your free will is of the darkness. Anything. Even if it seems wholesome. For example, it is good to love others. However, you cannot force someone to love others. You cannot command it. You cannot legislate it. You can, however, shine your own light. You can set an example of goodness and light, and love for others and then, they must choose it—or not."***

The light around the angel flickered and I realized he was about to leave. He gave a parting lesson. He said, "All the guidelines for life I have given you are good for anyone of any creed, but you

must understand the importance of what I am about to say. I know that your parents have taught you a little about God. I know that your family attends church. I know that you don't feel the importance or the significance of that, mostly because they and you don't actually understand that God *truly* exists. Therefore, let me tell you plainly, because you can see that I exist. Indeed, you see me with your own eyes."

"God is real. His Son, Jesus Christ, is real."

He put his hand on my shoulder. I think so I could feel the weight of it.

"I mean, young Eric, they are truly real."

"They exist. They aren't just some nice idea floating around in the air. They are real. They physically exist. They take up space. They reside somewhere, in an actual place, in this Universe. When you pray, they hear you. They always hear you. Live with that knowledge. Believe."

"Be of faith and therefore of good cheer. You are not alone. You are never alone unless you, yourself, have enclosed yourself in the darkness by slamming your door in God's face. Keep that door open through belief and hope, faith and courage."

"I must go now, but remember, you are never alone."

I watched the light gather around him, folding inward, getting smaller and smaller until he simply shrank away into a pinpoint of light and disappeared. Two seconds later, I heard my father calling and answered him, "Here! I'm here!"

Much excitement ensued as I heard my father call out to others, letting them know he'd found me. He appeared through the trees and ran toward me. I was so weak that I could barely reach out to him. My father scooped me up into his arms, and it was then that I knew I really was awake and I really was going to live. It *was* a miracle.

There was great commotion as my mother, aunts, uncles, cousins, rescue workers, and police officers converged on the scene. I was hooked up to an IV and transported to the hospital in Kapaa. All the while I kept trying to find the words to explain what had happened and to ask about Kai. As the ordinary "real" world reclaimed my attention, the realness of the miracle that had taken place began to fade. I began to wonder if I'd had a crazy dream or whether, in some sort of delirium, I had imagined the whole thing. The whole thing became hazy. I was so tired that I couldn't think straight and finally drifted off to sleep in a warm, dry bed that I'd just very recently thought I'd never feel again. I remember feeling very content as I drifted off, with my parents nearby—whom I'd thought I'd never see again—and my belly full, which I'd thought I'd never experience again.

I awoke in the morning to the sound of my parents softly conversing. As I listened, I discovered I'd been missing for three days. How was I even still alive, I wondered. Of course, I knew how. I heard them talking about Kai and kept my eyes closed and

strained to hear what they were saying. I heard them say it was a miracle she was alive because she'd fallen such a long way. She'd broken her back and was paralyzed. The doctors didn't know if she would ever walk again. But I knew. I *absolutely knew*. She was alive and suddenly I KNEW that what I'd experienced during those three days was real.

I sat up and told my parents, "She *will* walk again." They didn't understand and I started to explain, started to tell them what I'd seen and heard inside the mountain, but then I remembered that I'd been told to come alone and I didn't want to divulge information I wasn't supposed to divulge. Before I told my parents the story, I wanted to know that they would not be in any danger.

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Kai did walk again. Over the next two years, I spent almost all of my free time with her, first just keeping her company, keeping her entertained, reading to her, and helping her with schoolwork. Kaiya, her parents, and I all helped with physical therapy. I dedicated myself to helping her, not so much out of guilt but out of gratitude, *and* because I told my angel I would do anything to help her.

There were times I felt as if things weren't progressing the way they should and so I would go into a deep prayer and meditation. Then something would change. Some new bit of information or therapy would come, through the physical therapist, or a new acquaintance, or I would stumble over something at the library, or I'd even dream something or just have an idea pop into my head.

Kai walking didn't come as a sudden miracle. I had to accept that sometimes miracles take a bit of
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work. The messenger—the one I thought of as my angel—had told me that it would be a difficult task. Still, just the fact that she was alive was a very real miracle. Her recovery came slowly, but less than two years later, on her fourteenth birthday, she walked across a room unassisted. Kai would grow up to become a physical therapist herself, a personal trainer, a wife and a mother.

I have always acknowledged that this story is hard to believe. Over the course of my life, I told only a handful of people about what happened that strange time in December. It became known as "the miracle of the cave," by my family. More recently, however, I have spoken about it often. Sometimes my recollection of the event is crystal clear, and other times, I have a hard time believing it myself. However, Kai's recovery is always a reminder.

Can miracles like this really happen? Are there really transcendent beings, or guardian angels, or eternal family members, or whatever you want to call them, watching over us, helping us at crucial times in our lives? It sounds far-fetched to people who have not quite awakened yet, but those who are beginning to awaken know that things like this really do happen. And I know that I'm not the only one. What happened to me changed the course of my life and has led me to become who I am today.

For those who are still lumbering through each day thinking that stories like these are only from unbalanced or demented people, I'll point out a few things. Take them or leave them, or just chew on them for a while.

Far more exists in this life than one can

experience with human senses. There are more things in this world that we cannot see with our human eyes than we* can *see. The educated have no problem believing, for example, in ultraviolet rays, gases, electricity, gravity, and, of course, sound. They cannot see these things, yet there is evidence that all these things exist. If we but open our minds a tiny bit, we will admit that there is evidence of much more than these things. The point is not that these things are the same, but that something need not be visible to be real.

Nothing is as it seems. If one can believe in visions, prophets, and angels coming to Earth in days of old, then know that this is still happening.

We all have eternal families. We are not alone. Our Creator is very much aware of us. We are His children, and each and every one of us is important to Him. Our God is an awesome God.

All this is why I became a teacher.

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Titus 2:7-8

"Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us."

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I am God..."

Chapter Three

A Whole New World

I worked with my cousin for two years before she walked again. I would stay on the island only two more years after that. I thought I would die when my father made the decision to move our family to California. I thought my life was over. I thought I could not survive away from all I knew and especially away from the sacred place where I'd discovered so many truths. Obviously, I was wrong.

During the two years I worked with my cousin, I stayed absolutely focused on the goal: Kai would walk again. By focusing on one goal, I discovered it was easier, or more like automatic, to give the other parts of my life similar attention. From that point on, my grades never sank below an "A." Chores at home were completed quickly and efficiently each day. Even my bedroom was neat and tidy, which almost seemed to trouble my mother. I believe she thought I was sick or possessed. I tried to keep my body healthy by eating clean foods. I stopped eating sweets. I studied God's Word often. I prayed often. As a matter of fact, I lived in an almost constant state of prayer. And I meditated often, my way of calming my mind so that I could hear God's answers.

One of the main ways I seemed to soar was in my father's martial arts classes, which he'd begun

teaching when I was only a toddler. He did this to help earn extra money to make improvements on the farm.

My father, though half white, was also of Chinese-Hawaiian descent. With that mixture of Chinese and Hawaiian, he taught a combination of Chinese Wing Chun and Hawaiian Lua. One year after Kai's fall, I was a black belt in Lua, and had reached Master level in Wing Chun. I did not come by that easily because my father was our instructor.

He was much harder on me than on any of his other students. I'm not resentful of that. I am grateful.

By the time I was twelve, I was teaching classes for my father. I thought I would receive much verbal abuse—in the form of teasing—from my cousins about that, but instead I was surprised by their support and, actually, their show of respect. Bolstered by that, I worked hard to make sure I didn't let anyone down.

One day, during the course of a demonstration, I put my father on his back. He was surprised. I was even more surprised. I remember him standing up before me and looking me over as if searching for something. I apologized to him, and his answer registered deeply with me and stayed with me for the rest of my life.

He placed his hands on my shoulders and said, "Do not ever apologize for being the very best you can be."

From that point on, he pitted me against every sparring partner he could rustle up, older boys, then men, then men of other martial arts styles. When a third-degree Lua master had a difficult time with me, my father began thinking of taking me to California.

He believed there was nothing more that he or anyone else on the island could teach me. He thought I needed greater challenges, both in the martial arts and in school. However, I had no inkling he was thinking along these lines when he flew to the mainland one spring right before my fourteenth birthday and stayed for an entire month. My mother and uncles were not very forthcoming as to what business my father was tending to, other than it was a great surprise. My mind played all kinds of games with me, imagining the amazing things he would return with, like maybe—even though I was not quite fourteen—a car!

My dreams would be crushed. When he returned, my father gathered our entire extended family around him and announced that our family would be moving to a suburb of Los Angeles. I can smile about it now, though I also can very clearly remember how I felt. Shocked. Sick. Dizzy. Completely bewildered. How could this be? I needed to stay on the island where I felt safe, where I felt close to whatever or whoever had brought my cousin and me back to life. For that matter, I needed to stay by her—by Kai—and I needed my cousins, especially Kana who was my dearest ally and friend. How could my father even think that I would be happy about him taking me away from all I knew? Needless to say, I was not being very grateful.

I allowed anger to cloud my judgment. Notice that I say 'allowed.' I point this out to show that everything is a choice. I didn't become angry; I chose to allow myself to be angry.

I could have chosen to stay calm and consider my father's reasons for his decision. Instead, I stormed to my room, threw myself onto the bed and stewed.

My mind calmed, but only enough to have me leap into action. I climbed out of my window and started toward the falls. I lost track of time. It seemed that only seconds later I was making my way over the first waterfall and on my way to the second. Over the past few years I'd been back to the second fall many times. Alone. Nothing happened. No hole opened up and swallowed me. I usually wound up sitting and praying and meditating in the small cave at the middle landing of the second fall. That day, though, I circled around the second fall to the valley below where I'd been found. The man, my angel, whose name I did not know, had said there was a sacred place nearby, and I wanted to be as close as possible to that place.

That day, I was gone a long, time sitting in that valley, meditating and calling out with my mind. Eventually, my father arrived. He came to me quietly, sat next to me, folded himself into a full lotus and sank into his own meditation. This touched me deeply. I had not been very respectful to him when he'd sprung his surprise, yet as I sat there beside him, this strong, powerful man, I felt only his love emanating. It flowed forth from him to me, enveloped me, and tears formed in my eyes and fell

upon my cheeks. I reached out and touched his knee, and he placed his hand upon mine.

I opened my eyes and looked at him.

"Tell me," he said. "It's time."

So I did. I told him everything. I thought maybe he'd think I was stark raving mad, yet he seemed to accept everything I said at face value, nodding his head and encouraging me to go on with my tale.

The only portion I didn't tell him was about the dark forces that may be working against me, for fear I might be endangering him. When I finished, he sat thinking for several minutes and then he nodded his head. He said there was something he must now tell me. He'd had a dream. These are the words he spoke:

"In my dream you were in a cage. At first I thought it was just made of wood, but as I looked closer I could see that the cage top and bottom were made of earth and rocks and covered with grass and even fruit trees, and the cage bars were trees, vines and flowers. I decided that the dream was easily enough deciphered. After all, you'd been trapped in a hole somewhere on the island and held captive for days. The cage represented this event, or so I thought.

"That day, though, when I realized you had far surpassed anything I could teach you, it came to me that you are still being held by the island. The island is your cage, keeping you from progressing further. I meditated and prayed on the matter. Each time, I felt more and more strongly that your path lies in a larger, more populated area. I felt strongly that you are a bright light in this world, and as ominous as it

may seem, I also seemed to get the message that there is a darkness working to put out that light."

Now he really had my attention, for I hadn't mentioned the darkness to him.

"You must get stronger and brighter in order to overcome this darkness, and the only way for you to do that is to leave the island. I have a friend, Master Wong, who lives in California. He will take you on as a student and me on as an instructor. I will help him to run his three martial arts schools. We will live modestly, but we will have what we need."

I was overcome. My father and mother loved the island and the farm and the land and the waters as much as I did, or more. They would be giving up their lifestyle—really, their everything—to help me. They would do this for me because my father was enlightened and wanted me to fulfill my destiny. No, not destiny, for that implies I have no choice. It was a path I had *chosen* and he wanted me to be able to walk it. And I—I had acted like a badly behaved, ungrateful, spoiled child. I was consumed with remorse and shame, but my father forgave me readily. He told me:

"***People make many mistakes as they mature, and making them is certainly no problem. It's part of learning. The problem lies in not learning from our mistakes."***

He also said:

"It is possible that we will make the same

mistake more than once because sometimes learning takes repetition, and therefore we should not become discouraged."

Then, he said I could make reparation for leaving the house and making my mother worry by giving my all to whatever came my way in the future.

Of course, I immediately assured him that I would do just that. I would give my all gladly. Still, I told him I hated that he and my mother would be giving up their farm life. However, my father quickly assured me that the farm would still be around when they came back in four years, for they intended to return as soon as I graduated from high school and was on my way to college. Four years. Four years was all the time I had left in that particular dynamic—them as my parents and me as their child. That season would end. In four years I would be eighteen and a high school graduate. More importantly, in four years I had to learn not to be a selfish teenager and transform into an independent young man who was ready to take on the world, or at least, to take on the college scene.

This conversation with my father happened in the spring. Two months later, in June, I celebrated my fourteenth birthday in our new home in Palos Verdes Estates, California, a modest but decent community. The farewell from our family had been rich with hugs and tears. Kana had been quiet and sad. Kai had been teary yet encouraging. I walked the island one last time before we left. In my sacred valley, which had become my sanctuary, I prayed and asked for guidance, having faith that God heard my prayer. I asked God to send His angels to be with

the cousins I loved so dearly, to keep them safe and help them find their own paths. I then walked to the beach, waded out into the water, and turned my head eastward.

Our new home was in a crowded neighborhood by my standards, yet we were only a few miles from the ocean, which gave me great comfort. Whenever I could, I would make my way down to the beach to pray and meditate, to work on forms, and to immerse myself in the sea.

All matter is made of energy—particles of energy. The sea's energy is powerful, and when I touched my toe into that water on that beach in California, I could feel then—and can still feel now—the connection to my little island, a dot in the middle of the Pacific. In like manner, we are all connected to each other, to the planet we live on, and to God.

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2 Corinthians 5:7

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Chapter Four

Stumbling Down the Correct Path

Many times I have said—and have heard others say—that they are grateful for every single thing that has occurred in their lives, for those things have made them the people they are today. This, of course, is a good thing.

Usually, people feel this way when they have done what my father once requested of me, which was to learn from my mistakes. I've tried very hard to learn from my mistakes, though there have been times when I made the mistake several times before I finally 'got it.' Nonetheless, I continue to make mistakes regularly. I am human. I cannot live perfectly to obtain salvation. This could be a hopeless situation if not for the sacrifice and saving grace of Jesus.

Yet, His grace is not a license to succumb to my human frailties. My angel told me the more faithfully and honorably I live, the more I will hear God's voice, because I will be in sync with Him. Jesus wants us to strive to be good and holy and pure. And therefore, I do. Hopefully, every time I mess up I will continue to learn a little more so that I may continue evolving. Evolving into what? Into a better person, a person of light, strength, honor, integrity, kindness, love, and compassion.

What is amazing to me is that though I persist in falling down, somehow, with all of my imperfections, I keep stumbling down the correct path. Truly, God is amazing. The mistakes I've made have brought me much regret, and yet, they have led me to have wonderful blessings in my life too. I'm going to tell you a story of how, once again, choosing anger brought much regret, yet, led me to even greater things. There is a yin and yang, good and evil, dark and light in our earthly lives.

In the first line of this chapter, I stated people are "grateful for every single thing that has occurred in their lives, for those things have made them the people they are today." It's my use of the word "occurred" that gives me pause. I prefer to acknowledge that life is a series of choices. Things don't simply occur or just happen. Now, it may *occur* that someone else's choice affects me. Still, how I choose to handle that occurrence is what's important. Though I do not excuse the actions of the antagonist in the story I'm about to tell, I can only hold myself accountable for the choices I made.

The first summer after my family's move to California was spent training daily with Master Wong, a man for whom I have great love and respect. I gave my all, as my father had requested, and progressed rapidly. Master Wong pushed me hard. I don't give up easily on anything, and it never crossed my mind to say the words, "I can't," when he asked me to do twenty more pushups or to move faster. I did my best to give him whatever he asked of me and it paid off. I became stronger, faster, more skilled. My movements began to come to me automatically rather than requiring conscious thought.

I enrolled in the local high school and started there that August. Being the new kid, I was somewhat nervous. Yet, I kept my goals in my mind and God in my heart, and when I prayed I asked for protection from the dark forces. Many times I felt the warmth of the light of Christ moving through me and protecting me and I knew it was gonna be okay, and for the most part it was.

At my new high school, I was considered reserved, quiet, even brainy, which I thought was laughable. My cousins, too, would think that comical. Back on the island I was outgoing and popular, and I played sports. In Palos Verdes Estates, I kept my mouth shut and concentrated on schoolwork. I had no time for sports because of my training schedule with Master Wong. I set the intention in my mind and prayed and asked God that I would attract good friends to myself, and I did. I had friends of all races and nationalities, though the majority were of Asian descent.

Now don't worry, this is not about to turn into another bad remake of *The Karate Kid*. I was not picked on at school. I never saw myself as a victim. Though I was quiet, I had an air of confidence about me and I didn't act like a victim. I didn't lower my head. I gave direct eye contact. I smiled. I listened. Very important, this listening...but that is another lesson.

Every morning I prayed to God the Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, for "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Sometimes I also reached out to the angel who visited me, though I didn't know his name, and sometimes to my eternal family members, just to say, "Hello," just to acknowledge their presence. It seemed important to

acknowledge them, thereby acknowledging the realness of what happened to me that day in the cave. Acknowledging them always reminded me of the most important thing that the angel said, which was, "God is real. His Son is real. Truly real." Remembering this helped me to feel a real connection. I also envisioned myself wearing the full armor of God, surrounded with a shield of His light, and this seemed to keep me in a good place as I prayed. I used that shield of light when not in prayer, too, when I felt the need for instant connection or felt in a precarious situation.

The "precarious situations" are the basis of what I'm getting to. Though I employed prayer and light throughout my day, it didn't always keep me from having to step in a time or two and defuse certain "situations" among friends and other students. Usually all it took was for me to say something funny to lighten things up.

There are many stereotypes attached to the martial arts world. People believe that martial artists are prone to violence and always looking for a fight. In actuality, it's just the opposite—for those who are true to their art. Yes, there are those disciplines that teach aggressiveness. That was definitely not my art, nor my father's, nor Master Wong's.

Martial arts is much more than throwing a punch or delivering a kick. It's the complete control and mastery over body, mind, and spirit.

Master Wong and my father taught their students to do everything they could to avoid a fight.

Not out of fear, but because physical violence should always be a last resort and should only be used to protect one's life or to protect the innocent.

I have done my best to stay true to my art. I have had some slips. My senior year in high school was one of those slips. By that time I'd become confident and powerful. I was already teaching classes in Master Wong's studios. The young students I trained seemed to excel more than others, and it was becoming evident that I had a knack for connecting with students. In my own training I dominated my sparring partners. Yet, I had never actually been in a real fight. Unfortunately, my senior year, when I finally felt I had to fight, I believe I did not do so honorably.

That one slip caused me and those I love many years of heartache. And yet, that one slip also brought people into my life who would teach me many things about love and life and who would change me forever. That is part of what I mean by stumbling down the correct path.

What I did wrong was let my anger take over. For dramatic flair, I could say that I gave in to the dark side. Sounds silly, yet that is exactly what I did.

As stated earlier, I'd been able to defuse situations fairly easily up until my senior year. Unfortunately, there was this one kid, also a senior, who seemed to have built up quite a bit of resentment against the Asian students. At the time, I had no idea why he felt that way. Later, I would learn that it was because he and his younger brother were raised by their grandfather after the death of their parents, and this grandfather was a bitter veteran of World War II who'd been held by the

Japanese as a POW.

The man taught his two grandsons to hate. That is how racism and hatred continue. They are taught. No one is born with hatred in their hearts. Hatred and resentment are taught and nurtured and thus become a vicious cycle.

This cycle is perpetuated by claiming victimhood, feeding resentment, and inciting mob mentality. Sound familiar?

My entire high school career I'd pretty much flown under this guy's radar, I think partly because I looked more Native American than Asian. I thought this because I'd been asked several times which tribe I was from. I'd let my hair grow longer, so that too may have had something to do with appearing to be Native American in his eyes. Let me clear this up now. My father's paternal line can be traced back for generations among the Native Hawaiians and even branches into what are considered royal lines. My mother was a mix of white, Chinese, and Japanese. In Hawaii, my family is considered and honored as Native Hawaiians, regardless of the mixed bloodlines.

Though a person's race makes no difference to me, it seemed to be highly important to the young man, whom I will simply call X. I do this because there is no need to write or speak his name as I tell this story and bring that dark energy into what I am trying to teach here. Words are powerful and the speaking of a name is powerful, be it negative or positive. For example, there is power in the name of

Jesus.

X, like myself, had many friends of many different races and nationalities. The only ones he seemed to have a problem with were the Asian students. Though he had never targeted me, he *had* targeted several of my friends. A few times, when I saw X and his buddies circle around a friend of mine, I would merely call the friend's name and motion for him to come to me, and for some reason the circle would part and allow him to leave. I'm not sure why. More than likely, a blessing from above. I'm sure it wasn't because I was such an intimidating figure. I was an average size, at that time not quite the six feet I am now. X, however, was very large, 6 feet 5 inches tall and at least 220 pounds of muscle. He had blond hair and blue eyes, which belied the darkness inside. He had a girlfriend. Her name was Ann. I knew that because she had the same schedule as me and was in all of my classes. She was the opposite of her boyfriend. Small. Petite. Quiet. Black hair, blue eyes. I often wondered what she saw in him. I often wondered why she stayed with him when I would see him roughly force kisses on her. At that time I ventured to think she was a little afraid of him.

X's list of offenses and cruelties against my friends grew. He pushed one into a locker and bloodied his nose. He tripped another. He destroyed a friend's school project as he walked with it to class. All these things took place when I wasn't around. I couldn't be everywhere at once. It grated on me as I learned about each incident. I felt like I needed to do something.

There was a new kid in school, Jung Lee. He was a junior. He was Korean. He was a nice guy. He

was a catalyst. He was not afraid of X. One day, when X knocked Jung's books out of his arms, Jung expressed his opinion loudly and defiantly, and he gave X a warning. X did not take kindly to this, especially not in front of his many friends. That day, after school, X, with his gang as spectators, trapped Jung as he walked home. From what I heard the next day, Jung held his own for a minute. He was trained in Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art. Still, X was simply too big and too strong for the much smaller Jung. Jung was beaten severely and ended up in the ER with a broken arm and head trauma.

I remember thinking, if only I'd been there, I might have been able to defuse the situation or as a last resort, step in and protect Jung. Some friends and I went to visit Jung at his home. The sight of him—swollen, bruised and broken—made me sick and I became furious, enraged. I wanted revenge. Why had X not been arrested? Why had Jung's family not pressed charges? Of course, fear was involved. Fear of reprisal. Fear of even worse ostracism.

I made the decision on my own that I would have a word with X myself. I did not pray about this decision. I did not discuss this with my father or with Master Wong. I can look back now and know that I did not consult them because I thought they would give me counsel that I had no wish to follow. In other words, I made a choice to discard the counsel of two men for whom I had great respect and give in to the need to vent my anger. I also made the decision to leave God out of the equation, which was a huge mistake. It was a conscious decision. I chose to confront X, and I believe I actually hoped it would lead to a violent confrontation. I would learn later

that both Master Wong and my father would have supported my decision to speak with X. However, they would have gone about it a different way, privately and calmly, without anger or fear, to see whether I could come to understand his thinking. Had I done so, I might not have suffered such grave consequences. Who's to say? It was a path I chose and one I walked. I have lived and learned from my mistake. I have asked God for His forgiveness.

It so happened that I usually saw X in the lunchroom every day. I strode straight up to his group, some of whom I actually considered to be my friends too. X, his girlfriend Ann, and a few more guys and girls leaned against a far wall while the others stood with their backs to me as I approached. A friend of mine nodded in greeting and murmured my name.

The ones with their backs to me turned, but I stepped around them and moved toward X. I began reasonably enough. I asked X why he thought he could assault someone and suffer no consequences. I told him I knew he was the one who had put Jung in the hospital. There were a few snickers, and that fueled my already simmering anger. I told him there would be retribution and that I'd better not hear that he hurt anyone else ever again. He stood up straight, moved close to me. This was supposed to be a form of intimidation. I was not intimidated.

One of our mutual friends spoke up and informed X that he should disengage, because I was a third-degree black belt. This seemed to intrigue X more than deter him, and so the scene was set. He'd hurt a friend of mine. If he dared touch one other person, I would deliver my retribution. You see, I didn't give him an out. I delivered this ultimatum in

front of his friends and girlfriend. If he backed down, he would lose face. I pushed him until he felt like he had no choice but to respond to my challenge in some way, either by planning to hurt another kid or by challenging me directly. He chose the latter.

I remember seeing his girlfriend touch his arm in an effort to calm him down and he jerked his shoulder away, shoving her backward against the wall.

It seemed the entire lunchroom knew something was stirring and the crowd around us grew. I remember expecting a teacher or principal to break it up any second. That would have been a perfect out—for us both. However, it didn't happen, and the fight was on.

I remembered enough of my art to not want to be the one to throw the first punch. "Don't start a fight, but make sure you finish it." X made a few crude remarks about me, about my family, and about all the Asian kids in the school. He was fueling my rage on purpose. I suppose he thought I would get so upset I would make a mistake, but I took every single word he said and inwardly vowed he would pay for it. Some kid urged X to just do it, and he took the advice and swung at me.

The fight ended quickly, probably in less than a minute. I made short work of him. He was untrained and unfit. With my very first blow he staggered. I didn't want him to get out of it too quickly, though, because I wanted to punish him for all he'd done to Jung and all he'd said. So, I gave him time to rise only to knock him down again, and then helped him up myself so I could do it again. It was completely one-sided. I even said things as I

toyed with him to embarrass him in front of his friends. Those words, full of darkness, may have been the straw that broke the camel's back, which in this case is a metaphor for X's mind. Just before faculty arrived, some of X's friends helped him up and dragged him away.

Sounds like a grand story, with a hero's ending, huh? Hardly. What I did would come back to haunt me time and time again. It would cause pain not only for me, but for the people I loved most in the world. So what is the moral to the story? ****Be a pacifist? Don't get involved in other people's problems? Bury my head or stand up and do the right thing?

As I'm sure you expect me to say, I strongly believe in standing up and doing the right thing. I am not a coward and will always face up to what has to be done. That is what a man does. Still, did I do what *had* to be done?

I had not been true to my art. I used physical violence out of anger and resentment. No one's life was in danger. I did it out of pride. My ego was involved. I was hurt over my friend's injuries, though even he and his family had not gone down the road I chose. Here is one moral to the story.

Revenge is a dark and dangerous road to take, much more so for the avenger than for the one upon whom revenge is aimed.

****I asked a few questions above. I will address them here. Firstly, pacifism, secondly, not getting involved in other people's problems, and thirdly, burying my head.

1. Pacifism

The belief that any violence is unacceptable and unjustifiable. Because I am a martial artist and yet believe in peace and harmony, many people have asked me how I can reconcile these two things and usually begin with questioning how I feel about pacifism, expecting me to berate the belief.

I would never berate someone's life path choice. To berate would mean I would have to judge them, and who am I to judge?

Life is a series of choices. We may not realize, though, that many chose the paths they follow before they were ever born into this human existence. It is given to some to choose the path of a pacifist just as it is given to some to choose the path of a warrior. I do not judge either. I love both.

The pacifist will find a peaceful means to end a confrontation or will accept annihilation. The true warrior's path is surprisingly similar. The warrior will find a peaceful means to end a confrontation. He, however, will rise up and challenge annihilation. He will suffer injuries to himself in order to protect and defend those who cannot or will not protect themselves.

It is a pacifist's right to practice peace, and it is a warrior's right to defend and protect that pacifist, both of these things without either passing judgment on the other.

It is a fine line the true warrior must walk. The moment he allows hatred or anger or revenge into his heart, he is defeated.

His goal is to be strong enough to be gentle, powerful enough to be kind, large enough to shield, wise enough to understand, disciplined enough to restrain, and open enough to love.

2. Don't get involved in others' problems

I always say, "Get involved." However, I always qualify that with "Never force your will, your religion, your morals, or your judgment on anyone."

It is not wrong to help someone with their problems. However, remember to focus on the solution instead of the problem.

Don't commiserate. That only adds energy to the problem. Instead, offer compassion and solutions.

It can never be wrong to help someone unless you do so for the wrong reason.

In the story I just told, my reason for getting involved was more to vent my own anger and frustration rather than a need to help Jung. This comes down to:

W*hatever choices you make, examine*

yourself—your ego, your heart—and then decide if your choice is honorable.

Be in prayer and then follow your instincts, your heart, your gut. If you feel inclined to help someone, then by all means help, whether it's giving money to a homeless man, baking cookies for a neighbor, volunteering at a kid's afterschool program, or traveling to another country to build a water purification system. Get involved.

3. Burying Your Head

Most people would believe that it is never good to bury your head, to turn a blind eye to the troubles in our world. I'm going to surprise you and say that sometimes, many times, that is the best decision you can make.

Sometimes people need to be allowed to find their own solutions to a problem, rather than always looking to others for help, a habit easily fallen into. We actually benefit from going through the stages of falling and rising back up and falling again. This makes us stronger and wiser.

In the previous paragraph, I was speaking of what is best for other people. However, there is a flip side to this coin.

Sometimes the best thing we can do for ourselves is to turn a blind eye to the troubles of the

world. Not because we don't care, but because we also care about ourselves and our own psyche. We can be of no real help to the world if our vibration is low, steeped in misery from focusing on the ills of the world. We need to keep our own cups full, our vibration high, full of love and positive energy, or we will have nothing left when it comes time to fill another's cup. We have to keep a higher perspective.

Sometimes the best thing we can do for the world at large is to *NOT* focus on their troubles.

Focusing on negative things gives energy to those things. Talking about them, preaching about them, and crying about them add to them. Thought forms are energy. Thought produces measurable neurological activity. This is science-based knowledge with measurable neurological energy. Giving energy to negative thought forms does not help. Focus instead on the solution.

To integrate this idea of focusing on the solution, you may wonder what I could have done differently in my quest to help Jung, instead of giving negative energy by focusing on X.

I could have volunteered to help Jung learn to defend himself better. I could have helped him understand X's problems, offered to speak to X for him in a calm, nonthreatening manner. I should have surrounded him with prayer and the light of Christ, and shielded him from any negativity. These things may or may not have helped him to avoid the

situation. Yet, even after Jung had been beaten, I still could have and should have focused on the positive by helping him to rise up, rehabilitate, and get strong.

As I said from the beginning, I am not perfect. I have never been perfect. In this event, I failed miserably as a warrior.

There are consequences to every single choice we make.

There certainly were severe consequences from my choice to demolish this opponent. I didn't realize the consequences of what I'd done until several years later when X came back into my life with his own revenge in mind. I'd broken him mercilessly and he nurtured his hatred for me for the rest of his life. He would wreak much havoc...

All because I chose to act in anger rather than honor.

However, what I learned was invaluable. Again, there is a yin and yang to everything. The good came quickly, while the bad showed up much later. What happened next would change my life for the better, and for that I will be eternally grateful.

✝✝✝

Proverbs 24:16

"For a just man falleth seven times,

and riseth up again..."

Chapter Five

Love Blooms and Replicates

Seconds after the fight in the lunchroom ended, everything was back to normal. Teachers came running to find a subdued group of teenagers milling around, eating their lunches, quiet talk interrupted by short bouts of laughter. Normal. I stood alone near the door, my eyes scanning the crowd for X to see where he'd gone, but neither he nor his friends were about.

Needing to clear my head, I slipped out the side door of the lunchroom to the senior park. As I stood, leaning against a tree, realizing how badly I'd handled everything, I felt the presence of someone. I sensed no danger, so I ignored whoever it was until I felt a small touch on my arm, and I turned to find Ann standing beside me.

Her blue eyes, fringed by the black lashes, were hypnotic and she smiled at me with such a sweet smile that I believe my heart stuttered for a moment. And then she did the most incredible thing. She apologized. She apologized to me for the actions of her boyfriend. I felt immediately contrite. This sweet spirit had been witness to my dishonorable actions and I felt shame and an immense need to make things right.

So I then apologized to her. I told her I was sorry she had to see the violence that had just taken

place. I told her I was wrong in what I did and that I wished I'd done things differently. Being polite, she tried to offer me a justification to excuse me by saying she didn't think there was any other way to get through to X. We stood there quietly for several moments, staring into each other's eyes and I couldn't help myself—I asked her a personal question. I asked her why she'd chosen X as her boyfriend.

She explained to me that he'd chosen her. That when this amazingly popular guy in school became interested in her back when they were juniors she was amazed and even honored. He'd seemed so nice and he'd seemed genuinely interested in her and she couldn't help herself, she was seduced by the instant popularity it afforded her. Only during her senior year had she begun to realize just what kind of person he was and that she didn't want to be associated with him.

I could find no fault in this simple, honest explanation. I understood. I asked her then why was she still with him. She lowered her head as if ashamed and admitted to me that she'd become afraid of him. He was volatile and she wasn't sure how he would handle her breaking up with him and she simply didn't know how to go about it without fear of reprisal. That, too, I understood.

She'd just confirmed my earlier speculation that she stayed with him out of fear. I'd been in six classes with this girl all year and never actually spoken to her until now, yet I felt close to her, like we'd shared something profound. Even more, I felt an overwhelming need to protect her, and so, out of the blue, I made her a promise. This one, however, having learned my lesson with Kai, I made solemnly

and with great focus.

I told her that if she wanted to be free of her boyfriend, it would be her decision, not his and not mine, but that if that was what she wanted, I could protect her. I would walk her to each class, I would accompany her to her locker or to lunch. I would walk her to her car after school or escort her home if needed. I would even teach her how to defend herself if she was interested in that type of thing.

This was not entirely a grand gesture. I was fulfilling her need, yes, but I was also fulfilling my own need to protect, something innate in me from the beginning, a strong desire that fueled me. Also, in complete honesty, I admit that I was attracted to this small, kind, beautiful girl and touched by her sweetness. There was clearly chemistry between us and the male in me was definitely drawn to her. She took me up on my offer.

Obviously, being in each other's company so much of each day, and with her looking to me for protection and feeling safe with me, and with me giving in to the need to protect her, we naturally became close. She became my first real love. So, this is one way in which the encounter I had with a bully in high school, though poorly executed, brought me something that would change my life, brought me love, and took me stumbling down a path that was meant to be.

Another matter that was "meant to be" happened a few days after the fight. It was Sunday and there was a knock on the door. My mother answered and I remember hearing her speak to whomever was at the door and invite them inside. She came to my room and announced that I had

visitors. I entered our living room and found two strangers—one a guy maybe my age and the other just a kid. I was a little wary.

They were of Asian descent and both bowed to me. I returned the gesture. Then the older one offered his hand and introduced himself. His name was Justin Lee. He was fifteen years old and a sophomore in another school. He and his younger brother, Jason, who was only six years old, were cousins of Jung. Though Justin didn't go to my high school, his family had told him what I'd done to defend his cousin's honor and he'd come to thank me.

I remember sighing, realizing that again, I would need to expose my mistake. I needed to set them straight about what I'd done and why, for it would be incredibly dishonest to accept praise for such a dishonorable action. So, I asked them to sit, and went to ask my mother if she would mind preparing some sort of refreshment for my guests, then hurried back in to face the music.

I told them the entire story, though it didn't do much to diminish my hero status in their eyes. They were more interested in my art—or, actually, it was Master Wong's art with a few of my own variations. We spoke for a very long time about my art, about my reasons for coming to California, and about their reasons for coming to visit me. They wanted me to teach them.

At first, I told them they could come to Master Wong's school, enroll, and a very fine teacher would teach them, but they insisted it was me they wanted to learn from. I did teach at Master Wong's school, but it was only the young children. Now, this guy,

close to my own age, was asking me to teach him. I felt humbled and my first instinct was to decline. Yet, there was also the voice that was always close by, my eternal family member who said, *Yes, this is exactly the correct path for me to take.* I promised the brothers I would seriously consider what they were asking of me, and they took their leave.

Once I closed the front door, I turned to find my father behind me, his eyes searching mine. He asked me if there was something I wanted to tell him and I realized he'd overheard some of the conversation I'd had with Justin. I sat down with my father and told him everything that had happened, told him of my frustration that I couldn't be everywhere at once to protect my friends, told him about my poor choice to fight X, told him about Ann, and told him the reason for Justin's visit.

He listened without interruption. He listened with kindness in his eyes. I think he was sad for a moment when I told him of the decision I'd made to fight. I remember thinking that my father was such a good man, that he was a good father, and that one day I hoped to be as good with my own children, but mostly I remember feeling bad that I had disappointed him. My father was never quick to anger. It seemed he realized that there were always two or more sides to every story and...

He waited to gather all information available before he acted. He taught me that this listening, this waiting, was a marvelous tool to use if I truly wanted to help someone.

It reminded me of what the man in the cave had said: listen completely, until I was sure I had received the entire message. My father also jovially let me know that...

Waiting to gather all the information will keep one from sticking one's foot in one's mouth.

We discussed alternative ways I could have handled the situation with X. I shouldn't have confronted him publicly. Still, I didn't have to bury my head. What would have been a good alternative would've been to speak to him privately, get into his head, try to understand his mind, figure out from where this violence emanated and then teach in small doses.

Be a light. Do not pass judgment. Be a light.

My father forgave me. He always forgave so easily. He told me he hoped I had learned from my experience and then he moved on. He didn't feel the need to drive home the error, for he understood that I knew very well what mistakes I had made. He did warn me, prophetically I might add, that the consequences for my actions may be far-reaching.

Then he said something peculiar. He told me I could indeed be everywhere at once. I laughed because I thought he was joking. However, he was not. I told him I can't very well clone myself and his answer was, "Can't you?"

He reminded me that I'd once told a man who appeared to me in a cavern deep inside the Earth that I wanted to dispel darkness and teach the world. He reminded me that this "teaching the world" was not just a whim, but a life path I'd chosen. He reminded me that in seven months' time I would be graduating from high school and that a vague goal of *"teach the world"* was not clear enough. *How* was I going to teach the world? *What* was I going to teach the world?

The man in the cave had said I should teach what I know. Well, I know martial arts. I know Wing Chun, I know Lua, I know Hapkido, I know taekwondo, I know kung fu, karate, and ninjutsu. I was extremely skilled with a knife, with the bo staff, with a variety of swords, with nunchukas and more.

My father told me that when I teach one other person the things that I know, there would be two of me. What about when I teach twenty? And then, what if those twenty each teach twenty? I could indeed clone myself and maybe all these trained warriors together could be a bright light for this world. However, he warned, I must be very careful and very specific in what I teach. Along with the martial arts skills, I must teach a way of life that encourages integrity, honor, love, kindness, and compassion, for the martial skills I possess could be a problem in the hands of a dark soul.

Though I cannot keep others from making dark choices—that is, choices that hurt other people—I can shine a light* so *bright that others will flock to that light and partake of it.

I became excited about this new idea. I felt a surge of energy run through my body. My mind raced with the possibilities. Master Wong had taught me a mixture of many different arts and I had ventured out to become skilled in still more on my own. I had already begun to develop my own style of martial arts. And so, it came to be that I began to teach my new friend Justin and his little brother Jason in my own backyard, two days a week. This was a very formative time for me, for my art, and for a friendship forged in loyalty and honor. To this day, Justin and Jason Lee have stood by my side through thick and thin in love and dedication. They are true friends and I strive to be equal to their honor.

During the rest of my senior year, my days were full of teaching and learning. My evenings were full of long conversations with Ann, along with other expressions of a blossoming love. Luckily, my new best friend Justin and my best girl were also great friends. My little backyard school grew. By spring, I had close to thirty students.

Soon I would graduate and start college, which meant my mother and father would sell the house we lived in and return to Hawaii. I'd had a difficult time deciding which college to attend. I knew I wanted two very different degrees. I wanted a business degree so that I would understand how to run a successful martial arts studio. However, I also wanted a degree in psychology. That stemmed from my father's idea that I should have tried to understand X's frame of mind, understand why he thought like he did. With a psychology degree, I could better understand how our minds and psyches work—not just an enemy's mind, but my students' minds and how best to help them.

I'd come to realize something important. Our minds seem to be fragile. It seems that just one negative occurrence in someone's life can scar them forever. I wanted to fix that. I would eventually learn that...

People identify with victimhood. We tend to grab a victim label and live that identity. We actually nurture our own scars.

I've spent most of my life helping my students to let go of being a victim. *We may be victimized by another's actions, but we remain victims only if we allow that wound to become our identity.*

We are only victims if we allow ourselves to be, meaning, we do not have to remain victims.

It would be hard work going after both degrees. I earned a few academic scholarships, took out student loans, and applied for grants. I had also saved money I'd earned from teaching in my backyard. Though I'd never asked for payment, the very first week Justin had handed me two twenty-dollar bills. Of course I declined, but he insisted my time was worth something. He and Jason each paid me twenty dollars a week. As the class grew to thirty students, incredibly, I was raking in roughly six hundred dollars a week. Back then, that amount of weekly income was unheard of for someone my age. My students never complained. They reminded me that I had worked hard, trained hard for years to be

capable of teaching them, and that my knowledge was worth much more than what they paid.

I vowed to be worthy of their ideals. As my father had advised and Master Wong had echoed, I not only taught them fighting skills, I taught them about living nobly and cleanly, about honor, and about protecting the innocents of the world. Though I never preached, I let them know my belief in God. I let them know that I believe Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father. I let them know that I pray and then quiet my mind so that I can hear God's answers. I wanted them to know that He does indeed answer.

Notwithstanding, as graduation drew near, my parents would be selling our home and returning to Hawaii. I would be moving into off-campus housing, and there would be no backyard for me to continue teaching. I went to Master Wong to ask if I could possibly use one of his studios, even rent it from him so that I could continue teaching my friends. His answer shocked me at first, though later I would understand his wisdom.

He pushed me out of the nest. He refused my use of his studios. Like a mother bird, he decided it was time for me to leave the comforts of the nest and fly. I can thankfully say I was not disrespectful to him like I had been to my father four years earlier. I'd learned from that mistake. I merely nodded my head, offered Master Wong my gratitude, and went to pray and meditate on the matter.

I asked for guidance and then used meditation to clear my mind so that I could clearly hear the answer. It came to me. It came to me in a rush of love and excitement. I knew it was God speaking to

me. I knew that it was indeed time for me to fly. I would go to school and work hard and learn. I would find a place, a garage, an old, run-down building, somewhere to teach my students. I would decide once and for all which style I would teach; I would make a business plan; I would get a business loan; and I would do one more giant thing. I would ask Ann to marry me.

Yes, we were young, and indeed I had quite a few things already on my plate. Still, I could not imagine being away from Ann. We'd been together almost every day since the day I fought X. She'd broken up with him over the phone instead of in person because it seemed a safer thing to do. He'd tried to get to her a few times at school, but I was always nearby and he knew it. He wrote her notes and letters, trying to win her back, and we noticed him following us a few times, but we'd never had an encounter with him. We'd grown close, we'd fallen in love, and I didn't want to go away to college and leave her. She lived alone with her father in an upper-middle-class home. Her mother had died from complications while giving birth to Ann. I couldn't leave her and so I proposed.

With all of these things going on at once, it could have been a daunting undertaking, but I was too excited, too filled with amazing positive energy to feel anything but happy.

My parents sold the house and departed for Hawaii. As a graduation gift, they gave me a large portion of the profit from the sale of the house to help remodel my first studio. As a wedding gift, they brought Ann, her father, a few of our friends, and me back to Hawaii for a lovely wedding. My cousins fell in love with Ann, too. Once married, we moved into

off-campus housing at USC. My students brought in more students through word of mouth. I went to school full time, taught full time, and loved Ann full time. It was an amazing journey. There was a lot to do and sometimes I think I taught in my sleep, but I gave it my all, especially when I learned the greatest news in the world. Ann was pregnant!

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2 Timothy 2:2

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Chapter Six

Heaven Sent

Love. Pure love. That was what was growing inside of my wife's body. Every time I looked at her, my heart leapt with joy, a kind of joy that I simply cannot describe. I could feel her love for our child. I could feel the love of the tiny life growing inside of her. It seemed she glowed with a light from heaven. Her body vibrated with joy and excitement, and so did mine. I tried to take in each moment—remember it and revel in it—from the first small swell of her abdomen as her body made room for the child growing inside, to the first flutter of movement. I pondered this phenomenon for some time.

Isn't it curious how amazed we all are at that first flutter, that first time we feel the baby move, as if up until that moment, though we knew the baby was there, we didn't really believe there was a real person growing inside? The doctor told us it was so. My wife's body told us it was so, yet we were not able to quite integrate that knowledge until we actually felt the proof of that reality through the physical sense of touch. I realized that was the way of humans in many things.

Having knowledge of something is only one step toward evolution. Taking that knowledge and

integrating it into our lives to a point where it actually changes our perception of things is the next level, then acting on that perception to better ourselves or the world around us is a true path.

Take God as an example.

We may believe in God, see abundant evidence in our lives that He exists from a miracle of healing to the return of spring, yet, if He were to appear to us, or send a messenger to appear to us, however that works, wouldn't we be amazed? Yes, we would, for though we believe He exists, we as humans have not really integrated that into our physical world. I would venture to say that not only would we be amazed, we may refuse to believe that we are seeing what we are seeing.

I have been blessed to have actually seen, heard, and felt in physical form, proof of life far beyond what we know here on this Earth. Not just proof of spirits that once inhabited human bodies, but of a system of life that involves eternal families, evolution and the actual growing of our eternal selves. Increasing. Increasing in knowledge and in more ways still. When we have been resurrected and live with our heavenly family, we will not be idle. We will continue to work at things, to learn, to grow, to create, to increase. As stated earlier in this book, the Universe is always expanding.

With all that I've been blessed to know, with all that I've learned, I was still absolutely amazed at the fluttering proof of life I could feel as I placed my hand on my wife's taut abdomen.

As I prayed and meditated about this realization, it came to me how utterly important that tiny body was as it grew and changed, which of

course translates to the utter importance of our own physical bodies.

Our bodies are essential, crucial, and significant because they are the point in this world where the spiritual meets the physical. They are the point where spirit and physicality meet and intertwine—the origin of true life in this world. My spirit is focused into my physical body just as the spirit of my child will be focused into the tiny body growing inside Ann.

This, to me—this birth of a baby, this bringing of new life, is a most amazing event, a union of spirit to physicality, a joyous event and definitely something that brings both reverence and celebration. It is sacred.

How we are able to focus our bright, free spirits into this physical body I don't know. I can't remember. However, I do know that we do it willingly and with a plan in place, that plan being something that will either serve others or will help us to learn and evolve, or both.

How important, then, is it to take care of our physical bodies? How important that we feed and nourish, strengthen and fortify, tone, stretch, and purify our physical bodies? If we do this, how much more freely might our spirits be able to soar and make that connection with God? As you may have heard it said many times, "My body is a temple." These days people say this almost as a source of humor. Nevertheless, our bodies truly are temples for our spirits.

And now, I have to go back and place a caveat on what I just said. We cannot get so involved in our physical bodies that they take precedence over the spiritual. Our bodies are important, but they are mortal. Though we need to take care of what God has given us, what happens to our physical bodies is not as important as what happens to us spiritually, which is what is in our minds, in our thoughts, in our "I-ness."

How do we know we have integrated this information into our minds, into our lives where it changes our perception and sets us on a certain path? We know when we start to love, appreciate, and take care of our own bodies.

It doesn't matter if we start this when we are young or if we have used and abused our bodies and suddenly want to change.

Change is good. It is never too late to make changes. It is never too late for anything.

From the moment we decide we would like to hone the body into a tool to reconnect with God, it has begun.

Every single thing that exists began with a single thought. God created the world beginning with a thought, before He spoke the Word.

Many people are interested in what I've taught my students, the literal instructions I give them to

begin to hone their bodies and minds when they first come to my school. I give my students a handbook of some of the disciplines I expect. Because so many people have asked me what is in that handbook, I made it available as a book: *The Kino Martial Arts Student Manual: A Guide for Everyday Living With Purpose*. It is a short, concise list of instructions that I give to all my students when they begin training with me. To make it available to the public I had to add a few things, like a title and explanations as to why I ask certain things of my students, because neither the public nor the readers of this book get the extreme pleasure of hearing my explanations in class.

I believe in stretching my body and mind as much as possible. Realizing, assimilating, and integrating the connection between spirit and body during the course of Ann's pregnancy gave me new incentive to not only bring my own body and mind to new heights, but to help my students do the same. More importantly, at that time, to help Ann do the same.

There were so many things sweet Ann had to endure. Morning sickness, backaches, swollen ankles, and simply the changing shape of her body. It seemed to me like a great sacrifice she was making, and I was so very grateful to her. Along with all the other literature about having a baby, I decided I would study and learn about the changes a woman's body undergoes during pregnancy.

I bow to them, these women warriors, who do this amazing thing, who unite with God to reproduce life. Procreation—what an amazing process.

I wanted to be at my wife's side at all times, helping her, taking care of her, but I had school to attend and I had classes to teach in order to keep a roof over our heads. Ann, though, did not complain about all the hours I was gone and, fortunately, from her fifth month onward, she wasn't alone. My mother came to stay with us. Ann needed a mother, and my sweet mother was more than willing to step in.

I haven't mentioned much about my mother yet. I saved it for this time, this part of my story where I discuss the sacredness of motherhood, for it was during this time that I truly began to appreciate her. My mother was a quiet person, most of the time, unless something got her riled. We all tried to keep that from happening.

I didn't understand how this amazing woman who is my mother could be so quiet, so kind, so sweet and so strong at the same time. She worked hard on our farm. She could do anything, take care of any chore just as well as the men. Yet, when I was sick she was the most gentle angel on Earth. Her sweet spirit carried such light, I thought she could literally heal me with a touch of her hand to my head.

It was this same sweetness and compassion that she brought to Ann during her difficult time. I am ever so grateful that I had my mother there, that she was the type of mother I could turn to, that no matter what, I'd known she would be there for me, for Ann, and for our child. Although she was there for Ann, she did not seek to take away any special moments from her. How my mother could be such a strong presence and at the same time be so non-intrusive is beyond me. I see it as an art form. Though my

mother has now passed on to a world I don't remember, I know she is watching over me as I write these words and I know she knows how grateful I am to her for taking such loving care of me.

The baby was due to be born in the spring. About six weeks before the birth, Ann and I took a short walk from our apartment down to the corner store. We splurged and bought ice cream sandwiches and had a seat out on the bus stop bench. We sat quietly together, eating and staring up at the sky as it began to darken and the stars blinked on one by one. We talked about the baby to come and wondered if it would be a boy or girl. Back during those times, ultrasounds were only performed if there was some problem anticipated, and therefore couples often didn't know the sex of their child until it came into the world.

As we sat there eating and talking, what appeared to be a shooting star flashed brightly above our heads. Strangely, it didn't streak horizontally across the sky like shooting stars usually do. It came straight down right in front of us, vertically, as if it simply fell from the sky. Ann was very excited about this and of course she talked about it being a sign from heaven concerning our child.

I was inclined to agree because I felt a stirring in my heart, one I'd felt many times since my cave experience, one that usually meant I was about to receive a message. And I did. That night I had a prophetic dream. I dreamed someone held up a newborn baby in front of me. It was a boy, with a head full of thick black hair. However, there was a problem. The baby had a large dark bluish birthmark that covered almost his entire cheek. I was not one to judge others by their appearance. Still, as a new

father, I didn't want *my* child to have a blemish that would make life difficult for him.

I woke the next morning thinking about this and feeling a little ashamed that I was being shallow. The child in my dream was healthy and robust and I needed to focus on that. I prayed and found the peace I needed, accepting that whatever came our way, we would handle it together with love. Finally feeling peaceful about it, I told Ann of my dream. She had no problem with what I told her, for this was her child and she would love him and help him, no matter what problems might arise. Ah, my Ann, her heart was pure and my love for her grew daily.

And so it was that six weeks later, in the spring, Ann gave me a most precious gift—a son, Eric Kino Jr., whom we fondly called Ricky. It had been a long labor and difficult birth for Ann. After thirty hours, the doctor decided they would try the use of forceps before resorting to delivering the baby by cesarean. The forceps worked. However, they left a large bluish bruise on my son's cheek, and I realized that this was what I'd seen in my dream, a bruise and not a birthmark or disfigurement. It would fade, and indeed it did. This was an important lesson for me in interpreting signs and messages. I must...

Stay open-minded and never draw conclusions. Things can be interpreted many different ways.

I must not minimize the significance of the shooting star and a dream that actually came true. So many times we have miracles in our lives and we

treat them as inconsequential. We shrug them off as some strange experience, some coincidence, and push them aside. I have been guilty of this very thing. I finally, however, arrived at the place in my life where I fully came to understand that these types of things were amazing, wonderful, and a blessing.

These amazing things—as simple as a strange shooting star and a prophetic dream—were a gift, a touch on the shoulder, so to speak, to remind us that we are not alone, that there is much more to this world than we know, that there are things beyond the scope of our physical senses. They are a reminder that God is very much mindful of us.

These small things are a clear affirmation of something more, and if we are intellectually honest, we cannot merely chalk them up to coincidence. If we continue to take these small gifts for granted—the thought to turn right instead of left and avoid an accident, the inkling to call a loved one in their time of need—we will surely lose awareness of our connection. So be amazed. Be grateful. Glory in your connection to God. It IS a big deal. It IS indeed consequential.

Since my experience "beyond the waterfall" on the island of Kauai, I became more and more intuitive, or what some would even call psychic. Not that I could predict the future, or know what someone was about to say. Still, I found that I could sense things, a disturbance in the Force, so to speak. Sometimes I could sense a happy disturbance, like a "something good is about to happen" type of thing, and sometimes I would sense something negative

that I took as a warning. Sometimes I had dreams of things to come, like the one concerning Ricky's birth, and on a few occasions I'd have visions—quick flashes, a scene of some sort, sometimes almost too fast for me to be able to perceive what I'd seen.

This sense that I developed is one that every single person can develop. It comes through the connection to God, the most important concept that I am teaching in this book. This connection that aligns us with Divine energy makes us more aware of our own feelings and energy, as well as the energy around us. We become tuned in to a little bit of that higher frequency. It happens when we teach ourselves to listen, to let go of any judgments and simply observe, an ongoing lesson for me.

Ricky's birth was an extremely high-energy time for us. My extended family, including all of my cousins, came to visit. Justin Lee and most of my students threw a giant party. We were extremely grateful for the numerous gifts.

However, as family and friends converged on us with all of their well-intended advice on how best to raise a child, Ann and I began to feel uneasy. Many of these opinions of others were conflicting and contradictory. I tried to be humble and respectful. After all, I was quite young. I was only eighteen when little Ricky was born and turned nineteen the next month. What did I know? I tried to learn from those who were much older and therefore more experienced than I, yet, I felt troubled.

I thought deeply about what to teach my son. Did I want to take this blank slate and mold him into a replica of myself? Is that the reason for bringing a

child into this world, to make a little "me"? That could not be the reason. I knew that because I myself had chosen to come to the world with a specific plan to help others. What if my father had decided that was not to be my life? What if he'd decided that I was to remain on the island, stay to help on the farm, find an island girl, get married, and have kids to again help work the farm? What if he had insisted I become another version of him?

My father had been wise enough to understand that my path on this Earth would be one of my own choosing. I needed to at least be as wise as my father. I must not force my own opinions, my own lifestyle, maybe even my own spiritual beliefs on my child. That thought made me feel stressed, because I knew that God was real. I truly wanted to teach my son to think like me, to be like me. You can see that I was confused. There was a block and I needed more understanding.

So, of course, I prayed. I prayed hard. I began my prayer by giving gratitude for my son, for my wife, and for my life.

I asked for guidance and enlightenment, and then I meditated, which simply means I listened. If we can quiet the mind for only a short time, we will be amazed at what information will begin to flow through our human brain. God is waiting for us to quiet our mind chatter so that we can hear Him. He truly does answer prayers.

My meditations are nothing fancy, no fancy mantras or words are used. I concentrate on nothing

but my breathing. Of course, my mind wanders because I am merely human. As soon as I realize my mind has wandered, as it has many times, I simply bring it back to my breath. I concentrate on the feeling of the air as it rushes through my nostrils into my lungs and then changes direction and leaves my body. I do this at least twice a day, every day. I do it every time I'm trying to hear God's voice. Sometimes it only takes a mere fifteen to thirty seconds before I hear Him, or an idea rushes into my brain.

I focused on the question of how to best raise my son and on what to teach him. An entire week elapsed and I almost gave up. I began to believe that I'd lost my connection both to God and to the man in the cave, my eternal family member. I became frustrated. Emotional. Angry and then repentant for the anger. I forgot about the original question, which was, How do I let go and try not to push my own ideas onto my son?" I became more concerned with not feeling connected to my God. It was when I had the thought, *"I don't care what you have to tell me, just tell me something,"* that finally I received an answer.

When we let go of what we expect to hear and truly open our minds, that is when we allow our connection to God. Let go, and let God.

The knowledge I sought came to me in a rush, as if it had been blocked up by a dam and finally the dam released. Indeed, it had been blocked and it was I who had built the dam. Of course, the dam consisted of my insistence that the answer that came

to me was in compliance with what I thought God would say. I thought I was being open-minded. I thought they would tell me that either I must not teach my child the things I know, or I must indeed teach him everything I know. I thought I was ready for either answer. However, the answer was much different.

I had a vision. A scene rushed into my mind. My own earthly father and I conversed as we waited our turn to incarnate on this Earth. I knew of his life plan, and he knew of my life plan. We promised each other that we would do our best to follow the plans. I looked him in the eye and said solemnly, "I'm trusting you to take care of me." He nodded and hugged me and we parted.

Next a word sounded loudly in my brain. That word is "*stewardship.*" We as parents are stewards! We are being trusted by the spirits we bring into the world to do right by them, to take care of them, to keep them from harm, to teach them what we have learned so they too can fly, and then—to let them go. They are completely dependent on us to do that.

Think about it. A spirit has made the choice, and yes, a spirit must first choose to come to Earth, inherit a body and experience an Earthly existence. (So, when you hear someone complain, "I didn't ask to be born," you can tell them that indeed they did, they just don't remember.) What an amazing thing we choose, and for the parents, what a great responsibility! We are stewards.

Once these words sounded in my brain I saw

another scene. I saw myself with a young man who looked very much like me and a young woman. It was the young man who spoke. He said, "Okay, now...

"...I am trusting you to take care of me, to love me, to do your best by me. I will be completely dependent on you, so don't mess up!" He laughed. He seemed to be quite jovial. "Don't drop me. Don't forget to feed me. Don't forget to hug me. Answer my questions. Give me your attention. Teach me how to get along in this Earthly realm. Don't be angry with me when I mess up. Don't hurt me. Don't abuse me. I'm trusting you."

I laughed when he told me not to drop him, but I took the rest seriously. I hugged him and promised I would do all the things he asked. And then I said one more thing to him. I said, "I promise you that when you finally reach Earth, I will do my best to teach you everything I have learned, and then, I will give you your freedom of choice to walk your own path."

I opened my eyes. I can and should teach him *everything* I know, and then I must allow him to choose freely. It seemed so simple and clear. I rose from this prayer and meditation and vision and went to my son's bed, scooped him up and sat on the floor with him cradled in my arms. He opened his large brown eyes and stared at me. I felt as if he could see deep into my soul, and the connection was profound. I could almost remember the conversation we'd had in our pre-Earth existence and I nodded at him, tears flowing, and renewed the promise I'd made. And

then, he smiled!

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Life for my family and me seemed to be moving in hyperdrive. Things simply fell into place and we were ever grateful for our many blessings.

Ricky was a fast learner, almost as if he was in a hurry to get on top of mastering this thing called life. He walked by the time he was nine months old and as soon as he could walk, he began imitating my martial arts forms and my Tai Chi, which I'd added to my morning routine to have something my wife could do and enjoy with me.

By age two, Ricky's hand-eye coordination was already astonishing and I was trying very hard to be very objective. He was strong and, it seemed, in complete control of his young body. He was flipping and turning cartwheels and working on very intricate kicking patterns.

I had my business degree and was working on my doctorate in psychology. My martial arts classes had grown beyond the capacity of the one studio and so I branched out to have two more studios. Several of my original students were now black belts, a few second-degree black belts, and completely worthy of teaching. I was exceedingly specific in how and what they would teach, and my friend Justin, now a second-year law student, was very helpful in making up business plans, guidelines, credos, mottos, mission statements, as well as taking care of the legalities of the business.

Kino Martial Arts began to draw some attention. Two of the studios were in the greater Los Angeles area, and we attracted some Hollywood

stuntmen and martial arts choreographers. That was great for business.

The third studio was a little farther out, south, near Newport Beach. One of my original students had come all the way from there to study with me and was convinced that he could make a studio extremely prosperous in that area. He was right. It became my largest and one of my most profitable studios.

I began to make the studios a one-stop shop for fitness and well-being both physically and spiritually. A weight room and workout area, a spa area, a meditation room—everything I could think of that would help a person to achieve their goals. I mean, achieving their physical goals, their martial arts skills, their fitness goals, and even their spiritual goals. Ann decided to help by designing special uniforms, T-shirts and workout clothing that advertised our name, Kino Martial Arts, and promoted our motto, which was, "*Love is the Base*."

I still taught in the original studio and made visits to the other two. Between school, business and teaching, my time with my family became precious. They accompanied me whenever possible, especially when I traveled to visit the other studios. Ann was proud of what we'd accomplished so far and loved visiting the other studios. My students treated her and Ricky like royalty, though she said that it was me the students were excited about seeing. I admit, I felt a great deal of respect and love from the patrons of Kino Martial Arts and I returned that love.

Ann, Ricky, and I still lived in the little off-campus apartment we'd moved to when we were married. We'd begun to discuss the possibilities of

buying a home, maybe a place near a park, where Ann could take Ricky to play. We didn't want to stretch ourselves too thin, however, I wanted Ann to feel comfortable and happy. Though I was still in school, the business was doing well. We decided that if it were meant to be, it would be. We put it out there, through prayer and meditation, that if it were God's will, we would find a lovely home, one with space, one that would be good for Ricky, would have room for him to play, and maybe even enough room to invite our students to gatherings. We toyed with that idea a bit, with how much fun it would be to entertain our students in our home. And then, we let it go. We reminded ourselves just how happy we already were and how grateful we were for what we already have.

It was only a few months later that a couple who studied at the Newport Beach studio invited us to their home for dinner. They were well-to-do, to put it mildly, and their home, located farther south near Crystal Cove, was spectacular. They seemed extremely interested in our opinion of their home, which I thought was odd. By the end of the evening, I found out what it had all been about. They were leaving the country. They were headed to Chile with a missionary group to work on numerous projects, including water shortage and soil erosion. Their reason for telling us this and inviting us to their home was to ask if we would consider house-sitting while they were gone. It would be at least two years before they would come back. We would live rent-free in return for taking care of their home. How could we turn that down?

Ann was ecstatic. First, the house had the ocean for a backyard and the front drive was almost a mile

long and wound its way through a lush green lawn. A stone path led from the front drive through that lawn to a fountain surrounded by flowers. As far as Ann was concerned, it was a fantasy land. As far as I was concerned, it was a blessing, for as you know, the ocean and I have a close relationship. The thought of getting to wake in the morning and fall asleep at night to the sound of the surf was heaven.

The only drawback was the time I would have to put in driving to school and to the studios. Still, the time spent driving was worth every minute just to see Ann so giddy with joy.

Ann had never asked for anything. She supported me in all of my undertakings, and never asked anything for herself. I would have supported her in anything she wanted to do. However, she always insisted that being my wife and being Ricky's mother was the most fulfilling vocation or calling she could ever ask for. She took her job seriously. Nothing was too much for her. She prepared natural, organic homemade foods, did arts and crafts with Ricky, took him on learning excursions—she was the epitome of motherly love.

Everything was working out perfectly. So, how did this good fortune come about? Did God grant our plea for a home? Was this the "law of attraction" thing that everyone was talking about? Or was it, as many have accused me of, that I was just "born lucky" or "born under a golden star"? What if I told you it was none of these things and yet all of these things?

That is really the way it is with most everything we think is fact or truth in this world. Nothing is

really as it seems and there is truth mixed with myth everywhere we look.

I have learned much about asking God for *things* and about the law of attraction, and I will address what I have learned about these things in later chapters. For now, please know that we did not take these things for granted. We were grateful for every single thing, every blade of grass in that lush lawn, every wave that crashed on that shore, every meal, every smile, Ricky's laughter and even every speck of dust that we routinely cleaned from the corners of that giant home. So, very, grateful.

Once we moved into our new home Ann thrived more than ever. We were only there one year when the owners called and told us there had been a change of plans. They were coming home early, but not to move back in. They intended to pack or sell or give away all of their belongings. They said they'd seen much poverty in the world and they were changing their way of life and much of that had to do with me and my martial arts classes they'd attended. I didn't understand. I'd never spoken down to those who had much abundance or prosperity.

They explained that I'd taught that different people have different paths to walk and that prosperity could be a good position to be in because it offered power and freedom to help others. Well, they had plenty of power to do just that. They went off to help the people in Chile and fell in love with the simple, minimalist way of life. They said the prayer and meditation ritual they'd begun when they started my class had opened their eyes and their hearts and they didn't want to be tied down to their

home in California anymore. Instead, they wanted us to buy it from them at a reasonable price and with reasonable payments, for they knew I was still in school and just starting out in the business world and things were tight. Again, it was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Our family was very blessed to have found these people. Sometimes I look back and think, if that one student of mine had not traveled from the area to study with me, and then had he not progressed so far as to qualify to teach, and then had he not convinced me that I could open a studio in that affluent area so that these people could come and learn, then we would not have had the offer to live in an amazing home. It was a light to me, a flicker that I could see that maybe, just maybe what I was doing really was starting to make a difference in the world. Maybe I am bringing light. Maybe I am helping others to awaken and to find their joy and their special path. It's not that I wasn't confident in what I was doing, but seeing it actually change lives, including mine, it was extremely heartening and encouraging.

Once we had an empty home to work with, Ann's nesting instincts took over. Slowly over the next few years she furnished and decorated our home. We enjoyed that home, loved in that home, entertained our friends in that home, and watched our son grow and flourish.

By the time Ricky was five I was close to getting my PhD in psychology, I had a dozen more schools and business was thriving.

Ricky had begun to attract attention from some of the Hollywood types that came to learn from me.

One of them came to me to ask if Ricky might be available to appear in a martial arts movie.

Call me a doting father, but I felt the pride of a father whenever I watched Ricky perform in class. He was good. He was a natural and had at least as much an instinct for it as I did. His forms were perfect. His punches and kicks were powerful. Along with that, he was an appealing little boy with his longish hair and wide grin and bright eyes. At five years old, when he creased his brow into one of those Bruce Lee type frowns and gave his loud kiyai, well, people couldn't help but smile. I imagine this is why they wanted him in the movie, and why Ann and I gave our permission.

He would be playing a minor role, the little brother of the lead, though that would be the last time he played an insignificant role. As many of you know, Ricky became a star almost overnight, however, these memoirs are not about his career so I won't go into detail. I will say that our life became a balancing act between my schooling and Ricky's schooling, my teaching martial arts and Ricky's martial arts classes, Ricky's tournaments (which he'd become extremely interested in), my coaching him, and getting him to and from the film sets. It was Ann who had to do most of the chauffeuring and accompanying since I was still in school.

As I mentioned earlier, X, the bully from high school, had written Ann and me several threatening letters when we'd first graduated high school. Once Ann and I married and she became pregnant, the letters stopped. We'd mistakenly thought it was all over, he'd matured and moved on. However, the letters began again when Ricky was about two years of age. Now, with Ann having to travel long

distances carting Ricky around when I wasn't able to be with them, I made the decision to hire a bodyguard to accompany them. This lasted for approximately two years. Nothing ever happened.

By the time Ricky was seven I finally obtained my PhD and was able to be with my family and protect them myself. We did not live in fear, however, I did keep shields around my family, I prayed for the armor of God. I prayed for shields of the white light of Jesus Christ to protect us. I even asked God to help X to overcome his mental illness, because to me, he was indeed ill. We prayed for him, though we never told him that. He never knew on an Earthly level. It would be up to that part of him that was in touch with God, whether he accepted Jesus' healing light.

In other areas, we were being blessed with much abundance. My business was flourishing. I don't tell you this to boast. It's more a public expression of gratitude. It is also a guide to help others to achieve their heart's desires.

I'd opened several more studios, but that was nothing compared to how things were about to take off. One of my students came to me to ask me if I had ever thought about entering the MART. The MART is an acronym for Martial Arts Recruiting Tournament. Even way back then it was a large nationwide competition, and had been growing in popularity. It had begun to attract many big sponsors and had become a moneymaker. It was more a competition of the instructors than it was of the competitors themselves. An instructor was to take a student with very little experience, one who was only of a middle ranking belt in their art, and turn them into a black belt in one year's time.

The student's success depended on their talent, their ability to learn and their dedication—but mostly on their instructor. Of course, whoever won the MART, the school where they trained received a great deal of publicity and honor, which increased enrollment and gave their business a giant lift. The first MART was exactly a competition between two rival schools to prove who had the better program and the better instructors. Since then, the MART had grown into a nationwide competition and would air on all the sports channels. It was a big deal.

The competition took place every two years and if I wanted to be a part of it, I would have to register before the end of May as an instructor for the MART. I had until the end of June to find a student, and then, that student would be trained for one year, to compete the following June in the MART.

At first I thought I really didn't have time to do this. Yet, something in my gut told me it was something I needed to consider carefully. I discussed it with Ann and prayed and meditated on the matter. Several synchronistic manifestations came to me, within a few days. I stopped to help a woman change a tire on the side of the road. We chatted as I changed her tire and discovered she was anxious because she was late for a meeting with some executives who were discussing sponsorship of the MART.

A short time later I drove past a local Food Mart that was in the middle of being remodeled, and the only part showing on their sign was a giant "MART." The following day, I got held up at the copy and print department of a local office supply store because the woman in front of me was placing a large order for MART brochures. That night, as

Ann and I sat out on our balcony discussing these synchronicities I told her I think I would definitely consider entering the MART and at that moment a shooting star shot across the sky. Some people would think these are mere coincidences, but I had learned to not take these 'nods' for granted. They were indeed God trying to tell me something, trying to get my attention, trying to answer my prayers.

After that, I felt strongly that the MART was something I should do. My first student was a young teenage boy, and as you may know, I and that young man won the MART in that division the following year. That was the first of four MART championships I would win.

This first one, however, was one of the most important, for it catapulted Kino Martial Arts into the limelight. From that win forward we opened hundreds of studios across the country.

Listening and responding with action to the nudges God gives us is essential to having our desires fulfilled, our prayers answered.

This is one of the most important lessons I've learned. When pondering a plan of action, listen, observe everything, and then follow through and make sure you do everything with honor and integrity to have God on your side.

Participating in the MART was a big step for me, and an opportunity for which I am grateful. I now had thousands of students. As they trained and grew to adulthood, some wanted to initiate their own studios using their own names. Naturally, I

encouraged them and supported them. I gave them certifications that they were instructors in the highest regard at Kino Martial Arts. We were not in competition. I felt proud of them as they went out and searched for their niche. I wanted them to succeed much as a father would want his child to succeed and definitely as Master Wong and my father had wanted me to succeed.

There is no competition for abundance and prosperity. There is plenty for all in this Universe.

It would be easy for me to see students who branch off from *Kino Martial Arts* to do their own thing as a threat. Well, not easy for me, but easy for some business-minded folks.

They might think that these people are making money off my brand and my name. They are using my reputation to prosper. I think these thoughts are based in fear. I do not fear their competition; I welcome it. I do not hope for their demise, I wish them success and prosperity, for to do otherwise surrounds the whole business with darkness and negativity.

Kino Martial Arts was growing and prospering every day.

Why would I not want to share that prosperity with the world? The only answer would be greed.

I do not need or want all the money in the world. I only want to build a prosperous business that brings light and dispels darkness. How could my business do that if I forge it with greed and fear and wishing for others' misfortune? I believe in creating something of value and there is no harm in asking value for value. In other words, there is no harm in asking for payment for what I provide. It is valuable. However, I do not need to feel like I am in competition with any other similar business. There is plenty to go around. My only competition is with myself...

...to make myself and my schools better each day, to make them the best that I can make them.

My goal for my business is to learn and improve and to surround it with honesty, integrity and God's light.

Running my business in honesty, love, integrity and light attracts those same type of things to me. If I run my business in fear and darkness and suspicion, then I will most certainly attract those things to my business. I do not want to attract those things.

Not that I haven't made mistakes and done just that. Undoubtedly I have.

I've made huge mistakes. When I do, and figure out that I have, I've learned to forgive myself, make amends the best I can and start over.

Many people have asked me, how do I start over? The answer is simple: always, always go back to the basics—the very basic basics. Breathe, pray, meditate, stretch your body, open your mind, and listen. The answers will come.

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Psalm 127:3

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

Chapter Seven

Heaven Received

It seemed by the time I was twenty-seven, I had the world by the horns. I was married to the prettiest and sweetest girl on Earth. My nine-year-old son was bright and talented, making movies and winning martial arts competitions like a pro. My business was booming, growing, and expanding. Ann and I had droves of wonderful friends and we entertained both our friends and our family often in our beautiful, spacious home. Again, I don't say this to boast. I am expressing gratitude and encouraging you to know that you, too, can find your path and live an amazing life. I want to share my joy with you by helping you to find joy also.

Many of my original students were growing and prospering and spreading their light. Two of those friends were Justin Lee, now a brilliant attorney who would soon have his own practice, and his younger brother, Jason Lee, now fifteen and a prodigy as far as martial arts and the tournament circuits were concerned.

I mention these two friends because they have been with me since the beginning and from then until now, they have never left my side. Friends such as they are precious and valuable. They are the epitome of loyalty. They are also the epitome of strength and power, which was a blessing, because they would

help me through the next phase of my life—and I would indeed need their help.

Even with everything going our way, Ann had seemed a little down. I loved her so and wanted her to be happy. I began to wonder if I needed to be more attentive, more loving, or maybe a better listener. I tried to talk to her, tried to understand what was going on in her mind, but she insisted she was happy and fine.

Now this wasn't the first time we'd had discussions like this. Throughout our marriage, I had been very careful to not overshadow her. I encouraged her to do things she loved, to maybe go back to school or take some classes. I offered to take dance classes with her, which we did for a while, but she grew bored with it. She kept telling me that she only wanted to be a wife to me and mother to Ricky and be the best she could be. Don't get me wrong, that is a brilliant and difficult undertaking and I was glad that I could provide her with that opportunity. However, I didn't want her to feel trapped or overburdened or underappreciated.

One day, after a long walk on the beach, watching Ricky run ahead, Ann smiled and mentioned how she wished he had a sibling to play with. It was the first time she'd ever said anything like that, and my heart leapt. I'd thought many times how much I'd love to have another child, but I never said it to Ann because I knew she'd give that child to me whether she truly wanted to or not.

Now, she brought it up and I remember turning and smiling at her with such love and she smiled back at me, and suddenly, we couldn't wait to get back home, have dinner, put Ricky to bed, and begin

right away working on that goal. Wouldn't it be wonderful to bring another bundle of love and joy into the world? Wouldn't Ricky be so happy to have a brother or sister? The joy that appeared in Ann's eyes dispelled any worries I may have had.

We began immediately, trying to get pregnant, but it didn't happen. We began to look into natural ways to help fertilization and it still didn't happen. I went to a doctor to see if I was the problem, but that wasn't it. Finally, Ann, who hated doctors, went in to find if she had a problem. Initially the doctors said she was fine and we were probably just trying too hard. Then, the results from her Pap test came back. There was an irregularity and they wanted to do a biopsy. That was when the dreaded word reached out and grabbed us. Ann had cancer.

I won't go into all the details, not only because they are tedious, but because I don't want myself or you to focus on the problem. I have learned a hard lesson. Never focus on the problem. Always focus on the solution. This can go for anyone who has any problem, be it an illness, the loss of a loved one, a legal matter, a bad marriage, or even something as silly as 'a bad day.' Allow me to use the common 'bad day' scenario as an example.

A friend tells you they've had a heck of a bad day. You feel compelled to help them. You want to commiserate to let them know you understand, so you say, "Tell me all about it." One of the worst things you can do is to hear or tell a 'bad day' story over and over. Speaking it only adds energy to the problem which of course, attracts more bad days. You are focusing on what went wrong. You must never commiserate with someone over their bad day story. If you really want to do something to help

them, then help them to focus on the solution by talking about the solution, or, if there is no solution, focus on anything good or positive about the situation.

This doesn't mean that you can't be a good listener when someone needs to be heard, to vent, to explain. It's *how* you listen that counts. "Oh no, I'm so sorry, this is terrible, I feel so bad for you, I'm mad right along with you, I don't know how you can stand it, what a horrible situation." Those are some of the worst things we can say. Commiseration is not the answer and, it bears saying again, only gives energy to the problem. Instead, focus on the solution. "Wow, that's quite a story, so what are you going to do to get out of that situation?" "Man, I bet tomorrow will be a much better day." "I understand how you're feeling and what always helps me is...."

Now, all that is good, but when someone is gravely ill, you may feel like there is nothing positive to say. And there may not be, except maybe, "I will keep positive thoughts for you, I will keep you in my prayers, I will send you the healing light of Christ."

So, I will not go into detail on Ann's cancer. In a nutshell it was stage IV uterine cancer that had metastasized. I admit, fear took over immediately. I felt as if our family was falling through that mountain, bumping heads and chins and shins, getting broken and bruised and bloody and finally landing in a heap deep inside the Earth, smothering from lack of air, lack of water and lack of light.

Actually, fear did not take over. I *allowed* fear to take over. For all my wise lessons to my students, I lost myself. I felt completely unconnected to my

God and I floundered– for a time. I floundered much like I did when I was inside that mountain, wishing to be back in my home, wishing that I wouldn't stay there and die a long slow death, begging to be saved. I tried to pray over Ann. I tried to meditate, but my mind would not quiet. Weeks later, one night, I was in such turmoil that I couldn't sleep. I felt as if I would jump out of my skin and I rose and went out the back door and down to the beach. I looked out to sea and then up to the heavens and I yelled, "Why won't you hear me? What have I done wrong? Why won't you help us? Why is this happening? Father, please, what can I do?"

When I felt no inkling of an answer I turned and ran down the beach full speed, until I couldn't run anymore. When I stopped I realized I was miles away from home. I was exhausted, covered with sweat and I sank down onto the sand, lay flat on my back and I cried. I suppose the running, the sweating, and crying got it all out. I lay there on the sand staring up at the night sky and I asked the question again, *"Please, dear Father, please tell me what I can do*." And the answer came, or rather, I finally heard it:

"There is nothing you can do."

My first thought was, I don't buy that. If a doctor had told me that, I would not have accepted it, like Kai's doctors back on Kauai saying she would never walk again. Yet this time, I felt the surety of this in my soul. I knew it was true. It was out of my hands. I was powerless.

There are times when you must never give up, and there are times when you must accept that

there are some things you cannot control.

I accepted what was happening in my life, in our lives—Ann's, Ricky's, and mine. I accepted it like I finally accepted my own death back inside that mountain, though, in complete honesty I admit that in the back of my mind, I'd hoped that if I accepted, perhaps a miracle would occur and suddenly she would be cured. I'm human, and as I've said many times, not perfect, and so that hope still had a tiny glimmer, though in my heart I knew that this time, it was not to be the case.

As I lay there in the sand on a beach miles from my home in the middle of the night, tears on my face for the loss our family was about to experience, the Holy Spirit spoke to me. His voice came into my mind quietly. "You have talked the talk. Now, Eric, you must walk the walk."

I asked, "How—how do I walk this walk?"

"How you walk the walk when things seem to be at their worst is the true measure of what you have actually learned, and even more so, of what you truly believe. Search your mind and remember. What have you learned? To listen quietly. To let go and not try to control the outcome. Let go and let God, literally. Go with and abide by His will. Accept it and be grateful. Love. Keep love in your heart."

"I do love," I whispered. "I love her. I can't even think of how I will live without her, how Ricky will live without his mother. Please, please, help

her."

Do you see how quickly I reverted back? Obviously I hadn't truly accepted it yet. The Holy Spirit spoke again.

"Let go, Eric. Think back to what you learned when your son was born. Quiet your mind and let it come."

Quiet my mind. Back to the basics. When things get tough and out of hand, that's always the best action, go back to the basics. What are the basics? Pray, meditate, breathe, be quiet, listen.

And so I did.

It took a while, and when I finally grew quiet, let go, and accepted I felt a calmness come over me, I felt a vibration move through me, and suddenly I knew. I knew it all. This is what I remembered, for remembering is the only way I can explain what I suddenly knew.

What did I learn when Ricky was born? I learned that we'd been together before we ever chose to incarnate on this Earth. I learned that there had been a plan. Sometimes the plan is more intricate and sometimes it is more general, such as: Go to Earth, live, learn, gain experience in a certain situation. There is a plan. The remembering flowed into my conscious mind.

When we are born into this earthly life, there is an evolution that occurs. Some beings are more

evolved than others. Some choose certain paths during their incarnation, to be in service to others. As inconceivable as it may seem, they may choose before they ever come to Earth that they will leave quickly, by contracting a disease, or having an accident. Why? Why would anyone do this?

As I said, from a human perspective, it seems inconceivable, yet, suddenly I could feel the perspective as an eternal being, and I understood. A person who chooses to do this does it in service, to help those around them during their Earthly life to grow, to evolve, to handle the tragedy of it all, to search and find peace, to learn to let go and trust God. We don't always learn it right away. We may have many experiences to learn how to handle tragedy, but we do eventually learn. We learn to love, to forgive, to do away with bitterness, this is how we grow and evolve.

Still, not all accidents or all diseases are part of a plan. Sometimes another's choice interferes in our plan. Sometimes, we bring it on ourselves in one way or another. Or perhaps, sometimes the plan changes. Everything is adaptable. Sometimes, there may be a miracle cure, and sometimes there is not. We may cry to God, why would He save one and let another die? It's all about free will and the plan you chose. Yet, there is a constant in every single instance. That constant is that each time is an opportunity to grow and evolve.

It's difficult for some to accept that the death of a loved one could ever be a "good" or "positive" thing. That is still thinking from a human perspective. If you don't have some kind of inkling of how eternal our beings are, then the loss of a

loved one is devastating and would make us inconsolable. This concept is covered brilliantly in a Christian song by Big Daddy Weave called, "*Heaven Changes Everything."* Indeed it does. To know there is definitely something beyond this earth life changes everything. Even with that knowledge, though, losing someone is still difficult. For example, many people of faith in various religions teach about our eternal souls, so they have at least an inkling, or they have faith that we are eternal, yet when a loved one leaves them, their faith is sorely tested. Understandably so. As I discovered firsthand, it is one thing to talk the talk, and another altogether to walk the walk.

I wish that there was a way for me to convince you that we are eternal. However, this is something each person must discover for themselves. I can only tell you this: God is real. Jesus is real. We DO have eternal families and you will continue to interact with those families. I was relieved and blessed to have this knowing come to me. As I sat there on that beach and watched the darkness of night lighten to gray, a feeling of peace came over me. Peace and—a challenge. How will I handle what is to come? What can I do to "walk the walk?"

I pulled myself into a full lotus and listened again. At first I heard the same message I'd just remembered. It was as if God felt it was important that I truly grasp what I'd remembered, and so, I will repeat what I heard in just the way I heard it. *What did I learn when Ricky was born?*

I learned that we knew each other before we came to Earth. I learned that we chose to be

together on our journey. We chose. Everyone must choose. God's Universe is based on free will and love. Free will is a Universal law that even God must obey. He does not merely send us to Earth to learn lessons. We must choose to come and we must choose the lessons. Some people come only for ourselves, to learn, progress, and evolve. Some people come only to serve. Some people come to do both.

I came to do both. Ricky came to do both. Ann came to serve.

It was a jolt. ***Ann came to serve!*** Ann's purpose was different than mine.

Every single one of us has a different purpose. Some only slightly different from our own. Some vastly different. Though we may not understand from our lower Earthly perspective, there is a purpose to everything.

Lives can be cut short for a number of reasons. Sometimes it's the path we chose: we will come to Earth, live briefly, be a catalyst for someone else and leave. Sometimes the darkness interferes with a life, to try to keep them from evolving. Some people simply do not fulfill their plan. Sometimes their plan is interrupted by something or someone else, and sometimes, they falter and wander down a wrong path. Sometimes they find their way back. Sometimes they don't. But don't worry. God is just. Trust Him. He knows our hearts. Our purpose is to evolve, to find our "God" qualities, hone them, and become like Him. This will bring us great joy.

It was almost an overload for me. The knowledge was coming so fast, yet it gave me much peace. Finally I knew what I must do. I must take advantage of each and every moment left with my wife. I must walk the walk. I must teach what I've learned about eternal families and eternal lives. I must live in positivity and be grateful for Ann and for Ricky, and I must teach Ricky about eternal families and help him to understand the loss of his mother. I must widen his perspective. I must tell him every single thing I have learned. I must dedicate myself to teaching all that I have learned not only to Ricky, but to my students, and now, as I write this book, to anyone who is led to pick up this book and read.

The new day dawned. I expressed gratitude for the new knowledge and peace I was experiencing. I must say here that when Jesus gives you peace, it is an amazing feeling. Everything is instantly better.

I stood and headed home. When I arrived, Ann was in the kitchen and she smiled at me. I took her in my arms and told her how much I loved her. She touched my face and said she knew. She told me she'd had a dream and that she wasn't afraid at all of what was to come. That she would not give up on life, but that whatever happened, she would always be grateful to have met Ricky and me.

From that day forward we lived in complete gratitude for each other and for each minute. We helped others to understand and accept our peace with Ann's illness. We tried to set a good example for people who were in a similar position.

We visited hospitals, entertained children, and spoke softly with their parents. We tried to help them

to focus on positive things, tried to help them to connect to God, to Jesus, anything they needed so that they could understand and feel the peace that we'd begun to feel. We didn't do this with ego or by preaching, only out of love and compassion for what they were going through, for we knew that firsthand. We also knew that those who were ready to hear would, and those who weren't, would not. No problem. As I've said over and over...

Each has a path to walk and just because that path is not the same as mine does not mean you're going the wrong way.

At one of our trips to a children's hospital, we met six-year-old Eve. Like most of the children, she was sick but not sad. She was a sweet, happy girl. As Ann spoke to her, she realized Eve loved music. Ann whispered to me to run down to the gift shop and see if I could find her a music box. I came back from my errand successful. Little Eve was delighted with the gift and she and Ann took turns turning the key and listening to the music. It played the theme song from an old movie, *Love Story*, sung by Andy Williams and when Ann told the girl there were actual words to the song, Eve's eyes lit up and she begged Ann to teach her the song. So, we sat there for over an hour as Ann taught the girl to sing the song, one with very grown-up words. Though Ann and Eve were having a grand time, Eve's parents and I were struggling very hard to hold back our tears. In case you've never heard of this song, or can't remember, here are the lyrics. I'm sure you can understand how this song touched us as Ann and Eve sang together.

The song commonly known as "*Where Do I Begin."* Look it up. Read the lyrics. They tell of a most beautiful love, and that love fills their very soul and how it's always there. Look it up and you will see why this song filled my heart and broke my heart at the same time.

I can still see that day clearly in my mind. I can see Ann and little Eve, their heads together as they sang quietly, learning the song. I was so touched by this that I went back to the little gift shop and looked for another music box for Ann. They didn't have any more that played *"The Theme from Love Story*," so I bought what they had, which was one that played Beethoven's *Für Elise*.

That day is such a wonderful memory. It doesn't bring sadness or nostalgia. Instead, it brings peace and love. Let me make this clear. I am not saying that people who are sick should merely give up and allow death to come. Rather than live in fear or desperation, Ann and I chose to make peace with whatever the outcome would be. Ann and I came up with a plan to fight the cancer with the help of her doctors, through the laying on of hands in Jesus' mighty name, and with the natural remedies she chose to use. Ann chose to also go through the doctor-prescribed treatment. I supported her in anything she felt she needed to do. Like I said earlier, I won't go into detail. I will say it began with surgery, went on to radiation, and finally chemotherapy. She held on for almost a year and a half.

We had Ricky's eleventh birthday party at the house on a bright Saturday in May. Ann planned it, had it catered, and ordered us around. We obeyed like good soldiers. She laughed about that, which

was good because Ricky and I truly enjoyed making her laugh. Though it was Ricky's party, everyone seemed to gravitate toward Ann. She sat by the pool on a chaise lounge looking like a fairy princess entertaining her court. She wore a sun hat with a yellow flower on the brim. She was thin and pale. It was as if everyone knew she was not long for this world and they wanted to bid her farewell.

A few weeks later, on the first of June, in our room, in our bed, in my arms, with the full moon shining on her face through the window, Ann passed away.

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Philippians 4:7

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Chapter Eight

The Meaning of Life

I have been asked, "What is the meaning of life? Why do we come here? Where do we come from? Where do we go?" I try to help people find the answers they need. If I simply told them that we are eternal beings and there is nothing to fear from the transition between earth life to a more eternal perspective, it would not relieve their fear. I want to help them understand. I have a great, overpowering need to help them. I empathize with the frustration of not knowing. However, they must do the work and learn some of the things for themselves through their own spiritual connection. After all, I could tell them all that I've seen and all that I've done, and that may help a bit, but if they haven't experienced it for themselves, then what I have to say is only a nice, perhaps inspirational, story.

If we would or could learn from others' experiences and from others' mistakes, humans would* be *a* highly *evolved species by now, with complete peace, complete love and complete joy.

It would be nice if we could learn from others' mistakes. It's good to be humble and teachable, and

those who are, do learn from others' mistakes and experiences. Notwithstanding, unless we experience some things for ourselves, it is almost impossible to assimilate and integrate what we have learned into something practical. Take "romantic love" for example. Until we feel it for someone, we really can't explain the feeling. Until we feel it ourselves, we really can't understand it, can't understand why we would do almost anything to have it. Yet once we fall in love, we think, "Ah, so this is why people say they would go to the ends of the Earth for love. Love is grand!" More examples—until we have our own child sleeping soundly on our chest, cooing softly, there is no way to explain the bond between a parent and a child. Until a woman goes through labor and childbirth, there is no way to make another woman understand. Until that child has experienced a broken arm, how do you make a child understand why he shouldn't climb so high? If you tell him, "Because it's dangerous," or "because you'll get hurt," do you think he will assimilate that information?

Learn from others as much as you can, but there is no shame in not being able to learn without experiencing some things for yourselves. It *is* possible for me to teach you what I have experienced and what I have learned and that will help you to awaken and give you the motivation to get started. Yet, even more than telling you *my* stories, I wish to teach you how you can connect spiritually to *your* eternal families, to *your* angels and to God. It IS possible. I am not special. I am merely following my path, and part of my plan was to receive instruction from my "messenger" and then teach others to awaken and connect themselves.

Each and every single one of you is capable of

connecting with God. Until you do, you will not understand how this connection can heal you from any situation. Depression gone. Sadness gone. Loneliness gone. Traumatic violence (rape, domestic abuse, war, etc.) healed. Sorrow, healed. Diseases, healed. Loss, accepted. Peace found. This connection is like a rising up above all the drama of the Earth, a knowing that you are not alone, that you do not ever have to be a victim of any of these things again.

Connection, alignment with God, gives you a higher perspective, where you realize that what we experience here is a drop in the bucket. This is seeing through God's eyes.

Once you've connected and found this different perspective, the troubles and burdens we experience lighten, and even, melt completely away. We realize all the drama we experience is merely small stuff.

Does that make you angry? Many get angry when I tell them everything is small stuff. They feel like I just don't understand what they're going through and how dare I mitigate their problems? I am not making light of them. Your problems are real. They are powerful and if you allow them to, those problems can and will destroy you. What I am trying to do is let you know that you *can* heal, you *can* rise above, and those problems will not affect you anymore. You will find peace, and understanding and you will wake up in the morning and feel only joy.

This healing is completely possible and it's not complicated. It is done through spiritual connection

to Father God and His Son Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what Christian denomination you are. This spiritual connection is merely an opening of your eyes to see things, to feel things that are there that you were oblivious to before. Even scientists have discovered that there is more to our Earth life than we can feel with our five senses.

This spiritual connection I speak of is not as difficult as you think. You do not have to fast for days, go into deep trances, figure out transcendental meditation, or sit in the lotus position for hours and chant. The thought that you must learn to do these things in order to connect causes stress, and you can NOT connect if you are stressed, fearful, disappointed, sour, irritable, impatient or anything negative.

Nevertheless, I can teach you this spiritual connection by following a simple plan. It is easy and stress free and, depending on your own attitude, you will begin to feel like a new person, a different person, in a small amount of time. Each person is different and coming from different belief systems, so each person's connection time will differ. Each person has chosen a different path, still, NOT ONE of you is alone.

I will continue telling my story here, and by the time you get to the all-important chapter on spiritually connecting with God, you will understand that it is easy, that it is important to what you do in this life, and that it is completely up to you and the mindset you bring to the game.

All this being said, do you think that once my sweet wife passed away that I merely shrugged my shoulders and went on without a hitch? Of course

not. We were sad. We missed her. We longed to speak with her, to hear her voice, to feel her touch.

My son was eleven years old. Old enough to understand what had taken place and young enough to miss and mourn his mother greatly. More than once, I faltered. However, I'd been blessed to be privy to things that not many others had experienced, and it was time for me to walk the walk. I did the best I could and I was able to do that because of the spiritual connection with Jesus I'd honed over the years.

So when friends and family sat with Ricky and I and tried to commiserate with us, I found myself instead, helping *them* to understand that this mortal life is merely a drop in the bucket. I knew of a certainty I would see and speak with Ann again, though the dynamic may be different.

Many times over the months since Ann's passing there were so many people, during the course of offering sympathy, who would bring up the subject, what is the reason for life, the reason we come to this Earth, only to eventually die. I prayed on this question, that I might help them find an answer that was uplifting, empowering and comforting.

We are all connected, and what we do affects those around us. However, we are not all 'one' as many like to say. Though most of us *are* one in purpose, and that purpose is to learn, to grow, to evolve and to find our way back home to live in God's presence. Although we are one in purpose, and are connected, we are still individuals making individual decisions for ourselves. This ability to make a decision, to have individual free will, is what

makes us evolve and learn. If we did not make a choice to follow a certain path, and falter, and learn from our mistakes, if we only came to Earth to be told what to do like puppets, told it is our fate—then we would not change. We may just as well be mindless objects made to go here and there and do this and that, with no meaning.

We choose, and must be allowed to choose, and anyone or anything that tries to force us to do something against our "free" will is not of the light.

When we arrive on the Earth, we have a veil of sorts placed over our consciousness, so that we don't remember much of who we were before we came here, or about the eternal nature of our being. However, we chose to come, to experience a physical body and, as I've stated earlier, to either learn and evolve, or to serve others and evolve, or a little of both.

Our Father who art in heaven wants us to choose well, so that we might evolve quickly, and we might experience great joy and great love, or to choose badly so that we might learn great lessons and find even greater joy, thanks to the contrast. When we experience joy, do you think God experiences great joy? Yes, of course. We can know this through parenthood ourselves, which is our human version of creating a mini Universe. When we choose to create a family, we want our children to grow and evolve and not only be the best they can be. More than anything, no matter what they choose, we want them to be happy, to have joy in their hearts. When our children are joyful, does that make us joyful? Yes, it does.

There are four great things that bring us joy.

Here are three of them: creation, service, and love. I will address these here. The fourth, and **most important**, I have already spoken about and will talk more about it later, that being a connection to and a relationship with the one true God.

Creation

The creating of anything—be it art, a new scientific breakthrough, a business, music, a book, a dance, a strong body, a piece of furniture, a landscape, or a child, gives us immense pleasure and satisfaction. The Universe is ever expanding, contracting, and expanding all over again. It is constantly creating, and creating in turn is what gives us satisfaction and joy. When you have put yourself completely into a thing, given something your all and actually created something of beauty and worth, how does it make you feel? Joyful! So joyful that you want to share your creation with others, correct? Of course you do. And why would you want to share? Because you want them to feel the joy that you feel. And why do you want them to feel that joy? Because of the beautiful and powerful love that is in your heart.

Service

Because of the love in our hearts,—for God's Universe and all its laws are based in love—we sometimes choose to serve others. Being in service to others is another way of evolving, another way of giving love, and another way of creating.

For if we help others to find their way and they begin to create and have joy, do we feel the joy of being part of that? Of course we do.

When I am doing something kind for someone, performing a service for someone, or teaching someone and I am able to help them in any way, it seems I am serving others, but I am also serving myself, for if I can help them to find joy, then I find more joy myself. Therefore...

I like to encourage people to be so selfish that they find joy in serving others. At first, they don't understand. Am I actually telling them to be selfish? Yes! Everyone, be so very selfish that you help all of mankind to find joy! How joyful would you be then?

A note about helping others:

Sometimes we get caught up in self-righteousness in our helping of others, which only destroys what we're trying to create.

Explanation:

I have already addressed that each individual has the ability to choose their path. They choose to come to Earth. They may have a preordained path they must search for and discover and claim, or they may simply be here for the experience of learning and choose their path as they go along. That is why some people feel they are searching for their mission or their calling and some do not feel that at all.

Sometimes, when one person has discovered their calling, they become so caught up in it and in the "rightness" of it, they begin to think that their calling is for everyone.

So, they think, "My calling is to serve and help others, and it gives me so much joy and I help so many people, therefore EVERYONE should do this same thing. If everyone wants to have joy they should do what I do. If people don't choose to help and serve others, they must be selfish, or greedy, or lazy, or stupid, or simply unenlightened."

You see the flaw in this?

Each person has their ***own*** path and we must allow them their path without judgment. Perhaps one's purpose is to be charitable and help others, while another's is to create a great business that employs many people, while another's is to live homeless and teach people compassion. Therefore...

Do not compel others to follow <u>your</u> path. Compel them to find their <u>own</u> path.

In addition...

You do not necessarily follow just one path. Lifetimes can encompass more than one path.

Perhaps the great business owner also donates to causes, perhaps the philanthropist teaches the

homeless how to get out of their desperate situation and finds them a job working for the business. Perhaps, a person needs to find a way, without help, to get themselves out of their dire situation, and this makes them strong and they become the great business owner.

The Universe is not chaos. Nothing is random.

Judge no one. Love everyone. Yet that doesn't mean that you should compromise with evil. Never compromise with that which you know to be evil. That thought needs a bit more explanation. We are not talking about sin, where someone steals something or sleeps with his neighbor's wife. Those acts are mistakes, but they are not evil. Evil is done purposely in hatred, to hurt, to infringe on someone's life or free will.

Be kind. Be charitable when it feels right to be, and if it doesn't feel right, do not feel guilty. Guilt is a negative concept and can bring much darkness into your life.

Love

There are many different kinds of love: romantic love, the love between parent and child, the love between siblings, the love between friends, the love of nature, of art, of music, of beauty, of reading, of animals, of God, country, and so on.

True love is felt and acted upon with wisdom, with kindness, with compassion, and unconditionally. Love is not ownership of an individual. Love offers freedom. Love brings joy. Love is not needy. Love can stand alone. Love is strong. It is the most powerful force in the Universe. Live in love. Make all decisions based on love. God IS love.

When Ann left her mortal body and moved on, I didn't think I would ever find that kind of love again. Many of you know that was not the case.

Once Ann was gone from our lives, the house would have felt very large and empty except for the love and service of family and friends. My extended family stayed for a week. My parents stayed for a month. My best friends Justin and Jason Lee stayed much longer. They said they felt the need to stay and offer their assistance to us in any way possible, and though I gave them permission to leave many times, I can tell you that their presence was powerful and greatly needed.

Justin, a young attorney, was closer to my age, and provided me with the companionship I needed, an adult to speak with about everything and anything. Jason, then seventeen and a high school senior with much going on in his life, took it upon himself to be a companion to eleven-year-old Ricky. For this I will be forever grateful.

I received a letter during this time, an unwanted letter from our nemesis, X. Apparently, he heard of Ann's passing, and clearly, he hadn't matured and moved on as I'd thought. He stated in the letter that he knew I had killed Ann. He believed I had

poisoned her. He would never forgive me for taking her away from him and that one day he would get his revenge. I thought about taking the letter to the police, but decided to simply put it away. I didn't want to deal with it, or him. I had more important things to focus on and didn't want to give the letter any of my energy. I filed it away, both physically and mentally.

I spent many hours with Ricky, talking, teaching, comforting, allowing him to grieve. Jason gave him a lighter outlet, fun and humor. I suppose comparatively, I was a pretty serious guy. Ricky's demeanor had always been fun, jovial, and lighthearted. He was quick to smile, quick to laugh, which was one of the reasons he was such a popular young man. Jason encouraged that part of him.

Though I was the one who'd actually experienced the visitation of an angelic messenger, it was Ricky who seemed to show more faith, more resilience with his mother's passing. Sometimes it was Ricky who comforted me. We pretty much clung to each other. We became closer than ever. Really inseparable.

Over the next several years, Ricky did several movies and the world began to fall in love with this young, good-looking boy. In between roles, Ricky and I traveled the world as part of his education. We decided to learn several more languages and try them out in the countries where they originated.

We already spoke both English and of course, Hawaiian. We knew a good deal of French from my grandfather, Chinese—both Cantonese and Mandarin—from my other grandfather, and some Japanese from my mother's side of the family. We

decided we would learn them all and add Korean with Justin's help and Spanish. It was quite an undertaking, but as we mastered each one, the next one became easier and easier. Ricky's younger mind was amazing, and I was quite impressed with his ability to learn new things so quickly.

Justin and Jason, though they finally stopped living with us after three months, remained our constant and loyal friends over the years. In Ann's absence, I completely dedicated myself to my son and to my martial art studios.

Ricky and I made goals to stay aligned spiritually, to pray together every day and individually at least twice a day. We attended church because fellowship with other believers is important and gives strength and keeps our vibration high. I think that was the reason why we drew so much success into our lives. Ricky's stardom grew, as did my popularity as a teacher, not only in the martial arts, but as a life and spiritual mentor. I won the MART twice more and I was inducted into the "Black Belt Hall of Fame" when I was thirty-three. Many of my students had become highly successful martial artists and instructors themselves. Both Ricky and Jason Lee competed on the tournament circuit and had been both national and world champions. They were pretty impressive, and I, as their teacher, was proud of them. They worked hard, trained hard, and achieved near perfection.

My schools grew so numerous that I only instructed the masters of each school, and even this was becoming only a part-time endeavor. My schools were well-run, and my job had become an overseer, an honored visitor to a studio, or dignitary at a giant black belt testing/celebration.

Ricky was more sought after than ever in film. Jason became sought after as a consultant by local law enforcement at first, and soon after that by the federal government and by our military. I couldn't have been more pleased. He was finding his way, his path, and that path would eventually take him to great heights. His brother Justin was becoming a powerful attorney and was stretching his law firm wings into other states.

I was blessed to be able to see the fruit of the work I'd put in, the changing of lives, the accomplishments and creations of others, all of them living in love and light and doing what they could to protect the innocent and to fight the darkness. My gratitude for all of this knows no bounds.

I continued my daily prayers and meditations, continued working on my spiritual connection. Ricky and I traveled to Kauai often, hiked back into the sacred places, and spoke to God in Jesus' name. Ricky was my constant companion, and I his.

We believed in always creating, always progressing, so we honed our craft, reaching for perfection. We incorporated numerous martial arts weapons into our training. Ricky was a natural with several, though mostly with nunchakus, bo staff, and the knife. The knife was my particular specialty, and the scimitar, kama, and sword. It was merely a skill we worked on perfecting. I had no intentions of ever using one of these weapons on a human being. I had no idea that any of this training would ever prove useful, other than to astonish people at martial arts demonstrations. I was still young and learning. I had a lot to learn.

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Micah 6:8

*"...what doth the LORD require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

Chapter Nine

Consequences

I was twenty-nine when Ann left this world. Ricky was eleven. Eight years later, when I was thirty-seven, Ann finally came to me in a dream. She looked young and beautiful, healthy and vivacious and—happy. In my dream, I sat meditating on the beach, something very normal for me. She walked out of the water and approached.

I smiled at her and tried to rise, but she touched my shoulder and told me to keep doing what I was doing. That was a tiny message that I was on the right track. I told her I was happy to see her, that I missed her, that I felt lonely without her. I told her that Ricky was doing well and asked if she would stick around so that I could tell her all the things that I wanted to share. She answered in her sweet voice. I'd almost forgotten how sweet her voice had been and hearing it brought tears to my eyes. She told me she'd been watching and that she knew all about our lives. She said she knew even more about what was to come. I asked her to share this information and she told me that she couldn't, for it would interfere with my ability to make the choices I needed to make and she didn't want to violate my free will.

She did give me one piece of advice: to open my mind to new opportunities, to new possibilities, and to be true to my nature. This confused me a bit,

for had I not been true to my nature? Was I going against something I'd taught to my students and was not living it myself? I asked her these things and she laughed and actually told me to lighten up. This made *me* laugh because she used to tell me that quite often. We talked then, for a while, though I can't really remember the conversation. I only know that it seemed to take up the entire night. I woke in the morning and knew of a certainty that I had not merely dreamed of Ann, but had actually communed with her, the real her, the essence that was my sweet Ann. I cannot tell you how I knew. I believe it was in the conversation we had that I can't remember. Something in that part of the dream is what made me know that I had conversed with Ann. I felt elated and happy.

Shortly after that dream, I began to have visions and more dreams, but these were not of Ann and were not particularly pleasant. They were visions of large brown eyes, feminine eyes, beautiful eyes, but they were sad, sometimes crying, and always pleading for help. I was not only intrigued; I became obsessed with discovering who this person was, and how I could help her, maybe even rescue her from whatever peril she seemed to be in. Yet, the dreams went on, the visions went on, and I still did not meet the woman. I began to think that maybe I'd simply lost my mind.

However, two years later, I did run into the owner of those eyes. I'd signed up to compete in the MART again. I hadn't yet picked the student I would teach. I was in Atlanta, accompanying Ricky to a demo he'd been asked to perform at a regional martial arts tournament. Ricky, then twenty-one, had suggested that the student I was looking for and the woman in my visions and dreams were one and the

same. He'd been right. She was running through the lobby of the venue where the tournament was being held and wasn't looking where she was going and ran right into me. I helped her up and helped her gather her things, and when she looked up at me, I knew immediately. It was her.

Her name was Shelley Adams. She was a divorced mother of three children. I would come to learn that a few years before that tournament, she'd been sexually assaulted by a stranger in a park. This event was a catalyst for her divorce and for her taking up martial arts as a means of empowering herself. I knew the moment I laid eyes on her that she was supposed to be my student for the MART, that she was the woman in my dreams, and that she was special.

It would not take me long to fall madly in love with Shelley Adams. As many of you who have heard the story know, it was a rough time, and many things happened that would teach us both crucial lessons. Shelley was different from Ann, as different as night is from day. Ann was soft, sweet, and even-tempered, while Shelley was vibrant, volatile, rash, and passionate. I'd thought that this woman needed me to rescue her, yet it seemed she was the one who rescued me.

I met her in June, almost exactly ten years after Ann's death. Within only a few months, we knew we loved each other. We were not the only ones who knew. Ricky said it was quite evident how we felt about each other. Of course Ricky would know, as he and I were so close. Once Justin and Jason Lee met Shelley, they too knew it was meant to be. It was six months into our relationship, though, when we found another person who knew I'd fallen in love. I

arrived at Shelley's home one morning to find that X had gotten to her and left her unconscious and bloody on her living room floor. Retribution had finally found me, and it would turn out that people I loved would pay for my mistakes, over and over again.

I will not tell the story here. I will say as I have many times, I am not perfect. I am human and I make mistakes. I can't express to you how it feels to know that the mistakes I made came back to hurt people I care about. In this case, my emotional response was anger, or maybe more like rage. I wanted to hurt him back. I wanted him to pay for what he'd done. I wanted to kill him. It was difficult to pull myself from that mindset. I knew it wasn't healthy or wise or spiritual, and yet, it took me some time to come around to a higher perspective. It took me a while to remember that...

The moment we allow anger and hatred into our hearts, we are defeated.

It was actually Shelley, the one who'd been hurt, who helped me. She was fearless. She was strong. She was ready to get back up and be a light. She was definitely ***my*** light for sure.

Other than anger, there was another emotion I had to deal with. It was guilt. I remember preparing a protein shake for Shelley because after taking that beating from X, her lips were swollen and her teeth were too loose for her to be able to eat solid food. As I made the shake, all I could think about was, *this is my fault. I did this to her. If I hadn't shamed X all those years ago, if I hadn't given in to the need for*

my own revenge, then this wouldn't have happened. I looked up to find my friend Justin watching me. He tossed my own words back at me. He reminded me that I always say...

Guilt is a negative emotion. We must forgive ourselves because one cannot live in darkness, and guilt is darkness.

I knew these things because of the teachings of my eternal family member, the angelic messenger who'd visited me in the cave. And because of my connection to God, I knew it was time again for me to "walk the walk." There was no way I could teach these things to my students and not adhere to them myself. So I did my best to let go of guilt.

X must be held responsible for his own actions. His actions were a choice he made. Yes, I caused him to suffer shame and embarrassment, and I certainly handled it badly. Still, he chose to move forward in hatred and hurt innocent people. It was a pattern of his. It sprang from the teaching of hatred by the man who raised him.

That is how hatred is taught. It is carried on from generation to generation and will never end until wise people become enlightened enough to break the cycle.

Ensuant, I learned to forgive myself for the mistakes I've made, and I learned to hold each person responsible for the choices they make and for

the actions they take. X, a large man who had studied Ninjutsu since shortly after the day I humiliated him, beat a small woman to a pulp. He didn't stop there. He sought Shelley out many times, toying with her, until finally, he tried to take her life. I was able to intervene literally in the nick of time. My skill with a knife came into play. Maybe it was not just an interest in weapons but part of a grander scheme that led me to my expertise. Whatever it was, it ended with me having to kill a man.

The taking of a life is something I never thought I would have to do. It is not something to be taken lightly or casually, and it had a profound effect on me. Notwithstanding, there was no guilt involved this time. There was no guilt because I did not have hatred or revenge in my heart. I simply chose to protect the innocent. I chose to intervene. If I could have done it without killing, I would have, and I know that in my heart. I did only what had to be done.

Some people are meant to be warriors, to be strong enough to do what has to be done, not in anger, not in hatred, but out of love for the life you are able to save.

As I said earlier, the pacifist may choose not to fight, and I do not judge them for that, yet, they must allow me to protect them, also without judgment.

That statement is a general statement, for my Shelley was no pacifist, though she was innocent, as was the child she carried at the time.

Our child.

It was a girl. She was given the name, June Flower, because of Shelley's fascination with dandelions. June Flower was born a psychic and high genius. She finished high school when most children were in elementary school and she obtained her PhD in neurology before she was twenty. She also has degrees in quantum physics, chemistry, and biochemistry and works as a research scientist. Her goal is to find the underlying cause of every disease, find cures, and heal the world. She was a joy and blessing from the moment she was born. As I said earlier about Ricky, though, this is not her story. I will tell you that X had a younger brother who eventually went after both of my children. It was an ugly time.

Do you see how darkness begets darkness? On the upside, light begets light, and light is much more powerful than darkness. For one small flame changes an entire room of darkness.

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Galatians 6:7

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Chapter Ten

Abundance and Prosperity

The Law of Attraction?

I am doing a chapter on the Law of Attraction because so many people have asked me about it, usually wanting to know how I became so prosperous. I realize they are actually wanting to know how I made *money*. They want to know so that they, too, can make lots of money.

There was a book published back in the early 2000s telling a "secret" about how to use your mind to get anything you want. In this book you learn, *on the surface*, how to use the Law of Attraction for your benefit. Many people have used it and succeeded. Many more have used it and failed.

Because of that failure, Law of Attraction gurus and life coaches became a thing. Those life coaches have made billions of dollars off of the masses. Why? They took advantage of everyone wanting something and wanting to know how to get it. They used attractive phrases like "work smarter, not harder," and "think yourself rich."

I'm going to tell you the real "secret" about the Law of Attraction. Before I do, let me tell you what the gurus say about why it's not working in your life.

They usually say it's not working because you have what they call "blocks." Blocks can be anything

from limiting beliefs, for example, "wealth is reserved for a select few," to something like the stereotype "rich people are snobby and selfish." They tell you that you must consciously figure out these blocks and get rid of them, and THEN you can be abundant.

Then there are the gurus who say you don't have to work through the blocks, just listen to their secret subliminal messages and you will miraculously overcome the blocks. Or listen to their hypnosis tracks. Or repeat their mantras. I could go on. Keep reading. The real "secret" is coming.

Over the course of my life I have said many times that I am a rich man, in that I have been blessed to have an amazing family and true and loyal friends. I can chuckle now as I remember that this made my Shelley frustrated and probably a little angry. When I first met Shelley, she was struggling financially, so she was a little resentful of my material wealth. Since then, however, she has learned how to become abundant herself.

Shelley's children, Bree, Mark, and Joey, mean no less to me than my own Ricky and Jeffy. Together, we are strong, united, growing, creating, and joyful. We are abundant and prosperous, yet we don't have to be in order to be joyful. We are just as happy camping in the desert as we are in our home.

We enjoy our abundant life, but we don't need it in order to be happy. This is an important point.

Needy is never abundant.

We are not attached to things. It is this way of

thinking that has made the material world think of us as an oddity. We are peculiar.

It bears repeating so that it may sink in.

Needy is never abundant. Needing things, even if we CAN afford them, is NEVER abundant.

If you are a Wall Street genius and have made millions of dollars and yet live in fear of losing the money you have made, then you most definitely are not rich. Real prosperity and abundance are never needy and being needy is never abundant.

Needy means you need something to make you feel happy. If you feel like you HAVE to have a big, expensive home, a new car, fancy clothing, the latest in electronics, or shoes in order to be happy or content, then you are needy. That means even wealthy people are needy.

It works the same way with relationships. If you must have your love interest by your side, catering to your "needs" at all times, or even a lot of the time, then you have a needy relationship. A needy relationship will not last.

There are millions of people worldwide who understand two ideas: We don't need "things" to be happy, AND, it's okay to be abundant and prosperous.

To some, these may seem to be opposing principles.

This conundrum may stem from the preaching of a doctrine that "money is the root of all evil." The actual quote is, "the LOVE of money is the root of

all evil." This changes the meaning extensively.

Side note: Funny how changing one or two words in a scripture, book, or manuscript can change the entire meaning. Remember this, for it is key knowledge as you go through life.

Let's address this precept that "the love of money is the root of all evil." The essential meaning of this idea is that when one's priorities shift to the acquisition of money or material gains, they have lost sight of what is really important in this life, and when one loses sight of what is truly important—God, love, freedom, knowledge, kindness, compassion, and creativity—then this begets evil.

It may seem that while we should not lose sight of what is important in this world, calling it the root of all evil is a bit of an overstatement. Would it be an overstatement to say that an acorn is the beginning of an oak tree? No, that is not an overstatement. Hence, it is not an overstatement to say the wrong priorities beget evil.

When our priorities shift to obtaining wealth, we are on the verge of becoming lost. Evil is darkness and darkness seeks to destroy, seeks to take away individual freedom, seeks to cause pain. Allowing our priorities to get a little out of whack may not seem to be evil, but that is how Satan works. A little cajoling here, cross a tiny line there. If Satan simply gave you two choices, one of light and one of darkness, it would make it an easy choice for most of us. But he blurs the lines. He makes the dark seem light and the light seem a little darker until all is

gray. Now he has you.

But all is not lost. A mistake can be turned around. We can adjust our thinking. Just remember, when we obtain wealth and would hurt or destroy others to get it or keep it, *that* is evil.

Notwithstanding, there is nothing wrong with the acquisition of wealth, prosperity, and abundance. The Universe is set up to create value, and that value begets value. Creating value is what caused the Earth to be made.

If one has created a great work of art, a brilliant invention, or an innovative business concept, there is no shame and nothing wrong with exchanging that for other things you may need or want as in value for value. In days of yore that would be goods for goods. Food for shelter. Music for food. Shelter for clothing. Nowadays, whatever you create is exchanged for money, which is then exchanged for food, shelter, clothing, and things you may need or want.

So, where does this all go wrong? It goes wrong only in the shift of one's priorities. If one would become dishonest in his business dealings, if one lacks integrity, if one would say or do anything to make a sale, win a trade, increase their profit through the exploitation of others, then one has lost sight of what is important. This losing sight can definitely lead to evil doings. So, we must check ourselves. Have we lost sight? Do we deal honestly? Do we trick people into coming to our websites through false advertising? Do we bait and switch? Do we use "clickbait"? Would we do anything to get rich, including being dishonest or even including hurting

someone? Most importantly, is love our priority?

When I was first beginning in my business, I had a "life coach" tell me: "You must be willing to do all it takes, absolutely anything, to reach your goal." Sounds good, right? Sounds good if "all it takes" means working tirelessly, learning more, going without sleep, overcoming shyness, etcetera, that would be no problem. But she looked hard at me. "Are you willing to do absolutely ANYTHING?"

"Uh, no," I said. "I won't do *absolutely anything*. There are certain things I absolutely won't do, lines I won't cross."

She smiled toward the people who were standing around listening to this conversation. "And that, my dears, is why people do not succeed," she said, as if she had just bestowed great wisdom on the group. It didn't take much of my power of discernment to realize this was not of the light. But others would fall for her lies easily, because she was young, very pretty, outgoing, and friendly, had all the catchphrases down, and she was offering what they wanted, which was fast success.

All this raises the question, then how does one gain abundance? The answer is pretty ironic and usually not what we want to hear. The answer is fourfold.

1) Stop trying so hard. Remember the story about pushing against the water? Instead, be one with it. Let go, relax, and *enjoy the process*.

2) Be truly grateful for exactly where you are at this moment. If you find yourself in a place you are not grateful for, then don't focus on that. Focus on something, anything for which you ARE grateful.

(You can see, you ate today, a bird chirped, you're alive.)

3) Set goals or intentions. You must put it out there, to God, to yourself, and to your loved ones. Get clear, write it down, draw a picture, visualize.

4) Move forward in joy. Do something. Take action. However, this action must be taken in joy. For example, if you are working a boring job to earn money so that you can go back to school, then you must work that job in joy. Which also means you must be patient.

This Law of Attraction is simple, but many find it extremely tricky. Others think it is just some airy-fairy hogwash. It is neither tricky nor hogwash. It's simply incomplete.

I considered writing an entire book about this Law of Attraction, but until I make that decision, let me tell you this: The Law of Attraction is real and yet as it has been presented to the masses, it is dangerous.

It's dangerous because it has been presented with a New Age focus, which is one of Satan's tools in pulling followers of Jesus away. It has also given birth to the "prosperity gospel," which again, is deceptive and a lure to pull us away from the truth of God, from the Word.

I'm about to tell you the secret that you haven't been told because they don't want you to know it.

Here it is: The Law of Attraction WORKS, but it works THROUGH our connection to God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. *That* is the real secret. The one they don't want you to know, the one Satan doesn't want you to know. He wants you to

not need Jesus.

The Law of Attraction is all about vibration, which you've heard me say before. What, or WHOM do you think has the highest vibration of all, the strongest vibration of any? Our Father who art in heaven, and His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Connect with God and you will raise your vibration.

With your connection to God comes peace, calmness, confidence, wisdom, and direction. Whatever hurtful thing is in your past can be healed and that "block" removed. Knowing that He is real makes it possible for us to let go. Allow—which, earlier in this book, a heavenly messenger told me was the only way to live.

I believe it is time to talk about the whole picture.

Firstly, the Law of Attraction is not the end-all, it is merely a tool to work with in obtaining goals. It can be the beginning of an awakening for some, which is a beautiful thing. How? Because it intimates that there is much more to God's Universe than you are being told.

That much is true.

Nothing is impossible. There really is much more going on behind the scenes that you <u>can't</u> see than you CAN.

What you 'think' truly does exist. Thought is energy. Thought produces measurable activity in the brain. We know that what we repeatedly think about can affect our bodies, emotions, choices, and actions. I also believe there is a spiritual dimension to

thought that science does not yet fully understand. God spoke this world into existence, and those words began with His almighty thought.

Earlier in this book, I promised to address the asking of God for "things." He actually tells us to ask Him for what we desire. In Matthew it says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." Yet in James it also says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."

Asking God for things is not a bad thing to do. Desire is not bad. Desire helps us to reach for goals, to stretch our imagination, and to create amazing things. So, put out there what it is you want to have, to do, to happen, to be. God wants you to have everything you desire. He wants you to live in complete joy and bliss. Yet God, in His infinite wisdom, knows that it is not in our best interest to simply give us anything and everything we ask for immediately, like some petulant child.

The Law of Attraction is only part of His plan, but it is part. It requires you to achieve a level of vibration in order to receive whatever you wish to receive.

Not only that, but just as a king must obey the laws of his own kingdom, God Himself must obey certain Universal laws. This is wisdom and love and rightness.

God's universal laws are based on real knowledge and everything can be backed up by real scientific principles far beyond our present

understanding.

Things we see as God's miracles are only miracles to us because we do not yet understand the science—the laws and truths—behind them. God, the Creator of worlds without end, understands every principle completely. He created the laws. He knows the science. He's done the math. It would be like when an "advanced" civilization struck a match for secluded natives, the natives saw this making of fire out of a small stick as a miracle. Of course, we know that there was a scientific principle behind the striking of that match.

God, being the creator of worlds without end, do you think that maybe He knows more science than even the brightest scientists on our little world? So then, how does this science affect our asking for things?

In order to have the things we ask for, we must be vibrating at the rate of those things. It is vibrational. You've heard me use that term many times by now. You see, everything and everyone vibrates at a certain rate. That vibration can change. Even a rock's vibration can change, for if you heat the rock, its vibration becomes faster, and if you cool a rock, its vibration becomes slower. There is more to it than this, but this is a good, simplistic way of helping us to understand.

So, if you want a new car, your vibration must be in tune with receiving that new car. A friend of mine once told me that he wanted a certain luxury car with a cost of well over a hundred thousand dollars. In the same sentence he added the words, "...though it will probably never happen."

He was correct. He defeated himself. For as

long as he said those words, "it will probably never happen," then he was right. Probably not. His vibration was low, like his expectations.

Here is an exercise. See if you can tell the subtle differences in the following scenarios:

- One person believes he will obtain a new car. He believes he will make it happen somehow, some way. He believes that through hard work and dedication to an ideal, he can make it happen—and he does.

- Another believes he will have a new car and it will miraculously show up in his life. He really believes this, and *eventually*, it does.

- Still another person believes a new car will miraculously show up in his life, that or something even better. He too, really believes, but he lets go of the stress and worrying of how it will get here. Whatever comes, he is still grateful for the little car he has right now and though he would love to have a new car, he doesn't really *need* it. He simply put the intention out there and let go of it, and continued working toward his goal without forgetting to live in joy and gratitude and— surprise, surprise—it shows up quickly.

Each one of these scenarios has a slightly different vibration. The question is, what are YOU

vibrating? Can you be truly grateful for where and what you are right now?

The vibration of gratitude, true gratitude, is an extremely high vibration, a perfect vibration for receiving your heart's desires.

Ask for what you want and have absolute trust that when you match that vibration, you will have it. God wants you to have it. He wants to see you overcome trauma and obstacles so that you can evolve and raise that vibration and have everything that will bring you joy. Remember, He wants us to learn joy, to learn peace, to learn love. If you are a parent, you understand this wanting for your own children. Their joy is your joy. Our joy is God's joy.

Therefore, if you ask for something, and it's taking some time, it is not because you are unworthy in God's eyes or because He is punishing you or because He's not listening to you. It is merely taking time for YOU to get yourself to a vibration where your desire can manifest.

If you order a package to be delivered, but your front gate is locked and the delivery man cannot get through the gate in order to get the package to your door, then you won't receive the package. God, or one of his many helpers—for we all have eternal family members and angels working on our behalf—may even send a catalyst to you to help you learn how to "get your gate open." God will not give up on you, so don't give up on yourself.

To reiterate: There is much more to the LOA than I have briefly stated here. The "Law of Attraction" is just one principle of many Universal laws. There is so much more going on behind the scenes. There is so much more you have not seen.

Satan has used the Law of Attraction principles to pull you away from God. Why would you need to worship God if you can manipulate your vibrations in order to get anything you want?

Because worshiping God is not about obtaining the things—or circumstances—you want. It is about your actual eternal soul, and where you will live through eternity.

Times are changing. There is a great awakening taking place. People are beginning to realize there is so much more going on than what you see or experience with your five senses. I have written that statement many times now. There is a reason for that.

You have been lied to by the media. Satan has used the media to control the masses. But people are waking up. They are having to choose between darkness and light.

Here is something extremely important to consider. If you have been using the Law of Attraction to get the things you think you want and you have not been connecting with God through constant prayer, fasting, and meditating in the name of Jesus, and yet the Law of Attraction has been working for you—whose teaching and vibration have you been depending on? I believe if you have not chosen the light, then by default you have chosen the darkness. And the entities of the dark have been helping you to get what you want. Do not sell your

soul! I caution you, there is an eternity to live when this earth life is done. Think very carefully about with whom you are in league.

One last but very important thing to say concerning the Law of Attraction. When you have taken time to build a relationship with God, when you have established a connection with Him, you may find that what you thought you wanted is no longer appealing to you. With connection to God, you begin to see things with His eyes and you may find that your priorities have changed. You have begun to shift your way of thinking. What you may discover is that you don't want what you want; instead, you want what God wants for you. When you finally make this shift, you will feel so much joy. What a beautiful thing to wake up in the morning and to feel so much joy just because you literally feel God's light vibrating through you.

You may find that what you truly desire is only to do His will. Then you do whatever you can, not to get something, but to learn His will for your life. He hopes you will choose to do His will, because God knows the very thing that will truly give you joy. Real joy. Unshakeable joy. Not joy because you won the lottery, or because you got a new car, or a great career, or a new boyfriend, etc. Those things would be fun, but they won't give you true unshakeable joy because any one of those things can be taken away. If your joy depends on them, then your joy is subject to the wind, to be tossed by any random wave and washed away.

Connection to God is joy that is unshakeable.

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Matthew 6:33

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness; and all these things
shall be added unto you."

Chapter Eleven

Some Interviews

Relationships, God, and Freedom

Over the course of my life, I have received some notoriety. I don't say this to boast. I say it in gratitude because it has given me the opportunity to teach on a larger scale. Much of my notoriety is due to my son, Ricky, and Shelley's daughter, Bree, and our daughter, June Flower. Nevertheless, over the recent years, I have been interviewed for different publications, media, and podcasts. I have selected a few of those questions and answers from a few different interviewers to share with you here because they are the questions I receive most often from others.

Interviewer: Many people are intrigued by the relationship you have with your wife. Can you tell us your secret to a good relationship?

When people ask me this question, they usually don't really want to hear what I have to say, because it's not the usual thing you've heard over the years when you hear advice for couples getting married. However, since you've asked, I will give you the secret.

It begins with the knowledge that we don't own each other. Individual free will is a must. Though we may refer to each other as "my wife" or "my husband" we realize that is only to identify whom we may be speaking about. We are not property and we don't own each other. We maintain separate identities with individual thoughts, ideas, wants, needs, and experiences.

I allow Shelley the freedom to be who she is; she allows me the same. After all, that person is the one with whom we fell in love. However, that freedom comes with immense trust and responsibility.

Many times, when someone marries, you hear it said that they are now "one." Not only is this not possible, it is not healthy, for if they become one, the person with the less aggressive or less dominant personality will slowly recede until one day they may feel as if they have simply disappeared.

You cannot be one. You can be one unit. One in goals and beliefs. You are one in purpose. That purpose depends on your joint beliefs and on your actual vows. Therefore, one purpose may be to love and cherish and support each other. You can be "one flesh," which I believe refers to the act of sexual intimacy. Still, you are two separate individuals with separate and individual needs, wants, tastes, and opinions.

Let me reiterate for clarity. If you become "one" and the more dominant person prevails, how does this make the other person feel? Lost? Undervalued? Unappreciated? They may feel resentment, anger, or possibly even betrayed. The dominant partner may not even realize he or she is being dominant. They are simply forgetting to

revere, admire, and respect the other partner. They really cannot be blamed for this because the less dominant person simply recedes. When a person recedes, when they lose who they are, the other person in the relationship will not only take the lead, but they will lose respect or admiration for the weaker person. They will forget the reasons they were drawn to that person in the first place. They may lose interest. So, how do we fix this?

We maintain our identities by encouraging our partners to pursue their interests, the things that make them happy. Shelley would never ask me not to teach, or not to train, and whatever Shelley wishes to pursue, she has always had my complete support and encouragement, unless that pursuit is dangerous in some way or is to the detriment of herself or our family. We support and respect each other and allow each other to be who we are. We encourage positive things and we remember that we don't own our partner. They do not have to agree with everything we think and do. They do not have to have our permission, though out of respect, we do our best to work together. Caveat: I will always feel the need to shield and protect my wife. It is my duty as a man. I'm smiling as I write that, because I know those words just triggered a bunch of people. Pray about it. Listen.

I usually encourage couples to maintain separate identities, to even enjoy some separate activities. You don't have to do everything together. If you cannot stand to be away from each other, then this becomes a needy situation. If you cannot stand alone and pursue your own interests, and must have your partner with you at all times, then maybe you are not ready for a mature, committed relationship. Needy is not healthy.

And speaking as a man, your wife will love the strength of you being able to stand on your own and not need her by your side waiting on you at all times. However, don't overdo that, because she also needs you to need her.

Logically, a great marriage really comes down to who you select as your spouse. When you consider a life partner, remember this: You must be able to admire the person you marry. You must admire them and respect them for who they are. If you don't, if instead, you feel drawn to them chemically (sexually) or if you are in a relationship because maybe you are meant to help someone, or they are meant to help you, then that is fine, but realize THAT relationship may not be the one that lasts forever. It may be one that lasts until each has given to each other what they were meant to give. That is not a marrying relationship.

That is the way of many relationships. As I've said many times, it's vibrational. A person's certain vibration may attract a complementary vibration, one that's needed at the time. Yet as those people grow and change and evolve, their needs change and they may find that they are no longer a match. So, be very careful to whom you commit, and when you do commit, then commit. People marry and make lovely vows and then don't think about them again. It is commonly said that 50% of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. That number has gone down somewhat. The point is, your sweet little wedding vows are hugely important. Keep them.

If two people are evolving in a healthy manner, not a needy one, and can stand strong by themselves, and then find each other and can

respect and admire each other, and don't feel as if they own each other and decide they can commit to a life of learning and growing side by side, then they are the ones who will live "happily ever after."

Allow me, though, to get to the heart of the matter. In truth, when you marry, you become a family, and the real basis of a good relationship—is God.

Shelley trusts me, because she knows I love God. She knows I will always try to do God's will in my personal life, in my marriage, as a father, and so on. She knows that if I do as God would have me do, then she can trust me to do what's best for our family.

And I know that same thing about her. So I trust her. I know she is striving to do God's will. If she falters, she knows I will be there for her to lift her up and help in any way I can. And if I falter, I know she'll do the same for me. We are a team. We made a vow in front of God, and we will keep that vow. We will continue to strive to be the best people we can be. She won't sit around being lazy, eating chocolate and self-indulging, or sneak off to see another man. She trusts that I won't get lazy, or start drinking or sneak off to see someone else. We both strive each day to be holy in God's eyes, and our union is blessed. That's the real key to a perfect relationship.

One last thing that really gels a relationship is if you save sexual relations until after you're married. That may sound archaic or simply ridiculous in this day and age, but God made that rule for a reason. The reason was not to simply make things difficult or to have power over us. It was because God, in His infinite wisdom, knows how

beautiful and special and sacred this makes your first time together as husband and wife. It also makes it much more likely that you will NOT break those vows.

Interviewer: So, may I be so bold as to ask if you and your wife were virgins when you married?

It truly is a bold question, but I understand. You want to know if I practice what I preach. My wife and I had both been married with children by the time we first met. So no, we were not virgins. Not coming to our marriage. Still, I'd had only one partner before Shelley and she'd had only one before me. However, if I'm being honest, I will say that we were sorely tempted to be together before we married, but we stayed strong and made it to our wedding night. Which, as I said earlier, made it a thousand times better, more powerful, more meaningful, and more sacred. The holy relationship between a man and woman is beautiful.

Interviewer: Speaking of relationships between a man and a woman, I've heard that you are adamant about gender roles in marriage.

I remember when I was asked this question, the weariness that came upon me. I had to say a quick prayer to ask God to help me with my response and He almost immediately answered my prayer with these words. "Tell the truth with love."

The truth is, God created male and female, and by the way, there are only two genders, male and female. Anything else is a lie created by Satan to

destroy the relationship between men and women and therefore to destroy the family. God created man first. He created woman as a companion to man. He created the man to be stronger. He created men, on average, with greater physical strength. That difference can be seen in physiology and endocrinology. Yes, there are some women who are very strong. Stronger than a weak man. Not stronger than a strong man. A man and woman are different and have different roles. Those roles are not to stagnate one another. A man can cook. A woman can play sports. They are, however, beautiful. Each role is beautiful and each role is equally important.

Men are leaders. Women too, can be leaders, but that is not their main role, and usually women should not be in leadership roles over men, except in certain things. For example, we have a friend, a woman, who is an amazing chef. When she is in our kitchen, she leads. I take orders from her. There is no ego involved.

Still, men lead. Men protect. Men provide. Men are like the quarterback. Whatever goes wrong on the team, it is the QB that God holds ultimately responsible. Yes, we are responsible for our individual actions, but men have the power to make or break the family. They must lead, protect, take responsibility and it's not such a cush job.

My wife supports me. I support my wife. I am not a chauvinist. I don't use my strength against her or to make her fear me. I use it to support and protect her and my family. I would never use my strength to cause fear or to intimidate my wife. Not even a hint of fear. Not a veiled threat. Never. That is not Godly.

My wife's role is to nurture, to protect, to run

our home, to take care of our children. I depend on her to do this most important thing. I help and participate. I am present as much as I can be. I back her play and she definitely backs mine.

I stay vigilant in paying attention to my wife's well-being. If she is tired, or sad, or in need of anything, I make sure she is taken care of. I help out around the house when I can, when I'm home. Yes, sometimes I've had a tough day. So what? I'm strong. I can handle it.

She also watches to see if I'm in need of any loving care. She provides that willingly and tirelessly.

Of course there are exceptions to these roles. Sometimes the wife has to step up to help out financially. Still, the little bit of income after paying for child care and transportation almost completely negates whatever good comes of this. The bad that comes with children being raised by strangers is a much bigger consideration. This doesn't include single moms. Their situation is a difficult one. However, us men should be looking out for the single moms in our family and communities. God mentions widows approximately a hundred times in the Bible. I believe that taking care of them is extremely important. Search them out. Widows, single moms, orphaned children. Focus on that.

Now, back to two-parent homes; as a man, I have a responsibility to look after my wife. I will never, not ever, allow any of the children to speak disrespectfully to my wife, or to disobey her, even if I think what she wants them to do is not necessary. That, I would discuss with her behind closed doors, in a kind, calm, and loving manner. And she would do the same for me. Teaching the children to be

respectful of our women is of the utmost importance, not just in our marriage, but in the world. We would do away with so much violence and heartache brought on by men who don't respect and protect women.

As a man, I also have a responsibility to take care of my own health. Eat well. Exercise. Be strong enough to protect my family. There are men who are super-genius guys. People call them nerds and many of those guys think that because they are super smart and make lots of money for their families, they don't have to think about fitness or appearances. Think again. A smart, wealthy man who can't stand up and protect his family does not have my respect.

A man should be well-rounded. Some people are naturally brainy. Some people are naturally athletic. Whatever their weakness is, they are responsible for turning that weakness around. It's not funny or cute to be a weak-bodied nerd. It's also not funny or cute to be a brainless jock. But I digress. Bottom line, men and women are different. They are not equal, meaning they are not the same. They each have different roles to fulfill and when they do that, it makes beautiful harmony. From the act of making love to the fulfilling of our roles, it is a beautiful and miraculous thing. And of course, women do the most incredible thing, and that is to bear children. What the Lord has entrusted to them, to the female, is a difficult, beautiful and sacred thing. I am in awe of females and my love for the females in my life is too much to verbalize.

New Interviewer: Religion, a subject that can cause quite a stir for many people. If you are willing

to breach this subject, I would like to ask if you believe in God?

No. I don't believe. I know. I KNOW there is a God, He is our Creator, our source of life, God, our Heavenly Father, whose Son is Jesus the Christ, the prophesied Messiah. He is real.

These days many people prefer to call Him Source or the Universe because it makes them feel more at ease. They don't want to admit they believe in God, a higher power, because the Godless have deemed one stupid if they believe in God. So it's easier to take a "new age" approach and just call God "Source," or "the Universe" or "the Divine." Like I said, it has been suggested that those who believe in a supreme being are silly, ignorant and uneducated.

So, what happens is, many who believe in some kind of supreme being are reluctant to call him God. I actually understand their reluctance. For when we say "God" we picture the masses bowing down to some egotistical supreme being who demands that we fall on our knees and worship him. This is not the God I know. The One I have come to know through prayer and meditation, through the Holy Spirit bearing witness, through miracles and visitations, is a loving Creator, a just parent. He created the Universe in love, light, and compassion. He is the One who wants us to evolve, wants us, through individual freedom of choice, to find Him for ourselves. Scientists laugh at the notion of a God. I say God is the greatest scientist of them all and can certainly help them to understand His existence if they but ask.

I must say though, that once you realize God is

real, and feel His immense power and love, it ***is*** *overwhelming, and you certainly* ***do*** *feel the need to kneel at His feet and praise Him. In Matthew 22, His first and great commandment is to love Him. Which to some people sounds egotistical. But He knows that if we are close enough to Him to feel His power and love, we would love Him and want to obey Him and He knows that only that will bring us true joy that will never end. Now, about God being egotistical, what is His second commandment? It is to love everyone else as we love ourselves. That doesn't sound egotistical to me.*

Interviewer: Let me go back to science, because I know that you're a doctor of psychology, so as a man of science, how can you believe in God?

As a man of science, how can I not? I have to say right now, that my doctorate is considered a soft science. We use math extensively, like statistics and models, but it's a soft science. However, even if I was a physicist, there is much scientific research looking into the creation of the Universe. I implore people to research it for themselves. Look into the aspects of the Laws of Nature, of quantum physics and see that science and belief in God can—and most certainly do—go hand in hand.

Let me ask you this: when a supposedly learned individual declares that anyone who believes in God must be either ignorant or insane, does that statement have a vibration of light, or of darkness? Always consider the source. Don't follow the darkness. Contrary to what many believe, science and God go hand in hand*.*

It's much more ignorant or insane to believe that everything—came out of nothing. The scientific community even admits that something happened. Or they believe only what they can observe. There was a point at which everything came into being. What made that happen? It seems obvious to me, but that's because I know of a surety that God exists. He's made Himself known to me. Some scientists say it's just wishful thinking on our part, that there is a loving God. But He has made Himself known to me and I could never deny Him.

Our brains have a difficult time comprehending the vastness of the Universe, and in our human form cannot think outside the box enough to understand the science of what allows God to create the Universe. One merely has to look around them, at the Universe, at our world, at our bodies, at a flower, at a tree, and know that a higher power exists, and He is the greatest scientist of all. Our human theoretical scientists think they know or understand it all, when in truth, they know and understand very little.

To me, our existence—our actual DNA—is compelling evidence that God exists.

Let's not just look at scientific evidence. There is also much historical evidence that Jesus really existed and that He is the Son of God. For example, Biblical scholars have calculated that He fulfilled over three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament. That is pretty much statistically impossible. We're talking about somewhere between sixty to eighty

books, written by forty or so authors, over the span of fifteen hundred years. Keep in mind, there was no internet back then. There wasn't even a printing press. The authors were of different generations, yet they all speak of a common story.

There are over forty records of Jesus' life from ancient annals, from prominent historians, many who were not Christians, but simply learned men, historians, philosophers, and some even enemies of Christians. Forty records. Tiberius was emperor of Rome during Jesus' life. There are only ten records of this, yet, no one questions it.

Sixty years after Jesus' death, Josephus, sometimes known as a Jewish anti-Christian, wrote about Jesus. An extraordinary amount of scholars of all backgrounds and religions who studied Jesus' life have concluded that Jesus existed and He absolutely died on the cross. More importantly, over five hundred and fifty people, not all His disciples, saw and testified of the resurrected Jesus. No matter what, if you were to take this dive into the non-Christian study of Jesus, you would have to admit, that He did indeed live, He was indeed crucified, He did indeed die and He was indeed resurrected.

Interviewer: So, then are you a member of a particular church or religion?

I am a follower of Jesus Christ, a Christian. I don't always go to church, though we do attend often. I've attended numerous churches, numerous denominations. We, our family, love to go around visiting different Christian churches. Some of those

I have attended have been filled with God's Spirit and some have felt very dark. I use discernment. Those that feel dark I pray for, those that are filled with God's light, well, I also pray for. Most religious denominations, but not all, usually are begun with truths of light. Unfortunately, many religions become distorted. This is not necessarily on purpose to deceive, however, distorted is distorted. Then there are those religions that have become corrupted, meaning that someone within that religion purposely corrupted doctrine in order to gain more power or to help darkness prevail. Though others in that religion may not know of this corruption, corruption is corruption. That is why it is important that we...

Never follow anything blindly. We must look for truth and discover it for ourselves by praying and getting to know our Father's voice.

Recently, some prominent preachers and prominent denominations of Christian churches have purposely chosen to follow the directives of Satan. It's a very sad thing to see. Some of their parishioners will continue to follow blindly, and usually that is out of fear. Fear that certain things will happen to us if we don't follow, or fear that certain things will ***not*** *happen to us if we don't follow.*

Fear is a negative emotion. A dark emotion. A powerful emotion. Never let fear control your life.

Examine yourself, examine your life, examine

your motives. Let only love guide you. Most people live in fear and don't even realize it. There is fear that a relationship will end, that the loved one will stop loving them or lose interest in them. There is fear that a person or family member will become ill or contract some deadly disease or have an accident. There is fear that a child will make a bad life decision. There is fear of losing a job, a car, or a home. And back to the original subject, there are many religions based in fear. Worry, stress, fear—in order to live a happy, healthy and joyous life, we must learn to let go of our fears.

I recently had someone tell me that the church they belonged to would not approve of the way I am living my life. Mind you, I live in love, in kindness, in goodness, in positivity, in health, in spirit and strive to know and do God's will. This friend told me that what they would disapprove of was the fact that I did not attend any one particular church. Let me just say quickly, that when I do attend church, when we do, we spread the love around and attend different churches depending on what direction God sends us.

I realized this person, in his own way, was reaching out to me. This person was actually trapped, though he didn't know it. Rather than thinking for himself, this person cared very much about what "his church" declared to be right or wrong and this person allowed 'his church' to dictate his life. He was not free because he wanted what this church offered, which he thought was eternal salvation, and he allowed the church to dictate his life in ***FEAR*** *that he wouldn't obtain what he wanted. The church was using fear to control the members, to keep them coming to church. To keep them paying into the coffers. You see how this is not of the light?*

So when this man reached out and told me his pastor would not approve of me, I simply shook my head. You see, I do not believe in the authority of his church. I don't answer to a church authority. I have a relationship with the ***highest authority****. To me, it was indeed laughable that I would give this church entity any power over me. I would not, and in this I am truly free. I love God, I hear Him, I obey Him, not some church's interpretation of God's word. I do my best to live as nobly and honestly as I can, to obey His laws, and do His will. I do these things because I love Him. Still, I am* **saved** *by grace. Not by works.*

Interviewer: Will you say what church you believe is following the directives of Satan?

I will not call any of them out by name, but one only has to do a little research to discover which ones I'm talking about. Here's something to keep in mind. Telling people lies to affirm their mental illness is not love. Every church should reach out to all people of every race, every creed, and welcome them into the fold. Yes, Jesus wants us to love one another. But He also directed us to go and sin no more. So, accept everyone, but don't lie to them. Love the sinner, hate the sin.

Jesus died to save us from our sins. Being saved means we will be allowed entrance into our heavenly home to live out eternity with our families in the presence of God. We are saved by grace, so it's okay if we aren't perfect or if we falter, but that doesn't mean we can willfully participate in sinful activities freely. We must try to live as holy as possible. God

knows our hearts.

Satan too knows our hearts because he watches us and listens to us and learns our weaknesses. He knows that the way to destroy us and the world is by destroying the family and he knows to destroy the family he only needs to get us to believe his lies and to commit sin. He blurs the lines so that we can't clearly see wrong from right. He uses sexual immorality a lot because our sex drives are powerful and hard to keep in control. He convinces people of how glorious perversions of sexual intimacy can be, can feel, and makes us want more. This is how he destroys the relationships between men and women, which destroys the family, which harms and destroys the children and suddenly we are living in the days of Noah, or the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Which is where we are now. The churches who encourage Satan's teachings will receive their just reward.

New Interviewer: What are your views on abortion? Or would you rather not say?

I have no qualms telling the truth. And the truth is, abortion is murder, pure and simple. People say it depends on when you think life begins. When YOU think life begins doesn't matter. The truth is, life begins at the moment of conception. That is science. Will it make it easier to accept if I say that at fertilization, a new human organism begins developing? That is biology? Either way it is human life.

Interviewer: Some say at that point it is just a

clump of cells and not really human life.

People can say whatever they want, but that doesn't make it true. We can't lie to them to make them feel better about their life choices. Life begins at conception. Period. I know that's how God sees it. Even scientists have declared that there is an actual, visual, spark of light at the moment of conception. How beautiful is that?

Interviewer: So, then, what is the answer to the problem of unwanted pregnancies? The world would fill up with a bunch of sad, miserable, unwanted children.

The answer is very clear. Don't have sex unless you're married and ready to have a child.

Interviewer: Still, you know there will be millions of girls getting pregnant. There needs to be an answer for them.

Those girls aren't "getting pregnant." They are being impregnated. Most of that responsibility I will put on the males. Still, both males and females need to stop having sex. But I understand what you're saying. It's not going to stop. So there are two things I want to say to that:

1. Though we may not know the whole answer to this problem, I know for sure that the killing of an innocent baby is NEVER the right answer. Not EVER.

2. If we make people responsible for their actions, it will cut down considerably on the number of unwanted pregnancies, though there would be a learning curve.

Interviewer: Do you not think that women should have autonomy over their own bodies?

They had autonomy when they had sex. Once a female is pregnant, it's not just her body anymore. Like it or not, that is how God created us. A pregnant female is now responsible for a separate human growing inside of her. A human with separate DNA. A separate human from herself. So, the "my body my choice" thing is not true once they conceive. Period. End of discussion. The only alternative to that would be to end the pregnancy, which is straight up, murder. So, that's not the answer. Not ever.

Interviewer: What about rape?

If you're asking what do we do with a pregnancy caused by rape, then the answer is the same. Abortion, murder, is not the answer. Rape is a horrible crime. That a female is first raped and then becomes pregnant is another injury on top of a grievous crime. It's sad. It's terrible. But the child is innocent. Murdering that child is simply not the answer. That female can have the baby and give it up for adoption.

Interviewer: But that female would have to go through childbirth.

That is a fact of life. Rather than ending an innocent human being's life, let's focus on stopping rape. Let's ask the men to teach their boys about this grievous crime. Let's ask men to protect the females in their lives. Let's all do better. But let's not murder children.

I know several very good people who were the children of rape. They are grateful to be alive.

Interviewer: What about if the mother's life is in danger?

There was a Facebook meme going around that said abortion is never medically necessary to save a mother's life. A meme is not proof. However, many doctors stand by that. Many have spoken out about that, talking around semantics and showing how there are times when it is medically necessary, citing certain scenarios.

I've spoken to a very famous doctor about this very thing, and she says, when there is a medical complication, a doctor must always try to save the mother AND the baby. That may not be possible. But you try. You don't intentionally end the baby's life. She says they are playing with words. For example, they say: the ending of a pregnancy, if a mother's water breaks before twenty weeks, and they deliver the child, knowing it won't survive, that is still an abortion. She says it's not the same as an abortion because they are not tearing the baby apart. They deliver it and try to save it. More than likely, it won't survive, but that is up to God, not us. If we purposely tear a fetus apart, that is on us. And, by the way, we will be held responsible.

Bottom line, sexual immorality, rape, unwanted pregnancies, these are all problems and dark things in our fallen world. However, we must do all we can to bring light to the world, not more darkness by doubling down on the problem with more sin. Let's be more honorable than that. Let's take responsibility for our actions. Let's take responsibility for teaching our children.

Abortion is an easy way out instead of taking responsibility. It needs to stop. It won't. I know that. Not yet. But it will eventually, with some divine intervention. Until then, we need to live nobly, with integrity, with love, with kindness, and always looking to find the higher road in any situation.

In summary:

Let love guide you. God is love. The Universe is based in love, light, and freedom. Live in love. Look forever toward the light of Jesus. Practice individual freedom. Remember that each person walks their own individual path. Paths may come together for a short time or for the rest of a human life, but you will always remain individuals. You will remain free to choose what you will do in each circumstance. You cannot control anyone else, though you may want to and you may try to and you may even succeed. However, this control will not benefit either of you.

There is always a caveat to freedom, and it goes like this:

When someone uses their individual freedom to infringe upon the freedom or rights of others—as in abortion—then they have

overstepped their bounds.

For example, when one uses their freedom to take another's belongings or another's life, they have crossed the line. What shall we do about those who cross the line? I teach my warrior students to make their choice, because we, as warriors, have our freedom too, the freedom to choose to step in and intervene to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

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2 Corinthians 3:17

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Chapter Twelve

Spiritual Alignment

Spiritual connection is the most important part of all that I have learned over the course of my life—not my schooling and not the martial arts. It is the alignment with God's pure energy that has given me all that I have. This relationship with God brings me so much clarity and perspective that things that might normally bring a person down don't affect me. I wake each day with so much joy and energy and love that I have a burning desire to share that joy with others. However, I don't want to be their source of joy; I want them to be able to find their own joy, which only comes from a relationship with God. Helping you stand on your own two feet and connect to God—to complete joy and love—is what I truly desire to bring to the world.

True joy comes through connection and alignment with God, our Creator. When we become aware and awakened to life beyond this Earthly realm, and we align spiritually with God, we almost cannot contain the joy that fills our hearts.

As we are lifted through spiritual connection to that new perspective, we begin to feel God's power and hear His voice and He shows us our own path.

With such clarity comes pure joy. This joy comes because the capacity to feel love increases as our minds and bodies connect to the immense love of God. This awareness happens through spiritual connection or alignment and this spiritual alignment is not a difficult thing to achieve. You do not have to attend seminary, join a religion, become a monk, sit and chant mantras, fast for days, or meditate for hours. You simply need to consistently do the things outlined in this chapter and you will find yourself filled with the true unshakeable joy that only comes through Jesus.

Spiritual alignment with God, which allows us to see things from His perspective, can lift us from any Earthly tragedy. It doesn't matter what has occurred in your life, whatever emotional scarring, illness, death, violence, loss, depression, or abuse—all of them can be overcome. You do not have to feel alone or unhappy anymore. You will be filled with peace.

Let me use an example that most all of you have dealt with.

A teenage girl (or boy) has a boyfriend (or girlfriend) and she has fallen deeply in love. Then, the inevitable happens: he breaks up with her. She is devastated. She thinks she can't go on living. She falls into a deep depression. Her parents tell her that she will eventually get over this. They can tell her that because they have a different perspective. They know this is only the beginning of a long process of finding "true love." If only they could connect their minds to hers and allow her to see and know what they know, then she would begin to understand that the loss of this boyfriend, though understandably painful, is not the end of the world.

In like manner, when we face unbelievable pain here on the Earth, we sometimes feel we just cannot overcome it. Yet, if we were to connect our minds to our "Parent's" mind, we can be lifted up to a new perspective and we begin to understand that everything we face is simply a process of finding our "true love," our true selves, our true path, and truth in general.

When we connect spiritually (to our "parent") to our Father God, we remember joy, we remember love, the burdens of our Earthly lives fall away, and things we thought to be unbearable are suddenly vanquished. We are lifted up to a new perspective and the relief is immediate.

Have you ever been in a panic and prayed and felt a sudden peace? The pit in your stomach goes away and you suddenly have a knowing that everything is going to be okay? That was Jesus giving you peace. You aligned with Him briefly and He eased your burden. This doesn't happen all the time, but it can.

So what should we do to reconnect with God? The ultimate question, correct? The ways are as various and diverse as the people who inhabit this planet. I can only let it be known what I have done and what I've taught my students to do, to bring the joy, light, and love of God into our lives. This chapter is my plan in detail.

I teach my students to begin with thought. Everything begins with thought. Even God creating this world began with His thought. There is nothing that can be done without thought, and there is

nothing that can be done that is of the light without positive thought. Do you know what I mean by positive thought? Contrast usually makes things easier to understand.

In observation, instead of being critical, look for anything of good report. This covers a huge amount of your daily fare, for we observe and react almost every minute of the day. What did you think of breakfast? Of someone's driving on your way to work? Of having to go to work? Of your job itself? What do you think of your spouse, your children? Are your thoughts mostly negative, or positive? Are you focusing on the things that bother you, frustrate you, and anger you?

Be an observer of your thoughts. Don't judge yourself. Don't be frustrated with yourself. Only observe. That is the beginning.

Now that you are being an observer of your own thoughts, I will discuss each key to spiritual alignment. At the end, I have provided an easy-to-follow outline. I am not speaking of a daily schedule, though that can be obtained in my student manual.

1. Let go

Let go of all expectations. Let go of any negative thoughts or emotions. Let go of your need or want to feel happy. Let go of your need or want for anything. Simply accept all that is *you* right now. Say, "yes" to who you are, what you are, where you are, how you are, right now in this very moment. If you are in a place that feels pretty good, be grateful

for it. If you are in a place that feels terrible, allow it, wallow in it, but either way, accept it. At this moment, you may be feeling rebellious about what I've just asked you to do. I am not asking you to never again reach for what you desire. What I ask is a tiny adjustment in your thought, for before you reach for anything else, you must accept and say 'yes' to the now. The working toward goals comes later. For now, let go.

Every day, throughout your day, let go. Don't push. Relax. Accept. If you feel yourself tense up about anything, let go. Visualization always helps, so take a deep breath, and as you exhale, see yourself letting go of a taut rope. You let go and you float down to land softly.

This "letting go" sometimes takes practice. We are so used to holding onto everything in life with such desperation that letting go seems impossible. Let go, like I had to in the cave when I was a boy. Let go as if you are accepting that your life is coming to an end. Surrender. You will know when you have achieved this moment of surrender because you will suddenly experience the most freedom you have ever felt in your life. It's not a hopeless feeling. It's a wonderful, empowering feeling.

2. Pull on the armor of God

This is an easy and quick technique that I do every day, many times a day. It takes literally two seconds. Still, I can do it anytime, anywhere in two seconds and it can change—and has changed—my circumstances.

When I first began to do this, I really didn't feel anything special. But as I continued to do it, I began

to feel a very special peace and strength fill me, and I know that God is present. This is simply a visualization and prayer mixed together.

In Ephesians 6:10-18, it says:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

I memorized this scripture and visualized myself literally putting on the armor, and when I finished I saw a force field of light coming from the hand of Jesus to fill me and surround me. I eventually reached the point where I could do it in only two seconds.

I knew that thoughts are real. The angel messenger in the cave told me it was so. I researched and discovered it has been found that thoughts are

scientifically proven to be an energy form. They are measurable neurological/electrical activity. That means that when I imagine the armor of God on my body and the light moving through and around my body, it actually IS there.

I usually begin by saying these words in my mind, "Lord, I put on your armor and I call upon Your light." I immediately "see" (visualize) the armor covering me, like something out of an *Iron Man* movie, and I see the light burst from the heavens into the crown of my head. I "see" this light move all the way through my body. I "see" this light increase in brightness and volume as it fills my body, moves through my body, and surrounds me.

Remember, where there is the light of Jesus, there can be no darkness.

Your thoughts are energy, and energy is matter. Therefore, what you think and what you say and what you visualize, IS. Thought energy exists.

After a while, I realized I could actually feel this power as it moved through me and I knew then that what I was visualizing truly was taking place.

Now, as I stated several times earlier, putting on the armor of God is important. There have been many students who have come to me complaining that they weren't making any progress in certain areas of their lives and I would go through a list of the basics I'd assigned to them and almost always when I asked if they were daily putting on the armor of God, reading the scripture, seeing the light of Jesus fill them, the answer was, "Oh, yeah, that. No, I haven't been doing it as much as I should." Which of course means, they haven't been doing it at all. Do it. Two seconds.

3. Hydrate

Drink water. I'm sure you all know that our bodies are composed of a large percentage of water. On the average, babies are close to 80% water, moving down to women who are a little over 50%. We won't go into the physical benefits of being hydrated. For this chapter, we are talking about spiritual benefits. Water is not only perfect for flushing out impurities from our bodies, but spiritually, it is a super conductor and therefore, staying hydrated is an important part of the energy connection between our bodies and God. It is a spiritual conduit.

So, how much water should we drink? It's different for each person. I will borrow a few paragraphs from the *Kino Martial Arts Student Handbook.*

"You will read on many diet plans to drink at least eight glasses of water. This seems to cause stress for many people, complaining that they have a really hard time drinking so much water. I also am very cautious to look deeper into whatever the mainstream pushes as good for our health. They've been wrong too many times. Do your own research.

I never recommend the forcing of water. I do recommend you stay hydrated. The problem is, many people don't realize when they are dehydrated. There are symptoms, such as dry mouth, thirst, fatigue, headaches, and body aches. Everyone is very different. Diets are different, body masses are different, some may take medications, some have other medical conditions they don't know about. Because of this, it is impossible for me to say that you should all force yourselves to drink eight glasses of water each day. Yet, you should try to stay

hydrated. That is why I ask each student to pay attention to their bodies, and take a quiet moment to assess their needs and talk to their doctors.

Most people flourish when drinking at least four glasses of pure water daily. It's doable and it is a number that most people do not stress over. It's a number I intuitively feel good about recommending. That being said, develop and use your OWN intuition about every single thing you do or don't do for your well-being. That is my real goal, to have you stand on your own. Mainly remember, water is a spiritual conduit.

4. Stretch

That's right, I'm asking you to stretch. You might think I'm speaking of your mind, and yes, I always ask that you ...

***Stretch your mind and open* it *up to new possibilities*.**

However, in this section we are speaking about stretching your body.

***Your body is more important than you may think in the seeking of spiritual alignment with* God.**

Remember in *Chapter Six* I marveled at the body of my son who was growing inside my wife, and I learned...

In this Earthly realm, our bodies are the clear point at which the spiritual meets the physical.

Our bodies are important, but this doesn't mean that the only way to connect with spirit is to be physically fit, though many people who focus on health and fitness also find a spiritual connection. I always recommend everyone be as fit as possible, but if you are not fit, don't let this defeat you. You do not have to be perfectly fit to align spiritually. Anyone, in any physical condition, can reach beautiful spiritual alignment. You can be handicapped, wheelchair-bound, even paralyzed. I ask you to simply stretch, for I have found that the moment we decide to stretch the body, to use it properly, to be grateful for it, the higher the vibration that moves through it, and the higher the vibration, the closer we are to God.

How can someone who is paralyzed stretch? Remember, thoughts are an energy form. See it! Use this same principle if you have a difficult time using your body. See it. Try it. Take small steps in the right direction.

This stretching should not be difficult or complicated. Make it easy. Bend, breathe, stretch over your head, breathe, lean to the side, breathe. Hold the stretch, any stretch, for at least three breaths and then change positions. It doesn't matter what stretches you do, as long as you are slow and gentle with your body. Be safe. Be comfortable. Breathe oxygen and light into each part of the body that you stretch and try to hit most major areas—legs, waist, arms, and chest. Do this stretching for five minutes before the next step.

5. Prayer

Everyone thinks they know what prayer is. I was on a forum recently where a woman spoke of praying and the wonderful feeling she gets from it. She was answered by a very angry person who was obviously offended by her faith and religion. That is the darkness talking. When someone shines their light, the dark forces always move in to try to put out that light. A person of pure faith, like the woman, does not offend me in the least. I won't repeat what this man said to the woman word for word, however, he declared to her that prayer was a mindless asking of a deity for favors and material things and that it was a ridiculous activity. The man then argued that the only way to spirituality was through meditation. Consider—whose vibration do you think was higher, his or hers?

The woman then took the time to explain that her purpose for praying was to give gratitude for her life and all of her many blessings, and that yes, she then asked for help with anything she needed help with.

Prayer and meditation are different, which is why I use them both. I use prayer to express gratitude, like the woman in my example. The state of gratitude is one of the highest vibrations we can experience. The higher our vibration, the stronger our spiritual connection. Now, as for the asking of God for "favors and material things," as the man put it. Asking God for your desires is the same as stating your intentions and there is nothing wrong with that at all. Desire is good and helps us to work toward something, which is part of evolving.

The *faith* in believing that God will provide and the *belief* that the Universe is working toward

providing you with your desires is not the same. As stated earlier, be very careful as to whom you direct your thoughts. Of course, there are times when we are not yet prepared to receive what God is trying to give us. Therefore, YOU must also take action, even if it is only a tiny step.

Some of you might be saying right now, but God can work ANY miracle. Yes, He can, and does, but remember, His miracles are merely science we don't understand. He may work a miracle, but first, He will help you to be able to accept that miracle. He may help you by providing a catalyst of some kind, one that helps you to vibrate at the rate of your desire.

So, first, pray giving thanks, and speak anything you wish to speak to Him, and ask for guidance and help in obtaining anything you wish to obtain, or declare your intention of what you wish to "be." State your intentions, and then, always ask for the spiritual connection and alignment we are working toward. Asking makes it your free choice and your free will to align with God's energy, with His light, with His love.

6. Meditation

Meditation is very simple and very easy to do, yet it is one of the most important things we can do. This meditation is not a New Age thing, or any other religion. It is not focusing on any particular thought or want or desire to make it come true. It is the opposite. It is the quieting of one's mind so that God's pure knowledge can finally get through. Mind chatter can be a problem for most people. When we quiet our minds for a time, *that* is when inspired

thoughts can flow. That is when ideas and messages from God and Jesus can get through.

How do we meditate? There are no firm rules, though some disciplines will tell you that their way is the best way. Of course, by now, you know what I think about that– YOUR way is the best way. In other words, whatever you instinctively feel comfortable with is the way you should go. The best for one is not the best for all.

Here is what I teach my students: Simply take a few deep cleansing breaths and then just breathe normally, in and out, anywhere from thirty seconds to one minute to fifteen minutes. The longer you take, the more inspiration flows.

Now, you may have heard that you should focus on your breath. The reason for that is to keep your mind from wandering and thinking about a thousand different things, which we, as humans, have a tendency to do. Focusing on your breath as it enters and leaves your body is the simplest and closest thing to our goal, which is, no thought at all. Breathing is an instinctive action and doesn't require much effort. Your mind will wander away from your breathing, and when you realize it has done that, simply bring it back to the breath—in, and out. Do NOT feel like you've failed because your mind wandered, for that would bring negative emotion. Be kind to yourself. Be forgiving of yourself. Love yourself. You are a beautiful creation, a child of God, capable of much goodness, love and light.

7. Listen and Pay Attention

You may ask, "Listen and pay attention to

what?" To everything. To synchronicities that happen throughout your day. To the person sitting on the bus across from you. To the birds chirping over your head. Listen. Watch. Be the observer of life. The inspired thought will come. The "aha" moments will come. The meeting of a key person will come. Some things will also come that are not inspired. Use your power of discernment to tell the difference. At first, this may be difficult. Yet if you persist in your goal for spiritual alignment with God, you will begin to know the truth of things instinctively. Your power of discernment will grow. You will begin to recognize your Father's voice.

Listen, even, to your mind chatter. I spoke at a conference about the words that came into my mind and how I knew I was being led in a certain direction. After the conference a woman asked me how I was able to differentiate between normal mind chatter and the inspired thoughts that come from God. I explained to her that sometimes I can't. Sometimes it seems just like my own mind just going a mile a minute, but then, some little coincidence/synchronicity will occur that lets me know that what I was thinking was indeed the inspiration for which I'd been searching. However, I wouldn't have noticed the synchronicity if I hadn't been "paying attention."

So, listen to your mind chatter, listen to the world, pay attention. It doesn't take very long at all before you realize things in this world are not what they seem. There is much more going on behind the scenes than we know or realize. And it is MARVELOUS!

Summary:

- Let go
- Put on the armor of God
- Hydrate
- Stretch
- Pray
- Meditate
- Pay attention

These are seven simple, easy-to-accomplish things that will change your life. Not one of them is more important than the others. I'm tempted to say prayer is the most important; however, what good is prayer if you don't listen for the answers? A lot of people say that God doesn't answer their prayers. Use the other steps to get in tune, and you will see that He does indeed answer you.

These seven keys unlock the door to true joy; however, it is like a combination lock. Each key is the number that opens another part of the lock. There is one more key that I haven't mentioned yet. It is that these keys will absolutely work if you make the choice to implement them. You must make that choice. What do you choose? Joy or sorrow? Light or darkness? Happiness is a choice, and if you choose to utilize these keys, it WILL happen.

This is the beginning of a whole new world. Just imagine what we could do if even a quarter of the people in this world decided they would try this. What a revival that would be.

Remember, where there is God's light, there can be no darkness, and remember, one small light changes a whole room of darkness.

Jesus is the light of the world. Work with Him to prepare for His coming. Because He IS coming.

At the beginning of this book I asked you to keep your mind open, gather knowledge and draw no conclusions. I hope you have been able to accomplish that, for new horizons require a mind open to all possibilities.

Nothing is as it seems and there are hidden truths everywhere.

Our ego is ever present, pervasive, and almost impossible to subdue. It wants to keep us safe by keeping us in a box that we are familiar with. Be aware of it and let go of fear. Fear is truly the mind-killer, as author Frank Herbert said. When we let go of fear and open the mind, we begin to see past the mirages that are part of this Earthly life.

What I want for each of you is pure joy. Though, as I said earlier, I can lead you to the path, I can offer some onside coaching, but I cannot do the work for you.

Your joy cannot come from an outside source. It cannot come because your illness has been cured or you won the lottery, or you won the game, or the woman you love consented to be your wife. Your

joy cannot come from a simple desire granted. You must have joy for no reason, and when I say that, I mean for no earthly reason. You must have joy simply because you are connected to and know the love and joy of God. If you don't have this kind of joy, then you are at the whim of whatever life brings your way. If things go bad, you won't be able to find your joy, unless that joy comes from God. Though I want this joy for you with every part of my being, I cannot give it to you. You must choose it yourself and do the work yourself.

Have you ever watched a chick breaking out of its shell? It is slow and tedious work and you want to reach in and help break away part of the shell. Yet, if you truly love that chick and want it to survive, you realize that it must do the work itself, because doing the work makes it strong.

I wonder if God's angels are similarly tempted to help us break our shells? Regardless, God, in His wisdom, will allow us to go through the pain of living and overcoming and getting strong. He will hone us in the fire. But He also will be there in the fire with us. He will give us peace. He will take away the pain. He loves us so much that He sent His only Begotten Son to die a horrible death for us. He has a plan. He will guide us and offer wisdom and send catalysts to teach us. Our God is an awesome God.

We can all choose joy. We can all be lifted up to a new perspective and we can then share that perspective of love and light with others until the

entire world is glowing with it. May it be so. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Do not let the course you think your path is supposed to take dictate where you go. Let go of your plan and expectations just enough to allow a variance or two or you may never come across the treasures hidden along the path. Let go enough to listen to the still small voice, the voice of your Father in Heaven, and trust Him. Show the faith of a mustard seed and He will fill your cup to overflowing.

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Psalm 16:11

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life:
in thy presence is fulness of joy;
at thy right hand there are
pleasures for evermore."

A Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven, thank You, Father, for being so mindful of us. Thank You for all that we have, and we know that is a lot. We don't mean to take it for granted. Thank You for all that we *don't* have, for we know that makes us reach toward You in our hearts. We praise You, Father, because we are so grateful for Your powerful love. We look forward to YOUR kingdom enveloping this Earth. We seek to know Your divine will for us, Father, and to have

guidance in doing Your will every single day. We ask You, Father, to give us what we need to provide for our families and for ourselves. Heal us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, please, dear Father. And help us to accept those things we cannot change, for we will do our best to pick up our own crosses and follow You. Forgive us, Father, for mistakes and for sins willfully committed. Help us to know and understand right from wrong. Help us to know and understand Your Word. Give us the power of discernment so that we may recognize the workings of Satan and his minions, and give us strength to overcome those temptations, and wisdom to not be deceived. Send Your angels to keep us safe, Father. And Father, most of all, we want You to know how grateful we are for Your Son, for His gift, for grace. We know He is the way, the truth, and the life; He is the light and He is the door. We pray this prayer in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scroll down for Pics

For more Pics from the Series

go to the Photo Album on

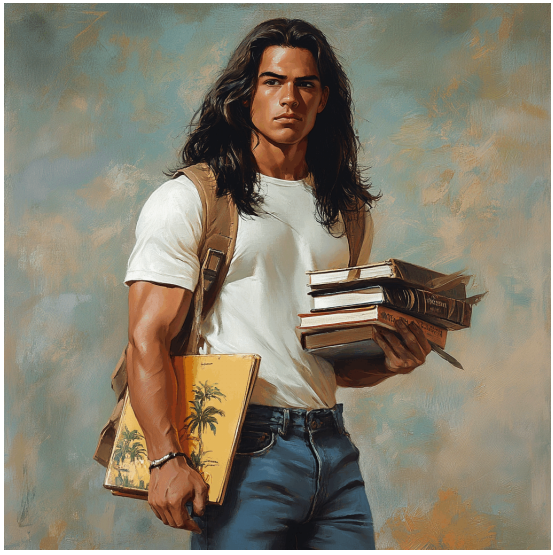
mccartneygreen.org



[L-R Kana, Eric, Mike, Samuel]



[Palani and Kai]



Eric Kino in High School



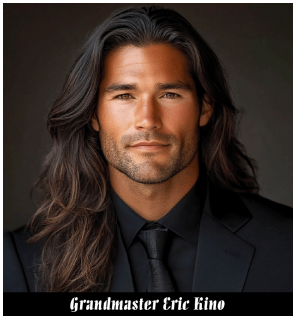
James Crane in High School

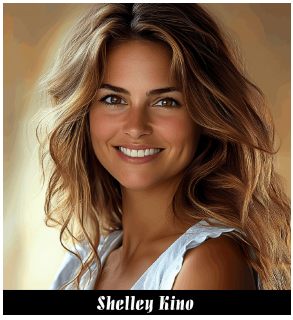


Ann in High School



Eric teaching class


Grandmaster Eric Kino


Shelley Kino


Justin Lee
Jason Lee


Ricky - age 9


Ricky - Age 10


Ricky - Age 11 at his mother's funeral

A Note from McCartney Green...

I will go where God leads me. I will write what He puts in my head. I will strive to learn God's will for my life, and I will do His will always. I know He has been with me and I know He is real. Jesus Christ is real. I love Him and pray His blessings upon you all, always. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Continue the Journey

The Dandelions Never Die—In Jesus' Name Series

by McCartney Green

#1 A Healing—In Jesus' Name

#2 Suffer the Children—In Jesus' Name

#3 Finding Home—In Jesus' Name

#4 Weeds Grow—In Jesus' Name

#5 Angels—In Jesus' Name

#6 The Worth of Souls—In Jesus' Name

#7 Warriors—In Jesus' Name

#8 June Flower—In Jesus' Name

#9 Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name

#10 Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name (Part Two)

#11 Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name (Part Three)

#12 Feed My Sheep—In Jesus' Name

#13 For Unto Us—In Jesus' Name

#14 Such a Time as This—In Jesus' Name

Prequel—Messages From God:
The Memoirs of Grandmaster Eric Kino

and just for fun... Kino Martial Arts Student Handbook

All Books Available for Free Download at:
mccartneygreen.org

About the Books

The Dandelions Never Die—In Jesus' Name Series currently includes fourteen novels and one prequel memoir. Each story brings its own message of faith, courage, love, healing, and hope while following the ever-growing circle of family and friends surrounding the Kinos.

Although each book contains a complete story and may be read on its own, the characters' lives continue from one novel to the next. Readers will experience the fullest journey by beginning with Book One and reading the series in order.

#1—A Healing—In Jesus' Name

When Shelley Adams crosses paths with Grandmaster Eric Kino, she is still carrying wounds from a trauma that changed the course of her life. Eric sees far beyond the frightened, uncertain woman she believes herself to be—and recognizes the strength, beauty, and purpose within her.

A Healing introduces the Kino and Adams families, the Lee brothers, and the dangerous Crane brothers in a story of love, courage, spiritual healing, and freedom from the victim identity. It is the beginning of the family—and the journey—that will grow throughout the entire series.

#2—Suffer the Children—In Jesus' Name

Fourteen-year-old Toby Nash is an ordinary boy with an extraordinary heart. He loves baseball, dreams of helping and healing animals, and thinks becoming a singer might be pretty cool someday. Then he meets twelve-year-old Caroline and recognizes the carefully hidden signs that something is terribly wrong in her life.

As Toby and those around him struggle to protect a wounded child, Suffer the Children confronts the devastating realities of abuse while showing the difference one observant, courageous person can make. It is a story of rescue, patient love, faith, and the long road toward learning to feel safe.

#3—Finding Home—In Jesus' Name

Lisa Lewis has spent years building a successful life while distancing herself from the painful family secrets she left behind. When circumstances bring her to Pine Forest, Georgia, she encounters Chaz Stewart, his remarkable family, and the grandmother who never stopped loving her.

Finding Home introduces Chaz, Lisa, Maddie, Jodi, John, and the Pine Forest family whose lives will soon become closely entwined with the Kinos. Through romance, danger, buried truth, teen pregnancy, incest, and post-traumatic

stress, this story asks what it truly means to come home.

#4—Weeds Grow—In Jesus' Name

The entire Kino family returns in a story centered on movie star and martial arts champion Ricky Kino and the fiercely independent Breanna Adams. Their love has never been simple, and the choices they make will affect not only their own future but the lives of the young people watching them.

As danger takes root close to home, Weeds Grow explores family relationships, fatherhood, personal identity, sexuality, fear, hatred, and the courage required to confront what has been allowed to grow in darkness. Some weeds can be pulled. Others fight to survive.

#5—Angels—In Jesus' Name

Widowed mother Lizzy Anderson is raising five little girls while working nights as a nurse and doing everything she can to hold her family together. Special Agent Keegan Tanner is dark, dangerous, driven—and carrying evidence that could expose a horrifying criminal operation.

When their lives collide, Lizzy and Keegan

are drawn into a battle involving corruption, assault, child trafficking, and powerful people willing to destroy anyone who stands in their way. With help from the Kinos, the Pine Forest family, and Ameritech, they must discover whether wounded people can still trust love—and whether ordinary human beings can sometimes become angels for one another.

#6—The Worth of Souls—In Jesus' Name

Jeff Davis returns in a story that introduces Mickey, a fierce young woman who has spent much of her life believing she is expendable. When she is taken by people who place no value on human life, Jeff and the growing Ameritech family will risk everything to bring her home.

The Worth of Souls is a story of kidnapping, sacrifice, courage, first love, and the immeasurable value of every human soul. It also offers an unforgettable glimpse of teenage Jeffy Kino and Cameron Wallace—two young people whose connection will help shape the future of the series.

#7—Warriors—In Jesus' Name

Shelley's youngest sons, Mark and Joey Adams, are grown men now, each carrying the teachings, strength, and example of the family

that raised them. But even the strongest warriors may find themselves facing enemies they cannot defeat with physical skill alone.

Warriors confronts domestic violence in its most recognizable and insidious form—the gradual isolation, control, fear, and destruction of a person's spirit. It is a story about recognizing abuse, finding the courage to escape it, and learning that true strength is not found in domination, but in love, protection, truth, and freedom.

#8—June Flower—In Jesus' Name

June Flower Kino—Jeffy to those who love her—has grown from the miraculous child introduced in Book One into a gifted physician whose discoveries may change the future of medicine. But there are powerful people who will do anything to prevent that future from arriving.

Her journey takes her across the world, into danger, loss, breathtaking beauty, and the lives of two unforgettable Ugandan children. As Cameron Wallace returns to protect the girl he never stopped loving, the entire cast of the series gathers for a sweeping story of courage, family, sacrifice, healing, reunion, and one final twist that reveals the story may be far from over.

#9—Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name

The next generation steps forward as the series moves between Hollywood and Pine Forest, Georgia. Young Eric Kino begins questioning the path laid before him, while Marine Raider Jacob Appel returns home and discovers that the girl he has known all his life may no longer be merely the little sister figure he left behind.

Meanwhile, fourteen-year-old Gabe Tanner—the charismatic only son in a family of beautiful sisters—is beginning a journey that will alter the lives of both the Tanner and Kino families. Love grows, danger gathers, and a shocking ending given to the author in a dream changes everything.

#10—Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name, Part Two

The story continues as Gabe Tanner and those who love him struggle with the consequences of what came before. Families draw closer, young relationships deepen, and faith is tested as darkness attempts to reshape the lives of the next generation.

At the same time, Eric Kino III begins to see his own path more clearly when he encounters a young woman stranded beside a highway. One act of compassion opens the door to a story larger than either of them expects, proving once again

that a seemingly ordinary moment may be part of God's extraordinary plan.

#11—Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name, Part Three

The consequences of what came before are still unfolding as Young Eric struggles to recover, families adjust to new realities, and the next generation begins stepping into roles once carried by their parents. Love deepens, new relationships take root, and healing proves to be as much about patience and trust as strength.

As Gabe and Taylor's influence grows and the expanding family is drawn toward Pine Forest, Georgia, long-awaited purposes begin to surface. Children become leaders, parents learn when to step back, and a new generation begins discovering that the work God has placed before them may be larger than any of them imagined.

#12—Feed My Sheep—In Jesus' Name

The family gathers in Pine Forest with an enormous goal: feed thousands of God's children, meet practical needs, restore dignity, and serve every person who crosses their path. But what begins as a Thanksgiving mission soon becomes something far greater than food.

As attacks mount and darkness works to stop

the ministry, the Kinos, Tanners, Appels, Stewarts, and the next generation refuse to retreat. Families are strengthened, long-held wounds begin to heal, new bonds are made permanent, and ordinary acts of service become miracles in the lives of people who simply needed someone to see them. Feed My Sheep asks what might happen if serving God meant noticing one person at a time—and refusing to walk past.

#13—For Unto Us—In Jesus' Name

For the first time, celebrate Christmas with the Kinos, Tanners, and the enormous family God has gathered around them. But this season becomes far more than decorations, gifts, and traditions as old wounds surface, former enemies return, strangers arrive carrying hidden needs, and forgotten places are given new life.

Through forgiveness, rescue, reconciliation, service, and unexpected second chances, the family discovers that honoring the birth of Jesus means more than remembering what happened long ago. It means becoming His hands and heart now—welcoming the unwanted, restoring what has been broken, and making room for those who thought they had no place to belong.

#14—Such a Time as This—In Jesus' Name

A mysterious stranger arrives in Pine Forest searching for answers about his family's past—and carrying the weight of darkness that has followed generations. His arrival may also bring an unexpected answer for Lily Tanner, who has begun to wonder whether everyone she loves has found their person except her.

But a far greater story is unfolding. Grandmaster Eric Kino discovers that he is not the only man whose life was changed by an angelic encounter at the age of ten. One by one, others emerge—men from across the world who disappeared for three days, returned with a calling, and were sent to teach.

As the Twelve are drawn together and darkness closes in, families, warriors, believers, and former strangers converge on Pine Forest. Old mysteries begin to make sense, lives are transformed, new love takes root, and a lifetime of seemingly separate callings begins to reveal a larger design—one meant for such a time as this.

What Readers Are Saying

Featured Reader Review...

"I just finished book nine in this series—DND #9—and I can honestly say I've been hooked since I started a few weeks ago. I found the author's website and began listening to her read the books aloud, and I haven't been able to stop since.

"The best way I can describe these books is that they're like a "how-to" manual for living as a Christian, told through an incredible story. Despite being the best fiction I've ever heard, the characters stay true to their faith—they don't cuss, and they don't sleep around before marriage. Instead, they lead by example, showing what it means to live a life guided by Christ.

"The books don't shy away from real-life struggles either. They walk you through tough situations, showing how to respond with faith—when to pray, how to pray, and how to lean on God through it all. I've read the Bible so many times that, at one point, I started to feel a little numb to it. But these books brought a fresh perspective that reminded me why I love Scripture in the first place.

"I'd recommend this series over watching TV or just about anything else the world has to offer—except reading the Bible itself."

More Reader Comments...

"I know deeply in my heart that your books will indeed be used as training manuals. My spirit was a witness to that when I heard you speak it when I first started listening to the books. That lit a fire under me to listen to them all, ASAP!" Yvonne Espy

"Angels is my new favorite book! I had the weekend off and all I did was read. I couldn't put it down. I only have a few pages left but I don't want it to end. Plus when I finish I will have to wait until your next book comes out. I just wanted to tell you how much I LOVED reading this book!"

"Just when I thought your books couldn't get any better I was proven wrong with Weeds Grow! What an exciting, great book. I am having trouble getting my work done because I can't put it down. You are an amazing writer and I have to say WOW!"

"I absolutely love DND #1. I can't wait to start reading the other books in the series. I was amazed at how addicted I became to the book. I can't stop thinking about the characters and their stories. I can definitely relate to Shelley's self confidence issues. Her strength is so great and makes me feel like I can be as strong as her in whatever situation life has to throw my way. Thank you for writing such an inspirational and motivating book."

"I have read the first three books and I love them all. They are addicting! The problem is, I don't get enough sleep when I read them because I can't put them down! I am now having withdrawals because I don't have the 4th book. McCartney- you are great."

"I have read everything you have put out and have been patiently waiting for more. I love them all as they are all unique and different. Can't wait for more.(a thankful fan)"

"Just wanted you to know I loved all your books. Now, I am doing something I only do with

my all time favorites. I am going back and reading them again. Thanks for sharing your gift. P.S. You are the real deal!"

"Hey McCartney~ Thanks so much for sending me "Dandelions Never Die." I absolutely loved it! As a fellow writer and "professional romance novel reader" I can honestly say you are truly gifted with writing talent. I've added you to the list of my favorite writers and I'm looking forward to reading another one of your books soon. Hugs!"

I love to read books that make me think and have positive motivational ideas in them and I have to say, this book has it all. Well written and hard to put down, *Messages* certainly gave me something to think about. McCartney Green has a style of writing that makes people feel like we can make the world a better place. She is a true light and always makes me smile. I look forward to reading her future books.

~Melanie Glenise Schmitt~

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Once again, Author McCartney Green has delivered a well written title that deserves much attention and appreciation. The work is chock full of wisdom spoken through the mind and heart of the much beloved character in her *DND In Jesus' Name series*, Grandmaster Eric Kino, who is based on a personal epiphany. I absolutely adored this character, so it was a real treat for the author to give her readers more from the patriarch of this amazing family. Though I may not be in complete personal agreement with some of the spiritual aspects, I can certainly glean the truths and wisdom in this book for leading and living a more joyful and contented

life. I found myself nodding in agreement more than not. Regardless of where you are in your spiritual life, there is something for everyone here. The only thing I would suggest as a reader of her series is to read that series before reading this book. There are a lot of spoilers here for the series if you haven't read it yet. Also, it will give you a better understanding of the heart and mind of the man that is Grandmaster Eric Kino. And as you read this title, you will easily be able to envision him telling you his story as you sit out on the patio of his beautiful home with wife Shelley by his side, taking in the ocean breezes while you enjoy a cup of cleansing tea.

~Marla Thompson~

Indiana

Continue with DND #9 Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name

Sneak preview...

"Whenever there is a bright light in this world, the dark forces gather to put it out. But don't worry or fear, God's light is stronger than any darkness."
~Grandmaster Eric Kino~

March 15th, Friday Afternoon
Hollywood, California

Eric Kino the Third, known most of his life thus far as Young Eric, landed flat on his back, breaths coming in huge gasps. His face registered pain; perspiration dripped from his hard body, a body that was currently covered in bruises and abrasions. The guy standing over him pointed a gun at his head.

"Say goodbye," he said softly.

Eric closed his eyes in defeat. And then, in a flash, the gun was in Eric's hand, his enemy stumbling backward. Eric took only seconds to drop the magazine, toss the gun aside, and beat the guy unconscious.

"And cut."

There was a murmuring on set. Choreographed or not, the Kino kid was impressive and everyone standing there was in awe.

Twenty-year-old Eric stood still and listened as the older guy he'd just beat senseless put his arm around his shoulders and gave him some

direction. Eric nodded and then headed to the side while the next shot was being set.

"Whaddya think, Dad?" he said as he approached his father.

Ricky Kino smiled with pride at his son. "I don't think I could be prouder."

Young Eric nodded at him. "Thanks, but I meant, do you have any pointers for me?"

"Then say what you mean," Ricky said with a smile.

Young Eric laughed.

"What's so funny?"

"You sound just like Granddad. You're becoming your dad."

"Well, there are a lot worse things to be, wouldn't you say?"

"I would. I aspire to be like you and him, and I gotta say, it's pretty tough."

"My shoes are easily filled, my father's shoes, not so much. But at least I just said something that he would say. Maybe there's hope for me yet."

Young Eric frowned. "I don't think I like you being all humble and stuff, Dad."

Ricky knew exactly what his son was thinking, but decided to draw it out of him. "Why not?"

The young man actually shuddered. "It makes me feel, uh, well, you know."

"Again, son, say what you mean."

Young Eric blew out a long breath, took a minute to put his thoughts together. "Okay, it's like, I feel strong and confident, and part of that is because I have so much confidence in you, in everything you've ever said or taught me. So, it's like my confidence lies in you, like, you the big movie star, the martial arts champion, you can do

no wrong, or like, there's nothing you couldn't master, nothing you don't know."

Ricky chuckled. "Well, just ask your Mom about that. But really, son, though I appreciate the honor, I think you have me on quite a pedestal. I am totally fallible. Granddad is fallible, though it's actually hard for me to say those words because I have so much respect for him. You need to take us down off that pedestal. Only God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are all-knowing and infallible and that is where your confidence needs to come from. Don't let the fact that Granddad and I are imperfect shake your confidence; let that be a lesson that one can always keep learning and progressing, even when you get to be as great as my father." He rubbed his hand over the top of Eric's hair. "And if it will help you to gain back some of that confidence in me, I would be happy to kick your butt on the mats anytime."

Eric grinned. "Oh ho, Dad, you do know you're getting older, right?"

"Yes—and wiser. Wanna take me on?"

"Of course. I would never turn down the honor of facing you."

Ricky chuckled. "Well said. Good. We'll make that happen."

✝✝✝

Continue the story in DND #9
Circle of Life—In Jesus' Name

Anyone want some Pi?

Pi is a reminder that what appears random may, in fact, be part of God's perfect order.

3.14159265358979323846264338327950288419716939937510582097494459230781640628620899862803482534211706798214808651328230664709384460955058223172535940812848111745028410270193852110555964462294895493038196442881097566593344612847564823378678316527120190914564856692346034861045432664821339360726024914127372458700660631558817488152092096282925409171536436789259036001133