Robin Sharma

Discover your Destiny

WITH THE

Monk who Sold his Ferrari

The 7 stages of SELF-AWAKENING

OVER 6 MILLION BOOKS SOLD

'Robin Sharma's books are helping people all over the world live great lives.'

PAULO COELHO, author of *The Alchemist*

Robin Sharma

Discover Your Destiny with The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: The 7 Stages of Self-Awakening

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Discover Your Destiny with The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: The 7 Stages of Self-Awakening / R. Sharma — «HarperCollins»,

A potent pathway to self-awakening that will help you to live your greatest life and claim the happiness, prosperity and inner peace that you deserve. From the author of the international bestseller, The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari.• The Monk is back with a visionary new book on awakening your authentic greatness, full of fresh and exciting new lessons to stimulate your life.• Combining Eastern wisdom with Western success principles in this deeply inspiring, yet highly practical guide, Robin Sharma offers a blueprint for living a beautiful life, rich with joy, prosperity and lasting inner peace.• This fable follows the story of Dar Sanderson, a middle-aged human resources manager with a good job, nice home and steady income. Despite his apparent success, Dar is deeply unhappy, realising that his good life is keeping him from his best life. After encountering the Monk, he embarks on a 6-month odyssey to discover his authentic self and reclaim the life of his dreams. Along the way he learns the 7 stages every person must choose to walk if they wish to seek a life of lasting happiness and personal freedom.• Robin Sharma is renowned for his captivating story-telling, which has earned him fans including the master of spiritual fiction Paulo Coelho.

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Robin Sharma
DISCOVER YOUR DESTINY
WITH THE
MONK WHO SOLD HIS FERRARI
The 7 Stages
of Self-Awakening

HARPER element™

PRAISE FOR ROBIN SHARMA AND
The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari

'Robin Sharma's books are helping people all over the world live great lives.' – Paulo Coelho, #1 bestselling author of *The Alchemist*

'Robin Sharma has the rare gift of writing books that are truly life-changing.' – Richard Carlson, Ph.D., author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*

'Nothing less than sensational. This book will bless your life.' – Mark Victor Hansen, co-author, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

'A great book, from an inspirational point of view.' – Carlos Delgado, Major League baseball superstar

'This is a fun, fascinating, fanciful adventure into the realms of personal development, personal effectiveness and individual happiness. It contains treasures of wisdom that can enrich and enhance the life of every single person.' – Brian Tracy, author of *Maximum Achievement*

'Robin S. Sharma has an important message for all of us – one that can change our lives. He's written a one-of-a-kind handbook for personal fulfillment in a hectic age.' – Scott DeGarmo, past publisher, *Success Magazine*

'The book is about finding out what is truly important to your real spiritual self, rather than being inundated with material possessions.' – Michelle Yeoh, lead actress of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,* in *TIME* Magazine

'Robin Sharma has created an enchanting tale that incorporates the classic tools of transformation into a simple philosophy of living. A delightful book that will change your life.' – Elaine St. James, author of *Simplify Your Life* and *Inner Simplicity*

'Sheds light on life's big questions.' – *The Edmonton Journal*

'The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari is coherent, useful and definitely worth reading … It can truly help readers cope with the rat race.' – *The Kingston Whig-Standard*

'Simple wisdom that anyone can benefit from.' – *The Calgary Herald*

'This book could be classified as The Wealthy Barber of personal development … [It contains] insightful messages on the key concepts which help bring greater balance, control and effectiveness in our daily lives.' – *Investment Executive*

'A treasure – an elegant and powerful formula for true success and happiness. Robin S. Sharma has captured the wisdom of the ages and made it relevant for these turbulent times. I couldn't put it down.' – Joe Tye, author of *Never Fear, Never Quit*

'Simple rules for reaching one's potential.' – *The Halifax Daily News*

'Sharma guides readers toward enlightenment.' – *The Chronicle-Herald*

'A wonderfully crafted parable revealing a set of simple yet surprisingly potent ideas for improving the quality of anyone's life. I'm recommending this gem of a book to all of my clients.' – George Williams, president, Karat Consulting International

'Robin Sharma offers personal fulfillment along the spiritual highroad.' – *Ottawa Citizen*

PRAISE FOR
Leadership Wisdom from The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari

'One of the year's best business books.' – *PROFIT Magazine*

'Very informative, easy to read and extremely helpful … We have distributed copies to all our management team as well as to store operators. The feedback has been very positive.' – David Bloom, CEO, Shoppers Drug Mart

'Robin Sharma has a neat, down-to-earth way of expressing his powerful solutions for today's most pressing leadership issues. This is so refreshing in a period when businesspeople are faced with so much jargon.' – Ian Turner, manager, Celestica Learning Centre

'This book is a gold mine of wisdom and common sense.' – Dean Larry Tapp, Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario

'A terrific book that will help any businessperson lead and live more effectively.' – Jim O'Neill, director of operations, District Sales Division, London Life

'Sharma's mission is to provide the reader with the insight to become a visionary leader, helping them transform their business into an organization that thrives in this era of change.' – *Sales Promotion Magazine*

ALSO BY ROBIN SHARMA

The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari Leadership Wisdom from The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari The Secret Letters of The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari Life Lessons from The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari Family Wisdom from The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari The Greatness Guide Be Extraordinary: The Greatness Guide, Book 2 MegaLiving The Leader Who Had No Title The Saint, The Surfer and The CEO

This book is dedicated to fellow seekers, those brave souls who exercise the courage to leave the crowd and find their way home to a place called authenticity.

May your resolve to awaken and live in *true* power be indomitable. May the lessons you are due to learn arrive in gentle ways. May your dark nights of the soul be few and far between. And may you shine so brightly that, at the end of your days, all will pause and say, “Ah, there was one who lived life fully and completely.”

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The hidden well-spring of your soul must needs rise and run murmuring to the sea;
And the treasure of your infinite depths would be revealed to your eyes.
But let there be no scales to weigh your unknown treasure;
And seek not the depths of your knowledge with staff or sounding line.
Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Gravedigger, when you dig my grave, could you make it shallow so that I can feel the rain.
Dave Matthews, *Some Devil*

An Introduction from Robin Sharma

You are far greater than you have ever dreamed of being. And no matter what you are experiencing in your life right now, trust that all is good and unfolding in your best interests. It may not look pretty, but it is exactly what you need to learn for you to grow into the person you have been destined to become. Everything occurring in your life has been perfectly orchestrated to inspire your maximal evolution as a human being and bring you into your true power. Learn from life and allow it to take you where you are meant to go—it has your highest interests in mind.

Within the pages of this book, you will discover many answers to life's most important questions. I pray you will find many truths and gain much insight into the way the world works and how you can succeed within it. But, ultimately, the answers you are seeking already lie deep within your heart. There is nowhere else to look. Yes, my words may prompt openings for you and serve to help you remember what you already know at your core. But do not doubt that there is, indeed, a treasure trove of wisdom, power and love slumbering within you—waiting to be awakened by your most courageous part. Isn't that incredibly inspiring to know? *You already are everything you have always wanted to become.* You simply need to do the inner work required to remove the blocks that have been covering—and denying—your original nature.

The purpose of human life, I believe, is to walk the path of this Great Awakening of Self and to return home to who you once were (and the place you once knew). My closely held belief is that newborn children represent perfection and the state of being to which each of us is duty-bound to return. In the instant after you were born, you were fearless, pure love, innocent, infinitely wise, of boundless potential and beautifully connected with the unseen hand that created the universe. As a very young child, you were filled with wonder and fully alive to life. Indeed, at that time you were nearly enlightened (to be enlightened is to be all light: one who is all light has no shadows, no dark side, no fears, no anger, no resentments and no limitations).

Most of us on the planet today have lost this connection to our authentic selves, this original state of being in which we were unafraid to walk towards possibility and reach for the stars. *We know not who we are.* We have morphed into people who behave selfishly, fearfully and hurtfully. This behavior is not a reflection of our essential nature but is, instead, a reflection of the wounds we have suffered as we have left the innocence to which we were born and traveled along the journey of our days. Only people in pain can do painful things. Only people who have been hurt can hurt others. Only people with closed hearts are able to act in less than loving ways.

The whole reason we are alive, I believe, is to grow into our greatest selves and *remember* the truth about who we fundamentally are. Life will support you perfectly in this quest. You will be sent people, events and trials that will invite you to reveal more of your brilliance and discover more of your possibilities. Often, your lessons will not come easily. Suffering has always been a vehicle for deep spiritual growth. Those who have endured great suffering are generally the ones who evolve into great beings. Those who have been deeply hurt by life are generally the ones who can feel the pain of others in a heartbeat. Those who have endured adversity become humbled by life, and as a result, are more open, compassionate and real. We may not like suffering when it visits us, but it serves us so very well: it cracks the shell that covers our hearts and empties us of the lies we have clung to about who we are, why we are here and how this remarkable world of ours really functions. Once emptied, we can be refilled with all that is good, noble and true. Troubles can transform, if we choose to allow them to do so. As Joseph Campbell wrote: "Where you stumble, there your treasure lies."

Discover Your Destiny is a book about reclaiming your greatest life. I have tried to pour my heart out onto these pages and share all I know about personal leadership, self-discovery and living from a place of authenticity. You should know that I am very human. I struggle daily with my limitations, my fears and what I call my "ancient patterns," those old ways of behaving that I have learned along

the way. I see myself as a work in progress and continually challenge myself to use each day as a platform to evolve into the higher reaches of my inner life. There is a myth out there that people who write these kinds of books are enlightened beings who spend their days in bliss and transcendence, offering words of truth from the mountaintop. In reality, I have learned that every single one of us has work to do, no matter how much work we have done on ourselves, no matter how evolved we are. Every single one of us has a light side as well as a dark side. Each of us has flaws to mend and wounds within us that cry out to be healed. Every single one of us has a splintered soul (as we try to reconcile being spiritual with being human). This condition of imperfection is actually what makes us human. And the deeper I go within myself, the more I realize how little I know. As I wrote in *The Saint, The Surfer and The CEO,* "the top of one mountain is the bottom of the next." As we reach the summit of the mountain we are currently climbing, guess what we see? Other peaks to scale. This is what life on Schoolhouse Earth is all about: never-ending growth and learning that comes for the sole purpose (or should that be "soul purpose"?) of helping us remember and reclaim the greatness —and wholeness—that, sadly, we've lost.

And though I have my human limitations, I will also admit to you that I have come a long way in a short period of time in terms of removing the blocks that have kept me small (and so can you if you follow the extraordinary process explained on the pages that follow). Only a handful of years ago, I was a litigation lawyer on the fast-track to worldly success, chasing money, acclaim and materialism. I was living life from the outside in rather than from the inside out (no wonder it wasn't working). I endured a very hard divorce and now raise my two incredible children as a single father. Along the way, I suffered great setbacks and, at times, seemingly endless personal trials. *But we grow most from our greatest challenges.* I've realized that these experiences were sent to help me clean up my act and me to move through my weakness. Life's biggest hurts are, in truth, glorious opportunities for personal growth, positive transformation and reclaiming the authentic power you've lost as you left the perfection of infancy and walked into the world. Embrace them for the gifts they are.

Through all the highs and lows that this incredible (and short) game of life has sent my way, I have never given up on my commitment to accept responsibility for my part in all that has unfolded and to reach for my biggest self in the process. I believe that much of what we experience in life has been pre-scripted. But I also believe that we, as human beings, have an *enormous* amount of choice to create the beautiful lives of our dreams. Fate and our choices work in concert to sculpt the look of our lives. And it is in our conscious choice-making that, ultimately, our destinies are realized. To forget this is to play the victim. To disregard this truth is to deny the power that has been granted to you to create all that you want.

The pathway I've described in this book—The 7 Stages of Self-Awakening—reflects the eternal, archetypal journey of the leader or the hero. In the tradition of the previous books of *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* series, the messages in this book are revealed through the fictional adventures of Julian Mantle. But it is important to remember that they are *very* real and exceptionally powerful. The process embodied within the seven stages can be found, in various forms, in many of the ancient texts of both Eastern and Western wisdom literature. You are the hero or heroine of your life. If you choose to play your biggest game as a human being (and I know you will), this is the path that you too must walk. Traveling it *guarantees* you authentic success.

The best way to learn is to teach. If you really want to own this material and integrate it into your life, it is *essential* that you teach it to someone within twenty-four hours of completing this book. This will serve two purposes: first, it will help you to integrate the knowledge; second, it will help those around you remember who *they* truly are. And as you read *Discover Your Destiny*, engage those you love in conversations about what you are learning. Share your insights. Put a voice to the changes you are committed to making in the move towards your greatest life. Doing so will deepen your conviction and generate results *that last.*

Thank you for picking up this book; I hope it delivers all you seek from it (and so much more). I am grateful that you would give me the hours of your life required to read and reflect upon this work. And I genuinely honor you for taking this *giant* step towards discovering your destiny. As you read this book and others in *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* series, you will be joining other women and men from around the world who have become part of a community. Extraordinary conversations happen at our gathering place, *robinsharma.com*, a site where you will find a wealth of tools and support as you walk the path of your destiny.

We are all connected at an invisible level. As you do your healing, you aid in the healing of the world. As you let your brilliance shine, you silently invite those around you to do the same. As you do the work required to let your life stand for the highest and the best, you serve as a model for others to play their highest game. And, as one of my coaching clients often says, “This is a beautiful thing.”

I wish you immense blessings along this voyage called a life.

With Love,

Robin Sharma

CHAPTER 1
A Spiritual Emergency

Life does not listen to your logic; it goes on its own way undisturbed. You have to listen to life; life will not listen to your logic, it does not bother about your logic.

—Osho

I could feel the coolness of the metal against my head. How could it have come to this? I was actually sitting in a shabby motel room with a gun pushed up against my temple, ready to squeeze the trigger. Sweat was pouring down my forehead and my heart was beating wildly. My hands were shaking uncontrollably. No one knew where I was. No one seemed to care anymore. I had nothing to live for. So I was preparing to die.

I could see the headline of my obituary right now: "Dar Sandersen, international hotel entrepreneur, divorced father of three, dead at age 44—by his own hand."

But as I closed my eyes and said a final prayer aloud, something unexpected—no, miraculous—happened. I began to feel dizzy and fell to the floor, the gun dropping out of my hand. As I lay there, motionless, a blinding white light began to fill my body. But before you dismiss my story, please know that I've always been a very grounded and reasonable person. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before. I'd always chuckled on hearing stories of the mystical, deeming them flaky and irresponsible. I didn't—and still don't—talk to angels, nor do I run my life according to the daily position of the stars. Yet, I cannot discount or deny what happened to me in that motel room only twelve months ago. Was it an experience of the divine? Was it a spiritual awakening? Was it simply a physical reaction to the extreme stress I was experiencing? Truthfully, I do not know. What I do know is what happened there set into motion a series of events that have transformed every element of the life I once knew.

The light grew brighter and brighter. Soon, my entire body began to shake, as if I were experiencing a massive seizure. Sweat flowed out of me in torrents as my arms, legs and torso trembled on the cold and filthy floor. This continued for what seemed like an eternity. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, came these words that pierced the deepest part of me: "*Your life is a treasure and you are so much more than you know.*"

That was it. Once these words flashed across my mind, I stopped shaking. I just lay there, in a pool of perspiration, staring up at the ceiling. I had never felt such internal peace in all my life. I was completely in my body, fully within my heart. *Life is a treasure and you are so much more than you know.*

After a while, I slowly rose to my feet and packed up my belongings. Something deep within me had shifted, though I can't explain it—I just *felt* it. I no longer had an interest in taking my own life. Maybe that voice was right—maybe I did have much more within me than I was currently aware of.

Generally, when we face hard times, we think the way we see the world reflects the way it really is. This is a false assumption. We are simply viewing the world from our hopeless frame of reference. We are seeing things through sad and hopeless eyes. The truth of the matter is that when we begin to feel better, our world will look better. And when we return to a state of joyfulness within, our outer world will reflect that feeling to us. I've learned that the world is a mirror. *We receive from life not what we want but who we are.* I've also learned that there are seasons to our lives and painful times never last. *Trust that the winter of your sorrow will yield to the summer of your joy, just as the brilliant rays of the morning always follow the darkest part of the night.*

I no longer was a desperate case, feeling sorry for myself. I no longer saw no way out. Some sort of power had been returned to me that day. And though my life was still a mess, truth be told, I had begun to know that I possessed the power to improve it. For some reason, *I trusted* that help was

on the way and that happier days were coming. Little did I know how wonderful this help would be and how beautiful my life would become. But before I get into these details, you may be wondering what circumstances led my spirit to fall into such a state of decay that I could even consider taking my own life.

Only a few years ago, I thought I was living the life everyone dreamed of. I had a lovely and intelligent wife who loved me deeply. I had three healthy and happy children who excelled at all they chose to do. I was making more money than I could have ever imagined, as the owner of a string of hip boutique hotels located at sophisticated hot spots around the globe. Movie stars, the fabulously wealthy and the glitterati in general were among my clients. I traveled to exotic places, accumulated many toys and became fairly well known, at least in the market-space within which I worked.

Then, one day, my entire world fell apart. I arrived home late after a business dinner with the vendor of a property I was interested in buying. Rachel usually left a few lights on for me but, on this night, the house was completely dark. It made no sense—it was only ten o'clock. Where was Rachel? Where were the kids?

I walked inside and turned on the lights in the entrance hall and the kitchen. Only silence greeted me. But on the kitchen table was a note in Rachel's familiar handwriting. It read:

Dar, I've taken the kids to my mother's place. I do not love you anymore. I'm sorry. My lawyer will call you in the morning.

Nothing can prepare you for a letter like that—nothing. Although I had pretended that my marriage was working, I knew we had drifted apart. All the time away from home, traveling and doing business, had been time stolen away from my marriage and family, and the love we once knew was gone. I had also pretended to be a good father and, from the outside, I probably seemed that. But the wise souls of my children knew the truth. Even when I was sitting right next to them, I wasn't really there. My mind never left the business and emotionally, I was unavailable. I guess the truth is that I was an extraordinarily selfish man back then. I believed the world revolved around me. No one else's needs and no one else's feelings mattered nearly as much as mine. I wanted to be rich. I wanted to be recognized. I wanted to win. And in the process, I lost what was most important.

The letter and the divorce litigation that ensued ripped my heart out. I was forced out of my own home and began to live in one of my hotels. I could see my kids only once a week and every few weekends. I began to drink heavily and gained an embarrassingly excessive amount of weight. I had always been ruggedly handsome and very fit, but that all unraveled. I'd wake up with searing migraines that would not leave me until I doused them with alcohol. Thankfully, I did not lose my business. I'd been smart enough to put in place a first-class management team who, out of loyalty to me, ran the show while I was busy licking my wounds. Sure, I'd attend the odd meeting and close the odd deal. But, mostly, I was home alone, sitting in a dark room listening to old Billie Holiday songs and having long conversations with Jack Daniels. This was the misery that eventually led me to that seedy motel room I told you about. But you should know that this was the misery that also led to my salvation.

I have discovered that pain and adversity are powerful vehicles to promote personal growth. Nothing helps you learn, grow and evolve more quickly. Nothing offers you as big an opportunity to reclaim more of your authentic power as a person. Our human eyes view it as a negative experience. This is pure *judgment* and behind this false belief is pure fear. You see, suffering occurs when something happens that we did not want. It occurs when life gives us something unexpected, some new condition. And the appearance of a new condition in our lives, whether this means an illness or the loss of a loved one or a financial setback, means we must change and leave the old, the shores we once clung to. We are asked to let go of what we expected and, for a human being, letting go can be frightening. We are afraid to leave the safe harbor of the familiar and the known. We resist traveling to the unknown places our lives sometimes lead us towards. The very thought of doing so scares us. Behind all resistance to the new is fear.

But there is nothing to fear. This universe of ours is a far friendlier place than we realize. A boat that never ventures beyond its moorings will never be damaged, but that's not what boats are made for. Similarly, a human being who never dares to walk out into the unknown spaces of his or her life will never get hurt—but that is not what human beings were designed for. We were made to experience the growth that comes from visiting foreign places as travelers through life. Our wiser eyes know this truth and see change and suffering for what it really is: a caring physician that comes to heal the sick part of our selves. Suffering serves to deepen us. Suffering comes to help us and causes us to know who we truly are. Suffering cracks us open, forcing us to let go and surrender all that we have known and clung to, like a little child on her first day of school, afraid to let go of her mother's hand and walk alone into a classroom full of new friends where she will learn so many new and beautiful things. The unknown is where "the new" exists and the new is the only place in the world where you will find *possibility.* And every human being is hardwired to run towards possibility and potential in their lives. We were all designed to be great. So how can you say suffering is bad when it is the very thing that makes you better? Yes, the human side of us feels the pain as we endure it. That's natural. But this pain will eventually subside and a richer, stronger, wiser you will emerge.

"Fear not the unknown, for it is where your greatness resides," said a very special teacher of mine, one whom you are about to learn much about. Most people spend the best years of their lives in the place of the known. They lack the courage to venture out into foreign territory and are frightened to leave the crowd. They want to fit in and are afraid to stand out. They dress like everyone else, think like everyone else and behave like everyone else, even if doing so doesn't feel right to them. They are reluctant to listen to the call of their hearts and try new things, refusing to leave that shore of safety. So they do what everybody else does. In so doing, their once-shining souls begin to darken and wrinkle. "Death is only one of many ways to lose your life," said adventurer Alvah Simon.

Clinging to safe shores in your life is nothing more than making a choice to remain imprisoned by your fears. There may be the illusion that you are free when you keep living within the box that your life may have become but, believe me, it's just that: an illusion—a lie you tell yourself. When you leave the box for new vistas and stop following the crowd, of course, fears will surface—you are human. But courage requires that you feel these fears and then move ahead anyway. *Courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to walk through your fear in pursuit of a goal that is important to you.* You are among the living dead when you live in a safe harbor and cling to the known. You come back to life and your heart starts to beat again when you venture into the unknown and explore the foreign places of your life. The adventure and thrill of living returns. *Remember, on the other side of your fears you will discovery your fortune.*

Here's a strong metaphor I'll offer you. If you have spent your whole life in a jail, many fears will surface on the day of your release. While in jail, though you had no freedom, you lived within the realm of the known because there was a strict routine in place for you: you knew when you were required to wake, you knew when you could exercise and you knew precisely when and what you could eat. Now, though you are no longer imprisoned, you feel afraid. You do not know what to do and where to go. There is no structure, only uncertainty. Your tendency is to return to the known rather than face the seeming insecurity and discomfort of the unknown. You would rather choose to be a prisoner than regain your freedom. It makes no sense but that's how most of us operate through life.

I have learned all this philosophy from the teacher I briefly mentioned. This teacher has been the single greatest influence on my life to date. The wisdom and the remarkable seven-stage process he began to share with me just over twelve months ago have completely revolutionized my life. I have never been so happy. I have never felt so alive. I have never had so much self-respect. I have found the love of my life. My health is perfect. And my business is soaring. I never imagined life could be this good. The same can hold true for you. The gifts I've received are gifts available to you as well. Sure, you will have to make some new choices and take a few chances. Sure, you will have to invest some time and energy to reconnect with the great and magnificent parts of yourself that you may

have lost. Sure, you may have to face a few fears that have been keeping you small, whether you've acknowledged it or not. But in so doing you will awaken your highest and greatest self. And what could possibly be more important than that?

The teacher I've mentioned is the wisest, most powerful and most noble person I know. He is an eccentric—a true original—and his ways are unorthodox, to put it mildly. Actually, he's a bit of a wildman at times. You have never met anyone like him and you never will. But he is so very gifted in his ability to impart life-altering knowledge in a way that speaks to your soul and causes you to experience changes that will open up a beautiful life for you. His lessons will be very helpful as you seek to discover your destiny and live the gorgeous life that is your birthright.

I guess there are no accidents. I met my teacher the day after my epiphany in the motel room. I went to work that day for a meeting with my team, and my human resources manager, Evan Janssen, walked into my office with two tickets to a motivational seminar later that evening. Evan loved these kinds of events and was a huge fan of the whole personal growth movement. I, on the other hand, was a skeptic. To be honest with you, I don't like motivational speakers at all. I've always found them to be a bit like cotton candy—sweet for a few moments but you soon discover that nothing lasts.

Evan's little boy had his first piano recital that night, so Evan couldn't attend the seminar. He wanted me to go. He thought the event would lift my spirits and perhaps inspire me to make the changes in my life he knew I needed to get back on track, not only professionally but personally. I told him I didn't want to go and just couldn't stomach the trite aphorisms and clichéd homilies commonly recited by motivators. I mentioned that I was still struggling with a lot of things and felt it best to be alone that evening. Then something interesting happened. My colleague, a highly intuitive man, looked deep into my eyes and said, "Dar, trust me on this one. I feel there is a reason you need to go to this seminar. It's just a feeling I have in my gut. *Please* go."

I have always been a man who lived mostly in his head. Reason rather than passion drove me. If something didn't make sense at an intellectual level, I'd usually discount it. But I'd lived that way my whole life and my life still wasn't working. I love Einstein's definition of insanity: "Doing the same things and expecting different results." If I wanted new results in my life I knew I had to behave in *new* ways. Otherwise my life would look the same, until I died.

Something deep within me suggested that there just might be another way to operate as a human being. I had recently read my very first book of philosophy, though I had never touched that kind of thing before. I don't know what compelled me to pick it up but I did. Maybe, being in so much pain, I was ready to look anywhere for salvation. *It is a truth that in our darkest times we are willing to go the deepest.* When life is good, we live superficially; we are not very reflective. But when the seas get rough, we step out of ourselves and ponder why things have unfolded as they have. Adversity tends to make us more philosophical. During times of challenge, we begin to ask ourselves the bigger questions of life, such as why does suffering happen, why do our best-laid plans not work out as we expect, and is life ruled by the silent hand of chance or the powerful fist of choice.

In this book I picked up, the author wrote that the mind is limited while the heart is limitless. The mind can be cruel, causing you to spend the best years of your life living in the past or squandering the present worrying over things that will never happen. The mind craves *external* power, the kind based on worldly—rather than spiritual—things such as money, position and possessions. The problem with external power is that it is fleeting: when you lose the money, position and possessions, you lose the power. If you have tied your identity to those things, you will also lose a sense of who you are when they fall away. The only power worth anything is authentic power—that which comes from within.

The heart, according to this book, has no desire for these minor pursuits. The heart lives in the present moment, knowing that is where life is to be lived. The heart is concerned with healing into wholeness, love, compassion and service to other human beings. It is aware that each of us is connected at an unseen level, that we are all brothers and sisters of the same family and that happiness

comes from giving and supporting the growth of others into their greatest selves. “Give up the drop, become the ocean,” said the brilliant Sufi poet Rumi. The heart knows this truth. Yes, the mind, with all its ability to reason and reflect, is a great *tool* that the heart should use to support its work, a tool that can be used for things like planning, learning and thinking. But these functions must be done in concert with the heart, and under its guidance. The head and heart must forge a lifetime *partnership* if one wants to live a beautiful life, the book informed me. They must work in *harmony.* Live completely in the head and you cannot *feel* the breath and rhythm of life. Live completely in the heart and you may find yourself acting like a love-struck fool, with poor judgment and no discipline. It’s all a fine balance, one that takes time, energy and understanding to get right.

Standing there, with Evan waiting patiently, I felt a pull to explore something new. Taking a moment to pay attention to what was happening below the surface, I decided to let go of the limitations of reason for a while and trust my deeper feelings. I agreed to go and took the tickets.

Evan reached over and gave me a hug. “We love you, you know.”

I was quiet as emotion welled up inside me on hearing this statement of profound kindness from my long-time colleague. Tears began to flow, partly over the sadness I felt from the way my life had unfolded in recent times and partly from the unconditional love I felt from another human being.

“Thanks, Evan,” I replied. “You’re a good man. I appreciate you.”

“Trust me, Dar, this seminar’s going to be really important for you. And who knows who you’ll meet there?”

Little did I know, I was about to meet the man who would lead me to my greatest life.

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