

KARYOBERBRUNNER

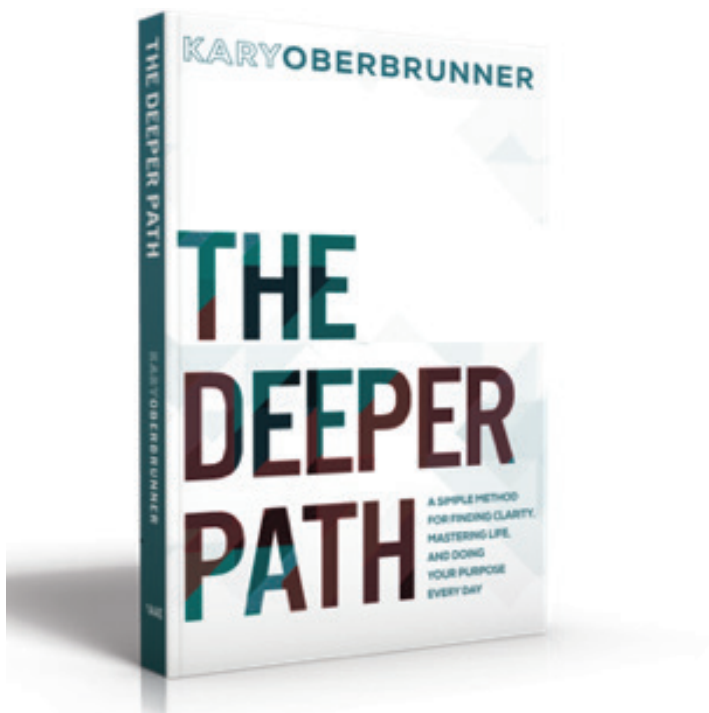
FOREWORD BY CHET SCOTT
Founder of Built to Lead

**THE
DEEPER
PATH**

A SIMPLE METHOD
FOR FINDING CLARITY,
MASTERING LIFE,
AND DOING
YOUR PURPOSE
EVERY DAY

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The Deeper Path.

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Published by Author Academy Elite
P.O. Box 43, Powell, OH 43065
www.AuthorAcademyElite.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging 2018939597

Softcover: 978-1-64085-268-6
Hardcover: 978-1-64085-269-3
Audiobook: 978-1-64085-270-9

Available in hardcover, softcover, e-book, and audiobook

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CONTENTS

Foreword: Chet Scott	xi
A Note to the Reader.	xiii
Introduction	1

PART 1: NUMB—THE WHY

1. A Routine Takeoff	7
2. The Melody Line.	12
3. Leaving the Nursery	18
4. The Little Difference	26

PART 2: FEEL—THE HOW

5. Step One: Question Your Condition	43
6. Step Two: Unmask Your Painkillers	51
7. Step Three: Explore Your Wounds	55
8. Step Four: Overcome Your Excuses	63
9. Step Five: Embody Your Healing	74

THE DEEPER PATH

PART 3: ALIVE—THE WHAT

10. One Happy Reunion	85
11. Soul on Fire	95
12. Author Your OPUS	101
13. Five-Minute Sketch	124

APPENDICES

1. Discussion Points	127
2. Examples of OPUS	133
3. Notes	139

Acknowledgments	147
About the Author	149
About the Publisher	151
About Igniting Souls	153
Your Next Steps with The Deeper Path.	155

Pain is inevitable. Misery is a choice.

—Unknown

A NOTE TO THE READER

Welcome to The Deeper Path.

Welcome to life change.

It might sound like a big claim, but I'm confident this book can change your life because the first life it changed was my own. When it was published in February 2012, I was a pastor entering my eleventh year at the same church. Three months later, I informed the church board I would be leaving. Six months after that, I said goodbye to everything familiar: a steady paycheck, health insurance, my colleagues, and comfort.

My departure wasn't reckless. After all, with a wife and three kids under six years old depending on me as the main financial provider, impulsivity wasn't even on my radar. My transition was an intentional decision to do my purpose full-time.

I often tell people that clarity is dangerous. Once you know what you want, you're dissatisfied with anything less.

CLARITY IS DANGEROUS.
ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT
YOU WANT, YOU'RE
DISSATISFIED WITH
ANYTHING LESS.

True, clarity comes with a cost, but the good news is it also comes with a big payoff. We call it the Deeper Path Payoff. Notice the progression below:

**Clarity → Competence → Confidence → Influence →
Impact → Income**

THE DEEPER PATH

WHY REPUBLISH THE BOOK?

Because *The Deeper Path* released many years ago, I wanted to update and expand it. Remember, when I first wrote the book, I was transitioning to do my purpose full-time. At that point, I still had the safety and familiarity of my day job, but I knew those days were numbered because clarity was on my side.

If you read the first edition, you witnessed my moments of bravery and my moments of fear and panic. By writing that initial manuscript, I was also literally writing my resignation letter. I knew it and I felt it.

I didn't remove those moments from this expanded and updated version. After all, you might still be in your day job surrounded by safety and familiarity. Maybe my fear and panic will bring you a kind of comfort too.

I didn't just stop there though. The truth is much has happened since 2012. First of all, I've found a wonderful group of friends. Together, we created a movement that has ignited over one million souls worldwide. We started a global team of hundreds of certified coaches, speakers, and trainers in dozens of countries. We even built a publishing company with over 500 authors, and it's growing every day.

In this edition, I share the most helpful lessons, stories, and tactics that I've learned along the way. After seven years, I've even rewritten my OPUS (which is listed in this book along with many other helpful tools). By the end of the book, you'll understand all about OPUS. And because you're brave, I'm betting you'll author your OPUS too. (More on that to come.)

For now, just show up filled up. Consume the content and apply the content. If you do, then like thousands of others who've taken *The Deeper Path*, you'll soon discover a simple method for finding clarity, mastering life, and doing your purpose every day.

I can't wait to hear about your life change.

Talk soon. And remember—I believe in you.

—Kary

INTRODUCTION

*Those who turn back remember the ordeal.
Those who persevere remember the adventure.*

—Milo Arnold

I'm writing this book with one hand: my left one. Nothing against the left-handed population—I respect and care for those people—but I'm right-handed, and I've written all my books with both hands. Except this one.

Seventeen years ago, something happened to me, although I didn't think too much of it at the time. The doctors finally caught it three months ago. As a result, I needed to have surgery. Up until that time, I was a "surgery virgin," but no longer.

While in wrestling practice back in high school, I attempted a move called a standing switch. Only I did it incorrectly, and my right shoulder paid the price. I didn't hear a tear, but I certainly felt one.

I remember yelling. It was a deep, genuine, from-the-belly yell. I hate those yells.

I don't like the word surgery either, which is why for seventeen years I ignored the pain in my shoulder. Avoiding it worked for a while, but in the back of my mind, I knew

THE DEEPER PATH

something was wrong. Sometimes, when things got too painful, I numbed the pain with over-the-counter meds, especially when playing sports.

Some people might debate whether it qualifies as a sport, but I enjoy the occasional round of disc golf. Looking back now, I realize my game always felt a little off. Certain throws produced a dull pain. I even stayed away from a few types of throws altogether because they made the pain worse.

My disc golf buddies never knew about my pain. I don't hang around people who make excuses, so I simply ignored the pain and avoided those particular throws for seventeen years.

Three months ago, all that changed.

Around Thanksgiving, my six-year-old son, brother-in-law, and father-in-law joined me in wintry Michigan for a game of disc golf. We came to a creek with a large pipe that spanned the ten-foot-wide stream of water.

Although there was a bridge for easy crossing, my adventurous son Keegan had a different idea. (We can't be too hard on him because his name means "little fiery one.") Rather excitedly, he asked if he could walk across on the pipe. I tossed some encouragement his way, and he sprang up and started walking across. I decided to join him as he crossed to the other side in case he hadn't quite mastered his balance yet.

He insisted he had learned this skill from Sensei Wu, the star of his favorite cartoon show at the time, *Lego Ninjago*. Still, his mother's warnings rang loud in my subconscious, so I assumed a supporting stance.

He made it halfway across and then started to teeter. Seeing his instability, my reflexes kicked in and I lunged for whatever body part I could grab. My right arm snatched him just in time. I managed to pull him awkwardly back onto the pipe.

We giggled, finished crossing, and doled out a round of high fives to his grandpa and uncle, witnesses to his bravery and our close call. If only we had walked away with just memories pumping through our brains and adrenaline pumping through

INTRODUCTION

our veins. Instead, I also carried with me a second tear in my shoulder. A week later, when I could no longer lift my arm, I knew I couldn't avoid the truth or the pain any longer.

I booked an appointment with a specialist to get a clearer picture of the damage.

The MRI didn't lie, and that winter my life changed in some unexpected ways. I experienced a surplus of medical bills, three months of physical therapy, lost days of work, a book deadline extension, the need to ask people for help, and—hardest of all for me—a ban from wrestling with my kids.

I learned a ton through the process. For starters, I discovered an unknown fear of mine. The MRI experience produced a severe claustrophobic reaction. I bet I looked odd kissing the ground after the technician pulled me out of the machine that day.

But I also learned that overcoming chronic pain—like a torn labrum—sometimes requires experiencing new kinds of pain—like surgery. I learned that sometimes our hurts are the only things that lead us to healing. If I hadn't received that second tear three months ago, I'd still be walking around ignorant of the initial tear from seventeen years ago.

Although I'm presently in pain and still healing, the truth is I no longer have two tears in my labrum. The surgeon repaired both and officially pronounced my shoulder as good as new.

Best of all, I'm told my disc golf game will be better than ever. And if all goes according to plan, I'm sure in a few short months I'll wonder why I waited so long.



Like me, you have pain in your life. We all do. But for most people, this pain may go unnoticed—for years.

We ignore the pain. We mask it. We numb it.

We get used to the limitations our pain brings, and we simply adjust.

We manage. We settle. We cope.

THE DEEPER PATH

We live way below our abilities simply because we're unwilling to pursue the pain that would push us to reach our potential. We hide our hurts, and in the process, we sabotage our healing.

But it doesn't have to be this way. If we're willing—and brave—we can choose a Deeper Path.

WE HIDE OUR HURTS,
AND IN THE PROCESS, WE
SABOTAGE OUR HEALING.

And this Deeper Path makes all the difference.

Before we celebrate this secret, we should first examine its price tag. Going beneath the

surface comes with a cost, and the general population prefers to stay at ground level for a reason.

Anyone who engages in even the shallowest emotional excavation needs the right kind of equipment. To be strategic, we must get properly equipped before we begin digging. For this reason, we'll examine the why, the how, and the what of the Deeper Path.

Prepare to get a little messy—going five steps down tends to have that effect. But also expect some adventure too. Along the way, we'll meet a few brave souls—and a few crazy ones too.

My ultimate purpose in writing this book (left-handed, mind you) is that you become one of these few. You're too important not to be included in this elite class.

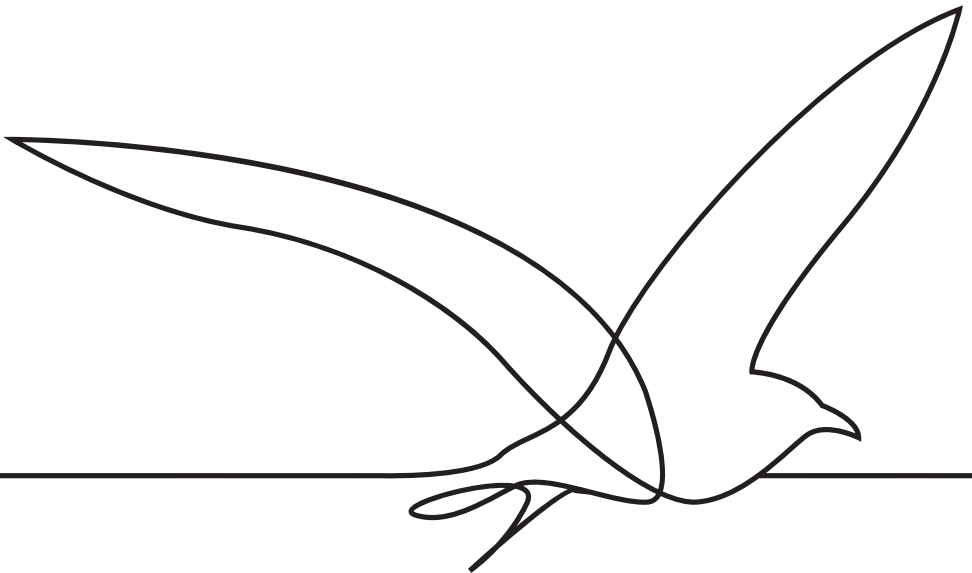
Ironically, to take The Deeper Path, we'll start by examining a specific takeoff. It might sound strange—go up to go down? Then again, the world we're about to explore may feel strange at first.

Even though the flight might get a little bumpy, I know you'll love where we land.

PART

ONE

Numb—The Why



1

A ROUTINE TAKEOFF

I run on the road, long before I dance under the lights.

—Muhammad Ali

On January 15, 2009, the sun rose as on any other day. One hundred fifty-five people awoke, packed their bags, and said their goodbyes. They headed to the airport expecting nothing unusual—like most of us do on most of our days.

Lucky for them, they buckled in for the flight of their lives. Even luckier for them, their particular pilot would soon be touted as a hero on the evening news.

Everything started out rather predictably—the spiel from the flight attendants about wearing the oxygen masks in the case of an emergency, the reminder to fasten their safety belts, the semi-awkward attempt to greet the stranger in the adjacent seat. Minutes later the plane raced down the runway and became airborne, along with musings about the day that now lay spread out for the seizing.

Like clockwork, the clock worked the way it should, bringing routine right along with it. Fortunately, this particular

THE DEEPER PATH

routine proved to be exceptionally routine, creating potential space for reading, writing, and even dozing for a few sleepy souls.

But only ninety seconds into the flight, the pilot noticed an unexpected obstacle. Or more accurately, unexpected *obstacles*. Birds suddenly filled his view.

Lots of birds. Lots of *big* birds.

In his book *Highest Duty*, Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger explains that the Canada geese with six-foot wingspans, weighing eight to eighteen pounds each, sounded like large hail pelting the plane. Moments later he felt what every pilot fears—double engine failure resulting from a brutal bird strike.¹

Routine had suddenly been blown to pieces—along with the birds.

The plane lost thrust and, given its low speed and low altitude over New York City, one of the most densely populated areas on the planet, Captain Sully knew he sat front and center in a seriously challenging situation.

Although he had never requested this experience, in that instant, life sought his response. And 154 people prayed that Captain Sully’s response would prove to be the right one.



We all have at least one defining moment in our lifetime. Many of us have a handful more. We can’t predict them. And we can’t create them—at least not easily.

But defining moments are coming for us. They will hunt us down and find us. They’re not for us or against us. They simply are. They’re a mirror—a complex combination of circumstances meant to do one solitary thing—reveal us. What’s inside of us is going to come out. And whether we welcome our response or whether we’d like to reverse time and bury our response right back where it came from, know this. The world is watching.

A ROUTINE TAKEOFF

We were going to see Captain Sully on the evening news that January day. Regardless of the pilot's actions following the unlucky bird strike, his number had come up, and life had decided to snatch him from semi-anonymity and thrust him onto center stage.

Through a series of events he couldn't avoid, Captain Sully faced his defining moment. And he faced it without the luxury of creating a plan.

Nope. Life happened, and he didn't have time for anything except an immediate response. But this is precisely what made Captain Sully a hero. And he didn't need a bird strike to tell him that. He already knew the secret that sets people like him apart from the rest. He acknowledged the reality that is no respecter of persons, race, age, intelligence, income, or education. He knew The Deeper Path and, more importantly, he traveled The Deeper Path.

Unfortunately, although this truth is available to all, it's understood by only a few. And despite this truth lurking in the shadows on most days, every so often, like on January 15, 2009, life decides to invite it into our awareness, even if for only a brief moment.

But what if we could tease this truth out of hiding, study it, and use it to our advantage? What if we could make it work for us and not against us? That wouldn't be fair, now, would it?

Like me, you've probably been sold the same claustrophobic cliché your entire life: *life isn't fair*. Well, what if in this situation it was? What if the universe operates according to specific laws and Sully simply used them to his advantage?

Think about it. Most people accept the law of gravity. Despite our best intentions, if we step off a cliff, we're going to fall and crash at the bottom. This law is no respecter of persons either—unless we have a hang glider, jetpack, parachute, or some other invention strapped to our back. To keep ourselves from falling, we would have to know the law and put it to work for ourselves.

THE DEEPER PATH

What if bending laws is exactly what Captain Sully did? What if we could follow suit and bend laws too—leveraging them and making them work for us, not against us?

Imagine the possibilities.

We could shortcut heartaches, ensure successes, and take strides ahead of our competition. We could excel in relationships, avoid emotional blowups, and increase our impact in the world.

We could also choose our response ahead of time and guarantee that our defining moments would define us exactly the way we desired.

Unfortunately, many people want none of it. To admit the existence of The Deeper Path is to admit the need to interact with it. This is precisely why most people consider January 15, 2009, a fluke—an example of luck in its purest form. Many prefer to label the whole experience as a miracle. And that’s just what they did—classifying this event as the “Miracle on the Hudson.”²

But this wasn’t a miracle—though I do believe in miracles. Sully achieved “the most successful ditching in aviation history” without luck or chance on his side.³

Was he a hero?

You bet, and the rest of the crew with him. They rightfully received the highest award. But this “miracle” wasn’t simply happenstance. Rather, this successful emergency landing on the Hudson River resulted from a series of decisions determined long before and birthed out of something much deeper.

As Captain Sully told CBS news anchor Katie Couric, “For 42 years, I’ve been making small, regular deposits in this bank of experience: education and training. And on January 15 the balance was sufficient so that I could make a very large withdrawal.”⁴



A ROUTINE TAKEOFF

Know this. Your number will come up. I can't tell you the exact time of your defining moment, but trust me, it's coming. And it doesn't care if you're ready.

I CAN'T TELL YOU THE
EXACT TIME OF YOUR
DEFINING MOMENT, BUT
TRUST ME, IT'S COMING.

Now our friends and family, they do care. They're rooting for our success, and they want us to land safely. But let's be honest. They have a vested interest too. None of us is flying alone. We all have passengers with us. They're belted in behind us, praying that our response will prove to be the right one.

But this is much bigger than even the "passengers" directly connected to us. US Airways Flight 1549 landed in the Hudson River adjacent to midtown Manhattan. Thousands of innocent New Yorkers were engaged in their normal routines that day, completely oblivious to the mass of metal with full fuel tanks descending directly on top of them.

Both our action and our inaction directly and indirectly affect our world.

The choice is ours. Do we want to shake the dice and wait for our unexpected bird strike before we determine our response? If Captain Sully had waited, he, the crew, the passengers, and the plane would have gone down in flames like other flights before his.⁵

The world is waiting on you to get past what you're waiting for. We need you to convert your apprehension into energy. We need you to take The Deeper Path. Tomorrow could be your defining moment, the day when your number is drawn.

Use today to prepare for tomorrow.

Know that we're behind you.

And we want you to land safely.

Because we have a vested interest in your success.

2

THE MELODY LINE

It's a beautiful day, don't let it get away.

—U2

Fans of the Dublin-based rock band U2 can probably recall the melody line of the song “Beautiful Day” without a second thought. Melody lines wield that kind of power and potential.

As we might expect, Bono, the humanitarian and main vocalist of U2, is often linked with the term *melody line*. He’s a singer, after all, and for one of the biggest rock bands of all time.

If you’re a nonmusical person like me, you might not know the technical meaning of *melody line*. With a little digging, I discovered it’s “a linear succession of musical tones perceived as a single entity.”¹

Bono created an alternative definition for melody line around the same time he cofounded ONE, a grassroots advocacy and campaigning organization. ONE fights extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa, by raising public awareness and pressuring political leaders to

THE MELODY LINE

support smart and effective policies and programs that are saving lives, helping to put kids in school, and improving futures.²

ONE boasts a big vision, but the billion-dollar question is “How does someone make that vision stick?” David Lane, ONE’s chief executive officer and former executive director of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, labored closely with Bono to discover the answer.

In their book *Why Are We Bad at Picking Good Leaders?*, authors Jeffery Cohn and Jay Moran take us deeper into the minds of Bono and Lane and deeper into the metaphor of melody lines.

Bono and Lane constantly honed their message, what they referred to as “the melody line.” In musical terms, a melody line is a series of rising or falling notes that gives a song its recognizable theme. It’s the part of the song that a listener remembers, the notes that stand out above the rest. Bono and Lane turned this into a metaphor for giving voice to their organization’s big ideas.³

WHAT’S YOUR BIG IDEA?

Bono’s not the only one with a big idea. You have one too—though at the moment it may still be buried deep inside you. By taking *The Deeper Path*, you’ll discover your own melody line and your big idea.

Ideas are powerful. They can change the world. We observe this in Leonardo DiCaprio’s character Cobb from the film *Inception*. Although the story is fiction, Cobb’s commentary on ideas is couched in truth.

In the movie, Cobb explains, “What’s the most resilient parasite? An idea. A single idea from the human mind can build cities. An idea can transform the world and rewrite all the rules.”⁴

Melody lines and ideas are interrelated because melody lines give voice to our big ideas. A message without a voice

THE DEEPER PATH

is simply a thought. But a message with too many voices is simply a noise.

Before we dig too deep, first, a little something about our trip. Pain is inevitable. I always appreciate doctors or dentists who give me a heads-up. The phrase “this is going to sting a little” always went a long way in building trust, even when I was a kid. The professionals who simply stuck me without warning failed to earn my trust. I ended up resenting them, even if their motivation was to protect me from the truth.

Tell me the ouch is coming, and then I can prepare.

So, in an attempt to earn your trust, take this as my advance warning. If you keep reading, pain will appear in your immediate future. It has to. Our path can't be pain-free because life isn't.

We humans take great measures to insulate and isolate ourselves from pain. This is our model from infancy. I remember driving each one of our newborn babies home from the hospital. Though they were buckled into a protective car seat and surrounded by four walls of airbags, twenty miles per hour still felt too fast to me. My wife, Kelly, and I cushioned their reality, pushing pain out the door.

But given enough time, pain eventually breaks through and corners us. When it does, most of us run for cover. We numb ourselves because when we're numb we don't feel anything—the good or the bad. We shout for our savior named noise to come rescue us and drown out our ache.

Unfortunately, by numbing our pain we also numb our potential.

Life gives us plenty of escape buttons to press when we feel our pain mounting. These distractions and diversions serve as coping strategies and survival tactics. Seventeenth-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal observed them and accurately forewarned us of their lethal effects.

“The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is distraction, yet that is the greatest of our wretchednesses. Because that is

THE MELODY LINE

what mainly prevents us from thinking about ourselves and leads us imperceptibly to damnation. Without it we should be bored, and boredom would force us to search for a firmer way out, but distraction entertains us and leads us imperceptibly to death.”⁵

Pascal believed that boredom would eventually lead to our escape. On the flip side, he also believed anesthetizing our pain unconsciously invites mediocrity.

I wonder what Pascal would think of our distractions today. Spending endless hours plugged into video games, excavating Facebook statuses, and binging on the latest series, leaves us unfulfilled. Vicariously living through someone else’s life—via reality TV—always leaves us wanting more.

We’re spirit, not just flesh. We’re meant to show up present in our own lives. We’re meant to be fully alive, not half dead. We’re designed for a fuller expression and fuller expansion of what we currently know. We long for more—more resources to share, more compassion to give, more fulfillment to experience, more purpose to taste, more peace to feel, and more joy to spread.

WE’RE MEANT TO BE FULLY
ALIVE, NOT HALF DEAD.

Despite all this, we’re deathly afraid, and we embody the “F” word—FEAR.

We resist traveling anyplace we’ve never been because on those roads we don’t know the way. We want a map, a compass, and a GPS, but we forget that the richest roads are unpaved and unknown.

Maybe this is why *The Fellowship of the Ring* resonates with so many people. We see ourselves as common and unimpressive, just like the two hobbits Sam and Frodo. We fail to realize that our own courage can only poke through when we get outside our comfort zone.

Frodo heard the melody line before Sam and brought it to his attention:

THE DEEPER PATH

Sam: This is it.

Frodo: This is what?

Sam: If I take one more step, it'll be the farthest away from home I've ever been.

Frodo: Come on, Sam. Remember what Bilbo used to say: "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to."⁶

These two predictable hobbits needed to leave the "comfort of home," because that comfort was slowly killing them. There's nothing wrong with home, but if we're honest, most of us are strangers in our own homes.

We're homesick for a place we've never been.

Home isn't a bad place, but we often ask too much of it. We hope it answers all our aches. But home is a metaphor for where we've been, not a place we're going. Home can be a prison if it's a place devoid of growth.



A while back, my friend Chet Scott made a deeply profound and painful point to me. Chet is the founder of an unconventional company called Built to Lead.⁷ Although some might try to label Chet a "life coach," he would beg to differ. Chet's heart is to build his clients by breaking them down—often through pain.

Chet warned me with searing truth, "You can't take the ring *and* stay in the Shire."

Ouch!

I wanted to do both simultaneously. I convinced myself safety and risk could be married. I believed comfort and adventure were compatible. Chet disagreed, and loved me enough to call me out. To go up, I needed to give up.

This strategy requires confronting all kinds of deep issues. Like failure, competence, risk, and reward.

THE MELODY LINE

The first place we need to travel is deep inside ourselves—uncharted and untamed. Henry Stanley Haskins accurately observed, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”⁸

We need to feel our own pain. And we must understand our own story if we hope to help other people find theirs.

So let me put it back on you.

What’s your melody line? And what’s your big idea?

Like every other outlier I’ve met, I know it involves taking “a ring” of sorts.

But to do that, you’re going to have to leave “the Shire.”

The next question only you can answer. Are you ready to open the door to a brand-new world?

3

LEAVING THE NURSERY

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

—C. S. Lewis

We never had one in our house growing up. It wasn't the price that kept us away. I think my parents just never bought one. As a result, it wasn't until our ninth year of marriage that my wife finally purchased one. Ironically, one week later we ended up purchasing three more. Now we'd never be without one—if we can steal them away from our kids. Just the other day, I came downstairs and saw our little daughter cuddled up in one. She's a smart girl who knows a good thing when she sees it—or in this case, she knows a good thing when she feels it.

She loves her new electric blanket.

We live in Ohio, so at times the winter season can get a little chilly. Now, with the flip of a switch, we get instant heat whenever we want.

LEAVING THE NURSERY

Electric blankets aren't our enemy. Comfort, however, can be. Consider the fact: Most mornings, most people struggle to emerge from a warm, soft bed devoid of noise and distraction. Most of the population hits the snooze button multiple times. We prefer swimming in a sea of sheets rather than showing up filled up ready for life.

But why?

When you were conceived, you started in a warm, soft environment devoid of noise and distraction. Residing in a sac of safety and swimming in a sea of fluid, you were comfortably insulated and isolated. Your body felt the rhythm of your mother, and you rested in your unawareness.

Eventually, your birth day came, the day you entered a new world. Pain served as the catalyst for your new birth and propelled you from what you knew out into the vast unknown.

With each passing day, you became more and more acquainted with pain—the pain of hunger, of feeling scared, of being alone.

Many of us have experienced our caretakers' desire to protect us from this pain. As best they could, they created a specific environment, better known as a nursery.

Nurseries vary in size and scope. Some are gigantic, outfitted with plush carpet and impressive mobiles. Others are quaint, painted with calming colors on all sides. Regardless of their size, most nurseries are designed with one specific goal in mind: safety. Baby wipe warmers, stuffed creatures, outlet covers, monitors, blankets, night-lights, cribs—all this pain protection hardwired into our lives from an early age.

Thankfully, a few kind people took some measures of safety in your life. If they hadn't, you might not be reading this book, (especially if they forgot those outlet covers).

But this desire for a pain-free world doesn't go away later in life. No wonder as adults we feel at peace swimming in a sea of sheets, savoring that snooze button, sleeping carefree

THE DEEPER PATH

and enjoying electric blankets. No wonder our warm, soft environment keeps us from activity.

There's nothing wrong with pain-free experiences. The problem occurs when our aspirations rank no higher than insulating and isolating ourselves from discomfort. The problem occurs when we fixate on remaining in the nursery.

We were never meant to live out our days inside the nursery. We were meant for more—much more.

God knows the only thing that propels us from the nursery. And if God didn't allow it in our lives, odds are we'd never choose it.



“What's the universal emotion?”

Chet asked me this interesting question a few years back.

Not quite understanding the question, I asked him to clarify.

“You know, the one feeling that every single person has experienced.”

It took me a moment to locate my answer. “Love,” I suggested. “Everyone has experienced love.”

Chet shook his head.

“Loneliness?”

“Nope.”

“Fear.”

“No.”

“OK, then, pain. Every single person has experienced pain,” I said. A smile slowly found its way onto Chet's face.

“Exactly.”

Think about it. Pain is the first feeling we express when we arrive in this world. And it's the last feeling most of us experience when we leave this world.

If a baby *doesn't* come out crying, medical professionals get worried and rush to discover what's wrong. Chances are, this

LEAVING THE NURSERY

lack of response results from a deeper pain lurking beneath the surface.

Most of us have a jacked-up view of pain. We believe it's bad and that it should be avoided at all costs. Lies like this go down easily because most of us don't have an alternative definition of pain to challenge such beliefs.

Fortunately, the medical community offers some: Pain is an uncomfortable feeling and/or an unpleasant sensation in the body. The presence of pain is often an indication that something is wrong.¹

Some interesting applications emerge from this definition.

- Pain should be examined more closely to discover the deeper issue.
- Pain is merely an indication that something is wrong.
- Pain shouldn't be avoided.
- Pain isn't the problem.
- Pain is a symptom.

These same professionals go further by classifying pain into two categories: chronic and acute.

Chronic Pain: This type of pain persists despite the fact the injury has healed. Pain signals remain active in the nervous system for weeks, months, or years. Some people suffer chronic pain in the absence of any past injury or evidence of body damage.

Acute Pain: This type of pain begins suddenly and is usually sharp in quality. It serves as a warning of disease or a threat to the body. In most cases, acute pain does not last longer than six months, and it disappears when the underlying cause of pain has been treated or has healed.⁶ Within our conversation, more thoughts emerge that are critical if we

THE DEEPER PATH

want to understand more about ourselves and our world. First, most of us don't want pain, but unless we learn how to deal with our pain, our only other option is to numb it. And

UNLESS WE LEARN HOW
TO DEAL WITH OUR
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regrettably, we live in a world that numbs it well.

Second, all this pain is an indication that something is deeply wrong. Such pain isn't good or bad—it simply *is*. Pain

becomes good or bad based on what we do with it. Good pain is essential, and unless it's permitted—in many cases even pursued—then bad pain will triumph and have its way.

Bad Pain: Extensive suffering that is chronic and purposeless. Bad pain leads to a state of unproductive inaction and ultimately a type of serious injury or death.

Good Pain: Intentional hurt that is acute and purposeful. Good pain leads to productive action and ultimately a type of healing or resurrection.

Think about your own life for a moment.

Which situations contain bad pain? Which situations contain good pain?

If we can't discern the difference, we'll tend to label them both negatively and dismiss them promptly, sending the good pain packing.



If you've ever experienced real relationship, then you've experienced real pain. Such was the case for world-renowned writer and professor C. S. Lewis. His mother's death from cancer when he was only a boy reshaped his entire life. Pain walled him in, preventing Lewis from venturing into other relationships. He reasoned that a life of love meant a life of pain, and regrettably he reasoned that such a life wasn't worth it.

C. S. Lewis probably wouldn't have been a fan of the now-famous line from nineteenth-century poet Alfred, Lord

LEAVING THE NURSERY

Tennyson: “’Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.”

Lewis gained a prominent position as a professor at Oxford and held it for over thirty years, and within the academy he ruled the roost. His brilliant mind and sharp humor ensured him the upper hand in professional encounters with colleagues and students. His intellect allowed him the ability to “school” any other educational opponent.

Lewis’s books and writings became the context in which he explored other types of relationships. In his fictional characters, he found complete control. His world of writing granted him godlike attributes: omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

But Lewis soon discovered that books can’t talk back to you. Books can’t embrace or engage you the same way a person can. His need for relationships became too great. Finally, love found him.

An American writer, Joy Gresham, came crashing into his life and brought love with her. Lewis and Gresham began a relationship and eventually married. Lewis felt alive and free, just as he did before his mother passed so many years prior.

But when Lewis opened the door of his heart to love, pain snuck in as well. Only a few years into their marriage, Gresham suffered from the same disease that stole Lewis’s mother decades before. When she died, so did a piece of Lewis’s heart.

The movie *Shadowlands* captures this love story between Lewis and Gresham well. The emotional scenes include some incredibly insightful dialogue by Anthony Hopkins, who plays C. S. Lewis in the film. In one of those verbal exchanges, he brushes up against *The Deeper Path*.

Isn't God supposed to be good? Isn't He supposed to love us? Does God want us to suffer? What if the answer to that question is "yes"? I suggest to you that it is because God loves us that He makes us the gift of suffering.

THE DEEPER PATH

I'm not sure that God wants us to be happy. I think He wants us to be able to love and be loved. He wants us to grow up. We think our childish toys bring us all the happiness there is and our nursery is the whole wide world. But something must drive us out of the nursery to the world of others, and that something is suffering.²

Within our lives, although we may crave the comfort of those cozy blankets, pain is God's gift to push us out of the nursery. No wonder we feel unrest. We want to heal, but we don't want to hurt. We want love, but we don't want pain.

And so we enter relationships with flimsy masks comprised of faulty demands and forced commands. We want a shadow of love, but we don't want authentic love. This is why it's so hard for us to understand God. We can't wrap our arms around how a good, all-powerful God can coexist in a world of pain. We buy into a misbelief—that love can exist without pain. But authentic love and pain must coexist.

Authentic love led C. S. Lewis to care for Joy Gresham when she suffered from the same tragic disease that took his mother's life. Authentic love held Jesus's wrists to the tree as he took on the sin of the world. And authentic love serves as the glue in your relationships, despite the unavoidable pain they contain.

But if we're honest, we still struggle. Knowing the truth doesn't make accepting that truth any easier.

May I ask?

Where are you still white-knuckled clinging to the illusion of the nursery? Where are you insulating and isolating your heart to avoid the hurt? How are you running from the relationship with yourself? With others?

As a poster child from the nursery, I understand the logic of remaining there. It seems safer, cleaner, and more inviting.

But it's not. It's an illusion. And that's all it is.

You know this. You feel this.

LEAVING THE NURSERY

You've understood it for quite some time. This is what makes you different: the reality that you're willing to explore life outside the nursery. And this little difference sets you apart. But there's more to this little difference than what we can see.

We need to dig even deeper below the surface.

4

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

*You must strive to find your own voice.
Because the longer you wait to begin, the less
likely you are to find it at all.*

—John Keating, *Dead Poets Society*

I've always wondered what separates one person from the next.

In athletic championships, when adversity strikes, one athlete rises to the challenge and another athlete falters under pressure. In business setbacks, one leader rallies her department and another one self-destructs. In economic difficulties, one family works together under the banner of unity and another family fights each other and goes down in flames.

The same team, the same organization, the same neighborhood, but entirely different results.

In their book *212° The Extra Degree*, authors Sam Parker and Mac Anderson expand upon this “little difference,” referring to it as “the extra degree.”

“At 211° water is hot. At 212°, it boils. And with boiling

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

water, comes steam. And steam can power a locomotive. The one extra degree makes the difference.”¹

The authors provide several other examples of “the extra degree” within the world of sports:

1. The margin of victory in the men’s 800-meter race in the 1984 Summer Olympic Games was only 0.71 seconds—less than one second.
2. The average margin of victory in the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500 (combined) over a ten-year period was 1.54 seconds. And the prize money for second place is less than half of that for first place.
3. The average margin of victory for the last twenty-five years in all major PGA golf tournaments combined was less than three strokes.²

Although these observations provide interesting trivia tidbits, the bigger question is the story behind “the extra degree.” And even more relevant to our context: How is this degree quantified when it comes to people? It’s one thing to win a race. It’s another thing to overcome chronic personal pain.

Bottom line: What can we credit for “the little difference”?

Some tip their hat to simple perseverance. Thomas Edison said, “Many of life’s failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Examining Edison’s life closer, we see a never-give-up attitude. As the story goes, Edison was asked why he failed so many times when trying to create the first light bulb. He is famously quoted as replying, “I have not failed ten thousand times. I have successfully discovered ten thousand ways that it will not work.”

Regardless of the complete accuracy of the story, we should question if simple perseverance was Edison’s secret.

THE DEEPER PATH

Me? I don't buy it. It might read kindly in a greeting card, but you can't take it to the bank. Clichés don't convert into cash.

I bet people taught you the same warmed-over clichés they taught me. See if you can finish these statements.

1. No Pain, no _____.
2. Winners never quit, and quitters never _____.
3. If you can dream it, you can do _____.
4. No guts, no _____.
5. The early bird gets the _____.
6. It's not what you know, it's who you _____.
7. Be at the right place at the right _____

Funny how much these phrases shape our ideology and direct our actions, many times even indirectly. Although a tiny nugget of truth might reside within each phrase, breaking them down reveals some interesting false assumptions.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN.

Key point: Hard work.

False assumption: Pain produces promotion.

Truth: Choosing the right pain produces promotion.

Story: I know people who work incredibly hard, never reach their potential, and die with their music still inside them.

WINNERS NEVER QUIT, AND QUITTERS NEVER WIN.

Key point: Persistence.

False assumption: Stick with something long enough and you will win.

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

Truth: Healthy self-awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses combined with persistence can convert into winning.

Story: I know people who never gave up their dream but failed to acknowledge they were completely unqualified to achieve it.

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT.

Key point: Imagination.

False assumption: Imagination guarantees you will achieve what you want.

Truth: Vision is only the first step in possibly achieving what you want.

Story: I know people who have an unlimited number of ideas that never amount to anything.

NO GUTS, NO GLORY.

Key point: Risk.

False assumption: Risk will yield reward.

Truth: The right risk at the right time in the right way with the right people will yield reward.

Story: I know people who take all kinds of risks and simply take recklessness with them wherever they go.

THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM.

Key point: Scarcity.

False assumption: There is only one worm.

Truth: A mindset of scarcity, fear, and competition will produce a toxic attitude of threat and defensiveness.

Story: I know people who rush to take first and are in last place because of it.

THE DEEPER PATH

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, IT'S WHO YOU KNOW.

Key point: Luck.

False assumption: You can blame your plateau on a person you don't even know yet.

Truth: Before others will choose to believe in you, they will naturally judge if you believe in yourself.

Story: I know people who emitted the right frequency and attracted the right people to them because of it.

BE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

Key point: Chance.

False assumption: You stumble into greatness when you stumble into the right space.

Truth: If you've prepared for the moment, then the moment is prepared for you.

IF YOU'VE PREPARED FOR
THE MOMENT, THEN THE
MOMENT IS PREPARED
FOR YOU.

Story: I know people who won while in the wrong place at the wrong time and others who lost when they were in the right place at the right time.



Although mining these myths proves helpful, it's still not enough. And if "the extra degree" even escapes these clichés, where can we find it? No one can deny its existence, but can we capture it long enough to examine it with the hope of mastering its genius?

Sometimes this "little difference" surfaces when traumatic events pop into our awareness through the nightly news. One of these events occurred on an otherwise typical day in January 2011.

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

Although you might not have agreed with her public policies, if you heard her story, your heart went out to former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona who survived an attempt on her life. Others were not so lucky. The shooter, Jared Loughner, killed six people and wounded thirteen more. Tragically, his youngest victim was a nine-year-old girl.

Because the shooter fired his gun from less than three feet away, sending a bullet straight through Giffords's brain, her future looked grim.³ A portion of her skull the size of her palm had to be removed due to the swelling in her brain.

Grave predictions from professionals emerged rather quickly. Former surgeon general Dr. Richard Carmona said, "With guarded optimism, I hope she will survive, but this is a very devastating wound."⁴

Severe brain injuries rarely produce anything but grief and tragedy, and less than 10 percent of people with brain injuries even survive. Gabby Giffords not only survived, but she is also making a strong comeback, even today. She and her husband, Mark Kelly, an astronaut and captain in the United States Navy, chronicled their painstaking journey in a book titled *Gabby: A Story of Courage and Hope*.

Mark lets us into their world when he vulnerably writes:

I used to be able to tell just what my wife, Gabby, was thinking. She was a woman who lived in the moment—every moment. Gabby was a talker, too. Gabby doesn't have all those words at her command anymore, at least not yet. A brain injury like hers is a kind of hurricane blowing away some words and phrases, and leaving others almost within reach, but buried deep, under debris or in a different place.⁵

In Mark's own words, Gabby's voice was buried deep and needed to be excavated. She wanted so badly to move on with life. She was lucky to be alive, but her recovery progressed

THE DEEPER PATH

rather slowly, at times making her feel less than lucky. Her life had changed dramatically and she couldn't just quickly move on.

In a real way, by losing her physical speech, Gabby also lost her figurative voice. She suffers from expressive aphasia, a disorder caused by damage to or developmental issues in anterior regions of the brain. Expressive aphasia blocks the ability to produce written or spoken language. Although sufferers cognitively know what they want to say, their brains cannot retrieve the correct words. Often frustration, grief, and depression set in.

But neither Gabby nor Mark has given up easily. Gabby is slowly finding her voice again, and ironically, it's directly tied to her finding her melody line, both literally and figuratively.

A LITERAL MELODY LINE

Given the nature of her story and the political ramifications involved, it's no surprise that in order to get Gabby back on track, Mark and other loved ones called upon many of the best experts around the world. However, one particular type of expert they chose might surprise you: a music therapist.

Singing in a time of overwhelming pain? You bet. We can trick the brain by singing first and talking second. Music therapists tell us that when we sing we retrieve pitch, melody, and rhythm. Although language is normally held in the left side of the brain, music exists in both hemispheres.

"Music is that other road to get back to language," said Megan Morrow, Gifford's music therapist and a certified brain injury specialist at TIRR Memorial Hermann Rehabilitation Hospital in Houston, Texas. Morrow compared the process to a freeway detour. "You aren't able to go forward on that pathway anymore," she said, but "you can exit and go around, and get to where you need to go."⁶

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

Music helps many people get unstuck. Sceptically, some of us might wonder how someone can sing but not speak.

Dr. Oliver Sacks, professor of neurology and psychiatry at Columbia University, provides some insight. “Nothing activates the brain so extensively as music . . . and brain imagery . . . showed it had been possible to create a new language area on the right side of the brain . . . and that blew my mind.”

Ever seen the movie *Awakenings*? Dr. Oliver Sacks’s work with Parkinson’s disease spurred both the film and the eponymous book. He tells us, “These patients ‘have some words somewhere,’ but must be ‘tricked or seduced into discovering them.’”⁷

Melodic intonation therapy (MIT) is the technical term for this therapeutic process used by music therapists and speech pathologists to help patients with communication disorders caused by brain damage. This method uses a style of singing called melodic intonation to stimulate activity in the right hemisphere of the brain, which assists in speech production.

MIT was inspired by the observation that individuals with expressive aphasia sometimes can sing words or phrases that they normally cannot speak. The goal of melodic intonation therapy is to utilize singing to access the language-capable regions in the right hemisphere and use those regions to compensate for lost function in the left hemisphere. Because patients are better at singing phrases than speaking them, the natural musical component of speech is used to engage patients’ ability to voice phrases.

Notice the amazing pattern.

Gabby first found her melody line.

Singing this melody line helped her remember her song.

And by remembering her song, she remembered her words.

And when Gabby remembered her words, then she rediscovered her voice.

In a literal sense, this process helps Gabby recover, but this process works in the figurative sense as well.

THE DEEPER PATH

A FIGURATIVE MELODY LINE

Only weeks after Gabby's initial injury, Mark began presenting his wife with small goals, asking her how many fingers he held up or to recall simple memories. Mark believes hope is a form of love, and therefore, overcoming small challenges could produce small victories and with them small doses of hope.

As time marched on, so did their recovery from an incredibly traumatic event. Mark embodies courage on many fronts, including commanding the final mission of the Space Shuttle Endeavour less than five months after his wife's injury.

Asked to describe Mark in one word, Gabby chose "Brave."

Gabby embodies a bit of bravery herself. On August 1, 2011, less than eight months after the assassination attempt, she returned to Capitol Hill to make an appearance and received a warm bipartisan welcome from her colleagues on the House floor.

Having known much of her backstory, I sat stunned by the video footage of her appearance. Her "little difference" injected energy into the room that day. Electric and contagious, her courage did exactly what all courage is meant to do: inspire others.

Representative Jeff Flake said, "The two times that stand out in my mind—my whole memory of my time in Congress—is singing 'God Bless America' with people on 9/11 on the east steps [of the US Capitol] and then when Gabby Giffords walked in the chambers on August 1."⁸

How does someone in a matter of months go from speechless and sprawled out on a hospital bed to standing tall and speaking on the House floor on Capitol Hill? What is this "one degree" that sets Gabby Giffords apart from many other brain injury sufferers?

Unmistakably, it's because she found her voice. Watching her extensive interview with Diane Sawyer of *ABC News*, I learned that quite intentionally one particular phrase made it on her practice list for speech therapy: "I will return."

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

And herein lies another glimpse of The Deeper Path: her cross is bigger than her crown.

This is the same secret we observed in Captain Sully's ordeal earlier. And this is the same secret that enables me the privilege of writing you this book right now. Presently, one of these two orientations is pumping through your veins. Either your cross is bigger than your crown, or your crown is bigger than your cross.

You might not comprehend the magnitude of this subtle distinction right now, but you will. This "little difference" makes all the difference. In a manner of speaking, it is *the* difference maker.

Before we dig deep into the cross and crown distinction, let's close the loop on Gabby. Like any good excavator, we want to know how it all turned out. Did she serve another term? Is she presently in office? How is she now?

Although Representative Gabby Giffords announced her resignation on January 22, 2012, she still clings to her crown. Intently, I watched the video in which she regrettably announced to her state and the world that her time in public office had ended. Here's what she said:

Arizona is my home, always will be. A lot has happened over the past year. We cannot change that. But I know on the issues we fought for we can change things for the better. Jobs, border security, veterans. We can do so much more by working together. I don't remember much from that horrible day, but I will never forget the trust you placed in me to be your voice. Thank you for your prayers and for giving me time to recover. I have more work to do on my recovery so to do what is best for Arizona I will step down this week.⁹

She closed the video by saying, "I'm getting better. Every day, my spirit is high. I will return and we will work together for Arizona and this great country."¹⁰

THE DEEPER PATH

That melody line, again: “I will return.”

That’s the same phrase we heard in her speech therapy. Because she clarified her crown and because she clings to that crown, she has the courage to carry her cross. Knowing the little bit that I do about Gabby, I’d say she’s not setting that cross down anytime soon. Gabby understands the Law of the Crown: when we see our crown clearly, we can carry our cross willingly.

Her resignation shocked many who knew Gabby’s resolve and determination. She embodied courage, and courage can’t be contained because it’s infectious.

Fellow Arizona Democrat Representative Raul Grijalva was surprised by Giffords’s resignation. “I thought she would just see how the recovery proceeded, but I guess she decided in her own mind that this recovery is number one and that’s the right decision for her,” he said.¹¹

Her growing fan club now carries her cross with her, and sometimes even for her. On days when she might not feel strong, her community fills in the gaps. This is the unavoidable byproduct of a clarified crown. People see it and, just as important, they hear it too.

We hear Gabby’s song because we hear her voice. And many of us sing her song with her and for her, even in dark moments such as her resignation.

“She will fully recover and when she decides to come back from her pause to take care of herself, she’ll pick up where she left off, there’s no question about that,” Grijalva said. “I’m looking forward to seeing her, thanking her, wishing her the best, and letting her know we’re going to keep the seat warm for her.”¹²

Gabby now embodies an idea much bigger than a political party. She transcended Congress and even politics by connecting with something every human faces: pain.

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

THE CROSS AND THE CROWN

I heard it while watching *The Passion of the Christ*. Although the melody line came through clear, the application was a little foggy at first.

In the crucifixion scene, one of the thieves on the cross next to Jesus mocks him.

“Why do you embrace your cross, you fool?” the criminal asks.

Good question.

Why would someone embrace something as painful as a cross?

But it’s just a movie, right? Make-believe? Jesus didn’t really view his cross that way. Did he?

The author of the book of Hebrews clears up any confusion: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.”

Joy about a cross?

Today, we beautify them. We wear them in our ears and around our necks. We see crosses in our places of worship and we find them in our art. We display them as a symbol of hope and inspiration.

Not so in the first century. Crosses were instruments of death. Crosses lined roadways, pathways, and walkways. They guaranteed certain sounds, like deep moans of anguish from people suffocating to death. Crosses brought with them an undeniable stench—the smell of rotting corpses. And they invited certain images, like circling vultures fed on decomposing flesh.

The Romans were smart people, utilizing crosses as motivation for accepting Roman control. They created them to inject a fear factor into their society. Crosses were a daily reminder to everyone about the result of rebellion. With the purpose of generating unquestioning allegiance, the Romans created the perfect killing machine.

THE DEEPER PATH

So why would anyone welcome this instrument of suffering?

Today, it would be like expressing affection for an electric chair. We don't see too many people wearing that as jewelry or portraying it in art. Electric chairs hardly conjure up feelings of hope and inspiration.

But Jesus tapped into another reality. He saw the importance of the cross because he saw past it. He had crystal clear clarity for his crown. And he knew his cross was the only way to achieve his crown. So it became his passion and he carried it willingly, even joyfully.

Experts generally define the word *passion* as a powerful and compelling emotion or a strong feeling or experience of love.¹³ But surprisingly, the first definition for *passion* in Webster's dictionary is "the sufferings of Christ between the night of the Last Supper and his death."¹⁴

Even Mr. Webster heard Jesus's melody line. Jesus's passion connects so clearly with us that it shapes the way we understand the word itself.

Jesus's cross was merely a means to a much bigger end. His cross signified a step in the process. He didn't cherish the cross itself, but what waited beyond the cross.

The author of Hebrews urges us to consider the way Jesus approached his cross so we will not grow weary and lose heart when carrying our own. We are told not to focus on our cross, but rather upon Jesus as our example.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Jesus embodies an idea much bigger than a religion. He transcended life and even politics, modeling a lesson applicable to every one of us. He embraced something every human faces—pain.

THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE



So what about you? And what about your cross? More importantly, what about your crown?

Go ahead and ask someone about their cross. Or if that word doesn't connect, call it their "trial" or "pain point." Just inquire into who or what is bugging them. Most likely they'll give you a detailed speech with sub-points and illustrations about all the struggles in their lives. They are acquainted with the unique nuances of their cross.

However, ask these same people about their crown. Chances are that when you do, you'll get a puzzled look. Most people are foggy about it at best. And when we're foggy about our crown, then the weight of our cross will soon crush us. Clarity when considering our crown gives us courage when carrying our cross. One flows from the other.

American businessman and author Max De Pree says, "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality."¹⁵

You might not accept the fact that you're a leader, or maybe you've never even considered yourself one. But the truth is you're leading your own life, whether your performance is stellar or poor. Responsibility for leading our lives can't be placed on the government, the economy, our business, our friends, our families, or our boss—if we have one.

If you want "the little difference" to emerge within your own life, then you need to question your condition. You have to be willing to turn down the noise and listen for the melody line emerging from your soul.

When you do, like Gabby, you'll find your voice.

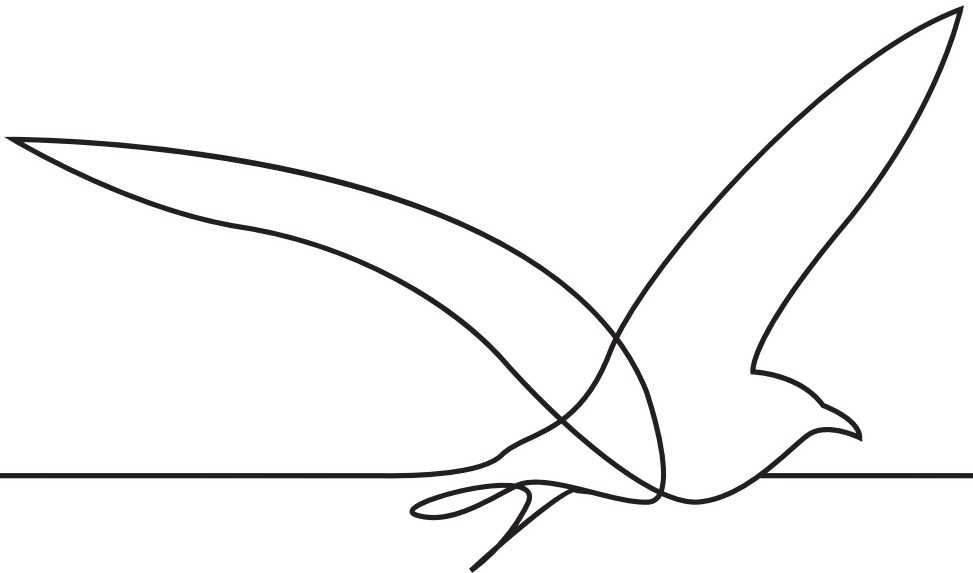
And people want to hear it. Because when you have the courage to sing, you allow courage to do what all courage is meant to do: inspire others.

And we are a world in desperate need of inspiration.

PART

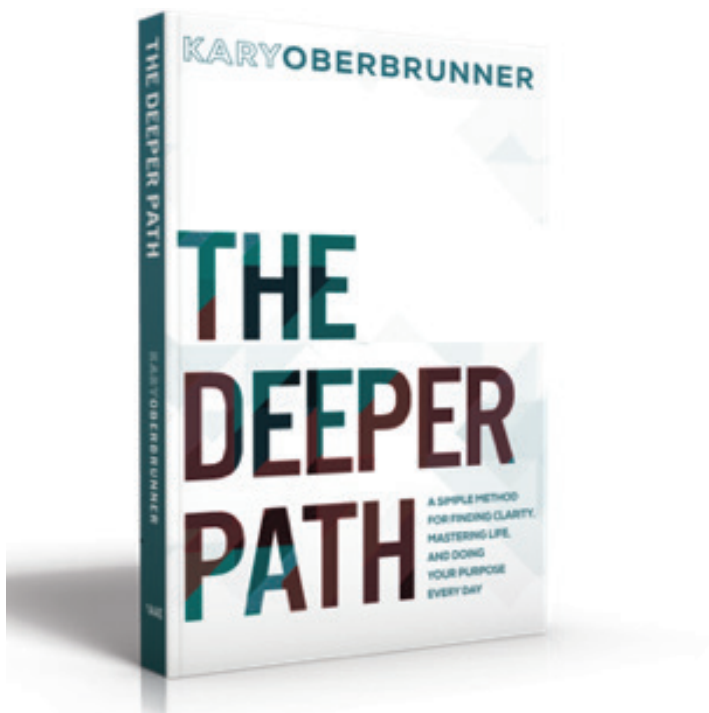
TWO

Feel—The How



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The Deeper Path.

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