

“Everyone’s Child”
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Chapter 5: Mistakes Are the Proof Needed

I realize that I am going to make a mistake. I consider it an indifference of perspective relating to my decisions and actions. I may have offended you without even realizing it. I will not be able to please everyone, but I know that I cannot only take credit when things go well and blame others when things don't go as well. It is so much easier to tell myself that if I don't go, don't try, or just don't care, I will feel better because I will not be judged by the results. Most of the time I feel like the world is looking at me, judging me, and placing me in a box of failure that is suffocating my efforts. I feel like the world is waiting for me to fail. I keep telling myself that I have to attempt to master self-forgiveness before my emotions get the best of me. If you haven't noticed, I have begun sheltering myself where I don't have to worry about the pressures of failing. I have learned to keep my head down, duck behind the questions, and not stand out.

Too many times I have made bad decisions and felt like it was the end of the world; but I have also made decisions I didn't think were bad, but got labeled as mistakes anyways. Now I feel like I am walking on egg shells, afraid to make mistakes, denying my actions while refusing to have consequences. You keep telling me that my mistakes can become fatal if I do not view them as bad decisions. I know that I shouldn't place the blame on others and expect everyone else to fix my mistakes. I am learning how to accept my poor reasoning and carelessness so that I won't justify making the same mistake over and over again. I know that as long as each mistake teaches a valuable life lesson, I should not fight against the idea that making mistakes is inevitable. Perhaps over time I will learn how to relinquish my fear and be willing to take a chance of owning my mistakes so that I can learn how to forgive myself and remind myself that I am not perfect. For those who expect perfection from me, I ask you to question your imperfections and mistakes to find explanation in how I should be doing things perfectly.

3 Rules Behind Each Mistake

While we live in the moment of each truth, we may think that we have made some bad decisions and are now realizing that we must own them moving forward. There are some things we have done and will do which we realize may have some people disagreeing with us; but if we are not intentional in our bad decision, label ourselves only by our errors. Do not allow ourselves to classify our bad decision as a mistake. Keep in mind that the mistake is something we did without intention and the bad decision is something we made intentionally. The reason we classify our bad decisions as mistakes is because it removes us from responsibility and makes us feel at peace with the feeling that we are not at fault.

Behind each mistake lies a rule. First is the rule of our “willingness to make a mistake”. Owning this understanding brings light to an overwhelming darkness. Every time we make a mistake, it is because we are willing to head towards a better conscious identity of ourselves. Reaching out to grab ahold of it, we may get tired, frustrated, angry, or just flat out sad, but we know that if we just push forward, there will be stronger, more positive results at the end. This will surface the true meaning of our purpose. Too many times, the negative impact for not having a willingness to make a mistake can lead us to a communication shutdown. Being judged by others sometimes puts us in a position where we feel that we cannot make a mistake. This causes so much fear and anxiety, and only multiplies when mistakes and failure come into play. We know that building resilience creates an individual discipline within ourselves, but we still must hear and listen to what others have to say. Becoming fearless will help us become less inhibited and will open up so many possibilities in our lives. Along the way, know that our willingness to make a mistake will show our courage and an ability to break down our own barriers of failure.

The second rule behind each mistake is the rule of “learning from a mistake”. If we fail, don’t give up, just stand up, take one step backwards, own that failure, and move on. The cliff has a bottom which is waiting for us to reach it; but before we fall off the cliff, know it is important to rise with a new purpose and take a step back to examine our process; then refine our process at the same speed, with the same attitude we had before. The bottom of the cliff waits for everyone, but if we learn to accept failure, we will only soar higher. This means looking at the place where we are willing to learn from a mistake. By learning from our mistakes, we can do it differently next time, and continuously until we get it right. Some people deny their mistakes, push them to the side and continue to make the same mistake over and over again. If we are doing this, we are on the path to insanity where we are not learning from our mistakes, but instead, we are doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result. When we make the mistake we were willing to do, own it and immediately learn from it.

The third rule behind the mistake is our willingness to help others through their mistakes. We are in no way perfect, but too much time we spend our lives in a cocoon telling ourselves that the mistake clearly isn’t our problem. Maybe we’re protecting our feelings and our fears by settling with those who will only agree with us and won’t expect us to help them through their mistakes. We all need to realize that helping others through their mistakes helps enlighten the path towards understanding our own. Compassion is important because it keeps all of us nonjudgmental. It only takes a minute to judge someone else’s mistake, but could take a lifetime for us to accept our own.

“Trust the process as you walk the journey with no expectations of the destination.”

Activity 1: Mistakes vs. Bad Decisions

Think about bad decisions you have made and mistakes you made. Did you come up with more bad decisions than you did mistakes? How many of those mistakes could actually be classified as bad decisions. Keep in mind that if you are labeling your bad decisions as mistakes, you are likely to make the same bad decisions over and over again.

The Story of Noah

Noah had just gotten out of alternative school and figured things were back to normal. He was always disruptive, in trouble with the law, and verbally abusive to his teachers and classmates. Many people had tried to help him over the years, but Noah was stubborn in his ways and his attitude usually pushed others over the edge of patience. He came from a very wealthy family; his dad an executive for an advertising company, and his mom a lawyer. He volunteered his summers working with young people at basketball camps and seemed to have a very caring attitude; so as Noah returned to public high school, he was determined to change his ways. He told himself that he would be on time to class, would pay attention without being a distraction, and would not get an attitude with adults. Although the first couple of days went smoothly, by the end of the next week, the problems began to show.

Noah became increasingly late for class; sometimes not showing up for class at all. On other occasions Noah would get an attitude in class and curse at the teacher. Enough was enough, and nobody in the school had a solution. It seemed as though every time Noah's parents were called on the phone, there was either no answer or a disconnected line. When the administrators asked the

parents to come in, they were both too busy and could not find the time. The decision was made by Principal Knight to kick Noah out of school and push for him to get his GED. The principal was a hard, no nonsense type of guy, who never seemed to put up with anything from the students. As Principal Knight sat in his office, there was a knock at the door. "Come in Noah", replied the principal with a firm voice.

As Noah entered, the principal stopped him at the door. "Freeze young man. Turn around, walk out that door, and knock when you are ready", replied the principal. Noah responded with a firm outburst, "What are you talking about man, you told me to come in." As Noah continued to the seat, Principal Knight spoke the same words again. "Freeze young man. Turn around, walk out that door, and knock when you are ready". Noah sat there and glared at Principal Knight as though he was trying to burn his soul right there at that moment. Principal Knight put his head down and continued writing on the paper he had in front of him. As minutes passed and nothing was said, Noah became increasingly frustrated. Why did you call me in here, asked Noah? Just give me my expulsion papers and I will be gone from here for good. When Noah finished explaining to Principal Knight how things needed to go down, the principal put his pen down on the table and put both hands over his eyes.

Noah was confused as he realized Principal Knight was crying. What's wrong with you Principal Knight, asked Noah. The principal gathered himself and wiped his tears. As he looked calmly into Noah's eyes, he said, "Noah, it's not your fault." Noah was so frustrated at this point as he expected to maybe get a small lecture, but nothing with crying. "What are you talking about", replied Noah. The principal then gathered his thoughts, leaned back in his chair and sighed. The principal was about to open Noah's eyes.

I used to be in your position Noah. I used to be that kid in alternative school, bounced back to public school, and right back to alternative school. I used to want to fight everyone, bully kids that I couldn't stand, and curse teachers out." Noah was now listening. He couldn't believe that this man sitting in a suit used to be a thug. "Noah, I was bounced around as a foster child, had no real guidance, and got labeled by every teacher and administrator when I was in school. Even when I tried to do right, it just turned out wrong." As the Principal kept talking, Noah began hearing things that he too had gone through. Noah could now relate. Principal Knight continued; "I made a lot of bad decisions and it took me longer than most to learn from those decisions. Growing up, people just kept telling me that I was making mistakes and that I could easily correct those mistakes by just trying harder. As I got older, I realized they were giving me an easy out by calling my actions, mistakes. I was flat out making bad decisions, and I knew that I needed to own them and change. It took me years to change, but when it clicked, I realized that my actions were my decisions, and that mistakes were things I did on a test, or a form, or in my answers. Son, when I changed my bad decisions, the mistakes became fewer and fewer."

As Principal Knight finished his story, he could see tears running down Noah's face. Principal Knight leaned forward across his desk and handed Noah a tissue. "You are growing up young man, and your days of making bad decisions ends now. If you make a mistake from this point on at school, I will forgive your mistake, only if you are first willing to forgive yourself. No lecture here. You can go back to class." The principal handed Noah a slip to return to class, and Noah stood up tall, pulling up his pants first. Principal Knight stood and smiled. Why are you smiling Principal Knight, asked Noah? The principal placed his hands on the desk and said, "Noah, your simple action of pulling up your pants is going to prevent many people in this building from labeling you. That first action of pulling up your pants is the first best decision you will make of many good ones to come.

Noah reached out and shook Principal Knight's hand. "Thank you sir. Thank you for allowing me to have another chance," replied Noah. "No Noah," said Principal Knight; "thank you for reminding me that I was once you."

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Chapter 6: Balance within the Process

My life, held by my visualization of a Frisbee. The outside of the Frisbee protected by the wind, only to soar freely with no direction intended. It catches the direction that everyone else is flowing. The inside of the Frisbee is protected by a secure border. Its sides stern, so that when circling the inside of the Frisbee, there is no escape; only the ability to hit the walls holding the design of the Frisbee. These walls become my everyday protection, for these walls will never let me titer off of the edge of the Frisbee. They will allow me to flow within my own strength, but will take the time to balance my movement.

Balance becomes a process. In order to find it, I know that I need to find that border that protects my thoughts. The border represents four half-moon walls which connect to form a complete whole. For me, those walls or that border metaphorically represents half-moons of my mental preparedness, emotional response, spiritual growth, and physical follow through. This balance allows me to explore the roller coaster of my life, but still understand that I a growing during this process. No matter how many times I make a mistake, I will always be able to know that I still have that secure border which balances my landing. I find a peace knowing that I have faith in a higher purpose. That purpose balances my journey each and every day so that when I land, I understand why the journey took place, the mistakes along the way, and the lessons learned.

I know that I must find balance within the process of my life, or my life may not be fulfilled. It only takes a small crack in the Frisbee for it to have no balance. And like the Frisbee, when my life is thrown into turmoil, it is only because of those sturdy walls that I know I will have a smooth landing, whether on this earth or in heaven.

The outside of the Frisbee represents the luck in my life. It is the unknown. If I really put this into everyday practice, the unknown

represents my life financially, employment, material items, and health. In these instances, I do not know where I or the material things will be day to day. While many people spend years trying to figure out how to control that side of the Frisbee, this is what helps me enjoy my life. It is the unknown of tomorrow. This is what helps me make the most of today. Leaving a footprint means that I trust that I am doing everything on the inside of the Frisbee that I can control within the walls. I am taking a chance in everything I do, whether working a part time job with a large family, designing AI technology, writing a book, or building a leadership company which helps train the minds of young people.

I throw my Frisbee every time I imagine reaching my destination or coming closer to closure within something. My Frisbee takes flight, guided by those four walls which I constructed to give its flight balance within the process. While many others may not see the walls underneath protecting my flight, I know that it is up to me to build these walls without any cracks; for the wind is just the motion that will carry me up and down each day. My journey stretches far, and when it lands, I must decide if I am content on staying there, or soaring again to see where I land next.

The Process of Practice

Sometimes the hardest thing to remember is that balance is not a final goal, but a process of practice. When we first begin at something, we may feel the biggest challenges mentally and emotionally as we tell ourselves that we won't be able to it, that it's too hard, or that we will fail at it. Through all of these mental and emotional challenges, we may have come to realize that the more we practice balance, at some point we will succeed; just long enough to eventually fail again. Hopefully by now, we know that accomplishments and failures are both a part of practicing balance. That is not the problem. The true problem we will have is spending more time in the negative than the positive when practicing such balance. We may think that things are going well,

but then everything collapses around us. Maybe we lost something or someone; we feel hopeless; or perhaps we are just angry. Maybe we are still learning how to control our emotions so that we are not showing aggressive behavior towards others; feeling anxiety; or feeling lost. No matter what the problem is, at some point we have the potential of finding balance. If we remember to set goals and assess our life without using the destructive subconscious to identify things, access our life by changing the way we think; and realizing that every time we find balance, it will not stay that way; and that we will find peace by setting goals every day. We should not let others access our goals. Their access of our goals may alter our overall goals, or change us from a constructive learner to a destructive over thinker.

We will be confident in our growth over time as we have come such a long way in life, jumping hurdles, almost drowning, and yet still having that little bit of strength to climb that last hill. Please don't stop climbing. Keep climbing, never stop, and whatever we do, don't settle. Clearing our negative thoughts takes more work than believing in our positive thoughts; however we need to know that it can be done. First we must spend a few minutes each day calming my mind. We used to think that this meant talking to friends and family; but believe it or not, not that is completely wrong. By connecting with others, we are allowing ourselves to connect with the thoughts, opinions, and lifestyle or others, our clarity can become blurred. We will need to disconnect socially and emotionally from everyone and everything. This doesn't mean run away, it just means take time for ourselves. We cannot take time for ourselves by watching television, being on social media, talking on the phone, or even reading. We need to meditate by finding a calm place where we can be one with his environment. We have found the best parks; one with a lake and the other with a waterfall. It is so calming to sit outside and hear what our body is supposed to hear; peace. A second approach to eliminating more time in the negative than the positive is to challenge ourselves and the way that we think.

Do we think constructively or destructively? Our destructive way of thinking is to dive deep into our subconscious on everything. This is what causes us to go from emotional to overemotional. When we begin to question things with our subconscious, we tend to lean our thoughts towards negative emotional triggers such as stress, anger, fear, or sadness. We are becoming self-destructive in our thinking and possibly at risk of our physical being. Memories and experiences are usually stored in our subconscious. It now becomes a game in our head whether or not we have the strength to place constructive learning experiences of the subconscious over destructive emotions that overpower our learning experiences. If we can be conscious of our thoughts, we may just be able to filter more in a constructive way, finding peace and resolve when our thoughts arise.

While knowing how to clear our thoughts is a big part of practicing balance, there is also a fundamental rule that we live by every day. We may try to assess and access our life in real time. We know that it took us a while to get to this place as we would put so much pressure on ourselves to succeed at the moment we were thinking about. Over time we realized that this process of assessing really entailed us restructuring our life. Things that we took for granted have become the backbone to our accessing a better us. These things include our sleeping habits; the way that we respond to someone; being quick and not fast; understanding perspective in making mistakes versus just flat out making bad decisions; finding trust within our values; communicating with purpose; and leaving a piece of our legacy every day. We realize now that taking a risk means changing our habits to see if we can obtain a different outcome.

Setting Goals Means Everything

The easiest way not to clearly see our direction is by not having any goals. We should have goals in everything we do. We should have goals set in employment with job status and salaries; relationships with significant other or children; physical wellbeing with healthy eating and weight; finances with spending and saving; spiritually with how we align our lifestyle; and so many other areas. For as much time as we spend assessing ourselves and being critical of ourselves, we should spend that same amount of time developing our goals.

When setting goals, the most important thing is to make sure we set a goal that motivates us. This means choosing goals that are specific. Each goal should be clear and well defined. Once we have our clear goal, measure the degree of the goals potential success and make sure that it's possible to even achieve the goal that we have set. While we set goals, sometimes we reach into a bag of dreams instead of a bag of goals. This doesn't mean that we should set a bunch of easy goals, or else our expectations will never truly meet up to the real world. Set goals that challenge us to bring out the best in our potential. The goal should be relevant to our life or career achievement direction. Once this is accomplished and our goal has relevancy, set a deadline. A sense of urgency is important in everything we do or else we will lack the time management skills necessary for every other area of our life.

“You will never be able to build a supportive wall where faith carries you further than fear if you let your fear dictate how far your faith carries you.”

Activity 1: Build a Wall

Take the one thing that you know most about, and one thing that you know least about. Think about how you could combine those two things to set a goal to achieve something related to both. We tend to turn to our natural abilities for reassurance that we can reach something. Our talent is just as the definition states; “a capacity for achievement or success, such as a power of mind or body considered as given to a person for use and improvement”. Is it possible to assess your strengths and weaknesses in real time every day? Do you settle on focusing solely the negative? If so, can you apply this chapter to accessing change? What walls have you built around your Frisbee to assure a balanced journey?

Activity 2: Balance Your Own Frisbee

Create your very own physical Frisbee. Inside of the Frisbee write on each of your four walls and label the strength of each wall (i.e. mental preparedness, emotional response, spiritual growth, and physical follow through). See if the Frisbee is able to fly or if it crashes. If it crashes, continue to rebuild the walls until your Frisbee is able to fly.

Mr. Devin's Story

Mr. Devin is the type of teacher at Jones High School who would always give his best. He was a former marine who, after his first tour, came home a hero many years earlier. All of the younger kids admired him and loved talking with him. Although he is what many parents now considered an incredible teacher, there was always something off with Mr. Devin's appearance. Some people at school always noticed that Mr. Devin was wearing the same jacket and shoes to school. He never took off his jacket. David didn't think anyone else ever noticed those things about Mr. Devin, but it had been bothering him for the last couple of weeks.

Last year Mr. Devin was the teacher of the year in the state of Colorado. He volunteered his time in the community, spending time with the homeless. The students always said that he loved spending his time with the homeless because most of them would see him under the bridge talking with the homeless, along the bike path every Saturday. It was obvious that Mr. Devin would one day be an administrator and possibly a principal at the high school. Every day during school, Mr. Devin had a specific schedule. During breaks and lunch, Mr. Devin would grade papers. Nothing ever seemed to distract him. He sat in his classroom while everyone else was packing to leave for the day. Other teachers looked up to Mr. Devin as they consider him a great role model for all other students. On Tuesdays and Thursday's Mr. Devin stayed after school and tutored whoever wanted tutoring. Somewhat of an odd schedule, Mr. Devin never seemed to let other adults or students know anything about him; but he always provided a hand and shared a smile. David took advantage of getting tutoring every Tuesday.

Matthew and David's parents were friends with Mr. Devin through a mutual friend. David's parents felt Mr. Devin always set a great example for the kids because he was respectful and

responsible. That was the major thing that David liked about Mr. Devin; that he cared about everyone. It was now Tuesday, and although the incident had occurred between David and Matthew the day earlier, they were both expected to show up for tutoring.

David went and talked to Mr. Devin immediately after school before tutoring and asked him to speak with Matthew and him about the incident earlier. Mr. Devin was always good at seeing everyone's side and bringing everyone to a place of understanding. Mr. Devin agreed and as tutoring began, Mr. Devin brought the two boys together. Everything seemed to be working out through Mr. Devin's discussion about friendship. The next day everything seemed to be just like nothing had ever happened between the two lifelong friends who agreed not to put another person in between their friendship.

Now Wednesday afternoon, both David and Matthew, friends once again, wanted to go by and thank Mr. Devin. As the end of school bell rang, the boys rushed down the hall to Mr. Devin's class. As they got closer, they noticed Mr. Devin bolting out of the side doors of the school, as if he wanted no one to notice he had left. Wait, someone shouted; I need to talk to you about something. As if he didn't fully the person shouting, Mr. Devin turned while continuing to walk briskly towards the street. Mr. Devin replied, "uh-not right now. I have to uh-got to walk down to the post office." Both looking confused, David and Matthew felt that something wasn't right. "Let's walk to the post office and make sure Mr. Devin is okay", said Matthew with a hurried tone. Nodding in agreement, David grabbed his bag off the ground and followed Matthew. Not once had either of them seen Mr. Devin look so nervous while walking off; but as usual, being the aggressive teenagers they were, they decided to follow Mr. Devin and make sure that everything was okay.

As they began following their teacher towards the post office, they couldn't help but notice Mr. Devin turning off onto a wooded

path. The path opened up into a field where there was a bike path approaching a bridge. Their anxiety levels went up but they continued to follow. "Where do you think he is going", asked David. "I don't know, but I don't think we should follow him", replied Matthew. As they hurried through the open field to keep a distant glimpse of Mr. Devin, they wondered. "If Mr. Devin is going home, we are going to be in a lot of trouble for following him", said David. Although they both questioned whether or not they should continue following Mr. Devin, they proceeded to follow him. What seemed to be a miles journey was finally coming to an end. Mr. Devin stopped at the base of the bridge and made a sharp right, ducking behind a pillar. The boys froze, feeling that they may have been spotted. All kinds of thoughts began swirling through their minds. "Mr. Devin is going to hate us forever for this", said David. The boys slowed down as they got closer to the area that they saw Mr. Devin duck into; and then without thinking, Matthew yelled out; "Mr. Devin wait".

As they turned the corner where they assumed Mr. Devin would be, there was nobody. They could not figure out how he had eluded them so quickly. As they turned to begin their quest back home, the boys heard a noise. As they looked up, they saw Mr. Devin huddled between the crevasse of the pillar and bridge along with what seemed to be an old homeless man. As the boys walked closer, the shadowy figures grew. They realized it was Mr. Devin with an older man. The boys ducked where they could not be seen. "What is he doing here", asked David. "I think he is helping that guy", Matthew said as they stood and watched. As the boys sat and listened, they heard Mr. Devin thank the homeless man for helping him when he was homeless. The boy's heads dropped when they heard Mr. Devin say this.

Mr. Devin continued speaking to the homeless man, now being called Mr. McCathy. "Right after I got out of the marines, looking for work and not being able to find any. I became homeless for almost two years and lived right here underneath this bridge.

You gave me my first real job. Working on the design projects for the school system helped me shift into teaching. You saw the impact I made of people. Even though you lost your job, and soon became homeless, you always stayed gracious and happy through life.”

As Mr. Devin finished telling Mr. McCathy how thankful he was, the boys became very sad. They soon realized that Mr. Devin came and visited Mr. McCathy every day under the bridge after school; except for Tuesdays and Thursdays when he would bring Mr. McCathy dinner in the evening after his tutoring sessions. “Maybe you and I can chip in and help” echoed Matthew to David in disbelief. This sounds like an incredible man who was always there for others. Mr. Devin would always try to get Mr. McCathy to leave the bridge and come stay with him, but Mr. McCathy’s pride never allowed him to leave. He would always tell Mr. Devin that there is a plan in a hurry to move slowly. Mr. Devin decided to help him by putting money away each month to help him. He also give him many of his own clothes and came out here to sit with him every day.

Mr. Devin never quite understood what Mr. McCathy meant by there being a plan in a hurry to move slowly; why this man who was once his mentor would tell him every time that “there is a plan in a hurry to move slow.” Mr. McCathy always tried to see the good in every opportunity. He walked every day with purpose; always saying hello to those he passed, even when homeless. The boys sat there with their mouths wide open. They couldn’t believe what they were hearing. As Mr. Devin got up to leave Mr. McCathy, he turned to him and said, “There is a storm that carried you here, but in the end the sun shines and a purpose shows itself on the other side.” The boys began weeping as they saw Mr. Devin get up and walk off from Mr. McCathy.

Chapter 7: The Grass Is Greener When I Water It

I have begun to understand that my mistakes are just that, and that balance through the process helps lead me through my valley between the mountains. My posture has been very important for creating stronger, more positive outcomes in my life. I am beginning to understand that the grass is not greener on the other side; I just need to water it consistently. The grass has a better chance of staying green if I continue to water it and study its behavior and process in order to not kill the grass. Instead of looking for greener grass, I need to spend more time understanding its behaviors and what it needs to maintain its beauty when the seasons change.

The idea that my instinct is to continuously look for something better is invalid. I desire to take time and enjoy what is in front of me. Enjoying the challenges and the obstacles, maybe I will appreciate more, the effects of seeing what I can do better to keep the grass healthy. If I take time to enjoy material items, maybe I will realize that I don't need the next best item because it is the exact same item with one new additional feature. If I take time to enjoy who I am, maybe I will actually appreciate myself outside of what others label me. So again, I ask myself; is the grass greener on the other side, or is it just the fantasy of a different grass?

If I can agree that different types of grasses represent an emotional fantasy, then head in the clouds, perhaps I should have never committed to that grass. The grass I want to commit to should represent all elements of my existence including; physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. I live inside of this ideal in my relationship. Inside of the physical, if I water her existence means that I show her by my touch just how much she means every day. Whether holding hands, giving a hug, putting a hand on her shoulder, touching her cheek, giving her a kiss, or rubbing her feet, I commit myself to the physical existence of the grass. Inside of the mental, I water her existence so that I communicate

affectively everyday with her by hearing her (with eye contact) when she speaks and when she is silent, whispering in her ear, encouraging her passions, and just simply telling her why she means so much to me. Inside of the emotional I water her existence by protecting her fears and anxieties, and being patient when she is in a hurry. Finally, inside of the spiritual I water her existence by being the man God designed me to be and keeping myself grounded in faith alongside her.

Create an Action Plan

The grass we water every day is because we understand our responsibility in keeping the grass beautiful. Our relationships, our attitude towards others, the things we affect, and our everyday purpose is the grass we stand on. We are committing to only planting additional grass around what has purpose in our life. We will love and forgive the grass that does not stand tall when it is watered. We will empower the grass to grow with sunlight and happiness. We will trust the grass to take our water when it is thirsty. And if the grass ever begins to wither, we will give it a spiritual awakening while planting fresh grass around it so that it still knows it is needed.

Things are really bad only some of the time, but did you know that if we get into our own destructive subconscious, we will fester on that really bad moment? In order for us to have purpose, we have to sacrifice complaining and own our unfavorable experiences. We are not going to save the world, but we can place something in it that makes it grow even better. We will only become passionate about something that we do, and we cannot sit and talk about it; especially when we know that we need an action plan. Action will help our purpose come to life. Too many times we spend more time thinking about our execution and potential mistakes. When we learn to dive head first into the action, we will learn that balance can be practiced while mistakes are happening. When we learn to dive head first into the action, we will create

hobbies and passions. Our life will become a daring adventure, full of mystery and suspense, failures and successes. This action begins with our willingness to just water the grass instead of looking for another patch of grass.

We are going to have people who try to walk all over our lawn and it is our job to protect it. When the weather gets hot outside, the grass has a higher chance of dying. At the end of the week, we should sit in reflection and ask ourselves if our action plan was aggressive or passive. We already know that sometimes the lawn will not be receptive to our watering. The grass may have empty patches that may need to be watered more than the rest of it. We need to be observant without judgement of the grass, for the lawn is big and watering the grass could be an all-day event.

No matter what age, we know that it is up to us to understand how to water our own grass. Sometimes we have struggled with that because we weren't willing to put in the work necessary to keep our grass fresh. With action being the priority, we should now understand that watering the grass every day is important in order to truly live our purpose.

"No water corrupts healthy grass, while watering cultivates healthy growth."

Activity 1: Water Your Lawn

Take the time to label your lawn, then create a plan to water it every day. The lawn may be school, your home, your family, your spouse, your children, and your pace of work, your boss, or perhaps your soul. Only label one lawn for the week and be specific. Write down your weekly watering plan and stick to it, keeping in mind that watering the lawn more than once a day is good for keeping the grass healthy.

Christina's Story

Christina Brinkley had so many goals growing up. She wanted to be a pilot, a doctor, an astronaut, and a computer programmer. Christina's teachers felt that she was all over the place with her dreams, but after being depressed in middle school and the first couple of years in high school, she was finally becoming more social and active in high school. Christina went through High School, growing taller physically, and now was one of the taller girls in the school. Everyone told her that she had to play sports, but Christina was focused on her goals and didn't like sports. Somewhat pressured by teachers and her peers to play basketball or volleyball, Christina shut down altogether her first two years high school. She rarely spoke with anyone and always kept to herself. Her parents sent her to counseling, but still no answers. Her parents knew that she had faced a lot of tough challenges while in middle school, but always felt like bringing those things up would only shun Christina away even more.

It was Christina's senior year in high school, and it seemed like she was ready for college. The first day of class, Christina's counselor called her into the office. "So Christina, what do you want to study in college?" Well, replied Christina; "I want to be a pilot, a doctor, an astronaut, and a computer programmer." The counselor looked at her and said with a firm voice and a confused tone; "you have to pick one thing and focus on that." Christina shook her head in disagreement, but sat and listened as the counselor tried to point her in one direction. Christina's parents had always told her to dream big and reach past her limits, but here she sat being told the complete opposite. As the day ended, Christina decided to write her goals down on paper. She had always used a S.M.A.R.T. Goal concept her dad taught her in Middle School, and Christina still knew deep down that she could succeed at all of her dreams, even if nobody else did.

Every day after school Christina would go home and have a regiment. She would take a break from school and decompress. This included no social media and very little television. For Christina this usually incorporated taking a small nap or getting a bite to eat while watching a little television. Once Christina woke up, she would go over all of her homework agenda notes and start with the assignment that took her the shortest amount of time to complete. She would work all the way up to the assignment which took the most time. When her parents got home, Christina, would stop and take her second break. Christina took that time to speak with her parents about life, although usually this was the time when they were tired and just didn't fully listen to her needs. Of course if time and work aligned with dinner, they would all eat together, but it was very rare.

Christina's final homework assignment would sometimes take her into the early hours of the morning, but she was still able to find balance. Her parents didn't interact much with her during the week as they were busy working. Every night before bed, Christina would stare at the ceiling and ask "why now". Not really knowing why she was asking that question, she would always find peace in waiting for an answer. Every morning, Christina made sure that she was at her locker early so that she was prepared for the entire day. She seemed to have a lot of structure to her days and nights. What the teachers at Christina's school did not know was that she actually lived with a lot of procrastinators and that her biggest goal was not to become one as well. She saw her parents always in a hurry, doing things at the last minute. She knew that she could not find opportunity like that and wanted to have more balance. And because she found that balance in the process, she would be able to accomplish all of her goals.

When Christina graduated from High School, she attended the Air Force Academy, where she became a mechanical engineer in the Air Force. After a few years in the Air Force as a mechanical

engineer, she was called up to work with NASA on the space shuttles. While working with NASA for years, Christina had a passion for helping people. She used her spare time to volunteer at a local clinic creating more detailed database systems for patients so that their records were stored properly. And when Christina retired from NASA after 9 years, she was offered a position at the White House, working directly with the President on a new space program. Christina always trusted the walls inside of her Frisbee. She let her mental, emotional, and spiritual blocks build the walls so that when she launched herself, everything would be balanced.

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