



I Know Who I Am

Twenty-Three Years Knowing I Am Jesus Christ Returned
—and Living in a World That Does Not Believe Me

Ross Harvey

DEDICATION

For Christy Anne—

*who entered my life when I had spent nearly all of it alone,
and who opened a door to a side of life I had never known.*

*And for every person who has ever been reduced to a label,
when all they wanted was to be met as a human being.*

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EPILOGUE

Meet Me Here

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Why I Am Telling This Story

There are stories people tell because they want to be admired. There are stories people tell because they wish to explain themselves. And there are stories that must be told because silence has become a kind of disappearance.

This book belongs to the third kind.

For twenty-three years, I have lived with knowledge that changed everything: I know that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I understand the effect those words may have on you. They may cause you to become curious. They may make you uncomfortable. They may lead you to close this book before you have really opened it. If that is your first reaction, I do not condemn you. I know how extraordinary the statement sounds. But I ask you to remain with me long enough to meet the person speaking it.

I am not writing to trap you in an argument. I am not asking you to surrender your judgment, abandon your faith, or adopt mine.

In fact, I do not describe my identity as a faith or belief. Belief leaves room for uncertainty. What I have carried is knowledge.

You may dispute that knowledge. You may interpret my experiences differently. You may decide that my certainty is itself evidence of illness. But if this book is honest, it cannot weaken what I know merely to make the story easier for others to accept.

For much of my life, people met me simply as Ross Harvey. They encountered an athlete, a golf and racquet-sports professional, a bar and restaurant owner, an entrepreneur, a friend, a competitor, a dreamer, and sometimes a difficult or unconventional man.

I graduated as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, although I never worked as a veterinarian. My road led elsewhere. I lived vigorously in the world for forty-three years before entering the stage of life described in these pages.

Then I disclosed what I knew, and many people ceased to meet me in the same way.

My history did not vanish, but it seemed to lose its authority. My accomplishments became secondary. My ideas were examined for symptoms. My enthusiasm became suspect. Instead of asking what I meant, people often asked what was wrong with me.

The strangest evidence of this divide came from people who did not know. They continued to speak with me normally. They laughed with me, disagreed with me, accepted my help, offered their own, and carried on ordinary human relationships.

They did not search every sentence for proof of a condition. They met Ross.

By contrast, many who knew my secret appeared to meet a diagnosis before they met the man.

That distinction is one reason I am writing. This book is about identity, but it is also about what happens when a human being is reduced to a single idea about him. It is about the distance between concern and control, between care and condescension, between listening to a person and merely assessing him.

Mental illness is real, serious, and deserving of compassionate care. So is the dignity of every person whose experiences are interpreted through that language. One truth must never be used to erase the other.

This is also a love story.

I was single for nearly all my life. Less than two years ago, I met Christy Anne at our local food bank. In a place built around

need and generosity, I encountered companionship in a form I had never known.

Through her, a life long organized around “I” began learning the meaning of “we.” Her arrival did not erase the preceding years, but it changed the light in which I could see them.

And this is the story of a dream.

I have long loved John Lennon. In “Imagine,” I hear a vision of humanity beyond the walls that divide us—a world without hunger, possessiveness, religious conflict, or the habit of treating another human being as an outsider.

I call that possibility Heaven on Earth. I call the practical work of creating it A NuVo World.

I do not consider myself Christian. That statement may seem impossible beside the one with which I began, but it is central to this book.

I do not envision Christianity conquering the other religions. I envision a time when religious division gives way to the only devotion large enough to hold every person: love.

You do not have to know what I know. You do not even have to believe me.

I ask only that you read without taking away my humanity.

Meet the man before deciding what to make of the secret. Then, whatever conclusion you reach about me, consider the world I am inviting us to build together.

PROLOGUE

Before You Decide Who I Am

Before we go any further, I must make one thing clear:

I do not believe that I am Jesus Christ returned. I know that I am.

Those two words—*believe* and *know*—are not interchangeable to me.

Belief is a bridge across uncertainty. Knowledge is what remains when uncertainty has gone.

I understand that you may regard my certainty as mistaken. I understand that physicians, family members, friends, and strangers may give it another name. I have lived inside that disagreement for twenty-three years.

But I cannot tell my story truthfully while changing knowledge into belief simply because belief sounds gentler.

Perhaps you have already begun forming a picture of me. That is natural. Human beings make decisions quickly, especially when confronted by something that appears impossible.

You may picture a man dressed in religious robes, speaking in riddles and demanding obedience. You may picture someone disconnected from ordinary life. You may picture a patient rather than an author.

None of those pictures begins with the person I was when this chapter opened.

I entered it after forty-three years of living energetically in the world.

I had competed at the highest level in sport. I had worked as a golf and racquet-sports professional. I had owned a bar and

restaurant, places where life arrived without editing itself. I had helped build a sports-and-nutrition business and take it onto NASDAQ.

I had earned a veterinary degree but chosen not to practise.

I had known ambition, pressure, risk, achievement, failure, friendship, and the relentless education that comes from dealing with people.

I was not waiting to become a religious figure. I had not organized my life around appearing holy. I was a man of appetite and action, formed by competition and enterprise.

Whatever you ultimately decide about what happened to me, it happened to a person with a long history before it.

That history matters because of what occurred after I spoke.

Once people knew what I knew about myself, many began reading my entire life backward through a psychiatric conclusion.

Ordinary enthusiasm could become mania. Confidence could become grandiosity. A large idea could become proof that I was detached from reality. Even kindness could be treated as part of a pattern rather than an expression of character.

Meanwhile, people who had not been told continued to encounter me without that filter.

On a park bench, in a shop, at a food bank, or while walking through my neighbourhood, I could simply be Ross. We could speak about dogs, food, loneliness, sport, weather, work, or the small needs of the day.

They did not know there was a reason they were supposed to be wary of me. And so, very often, they were not.

This difference became one of the most painful and revealing facts of my life. It showed me how completely a label can enter a room before a person does.

It also taught me that being treated normally is not a trivial courtesy. It is a form of mercy.

To be heard without being decoded, to be disagreed with without being dismissed, and to be known as more than one extraordinary statement—these are basic forms of human dignity.

I do not pretend that the people around me had no reason for concern.

If someone you loved announced that he was Jesus Christ returned, what would you do?

Would you accept his certainty? Challenge him? Seek medical help? Protect him from decisions you feared he might make?

Their position deserves to be represented honestly. Love can be frightened. Concern can be sincere. Families and professionals can act from a genuine wish to prevent harm.

But good intentions do not guarantee that a person feels seen, and care loses something essential when it stops listening.

This book will live inside that tension.

I will not surrender what I know. I will also not demand that the reader pretend to know it.

My task is to show you the life as I experienced it: the man before, the moment everything changed, the cost of disclosure, the loneliness of being disbelieved, and the unexpected arrival of love.

Eventually, the story widens beyond my identity. It becomes a question about the identity of humanity.

Are we creatures destined to organize ourselves through money, possession, nationality, status, and competing religions? Or can we imagine a world built upon the recognition that every human being belongs?

John Lennon imagined such a world in song. I have spent years imagining how we might begin constructing it in life.

You may finish this book uncertain about me. That is your right.

But I hope you will become less uncertain about this:

No diagnosis, disagreement, religion, or impossible claim should relieve us of the responsibility to meet one another with love.

CHAPTER ONE

A Life Lived at Full Speed

Long before anyone thought of me as a man with a serious mental illness, people knew me as a man in motion.

I liked the world of action.

I liked competition, possibility, people, and the feeling that something could be built where nothing had existed before. I did not spend my first forty-three years withdrawing from life. I entered it. I tested myself against it.

I learned through the body, through business, through risk, through victory, and through the unmistakable education of getting things wrong.

This is important because beginnings are powerful.

If I begin my story with the sentence “I know that I am Jesus Christ returned,” that knowledge can swallow everything around it. The reader may unconsciously turn forty-three years of living into a preface for a diagnosis.

But those years were not waiting to be reinterpreted.

They were a life—large, active, imperfect, and real.

Sport taught me some of my earliest and most enduring lessons. It showed me the difference between wishing and preparing. It taught me that the body remembers what the mind repeatedly asks of it, and that confidence is not merely a feeling; it is often the accumulated memory of work.

On a court, explanations have limited value.

The ball comes. You move or you do not. You make the shot or miss it. Then, almost immediately, another moment arrives and asks whether you can begin again.

I became a world champion in racquetball.

The title matters, but not only because winning matters. It represents an entire way of approaching life. To compete at a high level is to enter a conversation with your own limits.

It requires intensity, imagination, resilience, and a willingness to look foolish while learning. It can also sharpen parts of a personality that later become difficult to set down.

A competitor learns to push, to persist, and to believe that a result can be changed through force of will and disciplined action.

Those qualities served me.

They also shaped the way I would respond, years later, when people dismissed what I knew. I did not possess a temperament inclined to surrender merely because the opposition was overwhelming.

I had spent too much of my life learning that the score at one moment is not necessarily the final score.

My working life grew naturally around sport. I became a golf and racquet-sports professional.

These roles demanded more than technical skill. Teaching sport requires an ability to see another person clearly. One player needs instruction. Another needs reassurance. One is afraid of failure; another is so eager to prove himself that he cannot relax enough to perform.

The same correction delivered in the same words can liberate one person and discourage another.

Sport is often described as a contest against an opponent, but much of it is a meeting with the self.

The court exposes impatience, fear, vanity, courage, generosity, and anger. It shows us how we behave when the outcome

matters. It reveals whether we can honour another person's excellence without experiencing it as an insult to our own.

As a professional, I learned to observe.

I learned how quickly a person's posture changes when he feels judged, and how much more freely someone moves when he feels trusted. I did not have the language then for all the ways those lessons would return later in my life.

I only knew that people performed better when they were seen as capable rather than defective.

My education appeared to point toward a very different profession. I graduated as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

The achievement was real, but I never worked as a veterinarian.

Life is sometimes untidy in precisely this way. We labour toward one destination and discover that arriving there does not require us to remain.

A degree records what a person completed; it does not necessarily predict what he will become.

Some people may regard the decision not to practise as a departure from the obvious road. I see it as part of a larger pattern.

I was willing to change direction when life called me elsewhere. I valued knowledge, but I was not interested in allowing a credential to imprison me. My energy was drawing me toward sport, enterprise, and the unpredictable theatre of human interaction.

The veterinary degree remained part of me. It represented years of work and an education in life, health, suffering, and responsibility.

But I did not want to manufacture a professional history I never lived.

I was not a veterinarian in practice. I was a man trained in one field who chose to build his life in others.

One of those other fields was hospitality. I became the owner of a bar and restaurant.

A court has boundaries painted on the floor; a bar has boundaries that move with every person who enters. Behind its doors, confidence can become confession, celebration can become loneliness, and strangers can become companions for an evening.

Owning a bar and restaurant taught me about people in a way no formal education could.

Hospitality is often described as serving food and drink, but its deeper product is atmosphere. People return to a place because of how it allows them to feel.

They want to be welcomed, recognized, entertained, comforted, or briefly released from whatever waits outside.

The work was practical and immediate. Staff had to be managed. Customers had to be satisfied. Problems did not schedule appointments before arriving.

Money moved quickly, and mistakes announced themselves. A business could feel alive one night and fragile the next.

You learned to make decisions with incomplete information and then live beside the consequences.

I also learned that almost everyone carries a story invisible at first glance.

The loudest person may be lonely. The difficult customer may be afraid. The person who appears entirely self-sufficient may be waiting for someone to ask a sincere question.

Hospitality offered a front-row seat to human contradiction.

I was not always patient or wise.

A memoir that turns its author into a flawless hero cannot tell the truth. I had ambition. I had ego. I enjoyed success and could be forceful in pursuing what I wanted.

I made mistakes, misunderstood people, and sometimes moved too quickly to notice the effect I was having.

But even my shortcomings belonged to ordinary human life. They were not early footnotes to an extraordinary identity claim. They were the rough edges of a man learning his way through the world.

Looking back, the bar and restaurant also taught me something central to my present vision:

People need places where they belong.

Food has never been only fuel. A table can be a small form of civilization. It can transform separate individuals into a temporary community.

Years later, I would meet Christy Anne at a food bank, another place organized around nourishment but carrying meanings far beyond it.

My business life eventually carried me into an entirely different scale of ambition.

I became involved in a sports-and-nutrition company and helped take it onto NASDAQ.

There is a particular electricity in building a company. An idea begins privately, almost invisibly, and then gathers people, products, promises, documents, money, expectations, and consequences.

Taking a company public magnifies everything.

It can make possibility feel limitless. It can also reveal how quickly a vision becomes entangled with valuation, perception, regulation, timing, and the demands of other people's capital.

The market does not care about the purity of your intentions. It responds to performance, expectation, confidence, fear, and narratives of the future.

NASDAQ represented achievement, but it also intensified my understanding of what the world rewards.

Scale mattered. Growth mattered. Visibility mattered.

Money functioned not only as a means of exchange but as a language through which worth was constantly being assigned. A successful company could be described through numbers with more authority than a successful human life.

I was capable of operating in that world.

That fact must remain visible in this story.

Before others regarded my large ideas as evidence that I had lost touch with reality, I had already participated in turning a large idea into a publicly traded company.

I knew what it was to organize people around a vision and move that vision through difficult stages toward material form.

This does not prove that every later idea was practical, correct, or destined to succeed. Past accomplishment does not grant immunity from error.

But neither should a later diagnosis erase the evidence of capacity that came before it.

Human beings are not made honest by selecting only the facts that support the conclusion we prefer.

Business strengthened my appetite for scale.

It encouraged me to ask what could happen if an idea were given enough energy, structure, and belief. Years later, when my imagination turned toward changing communities and eventually the world, that ambition did not arrive from nowhere.

It spoke in a language I had been learning for decades.

For nearly all those years, I was single.

Independence became so ordinary that I did not experience it as a temporary condition. I made decisions alone, carried responsibilities alone, pursued goals alone, and built a life around the pronoun “I.”

There is freedom in such a life.

There is also a kind of silence that becomes audible only after another person enters it.

I did not know, during those first forty-three years, that the most important relationship of my life would begin decades later in a local food bank.

I did not know Christy Anne. I did not know the daily adjustments of companionship or the tenderness of building a shared home after a lifetime of self-direction.

That discovery belonged to another chapter, far beyond the moment when my impossible knowledge first arrived.

Still, my long singleness shaped the way I carried that knowledge.

Isolation did not begin with the secret, but the secret gave it another dimension. I was accustomed to relying upon myself.

When others rejected my understanding of who I was, I did not have a lifelong partner beside me who had known the man before and could help hold the continuity of my story.

The continuity matters to me now.

I was Ross before December 2003. I remained Ross afterward.

The revelation did not erase the athlete, the professional, the businessman, the host, the graduate, the competitor, or the

man who had spent forty-three years developing values through experience.

It changed the meaning of my life, but it did not replace the person who had lived it.

One of the great injuries of being treated primarily as mentally ill was the feeling that continuity no longer mattered to others.

The past could be acknowledged politely, then placed aside. The present claim became the master key that supposedly unlocked everything.

If I was energetic, the energy was interpreted. If I was confident, the confidence was interpreted. If I imagined a more loving world, the size of the vision was interpreted.

Yet people are never only the most controversial thing they have said.

A human being is an accumulation of mornings, decisions, disciplines, failures, friendships, labours, wounds, and hopes.

To know anyone, we must resist the temptation to compress him into the sentence that most unsettles us.

What values had those forty-three years taught me?

First, effort matters.

Sport had shown me that transformation rarely announces itself in a single dramatic moment. It is built through repetition.

A better shot, a stronger body, a more disciplined mind—each emerges through acts that may appear insignificant when viewed alone.

Second, people matter.

Business can tempt us to speak of markets, consumers, employees, and investors as categories. Hospitality can turn guests into receipts. Sport can turn opponents into obstacles.

But life repeatedly returned me to the individual person: the one standing before me, carrying needs and abilities that no category could fully express.

Third, vision matters.

Every organization, event, restaurant, match, and enterprise begins in some form as an idea of what might be possible.

Vision is not sufficient. It must be joined to skill, timing, cooperation, resources, and humility.

But without it, we merely repeat what already exists.

Finally, beginning again matters.

Competition taught me this most clearly. A lost point is not retrieved by staring at it. A bad decision can be studied, but life will not permit us to live inside the instant before it was made.

We begin from where we are, not from where we wish we had been.

These values would follow me into the next stage, although they would be tested in forms I could not have anticipated.

Persistence would look to others like refusal to accept reality. Confidence would be called grandiosity. Vision would be called delusion.

My determination to begin again would be tested by rejection, misunderstanding, and loneliness.

I cannot ask the reader to agree in advance about the meaning of everything that followed.

I can ask only that the reader remember the man entering it.

He was not an empty vessel waiting for an extraordinary idea. He was forty-three years of life in motion.

He had learned to compete, teach, serve, build, risk, fall, and rise.

He knew the exhilaration of achievement and the ordinary imperfections of being human.

Then came the experience that divided my life into before and after.

CHAPTER TWO

Learning to Compete

Competition entered my life long before I understood how deeply it would shape me.

At first, sport was simply exhilarating. It gave my energy somewhere to go. It offered clear boundaries, immediate challenges, and the promise that effort could become improvement.

A court made sense to me.

There were lines. There were rules. There was an opponent. There was a ball that demanded a response.

Life beyond the court was rarely so orderly.

People did not always say what they meant. Effort did not always produce a fair result. Good intentions did not guarantee success. But in sport, there was usually another point to play.

That simplicity appealed to me.

It also awakened something powerful: a desire to discover how good I could become.

Some people participate in sport for exercise, companionship, or pleasure. I loved those things, but participation alone was never enough for me. Once I sensed the possibility of excellence, I wanted to pursue it.

I wanted to learn the details other people overlooked. I wanted to understand why one movement worked and another failed. I wanted to know what separated a competent player from a champion.

Most of all, I wanted to win.

There is no virtue in pretending otherwise.

Winning mattered to me. It confirmed that preparation had become performance. It gave shape to sacrifice. It produced a feeling of mastery that was difficult to find anywhere else.

But the longer I competed, the more I discovered that winning was not one thing.

There was the victory recorded on the scoreboard. There was the victory of performing well under pressure. There was the victory of correcting a weakness that had defeated me before. There was the private victory of refusing to give up when part of me wanted to stop.

Sometimes I won the match and learned very little.

Sometimes I lost and left the court a better player.

That was one of sport's first great lessons: the visible result and the deeper result are not always the same.

The Education of Repetition

Natural ability can open a door, but repetition determines how far a person travels after entering.

There is nothing glamorous about much of athletic development.

It consists of doing the same thing again and again, while paying enough attention that it never becomes exactly the same thing.

A movement is repeated until it becomes smoother. A mistake is examined until its cause can be felt before it appears. The body is trained to respond correctly in the fraction of a second when conscious thought would arrive too late.

To an observer, practice may look like monotony.

To an athlete, it is construction.

Each repetition places another small piece into a structure that will later be called instinct. What looks effortless in competition is often the visible surface of thousands of invisible efforts.

I learned to respect that process.

I learned that enthusiasm is valuable at the beginning, but discipline carries us through the long middle, when improvement becomes difficult to detect.

Anyone can feel inspired for an afternoon. The larger question is whether a person will return tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, when the excitement has gone and only the work remains.

This lesson would eventually influence far more than my athletic life.

Years later, when I began imagining a better world, I knew it could not be created through declarations alone. A vision might awaken people, but transformation would require repetition: one conversation, one meal, one act of kindness, one person, and one day at a time.

A community, like an athlete, becomes what it repeatedly practises.

The Opponent Across the Court

An opponent can be viewed in two ways.

He can be seen as the person preventing you from receiving what you want. Or he can be recognized as the person making it possible for you to discover what you are capable of becoming.

The first view creates hostility.

The second creates respect.

I cannot claim that I always maintained the second view. I was intensely competitive. I wanted to impose my game, control the

pace, expose weakness, and win. Competition can narrow the imagination until the person across from us becomes little more than a barrier.

Yet the strongest opponents gave me gifts weaker opponents could not.

They forced me to think faster. They revealed flaws that easy victories had allowed me to ignore. They demanded courage when my confidence began to weaken. They prevented me from mistaking comfort for excellence.

Without worthy opposition, talent can become complacent.

The person trying hardest to defeat me was often the person helping me grow.

That paradox later became important in another part of my life.

When people opposed my understanding of who I am, I experienced their disbelief as painful and sometimes dehumanizing. Yet the opposition also forced me to examine myself, refine my language, and ask whether I could live what I claimed to know.

If I spoke of love, could I continue loving people who dismissed me?

If I spoke of dignity, could I recognize the dignity of those who believed they were protecting me?

If I spoke of a new world, could I respond to the old world without becoming consumed by bitterness?

Opposition does not prove that we are right. Nor does it prove that we are wrong.

Sometimes it simply reveals us.

Pressure

Every athlete eventually meets pressure.

Pressure is not merely the importance of the moment. It is the mind becoming divided against itself.

One part of you remains in the present. Another rushes ahead to the possible outcome.

You begin playing not only the point in front of you, but also the championship you might win, the embarrassment you might suffer, the people you might disappoint, and the story you will tell yourself afterward.

The body is still on the court, but the mind is everywhere else.

Under pressure, movements that had become natural can suddenly feel mechanical. The athlete begins supervising himself too closely. Instead of seeing the ball, he sees the possibility of failure.

The moment becomes crowded.

I learned that performance required returning to what was immediately mine to do.

Not the match. Not the trophy. Not the opinion of the crowd.

The next shot.

That discipline sounds simple. It is not.

The human mind prefers to live in imagined futures and completed stories. We want to know how everything will turn out before we fully inhabit the moment that will help determine it.

Sport kept bringing me back.

Watch the ball.

Move your feet.

Choose the shot.

Recover your position.

Begin again.

I have often thought that much of life can be lived in the same way.

When the future feels too large, return to the person in front of you. When the world appears impossible to change, perform the next act of kindness available to you. When the vision of Heaven on Earth feels beyond reach, help create one small corner of it.

The next point is not the whole match.

But there is no match without it.

Becoming a World Champion

Becoming a world champion in racquetball was one of the great achievements of my early life.

Even now, the words carry weight.

World champion.

They represent competition at the highest level and the fulfilment of an ambition that demanded ability, work, confidence, and persistence.

I am proud of that achievement.

I do not mention it to establish that I was better than other people. I mention it because it became part of the evidence I carried about myself.

I had learned that an improbable goal could become real.

I had learned that confidence often appears unreasonable to people who cannot see the preparation behind it.

Before an athlete becomes a champion, he must usually imagine the possibility. He must hold a picture of success before the world has supplied proof. If he announces that

ambition too early, others may consider him unrealistic or arrogant.

Then, if he succeeds, the same confidence is often reinterpreted as vision.

This can be dangerous.

Past achievement can seduce a person into believing that determination alone makes every future vision attainable. It does not. The world contains limits that willpower cannot simply remove. Wisdom requires distinguishing courage from recklessness, persistence from rigidity, and confidence from refusal to learn.

But it would be equally false to conclude that large ambitions are inherently foolish.

Every achievement exists because someone continued working before success was guaranteed.

Winning a world championship did not make me infallible. It did teach me never to dismiss possibility merely because it had not yet become visible.

That lesson entered my bones.

More Than a Score

There is a loneliness inside serious competition that spectators do not always see.

Others can train with you, teach you, encourage you, and stand in your corner. But when the decisive moment arrives, no one can perform it for you.

You must enter the court alone.

You must make the decisions. You must manage your fear. You must live with the result.

That solitude can create strength. It can also create the habit of believing that everything must be carried alone.

For most of my life, I was single. My athletic experience reinforced an independence already growing within me. I trusted my capacity to endure, solve problems, change direction, and begin again.

I did not know how difficult that habit would later be to loosen.

When I came to know who I am, there was no coach who could explain the experience to me. There was no established training program for living with knowledge that everyone around me rejected. There was no scoreboard capable of resolving the disagreement.

I was again alone in a decisive moment—but this time, there were no clear lines and no agreed rules.

Sport had prepared me to resist pressure.

It had not prepared me for the possibility that persistence itself would be considered a symptom.

Teaching Others

Working as a golf and racquet-sports professional gave me another view of competition.

It was one thing to understand my own performance. It was another to help someone else understand theirs.

Teaching required patience of a different kind.

A student might hear an instruction perfectly and still be unable to translate it into movement. Another might possess the physical ability but be blocked by fear. Some wanted immediate results without enduring the awkward period in which an old habit was being dismantled and a new one had not yet become reliable.

The best instruction was not always the most complicated.

Often, people needed one clear idea and the confidence to try it without feeling judged.

I noticed that criticism could tighten a person's body. Encouragement could create space. A student who expected humiliation became cautious and mechanical. A student who felt safe enough to fail became more willing to experiment.

Improvement required honesty, but honesty did not require cruelty.

This is a lesson the world still struggles to understand.

We often imagine that compassion weakens truth. We fear that if we treat a person gently, we are agreeing with everything he says or does. But kindness and agreement are not the same.

A coach can correct a player while preserving his dignity.

A friend can express concern without turning the person into a problem.

A physician can disagree with a patient's interpretation while remaining curious about his experience.

A family can set boundaries without withdrawing love.

The way truth is delivered changes the way it can be received.

The Inner Contest

The most enduring opponent is not another athlete.

It is the voice within us that says we are finished before the contest has ended.

Sometimes that voice is fear. Sometimes it is fatigue. Sometimes it is the memory of a previous failure returning at the worst possible moment. Sometimes it is pride trying to protect itself by lowering effort before the outcome becomes final.

If I do not fully try, the mind whispers, then defeat will not fully define me.

But withholding effort is its own defeat.

Competition taught me to notice that voice without obeying it.

Courage did not mean feeling no fear. It meant refusing to give fear the final decision.

This principle served me throughout life. It carried me through business risks, changing careers, public ambition, personal isolation, and the years after my disclosure.

But courage can be misunderstood when the people around us disagree about what is happening.

From my perspective, I was refusing to deny what I knew.

From the perspective of others, I was refusing to recognize that I was ill.

The same act—holding my ground—could be seen as integrity or pathology, depending upon the observer's starting point.

There was no referee capable of settling the matter.

What Competition Could Not Teach Me

For all it gave me, competition could not teach me everything.

It trained me to overcome opposition, but love sometimes asks us to stop treating opposition as something to overcome.

It trained me to pursue victory, but relationships often require the surrender of the need to win.

It trained me to trust myself, but intimacy requires us to trust another person.

It trained me to become stronger, but strength alone cannot teach tenderness.

Those lessons would come much later.

Christy Anne would introduce me to forms of life that had little to do with scoreboards. A shared morning, a ride together, a meal, a difficult conversation, or the quiet knowledge that another person was nearby—these carried a value that could not be measured through victory.

Meeting her did not invalidate what sport had taught me. It completed something sport could not.

Competition had taught me how to become formidable.

Love would begin teaching me how to become open.

The Game Beyond the Game

When I look back now, I do not see athletics as separate from the spiritual story that followed.

I see a long preparation whose meaning I could not yet understand.

Sport taught me to discipline the body, focus the mind, withstand pressure, endure loneliness, imagine possibility, and begin again after failure.

It also taught me the limitations of those strengths.

Persistence without reflection can become stubbornness.

Confidence without humility can become blindness.

Competition without love can turn every disagreement into a battle and every person into an opponent.

The deeper challenge was not whether I could defeat another person.

It was whether I could remain fully myself without needing to defeat those who could not accept me.

I would fail at that challenge many times.

I would become frustrated, defensive, impatient, and hurt. I would sometimes speak from the wound of not being recognized rather than from the love I wanted to represent.

But sport had taught me something merciful:

A mistake is not the end of the game unless we refuse to play the next point.

I was still learning.

I am still learning.

And before the knowledge that changed my life arrived, I would travel down several more roads—roads that appeared unrelated at the time but would each teach me something about identity, ambition, people, and the strange turns through which a life becomes its own.

One of those roads began with a degree I had worked hard to earn—and a profession I would never practise.

CHAPTER THREE

The Veterinarian Who Never Practised

On paper, becoming a veterinarian should have defined the direction of my life.

A veterinary degree is not earned casually. It demands years of study, discipline, scientific training, and exposure to the complexity of living bodies. It carries social respect and a clear professional identity.

Once earned, it appears to answer a simple question:

What are you?

A veterinarian.

But life did not answer that question so neatly for me.

I graduated as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, yet I never worked as a veterinarian.

That fact can sound like a contradiction. Why devote so much time and effort to becoming something, only to choose not to practise it?

The simplest answer is that completing a path and belonging to it are not always the same thing.

Education had given me knowledge, discipline, and a credential. It had proved that I could undertake demanding work and bring it to completion.

But it did not possess the right to decide the rest of my life.

I was drawn elsewhere.

My energy belonged to sport, enterprise, people, and possibility. I wanted movement. I wanted creation. I wanted the

challenge of building something whose final shape was not already determined.

The veterinary profession offered meaningful work, but it was not the work I ultimately chose.

There is a lesson here that extends beyond careers.

The world is eager to give us identities.

Athlete. Doctor. Businessman. Patient. Success. Failure. Believer. Nonbeliever. Sane. Ill.

Some identities are earned. Some are assigned. Some are accepted with pride. Others are placed upon us by people who believe they understand us better than we understand ourselves.

A label may contain truth.

But no label contains the whole person.

I had earned the right to call myself a veterinarian by education. Yet doing so without explaining that I had never practised would create a false impression.

Later, people would call me mentally ill. That label also became part of my story, but I would resist allowing it to become the complete explanation of who I was.

Much of my life would become a struggle over the difference between describing a person and defining him.

The veterinary degree was one of my earliest lessons in that difference.

I had achieved the title.

Then I chose the life.

Choosing another life did not make the education meaningless.

For years, I had been trained to observe carefully. A living creature cannot explain its pain in words. The veterinarian must pay attention to behaviour, movement, appetite, posture, breathing, and subtle changes that might easily be overlooked.

You learn to look beyond the obvious.

You learn that suffering may be present even when it cannot be clearly expressed.

You learn that care begins with attention.

Those lessons remained with me long after I left the prospect of veterinary practice behind.

They influenced the way I looked at animals, certainly, but also the way I encountered people. Human beings possess language, yet we often struggle to communicate what hurts. We hide behind anger, humour, pride, silence, work, or apparent indifference.

What a person says is important.

What he cannot say may be equally important.

This capacity for observation would later become central to my daily life. I would notice the person sitting alone, the neighbour who needed conversation, the homeless man whose immediate request concealed a much larger story, or the dog owner whose regular walk created an opportunity for human connection.

I came to understand that entire worlds can exist behind an ordinary face.

The Meaning of Care

Veterinary medicine is not only about science. It is also about care.

Knowledge matters. Diagnosis matters. Treatment matters. But beneath all of them lies a relationship of responsibility toward a vulnerable living being.

The animal cannot understand the professional language surrounding its condition. It does not know the credentials of the person examining it. It knows touch, tone, fear, pain, relief, and safety.

It knows how it is being treated.

People know this too.

We may not always remember the exact words someone used, but we remember whether we felt respected. We remember whether the person seemed curious about us or had already decided what we were. We remember whether care felt like something being done with us or something being done to us.

This became particularly important during the years when my experiences were understood through mental-health care.

I do not deny that people believed they were helping me. I do not deny that family members and professionals may have felt frightened or responsible. I understand that when someone makes a claim as extraordinary as mine, those around him may feel an urgent need to respond.

But care is experienced not only through intention.

It is experienced through relationship.

A person may sincerely intend to protect you while making you feel powerless. Someone may believe he is listening while hearing only the parts of your story that fit his conclusion. A professional may speak gently while still communicating that your own understanding of your life has no value.

This does not make care unnecessary.

It makes humane care essential.

My veterinary education had taught me that the subject of care is never merely a case. There is a living being in front of you whose fear and dignity matter, even when that being cannot agree with your analysis.

Surely the same must be true for people.

Science and Mystery

Scientific education taught me to respect evidence.

It taught me that claims should be tested, that physical processes have causes, and that intuition alone is not a substitute for disciplined investigation.

I did not emerge from an intellectual world in which every unusual feeling was automatically treated as divine. I had studied anatomy, physiology, disease, treatment, and the complex systems that sustain life.

Science offered a way of asking questions.

What happened?

What evidence supports this conclusion?

What other explanations are possible?

What might disprove what we currently think?

These are valuable questions. They protect us from error, wishful thinking, and the human tendency to see only what we expect to see.

Yet science also introduced me to mystery.

The more closely one studies life, the less ordinary it becomes. A body is not a simple object. It is an astonishing coordination of systems, signals, repairs, adaptations, and relationships.

Science can describe much of how life functions. Its descriptions do not make life less wondrous.

For me, science and spiritual meaning were not necessarily enemies. One asked how. The other asked why. Conflict arose when either claimed exclusive ownership of every human question.

Years later, the people evaluating me would often approach my experience through medical categories. Their training offered explanations for unusual certainty, revelation, grand identity, and religious experience.

Within that framework, my statement that I knew myself to be Jesus Christ returned pointed clearly toward illness.

I understood the logic.

But understanding their interpretation did not make it mine.

We were looking at the same statement through different windows. They saw a symptom requiring treatment. I saw knowledge requiring a life worthy of it.

Neither side possessed a simple instrument capable of resolving the disagreement.

A Title and a Life

The title “Doctor” can change the way people respond to a person.

It carries authority. It suggests expertise. It opens doors and creates expectations. People may listen differently when they believe the speaker has earned the right credentials.

But a title can also become a disguise.

It can tempt the person who holds it to believe that education has made him wise in areas far beyond his expertise. It can lead others to surrender too much of their judgment. It can create a distance between the professional and the person seeking help.

I had earned a doctorate, but I knew that a degree did not make me infallible.

I had also learned that expertise in one field does not answer every question in another.

This mattered when psychiatric language entered my life. Medical professionals possessed training and experience that I did not. I could respect that without accepting that their expertise gave them final authority over the spiritual meaning of my existence.

At the same time, my own veterinary education did not qualify me to dismiss psychiatry or to tell others what treatment they should receive.

The honest place was more difficult than either extreme.

I could acknowledge the seriousness of mental illness.

I could acknowledge that unusual experiences may arise from illness.

I could acknowledge that people making extraordinary claims may sometimes be unable to recognize that they need help.

And I could still say:

That is not how I understand what happened to me.

This tension would remain unresolved. Perhaps it will remain unresolved for many readers after they finish this book.

I can live with that.

I have had to.

The Road Not Taken

There is a temptation, when looking backward, to turn every decision into destiny.

Because I did not practise veterinary medicine, it may be easy to imagine that I always knew another purpose awaited me. That would make the story cleaner than life actually was.

I did not possess a complete map.

I made choices with the understanding available to me at the time. Some were bold. Some were uncertain. Some led to achievement. Others led to difficulty.

Like everyone else, I sometimes discovered the meaning of a decision only after living with its consequences.

The profession I did not enter remained one of the great roads not taken.

Had I practised veterinary medicine, I might have built a stable career around healing animals. I might have become known in a community through years of service. I might have developed a life that looked more conventional and easier for others to understand.

Perhaps the structure of that life would have changed what followed.

Perhaps not.

We cannot live the unlived versions of ourselves. We can only imagine them.

What I know is that my actual road carried me toward sport, hospitality, business, ambition, public markets, spiritual experience, social rejection, love, and eventually a vision for transforming the world.

It was not a straight road.

But it was mine.

Animals and Uncomplicated Presence

Animals offer a form of companionship that human beings often find difficult to provide.

An animal does not ask for your résumé before accepting affection. It does not review your religious convictions before resting beside you. It does not hear an extraordinary statement

about your identity and then reinterpret every previous interaction through it.

Animals respond to presence.

They know consistency, gentleness, threat, comfort, attention, and neglect. They meet the person who is actually before them.

Perhaps this is one reason relationships with animals can be so healing.

A dog does not reduce a person to a diagnosis.

A cat does not require a defence of one's theology.

The animal asks, in its own way:

Are you here?

Are you safe?

Do you care for me?

Will you return?

These are not small questions.

They are among the most important questions in any relationship.

My education gave me scientific knowledge about animals, but living around them taught me something equally valuable about uncomplicated acceptance.

I would later become convinced that pets could contribute enormously to human well-being and community life. Walking a dog brings people outside. It creates encounters between neighbours. It gives strangers an easy reason to speak. It offers companionship to people who might otherwise return to an empty home.

An animal can become a bridge between isolated human beings.

This is why I have found policies that prohibit pets—particularly dogs—in so many apartment buildings deeply troubling. Such rules may appear administrative, but they can close the door on companionship, routine, exercise, and connection.

A humane community should take the human-animal bond seriously.

That conviction did not come only from my degree.

It came from observing life.

Choosing What Was Alive in Me

Why, then, did I not practise?

Because another part of life felt more alive to me.

That answer may not satisfy everyone. We are taught to justify major decisions through security, prestige, income, or a carefully organized plan. But sometimes a person knows primarily that he is being drawn toward one life and away from another.

I wanted direct engagement.

I wanted competition and enterprise.

I wanted to create, persuade, organize, teach, and build.

The sporting world allowed me to test myself physically and mentally. Hospitality placed me inside the endless variety of human nature. Business gave ambition a structure and vision a marketplace.

These paths contained uncertainty, but they also contained energy.

I followed that energy.

This did not mean that every decision was wise. Feeling alive is not a guarantee of good judgment. Excitement can lead people

toward unnecessary risks, and ambition can make warning signs easy to ignore.

But a life built entirely around avoiding error can become its own kind of mistake.

I preferred participation to safety.

I wanted to be in the arena.

Becoming More Than One Thing

The world often asks us to choose a single identity because single identities are easier to understand.

What do you do?

What are you?

Which category contains you?

My life resisted simple answers.

I was trained as a veterinarian but did not practise. I became a professional in sport. I owned a bar and restaurant. I entered the world of sports nutrition and public markets. I wrote books. I developed plans, launched initiatives, and imagined possibilities that crossed the boundaries between business, community, health, spirituality, and social change.

Some people regarded this variety as evidence that I lacked focus.

I experienced it as curiosity.

Life seemed too large to be entered through only one door.

That quality would later shape A NuVo World. I did not envision a single charity addressing a single problem. I saw the connections between food, housing, transportation, physical health, mental well-being, loneliness, recreation, employment, local business, friendship, and belonging.

Human needs do not live in separate departments.

A person who is hungry may also be lonely. A person without transportation may lose access to work, medical care, community, and exercise. A senior who needs food may need conversation just as urgently. A child who lacks recreation may also lack confidence, mentorship, and a safe place to belong.

My mind naturally moved between these connections.

To some, that breadth would appear unrealistic.

To me, it was the only honest way to see the whole person.

The Degree I Carried Forward

I never used my degree in the conventional way, but I carried elements of it into everything that followed.

I carried the discipline required to complete difficult work.

I carried respect for living beings.

I carried the habit of observation.

I carried an awareness that suffering is not always visible.

I carried the understanding that treatment without trust can be frightening.

And I carried a complicated relationship with professional authority: respect for genuine knowledge, combined with an unwillingness to believe that a title makes any human being incapable of error.

These lessons would become especially important after December 2003.

People would ask me to trust professionals who interpreted my experiences differently from the way I did. I would ask those professionals to recognize that a person can respect their training without surrendering his own voice.

Sometimes that relationship worked better than others.

Sometimes I felt heard.

Often, I did not.

Yet the question beneath every encounter remained the same:

Can two people who understand reality differently still meet each other with dignity?

This book is, in part, my attempt to answer yes.

The Identity Beneath the Occupation

A profession tells us what someone does.

It does not fully tell us who someone is.

I could have practised veterinary medicine for decades and still remained mysterious to the people around me. I could have accumulated titles, honours, and wealth without answering the deeper question of identity.

Who are we when the workday ends?

Who are we when success disappears?

Who are we when other people's approval is withdrawn?

Who are we when the name they give us conflicts with the name we give ourselves?

These questions became central to my life long after I left veterinary school.

The world knew many ways of identifying me.

Athlete.

Champion.

Professional.

Owner.

Entrepreneur.

Doctor by education.

Mentally ill man.

Author.

Dreamer.

Neighbour.

Partner to Christy Anne.

And, in my own certain knowledge, Jesus Christ returned.

Each description points toward part of the story.

None can stand alone.

The veterinary degree taught me, perhaps without intending to, that a title may be true without being complete.

I had become qualified for a profession I never entered. The world could accurately describe what I had earned while still misunderstanding the life I would choose.

This would not be the last time that the difference between a title and a life became important.

I moved forward without practising veterinary medicine, carrying its lessons into arenas that felt more fully my own.

The next arena was sport—not merely as a competitor, but as a professional whose work depended upon helping other people discover what their bodies and minds could do.

I had learned how to compete.

Now I would learn how to teach.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Professional in Play

There is a difference between playing a sport well and making sport one's profession.

The first asks for performance.

The second asks for responsibility.

When people come to a golf or racquet-sports professional, they are not merely purchasing information. They are placing a small but meaningful hope in someone else's hands.

They may want to win a tournament, improve a swing, recover confidence, become healthier, spend time with friends, or finally learn something they have always found intimidating.

The technical problem is visible.

The personal reason often is not.

A student might say, "I want to improve my backhand."

What he may mean is, "I am tired of feeling embarrassed."

Another might say, "I want more consistency."

What she may mean is, "I need something in my life that proves I can still improve."

The professional must teach the skill without overlooking the person.

Teaching What the Body Must Learn

Words can explain a movement, but they cannot perform it.

A teacher may describe grip, balance, timing, position, and follow-through perfectly. The student can understand every sentence and still be unable to produce the desired result.

The body learns differently from the intellect.

It learns through sensation, correction, experimentation, repetition, and trust.

This makes coaching an art as much as a science.

Too much information can paralyse a student. Too little can leave him repeating the same mistake. Some people need to understand the mechanics. Others need an image, a rhythm, or one simple instruction that frees the movement.

The teacher's task is not to display everything he knows.

It is to discover what the student needs next.

That principle would later influence the way I thought about changing the world.

People can be overwhelmed by enormous plans. Tell someone that humanity must eliminate hunger, transform health care, reimagine transportation, overcome religious division, and create a moneyless society, and the vision may feel too large to enter.

But ask someone to greet one neighbour, share one meal, help one person, or make one corner of the community more welcoming, and action becomes possible.

A great vision still needs a next movement.

A coach knows this.

You do not teach the entire game in one instruction.

You help the person make the next shot.

The Courage to Be a Beginner

Adults often find it difficult to be beginners.

Children expect to be unable to do things. Their incompetence is temporary and socially permitted. Adults carry established identities. They are accustomed to appearing capable.

Learning exposes them.

A successful businessperson may become awkward with a racquet. An articulate professional may be unable to coordinate a simple movement. Someone who commands respect elsewhere may suddenly feel foolish.

The fear of looking incompetent can prevent improvement more powerfully than any physical limitation.

I learned that people needed permission to be imperfect.

They needed to know that a missed shot was information, not a verdict.

They needed a place where failure did not threaten their worth.

This is true far beyond sport.

A society that punishes every mistake teaches people to hide rather than grow. A relationship in which one person must always be right leaves no room for learning. A community that reduces someone to his worst moment denies the human capacity to change.

And a mental-health system that treats every unusual statement as proof that nothing else the person says can be trusted risks closing the very relationship through which understanding might develop.

People learn best when they are safe enough to be honest.

That includes being honest about confusion, fear, error, and uncertainty.

Seeing the Whole Player

No two students arrived with exactly the same body, history, temperament, or goal.

A technique that worked beautifully for one person might be inappropriate for another. Age mattered. Strength mattered. Injury mattered. Confidence mattered. Previous experience mattered.

The whole player had to be considered.

This appears obvious in sport, yet we often forget it in other areas of life.

We apply categories and assume uniformity. We create systems for the average person and then blame individuals when they do not fit. We speak of “the homeless,” “the mentally ill,” “the elderly,” “the poor,” or “the religious” as though a category had replaced millions of distinct lives.

No person is a category.

Each has a history.

Each has abilities, wounds, habits, fears, relationships, and desires that cannot be captured by a single word.

If I wanted to help a student, I had to begin with the person actually standing before me—not the abstract player I expected to see.

That lesson became one of the foundations of my vision for community.

A NuVo World could never be built by treating people as units in a program. It would have to meet them personally. It would have to ask not only, “What service does this person qualify for?” but also, “Who is this person, and what would help this life become more whole?”

Confidence and Trust

Students often borrow confidence from a teacher before they develop their own.

A coach sees a possibility the student cannot yet see. He says, in effect:

You are capable of this.

Try again.

For a time, the student's willingness to continue may depend upon trusting that judgment.

This is a delicate responsibility.

Confidence can encourage growth, but false promises can create disappointment. A teacher must believe in possibility without pretending that every outcome is guaranteed.

I valued confidence because it had served me so well. I knew how much performance could change when a person stopped expecting failure.

But confidence is not volume. It is not boastfulness. It is not the refusal to recognize difficulty.

The deepest confidence is often quiet.

It permits effort without demanding certainty about the result.

My own confidence would later become controversial. When I spoke with certainty about my identity or enthusiasm about large social visions, others often heard grandiosity.

I heard the voice that had carried me through competition and business—the voice that said possibility should not be abandoned merely because other people could not yet see it.

There were times when I needed to listen more carefully to how that confidence affected others. Certainty can close a conversation if it leaves no space for another person's perspective.

But the solution could not be to speak falsely about what I knew.

The challenge was to hold certainty without using it as a weapon.

Golf, Racquet Sports, and Character

Different sports reveal different parts of us.

Golf can be a long conversation with patience. The course does not rush to meet the player's emotional timetable. A poor shot remains where it lands. The player must accept the new position and continue from there.

Anger cannot move the ball backward.

Excuses cannot improve the lie.

The next shot begins with reality as it is.

Racquet sports bring a different urgency. The opponent is present. The ball returns quickly. Decisions must be made under pressure. Recovery follows action almost immediately.

There is less time to brood.

Golf says: accept where you are.

Racquet sports say: respond now.

A good life requires both lessons.

We must see reality clearly enough to begin from our actual position. Then we must act before reflection becomes paralysis.

For years, these sports trained my character without my realizing it.

They taught me patience and urgency, strategy and instinct, self-reliance and respect for an opponent.

They also exposed anger, impatience, ego, and the desire for control.

Sport did not automatically make me virtuous.

It made me visible to myself.

What I did with that visibility remained my responsibility.

The Community Around Sport

Sport creates communities almost accidentally.

People arrive for exercise or competition and begin learning one another's names. They form routines. They notice absences. They celebrate improvement. They share stories between games.

A club can become a social home.

This mattered to me.

I saw that physical activity could support far more than the body. It could reduce isolation, create friendship, give structure to a day, restore confidence, and bring generations together.

A court is not merely a rectangle marked by lines.

It is a meeting place.

This understanding would later influence my vision for NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres. I imagined places where physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being were not separated into unrelated services.

A person might come to play racquetball and discover friendship.

Someone might enter for a meal and find exercise.

A senior might attend for health support and become a mentor.

A child might arrive for sport and encounter an adult who sees potential.

The activity opens the door.

Belonging gives the place meaning.

My desire to make racquetball one of the world's most widely played sports grew from more than personal affection. I knew what the game could teach and the relationships it could create.

Sport had transformed my life.

Why should its benefits belong only to those with money, access, or the confidence to enter an exclusive club?

In the world I imagined, recreation would not be treated as a luxury.

It would be part of a healthy human life.

When Work Feels Like Play

I was fortunate that part of my professional life grew from something I loved.

Work and play are usually described as opposites. Work is serious, necessary, and productive. Play is optional, light, and recreational.

But some of the most meaningful human activity exists where the two meet.

Play invites experimentation. It makes learning easier. It creates energy. It allows people to become absorbed in a task without constantly measuring its external reward.

Work supplies responsibility, commitment, structure, and service.

When work contains the spirit of play, it can become creative.

When play contains the discipline of work, it can become excellent.

My life in sport lived inside that meeting place.

I could enjoy the game and still take it seriously. I could earn a living while helping another person experience movement, mastery, challenge, and pleasure.

This shaped my belief that a better society should not merely keep people alive.

It should help them feel alive.

Food, shelter, transportation, and health care are essential. But human beings also need play, beauty, music, nature, friendship, learning, purpose, and joy.

Survival is the foundation.

It is not the whole house.

What My Students Taught Me

Teaching is never a one-way relationship.

My students learned from me, but they also revealed life to me.

They showed me that progress can arrive at different speeds. They taught me that the person who appears least gifted may possess the greatest perseverance. They showed me how one sincere word of encouragement can change posture, effort, and expectation.

They also taught me humility.

If a student repeatedly failed to understand my instruction, the problem could not always be placed upon the student. Perhaps I had not found the right language. Perhaps I was answering a question the person had not asked. Perhaps I was so attached to my method that I could not see another route.

Communication is not complete when something has been said.

It is complete when something has been received.

This would become a painful lesson in the years after my revelation.

I disclosed what I knew, but other people did not receive the meaning I intended.

I said identity.

They heard illness.

I said responsibility.

They heard grandiosity.

I said Heaven on Earth.

They heard an impossible scheme.

Repeating myself more forcefully did not necessarily create understanding. Sometimes it deepened resistance.

Like a coach whose instruction is not reaching a student, I had to ask whether another form of communication was possible.

Perhaps my life would have to speak where words could not.

Perhaps kindness, consistency, patience, and service could communicate something that declarations never would.

Winning Without Defeating

The finest sporting contests contain a beautiful contradiction.

Both players try fully to win, yet each depends upon the other for the quality of the experience.

Without the opponent, there is no contest.

Without rules, there is no meaningful victory.

Without respect, competition can become cruelty.

The goal is to win, but not to destroy the person who makes winning possible.

This became a model for how I wanted to live with disagreement.

I did not want to defeat those who believed I was mentally ill. I wanted them to see me. I wanted the right to describe my own experience without being reduced to it.

But I also had to recognize that they were human beings carrying fear, responsibility, history, and love.

If I demanded that they abandon their understanding before I would treat them with compassion, I would reproduce the very rejection that had wounded me.

Love cannot depend upon agreement.

That may be one of the hardest truths I have ever had to learn.

Leaving the Court

A professional athlete and teacher learns that every game ends.

The players shake hands. The equipment is gathered. The lights are turned off. The body leaves the court and returns to the unresolved complexity of ordinary life.

A victory cannot answer every question.

A championship cannot prevent loneliness.

Physical excellence cannot guarantee wisdom.

Sport gave me identity, discipline, community, and achievement. But I was still restless. I remained drawn toward new arenas and larger possibilities.

I wanted to build.

I wanted to lead.

I wanted to create places where people gathered and experiences happened.

That desire carried me from courts and courses into the world of hospitality.

The setting changed dramatically.

There would be no painted lines, no predictable schedule of points, and no single opponent across from me.

Instead, there would be staff, customers, food, drink, music, money, celebration, conflict, and the endless unpredictability of people.

I was leaving one kind of arena for another.

I was going behind the bar.

CHAPTER FIVE

Behind the Bar

A bar and restaurant contains an entire world within four walls.

People enter hungry, thirsty, tired, excited, lonely, celebratory, disappointed, hopeful, or simply unwilling to go home yet.

Some arrive with friends.

Some arrive looking for them.

The owner sees more than transactions. He sees moods crossing the room. He sees relationships beginning, strengthening, fracturing, and sometimes ending. He sees people at their most sociable and, occasionally, at their most exposed.

Sport had taught me about people under pressure.

Hospitality taught me about people in search of belonging.

Opening the Doors

Before customers arrive, a bar or restaurant is only a room.

There are tables, chairs, glasses, food, equipment, lights, and perhaps music. Everything is present except the thing that gives the place life:

People.

Then the door opens.

Voices enter. Coats are removed. Chairs move. Orders are placed. Laughter begins at one table while an argument quietly grows at another.

The room becomes an organism.

Its energy can change in minutes.

A good owner must feel those changes. Hospitality is not performed only through recipes, inventory, and service procedures. It is also the management of atmosphere.

Do people feel welcomed?

Do they feel noticed without feeling watched?

Is the room alive without becoming chaotic?

Can strangers enter without feeling that they have interrupted a private club?

These questions fascinated me.

A successful establishment offers more than food and drink.

It offers permission to belong for a while.

Recognition

One of the simplest pleasures in life is entering a place where someone knows your name.

Recognition tells a person:

You have been here before.

Your presence was remembered.

You are not interchangeable with everyone else.

Regular customers often came for this as much as for anything on the menu. They wanted the familiar greeting, the usual seat, the shared joke, or the comfort of being expected.

This taught me that belonging is built through repetition.

One grand gesture cannot replace a hundred small recognitions.

Communities are formed when people repeatedly acknowledge one another. A neighbour becomes familiar. Familiarity becomes conversation. Conversation becomes concern. Concern becomes relationship.

This is why my “office”—the park benches outside Metro Grocer—would become meaningful to me many years later.

I did not need an official building to create connection. I needed presence and consistency.

By returning to the same place, greeting the same people, and remaining open to new ones, I could help create the feeling that someone noticed who came and went.

Behind the bar, I learned the power of that recognition.

Everyone Carries Something

People often reveal themselves differently in a bar than they do elsewhere.

A person who is restrained at work may become expansive. Someone known for confidence may admit uncertainty. Celebration may uncover gratitude, while disappointment may uncover anger.

Alcohol can loosen what people ordinarily keep guarded. Sometimes that produces warmth and honesty. Sometimes it produces carelessness, aggression, or pain.

As an owner, I saw both.

I learned not to assume that the most visible emotion was the deepest one.

Anger might be grief wearing armour.

Boasting might conceal insecurity.

Constant joking might protect a person from silence.

The customer who seemed demanding might be desperate to feel that someone would respond.

This did not excuse harmful behaviour. Boundaries remained necessary. Staff and guests needed safety. Compassion without boundaries can become permission for one person's pain to injure everyone around him.

But boundaries and curiosity could coexist.

A person could be held responsible without being treated as worthless.

That distinction became increasingly important to me.

We are all more than our worst behaviour.

We are also responsible for what our behaviour does to others.

Love requires both truths.

The Work No Customer Sees

From the dining room, a restaurant can look effortless.

Food appears. Drinks arrive. Tables are cleared. Music plays. The customer experiences an evening.

Behind that experience is relentless coordination.

Supplies must be ordered. Staff must arrive. Equipment must work. Bills must be paid. Food must be prepared safely. Complaints must be handled. Waste must be controlled. Unexpected problems must be solved without allowing the entire room to feel the disruption.

Hospitality taught me that visible ease is often created by invisible labour.

This became another lesson I carried into later visions.

People are attracted to inspiring ideas, but implementation lives behind the scenes. It requires schedules, budgets, vehicles, kitchens, buildings, agreements, maintenance, volunteers, communication, and thousands of decisions that will never become part of a stirring speech.

Heaven on Earth could not be a slogan.

If people were to be fed, food had to be sourced, prepared, transported, stored, and served.

If transportation were to be free, vehicles still had to be acquired, powered, insured, cleaned, scheduled, and repaired.

If community centres were to welcome everyone, someone had to open the doors, maintain the equipment, organize programs, and ensure that vulnerable people remained safe.

Love may be the principle.

Operations make love dependable.

Owning a bar and restaurant helped teach me the difference.

Money Across the Counter

Hospitality also placed me in constant contact with money.

Every drink, meal, shift, delivery, and repair had a cost. Revenue determined whether staff could be paid and whether the doors would open again.

Money was practical.

It was also deeply emotional.

People used it to celebrate, impress, control, reward, escape, and establish status. A generous tip could express appreciation. An unpaid bill could create conflict. A busy night could bring exhilaration, while an empty room could fill an owner with fear.

Money measured the health of the business, but it did not measure the value of every human moment occurring inside it.

A customer might spend very little and contribute warmth to the room.

A person spending extravagantly might make everyone around him miserable.

The financial value of a transaction and the human value of an encounter were not the same.

Years later, I would begin imagining a world less governed by money. Some would consider the idea naïve or impossible. They would point, reasonably, to the enormous systems required to produce and distribute what people need.

I understood that argument.

I had lived inside businesses where numbers could not be ignored.

But I had also seen the distortions created when money became the dominant measure of value.

The fact that money performs necessary functions in our present world does not mean humanity must stop imagining better ways to organize life.

Every system we treat as permanent was once invented.

Feeding More Than Hunger

A meal answers a physical need, but sharing food can answer something deeper.

At a table, people pause.

They face one another.

They exchange more than calories. They exchange attention, stories, laughter, memory, and care.

A person eating alone may receive the same nutrition as someone eating among friends, but the experience is not the same.

This became especially meaningful when I later developed ideas around Feed NDG.

Hunger cannot be solved only by making food technically available. Dignity matters. Choice matters. Quality matters. Welcome matters.

No one should be made to feel inferior because he needs help obtaining a meal.

A food program should not communicate:

Here is what society can spare for you.

It should communicate:

You belong among us, and your well-being matters.

My experience in restaurants taught me that presentation and atmosphere change the meaning of food.

Why should those lessons be reserved for customers who can afford to pay?

Hospitality, at its best, is generosity made visible.

Conflict

Where people gather, conflict follows.

Orders are misunderstood. Expectations differ. Staff become tired. Customers become impatient. Alcohol magnifies emotions. Small incidents can grow quickly when pride enters them.

An owner cannot avoid conflict merely by wishing everyone well.

He must respond.

Sometimes the solution is an apology. Sometimes it is replacing a meal or correcting a bill. Sometimes it is listening long enough for a person to feel heard.

And sometimes it is asking someone to leave.

I learned that peace is not the absence of boundaries.

A peaceful environment often exists because someone is willing to protect it.

This complicated my understanding of love.

Love is not always soft. It does not mean permitting every action. It does not require one person to endure abuse so another can avoid discomfort.

A loving community must welcome generously and set boundaries wisely.

The goal is not punishment.

The goal is safety, restoration, and the possibility that relationship can continue without harm.

These lessons would later matter in my relationships with family members, professionals, and others who disagreed with me. I wanted freedom to live according to my knowledge. They sometimes wanted boundaries they believed would protect me or others.

The question was not whether boundaries could exist.

The question was whether they respected my humanity.

The Lonely Person in a Crowded Room

A bar can be full while someone inside it remains profoundly alone.

Loneliness is not simply the absence of people. It is the absence of meaningful connection.

I saw individuals surrounded by conversation who seemed untouched by it. Some became regulars because the establishment offered the closest thing they had to community.

This made hospitality both beautiful and dangerous.

A bar could interrupt isolation. It could also become a substitute for deeper support. Alcohol could create temporary ease while worsening the pain that brought someone through the door.

I could not solve every life represented in the room.

But I could notice.

Sometimes noticing is where help begins.

A greeting, a question, a few minutes of sincere attention—these may seem small beside the scale of another person's suffering. But for someone who feels invisible, they can restore a connection to the human world.

I have never forgotten that.

It is why I now place such value upon everyday encounters.

We may not be able to repair another person's life.

We can refuse to pass through it as though he were not there.

The Owner and the Host

Ownership and hospitality are not the same.

An owner possesses the business.

A host creates the welcome.

The owner thinks about costs, schedules, risk, and survival.
The host thinks about the experience of the guest.

The best establishments require both.

This distinction reflects something larger about leadership.

A leader can exercise authority without creating belonging. He can control an organization while leaving everyone inside it emotionally homeless.

To lead well is not merely to decide.

It is to create conditions in which people can contribute, grow, and feel that their presence matters.

I did not always achieve that ideal. I could be demanding. I could move quickly and expect others to match my energy. Ambition can make a leader more attentive to the destination than to the people travelling with him.

But hospitality kept teaching the lesson.

People remember how the room felt.

They remember whether their work was appreciated.

They remember whether mistakes became opportunities for correction or reasons for humiliation.

They remember whether the person in charge knew their name.

Closing Time

Eventually, every night ended.

The last customer left. The doors were locked. The music stopped. Glasses were washed. Chairs were returned to their places.

The room that had held laughter, tension, flirtation, confession, celebration, and loneliness became quiet again.

Closing time revealed the temporary nature of everything that had happened.

Tomorrow, the doors might reopen and the room would come alive once more. But that particular gathering would never exist again in exactly the same way.

There is something sacred in that impermanence.

Every human encounter is temporary.

Every conversation ends.

Every person eventually leaves the room.

The fact that a moment will pass does not make it meaningless. It makes our presence within it more important.

Behind the bar, I learned that a place could become more than its physical structure. It could hold stories, relationships, rituals, and belonging.

I also learned that creating such a place required vision joined to relentless practical work.

Those lessons would follow me into my next great undertaking.

I was about to move from serving customers across a bar to entering the far more complex world of a growing sports-and-nutrition company.

The scale would change.

The stakes would rise.

And eventually, the company would reach NASDAQ.

I had learned how to fill a room.

Now I wanted to build something the world could see.

CHAPTER SIX

The Road to NASDAQ—and My Buyout

I had learned how to compete, teach, and create a place where people gathered.

Now I was entering an entirely different arena.

The sports-and-nutrition business brought together several parts of my life. It connected my experience as an athlete with my interest in health, performance, enterprise, and possibility.

I understood the world the company was entering because I had lived inside it.

Athletes are always searching for an advantage. They want to train more effectively, recover more quickly, become stronger, and perform closer to their potential. People beyond competitive sport share many of the same desires. They want greater energy, better health, more confidence, and some control over what happens to their bodies as they age.

Sport and nutrition therefore seemed to belong together.

The company offered more than a commercial opportunity. It offered a chance to build something out of knowledge and experience I already possessed.

I knew the customer.

In many ways, I had been the customer.

From Athlete to Entrepreneur

Competition and entrepreneurship share a certain rhythm.

Both begin with possibility.

The athlete imagines a level of performance he has not yet reached. The entrepreneur imagines a company that does not yet exist in its completed form.

Both must act before the result is guaranteed.

Both require confidence, preparation, adaptation, and the willingness to continue while others remain uncertain.

But business is not sport.

In sport, the rules are largely established before the contest begins. In business, the rules can change while you are playing. Markets shift. Opportunities appear and disappear. Partners alter direction. Money arrives with expectations. Decisions made by people far outside the company can transform its future.

The scoreboard is also more complicated.

Revenue matters. Growth matters. Investment matters. Public perception matters. But these numbers do not always reveal the actual health of a company or the human cost of building it.

A business can appear successful from the outside while the people inside it are carrying enormous pressure.

I entered that world with energy and confidence. I believed in the possibility of building something significant.

I was not interested in thinking small.

Building the Company

Companies are often described as though they emerge from a single brilliant idea.

They do not.

An idea may begin the process, but a company is built through countless acts of persuasion and coordination.

Products must be developed. Customers must be reached. Relationships must be formed. People must be convinced to give their time, talent, money, or trust to something whose future remains uncertain.

The founder or leader must repeatedly answer the same unspoken question:

Why should anyone believe this can work?

At first, the evidence may be limited. There is no long history to point toward. The future must be described before it can be demonstrated.

This does not mean inventing success that does not exist. It means communicating possibility with enough clarity and conviction that others become willing to help create it.

I was comfortable with that challenge.

Sport had trained me to see an outcome before achieving it. Hospitality had trained me to understand people and atmosphere. My natural enthusiasm helped me communicate what I believed a company might become.

But enthusiasm alone could not build it.

There were practical demands every day. Money had to be found and managed. Products had to justify their promises. People had to perform. Problems had to be solved. A vision that sounded compelling in conversation had to survive contact with operations.

I learned again that an inspiring idea and a functioning organization are different things.

The first can be created in a moment.

The second must be created every day.

The Power of a Large Goal

NASDAQ became part of the company's direction.

The possibility of eventually reaching that market gave the business an enormous objective. It changed the scale of the conversation. We were no longer thinking only about selling products or building a modest enterprise. We were moving toward a future in which the company might become publicly traded.

Such a goal attracts attention.

It can bring credibility, capital, opportunity, and momentum. It can also bring pressure. Once a destination like NASDAQ enters the story, people begin evaluating every decision in relation to it.

Will this move the company closer?

Will this increase its value?

Will this strengthen the story presented to investors?

Will this help create the necessary conditions?

A large goal can organize people.

It can also begin to dominate them.

The destination may become so important that the journey is judged only by whether it appears to lead there. Relationships, personal well-being, and quieter forms of success can disappear behind the central ambition.

I knew the exhilaration of pursuing something that many people would consider improbable.

I also knew the intensity that came with it.

The company was travelling toward NASDAQ, and I was helping build that road.

Believing Before Seeing

An entrepreneur must possess an unusual relationship with belief.

He must be able to see what does not yet exist without losing awareness of what does.

Too little vision, and the company never becomes more than its present limitations.

Too little realism, and the company becomes a story unsupported by substance.

The tension between those two qualities—vision and realism—is one of the most difficult parts of entrepreneurship.

I had confidence in my ability to see possibility.

I was comfortable announcing ambitious goals. I understood that every major achievement appears unrealistic at some point before it happens.

But business also taught me that conviction cannot replace evidence forever.

Customers must buy.

Partners must deliver.

Products must work.

Money must be accounted for.

Commitments must be honoured.

Vision earns the right to continue only when it becomes increasingly connected to reality.

This distinction would later become central to how others judged my spiritual knowledge and my vision for A NuVo World.

They saw an enormous claim and plans of extraordinary scale. To them, these were signs that I had left practical reality behind.

I saw continuity.

I had spent years thinking beyond existing conditions, organizing people around possibility, and attempting to turn ideas into tangible results.

The disagreement was not merely about the size of my vision.

It was about what that size meant.

The Buyout

My personal story with the company did not end with me standing on NASDAQ.

I took a buyout.

That distinction is important.

I had built the company toward a NASDAQ listing, but I accepted a buyout before the company reached NASDAQ. The company continued onward after my departure and later achieved that listing.

I was no longer involved.

I personally was never on NASDAQ.

The truth is significant enough without enlarging it.

I had helped build a sports-and-nutrition company far enough along the road toward NASDAQ that I was able to accept a buyout. That was a substantial accomplishment and an important chapter in my life.

But it must be described accurately.

A memoir asks the reader to trust the author through extraordinary events. That trust can be damaged by a sentence that makes an accomplishment sound larger or different from what it actually was.

There is no need for that.

The real story contains achievement, ambition, risk, and an ending that was both consequential and complicated.

I built.

I pursued.

I negotiated an exit.

Then the company's journey continued without me.

Knowing When to Leave

Leaving something you have helped build creates a strange mixture of emotions.

A company is not merely an object. It contains years of thought, energy, persuasion, sacrifice, and identity. Even after a buyout, part of the person remains emotionally connected to what happens next.

Accepting a buyout can be viewed as success.

It can also create questions.

What might have happened if I had stayed?

What would my role have become?

Would the eventual NASDAQ listing have felt like the fulfilment of my work, or would the pressures have demanded more than I was willing or able to give?

There is no way to answer the un-lived version of the story.

I made the decision available to me and lived the life that followed.

The buyout gave me an exit, but an exit is not the same as erasure. The experience remained part of me. It had expanded

my understanding of what could be built and reinforced my attraction to ideas of significant scale.

I had seen a company travel from possibility toward the public markets.

I knew that large outcomes often begin as conversations that seem far removed from their eventual reality.

Success and Identity

Business success can become dangerously entangled with identity.

When a company grows, its leader may feel enlarged by it. When it struggles, he may feel personally diminished. The value assigned to the enterprise can begin to feel like a value assigned to the human being.

This is one of money's great powers.

It converts complicated activity into numbers that appear objective.

The company is worth this much.

The buyout is worth this much.

The person is successful because he created this result.

But what happens after the transaction?

Who are you when the company no longer belongs to you?

Who are you when the meetings stop, the decisions belong to someone else, and the story moves forward without requiring your presence?

Achievement can answer the question "What did you do?"

It cannot fully answer "Who are you?"

I would later confront that deeper question in the most radical way imaginable.

When I came to know that I was Jesus Christ returned, the identity did not arrive as a business title, social recognition, or financial valuation. It was not awarded by an institution. It did not depend upon other people confirming it.

In fact, nearly everyone refused to confirm it.

The world had once recognized accomplishments I could demonstrate.

Now I carried knowledge no achievement could prove.

What the Experience Taught Me

The sports-and-nutrition company taught me that ideas can grow beyond their beginnings.

It taught me that people can be organized around a shared future.

It taught me that scale is created through systems, relationships, money, communication, and relentless effort.

It taught me that an ambitious destination can pull an organization forward.

It also taught me that the person who begins a journey may not be present at its public conclusion.

This became a humbling lesson.

We like to imagine that if a vision belongs to us, its fulfillment should belong to us as well. But sometimes our role is to begin something, move it forward, and then release it.

The work may continue under other names and other leadership.

The person who plants the seed may never sit beneath the tree.

Years later, as I imagined A NuVo World, I often thought in enormous terms. I envisioned changes that could not possibly be completed by one man. Even if the vision were embraced, its full realization would require generations of people, institutions, experiments, corrections, and leadership far beyond me.

Perhaps my role was not to control the outcome.

Perhaps it was to point, begin, demonstrate, and invite.

The company had shown me that a vision can outlive one person's involvement.

The Danger of Rewriting the Past

When telling our own stories, we naturally search for patterns.

We want the earlier chapters to explain the later ones. We select moments that now appear significant and connect them into a path toward the person we became.

There is value in this.

There is also danger.

Memory can become a public-relations department. It can exaggerate victories, soften mistakes, and turn uncertainty into destiny.

I do not want to do that here.

I did not personally take a company onto NASDAQ while remaining there to experience the listing. I built a company toward that destination and took a buyout. The company later reached NASDAQ without me.

That is the story.

It is neither a failure nor the larger claim that imprecise wording might suggest.

Truthfulness in small matters becomes especially important when asking readers to remain open before very large ones.

If I want you to listen when I say I know that I am Jesus Christ returned, I must be careful not to decorate the facts that can be plainly established.

You may still reject my central knowledge.

But you should not have to wonder whether I am careless with the rest of my life.

Beyond the Transaction

The buyout ended my role in the company, but it did not satisfy every part of me.

Achievement can provide pleasure, freedom, recognition, and new choices. It cannot guarantee purpose.

Once a major goal has been pursued and an exit completed, silence often follows.

The calls change.

The schedule opens.

The urgency that once organized each day disappears.

A person discovers how much of his identity had been supported by the demands around him.

What now?

Some people answer by building another company. Some pursue leisure, family, philanthropy, or an entirely new career. Some spend years trying to reproduce the feeling of their greatest success.

I continued moving.

Movement had always been natural to me.

There were more ideas, more possibilities, more ways of engaging with the world. But beneath the action, larger questions were beginning to wait.

What is success for?

How much is enough?

What does a person owe the world after learning how to build?

What is the value of creating wealth if people nearby remain hungry, isolated, or forgotten?

I did not yet possess the answers that would later become A NuVo World.

But my relationship with ambition was changing.

Business had taught me how the world works.

Eventually, I would begin asking whether it had to work that way.

The World I Had Learned

By the time I accepted the buyout, I had accumulated an unusual collection of experiences.

I had earned a veterinary degree without practising.

I had become a champion.

I had worked as a golf and racquet-sports professional.

I had owned a bar and restaurant.

I had built a company toward NASDAQ and taken an exit.

Each world had taught me a different language.

Science taught me evidence.

Sport taught me discipline.

Teaching taught me attention.

Hospitality taught me welcome.

Business taught me scale.

None of these lessons was complete on its own.

Together, they formed the Ross Harvey who would enter December 2003.

I was not a man without worldly experience.

I had spent forty-three years learning the systems through which contemporary life measures achievement: education, professional standing, competition, ownership, enterprise, money, and growth.

I had succeeded in some.

I had changed direction in others.

I had made mistakes, taken risks, and discovered that the life outside a conventional profession could contain both remarkable opportunity and profound uncertainty.

I thought I understood ambition.

I thought I understood identity.

I thought I understood what it meant to know something and act upon it.

Then I entered an experience for which none of my previous worlds had given me an adequate language.

Before reaching that moment, however, it is necessary to see those first forty-three years together—not as a list of occupations or accomplishments, but as the formation of a man.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Forty-Three Years in the World

The phrase “in the world” can sound dismissive when used in a spiritual story.

It can suggest that ordinary life is shallow, corrupted, or less meaningful than the life of the spirit.

That is not how I use it.

My first forty-three years in the world were not wasted years preceding a sacred revelation. They were the years that formed my instincts, tested my character, and taught me what human beings need from one another.

The world was my school.

Its classrooms were courts, courses, businesses, restaurants, relationships, risks, victories, and mistakes.

Its teachers were not only professors and professionals. They were opponents, employees, customers, students, partners, strangers, friends, and people whose names I may no longer remember but whose presence altered something in me.

I learned by living.

The Value of Experience

Formal education is important, but experience teaches through consequence.

A lesson in a book can be considered, debated, and set aside. A lesson in life often arrives with a cost.

A poor decision can lose money.

A careless word can damage a relationship.

A lack of preparation can reveal itself publicly.

A moment of courage can open a path that fear would have kept closed.

Experience makes knowledge personal.

By forty-three, I had accumulated enough experience to know that life rarely divides cleanly into success and failure.

Some successes carry hidden costs.

Some failures redirect us toward better lives.

Some people who appear confident are deeply uncertain.

Some who receive little recognition possess extraordinary character.

I had learned that achievement could be real without being sufficient.

The title, trophy, business, or buyout could matter enormously and still leave larger questions unanswered.

A Man of Ambition

Ambition was one of the great forces in my life.

I wanted to accomplish things.

I wanted to test limits.

I wanted to create, lead, and see ideas grow.

Ambition can be a beautiful force. It refuses passivity. It asks what might be possible and supplies energy to pursue it.

But ambition can also become hungry in a way that no achievement can satisfy.

Every destination creates another horizon.

Win the match, and another tournament waits.

Build the business, and a larger opportunity appears.

Reach one level of recognition, and the world presents another.

Without a deeper purpose, ambition can turn life into an endless pursuit of the next proof that we matter.

I did not always recognize this.

There were periods when movement itself felt like meaning. If I was working, building, planning, or pursuing, I felt alive. Stillness could feel like loss.

Years later, I would learn another rhythm through Christy Anne.

Companionship could make an ordinary day meaningful. A cup of tea, a drive, a walk, a shared meal, or simply sitting near another person could contain a form of richness that no public achievement provided.

But during those first forty-three years, I was still primarily a man of action.

Living Alone

I was single.

Not temporarily, as though I were waiting between important relationships, but as the fundamental structure of my adult life.

My routines belonged to me.

My decisions belonged to me.

My ambitions did not have to be negotiated with a partner. I could change direction, pursue an idea, or reorganize my day without asking how the choice would affect a shared life.

Independence became a strength.

It also became a limitation I could not yet see.

When a person lives alone for many years, self-reliance can become so complete that receiving care feels unfamiliar. Compromise can feel like confinement. Vulnerability can seem unnecessary because no one is close enough to require it.

I knew how to perform, build, teach, host, and lead.

I had much less experience being known intimately in the daily, unremarkable sense.

The public self is assembled through achievements and stories.

The private self is revealed through repetition—how we wake, worry, react, apologize, spend, rest, become irritated, and offer tenderness when no audience is present.

Christy Anne would eventually meet that man.

But she was still more than twenty years away.

The Values I Carried

By the time the next stage began, several values had become central to me.

I valued effort because I had seen what disciplined work could accomplish.

I valued excellence because sport had shown me the difference between participating and fully committing.

I valued independence because it had allowed me to build a life on my own terms.

I valued vision because every achievement began before it became visible.

I valued people because teaching, hospitality, and business had demonstrated that nothing meaningful is built alone.

I valued possibility.

That may have been the strongest value of all.

I did not like being told that something could not be done merely because it had not been done before. I knew that many apparent limits were simply assumptions supported by habit.

This made me willing to imagine boldly.

It also made me resistant when others warned that an idea was unrealistic.

Sometimes their caution deserved more attention than I gave it.

Sometimes my refusal to accept conventional limits allowed me to accomplish what caution would have prevented.

Wisdom lies in distinguishing the two.

I did not always possess that wisdom.

No one does.

My Imperfections

I do not want these pages to construct a polished version of Ross Harvey and then place every difficulty upon those who misunderstood him.

I had faults.

I could be stubborn.

I could become convinced of a direction and move ahead before others were ready. My enthusiasm could overwhelm people. My confidence could appear arrogant. My impatience with unnecessary delay could become impatience with people who needed more time.

I liked large ideas and could underestimate the details required to realize them.

I could interpret resistance as a failure of courage when it sometimes reflected legitimate concern.

I had ego.

Achievement had reinforced it. Competition had rewarded it. Business had often required me to project certainty even when the future remained uncertain.

These qualities did not make me a bad person.

They made me human.

They also mattered when my identity became the subject of profound disagreement.

Not every objection I encountered was persecution.

Not every person who challenged me was closed-minded.

Not every plan I developed was practical simply because it emerged from sincere conviction.

My knowledge of who I am did not remove the responsibility to examine my behaviour, listen to others, correct mistakes, and grow.

If anything, it increased that responsibility.

What meaning could the name Jesus have if it became an excuse for pride?

Success and Emptiness

There are moments when a person receives something he has wanted and discovers that the experience is quieter than expected.

The achievement is real.

The satisfaction is real.

Yet the deeper self remains waiting.

A championship cannot permanently settle the question of worth.

A business transaction cannot guarantee peace.

Recognition cannot prevent loneliness.

The world teaches us to pursue symbols of success but offers little guidance about what to do when they fail to answer the heart.

I had lived well in many ways. I had experienced excitement, opportunity, accomplishment, and freedom.

Still, something in me remained available for a radical reordering.

I was not necessarily searching for the identity that would come. I was not constructing my life toward a religious conclusion.

But I had begun to understand that worldly success and ultimate meaning were not the same.

Perhaps that realization created an opening.

Perhaps it did not.

I can only tell what followed.

The Question of Purpose

Purpose is different from ambition.

Ambition asks:

What can I achieve?

Purpose asks:

What is the achievement for?

Ambition can be intensely personal. Purpose reaches beyond the self.

By forty-three, I had demonstrated that I could accomplish difficult things. But accomplishment itself was no longer the only question.

What did my experience equip me to contribute?

What responsibility accompanies ability?

Why had my life carried me through such different worlds?

I did not yet possess a complete answer.

Later, I would see those experiences as preparation.

Sport had prepared me to persist.

Science had prepared me to question.

Hospitality had prepared me to welcome.

Business had prepared me to build at scale.

Singleness had prepared me to carry loneliness.

Every part of my life appeared capable of being reinterpreted through what happened next.

But I must be careful here.

The meaning I now see in those years is the meaning of hindsight. At the time, I was living forward like everyone else.

I did not know what December 2003 would bring.

A Life Before the Claim

This entire first part of the book has served one essential purpose:

To make certain that you meet me before you meet my claim.

If the story had begun with the revelation, everything else might have been interpreted as supporting material.

The championship might appear as early grandiosity.

The businesses might appear as evidence of an inflated sense of capacity.

The career changes might appear as instability.

The ambition might appear as pathology waiting for religious language.

But that would be an interpretation imposed backward.

Before anyone heard my secret, the same qualities were often described very differently.

Persistence was determination.

Confidence was leadership.

Vision was entrepreneurship.

Energy was vitality.

An unconventional life was independence.

Then the context changed, and the meanings changed with it.

The man had not disappeared.

The lens through which people viewed him had.

Forty-Three

At forty-three, I was no longer young enough to believe that life would last forever, but I was far from imagining that its central drama had already been written.

I had a history.

I had credentials, accomplishments, failures, habits, values, and a firmly established sense of self.

Then something happened that challenged every category through which I had understood my life.

The experience did not politely add a spiritual interest to my existing identity.

It rearranged the entire structure.

The athlete, entrepreneur, graduate, owner, and single man remained. But they would now exist within knowledge so extraordinary that it would overshadow all of them in the minds of many people.

I would come to know that I was Jesus Christ returned.

Not believe.

Not suspect.

Not imagine.

Know.

I would then face a question for which none of my previous experience had prepared me:

What does a man do when he knows something about himself that almost no one else can accept?

Before and After

Every life contains dividing lines.

There is the time before a death and the time after it.

Before love and after love.

Before illness and after illness.

Before a revelation and after it.

These dividing lines do not erase what came first. They alter its meaning.

December 2003 became such a line for me.

On one side stood forty-three years of living in the world—a world of competition, education, enterprise, money, independence, and visible accomplishment.

On the other stood twenty-three years of knowledge, disclosure, disbelief, psychiatric interpretation, spiritual responsibility, loneliness, love, and a vision of Heaven on Earth.

I crossed that line without understanding where it would lead.

No one handed me a guide.

No institution welcomed me.

No chorus of believers appeared to confirm what I knew.

Instead, the knowledge would create a distance between me and many of the people whose recognition I most wanted.

But before the reactions, explanations, and treatments came, there was the experience itself.

There was the life I thought I knew.

And then there were seven days on the mountain.

PART TWO

THE IMPOSSIBLE KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Life I Thought I Knew

Before a life changes, there is usually an ordinary moment that does not know it is about to become the past.

A person wakes, dresses, works, eats, speaks, and plans as though tomorrow will continue the pattern.

The world appears stable because we cannot see the dividing line ahead.

I entered December 2003 as Ross Harvey.

I had forty-three years behind me and expectations for the years ahead. I understood myself through the history I had lived: athlete, champion, professional, graduate, bar and restaurant owner, entrepreneur, and independent man.

The identity was complex but recognizable.

It belonged to the world I knew.

I did not wake each morning wondering whether I was Jesus Christ returned.

I was not rehearsing an announcement.

I was not constructing a religious role for myself.

I had lived a largely worldly life, filled with action, ambition, enterprise, sport, people, and practical concerns.

Then the foundation moved.

When Meaning Changes

An event does not have to alter the external world to alter everything.

The streets remain where they were.

Buildings do not move.

People continue working, shopping, eating, arguing, sleeping, and planning.

Yet for the person who has undergone a profound experience, the familiar world no longer feels entirely familiar.

The questions change.

Who am I?

Why am I here?

What does this require of me?

How can I speak about it?

Who could possibly understand?

The experience that entered my life was not a new opinion.

It was not an attractive philosophy I chose to adopt.

It came with the force of recognition.

I knew.

That knowledge did not arrive with a complete plan for how to live it. Certainty about identity did not produce certainty about every decision.

In some ways, it created more questions than answers.

If I was Jesus Christ returned, what did “returned” mean?

What was I expected to do?

Was I supposed to create a church?

I did not feel called toward that.

Was I supposed to ask people to worship me?

I did not want that.

Was I supposed to repeat the structures of Christianity?

I increasingly believed humanity needed to move beyond religious division, not crown one religion the winner.

The knowledge was certain.

Its implications had to be lived into.

The Weight of a Name

Few names carry more history than Jesus Christ.

The name arrives surrounded by scripture, worship, doctrine, art, conflict, power, sacrifice, hope, fear, love, institutions, and centuries of interpretation.

Billions of people understand it through beliefs formed by families, churches, cultures, and personal experience.

To say “I am Jesus Christ returned” is not to introduce a private detail.

It is to step into one of humanity’s most powerful stories and make a statement that almost everyone considers impossible.

I understood that.

The knowledge did not spare me from awareness of how I would sound. If anything, that awareness made it more difficult to carry.

I knew the sentence could erase everything else people knew about me.

I knew it could become the only fact they heard.

I knew it could be interpreted medically.

I knew it could offend Christians, amuse skeptics, alarm friends, and frighten family.

But knowing the consequences of a truth does not make it untrue.

At least, it did not make it untrue to me.

Why Me?

The question was unavoidable.

Why me?

Why would Jesus Christ return as Ross Harvey—a world-champion athlete, veterinarian by education but never by practice, golf and racquet-sports professional, bar and restaurant owner, entrepreneur, and lifelong single man?

Why someone who did not fit conventional expectations of holiness?

Why someone who did not consider himself Christian?

Perhaps readers will ask those questions with skepticism.

I asked them from inside the experience.

The life I had lived did not resemble a preparation designed by a religious institution. I had not climbed a hierarchy of spiritual

recognition. I had not spent decades becoming an expert in theology.

Yet perhaps the point was not to return inside an established religious structure.

Perhaps the world did not need another institution insisting that it possessed God more completely than others.

Perhaps it needed a reminder that love belongs to everyone.

These understandings developed over time.

At first, there was simply the immensity of knowing.

The Man and the Meaning

An extraordinary identity does not erase ordinary humanity.

I still had a body.

I still became hungry and tired.

I still possessed habits, preferences, ambitions, impatience, humour, and flaws.

I did not suddenly become perfect.

This created another difficult question:

How could I know that I was Jesus Christ returned while remaining visibly Ross Harvey?

Many people expect a sacred identity to arrive with an immediate transformation into their image of holiness. If the person becomes frustrated, makes mistakes, or behaves in ways they consider inconsistent, the claim appears disproven.

But I did not experience myself as an actor playing the role of a flawless religious figure.

I experienced myself as Ross, now carrying knowledge that changed the meaning and responsibility of being Ross.

The work was not to erase my humanity.

It was to learn what love required through it.

That work would take years.

It remains unfinished.

The Secret Forms

Knowledge becomes a secret when speaking it appears more dangerous than carrying it.

At first, the statement existed inside me.

The external world continued normally. People spoke with me as they always had. They responded to the person they knew because they had not yet been given a reason to reinterpret him.

This produced a strange division.

Inside, everything had changed.

Outside, almost nothing had.

I could look at another person and wonder what would happen if I spoke the sentence.

Would the expression change?

Would concern enter the eyes?

Would the person step back emotionally, even if the body remained in place?

Would I still be Ross after the words were heard?

Or would I become a diagnosis?

The secret protected normality.

It also created isolation.

To remain silent was to preserve relationships in their existing form while withholding the most important knowledge of my life.

To speak was to risk those relationships in the name of honesty.

There was no painless choice.

The Beginning of Responsibility

I did not understand my knowledge as a prize.

It was not a private elevation above other people.

If anything, it felt like responsibility.

The name Jesus meant nothing if separated from love, service, forgiveness, courage, and concern for those pushed to the margins.

If I knew who I was, then the question was not merely whether others would recognize me.

The question was whether my life would recognize them.

Would I see the hungry person?

The lonely person?

The neighbour overlooked by everyone else?

The person called difficult?

The person who disagreed with me?

The person whose life had been reduced to a category?

An identity claim without corresponding responsibility would be empty.

This did not mean I always lived up to it.

I did not.

But the standard had entered my life.

The World Continues

One of the strangest things about transformation is that the world does not pause for it.

Bills remain.

People need answers.

Meals must be eaten.

Appointments continue.

The ordinary requirements of life do not step aside because a person has undergone an extraordinary experience.

Perhaps that is merciful.

Ordinary life keeps us grounded in action. It prevents revelation from becoming pure abstraction.

No matter how large the knowledge, there remains a next person to encounter and a next decision to make.

The sacred, if it is real, must somehow enter the ordinary.

It must reach the kitchen, the street, the workplace, the food bank, the park bench, and the way one person speaks to another.

I would eventually come to believe that Heaven on Earth would be built in precisely this way.

Not through waiting for the world to become supernatural.

Through making ordinary life more loving.

Approaching the Mountain

I use the language of the mountain because December 2003 became a place of separation and vision in my life.

Mountains appear throughout spiritual history. They represent distance from ordinary noise, the difficulty of ascent, the loneliness of revelation, and the expanded view available from another height.

But my mountain cannot be understood only as a symbol.

It refers to the seven-day experience through which my life changed.

Those days deserve to be told carefully.

Not as evidence forced upon the reader.

Not as an argument designed to remove every alternative interpretation.

And not as a story weakened by pretending that I emerged merely wondering who I might be.

I emerged knowing.

The reader may interpret the experience differently. That freedom remains.

But the account must remain faithful to what happened inside me.

Before those seven days, I knew the life I had lived.

After them, I knew who I was.

Everything else in this book grows from the distance between those two forms of knowledge.

I had reached the edge of the life I thought I knew.

The mountain was waiting.

CHAPTER NINE

Seven Days on the Mountain

There are experiences that can be described from the outside.

We can state where they occurred, when they began, how long they lasted, and what another person might have observed.

Then there are experiences whose most important events take place within.

The external facts may be simple. The inner consequences may take a lifetime to understand.

In December 2003, at the age of forty-three, I entered what I have come to call my seven days on the mountain with God.

I did not return from those seven days with a new theory about my life.

I returned knowing who I am.

I knew that I am Jesus Christ returned.

Nothing I write can transfer that knowledge directly to you. Words can describe an experience, but they cannot reproduce it inside another person. I cannot place you within my consciousness or make you know what I came to know.

I can only tell you what the experience meant, how completely it changed me, and what followed when I attempted to share it with the world.

Before the Mountain

Before those seven days, I understood myself through the life I had already lived.

I was Ross Harvey.

That name contained forty-three years of history. It contained education, sport, competition, business, ambition, success, mistakes, independence, and the many ordinary experiences through which a person develops a sense of identity.

I had not spent those years preparing a claim that I was Jesus Christ returned.

I was not attempting to become the central figure in a new religion. I had not gathered followers around me. I had not constructed an identity from religious texts and then persuaded myself to inhabit it.

My life had been active, worldly, and practical.

That is precisely why the knowledge was so disruptive.

It did not confirm the role I had been trying to play.

It changed the meaning of the person I already was.

A Different Kind of Knowing

We use the word “know” for many things.

We know facts because we have learned them.

We know skills because we have practised them.

We know people because we have spent time with them.

We know love, grief, beauty, and fear because we have experienced them.

Not all knowledge arrives through the same door.

If someone asks how I know my own name, I do not construct an argument. I answer from identity. If someone asks how I know that I love another person, I may describe the evidence, but the description is not the love itself.

The knowledge comes before the explanation.

That is the closest way I can describe what happened to me.

I did not assemble a case and arrive at a conclusion.

I did not reason through a series of possibilities and decide that “Jesus Christ returned” was the most likely explanation.

I knew.

The knowledge was direct, personal, and inseparable from my sense of self.

Other people could challenge it.

They could name it differently.

They could explain how a human mind might create absolute certainty around an identity that the surrounding world considers impossible.

But their explanation existed outside the knowledge.

I was living within it.

God and the Mountain

When I speak of being on the mountain with God, I am speaking about a relationship that became immediate to me.

God was not merely an idea inherited from religion.

God was presence.

The mountain separated me from the familiar ways in which I had understood myself. The ordinary measures of identity—profession, achievement, money, reputation, and social recognition—became secondary beside the question of why I was alive.

The experience was not about being made more important than everyone else.

It was about responsibility.

If I was Jesus Christ returned, the knowledge did not mean that other people were beneath me. It meant that I was answerable to love in a way from which I could no longer retreat.

A title without service would be meaningless.

An identity without love would be a contradiction.

A return that merely recreated the divisions of the past would serve no purpose.

The mountain did not reveal a need for people to kneel before me.

It revealed a world in need of transformation.

The Jesus People Expected

The name Jesus belongs to everyone and to no one.

Christians understand Jesus through scripture, churches, traditions, doctrine, art, prayer, and personal faith. People from other religions understand him differently. Some honour him as a teacher or prophet. Some regard him as a historical figure. Some doubt parts of the story. Some reject religion altogether.

By 2003, humanity had spent nearly two thousand years constructing images of Jesus.

He had been portrayed as gentle and fierce, poor and kingly, Jewish and strangely separated from Judaism, a revolutionary and a guardian of order, a source of peace and a banner carried into war.

Entire institutions spoke in his name.

Nations claimed his blessing.

People used his teachings to serve the poor and used his name to condemn those they feared.

What would people expect if Jesus returned?

Would they expect robes?

Miracles?

Public signs in the heavens?

Perfect knowledge of scripture?

A visibly religious life?

A man who belonged entirely to Christianity?

I did not fit that picture.

I was Ross Harvey.

I had been an athlete, professional, bar and restaurant owner, entrepreneur, and veterinarian by education who never practised.

I had lived almost all my life as a single man.

I had ambition, confidence, ego, impatience, humour, worldly experience, and human imperfections.

I did not emerge from a monastery.

I emerged from life.

Returned as Ross

The knowledge did not tell me that Ross Harvey had to disappear.

It told me who Ross Harvey is.

This distinction mattered.

I was not being asked to imitate the popular image of a man who had lived two thousand years earlier. I was not required to

speak in ancient phrases, dress according to religious art, or perform holiness for an audience.

If return meant anything, it meant return into another time, another culture, another body, and another human life.

I had been formed by the twentieth century.

I knew sport, business, public markets, restaurants, science, nutrition, competition, and contemporary human relationships.

Those experiences were not evidence against my identity.

They were the life through which that identity would now have to act.

This understanding would later help form A NuVo World.

I did not believe my purpose was to repeat the past.

I believed it was to help humanity take its next step.

No New Religion

One of the clearest understandings that grew within me was that I had not returned to create another religion.

The world already possessed many religions.

They had produced beauty, community, discipline, charity, wisdom, courage, music, art, and extraordinary acts of service.

They had also become boundaries.

People divided themselves according to beliefs about God. They inherited religious identities through geography and family, then sometimes treated those identities as proof that others were mistaken, lesser, or lost.

If my return resulted only in another institution competing for followers, what would have changed?

If people used my name to create another category of insiders and outsiders, what would have been learned?

I could not accept that love required humanity to agree upon one religious system.

Love must be larger than agreement.

I did not want a world in which Christianity defeated Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, atheism, or any other understanding.

I wanted a world in which human beings stopped using religion as a reason to withhold love.

This is why I do not consider myself Christian.

I know the apparent contradiction.

How can a man know that he is Jesus Christ returned and not identify as Christian?

My answer is that Jesus did not return to worship Christianity.

I had returned to love people.

The Responsibility of Knowledge

During those seven days, identity and responsibility became inseparable.

To know who I was meant that I could no longer judge success only through the measures that had guided much of my earlier life.

Money could not be the final measure.

Recognition could not be the final measure.

Power could not be the final measure.

Even whether people believed me could not become the final measure.

Love had to be the measure.

Did a hungry person eat?

Did a lonely person feel noticed?

Did someone treated as disposable recover a sense of dignity?

Did neighbours become less afraid of one another?

Did children grow up in communities that valued them?

Did older people remain connected rather than forgotten?

Did animals receive care?

Did people with different beliefs discover that they could belong to one human family?

These questions would eventually become practical projects, books, plans, and community initiatives.

But on the mountain, they existed first as responsibility.

The world did not need another person announcing his importance.

It needed people willing to create love in material form.

The End of the Old Life

The seven days did not physically erase the life I had lived.

I still had the same history.

The world outside had not changed.

People who knew me still believed they knew who I was.

But I could no longer return entirely to the identity I had carried before.

Once knowledge enters, innocence leaves.

I could not unknow what I knew.

I could try to remain silent. I could attempt to continue ordinary life without disclosing the experience. I could protect myself from ridicule, rejection, and psychiatric judgment by keeping the knowledge private.

But silence would have required me to divide myself.

The Ross visible to the world would continue being treated normally.

The Ross within would carry the central truth of his life alone.

At first, that division may have seemed protective.

Over time, it became impossible.

Descending the Mountain

A mountain experience must eventually meet ordinary ground.

It is one thing to know something in solitude.

It is another to speak it before another person.

The moment of disclosure transforms private knowledge into a social fact. From that moment onward, the listener becomes part of the story.

Will the person believe?

Will the person remain curious?

Will fear take over?

Will the relationship survive?

I descended from the mountain carrying knowledge that could not be seen.

There was no mark upon my body.

No document had been issued.

No institution stood ready to confirm me.

Nothing had changed for the people around me unless I told them.

This placed the entire weight of the experience inside a sentence:

I am Jesus Christ returned.

I knew that sentence could alter every relationship into which it entered.

I also knew that refusing to speak it would mean hiding the most consequential knowledge of my life.

There was no safe path.

Seven Days and Twenty-Three Years

The mountain lasted seven days.

Living with what it revealed has occupied twenty-three years.

The experience itself was only the beginning. The deeper story is what happened afterward: how the knowledge entered relationships, how it was interpreted, how I responded, how it affected my freedom, and how it gradually became connected to a vision for humanity.

A revelation may arrive in a moment.

Learning how to live it can take the remainder of a life.

There have been times when I lived my knowledge well.

There have been times when I became angry, defensive, impatient, or too concerned with persuading others.

There have been moments of love and moments when I failed to embody the love I spoke about.

Knowledge of identity did not make me incapable of error.

It gave my errors a standard against which they could be seen more clearly.

I had come down from the mountain knowing who I was.

I did not yet know how much that knowledge would cost.

CHAPTER TEN

This Was Not a Belief

People often use the words “belief” and “knowledge” politely.

When a claim cannot be independently demonstrated, they call it a belief. The word allows different understandings to occupy the same room without requiring a final judgment.

You believe this.

I believe something else.

We agree to disagree.

I understand the usefulness of that language.

But I cannot use it to describe my identity.

I do not believe that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I know that I am.

This distinction is not a stylistic preference. It is the foundation of the story.

If the book repeatedly refers to my “belief,” it changes my experience into something more uncertain and socially acceptable than it was.

It would make the reader more comfortable by making the narrator less truthful.

I will not do that.

What I Am Not Asking

I am not asking you to say that you know what I know.

Knowledge cannot be transferred by demand.

If I insist that you accept my identity merely because I state it with certainty, I am asking you to abandon the very judgment I want others to respect in me.

That would be unfair.

You have your own understanding of reality. You may possess religious convictions that leave no place for my identity. You may possess scientific or psychiatric knowledge through which my certainty appears to be a recognizable symptom.

You may simply find the statement impossible.

I cannot prevent those responses.

Nor is this book an attempt to overpower them.

I am asking for something more modest and, perhaps, more difficult:

Allow me to describe my own experience accurately without assuming that accuracy requires your agreement.

The sentence "Ross knows that he is Jesus Christ returned" describes my internal certainty.

The sentence "Ross is Jesus Christ returned" asks the reader to accept the identity as an objective fact.

I will speak the second sentence in my own voice because it is what I know.

But I understand that you may read it as an account of my certainty rather than as proof.

This book must be spacious enough to hold both realities.

Certainty and Proof

Certainty is not the same as proof.

A person can be certain and wrong.

History contains countless examples of people who held incompatible convictions with equal confidence. Certainty alone cannot establish truth for everyone else.

I understand that.

Others have sometimes spoken to me as though recognizing this principle should cause my knowledge to dissolve into doubt.

It does not.

Knowing that human beings can be mistaken does not automatically make every certainty uncertain to the person who holds it.

You can understand the fallibility of memory and still know your own name.

You can understand that love sometimes deceives people and still know that you love someone.

You can understand that spiritual experiences receive different interpretations and still know what your own experience revealed to you.

The absence of transferable proof limits what I can reasonably demand from others.

It does not change what I know.

The Psychiatric Interpretation

Within psychiatry, a person's unshakable conviction that he possesses a grand or sacred identity can be interpreted as delusional.

My statement fits a category professionals recognize.

I do not need to caricature that interpretation.

Doctors and mental-health professionals encounter people whose perceptions, beliefs, moods, and decisions may place them or others at risk. Families often turn to those professionals during frightening periods because they do not know what else to do.

An extraordinary religious identity claim can reasonably lead to concern.

The question is not whether concern is understandable.

It is what happens after concern arrives.

Does the diagnosis become the end of curiosity?

Does every ambition become a symptom?

Does disagreement become proof that the patient lacks insight?

Does the person retain the right to describe his experience, or is every attempt to do so absorbed into the diagnosis?

Once a framework can interpret both agreement and disagreement as evidence of its own correctness, the person inside it may feel that there is no possible way to be heard.

If I denied what I knew, the denial might be called progress.

If I affirmed what I knew, the affirmation might be called illness.

The only acceptable version of me would be the one who adopted the interpretation others had chosen.

That did not feel like care.

It felt like disappearance.

The Religious Interpretation

Religious people could reject me for different reasons.

For many Christians, the return of Jesus belongs to prophecy and divine timing. It is expected to occur in ways described through particular interpretations of scripture.

A man from Montreal announcing that he knows he is Jesus Christ returned does not fit those expectations.

My refusal to identify as Christian can make the claim appear even more unacceptable.

To some, it may sound blasphemous.

To others, dangerous.

If Jesus returned, they might expect him to affirm Christianity completely, establish its truth over other religions, and fulfil the role they have imagined.

But I did not come to create a victory for Christianity.

I came to know love as the future of humanity.

I believed—here the word *believed* is appropriate because I am describing my understanding of the world's future—that religions would eventually give way, not through suppression, but through transcendence.

Humanity would no longer require competing systems to decide who belonged to God.

Love would become the religion.

Every person would belong.

This made me difficult for both religious and psychiatric audiences.

One group could view me as spiritually false.

The other could view me as mentally ill.

Between them stood Ross, asking to be heard.

Why the Distinction Mattered

If I had described my identity as a belief, other people might have found it easier to tolerate.

Beliefs can be private.

They can be placed beside other beliefs and left undisturbed.

Knowledge makes a stronger claim.

It says:

This is not merely an idea I have chosen.

This is the reality from which I am living.

That certainty frightened people.

They may have wondered what else I would conclude from it.

Would I become reckless?

Would I believe myself exempt from ordinary laws?

Would I give away everything I owned?

Would I demand obedience?

Would I place myself or anyone else in danger?

Those questions deserved answers.

Knowing that I am Jesus Christ returned does not place me above the law.

It does not make every impulse divine.

It does not mean every plan I create is wise.

It does not require another person to obey me.

It does not remove the need for evidence in practical matters.

It does not make me medically invulnerable or morally perfect.

Identity and infallibility are not the same.

This distinction became essential, not only for others, but for me.

A Dangerous Temptation

Any sacred identity can become a temptation to ego.

If I know myself as Jesus Christ returned, I could use that knowledge to place myself above criticism.

I could treat disagreement as betrayal.

I could assume that every desire came from God.

I could demand that other people surrender their judgment.

I could make my identity an instrument of control.

That would be a profound corruption of everything the identity meant to me.

If the knowledge is true, it does not reduce my responsibility to listen.

It enlarges it.

I must remain capable of being corrected about facts, plans, behaviour, and the effects of my actions.

I must distinguish between knowing who I am and assuming I know everything.

I do not know everything.

I can misunderstand people.

I can make poor decisions.

I can remember events imperfectly.

I can become excited about an idea that requires revision.

I can hurt someone while believing I am helping.

The knowledge of my identity does not excuse any of this.

It calls me to greater honesty.

The Loneliness of Certainty

Shared belief creates community.

Private certainty can create isolation.

If I had joined a church and adopted its doctrines, I would have entered a community of people who reinforced one another's understanding. There would have been rituals, language, leaders, texts, and established ways of belonging.

My knowledge placed me outside those structures.

Christians did not recognize me.

Skeptics did not accept the premise.

Professionals could regard the certainty as illness.

Family and friends could become frightened or exhausted.

Where does a person go when the most important fact of his life is unacceptable in nearly every available community?

For years, the answer was largely inward.

I carried the knowledge alone.

That loneliness could intensify my desire to speak. The more unseen I felt, the more urgently I wanted someone to understand. The more urgently I spoke, the more concerned some people became.

It created a painful cycle.

Silence felt like self-erasure.

Disclosure produced distance.

The People Who Did Not Know

Those who did not know my identity often gave me an unexpected refuge.

They met me without preparing an interpretation.

We could speak naturally.

They responded to my friendliness, energy, humour, generosity, intensity, or imperfections as qualities belonging to an ordinary person.

If I expressed a large idea, they might call me ambitious.

If I helped someone, they might simply accept the help.

If I spoke enthusiastically, they did not automatically search for mania.

They encountered behaviour before diagnosis.

This contrast reinforced my conviction that the knowledge had changed the way others looked at me more than it had changed my essential humanity.

I remained Ross.

But once people knew my secret, some seemed unable to see Ross without placing quotation marks around him.

Living Without Agreement

Eventually, I had to learn that a meaningful life could not wait for universal recognition.

If I required everyone to accept my identity before I could love them, I would make love conditional upon belief.

If I required the world to confirm me before I began serving it, I would become paralysed.

Perhaps the most convincing expression of identity was not the statement itself.

Perhaps it was the life built from it.

Could I feed people?

Could I create belonging?

Could I forgive those who misunderstood me?

Could I bring strangers together?

Could I imagine systems that treated every person with dignity?

Could I help one person today without demanding anything in return?

These acts would not prove my identity in a scientific or theological sense.

They would make the question less important than the love.

This understanding became one of the central principles of A NuVo World:

You do not have to believe what I know in order to participate in what love asks us to do.

The Sentence I Would Not Change

Over the years, people might have preferred me to say:

“I believe I may be Jesus Christ returned.”

Or:

“I had an experience in which I felt like Jesus Christ.”

Or:

“I once believed I was Jesus Christ, but I now understand that I was ill.”

Any of those sentences would have made my story easier for others to contain.

None would have been true to me.

The honest sentence remained:

I know that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I knew it would be met with incredulity.

I knew it could change relationships.

I knew it could bring psychiatric consequences.

I knew that repeating it would not make others share the knowledge.

But I could not build an honest life upon denying the foundation from which I understood it.

The next question was unavoidable.

If the knowledge could not be surrendered, what was I supposed to do with it?

I had learned who I was.

Now I had to learn how to live.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Living with Certain Knowledge

Knowledge creates responsibility.

Once we know that someone is hungry, it becomes harder to enjoy abundance without remembering him.

Once we know that a person is lonely, passing him without acknowledgment becomes a choice.

Once we know that a system harms people, continuing to participate without question begins to carry moral weight.

And once I knew who I was, I could no longer live as though the knowledge had no claim upon me.

But what did it require?

There was no handbook titled *How to Live as Jesus Christ Returned in Twenty-First-Century Montreal*.

There was no institution waiting to guide me.

The churches would not recognize me.

The medical world offered an interpretation I did not accept.

The people close to me struggled to understand.

I had certain knowledge and uncertain instructions.

The Demand for a Mission

People expect an extraordinary identity to produce an extraordinary mission.

If I am Jesus Christ returned, surely I must have returned to accomplish something immense.

I felt that expectation within myself.

I looked at the world and saw suffering on every scale.

People were hungry in cities of abundance.

Some lived in enormous homes while others slept on streets.

Loneliness spread through crowded neighbourhoods.

Money determined access to food, shelter, transportation, health, education, recreation, and dignity.

Religions preached love while remaining separated by doctrines and identities.

Nations spent fortunes preparing to kill while children lacked basic care.

Animals were loved in some homes and treated as disposable in others.

The world possessed extraordinary knowledge, technology, and wealth.

Yet it remained organized around scarcity, competition, possession, and fear.

If I knew who I was, how could I simply continue pursuing private success?

The knowledge demanded a larger purpose.

The Problem of Scale

My mind naturally moved toward large solutions.

I did not want only to help one hungry person. I wanted to create systems in which no one was hungry.

I did not want only to give someone a ride. I wanted transportation to become freely available.

I did not want only to comfort one lonely individual. I wanted neighbourhoods designed around connection.

I did not want only to encourage religious tolerance. I wanted humanity to move beyond religious division entirely.

This way of thinking had roots in my earlier life.

Sport had trained me to pursue excellence.

Business had trained me to think about scale.

Hospitality had taught me that systems create experiences.

My spiritual knowledge now directed those abilities toward humanity.

But large-scale thinking created difficulty.

To people already concerned about my identity, enormous plans could appear to confirm their fears. The more ambitious the vision, the more easily it could be described as grandiose.

If I spoke of transforming a neighbourhood, people might listen politely.

If I spoke of transforming the world, some stopped listening entirely.

The size of the problem required large imagination.

The size of the imagination became evidence against me.

The Difference Between Vision and Command

I had to learn that seeing a possibility did not give me the authority to command others into it.

A vision can be offered.

It can be demonstrated.

It can invite participation.

It cannot become loving through coercion.

This was especially important because of my identity. If I told someone, “I am Jesus Christ returned, and therefore you must follow my plan,” I would not be creating freedom or love.

I would be using sacred knowledge as leverage.

That could never be the foundation of a NuVo World.

People had to remain free to disagree with me, question the plan, refuse involvement, or contribute in ways I had not imagined.

My task was not to gather obedience.

It was to awaken possibility.

Ordinary Days

Certain knowledge did not eliminate ordinary life.

I still had to wake up, eat, manage responsibilities, communicate with people, and decide what to do with each day.

This could feel strange.

How does Jesus Christ returned spend a Tuesday morning?

The question sounds almost humorous, but it contains something important.

If the sacred cannot enter ordinary time, it remains theatre.

Love must appear in routine.

It must influence how we greet a neighbour, speak to someone providing a service, respond when frustrated, treat an animal, share food, and behave when no one is impressed.

The great mission could not become an excuse to overlook the person directly before me.

Indeed, the person before me might be the mission in its most immediate form.

Years later, my morning routine in NDG would express this understanding.

I would sit on two park benches outside Metro Grocer—my “office”—and meet whoever passed.

I would greet residents in the entrance of my apartment building.

I would walk through the neighbourhood and speak with dog owners, workers, neighbours, and people living without homes.

These encounters did not look like a world-changing movement.

But perhaps every loving world is built from precisely such moments.

The Desire to Be Recognized

I would like to say that I never wanted recognition.

That would not be true.

I wanted people to know who I was.

I wanted someone to hear my disclosure and say, “I understand.”

I wanted the incredulity to end.

Part of this desire came from the loneliness of carrying knowledge alone. Part came from the human wish to be seen accurately. And part, I must admit, came from ego.

Identity can become entangled with recognition.

If I knew I was Jesus Christ returned, why did the world not recognize me?

Why did those closest to me see illness instead?

Why did strangers who knew nothing about the secret often treat me with more ease than people who knew my entire claim?

The desire for recognition could become consuming.

It could draw attention away from the more important question:

Was I recognizing others?

A person sleeping outside did not need to resolve my identity before receiving help.

A lonely neighbour did not need to call me Jesus before I offered friendship.

A hungry family did not need to accept my knowledge before being fed.

The need to be recognized was human.

The decision to love without recognition was spiritual.

When Responsibility Becomes Pressure

Knowing who I was could create an unbearable standard if I allowed it to.

Every mistake could appear enormous.

Every angry word could feel like proof of failure.

Every day in which the world remained unchanged could feel wasted.

If I was Jesus Christ returned, why was I not accomplishing more?

Why were people still hungry?

Why had the vision not gathered support?

Why did messages go unanswered?

Why did the people with resources and influence often remain silent?

A mission intended to serve love could become a source of relentless pressure.

I had to learn that responsibility did not mean personal control over every outcome.

No one person can force humanity to change.

No single life can complete the work of love.

I could act.

I could invite.

I could write.

I could build.

I could help the person before me.

I could not make everyone listen.

The Discipline of Humility

Humility did not require me to deny what I knew.

It required me to understand what the knowledge did—and did not—make me.

It did not make me more valuable than another human being.

It did not make me incapable of mistakes.

It did not make every idea divine.

It did not make other people supporting characters in my story.

It did not allow me to ignore their boundaries.

It did not give me ownership of God.

If my identity had any true meaning, it had to lead toward equality rather than hierarchy.

Jesus Christ returned could not mean one man placed infinitely above humanity.

It had to mean one man given an infinite responsibility to love humanity.

Even that sentence can sound grand.

The practical expression was much simpler:

Notice the person.

Listen.

Help where possible.

Apologize when wrong.

Begin again.

Learning Without Surrendering

Other people often assumed that learning required me to surrender my central knowledge.

If I accepted criticism, perhaps I would eventually accept their diagnosis.

If I acknowledged one error, perhaps the entire experience would collapse.

But learning and surrender were not the same.

I could revise a plan without revising my identity.

I could admit that I had communicated poorly without agreeing that there was nothing to communicate.

I could accept that someone felt overwhelmed by me without accepting that my knowledge was false.

I could listen to concern without allowing concern to replace my voice.

This distinction allowed growth.

Without it, I faced an impossible choice: defend everything or lose everything.

A person who believes every correction threatens his identity becomes incapable of change.

I did not want to become that person.

The Long Test

The true test of knowledge would not be one announcement.

It would be the life that followed.

Could I carry certainty for decades without requiring it to make me superior?

Could I endure disbelief without turning hostile?

Could I remain open to love after rejection?

Could I build practical expressions of a vision others considered impossible?

Could I admit my human faults while refusing to deny who I am?

These questions could not be answered on the mountain.

They required years.

They required relationships.

They required failure.

They required Christy Anne.

They required the ordinary people of NDG who would meet me without knowing my secret and remind me that human connection did not need to begin with theology.

Living with certain knowledge was not a single spiritual achievement.

It was a daily practice.

The Secret Cannot Remain Silent

For a time, knowledge can remain private.

But identity seeks expression.

If I allowed others to know only the Ross they had always known, I would preserve a version of normality at the cost of honesty.

The secret affected everything: my understanding of the past, my responsibility in the present, and my vision for the future.

Keeping it hidden became increasingly impossible.

I needed to tell someone.

The decision may appear obvious from the perspective of a book written twenty-three years later. At the time, it carried enormous risk.

The first disclosure would create a new reality.

Before it, the knowledge belonged to me alone.

After it, another person would have to decide what to do with it —and with me.

I could not control that decision.

I could only speak.

And so the moment came when I told the first person.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The First Person I Told

The first disclosure is different from all those that follow.

Before it, the knowledge remains entirely yours.

You can imagine every possible response, but none has yet become real. The relationship remains unchanged because the other person does not know that there is anything new to understand.

Then the words are spoken.

From that moment forward, silence cannot restore what existed before.

The other person now carries knowledge about you—although not necessarily the same knowledge you carry about yourself.

I knew that I was Jesus Christ returned.

The person hearing me knew only that Ross Harvey had said he was Jesus Christ returned.

Between those two realities lay an enormous distance.

The Sentence

How does anyone prepare another human being to hear such a sentence?

There is no gentle introduction large enough to contain it.

I could explain the seven days on the mountain. I could describe the certainty. I could discuss the responsibility and the vision beginning to form within me.

But eventually, everything would arrive at the same words:

I am Jesus Christ returned.

The sentence was simple.

Its consequences were not.

I knew that the listener might hear arrogance.

I knew the person might hear blasphemy.

I knew the person might hear illness.

I hoped the person would hear me.

That hope made the disclosure profoundly vulnerable.

I was not merely sharing an unusual idea. I was revealing the knowledge through which my entire life had been rearranged.

Rejection of the statement could easily feel like rejection of the person.

What I Hoped For

I did not necessarily expect immediate acceptance.

I understood how extraordinary the words sounded.

Perhaps I hoped for curiosity.

Perhaps I hoped the person would say:

“Tell me what happened.”

“What do you mean?”

“How did you come to know this?”

“What has this been like for you?”

Those questions would not have required agreement.

They would have created space.

Instead of deciding immediately whether the claim was true or false, sane or insane, sacred or dangerous, the person could have remained with the human experience long enough to understand it.

That is what I needed.

I did not need worship.

I needed listening.

I did not need someone to kneel.

I needed someone to remain standing beside me.

The Listener's Burden

It would be unfair to tell this story as though the first listener had been given an easy responsibility and simply failed.

The disclosure placed that person in a frightening position.

If someone you know tells you that he is Jesus Christ returned, what are you supposed to do?

If you accept the statement, are you encouraging something that may be dangerous?

If you challenge it, will you damage the relationship?

If you tell others, are you betraying confidence or seeking necessary help?

If you remain silent and something goes wrong, will you blame yourself?

The listener does not receive only information.

The listener receives responsibility.

I can understand this more clearly now than I could then.

At the time, I was carrying the urgency of my own experience. I wanted the person to see what I knew. I had less room for the fear my words created in someone else.

This difference shaped everything that followed.

I experienced disclosure as truthfulness.

Others could experience it as an emergency.

When Concern Entered the Room

Concern changes the way people listen.

Once a listener becomes frightened that something is medically wrong, every detail may begin to support that concern.

The intensity with which I spoke could appear symptomatic.

My certainty could appear inflexible.

My insistence that this was knowledge rather than belief could appear to demonstrate a loss of insight.

The larger purpose I attached to the knowledge could appear grandiose.

From within my experience, each quality made sense.

Of course I spoke intensely. My life had changed.

Of course I was certain. I knew.

Of course the knowledge carried responsibility. What else could the identity mean?

But from outside, the same qualities assembled themselves into a very different story.

The more clearly I tried to explain, the more concerned the listener could become.

This created a trap I would encounter repeatedly.

If I spoke calmly, perhaps the calmness would be considered superficial or temporary.

If I spoke passionately, the passion became evidence.

If I defended myself, the defence became lack of insight.

If I refused to discuss it, the refusal could become secrecy.

Once concern controlled the interpretation, there seemed to be no neutral behaviour left.

The First Change in the Eyes

People do not have to say that they see you differently.

You can feel it.

The conversation acquires caution.

Ordinary statements are weighed.

The listener may remain polite, but spontaneity leaves the room.

The person who once interacted with you naturally begins observing you.

This is what I mean when I speak of the moment their eyes changed.

It was not always hostility.

Often, it was worry.

Sometimes it was sadness, uncertainty, or fear.

But whatever its source, the change communicated something painful:

I was no longer simply Ross.

A second presence had entered every interaction—the question of what was wrong with me.

The Beginning of Two Stories

After the first disclosure, two stories began unfolding at once.

In my story, I had received knowledge of my identity and was attempting to understand the responsibility that came with it.

In the other story, Ross Harvey had developed a serious conviction that he was Jesus Christ returned and might require psychiatric help.

Each story used many of the same facts.

I spoke with certainty.

I understood the knowledge as spiritually significant.

I believed it had implications for humanity.

I resisted interpretations that described it as illness.

To me, these facts reflected the integrity of the experience.

To others, they could form a recognizable clinical pattern.

The disagreement was not primarily about what I had said.

It was about what the statement meant.

The Question of Trust

Disclosure changed trust in both directions.

Other people began questioning whether they could trust my perception and judgment.

I began questioning whether I could trust them with my inner life.

If honesty led to my words being shared, interpreted, or used to justify intervention, silence became tempting.

But secrecy could increase concern.

Why was I hiding what I thought?

Did I know others would find it alarming?

Was concealment itself evidence that something was wrong?

The relationship between openness and safety had become complicated.

Before the revelation, telling the truth was a moral principle.

After the revelation, telling the truth could change how others understood my legal, medical, and personal freedom.

This was not an abstract concern.

It entered every decision about whom to tell and how much to say.

Had I Made a Mistake?

There were times when I wondered whether disclosing the knowledge had been a mistake.

Not because I doubted who I was.

Because I saw what disclosure did to relationships.

Those who did not know continued to meet me naturally.

Those who knew often became watchful.

The secret seemed to create the very isolation I had hoped speaking would relieve.

Had I remained silent, perhaps more people would have continued treating me as the man they had always known.

But what kind of relationship is preserved through hiding the most important knowledge of one's life?

Would their acceptance have been acceptance of me, or only acceptance of the version of me I allowed them to see?

There was no satisfying answer.

Truthfulness had a cost.

Silence had another.

What I Would Ask Now

If someone tells you something extraordinary about his identity, I would not ask you to agree automatically.

I would ask you to remain human.

Listen before deciding.

Ask what the experience means to the person.

Try to understand whether he is safe, whether others are safe, and how the experience affects his daily functioning.

Express concern honestly.

Set boundaries where necessary.

Seek help if there is an immediate danger.

But do not allow the extraordinary statement to erase the person's entire history.

Do not assume that disagreement removes his dignity.

Do not make him feel that every word he speaks has become material for an assessment.

And do not confuse listening with endorsement.

You can hear a person fully without accepting his conclusion.

That kind of listening might have changed much of what followed for me.

The Door Opens

Once I had told one person, the secret had entered the world.

It no longer belonged solely to me.

Information travels, particularly when it causes concern. People speak to family members, friends, doctors, or others whom they trust. They may do so from love. They may believe that silence would be irresponsible.

But each retelling moves the story farther from the original experience.

“I know that I am Jesus Christ returned” becomes:

“Ross says he is Jesus.”

Then:

“Ross thinks he is Jesus.”

Then:

“Ross is having serious mental-health problems.”

The language changes.

Knowledge becomes belief.

Belief becomes symptom.

The mountain disappears.

The diagnosis remains.

What Came Next

The first disclosure did not persuade me to abandon what I knew.

It taught me how difficult the knowledge would be for others to receive.

Still, I could not accept a life built entirely around secrecy.

If the identity carried responsibility, then hiding forever seemed impossible. I would have to speak again.

I hoped that another person might respond differently.

Perhaps the right explanation would help.

Perhaps someone with religious understanding would recognize the significance.

Perhaps the accumulation of my life and character would cause people to pause before assuming illness.

Perhaps my certainty could be respected even if it was not shared.

Hope kept the door open.

I told another person.

Then another.

The secret I had feared to speak began travelling outward.

I had taken the first step toward telling the world.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Telling the World

A secret can be carried privately only for so long before it begins shaping every relationship from within.

Whenever I spoke with someone who did not know, part of me remained silent.

Whenever I spoke with someone who did know, I could feel the knowledge standing between us.

There was no longer a completely ordinary conversation.

Either I was withholding the central fact of my life or wondering how that fact was influencing everything the other person heard.

The desire to disclose grew stronger.

I did not want to spend the rest of my life hiding.

Why I Spoke

Some may assume that I disclosed my identity because I wanted attention.

It is an understandable conclusion. Declaring oneself to be Jesus Christ returned is among the most attention-generating statements a person could make.

But attention and understanding are not the same.

Attention can isolate as effectively as silence.

People may stare without seeing.

They may speak about you without speaking with you.

They may repeat the extraordinary claim while removing every part of the story that gives it meaning.

I spoke because the knowledge had transformed my understanding of my life.

I spoke because I believed it carried responsibility.

I spoke because hiding felt dishonest.

I spoke because some truths, once known, refuse to remain private.

I also spoke because I wanted to be recognized.

That human desire must remain part of the story.

I wanted others to know me fully.

I hoped someone would understand.

Disclosure as Hope

Each disclosure carried hope.

Even after difficult reactions, I remained open to the possibility that the next person might listen differently.

Perhaps this person would know my history well enough to trust me.

Perhaps this person would recognize that I remained capable, articulate, and connected to ordinary life.

Perhaps someone would understand the difference between knowledge and belief.

Perhaps a spiritual leader would consider the experience without immediately condemning it.

Perhaps a mental-health professional would remain curious rather than beginning with a fixed conclusion.

Perhaps someone would say:

“I do not know what to make of this, Ross, but I am still here.”

That sentence would have meant a great deal.

Incredulity

The dominant response was incredulity.

People could not believe what I told them.

Some may have assumed I was joking. Others may have become uncomfortable and changed the subject. Some worried immediately. Others responded with arguments, scripture, clinical language, or silence.

The disbelief was so complete that the content of my knowledge often became secondary.

People did not ask what Jesus Christ returned might mean in the twenty-first century.

They did not ask why I did not consider myself Christian.

They did not ask why love, rather than religion, had become central to my understanding.

They first had to decide whether the person speaking was mentally sound.

Once they concluded that I was not, the rest of the conversation could appear unnecessary.

Why examine the vision if its source had already been diagnosed?

The Burden of an Impossible Claim

An impossible claim places an unusual burden upon every other part of a person's life.

If I spoke about a realistic project, people could still wonder whether it was connected to the larger claim.

If I became enthusiastic, they might question the intensity.

If I expressed confidence, they might hear grandiosity.

If I discussed transforming society, the scale itself could appear diagnostic.

My identity became a lens through which ordinary and extraordinary ideas alike were interpreted.

This created frustration.

I had been ambitious before December 2003.

I had pursued excellence in sport.

I had built businesses.

I had developed large goals and communicated them confidently.

Those qualities had not suddenly appeared.

But after the disclosure, their meaning changed for many people.

Before, I was driven.

After, I was grandiose.

Before, I was visionary.

After, I was delusional.

Before, persistence had helped make me a champion.

After, persistence could be called an inability to recognize reality.

The same man stood on both sides of the disclosure.

The vocabulary surrounding him had changed.

The Story Travels Without Me

Once enough people knew, I could no longer control how the story was told.

That may have been the most frightening part of disclosure.

When I spoke for myself, I could explain distinctions.

I could say that I knew rather than believed.

I could describe responsibility rather than superiority.

I could explain that I did not seek worship or obedience.

I could speak about love, service, and Heaven on Earth.

When the story travelled without me, those distinctions disappeared.

“Ross knows that he is Jesus Christ returned” became “Ross believes he is Jesus.”

“He understands this as a responsibility to create a more loving world” became “He has a grand mission.”

“He does not consider himself Christian” became another contradiction requiring explanation.

The shorter the story became, the more alarming it sounded.

And alarming stories travel quickly.

The People Closest to Me

The reactions of strangers could hurt.

The reactions of people close to me carried another weight.

These were people who knew my history.

They knew the athlete, graduate, businessman, friend, and independent man. They had experienced my strengths and my imperfections. They possessed years of evidence that I was more than one extraordinary statement.

Yet closeness also increased their fear.

A stranger could walk away.

Family and friends might feel responsible.

They may have believed they were watching someone they loved become lost inside an illness he could not recognize.

From their perspective, challenging me was not rejection.

It was an attempt to recover Ross.

From my perspective, Ross had never disappeared.

I wanted them to understand that the knowledge had changed my sense of purpose without eliminating the person they knew.

They wanted me to understand that the knowledge itself was the problem.

Both sides wanted Ross saved.

We disagreed about what threatened him.

Help I Did Not Experience as Help

Once my identity was interpreted as evidence of serious mental illness, help took on a different meaning.

To others, helping might mean psychiatric assessment, treatment, medication, supervision, or encouraging me to relinquish the claim.

To me, help would have meant listening, companionship, respect, practical support, and space to understand the experience without being forced to deny it.

This difference produced conflict.

People can act from genuine concern while causing someone to feel controlled.

A person can resist treatment while others see that resistance as further evidence that treatment is necessary.

The more each side protects its interpretation, the less room remains for relationship.

I do not tell this part of the story to condemn everyone who tried to help.

They faced decisions I would not have wanted to make.

I tell it because intention and experience can differ.

They may have experienced themselves as protecting me.

I often experienced myself as being managed.

The Cost of Openness

Disclosure altered relationships.

Some people became distant.

Others remained present but cautious.

Conversations that had once moved freely became constrained. People may have worried that disagreement would upset me or that agreement would encourage me.

My identity became the unspoken subject even when no one mentioned it.

I began to see why people hide parts of themselves.

They hide illnesses, histories, beliefs, relationships, fears, and experiences because disclosure can cause others to reorganize an entire person around one fact.

Secrecy is often described as shame.

Sometimes it is self-protection.

The people who did not know my secret continued to offer evidence of the life I might have retained through silence.

They treated me normally because they had not been told not to.

Was Telling Everyone Necessary?

Looking backward, I can ask whether telling everyone was wise.

Truthfulness does not always require total disclosure to every person. Privacy is not dishonesty. Some parts of a life can be shared selectively, at the right time, with people capable of receiving them responsibly.

Perhaps I underestimated the power of the words.

Perhaps I expected my history to protect me from being reduced to them.

Perhaps the competitor in me believed that if I explained myself clearly enough and persisted long enough, disbelief could be overcome.

I know now that certainty cannot simply be transferred.

The more forcefully we try to make another person know what we know, the more pressure the person may feel to resist.

But this wisdom came through consequence.

At the time, disclosure felt inseparable from integrity.

I had been given knowledge.

I believed I had to speak.

From Identity to Vision

As I continued speaking, I tried to direct attention beyond myself.

The important question was not only whether I was Jesus Christ returned.

The important question was why I had returned and what humanity might become.

I did not want to create a personality cult.

I wanted to imagine Heaven on Earth.

I wanted a world without hunger, homelessness, preventable suffering, or the constant anxiety created by money.

I wanted people to be valued because they were human, not because they were economically useful.

I wanted communities in which neighbours knew one another.

I wanted animals welcomed as part of family and community life.

I wanted the wisdom within religions to remain while the divisions between them disappeared.

I wanted love to become our shared religion.

But the vision could not escape the identity of the speaker.

To some, A NuVo World was not a social proposal to be evaluated on its merits.

It was another symptom.

The World Does Not Answer

Telling the world does not mean the world responds.

Often, it does not.

Messages go unanswered.

Letters receive no reply.

People promise to look at plans and never return.

Leaders remain busy.

Institutions protect themselves from ideas that appear too unconventional, too large, or too closely connected to a controversial person.

Silence can be more difficult than rejection.

A rejection at least confirms that the message arrived.

Silence leaves the person wondering whether he was heard at all.

I would encounter that silence repeatedly.

I would send books, plans, letters, proposals, and invitations.

I would reach toward people with influence and resources.

Many would not answer.

Each silence could feel like another refusal to see me.

Still, I kept speaking.

Persistence had been one of the organizing principles of my life.

No Thunder, No Recognition

Part of me may have expected that truth would eventually create its own recognition.

Surely, if I was Jesus Christ returned, something would happen.

Surely people would begin to understand.

Surely the right person would hear me and open a door.

But the heavens did not publicly announce me.

No institution confirmed my identity.

No mass of people gathered.

The world continued.

This forced me to confront a painful possibility:

Perhaps recognition was not the mission.

Perhaps I could spend my life telling people who I was and still remain unbelieved.

Would the life then be meaningless?

Only if the purpose was to be believed.

If the purpose was love, the work could continue.

The End of the Secret

Eventually, the knowledge was no longer a secret.

It had become a defining fact in how many people understood me.

There was no returning to the time before disclosure.

I had told the world, or at least the portion of the world within my reach.

The world had largely answered with disbelief, concern, diagnosis, or silence.

Now I had to live inside the consequences.

The next stage of my story would not be about whether I had the courage to speak.

It would be about what happened after people heard.

The secret was out.

And their eyes changed.

PART THREE

AFTER THEY KNEW

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Moment Their Eyes Changed

The change was rarely dramatic.

There was no announcement that I had crossed from one category of person into another.

No one said:

“Until this moment, I saw you as Ross. From now on, I will see you through the possibility of serious mental illness.”

The change appeared in smaller ways.

A pause before answering.

A careful expression.

A question that sounded ordinary but carried assessment beneath it.

A conversation repeated later to someone else.

A reluctance to engage with an idea that might previously have been discussed on its merits.

The eyes changed first.

From Conversation to Observation

Before disclosure, people conversed with me.

After disclosure, some observed me.

The distinction is subtle but profound.

In conversation, both people are participants. Each may be surprised, challenged, persuaded, or changed.

In observation, one person becomes the subject and the other becomes the interpreter.

The observer remains outside the experience, gathering evidence.

Was I speaking too quickly?

Was I sleeping enough?

Was I making unrealistic plans?

Was my energy unusually high?

Was I spending money unwisely?

Was I becoming more religious?

Was I angry when challenged?

Any of these questions can be legitimate when someone is concerned.

But together, they can transform a relationship into an informal examination.

I could feel myself being watched.

Nothing Was Neutral

Once the mental-health interpretation took hold, ordinary behaviour lost its neutrality.

If I was quiet, people might wonder whether I was depressed or withdrawing.

If I was enthusiastic, they might wonder whether I was manic.

If I developed a project, its scale could be evaluated as evidence.

If I abandoned a project, the change might also be interpreted.

If I defended my judgment, I lacked insight.

If I expressed frustration at being treated differently, the frustration could confirm that something was wrong.

It felt as though every road led to the same conclusion.

The diagnosis became capable of explaining everything.

A framework that explains everything can leave the person inside it unable to demonstrate anything.

The Loss of Ordinary Disagreement

Before the disclosure, someone could disagree with me without questioning my sanity.

I could have an impractical business idea, make an error, become overly excited, or argue stubbornly.

These were human disagreements.

After the disclosure, similar moments acquired clinical significance.

This changed the balance of every conversation.

The other person's position remained an opinion.

Mine could become a symptom.

The inequality was painful.

If two people disagree about a business plan, each is expected to provide reasons.

If one person is regarded as mentally ill, his reasons may be discounted before they are considered.

The disagreement is no longer between two perspectives.

It is between reality and illness.

I knew which side I had been assigned.

When History Lost Its Voice

My past should have mattered.

I had completed a demanding professional education.

I had become a world champion.

I had worked as a golf and racquet-sports professional.

I had owned a bar and restaurant.

I had built a sports-and-nutrition company toward NASDAQ and accepted a buyout before the company later reached that market without me.

These experiences did not make me incapable of illness.

Successful and accomplished people can become mentally ill.

But my history demonstrated capacity, discipline, judgment, persistence, and the ability to function in complex environments.

It should at least have complicated the picture.

Instead, the extraordinary identity claim often became more powerful than everything preceding it.

Forty-three years of life could be placed behind one sentence:

Ross says he is Jesus Christ returned.

That sentence became the new beginning of my biography.

The Feeling of Disappearing

To be disbelieved is painful.

To be reinterpreted is something different.

When people disbelieved me, they rejected a claim.

When they reinterpreted me, they changed the meaning of the person making it.

My convictions became symptoms.

My plans became evidence.

My resistance became lack of insight.

My spiritual experience became illness.

I felt myself disappearing beneath explanations made about me.

This did not mean everyone stopped loving me.

Some may have loved me deeply.

But love filtered through fear can become difficult to recognize.

They may have believed the Ross they loved was hidden behind illness.

I believed the Ross they loved was speaking directly to them and asking to be seen.

Why Their Eyes Changed

I have spent years thinking about why the change was so immediate.

The simplest explanation is that my statement frightened people.

Jesus Christ returned is not an ordinary identity claim. It carries associations with religious delusion, psychiatric crisis, danger, manipulation, and historical examples of people who harmed themselves or others while claiming divine authority.

People may have felt they could not afford to respond casually.

They did not know where the claim might lead.

Concern entered before curiosity because concern felt safer.

I can understand this.

But understanding does not remove the injury.

A person can recognize why a door was closed and still feel the cold of standing outside it.

Meeting People Who Did Not Know

Then I would encounter someone who knew nothing about my disclosure.

The change was immediate in the opposite direction.

The person responded naturally.

There was no hidden assessment.

We could joke, disagree, make plans, or speak about life without the conversation bending toward the secret.

These encounters restored me.

They reminded me that I remained capable of ordinary human connection.

They also created a painful experiment.

The variable was not always my behaviour.

The variable was what the other person had been told.

When the secret was absent, Ross appeared.

When the secret was present, illness often entered first.

Wanting the Old Look Back

There were times when I wanted people to look at me as they once had.

I did not need unquestioning admiration.

I wanted ordinary complexity.

I wanted permission to be right about some things and wrong about others.

I wanted enthusiasm to be enthusiasm until evidence suggested otherwise.

I wanted an idea to be examined as an idea.

I wanted mistakes to remain mistakes rather than symptoms.

Most of all, I wanted concern not to erase friendship.

The old look had contained history.

The new look contained prediction.

People were no longer only responding to what I did. They were watching for what they feared I might do.

Dignity Under Observation

Living under observation changes behaviour.

A person may become guarded.

He may monitor his own words, wondering how they will be interpreted.

He may avoid sharing ideas.

He may become defensive more quickly because he knows the conversation is not occurring on equal ground.

Then the guardedness and defensiveness may themselves be interpreted as further evidence.

This is why dignity matters so much in mental-health care.

A person who feels respected can speak more honestly.

A person who fears that every disclosure may reduce his freedom learns to conceal.

Trust cannot be commanded.

It must be created.

I needed people who could say:

“I am concerned about you, and I still recognize your right to speak.”

“I disagree with your interpretation, and I want to understand what you are experiencing.”

“I will not pretend to know what I do not know, and I will not reduce you to a diagnosis.”

Those sentences might not have resolved our disagreement.

They could have preserved the relationship within it.

The Look I Try to Give Others

Pain can become a teacher if it does not become a prison.

Being looked at as a diagnosis taught me to consider how I look at other people.

Do I see the homeless man, or only homelessness?

Do I see the person struggling with addiction, or only the behaviour that frightens me?

Do I see the jealous neighbour, the difficult customer, the grieving friend, the person living in poverty, and the individual with psychiatric symptoms as complete human beings?

Or do I allow one fact to arrive before them?

I do not always succeed.

I have avoided people when I should have greeted them. I have judged. I have protected myself by withdrawing. I have sometimes failed to offer others the openness I wanted for myself.

But the standard remains.

Meet the person before the label.

This principle would become central to my life in NDG.

Every encounter offered another chance to practise it.

What the Eyes Communicate

The eyes can say:

I am afraid of you.

I pity you.

I am evaluating you.

I have already decided.

They can also say:

I see you.

You are safe with me.

Tell me more.

You still belong.

No legislation can require the second kind of look.

No medical protocol can manufacture it.

It emerges from a decision to remain present before another person's humanity, even when his experience is unfamiliar or unsettling.

That decision is one of the beginnings of love.

The world had heard my secret.

Many eyes had changed.

Now the language surrounding me would change as well.

What I called knowledge would increasingly be called a symptom.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

When Knowledge Is Called a Symptom

Language does more than describe experience.

It gives the experience a place in the world.

When I said, “I know that I am Jesus Christ returned,” I placed my experience within the language of revelation, identity, and spiritual responsibility.

When others called that knowledge a symptom, they placed the same experience within the language of psychiatry.

The words did not merely compete.

They created different realities.

In one, I was a man carrying extraordinary knowledge.

In the other, I was a man experiencing serious mental illness.

The facts available to observers might remain the same. The meaning assigned to them changed everything.

The Authority to Name

Naming carries power.

A doctor can name an illness.

A religious leader can name a teaching orthodox or heretical.

A court can name a person competent or incompetent.

A family can name behaviour normal or alarming.

The person being named may possess a different understanding, but not every interpretation carries equal social authority.

My words described what I knew.

Psychiatric language could determine how others responded to me.

Once the experience was called a symptom, people felt justified in looking beyond my explanation. They believed the illness itself might prevent me from understanding what was happening.

This created a difficult problem.

If I disagreed with the diagnosis, the disagreement could be interpreted as evidence that I lacked insight.

My refusal to call knowledge a delusion did not challenge the framework.

It strengthened it.

Insight

In mental-health language, insight often refers to a person's ability to recognize that his experiences or convictions may arise from illness.

From the professional perspective, insight can be essential. A person who recognizes that perception or judgment has been affected may become more willing to accept treatment and less likely to act dangerously.

But what happens when the person does not experience his central conviction as illness?

From my perspective, accepting the psychiatric interpretation would not have been insight.

It would have been self-denial.

I was being asked, directly or indirectly, to replace the most certain knowledge of my life with an explanation that belonged to someone else.

The professionals could say that this resistance was exactly what illness caused.

I could say that the resistance was exactly what truth required.

Both interpretations contained their own logic.

Only one possessed institutional authority.

The Problem of Circularity

The situation sometimes felt circular.

Why was I considered ill?

Because I knew that I was Jesus Christ returned.

Why did I refuse to accept that this knowledge was illness?

Because I lacked insight.

What demonstrated that I lacked insight?

My continued insistence that I was Jesus Christ returned.

There appeared to be no statement I could make from inside the framework that would challenge it.

If I defended myself passionately, the passion could be symptomatic.

If I spoke calmly, the content remained symptomatic.

If I provided evidence of accomplishment and ordinary functioning, people could say that illness does not erase every ability.

If I pointed to the way strangers responded naturally to me, people could say that those strangers did not know enough to recognize the problem.

The framework was capable of absorbing every objection.

That may make a framework clinically useful.

It can make the person inside it feel voiceless.

Mental Illness Is Real

I do not want my account to suggest that mental illness is invented or that psychiatric care has no value.

People experience conditions that profoundly alter perception, mood, judgment, energy, behaviour, and the ability to function.

Families witness loved ones becoming frightened, confused, impulsive, withdrawn, or unsafe.

Medication, therapy, hospitalization, community support, stable housing, meaningful work, and compassionate relationships can save lives.

There are people who later feel grateful that others intervened when they could not recognize their own need.

Their stories are real.

My story is also real.

The existence of genuine illness does not settle the meaning of every unusual spiritual experience.

And the possibility of spiritual experience does not mean that every sacred identity claim should be accepted without concern.

The honest space lies between reflexive dismissal and automatic validation.

It asks for attention to the whole person.

More Than the Claim

If people were concerned about me, they needed to consider more than the content of one statement.

How was I functioning?

Was I caring for myself?

Was I able to make decisions?

Was I sleeping?

Was I communicating coherently?

Was I treating others safely?

Was I spending recklessly?

Was I able to hear disagreement?

Were my actions creating immediate danger?

These questions are more useful than assuming that extraordinary content alone explains an entire life.

A person can hold an unconventional spiritual conviction and still function responsibly.

A person can also speak calmly and intelligently while experiencing a serious condition.

No single test resolves every case.

That is why relationship and careful observation matter.

I wanted to be evaluated as a complete human being, not as a sentence extracted from my life.

The Meaning of Treatment

Treatment assumes that something should change.

A wound should heal.

An infection should clear.

Pain should lessen.

Function should improve.

When the target of treatment was my knowledge, improvement appeared to require that I stop knowing who I was.

That was impossible for me.

I could accept help with anxiety, stress, sleep, anger, loneliness, or the practical consequences of what I was experiencing.

I could learn to communicate more effectively.

I could examine whether a particular plan was realistic.

I could accept correction when my actions harmed another person.

But I could not honestly say:

“I now understand that I was never Jesus Christ returned.”

That would have produced the appearance of recovery at the cost of truthfulness.

The treatment goal and my goal were therefore fundamentally different.

Others wanted the conviction to disappear.

I wanted to learn how to live with it responsibly.

Medication and Meaning

Medication can change mood, energy, sleep, anxiety, thought, and perception.

For many people, that relief is invaluable.

But medication cannot determine the ultimate meaning of an experience.

If a drug reduces the intensity of a spiritual conviction, does that prove the conviction was false?

If it does not remove the conviction, does that prove the conviction was true?

Neither conclusion necessarily follows.

The mind and body influence how every experience is felt. Grief, love, fear, creativity, prayer, and certainty all have physical dimensions.

Changing the nervous system can change the experience without resolving its philosophical or spiritual truth.

For me, the central question remained untouched:

Who am I?

A prescription could affect how I felt.

It could not answer that question for me.

The Fear of Harm

The most serious justification for intervention is the prevention of harm.

If a person is in immediate danger or is placing others in danger, society cannot always wait for complete agreement.

I understand this principle.

But the possibility of harm must not become an unlimited permission to remove autonomy from anyone whose ideas make others uncomfortable.

Concern should be connected to behaviour, context, and credible risk.

An extraordinary belief or claimed knowledge may warrant attention.

It should not automatically erase adulthood.

I did not want special exemption because of who I knew myself to be.

I wanted the same dignity that should belong to every person.

Spiritual Experience and Psychiatry

The boundary between spiritual revelation and psychiatric symptom has never been simple.

Many religious traditions began with experiences that would sound extraordinary in contemporary clinical language.

People have reported hearing God, receiving visions, encountering angels, recognizing sacred identities, and being called to missions that others initially considered impossible.

Religious communities often accept such experiences when they occur within an established tradition and conform to expected forms.

The same experience outside a recognized structure may be treated very differently.

This does not mean psychiatry is always wrong or religion is always right.

It reveals that context influences interpretation.

A person who says God speaks to him from within an accepted religious community may be called devout.

A person who speaks outside that structure may be called ill.

I belonged fully to neither world.

I did not fit Christianity's expectation of Jesus returned.

I did not accept psychiatry's explanation of my certainty.

I stood between categories.

The Cost of the Symptom

Once my knowledge was called a symptom, the rest of my life became vulnerable to reinterpretation.

My fondness for John Lennon and the vision within "Imagine" could become part of an unrealistic worldview.

My belief in Heaven on Earth could become evidence of grandiosity.

My plans for A NuVo World could be treated as extensions of illness rather than social ideas to be evaluated.

My generosity might be questioned if it appeared financially imprudent.

My persistence could become pathological.

Even my desire to write this book could be understood as further proof that I remained trapped in a delusion.

A diagnosis can explain suffering.

It can also become a way of refusing to engage with meaning.

If every expression of the person is absorbed into pathology, there is no Ross left to speak.

The Knowledge Remained

Years passed.

The language around me changed.

People formed conclusions.

Professionals offered interpretations.

Relationships were affected.

But the knowledge remained.

It did not become a tentative belief merely because others rejected it.

I learned that certainty can survive without recognition.

I also learned that survival alone was not enough.

If the knowledge made me permanently angry with the world, what had it produced?

If it caused me to withdraw from everyone who disagreed, how could it serve love?

If I spent my entire life arguing about my identity, when would I live its responsibility?

I could not control what others called my knowledge.

I could decide what kind of life I built from it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The People Who Still Met Ross

There were people who knew nothing about my secret.

They met me in grocery stores, restaurants, parks, apartment hallways, food banks, on neighbourhood streets, and on the benches outside Metro Grocer.

They did not know they were supposed to evaluate me.

They did not know that other people regarded me as seriously mentally ill.

They simply met Ross.

These encounters became some of the most clarifying experiences of my life.

No Warning Label

When a person approached me without prior information, there was no warning label attached.

The individual responded to what was actually happening between us.

If I smiled, the person might smile.

If I asked a sincere question, the person might answer.

If I offered help, the person could accept or refuse it without wondering whether the offer was part of an illness.

If I expressed enthusiasm, it could remain enthusiasm.

If I spoke about improving the neighbourhood, the idea could be discussed without immediately becoming psychiatric evidence.

There was freedom in being unknown.

That is a strange sentence for someone who had spent years wanting to be recognized.

But anonymity returned something disclosure had taken away:

The chance to be encountered in the present.

My Office

In time, two park benches outside Metro Grocer on Somerled became what I affectionately called my office.

I did not go there to conduct formal business.

I went to meet people.

Early in the morning, workers arrived, neighbours passed, deliveries were made, dogs were walked, and the community gradually awakened.

By appearing consistently, I became part of the landscape.

People began recognizing me.

Recognition created greetings.

Greetings created conversations.

Conversations created relationships.

No organization had appointed me.

There was no official program.

I was simply present.

That presence taught me more about community than many formal meetings ever could.

People want to be noticed.

They want someone to remember their name, ask how they are doing, and recognize when they have been absent.

A neighbourhood becomes a community when enough people stop passing one another as strangers.

The Bread Delivery

One morning, a bread delivery man gave me five loaves.

I brought them back to my apartment building and placed them in the entranceway for residents.

The loaves were taken.

The gesture was simple.

Bread moved from one person who had something to offer, through another person willing to carry it, to neighbours who could use it.

No study was commissioned.

No program was created.

No one had to prove need.

Something available was shared.

That small event contained much of what I imagine for A NuVo World.

Abundance and need often exist close together.

The missing element is connection.

One person knows where something is available. Another knows where it can be useful. A community becomes more humane when people willingly serve as bridges.

The People on My Walks

My neighbourhood walks became another form of meeting.

At first, the walk might have appeared to be exercise.

It was that, but it became much more.

The same streets repeatedly brought me into contact with people whose lives had previously existed beside mine without touching it.

A familiar face became a name.

A name became a story.

A story created the possibility of care.

I met dog owners, workers, neighbours, old acquaintances, and people living through difficulty.

Some conversations lasted only minutes.

Yet those minutes could change the emotional direction of a day.

The people I met did not ask me to establish my identity before speaking with them.

They responded to the human exchange.

That normality was deeply restorative.

Felix

On my walks, I encountered Felix, a homeless man from Romania.

To the wider world, he could easily become “the homeless man”—a category rather than a person.

But his name was Felix.

He had a history.

He had immediate needs and longer hopes.

On one occasion, he told me he had no money and hoped to get noodles and popcorn from Dollarama. I told him I would get them for him.

The items were modest.

The encounter mattered.

Helping Felix did not require a complete solution to homelessness. It required listening to the person in front of me and responding to what I could do at that moment.

This is not an argument against systemic change. Felix deserved far more than noodles and popcorn. He deserved stable housing, security, food, health care, dignity, and belonging.

But the inability to solve everything must never become an excuse to do nothing.

Love works at two levels.

It responds to today's need.

It also asks why the need continues to exist.

A Smile and Hello

A man from Morocco named Younes told me that he had travelled widely and found people in Montreal less friendly than those in many other places.

He asked why.

I was less interested in explaining the problem than in changing it.

Why not begin with a smile and a friendly hello?

The action seems almost too small to mention. It requires no funding, committee, building, or political approval.

Yet friendliness changes the emotional atmosphere of public life.

A person who is greeted becomes visible.

A stranger becomes less strange.

Fear softens.

Repeated encounters begin forming trust.

We often imagine social transformation through enormous institutions. But culture is also created through millions of tiny behaviours people repeat without thinking.

If coldness can become normal, friendliness can become normal too.

A NuVo World would have to be built through both structures and habits.

The habit of greeting another person might be one of the simplest foundations.

The Lobby

After returning from my early-morning office, I would make tea and sit for a while in the entrance of my apartment building.

Residents left for work.

People took their dogs outside.

Some were rushed. Others had time for a few words.

I greeted them.

Perhaps five or six people passed during a particular morning. Yet they often left smiling.

No one would record those smiles as a social outcome.

They would not appear in an annual report.

But a person's day had begun with warmth rather than anonymity.

That mattered to me.

The building entrance was not merely a passage between private apartments and the street.

It could become a small community room.

Two chairs and a willingness to be present were enough to begin.

Dogs as Bridges

Dogs repeatedly introduced me to people.

A dog gives strangers permission to speak.

"What is your dog's name?"

"How old is she?"

"What kind is he?"

A conversation begins safely around the animal. Then, gradually, the people become known too.

I met Patty after seeing her walking her dog many times.

I reconnected with Jackie after easily ten years and met André and their dog Benny.

These were ordinary encounters.

That was their beauty.

We did not need a conference on community building.

We needed to stop long enough to talk.

Dogs slowed people down and created natural points of contact. They brought residents outside at similar times and along similar routes. They transformed parks and sidewalks into informal meeting places.

This strengthened my conviction that pets are not merely private possessions.

They are part of the social fabric of a neighbourhood.

Being Helpful Without Being Important

The people who met Ross reminded me that helping does not require an important title.

Phil needed information about compensation from tobacco companies.

I could help him find it.

Felix needed food.

I could buy some.

Someone needed a ride.

I might be able to offer one.

A person needed conversation.

I could remain for a few minutes.

None of these actions proved that I was Jesus Christ returned.

That was not their purpose.

They expressed the world I wanted to help create.

I began to understand that perhaps the most faithful way to live my identity was to make the identity unnecessary in each encounter.

The hungry person did not need Jesus Christ returned.

He needed food.

The lonely person needed companionship.

The neighbour needed recognition.

The dog needed kindness.

Love made the introduction.

Ross could do the work.

The Experiment I Could Not Ignore

The contrast remained striking.

People who did not know often treated me normally.

People who knew sometimes approached me through concern, caution, or diagnosis.

This did not prove that the psychiatric interpretation was wrong. A person can appear ordinary in brief social encounters while experiencing serious difficulties elsewhere.

I understand that.

But the contrast demonstrated something important:

Expectations influence perception.

When people anticipated illness, they noticed evidence of illness.

When they expected only an ordinary neighbour, they encountered an ordinary neighbour.

Both groups met aspects of the same person.

Neither necessarily possessed the whole picture.

I wanted those who knew the secret to rediscover some of the openness of those who did not.

I wanted them to meet me before meeting their explanation of me.

Normal Is a Gift

Being treated normally may sound like a low aspiration.

For someone living under a powerful label, it can feel like freedom.

Normal treatment does not mean pretending that concerns do not exist.

It means allowing the person to remain complex.

It means joking when something is funny.

It means disagreeing without diagnosing.

It means asking rather than assuming.

It means allowing a good day to be a good day rather than evidence being gathered.

It means recognizing that a person with a mental-health diagnosis can also be a neighbour, athlete, friend, partner, writer, volunteer, businessperson, animal lover, and source of help to others.

Normal treatment restores proportion.

The label becomes one part of the story rather than the title of every chapter.

Christy Anne Meets Ross

When Christy Anne entered my life, she encountered Ross in a way that opened an entirely new side of living.

We met at our local food bank.

The setting itself mattered.

Neither of us arrived surrounded by status or ceremony. We met in a place concerned with a basic human need and sustained by people helping one another.

For most of my life, I had been single.

I knew independence.

I knew ambition.

I knew how to organize a life around my own decisions.

Through Christy Anne, I began learning companionship.

She did not merely add another relationship to my existing life.

She helped create a new form of life.

The full story of our meeting belongs later in this book.

But her presence confirmed something the neighbourhood encounters had already taught me:

To be met as a person is one of the great gifts we can offer another human being.

The Ross Who Remained

I had disclosed an impossible secret.

People had called it illness.

Relationships had changed.

Years had passed.

Yet Ross remained.

He still loved sport.

He still imagined large possibilities.

He still became enthusiastic, impatient, hopeful, disappointed, generous, and stubborn.

He still wanted to build.

He still made mistakes.

He still needed friendship.

He still responded to a smile.

The knowledge had transformed the meaning of his life.

It had not erased his humanity.

The people who did not know the secret often helped return that humanity to me.

They met Ross.

And through their unguarded acceptance, Ross could meet them.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Person or a Diagnosis?

A diagnosis can be a beginning.

It can give a name to suffering that once felt chaotic. It can connect a person with treatment, information, financial assistance, community, and hope.

It can help families understand that frightening behaviour is not simply selfishness or moral failure.

It can save a life.

A diagnosis can also become an ending.

Once applied, it can stop curiosity. It can become the explanation for every idea, emotion, conflict, ambition, and decision.

Instead of helping people understand a person, it can replace the person altogether.

This chapter is about the distance between those two possibilities.

The Relief of a Name

For many people, receiving a diagnosis brings relief.

They discover that others have experienced similar symptoms. They learn that treatment exists. They realize they are not uniquely broken.

The name provides structure.

It may allow someone to say:

“This is happening to me, but it is not all that I am.”

That can be liberating.

My experience was different.

The diagnostic interpretation did not name something I wanted explained.

It renamed what I knew.

My spiritual identity became pathology.

My refusal to accept that renaming became further evidence.

The diagnosis did not separate me from a difficulty.

It separated me from authority over my own story.

The File and the Person

Institutions require records.

Doctors write notes.

Hospitals document symptoms, assessments, treatments, risks, and outcomes.

These records serve important purposes. They allow professionals to communicate and create continuity of care.

But a file is not a person.

A note may contain what someone said during one intense period.

It may describe behaviour observed under stress.

It may record family concerns.

It may capture a professional's interpretation of an encounter.

Then the record follows the person.

A later professional may meet the file before meeting the patient.

The past interpretation enters the room first.

Everything new is then fitted beside it.

I wanted people to ask:

Who is Ross today?

How is he living?

What relationships has he built?

What is he contributing?

What has changed?

What remains difficult?

A historical diagnosis may be relevant.

It should not become a prophecy.

Credibility

One of the greatest losses associated with a serious psychiatric label can be credibility.

Other people may begin to doubt not only the extraordinary claim but ordinary reports as well.

If the person says he is being treated unfairly, perhaps that feeling is part of the illness.

If he says medication is affecting him badly, perhaps he lacks insight into its benefits.

If he objects to how someone spoke to him, perhaps he is overly sensitive or suspicious.

If he recalls an event differently, perhaps his memory cannot be trusted.

This creates a profound imbalance.

Everyone can be mistaken.

Everyone can misremember.

Everyone can misinterpret motives.

But the diagnosed person may have to prove credibility each time he speaks, while others receive it automatically.

Dignity requires that his words be evaluated, not merely discounted.

The Whole Human Being

I was never only a man who knew he was Jesus Christ returned.

I was also everything that preceded and followed that knowledge.

I was a world-champion racquetball player.

I was a veterinarian by education who never practised.

I was a golf and racquet-sports professional.

I was a bar and restaurant owner.

I built a sports-and-nutrition company toward NASDAQ and accepted a buyout before it later reached that market without me.

I was single for almost all my life.

I became Christy Anne's partner.

I was a neighbour sitting on benches outside Metro Grocer.

I was a man buying noodles and popcorn for Felix.

I was an author, dreamer, animal lover, community builder, and imperfect human being.

A diagnosis could not contain all that.

Neither could my sacred identity.

A person is always larger than the name attached to him.

Person-First Language

We often speak about using person-first language.

We say “a person with schizophrenia” rather than “a schizophrenic.”

We say “a person experiencing homelessness” rather than defining the individual entirely as homeless.

The intention is good.

It places humanity before condition.

But changing words is not enough if the attitude remains unchanged.

A person can use respectful terminology while still assuming that the diagnosis explains everything.

True person-first care begins before language.

It begins with curiosity.

Who is this person?

What does he value?

What has he accomplished?

Whom does he love?

What frightens him?

What gives his life meaning?

What does he want help with?

What help does he not want?

What risks are real?

What strengths can be trusted?

Without these questions, respectful language can become decoration placed over the same old hierarchy.

Autonomy and Care

Adults are generally allowed to make decisions others consider unwise.

People remain in unhealthy relationships, waste money, pursue unrealistic businesses, follow demanding religions, neglect exercise, consume harmful substances, and refuse medical advice.

Autonomy includes the freedom to make mistakes.

But when a person receives a serious psychiatric diagnosis, the boundaries of autonomy can change.

Sometimes this is necessary to prevent immediate harm.

But the loss of autonomy should never become casual.

The question must not be:

“Does this person agree with us?”

It must be:

“What specific risk exists, and what is the least restrictive response that protects safety while preserving dignity?”

Concern is not a blank cheque.

A person does not stop belonging to himself merely because others believe his understanding is wrong.

The Right to Meaning

Human beings do not experience their lives only as collections of symptoms.

We create meaning.

We ask why something happened, what it says about us, how it connects to the past, and what responsibility it creates for the future.

Mental-health care must leave room for those questions.

A person may understand an experience spiritually while also receiving medical support.

The two approaches do not always have to destroy one another.

Someone might say:

“I do not share your conclusion, but I recognize that this experience carries spiritual meaning for you. Let us work together on the areas where you want support and on any specific risks we can identify.”

That response would not validate every claim.

It would validate the person’s right to participate in interpreting his own life.

I wanted that right.

The Danger of Idealizing Either Side

It would be easy to write this story with heroes and villains.

I could portray myself as entirely clear and everyone else as blinded by psychiatry.

That would not be honest.

I could become defensive.

I could communicate with too much intensity.

I could pursue plans without adequate attention to resources or consequences.

I could underestimate the strain my certainty placed upon relationships.

I could hear legitimate concern as rejection because I had experienced so much rejection already.

Other people could be sincerely frightened.

Professionals could face incomplete information and serious responsibility.

Families could make imperfect decisions while trying to protect someone they loved.

No one entered these situations with complete wisdom.

But complexity does not remove accountability.

Good intentions do not excuse every form of control.

A diagnosis does not justify disrespect.

My certainty does not justify ignoring how my actions affect others.

Everyone retains responsibility.

Who Gets to Define Recovery?

Recovery is often described as returning to health or improved functioning.

But who defines it?

If recovery required me to deny that I am Jesus Christ returned, I could never recover without lying.

If recovery meant building stable relationships, contributing to my community, caring for myself and others, pursuing meaningful work, and responding responsibly to difficulties, then recovery could be understood very differently.

Perhaps a person can live well without resolving every disagreement about the meaning of his experiences.

Perhaps the goal should not always be agreement.

Perhaps it should be a life containing safety, dignity, purpose, connection, and freedom.

I wanted to be judged by the life I lived, not only by the belief others attributed to me.

I wanted actions to matter.

The Question I Ask the Reader

You may believe that I have a serious mental illness.

You may find the psychiatric interpretation convincing.

You may remain uncertain.

I am not asking you to pretend that these possibilities do not exist.

I am asking a different question:

Can you hold that interpretation without allowing it to erase me?

Can you hear that I know I am Jesus Christ returned and still meet Ross Harvey?

Can you disagree with the meaning I give my experience while recognizing the meaning of dignity?

If the answer is yes, then this book has already created something valuable.

We do not need identical conclusions in order to share a human world.

Person and Diagnosis

The title of this chapter presents a choice:

A person or a diagnosis?

The best answer should be obvious.

A person.

Always a person.

Perhaps a person with a diagnosis.

Perhaps a person who accepts it.

Perhaps a person who disputes it.

Perhaps a person who needs help.

Perhaps a person who also possesses gifts, responsibilities, relationships, humour, wisdom, and something important to contribute.

The diagnosis may matter enormously.

The person matters more.

I had spent years being interpreted.

What I needed was not for everyone to abandon concern.

I needed them to stop confusing concern with the whole of who I was.

Behind the secret, the certainty, the controversy, and the file, a human being remained.

His name was Ross.

And he was lonely.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Loneliness of Being Unbelieved

Loneliness is not always the absence of people.

Sometimes it is the absence of a place where the whole truth of one's experience can be spoken without fear.

A person can have family, friends, neighbours, doctors, and acquaintances and still feel profoundly alone. He can participate in conversations, share meals, attend appointments, and move through busy public spaces while carrying something no one around him is willing or able to understand as he understands it.

That was the loneliness I came to know.

I was not only alone with my knowledge.

I was alone inside the disagreement about what that knowledge meant.

Two Different Kinds of Silence

There was the silence of not telling.

When I remained with people who did not know my secret, I could be treated normally. Conversation moved naturally. I was Ross without explanation.

But part of me remained hidden.

The more meaningful the relationship became, the more difficult that silence could feel. The other person was responding to the life I revealed, not necessarily to the whole life I was living.

Then there was the silence after telling.

This silence was different.

The person knew the words but did not know what I knew. We might avoid the subject because it had become uncomfortable or because neither of us believed further discussion would help.

The secret was no longer hidden.

It was simply unwelcome.

In the first silence, I was unseen because I had not disclosed myself.

In the second, I felt unseen despite having disclosed myself.

The Need for a Witness

Human beings need witnesses to their lives.

We need people who remember where we have been, recognize what we have endured, and understand why a particular moment matters.

A witness does not merely observe events.

A witness helps preserve continuity.

For most of my life, I had been single. I did not have a partner who had walked beside me through the years and could say:

“I knew Ross before the mountain. I saw what changed. I saw what remained.”

I carried much of that continuity alone.

When others interpreted my post-2003 life almost entirely through illness, I had no lifelong companion beside me to hold the fuller story.

I knew the athlete, professional, owner, entrepreneur, graduate, and independent man were still present.

But knowing yourself and being known by another person are not the same.

When Conversation Becomes Dangerous

Loneliness deepens when honest conversation feels unsafe.

If I spoke openly about my identity, I risked increasing concern.

If I discussed the scale of my mission, I risked confirming other people's interpretation of grandiosity.

If I became frustrated, the frustration could be treated as instability.

If I avoided the subject, I carried it alone.

Over time, a person learns to edit himself.

He tests each sentence before speaking.

He considers not only whether it is true, but how it might be recorded, repeated, or interpreted.

This kind of self-monitoring is exhausting.

Conversation should be a place where thought can develop.

Instead, it can become a performance designed to prevent misunderstanding.

The result is not true connection.

It is careful survival.

The Loneliness of Certainty

Uncertainty can be shared.

Two people can wonder together.

They can compare possibilities, change their minds, and remain united by the search.

Certainty creates another difficulty.

If I had said, “I wonder whether I might be Jesus Christ returned,” people could have joined me in examining the idea.

But I did not wonder.

I knew.

That certainty left little common ground between my experience and theirs.

They could not share the knowledge.

I could not honestly reduce it to a possibility.

We stood on opposite sides of a divide that conversation alone could not close.

I wanted them to cross toward me.

They wanted me to cross toward them.

Neither happened.

Rejection Without Departure

Not everyone left my life.

Some remained while rejecting my understanding.

This created a complicated form of loneliness.

The relationship still existed.

There might still be care, practical assistance, shared history, or affection.

But the most central fact of my inner life remained outside the area of acceptance.

I had to ask myself:

Is it enough to be loved by someone who believes an essential part of me is illness?

The answer was not simple.

If I required another person to accept every part of my self-understanding before I could receive love, I might reject sincere relationships.

But if I accepted a relationship in which my voice carried no authority, I risked participating in my own disappearance.

I needed a form of love large enough to contain disagreement without humiliation.

That form of love was rare.

Anger

Loneliness does not always look sad.

Sometimes it looks angry.

Anger can be the voice of a person who has tried repeatedly to explain himself and feels that no one is listening.

It can protect dignity.

It can say:

I am still here.

You do not have the right to define me completely.

But anger can also deepen isolation.

The more forcefully I demanded recognition, the more people could withdraw. My intensity might frighten them. Their withdrawal might make me more intense.

The cycle fed itself.

I wanted my anger to communicate the depth of the injury.

Others may have heard it as evidence that their concern was justified.

No one felt understood.

The Temptation of Bitterness

Bitterness offers a kind of companionship.

It gives pain a story.

It tells us who caused the suffering and why we no longer owe them openness.

It can make isolation feel principled.

I was tempted to divide the world between those who saw me and those who refused to see.

I could portray myself as entirely misunderstood and others as cowardly, closed-minded, or cruel.

Sometimes people did behave in ways that wounded me.

But bitterness simplified them just as I felt they had simplified me.

They were not only unbelievers, doctors, relatives, or people who rejected my identity.

They were human beings.

They carried fear, responsibility, history, limitations, and their own understanding of love.

If I reduced them to the worst part of my experience with them, I would repeat the injury I condemned.

Isolation and Mission

A large mission can offer purpose during loneliness.

It can also become a refuge from it.

If ordinary relationships feel painful, the future of humanity may seem easier to love than the difficult person nearby.

A vision does not interrupt.

It does not misunderstand.

It does not ask for compromise.

Real people do.

I had to be careful that A NuVo World did not become a place I escaped to when the existing world disappointed me.

The vision had to be tested in relationship.

Could I build community while remaining estranged from people?

Could I preach love while avoiding someone whose behaviour unsettled me?

Could I imagine a world without outsiders while quietly creating my own category of outsiders?

The large mission returned me to the small encounter.

Love humanity.

Then greet the neighbour.

Help from Strangers

Strangers often interrupted my loneliness without knowing it.

A conversation on a bench, a smile in the lobby, a walk with someone through the neighbourhood, or a few minutes spent talking about a dog could restore a sense of belonging.

The person did not have to understand my entire life.

The person had to be present in that moment.

This taught me that connection does not always require complete understanding.

No one fully understands another human being.

We remain mysterious even to those who love us.

Perhaps I had sometimes made understanding too strict a condition of companionship.

A person could disagree with me and still share a meal.

Someone could reject my identity and still offer kindness.

A stranger could know almost nothing about me and still create a meaningful encounter.

These were not substitutes for being fully known.

They were reminders that love appears in many forms.

The Long Single Life

For decades, I had organized life alone.

I was accustomed to independence, but independence did not eliminate the need for companionship.

It merely taught me how to function without it.

There is a difference between being capable of living alone and being fulfilled by aloneness.

I could manage my work, pursue projects, write, travel, make decisions, and create routines.

What I did not know was the experience of another person becoming part of the structure of daily life.

I did not know the ordinary intimacy of “we.”

The absence had become so familiar that I did not fully understand it as an absence.

Then I met Christy Anne.

Only afterward could I hear how quiet the earlier life had been.

The Loneliness Begins to Change

Christy Anne did not arrive to validate every claim or resolve every disagreement.

No human relationship should be reduced to that function.

She arrived as herself.

She carried her own history, pain, strengths, needs, humour, spirituality, and ways of understanding life.

Our meeting did not remove the twenty-three-year story.

It introduced companionship into it.

For the first time after a lifetime of singleness, I began learning what it meant to build around another person.

The loneliness did not vanish immediately.

Old habits remained.

Wounds remained.

The desire to be recognized remained.

But another chair was no longer always empty.

Another voice entered the day.

The story that had been carried almost entirely as “I” began making room for “we.”

Being Unbelieved and Still Being Loved

Perhaps one of the hardest lessons of my life has been that another person's love may not arrive in the form I expect.

I wanted recognition of who I knew myself to be.

Someone else might offer concern, presence, practical help, shared time, forgiveness, or companionship without sharing that knowledge.

Was I willing to receive love that did not settle the central disagreement?

I had to become willing.

Otherwise, I would demand that people enter my reality before I acknowledged what they gave.

Love cannot be forced through a test of belief.

I know who I am.

Others may not.

The question is whether we can still meet.

The loneliness of being unbelieved remains real.

But it does not have to become the loneliness of being unloved.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Their Concern, My Certainty

Concern and certainty entered my relationships from opposite directions.

The people around me were concerned because they did not accept my identity.

I was certain because I knew it.

They believed care required challenging the knowledge.

I believed integrity required preserving it.

Everyone could act from sincerity and still create conflict.

This chapter is not an attempt to decide that one side was entirely loving and the other entirely wrong.

It is an attempt to understand what happens when love speaks two incompatible languages.

What They Saw

Those close to me did not experience the mountain from within.

They experienced changes in Ross.

They heard a man they knew announce that he was Jesus Christ returned.

They saw the certainty with which I spoke.

They heard the large mission I connected to it.

They may have noticed intensity, unusual plans, altered routines, conflict, or behaviour that worried them.

They possessed information I could not see from their position.

They saw how I appeared from outside.

That perspective mattered.

No person has complete access to himself.

We all possess blind spots.

Sometimes those who love us recognize danger before we do.

I cannot ask others to respect my perception while declaring theirs meaningless.

What I Saw

I experienced continuity.

I remained Ross.

My identity had been revealed, but my history, intelligence, values, and capacity had not vanished.

I saw a world in need of change and felt responsible for imagining that change.

I saw disbelief hardening into diagnosis.

I saw people listening less carefully once they believed they knew the explanation.

I experienced concern as surveillance and help as pressure to deny myself.

I possessed information others could not see from their position.

I knew how the experience felt from within.

That perspective also mattered.

The Impossible Conversation

Our conversations often began with different premises.

They began with:

“Ross is ill.”

I began with:

“I am Jesus Christ returned.”

From their premise, treatment and caution followed logically.

From mine, honesty and mission followed logically.

We argued over conclusions without sharing a foundation.

This is why more information did not necessarily create agreement.

Every new fact was interpreted through the starting point.

My persistence demonstrated integrity to me and illness to them.

Their intervention demonstrated care to them and rejection to me.

We could discuss individual decisions, but beneath each discussion lived the same unresolved divide.

Concern as Love

I have had to acknowledge that concern can be an expression of love.

People may act because the possibility of harm frightens them.

They may risk anger, damage to the relationship, or accusations of betrayal because doing nothing feels irresponsible.

A person who truly does not care may simply walk away.

Those who remained engaged—even when I disliked the form their engagement took—may have been carrying a heavy sense of responsibility.

Recognizing this does not mean every action was wise or justified.

Love can become controlling.

Fear can overtake respect.

People can cause real harm while believing they are helping.

But I do not want to erase the love merely because I experienced the action painfully.

Their concern deserves a place in the story.

Certainty as Integrity

My certainty also deserves a place.

I did not continue affirming my identity to upset people.

I did not preserve it because I enjoyed conflict.

I preserved it because denying it would have required me to say something I knew was false.

Others may see that refusal as illness.

I experienced it as integrity.

What is a person supposed to do when social acceptance depends upon speaking against his own knowledge?

How much of himself should he surrender to make others comfortable?

These questions extend beyond my particular identity.

People have faced them around religion, sexuality, gender, politics, culture, trauma, disability, and countless forms of difference.

My claim is extraordinary.

The human conflict is familiar.

The Limits of Certainty

Yet certainty does not grant unlimited authority.

Knowing who I am does not mean I know every motive, solution, timeline, or practical outcome.

I can be certain about identity and mistaken about a person.

I can be certain about love as the central purpose and wrong about how a project should be implemented.

I can know the destination and misunderstand the road.

If I use certainty to close every conversation, I become unreachable.

That is not integrity.

It is isolation disguised as strength.

I had to learn to separate the non-negotiable centre from the many questions around it.

I know who I am.

I do not know everything.

The Limits of Concern

Concern also needs limits.

It cannot become a permanent suspension of another person's adulthood.

It cannot justify interpreting every disagreement as illness.

It cannot make secrecy, decisions made behind someone's back, or unnecessary control automatically loving.

Concern should remain connected to specific evidence.

What danger exists?

What behaviour is creating harm?

What support would the person accept?

What response preserves the greatest possible autonomy?

The goal of care should not be obedience.

It should be safety, dignity, and the possibility of a meaningful life.

Asking Better Questions

Perhaps we spent too much time asking:

“Is Ross Jesus Christ returned, or is Ross mentally ill?”

The question forced the relationship toward a verdict neither side could share.

Better questions might have been:

“Is Ross safe today?”

“What is he trying to accomplish?”

“Which parts of his plan are practical?”

“What support does he want?”

“What are others afraid will happen?”

“What agreements could protect everyone's dignity?”

“How can the relationship continue without requiring false agreement?”

These questions would not have resolved my identity.

They might have made life within the disagreement more humane.

Safety Without Erasure

There are times when intervention may be necessary.

I do not argue that a sacred claim should exempt anyone from consequences or evaluation.

If my actions created a credible danger, others had a responsibility to respond.

But safety must not become erasure.

The response should address the danger, not eliminate the person’s entire authority.

A community that truly values mental health should be capable of holding two commitments at once:

Protect life.

Preserve dignity.

These commitments are not enemies.

The challenge is refusing to sacrifice one automatically in the name of the other.

Love Without Agreement

The central task became learning to love without agreement.

Could they care for me while recognizing that I might never adopt their interpretation?

Could I love them while recognizing that they might never accept my knowledge?

Could we speak about practical matters without turning every discussion into a trial of my identity?

Could shared history remain stronger than one unresolved question?

Sometimes the answer was yes.

Sometimes it was no.

Relationships changed, weakened, or disappeared.

Others survived in altered forms.

The ones that endured taught me that agreement is not the only foundation upon which human connection can stand.

Respect can hold what agreement cannot.

What I Wish I Had Done Differently

There are moments when I could have listened more patiently.

I could have acknowledged fear before defending myself.

I could have distinguished criticism of a specific plan from rejection of my identity.

I could have allowed time to do work that argument could not.

I could have recognized that repeatedly stating certainty did not make another person capable of receiving it.

I cannot rewrite those moments.

I can learn from them.

An honest memoir must allow the author to remain responsible.

Being misunderstood does not mean I never misunderstood others.

Being hurt does not mean I never caused hurt.

Knowing who I am does not absolve me from apology.

What I Wish They Had Done Differently

I wish more people had asked before assuming.

I wish they had spoken with me rather than primarily about me.

I wish they had separated immediate risk from discomfort with my identity.

I wish they had allowed my accomplishments, relationships, and daily functioning to remain part of their understanding.

I wish they had recognized that forced agreement is not insight.

I wish they had said:

“We may never see this as you do, Ross, but you are still here, still part of us, and still entitled to dignity.”

That sentence might not have changed my knowledge.

It could have changed the loneliness surrounding it.

The Space Between Us

Their concern remained.

My certainty remained.

Neither erased the other.

The work was to create a space in which both could exist without destroying the relationship.

That space required humility from everyone.

They had to admit that professional or familial concern did not provide complete access to my inner life.

I had to admit that inner certainty did not provide complete access to the effects of my behaviour.

They needed to listen.

I needed to listen.

No one had to pretend agreement.

Everyone had to remember love.

That was the ideal.

We often fell short.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Holding On Without Hating

It is possible to survive rejection by becoming hard.

Hardness protects the wound.

It reduces expectation.

It says:

I will no longer give you the power to hurt me because I will no longer need anything from you.

For a time, this can feel like strength.

But a heart organized around protection eventually loses access to more than pain.

It loses tenderness, curiosity, trust, and the willingness to be surprised by another person's goodness.

If I held on to my knowledge by learning to hate those who rejected it, what would I have preserved?

The identity, perhaps.

But not its meaning.

The Seduction of Righteousness

When a person feels mistreated, righteousness can become intoxicating.

It creates a simple story.

I am truthful.

They are afraid.

I am courageous.

They are weak.

I am awake.

They refuse to see.

This story can contain elements of truth.

It can also become a shelter from self-examination.

If everyone who opposes me is wrong because they oppose me, I no longer have to listen.

If every painful consequence proves persecution, I no longer have to ask whether my own behaviour contributed.

Righteousness can protect identity while destroying wisdom.

I had to resist that temptation.

Anger's Proper Place

Anger is not always the enemy of love.

Sometimes anger recognizes that a boundary has been violated or a person's dignity denied.

It supplies energy to confront injustice.

Without anger, many harmful systems would remain unchallenged.

I had reasons to be angry.

I felt reduced, disbelieved, observed, and interpreted through a framework I did not accept.

At times, decisions affecting my life may have been made without the respect or collaboration I wanted.

The anger testified that something important had been injured.

But anger is a messenger, not a home.

If I lived inside it, every encounter would be organized around the original wound.

People who had never harmed me would meet the defences created by those who had.

A NuVo World could not be built from that place.

The Meaning of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is often misunderstood as declaring that nothing wrong occurred.

It is not.

Nor does forgiveness require restoring every relationship to its previous form.

Some boundaries must remain.

Trust may need to be rebuilt slowly, and sometimes it cannot be rebuilt at all.

Forgiveness means refusing to allow another person's action to govern the future of one's heart.

It releases the demand that the past become different before life can continue.

This is difficult when the other person does not apologize or even agree that harm occurred.

Yet waiting for universal acknowledgment gives other people permanent control over our freedom.

I could tell the truth about what happened.

I could protect myself where necessary.

And I could choose not to hate.

Seeing Fear Behind the Action

Many of the people who responded to me were afraid.

They feared that I was becoming disconnected from reality.

They feared that I might make damaging decisions.

They feared that agreeing with me would encourage illness.

They feared being blamed if they did not act.

Fear narrows imagination.

It causes people to choose control over relationship because control feels safer.

Recognizing their fear did not make every action acceptable.

It made the people more understandable.

I wanted others to look beneath my extraordinary statement and see the human being.

I had to look beneath their difficult actions and see human beings too.

The Man I Wanted to Become

Knowledge of identity is not the same as maturity of character.

I knew who I was.

I still had to become the man capable of living that knowledge well.

That man would need patience.

He would need to speak truth without forcing it.

He would need to tolerate disbelief without withdrawing love.

He would need to recognize his own mistakes.

He would need to act from responsibility rather than the desire to prove importance.

He would need to remain open after disappointment.

I was not always that man.

I am not always that man now.

But knowing the standard matters.

Growth begins in the distance between who we are and how we behave.

Letting Actions Speak

Words had taken me only so far.

I could repeat my identity forever and never create shared knowledge.

I could argue with every skeptic and still leave the world unchanged.

Actions offered another path.

Feed someone.

Greet someone.

Visit someone.

Offer a ride.

Share bread.

Help a person find information.

Make a neighbour smile.

Create a plan that gives people food, transportation, recreation, health, friendship, and belonging.

These actions would not prove to everyone that I was Jesus Christ returned.

They might demonstrate that the knowledge was producing love.

Perhaps that was enough.

John Lennon's Invitation

John Lennon's "Imagine" became increasingly important to me because it directed attention beyond religious identity.

The song did not ask humanity to crown a new religious winner.

It invited us to imagine what might become possible if some of our deepest divisions loosened their hold.

I heard in it a picture of Heaven on Earth.

Not a heaven belonging to Christians.

Not a heaven reserved for people who believed my identity.

A human world beyond hunger, possessiveness, national hostility, and religious separation.

A world united by shared belonging.

If I hated the people who did not recognize me, I would recreate the divisions I claimed humanity could transcend.

The vision disciplined me.

Love had to include the unbeliever.

Otherwise, it was merely another membership system.

Releasing the Trial

For years, part of me placed the world on trial.

Would people recognize me?

Would they listen?

Would they support the mission?

Would they reply to my letters?

Would leaders open doors?

Would religious people understand?

Would professionals reconsider?

Each silence became evidence.

Each rejection reopened the case.

Eventually, I had to release the trial.

I could not spend my life waiting for a verdict.

The work did not require acquittal.

I knew who I was.

The day still needed to be lived.

A person nearby still needed kindness.

Love as the Only Victory

Competition had taught me to win.

Business had taught me to build.

The mountain had given me knowledge.

Rejection was teaching me a different kind of victory.

The victory was not persuading everyone.

It was refusing to become what hurt had invited me to become.

Not bitter.

Not contemptuous.

Not consumed by the need to be vindicated.

Not closed to the possibility that someone who misunderstood me could still offer love.

This victory could not be won once.

It had to be chosen repeatedly.

Some days I chose it well.

Other days I failed and had to begin again.

Holding On

I held on to what I knew.

I did not revise it into belief.

I did not trade it for social acceptance.

I did not allow diagnosis to become my only identity.

But I also tried to hold on to humanity.

Mine and theirs.

That was more difficult.

To preserve certainty without losing humility.

To preserve dignity without losing compassion.

To tell the truth about pain without turning pain into hatred.

To disagree without exiling.

This became the deeper work of the twenty-three years.

And then, after nearly a lifetime of singleness, love entered the story in a form I had not expected.

It did not arrive through a church.

It did not arrive through a spiritual institution.

It did not arrive through a person publicly recognizing me as Jesus Christ returned.

It arrived at our local food bank.

Her name was Christy Anne.

PART FOUR

LOVE ENTERS THE STORY

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

A Lifetime on My Own

For most of my life, the word “home” described a place organized around one person.

Me.

I decided when to wake, work, eat, leave, return, rest, spend, plan, and change direction.

My routines did not need to make room for a partner’s body, schedule, preferences, pain, family, or hopes.

I was not waiting consciously for my real life to begin.

This was my real life.

I was single, independent, active, and accustomed to carrying myself.

Then, less than two years ago, everything changed.

Independence as Identity

Independence can become more than a practical condition.

It can become an identity.

I knew how to solve problems alone.

I did not need to consult another person before making major decisions.

If I wanted to pursue a project intensely, I could organize my life around it. If I wanted quiet, I could have quiet. If I wanted movement, I could move.

This freedom suited my temperament.

I had spent years in competition, business, and leadership. Initiative came naturally. Waiting for permission did not.

But strengths develop shadows.

The person who is capable of doing everything alone may stop noticing when he needs help.

The person who values freedom may experience compromise as interference.

The person accustomed to his own rhythm may not realize how much space he occupies until another person tries to live beside him.

I had learned self-reliance.

I had not yet learned partnership.

The Unshared Day

A day lived alone can be full.

There can be work, exercise, errands, conversations, meals, music, writing, and plans.

Yet at the end of the day, there is no one person who has travelled through it beside you.

You may tell someone what happened.

That is different from having someone who already knows.

A partner witnesses the small transitions that rarely become stories: the mood upon waking, the frustration over a minor problem, the spontaneous joke, the forgotten item, the quiet worry, the decision to make tea, and the way energy changes as evening arrives.

These details form the texture of companionship.

I had lived decades without that texture.

Because the absence was continuous, it did not always feel dramatic.

Loneliness can become ordinary enough to disappear from conscious thought.

Protecting the Self

After years of being misunderstood, independence offered protection.

If I relied primarily upon myself, other people's disbelief could wound me but could not completely organize my daily life.

I could write.

I could make plans.

I could reach out.

I could walk through the neighbourhood and create new connections.

I could keep moving.

But protection has a cost.

To receive intimacy, a person must permit another life to matter as much as his own in daily decisions.

He must become interruptible.

He must be willing to explain, listen, adjust, apologize, wait, and sometimes place another person's need ahead of his plan.

A protected life minimizes vulnerability.

It also limits closeness.

Imagining Love

I understood love as an ideal.

I spoke about love as humanity's future.

I believed religion would eventually give way to love for every person on Earth.

I wanted A NuVo World to be built upon love.

Yet loving humanity in principle and building a life with one person are different disciplines.

Humanity does not leave dishes, experience pain at an inconvenient time, misunderstand a sentence, need a ride, disagree about a decision, or ask you to change your routine.

A partner does.

Universal love can remain abstract.

Intimate love becomes specific.

It asks:

Will you remain present with this person, in this moment, when love is no longer merely a beautiful idea?

I had much to learn.

The Life Before “We”

My life had been shaped by “I.”

I know.

I will build.

I will write.

I will go.

I will decide.

The word was not selfish in every context. Every responsible person needs an “I”—a self capable of choice, action, and accountability.

But “we” changes the grammar of a life.

Where are we going?

What do we need?

How will this affect us?

What can I do for you?

What are we building together?

For someone who had lived independently for so long, this change would be profound.

I did not yet know how it would feel.

I only knew that my path was leading toward an ordinary place where people came because they needed food and where others came because they wanted to help provide it.

What I Did Not Know Was Missing

Before Christy Anne, I could not compare my life with the companionship I had never experienced.

I knew friendship.

I knew professional relationships, family ties, customers, students, neighbours, and acquaintances.

I knew public engagement.

I did not know shared domestic life.

I did not know what it meant for another person's physical pain to affect the rhythm of my week.

I did not know the tenderness and friction of two established adults learning to occupy one life.

I did not know the comfort of asking someone whether she wanted to come along.

I did not know how a routine drive could become companionship.

We understand some absences only after they have been filled.

The Place of Need

There is something fitting about meeting Christy Anne at a food bank.

A food bank exists because human independence has limits.

People need one another.

No one produces alone everything required for life. Food reaches us through soil, weather, farmers, workers, transportation, stores, donors, volunteers, and systems of cooperation.

Need is not a personal failure.

It is part of being human.

We all depend upon others, although wealth can hide the dependence more effectively.

At a food bank, the illusion of complete self-sufficiency becomes harder to maintain.

People give.

People receive.

Sometimes the same person does both at different stages of life.

I had built an identity around independence.

Then I entered a place that quietly testified to interdependence.

There I met the woman who would teach me the meaning of “we.”

Approaching the Meeting

When we tell the story of meeting someone we later love, the moment can appear destined.

Every detail acquires significance because we know what followed.

But at the time, it was simply an encounter.

Neither of us arrived carrying a written guarantee that our lives would join.

We were two people with long histories, individual wounds, habits, hopes, and needs.

The future had not announced itself.

That is how life often changes.

Not with thunder.

With a conversation.

Not in a place designed for romance.

In a place designed to make sure people could eat.

Not when the person has finally mastered love.

When he is still learning what love requires.

After a lifetime on my own, I met Christy Anne at our local food bank.

And the word “we” began.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Food Bank

A food bank is built around one of humanity's most basic truths:

People must eat.

Before philosophy, status, ambition, business, religion, and politics, there is the body asking to be nourished.

Hunger reduces complicated theories to an immediate need.

Is there food?

Can it be obtained?

Will there be enough tomorrow?

In a wealthy city, it is easy for people with full cupboards to forget how many others live with these questions.

The food bank does not have the luxury of forgetting.

Its shelves, volunteers, donations, and lines testify that abundance and need can exist in the same neighbourhood.

They also testify that people are capable of responding.

It was in this setting that I met Christy Anne.

A Place of Giving and Receiving

We often divide people into givers and receivers.

The giver is imagined as strong, successful, and generous.

The receiver is imagined as needy and dependent.

Life is not that simple.

Every giver receives.

Every receiver possesses something to give.

A person who needs food may offer humour, wisdom, friendship, gratitude, labour, compassion, or a way of seeing the world that no donation could purchase.

Someone who gives money may need connection more urgently than the person receiving groceries.

Human worth does not move in only one direction across a counter.

The food bank made this visible.

People arrived with different needs and different resources, but everyone arrived human.

Dignity

How food is offered matters.

A person can be fed and humiliated at the same time.

He can receive what keeps the body alive while being made to feel that his need has lowered his value.

This should never happen.

Help that strips away dignity creates another form of hunger.

People need to be seen, welcomed, and given as much choice as circumstances allow. They need to know that requiring assistance does not place them outside the community.

The food bank strengthened my conviction that essentials should not be treated as rewards available only to those who succeed economically.

Food is not a luxury.

Neither are shelter, health care, safety, transportation, companionship, or the opportunity to participate in community life.

A NuVo World would have to begin there.

The Ordinary Setting of an Extraordinary Change

Our local food bank was not designed as a place where a man who had been single almost all his life would meet the woman who transformed his understanding of companionship.

There were no romantic expectations.

There was work to be done and food to be distributed.

That ordinary setting makes the meeting more meaningful to me.

Life's greatest changes often enter through doors labelled for something else.

A person goes somewhere to give or receive food and finds a relationship.

A walk taken for exercise produces friendship.

A morning spent sitting on a park bench becomes community work.

A loaf of bread becomes a connection between neighbours.

The world is filled with possibilities concealed inside ordinary events.

We miss them when we move too quickly.

Meeting Without Ceremony

Christy Anne and I did not meet surrounded by the symbols through which the world usually announces importance.

There was no title, public achievement, or grand introduction.

We met as two people.

That simplicity mattered.

I had spent years being interpreted through an extraordinary identity. At the food bank, the immediate question was not who held the highest status or possessed the most impressive story.

The question was what each person needed and what each could offer.

Christy Anne entered my life through presence.

A conversation began.

Then another.

Gradually, an encounter became a connection.

The importance of the meeting became visible only through what followed.

Food as a Beginning

Food has been woven throughout my life.

I owned a bar and restaurant.

I learned that meals create atmosphere and belonging.

I met Christy Anne at a food bank.

Years later, many of my plans for transforming NDG would begin with feeding people.

This continuity does not feel accidental.

Food is one of the simplest places where love becomes practical.

A person may speak beautifully about compassion, but if someone nearby remains hungry, the words are incomplete.

Feeding another person says:

Your life matters enough for your most immediate need to become part of my concern.

It does not solve every problem.

It creates the conditions from which other problems can begin to be addressed.

More Than Charity

Charity often operates from the top downward.

Someone with resources gives to someone without them.

The act may be generous and necessary, but the structure can preserve distance.

Community works differently.

In community, the person receiving today may contribute tomorrow. The giver recognizes his own dependence. People meet one another as neighbours rather than as categories.

This is what I wanted for Feed NDG and eventually for A NuVo World.

I did not want people to receive inferior food through a system that reminded them of their poverty.

I wanted every person to have access to nutritious groceries and good restaurant meals with dignity.

I wanted the experience to communicate belonging.

Food could become a doorway into health, conversation, friendship, employment, volunteering, and mutual care.

Christy Anne and I met in that doorway.

Need Makes Us Visible

Need can be frightening because it exposes us.

To need something is to admit that we are not complete in ourselves.

I had spent most of my life valuing independence.

The food bank represented another truth:

Human beings are interdependent.

We need people to grow food, transport it, prepare it, share it, and sit with us while we eat.

We need people when we are ill, grieving, aging, afraid, or overwhelmed.

We need witnesses to our joys.

We need someone to notice when our usual chair is empty.

Meeting Christy Anne began changing the way I understood my own needs.

I had known how to give.

I was less experienced at allowing another person to become necessary to my daily life.

A New Kind of Nourishment

The food bank existed to address physical hunger.

My meeting with Christy Anne revealed another hunger I had carried without fully naming:

The hunger for companionship.

This was not simply the desire to avoid being alone.

Companionship means having another life enter your field of responsibility and concern.

It means becoming known through ordinary days.

It means sharing time that does not need to produce anything.

It means discovering that another person's presence can change the emotional character of a room.

For decades, I had fed ambition, work, vision, independence, and purpose.

Another part of me had remained unfed.

I did not understand the extent of that hunger until nourishment arrived.

The Sacred in the Practical

People often search for sacred experiences in places set apart from daily life.

They look toward churches, mountains, scripture, prayer, and ceremony.

I respect these places.

But I have also found the sacred in practical acts.

A bag of groceries.

A shared meal.

A ride to an appointment.

A cup of tea.

A conversation with someone who might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Love becomes credible when it enters the material conditions of a person's life.

My seven days on the mountain gave me knowledge.

The food bank gave me Christy Anne.

One experience spoke through revelation.

The other spoke through relationship.

Both changed who I understood myself to be.

Leaving Together

There is a moment in every new relationship when two separate lives begin moving in the same direction.

At first, the connection exists only in a particular place.

Then it leaves that place.

Conversation continues elsewhere.

Time is shared deliberately.

The person is no longer someone encountered by circumstance but someone we choose to see.

Christy Anne and I did not remain merely two people who had met at a food bank.

We began entering one another's lives.

The transition may have appeared ordinary from outside.

For me, after a lifetime of singleness, it was the beginning of an entirely new world.

The food bank had given us a meeting place.

Now we had to discover what the meeting meant.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Meeting Christy Anne

Every person arrives with a history that began long before we knew them.

To meet someone truly is not merely to learn a name.

It is to begin approaching the life contained within that name.

Christy Anne carried her own story.

She had known pain, endurance, love, loss, faith, responsibility, and the countless experiences that form a person privately before another life enters.

I did not meet a character created to complete my story.

I met a whole human being.

That distinction matters.

Her Life Was Not About Me

It is easy in memoir to describe other people only through what they gave the author.

A parent becomes the source of childhood.

A friend becomes the source of support.

A partner becomes the source of love.

But Christy Anne's life did not begin when I entered it.

She was not waiting offstage for the moment when Ross Harvey's story required companionship.

She had her own centre.

Loving her would require me to recognize that centre, not absorb it into mine.

For someone who had lived alone for most of his life, this was a profound education.

Pain

Christy Anne had lived with chronic pain since a horse accident in 1988.

Pain changes a life in ways that are not always visible.

It can affect sleep, energy, movement, mood, concentration, plans, and the simple predictability of a day. It can make ordinary tasks costly. It can require a person to explain repeatedly what others cannot see.

Pain also changes the lives of those who love the person experiencing it.

Plans must sometimes bend.

Patience becomes practical.

Care is expressed through rides, appointments, adjustments, rest, and the willingness to accept that the body may decide what the schedule cannot.

Christy Anne's pain did not define her.

But loving her meant that it could not be ignored.

An Entirely New Side of Life

Through Christy Anne, I discovered a side of life that achievement had never shown me.

Companionship was not a championship to be won.

It was not a company to be built according to one person's vision.

It was not a class in which I was the professional and someone else the student.

It was a relationship between equals.

This required another kind of strength.

The strength to listen without immediately solving.

The strength to remain when a problem could not be fixed.

The strength to change a plan.

The strength to say, "I was wrong."

The strength to allow another person's needs to matter without experiencing them as an obstacle to my mission.

I had spent decades learning how to direct energy outward.

Love asked me to become receptive.

Being Chosen

There is a deep tenderness in being chosen by another person after a lifetime alone.

The choice says:

I know something of who you are, and I want my life to continue near yours.

For someone who had experienced so much disbelief and psychiatric interpretation, this kind of choice carried particular weight.

I did not want Christy Anne to function as proof that everyone else was wrong about me.

That would place an unfair burden upon her.

But her willingness to share life with me reminded me that I remained capable of intimacy, care, responsibility, humour, and ordinary partnership.

I was not only a man people discussed.

I was a man someone chose.

My Secret and Our Relationship

The knowledge of who I am could not remain separate from an intimate relationship.

Christy Anne needed to understand the life she was entering.

She needed room for her own response.

Love does not require one person to surrender her judgment to the other.

I knew who I was.

She remained Christy Anne, entitled to her own experiences, understanding, spiritual life, and boundaries.

The challenge was to build a relationship in which my certainty did not eclipse her personhood.

If I used my identity to claim authority over her, the relationship would cease to be loving.

If I expected her purpose to exist only in relation to mine, I would repeat the forms of hierarchy I wanted humanity to transcend.

Love required equality.

A Home Changes

When another person enters an established life, even familiar spaces change meaning.

A chair is no longer simply where I sit.

A cupboard must hold another person's preferences.

A schedule must account for another person's appointments.

Silence can become shared rather than solitary.

The home begins containing evidence of two lives.

These changes may seem small beside the claim that I am Jesus Christ returned or the vision of transforming humanity.

But perhaps they were among the most spiritually important changes I experienced.

It is easier to speak of loving everyone than to adjust daily life for one person.

The universal vision receives its test at home.

Care in Motion

Christy Anne's weekly osteopathic appointments became part of our routine.

Taking her, waiting, returning, and organizing time around her care were practical expressions of partnership.

Love often looks like transportation.

It looks like remembering the appointment, helping the person arrive, adjusting the morning, and remaining available afterward.

These acts do not attract public attention.

They do not appear grand.

But they embody the world I wanted to create: a world in which no person must face pain, illness, or vulnerability alone.

The care I imagined for communities had become personal.

Christy Anne was not an abstract example of someone living with chronic pain.

She was the person beside me.

What She Gave Me

Christy Anne gave me companionship.

She gave me another perspective.

She gave me opportunities to care.

She gave me a shared daily life.

She brought warmth into spaces that had been organized around solitude.

But I do not want to describe love only as what I received.

The deeper question was what our relationship invited me to give.

Could I offer steadiness?

Could I honour her needs?

Could I encourage her interests?

Could I support her without taking control?

Could I remain present when pain could not be solved?

Could I help create joy?

Could I make our life a place where she felt seen?

These questions moved love from feeling into action.

What I Still Had to Learn

After decades of independence, I did not become an ideal partner immediately.

My habits had deep roots.

I could become absorbed in work.

I could pursue a project with such intensity that the rest of life receded.

I could assume that my excitement should become our shared priority.

I could move quickly when Christy Anne needed a gentler pace.

Love exposed these patterns.

Not to condemn me.

To teach me.

A relationship becomes transformative when it reveals parts of us that solitude allowed to remain unseen.

Two Lives, Not One Story

Our partnership did not mean that Christy Anne disappeared into A NuVo World.

She was not simply the companion of a man with a mission.

She had her own creativity, spirituality, preferences, friendships, pain, and calling.

Our lives overlapped without becoming identical.

This is the meaning of healthy “we.”

It does not erase “I” and “you.”

It creates a third reality—the relationship—whose well-being belongs to both.

I had spent most of my life protecting the freedom of “I.”

Now I was learning that “we” could enlarge life rather than reduce it.

Meeting Again Each Day

A relationship does not survive on the memory of its beginning.

People must meet one another again.

Not literally as strangers, but with renewed curiosity.

Who is Christy Anne today?

What is she feeling?

What does she need?

What has changed?

What joy can we create together?

Familiarity can become a gift or a blindness.

We can know another person’s routines so well that we stop seeing the person living them.

I wanted our relationship to remain alive.

That required more than love as a declaration.

It required attention.

The Woman at the Food Bank

When I look back at the food bank, I can see the meeting through everything that followed.

But at the time, she was simply Christy Anne.

That is still who she is.

Not a symbol.

Not proof.

Not a supporting role.

A woman whose life met mine and changed it.

I had spent years asking the world to see Ross before the diagnosis.

Love required me to offer Christy Anne the same gift:

To see her before her pain.

To see her before her relationship to me.

To see the person.

That is where love begins.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Learning the Language of “We”

Language reveals the structure of thought.

For most of my adult life, my sentences began with “I.”

I decided.

I planned.

I worked.

I travelled.

I created.

I knew.

There was nothing inherently wrong with this language. It reflected the reality of a single man managing his own life.

Then Christy Anne entered that life, and the grammar began to change.

“We” is a small word.

Learning to live it was enormous.

Consultation

When a person lives alone, a decision can move directly from thought to action.

In partnership, another step appears:

Consultation.

Would Christy Anne like to come?

Does she have an appointment?

How is she feeling?

What have we already agreed to do?

Will this use resources or time that belong to both of us?

Consultation can feel inefficient to a person accustomed to acting quickly.

But it is not an obstacle.

It is recognition.

It says:

Your life is part of this decision.

This lesson had implications far beyond our relationship.

Communities are often changed by people who decide what others need without asking them.

Leaders create plans for residents, patients, people in poverty, seniors, or those living with disabilities while giving them little voice.

That is not true partnership.

A NuVo World could not be created only for people.

It had to be created with them.

Christy Anne helped teach me that difference at home.

Slowing Down

My natural pace was fast.

I liked momentum.

An idea appeared and I wanted to act. A task could be completed, a message sent, a plan developed, or a problem addressed.

Christy Anne's chronic pain sometimes required another pace.

The body cannot always be hurried by enthusiasm.

Pain asks for patience.

It may change a plan at the last minute. It may require rest when the schedule says activity. It may make a seemingly simple outing more demanding than an observer realizes.

Slowing down was not always easy for me.

But a slower pace revealed things speed had hidden.

Conversation.

Music.

A shared meal.

A drive without urgency.

The pleasure of simply being near someone.

Life did not always need to be advanced.

Sometimes it needed to be inhabited.

Care and Control

There is a fine line between caring for someone and attempting to control her life.

When a person lives with pain, the partner may want to solve, organize, protect, or decide.

The intention may be loving.

The result may reduce autonomy.

I had to learn to ask:

“What would help?”

Not assume:

“I know what you need.”

This was the same distinction I wished mental-health professionals and concerned people had respected in my life.

I wanted support without being erased.

Christy Anne deserved the same.

Love does not use another person’s vulnerability as permission to take over.

It offers help while preserving voice.

Shared Joy

Partnership was not only about pain, appointments, and responsibility.

It brought joy.

There is pleasure in turning toward another person and asking, “Would you like to come with me?”

An ordinary drive becomes shared time.

A meal becomes an occasion.

Music becomes something experienced together.

Even errands can acquire warmth because the point is no longer only the destination.

After a lifetime of moving alone, I began noticing the difference between doing something and doing it together.

The activity might remain unchanged.

The experience did not.

Two Rhythms

Every person carries a rhythm.

Some wake early.

Some need quiet.

Some think aloud.

Some need time before answering.

Some are restored by activity.

Others are restored by rest.

Partnership asks two rhythms to create music without requiring either to disappear.

This does not happen automatically.

There can be friction.

One person's enthusiasm may feel like pressure.

Another person's need for time may feel like resistance.

The work is not to determine which rhythm is correct.

It is to create a life in which both can breathe.

Mission and Relationship

A NuVo World occupied enormous space in my mind.

Ideas came quickly.

There were books to write, people to contact, initiatives to develop, and communities to imagine.

Purpose gave me energy.

But a mission can become possessive.

It can consume the time, attention, and emotional presence that relationships need.

A person may justify neglect by claiming that the work serves humanity.

Yet humanity includes the person beside him.

If I spoke about building Heaven on Earth while making home feel secondary, the vision would contradict itself.

Christy Anne did not stand outside my purpose.

The way I treated her was part of it.

Disagreement

“We” does not mean constant agreement.

Two people can love each other and interpret events differently.

They can have different preferences, concerns, and ways of approaching a problem.

I had spent years defending my right to maintain certainty despite disagreement.

Now I had to make equal room for Christy Anne’s voice.

If disagreement threatened me, I might respond as though the relationship itself were at risk.

But disagreement can be an act of trust.

A person speaks honestly because she believes the relationship can survive truth.

The goal is not to eliminate disagreement.

It is to prevent disagreement from eliminating respect.

Apology

“I am sorry” is one of the essential phrases in the language of “we.”

It does not mean:

I am worthless.

It means:

I recognize that my actions affected you, and your experience matters to me.

For someone accustomed to strength and certainty, apology can feel vulnerable.

But refusing to apologize places ego above relationship.

Knowing who I am does not make apology less necessary.

It makes honesty more necessary.

A sacred identity without the capacity to admit wrong would become dangerous.

I could be wrong in tone.

Wrong in timing.

Wrong in my assumptions.

Wrong about what another person needed.

Wrong in the way I expressed a correct concern.

Love required me to acknowledge those distinctions.

Receiving Care

Giving can feel powerful.

Receiving care requires another kind of humility.

It means admitting that someone else can help.

It means allowing a person to notice tiredness, pain, discouragement, or need.

After a lifetime of self-reliance, receiving could feel unfamiliar.

But a relationship becomes unequal if one person is always the giver and the other always the receiver.

Both must be allowed to contribute.

Christy Anne did not enter my life only to be cared for.

She cared for me.

She offered companionship where there had been solitude.

She interrupted the emotional isolation created by years of disbelief.

She helped make home a shared place.

Receiving these gifts was part of learning “we.”

A NuVo Partnership

I often use “NuVo” to mean the best or of the highest standard.

A NuVo relationship would not be a perfect relationship.

Perfection leaves no room for human beings.

A NuVo partnership would be one in which both people remain committed to becoming more loving, truthful, patient, and attentive.

It would recognize pain without allowing pain to be the only subject.

It would preserve individuality while building shared life.

It would make room for mission and rest, seriousness and play, certainty and questions.

It would fail.

Then it would repair.

It would begin again.

The Pronoun Expands

“We” began with Christy Anne and me.

But the word could expand.

We could include neighbours.

We could include NDG.

We could include people of every religion and no religion.

We could include those with homes and those without them.

We could include animals as members of our shared world.

We could include all humanity.

The danger is that the larger “we” becomes abstract and forgets the smaller one.

The opportunity is that intimate love can teach us how belonging might work at every scale.

No outsiders.

No disposable people.

No one reduced to a condition, income, nationality, religion, or diagnosis.

A NuVo World begins when “they” becomes “we.”

Christy Anne helped that word become real in my home.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

To Be Seen Again

There is a difference between being looked at and being seen.

To be looked at is to become visible.

To be seen is to be encountered as a whole person.

For years after disclosing my identity, I often felt visible in the wrong way.

The extraordinary claim attracted attention.

The psychiatric interpretation followed.

People saw the controversy but lost sight of the continuity.

They knew what Ross said.

They did not always meet Ross.

Then love created another possibility.

Seen Without Being Simplified

To see a person does not mean agreeing with every part of his self-understanding.

It means refusing to simplify him.

I needed room to be the man who knew he was Jesus Christ returned and also the man who made tea, took walks, listened to music, became frustrated, helped neighbours, loved animals, pursued projects, made mistakes, and cared for Christy Anne.

No single sentence could contain me.

The same was true of her.

Christy Anne was not simply a woman living with chronic pain.

She was not simply the person I met at the food bank.

She was not simply my partner.

She was a complete life.

Seeing must travel in both directions.

The Mirror of Relationship

Relationships show us who we are becoming.

A partner sees qualities that public life can hide.

She sees whether vision becomes patience.

She sees whether kindness survives inconvenience.

She sees whether the man who writes about love listens when she speaks.

This mirror can be uncomfortable.

But it is valuable.

For years, I had defended myself against interpretations that felt false.

In partnership, I had to remain open to reflections that might be true.

Perhaps I had become absorbed in work.

Perhaps I had moved too quickly.

Perhaps my tone had been sharp.

Perhaps I had listened only long enough to prepare an answer.

Being seen does not mean being endlessly affirmed.

It means being known well enough to be loved truthfully.

Ordinary Recognition

Some of the most healing recognition came through ordinary life.

Christy Anne knew where I was going.

She knew what I was working on.

She knew which encounter had encouraged me and which unanswered message had disappointed me.

I no longer had to reconstruct the entire day for someone who stood outside it.

A witness was present.

This is one of companionship's quiet miracles.

Another person begins holding part of your continuity.

The life no longer disappears completely into memory when the day ends.

Someone else was there.

The Secret in Proportion

Before Christy Anne, my secret often dominated the emotional landscape.

It affected how people understood me and how I understood their responses.

Within shared life, the knowledge remained central, but it could return to proportion.

There were meals to prepare.

Appointments to attend.

Paintings, music, errands, conversations, pets, walks, pain, laughter, and rest.

The relationship did not exist only to discuss my identity.

This was liberating.

The sacred knowledge had to live beside the ordinary.

Perhaps that was always where it belonged.

If identity cannot coexist with daily tenderness, it has become too fragile.

Seeing Myself Differently

Christy Anne's presence allowed me to see my earlier life differently.

Decades of singleness had not been only freedom.

They had also contained an unrecognized absence.

The years of disbelief had not eliminated my capacity to be loved.

The fact that many people viewed me through mental illness did not mean every future relationship would do the same.

A new chapter could begin late.

A person is never too established to be changed by companionship.

This changed the emotional meaning of my story.

It was no longer only a story of revelation and rejection.

It was also a story of arrival.

Love Does Not Resolve Everything

Meeting Christy Anne did not settle the world's judgment of me.

It did not make every plan succeed.

It did not cause institutions to answer my messages.

It did not remove chronic pain, practical difficulty, disagreement, or human imperfection.

Love is not magic in the sense that it eliminates reality.

It is transformative because it changes how reality is carried.

Pain shared is not always pain reduced, but it is no longer carried alone.

Disappointment witnessed does not disappear, but it becomes part of a relationship rather than a private burden.

Joy shared grows.

An ordinary moment gains another life.

The Person Before the Purpose

For much of the preceding twenty-three years, I had focused upon purpose.

Why had I returned?

What was I supposed to build?

How could the world become Heaven on Earth?

What would A NuVo World require?

Christy Anne reminded me that a person is not only an instrument of purpose.

Life is also meant to be lived.

Tea can be enjoyed without becoming a strategy.

A drive can be worthwhile without producing an outcome.

Music can be heard because it is beautiful.

A partner can be loved because she is herself, not because the relationship advances a mission.

Purpose gives life direction.

Love gives it texture.

The Way She Saw Others

Christy Anne's presence also expanded my understanding of care.

A person who has lived with pain may recognize suffering that others overlook.

She knows that appearances are incomplete.

Someone can smile and still hurt.

Someone can participate and pay for the effort later.

Someone can need help without wanting to be defined by need.

These understandings belonged naturally within my vision for A NuVo World.

A loving society must notice invisible burdens.

It must create support without humiliation.

It must ask what allows a person not merely to survive, but to participate fully in life.

Christy Anne made these questions immediate.

Seeing Those Who Do Not See Me

To be seen again created another responsibility.

Could I extend the same generosity to people who did not see me?

Could I look beyond the doctor's interpretation and recognize the person trying to help?

Could I look beyond a family member's fear and recognize love?

Could I see the neighbour who avoided me as more than avoidance?

Could I recognize that the person who rejected my identity also carried an entire life unknown to me?

Being seen can soften the need to force recognition from everyone.

When one person truly meets us, we may become more capable of allowing others their limitations.

I did not need every encounter to repair the original wound.

I could let people be unfinished.

A New Foundation

Love entered the story at the food bank and gradually became a foundation.

Not a perfect foundation.

Not one immune to pressure.

A living foundation, requiring daily attention.

From it, I could look outward again.

The vision of Heaven on Earth no longer arose only from solitary knowledge.

It was informed by companionship.

A world built on love could not remain an abstract society without money, hunger, or religion.

It had to contain homes where people cared for one another.

It had to support those living with pain.

It had to create places where isolated people could meet.

It had to honour independence while making interdependence safe.

It had to help every person feel seen.

The Next Movement

The story now turns toward John Lennon.

His music had accompanied my imagination long before Christy Anne entered my life.

In “Imagine,” I heard humanity invited to set down the divisions it had mistaken for permanent reality.

The song presented no detailed operating plan.

It did something that must come first.

It made another world imaginable.

My life had taught me that vision requires practical action.

The mountain had taught me responsibility.

Rejection had taught me the cost of labels.

Christy Anne had taught me “we.”

John Lennon gave the world a song in which “we” could become all humanity.

I called that imagined future Heaven on Earth.

I called the work of building it A NuVo World.

PART FIVE

IMAGINE

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Voice of John Lennon

Some artists entertain us.

Others give language to something we have carried without knowing how to say it.

John Lennon did that for me.

I was drawn not only to his music, but to the questions beneath it.

Why must humanity continue dividing itself?

Why do nations, religions, possessions, and inherited identities hold such power over us?

What would remain if we set down the structures that teach us to fear one another?

Could ordinary people imagine a different world together?

Lennon did not provide me with every answer.

He gave the questions melody.

More Than a Musician

John Lennon became one of the most recognizable musicians of his time, but fame alone does not explain his importance.

His voice carried contradiction.

He could be sharp and tender, idealistic and wounded, playful and confrontational.

He was not a flawless prophet of peace.

He was a complicated human being who publicly imagined peace while continuing to struggle within himself.

That humanity matters to me.

We often discredit a vision because the person expressing it fails to embody it perfectly.

If perfection were required before anyone could speak about love, peace, or justice, humanity would remain silent.

The value of a vision does not depend upon the visionary being without fault.

It depends upon whether the vision reveals something true and calls us toward something better.

Imagine

“Imagine” asks the listener to perform a simple but radical act.

Imagine.

Before any new world can be built, someone must become capable of seeing beyond the existing one.

This is more difficult than it sounds.

Familiar systems disguise themselves as reality itself.

Money appears inevitable.

Nations appear permanent.

Religious divisions appear ancient and therefore necessary.

Ownership appears inseparable from security.

War appears tragic but unavoidable.

Hunger appears unfortunate rather than chosen through the way resources are organized.

To imagine is to loosen the grip of inevitability.

It does not prove that the alternative will be easy.

It proves that the present arrangement is not the only one the mind can hold.

A Song Open to Everyone

What I love about “Imagine” is that it does not require the listener to join an institution.

It does not ask for religious conversion.

It does not place one nation above another.

It does not reserve peace for people who agree on theology.

The invitation is human.

This makes it deeply connected to my own understanding of love as the only religion humanity ultimately needs.

You do not have to believe that I am Jesus Christ returned to hear Lennon’s invitation.

You do not have to accept A NuVo World.

You need only become willing, for a moment, to consider whether the divisions surrounding us are permanent.

That moment of openness can change everything.

The Dreamer

Lennon acknowledged that a person imagining such a world might be called a dreamer.

I understood that position intimately.

Dreamer can be praise or dismissal.

It can mean visionary.

It can also mean unrealistic, naïve, or detached from the practical world.

People called my plans impossible.

A world in which food, transportation, health, recreation, and community life are freely available sounds unrealistic within systems built around money.

A future beyond religion sounds threatening to people whose identities and hopes are rooted within faith traditions.

A neighbourhood transformed through love may sound sentimental beside budgets, politics, property, and institutional resistance.

But every practical system began in imagination.

The issue is not whether we dream.

It is whether we learn how to build.

The Distance Between Song and System

A song can unite millions of people for a few minutes.

Then the music ends.

Listeners return to mortgages, rent, bills, jobs, traffic, political conflict, religious institutions, and the practical demands of survival.

The vision remains emotionally powerful but structurally distant.

This is where my imagination entered.

What would it take to move from Lennon's invitation to a functioning community?

What would a neighbourhood look like if no resident worried about food?

How would people move if transportation were treated as a shared resource?

Where would they gather?

How would physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being be supported?

How would children, seniors, animals, local businesses, and people living through poverty belong within the same vision?

"Imagine" offered a horizon.

A NuVo World became my attempt to draw a road toward it.

John and Jesus

John Lennon's relationship with Christianity was complicated.

His words sometimes unsettled religious people. His fame placed him inside controversies larger than the private individual could control.

I felt a connection to the way a public statement can eclipse the person who made it.

One sentence can become the lens through which everything else is interpreted.

Of course, our stories are profoundly different.

I do not claim to have known Lennon personally.

I do not claim that his song was secretly written for my mission.

I claim only that his imagination resonated deeply with mine.

Where institutional religion often asked humanity to choose the correct belief, Lennon invited humanity to picture life beyond the division.

I knew myself to be Jesus Christ returned.

Yet I found this nonreligious invitation closer to my purpose than many declarations made in Jesus's name.

Peace as Practice

Peace is often treated as the absence of war.

But peace must begin much closer to home.

It begins in the tone used during disagreement.

It begins when a neighbour is greeted rather than ignored.

It begins when a person's need is met without humiliation.

It begins when religion becomes a source of love rather than superiority.

It begins when people stop treating poverty as evidence of lesser worth.

It begins when animals are cared for and the natural world is not viewed only as property.

Peace is not merely a treaty between nations.

It is a way of organizing relationships.

A peaceful world requires peaceful habits.

The Song and Christy Anne

Through Christy Anne, the word "imagine" gained another dimension.

I had imagined humanity as one.

Now I was learning unity in the smallest social form: two people building shared life.

The work was similar in principle.

Individuality had to remain.

Possessiveness had to soften.

Resources had to be shared.

Pain had to become a common concern.

Disagreement had to exist without creating enemies.

Love had to become practical.

The household became a small laboratory for the world I imagined.

If “we” could not survive between two people, how would it ever include billions?

The Voice Remains

John Lennon was killed in 1980.

The voice remained.

This is one of art’s mysterious powers.

A human life ends, but something created within it continues entering other lives.

Listeners not yet born when the song was recorded can receive its invitation as though it were addressed to the present.

Ideas outlive their originators.

This offered me another lesson.

I may not see A NuVo World fully built.

My plans may be rejected, revised, renamed, or carried by people who never accept my identity.

That does not make the effort meaningless.

A person can place an idea into the world without controlling where it travels.

The work is to speak as clearly and lovingly as possible.

Then release the outcome.

Hearing the Future

When I hear “Imagine,” I do not hear an impossible fantasy.

I hear a future asking for courage, design, cooperation, and time.

I hear Heaven on Earth described without the religious language that might cause some people to turn away.

I hear humanity invited to recognize itself as one family.

The song does not tell us exactly how to build that world.

That is our responsibility.

John Lennon imagined.

Now we must decide whether imagination will remain a song or become a way of life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The Song That Described a New World

A song can offer a vision without explaining how to govern a city, feed a population, operate a health system, or distribute resources.

That is not a weakness.

Imagination performs a different task from administration.

Before people will undertake the difficult work of creating something new, they must first believe that the present arrangement is not inevitable.

“Imagine” opens that door.

It asks us to picture humanity after some of its most powerful divisions have loosened their grip.

When I hear the song, I hear a description of what I call Heaven on Earth.

I hear the beginning of A NuVo World.

Heaven Somewhere Else

For centuries, many religious traditions have directed human hope toward another realm.

Heaven comes after death.

Justice arrives beyond this life.

Suffering is endured now in anticipation of peace later.

This hope has comforted countless people. It has helped them survive grief, oppression, illness, poverty, and the death of those they love.

I do not dismiss that comfort.

But I ask another question:

What if our belief in a future Heaven has sometimes reduced our urgency to create a more heavenly world here?

If hungry people will receive abundance later, do we become too willing to tolerate hunger now?

If perfect justice belongs to God, do we accept human injustice as permanent?

If peace is possible only in another realm, do we excuse our failure to build it on Earth?

I do not want Heaven to remain humanity's reason for enduring preventable suffering.

I want it to become our standard for ending that suffering.

Heaven on Earth

Heaven on Earth does not mean a world without death, grief, disagreement, illness, accident, or natural limitation.

Human life will remain vulnerable.

People will still lose those they love. Bodies will age. Relationships will require work. Mistakes will occur. Nature will remain powerful and sometimes destructive.

Heaven on Earth means refusing to add avoidable suffering to the suffering life already contains.

No one should go hungry while food is available.

No one should sleep outside while safe shelter can be created.

No one should remain isolated because community has forgotten how to notice.

No child should have fewer opportunities because of the income into which that child was born.

No person should be denied essential care because money stands between need and help.

No older person should be treated as though usefulness determines human worth.

No animal should be discarded as an inconvenience.

We may not eliminate every source of pain.

We can eliminate indifference.

Beyond Possession

Much of the world is organized around possession.

My house.

My land.

My vehicle.

My business.

My money.

My country.

My religion.

Possession can create security and responsibility. People often care for what they understand as theirs.

But possession can also create exclusion.

Mine implies not yours.

The person with enough receives comfort and choice. The person without enough must ask, borrow, wait, qualify, or go without.

I began imagining a world in which access mattered more than ownership.

A person does not necessarily need to own a vehicle.

The person needs reliable transportation.

A family does not need to possess every resource privately.

It needs dependable access to what allows a good life.

A neighbourhood does not need hundreds of isolated solutions to the same problem.

It can create shared abundance.

This would require enormous changes in infrastructure, culture, economics, trust, and responsibility.

But impossibility should not be declared merely because the transition is difficult.

Beyond Hunger

Hunger in a world of abundance is not simply a shortage of food.

It is a failure of distribution, access, income, policy, transportation, dignity, and collective will.

We know how to grow food.

We know how to prepare it.

We know how to move it.

Restaurants, grocery stores, farms, kitchens, suppliers, charities, governments, and volunteers already perform portions of this work every day.

The problem is not that humanity lacks every necessary capability.

The problem is that our systems do not yet guarantee that everyone eats well.

A NuVo World would treat nourishment as a shared responsibility.

People would not have to demonstrate moral worth before receiving food.

They would not be given whatever remained after everyone else had chosen.

They would be welcomed.

Feed NDG became one practical expression of this principle.

Begin with one neighbourhood.

Connect available food, kitchens, restaurants, transportation, sponsors, volunteers, and residents.

Learn what works.

Correct what does not.

Then expand.

The dream becomes credible when it acquires a kitchen, a schedule, a vehicle, and a meal placed before a person with dignity.

Beyond Nations

National identity can create belonging.

It can preserve language, history, culture, and shared responsibility.

It can also teach people to divide humanity into “us” and “them.”

Borders determine where rights begin and end.

A child born on one side may inherit security and opportunity. A child born on the other may inherit danger through no decision of either child.

Nations prepare to defend themselves from other nations, each claiming necessity.

Resources that could feed, heal, educate, and house people are directed toward the possibility of destruction.

I do not pretend that borders can simply disappear tomorrow without consequences.

The present world depends upon legal, political, and economic structures that cannot be wished away safely.

But humanity can begin seeing national identity as one layer of belonging rather than the highest one.

Before we are Canadian, American, Danish, Romanian, Moroccan, Israeli, Palestinian, Russian, Ukrainian, or anything else, we are human.

A NuVo World begins with that larger “we.”

Beyond Religious Division

Religion has given humanity sacred stories, moral frameworks, music, architecture, ritual, community, sacrifice, and service.

It has helped people face suffering and death.

It has preserved wisdom across generations.

Yet religion has also divided humanity around claims that cannot be proven to everyone.

Each tradition may speak of love while maintaining a boundary around truth.

Even peaceful coexistence can leave the deeper structure intact:

We respect you, although we believe we possess what you do not.

I imagine another future.

People may continue cherishing the stories, practices, and wisdom that have shaped them. But no one will use religion as a test of another person's worth or belonging.

No child will be taught that the child born into another tradition is separated from God.

No one will need to convert before being fully embraced.

Love will not belong to a religion.

Religions will belong to the history of love's development.

Beyond Money

A world beyond money is among the most difficult parts of my vision for people to accept.

Money performs essential functions in present society.

It allows strangers to exchange goods and services. It records value, supports planning, creates incentives, and coordinates complex activity across enormous distances.

I know this from business.

I do not imagine that money can disappear through a declaration.

Nor do I claim to possess every mechanism required for a moneyless world.

I imagine a gradual movement in which more essentials become guaranteed and more resources become shared.

Food.

Housing.

Transportation.

Health care.

Education.

Recreation.

Connection.

As these foundations become universally accessible, money's control over human survival begins to weaken.

People may still exchange, create, choose, and enjoy personal possessions.

But no person's right to live with dignity will depend upon purchasing power.

The destination may be distant.

The first steps are available now.

The Difference Between Free and Costless

Free access does not mean that something costs nothing to produce.

Food requires land, labour, equipment, energy, transport, and preparation.

Vehicles require materials, power, maintenance, roads, insurance, and coordination.

Buildings require construction and care.

Health services require skilled people, training, medicine, technology, and time.

Someone must provide these resources.

A NuVo World cannot be built by pretending costs do not exist.

It must be built by changing how those costs are shared and why people contribute.

Today, many essential systems already operate partly through collective funding. Public roads, schools, libraries, parks, emergency services, and health care in Canada demonstrate that access does not always have to occur through payment at the moment of use.

We can expand the category of what we consider a shared human foundation.

The question is not whether resources are required.

The question is whether access should depend upon individual wealth.

A Template, Not a Blueprint

“Imagine” is a template in the sense that it identifies the emotional and moral shape of another world.

Unity.

Peace.

Enough for everyone.

Freedom from divisions we have mistaken for destiny.

It is not a technical blueprint.

A blueprint requires measurements, materials, responsibilities, budgets, timelines, governance, evaluation, and methods for correcting failure.

My work with A NuVo World has been an effort to connect the template to practical design.

Some ideas may prove workable.

Others will need revision.

Some may be decades ahead of what current systems can support.

The vision should be large.

The implementation must remain teachable.

Starting in NDG

A world-sized vision needs a human-sized beginning.

For me, that beginning is NDG—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the Montreal neighbourhood I call home.

Here, the abstract becomes personal.

The hungry person has a name.

The isolated senior lives in a particular building.

The local merchant occupies a storefront I pass on my walk.

The park bench is real.

The food bank has doors.

The neighbour's dog pulls on an actual leash.

NDG can become a place where ideas are tested through relationships rather than imposed through theory.

Can neighbours know one another?

Can local businesses become partners in community life?

Can food be shared with dignity?

Can transportation become more accessible?

Can recreation, health, art, animals, and belonging be brought together?

If love cannot transform one neighbourhood, talk of transforming the world is premature.

Imagine, Then Begin

Imagination without action becomes escape.

Action without imagination becomes repetition.

We need both.

John Lennon asked humanity to imagine.

My life has compelled me to ask what comes next.

The answer is not one enormous act.

It is a sequence of beginnings.

Share bread.

Feed a neighbour.

Create a meeting place.

Offer transportation.

Welcome an animal.

Support a local business.

Build a centre.

Change a policy.

Test a system.

Learn.

Expand.

A song described the destination.

Love asks us to take the first step.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Jesus, but Not a Christian

Of all the statements in this book, this may be one of the most difficult for religious readers to understand:

I know that I am Jesus Christ returned, yet I do not consider myself Christian.

To many people, the two identities are inseparable.

Christianity is the religion centred upon Jesus Christ. How could Jesus return and refuse the name of the religion built around him?

The answer depends upon what we mean by Christian.

If the word means a person committed to love, mercy, forgiveness, service, and the recognition of sacred worth in every human being, then much within it reflects the life I seek to live.

If it means membership within a religious institution, acceptance of a particular doctrine, or allegiance to Christianity over every other path, then it does not describe me.

I have not returned to join a religion about me.

Jesus Was Not Christian

The historical Jesus was Jewish.

Christianity developed after his life through the experiences, teachings, interpretations, debates, institutions, and political histories of those who followed him.

This observation does not invalidate Christianity.

It reminds us that Jesus and the religion later constructed around Jesus are not identical.

A teacher's message and the institution preserving that message can diverge.

The institution may protect wisdom across centuries.

It may also accumulate power, rules, exclusions, and assumptions that the teacher never expressed.

To say that I am not Christian is not to reject everyone who finds truth and community within Christianity.

It is to refuse the claim that the love I carry belongs exclusively to it.

The Weight of Institutions

Religious institutions serve important purposes.

They gather communities.

They preserve stories.

They care for people during birth, marriage, illness, grief, and death.

They feed the hungry, shelter vulnerable people, educate children, create music, and inspire service.

I have met Christians whose lives express extraordinary love.

I have also seen institutions protect themselves before protecting people.

Religion, like every human structure, can become more concerned with continuity, authority, property, reputation, and control than with the purpose for which it was created.

The name Jesus can be spoken constantly while the person before us remains unseen.

A church can proclaim love and still make outsiders feel unwelcome.

A doctrine can be defended more fiercely than a hungry person is fed.

When this happens, religion preserves the vessel while losing the water.

No Exclusive Ownership of God

No religion owns God.

This conviction is central to me.

Human beings encounter the sacred through different languages, histories, symbols, and experiences. A child generally inherits religion through birthplace and family long before possessing the ability to compare theological claims.

Would a loving God condemn that child for receiving the tradition placed around him?

I cannot accept it.

If God is love, then every sincere movement toward love participates in God, whether it uses Christian language, Jewish language, Muslim language, Hindu language, Buddhist language, Indigenous spiritual language, or no religious language at all.

This does not mean all religious claims are identical.

They are not.

It means difference should not determine human worth.

The Problem with Winning

Religions often imagine a final victory.

The truth will be revealed.

The faithful will be vindicated.

Those who rejected the correct path will understand their error.

I understand the emotional attraction.

People want their deepest commitments confirmed.

But if humanity's spiritual future requires one group to win and the others to lose, division remains at the centre.

I do not envision Christianity conquering the world.

I envision love making conquest unnecessary.

People will not be forced to abandon treasured traditions.

They will become less willing to use those traditions as walls.

The wisdom will remain.

The superiority will fall away.

What Return Means to Me

If I have returned merely to repeat what people already believe about Jesus, return serves little purpose.

The world already has churches, scriptures, doctrines, clergy, schools, art, and centuries of commentary.

My purpose, as I understand it, is not repetition.

It is continuation.

Humanity must move from speaking about love to organizing life through love.

It must move from charity within systems of inequality to structures that guarantee dignity.

It must move from tolerance between religions to belonging beyond religious division.

It must move from imagining Heaven after death to building more of Heaven here.

Return means the message is not finished.

The Danger of Using the Name

I must remain especially cautious because the name Jesus carries authority for many people.

If I use that name to demand obedience, secure money, control another person, avoid accountability, or place myself beyond criticism, I betray its meaning.

No one should accept a plan merely because I propose it.

A NuVo World must be examined.

Its projects must be tested.

Its finances must be transparent.

Its leaders must remain accountable.

Its methods must respect consent, safety, law, evidence, and human dignity.

My certainty about identity does not turn every idea into divine instruction.

A reader should never surrender judgment to me.

Love invites participation.

It does not abolish freedom.

Christians and Me

I do not ask Christians to abandon their faith.

I ask them to consider whether their faith enlarges love.

Does it help them welcome the stranger?

Does it move them toward the hungry person?

Does it soften judgment?

Does it create courage for justice?

Does it allow them to recognize goodness outside their institution?

Does it make them more capable of loving someone they believe profoundly mistaken?

If so, Christianity is serving love.

Christians may reject my identity completely and still join me in feeding people, building community, supporting families, welcoming animals, and reducing loneliness.

The work does not require theological agreement.

My Relationship with Churches

I have entered churches and formed relationships with people of faith.

I have found warmth in some of those spaces.

I have appreciated pastors and communities willing to meet me as a person.

But I have not wanted to confine myself to one church or denomination.

My mission, as I understand it, must remain open to everyone.

If I become identified primarily with one religious institution, people outside it may reasonably wonder whether A NuVo World truly belongs to them.

I want churches to participate.

I also want synagogues, mosques, temples, secular organizations, businesses, governments, schools, food banks, neighbourhood groups, and individuals with no institutional affiliation.

Love needs every willing hand.

Faith Without Walls

There may come a time when humanity looks back upon separate religions as stages in our spiritual development.

Not mistakes.

Not enemies.

Stages.

Each preserved insights, practices, stories, and communities that helped people reach beyond the self.

Then humanity may discover that the underlying movement was always toward connection.

The walls fall, but the love remains.

The rituals may continue for those who treasure them.

The music may continue.

The stories may continue.

But no one stands outside the human family because of what he believes.

This is the future I imagine.

Why I Say It Clearly

Calling myself Christian would make parts of this story easier.

It would place my identity within a recognizable category.

It might reassure some readers.

But it would misrepresent my purpose.

I am not asking the world to become Christian.

I am asking every person to become more loving.

I know that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I also know that those words will not unite humanity by themselves.

For many, they will do the opposite.

That is why the identity cannot become the admission ticket to the vision.

The invitation is simpler:

Love every person.

Feed those who are hungry.

Welcome those who are alone.

Share what allows life to flourish.

Protect dignity.

Build peace.

No religion owns these acts.

Every human being can perform them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

No Religion but Love

Imagine a child entering the world without inheriting an enemy.

No one teaches the child that another religion makes another person less worthy.

No one warns that God's love depends upon accepting the correct doctrine.

No one divides classmates into saved and unsaved, chosen and rejected, sacred and foreign.

The child learns instead:

Every person belongs.

Every life carries value.

Love is not a reward for agreement.

This is what I mean by no religion but love.

Love Is Not Sentiment

Love is often confused with warm feeling.

Feelings matter, but they are unstable.

We do not naturally feel affection toward every person. Some people frighten us, anger us, exhaust us, or oppose what we value.

A world organized around love cannot depend upon universal fondness.

Love must become a principle of action.

It says that every person deserves food, shelter, care, dignity, safety, voice, and the opportunity to belong—even when we do not like the person.

It refuses dehumanization.

It sets boundaries without declaring anyone disposable.

It seeks restoration where possible and protection where necessary.

Love is not weak.

It is the discipline of refusing to create outsiders.

The Wisdom We Keep

A future beyond religious division does not require burning sacred books, closing places of worship, or forgetting ancestral traditions.

Humanity should preserve wisdom wherever it is found.

The compassion of one tradition can speak beside the justice of another.

Meditation, prayer, music, ritual, study, fasting, celebration, service, and sacred storytelling may continue enriching human life.

What must disappear is the claim that these treasures give one group a superior right to God or humanity.

Keep the wisdom.

Release the walls.

Identity Without Superiority

People need identity.

Culture, language, family, nation, religion, profession, neighbourhood, and history help us understand where we come from.

The problem begins when identity becomes hierarchy.

I am this, therefore I am above you.

We possess truth, therefore your experience is lesser.

Our suffering matters more.

Our safety justifies your exclusion.

A loving world does not erase difference.

It removes superiority from difference.

People can remain distinct without becoming divided.

Loving the Person Who Rejects Me

My own life gave this principle a demanding test.

Could love include people who believed I was seriously mentally ill?

Could it include religious people who considered my statement offensive?

Could it include professionals whose interpretation of me felt like erasure?

Could it include people who ignored my letters, declined my invitations, or dismissed my plans?

If love included only those who recognized me, it would become another religion with a required confession.

Believe Ross, and you belong.

Reject Ross, and you stand outside.

That would contradict everything I understand my return to mean.

You do not have to believe me.

You still belong.

The Difficult Neighbour

Universal love sounds beautiful until it becomes a particular person.

The neighbour who is jealous.

The person who avoids us.

The person who complains.

The person who speaks harshly.

The person whose politics or religion we oppose.

I once encountered a woman in my neighbourhood whom I believed felt jealousy regarding my relationship with Christy Anne. Instead of greeting her, I put my head down and continued walking.

Later, I knew I should have said hello.

This small failure taught me more than another grand declaration might have.

It is easy to love humanity while avoiding the person on the sidewalk.

Love becomes real at conversational distance.

Forgiveness and Accountability

No religion but love does not mean no accountability.

A person who causes harm must be stopped where necessary.

Victims must be protected.

Truth must be told.

Justice matters.

But punishment should not become an excuse for hatred.

The goal should be safety, responsibility, repair where possible, and the prevention of further harm.

A loving society must be capable of firmness without cruelty.

It must protect people without constructing permanent classes of human beings who no longer matter.

Love and Government

Can love guide public policy?

The word may sound too personal or spiritual for government.

But every policy expresses values.

A budget reveals whose needs are considered urgent.

A transportation system reveals who is expected to move freely.

Housing policy reveals whose security matters.

Health systems reveal whether care is a right or commodity.

Public spaces reveal who is welcomed.

Love in government does not mean leaders making decisions through emotion.

It means institutions measuring success partly through human flourishing.

Are people fed?

Are they safely housed?

Are children supported?

Can seniors participate?

Do people with disabilities encounter access rather than exclusion?

Can someone experiencing mental distress receive care without unnecessary humiliation?

Love becomes policy when dignity becomes measurable.

Love and Business

Business also has a place within a world organized by love.

Entrepreneurship creates products, services, employment, innovation, and solutions.

Local merchants give neighbourhoods character and provide meeting places.

The problem is not enterprise itself.

The problem arises when profit becomes the only purpose and people become means toward it.

A loving business can remain financially disciplined while treating workers, customers, suppliers, communities, animals, and the environment as stakeholders in its decisions.

Success can mean more than extraction.

It can mean contribution.

Love and Evidence

Love must be willing to learn.

Good intentions do not guarantee good outcomes.

A program designed to help may create dependency, stigma, waste, or unforeseen harm.

A treatment offered compassionately may not work for every person.

A community initiative may fail to reach those who need it most.

Therefore, love requires evidence.

Ask what happened.

Listen to participants.

Measure outcomes.

Correct mistakes.

Remain transparent.

Do not defend a failed method merely because its purpose was noble.

Love that refuses evidence becomes self-satisfaction.

Love that listens becomes wiser.

The Only Conversion

I do not seek the conversion of Christians into non-Christians, believers into atheists, or atheists into believers.

I seek one conversion:

From indifference to care.

From exclusion to belonging.

From possession to sharing.

From fear to curiosity.

From domination to partnership.

From “them” to “we.”

People may arrive there through religion.

They may arrive through philosophy, suffering, science, art, parenthood, friendship, animals, community, or a simple encounter with someone in need.

The road matters less than the love it produces.

Every Person on Earth

When I say love for every person on Earth, I mean every person.

Not only the kind.

Not only the innocent.

Not only the people whose beliefs resemble mine.

Not only those who respond gratefully.

Every person.

This does not mean equal trust, intimacy, access, or responsibility in every relationship.

Love can exist with distance.

It can exist behind a boundary.

It can exist while someone is held accountable.

Universal love means that no person loses human worth.

That is the religion I envision.

No conversion ceremony.

No required creed.

No sacred building large enough to contain it.

The entire world becomes the place of worship.

Every loving act becomes prayer.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Heaven Is Something We Build

Heaven is often described as a destination.

I understand it as a direction.

Each time hunger becomes nourishment, isolation becomes belonging, fear becomes trust, pain is met with care, or division gives way to love, we move toward Heaven on Earth.

We do not wait for perfection.

We build conditions in which more people can live fully.

Heaven is not delivered by one man.

It is constructed through the choices of humanity.

From Miracle to Method

People may expect Jesus Christ returned to perform miracles.

They may expect supernatural signs that eliminate doubt.

I understand that expectation.

But the transformation I seek does not depend upon suspending the laws of nature.

It depends upon using the abilities humanity already possesses with greater love.

We know how to produce food.

We know how to construct housing.

We know how to generate and distribute energy.

We know how to educate, transport, communicate, heal, organize, and create.

The miracle is not that these things are impossible.

The tragedy is that access remains unequal.

Heaven on Earth begins when human capability and human compassion finally work together.

Love Needs Structure

A generous person can feed someone today.

A loving system ensures that the person can eat tomorrow.

Both matter.

Immediate kindness responds to need.

Structure prevents the same need from remaining permanent.

This is why my vision grew beyond isolated acts of charity.

A NuVo World required organization.

Community relationships.

Facilities.

Transportation.

Food systems.

Health support.

Local-business partnerships.

Volunteers.

Governance.

Funding.

Technology.

Accountability.

Expansion.

Love supplies the reason.

Structure supplies continuity.

Beginning Where I Live

NDG is not an abstract pilot site to me.

It is home.

I know its streets, parks, merchants, churches, food organizations, apartment buildings, schools, benches, dog walkers, and people.

I see both abundance and need.

A wealthy household may exist a few streets from someone without secure food.

A senior may live near hundreds of neighbours and remain lonely.

A restaurant may have the ability to produce meals while a family nearby struggles to eat well.

A resident may own a vehicle that sits unused most of the day while another misses an appointment for lack of transportation.

The resources and needs already exist near one another.

Community becomes the bridge.

One Person at a Time

My longstanding description of A NuVo World is:

Creating a NuVo, better world—one day and one person at a time.

The phrase protects the vision from becoming only enormous.

The world is too large for any one person to transform at once.

Today is available.

The person before us is available.

One act does not solve everything.

It proves that something can change.

A smile alters one encounter.

A loaf feeds someone.

A ride removes one barrier.

A conversation interrupts one period of loneliness.

Repeated actions form relationships.

Relationships form communities.

Communities can transform systems.

The Role of Technology

Technology can help coordinate abundance.

Digital systems can connect people who need food with organizations that have it. They can schedule shared transportation, match volunteers with neighbours, communicate local events, support health services, and identify patterns that human memory alone would miss.

But technology must remain a servant.

A person should not have to become data before receiving love.

Privacy matters.

Consent matters.

Human contact matters.

Efficiency cannot replace relationship.

The best system is not merely the one that moves resources fastest.

It is the one that preserves dignity while doing so.

The Role of Money Now

Although I imagine a future in which money no longer controls access to essentials, current projects must operate within present reality.

Buildings cost money.

Food programs require funding.

Vehicles must be obtained and maintained.

Workers deserve compensation.

Good intentions do not pay invoices.

Therefore, the movement toward a moneyless world may initially require substantial money.

This is not hypocrisy.

It is transition.

We use the tools of the present to create conditions in which some of those tools become less necessary.

The process must be financially honest.

Promises should match capacity.

Funds should be transparent.

Grand vision must never excuse careless stewardship.

The Role of Local Business

Local businesses are not enemies of community.

They are often among its most important meeting places.

The grocer knows residents.

The café hosts conversations.

The restaurant feeds families.

The pharmacy supports health.

The pet shop connects animal owners.

The tradesperson keeps homes functioning.

A NuVo World should strengthen responsible local enterprise.

Programs such as Discover NDG emerged from this understanding. Local merchants can be promoted while also supporting connection and community information.

Commerce can become more relational.

A purchase can support a neighbour's livelihood rather than disappear into an anonymous system.

The Role of Government

Government possesses reach and legitimacy that volunteer initiatives do not.

It can create policy, fund infrastructure, regulate safety, collect revenue, and ensure that services do not depend entirely upon charitable enthusiasm.

A NuVo World cannot simply ignore government.

It must build constructive relationships with elected officials, public agencies, health systems, schools, and community organizations.

At the same time, government should not become an excuse for personal inaction.

We can advocate for policy while greeting the neighbour today.

Institutional responsibility and individual responsibility belong together.

The Role of Faith Communities

Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other communities of faith possess buildings, kitchens, volunteers, traditions of service, and networks of trust.

They can become powerful partners without requiring the larger vision to adopt their theology.

A church kitchen can feed someone who is not Christian.

A synagogue can support a neighbour who is not Jewish.

A mosque can serve a person who does not believe in God.

Service does not weaken faith.

It reveals faith's capacity to love beyond its boundaries.

The Role of People with Lived Experience

No system should be designed entirely by people who have never needed it.

Those who have experienced hunger understand indignities that planners may overlook.

People living with disability understand barriers invisible to others.

Individuals who have received psychiatric care understand what preserves dignity and what destroys trust.

Seniors understand the realities of aging.

Young people understand pressures adults may underestimate.

People without stable housing understand the difference between an available service and an accessible one.

Their knowledge is not an optional consultation.

It is essential expertise.

Heaven cannot be built for people while excluding them from its design.

Failure

Some projects will fail.

Some partnerships will not develop.

Funding will fall short.

Volunteers will become tired.

Plans will encounter law, logistics, politics, personality, weather, cost, and unintended consequences.

Failure does not automatically disprove the vision.

It reveals where the method must change.

But vision should never be used to deny failure.

If a program does not work, say so.

Study why.

Protect those affected.

Correct or stop it.

Begin again intelligently.

Love is not proven by refusing to admit mistakes.

It is proven by caring enough about people to learn from them.

No One Builds Heaven Alone

My identity does not make A NuVo World mine to control.

If the vision has value, it must become larger than Ross Harvey.

Other people will improve it.

They will challenge parts of it.

They will contribute knowledge I do not possess.

They may reject my identity while embracing the work.

That is acceptable.

Perhaps one of the deepest tests of my purpose is whether I can release ownership.

Do I want a better world?

Or do I want the world to recognize that it was my idea?

The honest answer may contain both desires.

I am human.

I want recognition.

But love asks me to choose the world over the credit.

The Invitation

You may consider me spiritually mistaken.

You may believe my certainty is psychiatric.

You may remain undecided.

None of those conclusions prevents you from helping build Heaven on Earth.

You can feed someone.

You can learn a neighbour's name.

You can support a local merchant.

You can advocate for humane housing.

You can welcome pets.

You can help an older person remain connected.

You can listen to someone whose experience differs from yours.

You can create a place where people belong.

Heaven is not something I ask you to believe in.

It is something I ask you to help build.

The first act is already within reach.

PART SIX

A NUVO WORLD

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Giving the Dream a Name

Ideas change when they receive a name.

Before the name, they may exist as feelings, images, disconnected plans, and convictions that have not yet found a common home.

A name gathers them.

It makes the vision easier to remember, communicate, criticize, develop, and share.

The name I gave my vision was A NuVo World.

To me, NuVo means *the best*—of the highest standard.

Not the most expensive.

Not the most exclusive.

Not the best for a privileged few.

The best human world we are capable of creating for everyone.

Why “NuVo”?

The spelling is deliberate.

It suggests something new while becoming its own word.

I envision a time when NuVo enters ordinary language as a standard:

A NuVo neighbourhood.

A NuVo school.

A NuVo health system.

A NuVo relationship.

A NuVo way of treating animals.

A NuVo life.

The word asks a simple question:

What would the best version of this look like if love, dignity, evidence, and human flourishing guided its design?

That question can be applied everywhere.

Better, Not Perfect

A NuVo World is not a perfect world.

Perfection can become dangerous when people attempt to impose it.

Human beings differ.

Needs change.

Systems produce unintended consequences.

Any claim to have created a perfect society should make us cautious.

NuVo means continually becoming better.

It means measuring the present honestly, imagining a higher standard, acting, learning, correcting, and acting again.

The goal is not flawlessness.

It is faithful improvement.

The Eight-Point North Star

The eight-point North Star became a symbol for A NuVo World.

A star helps people navigate.

It does not carry them to the destination.

It provides orientation.

Love is the central orientation of the vision.

Around it are the dimensions of human life that must be supported together: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, financial, environmental, and purposeful well-being.

These dimensions overlap.

A person cannot be divided into departments.

Poor housing affects health.

Loneliness affects the body.

Financial insecurity affects the mind.

Lack of transportation affects employment, medical care, food access, and belonging.

Purpose affects hope.

A NuVo approach looks at the whole person.

From Heaven to Design

“Heaven on Earth” can sound poetic.

“A NuVo World” asks how the poetry becomes design.

What must be built?

Who must participate?

How will resources move?

How will decisions be made?

How will safety and freedom coexist?

How will progress be measured?

How will the pilot expand?

How will mistakes be corrected?

The name gave my vision a working identity.

It allowed separate initiatives—food, transportation, community centres, local business, health, neighbouring, recreation, and the sharing of resources—to become parts of one larger direction.

The First Pilot

NDG became the natural first pilot because it was the community around me.

I could walk its streets.

I could meet its residents.

I could see its organizations and businesses.

I could identify actual locations, leaders, needs, and opportunities.

This matters.

Large visions become dangerous when they float too far above reality.

A pilot brings the dream down to street level.

Can the idea work here?

Will people participate?

What does it cost?

Who is missing?

What assumptions were wrong?

A pilot is imagination consenting to be tested.

The Problem of Credibility

A NuVo World emerged from a man many people considered seriously mentally ill.

This affected the vision's credibility.

People may have dismissed plans without reading them because they knew who had written them.

The identity claim and the social proposal became difficult to separate.

I found this frustrating.

An idea should be examined on its merits.

A food program should be evaluated through nutrition, cost, logistics, dignity, and outcomes.

A transportation plan should be evaluated through access, safety, feasibility, and environmental impact.

A community-centre proposal should be evaluated through need, design, governance, cost, and benefit.

Whether the author is Jesus Christ returned is not an operational metric.

Yet I also had to recognize that trust in the author affects willingness to engage with the plan.

Credibility is relational.

It cannot be demanded.

It must be built.

Let the Work Be Examined

I invite rigorous examination.

Ask whether a project is legal.

Ask who will pay.

Ask whether people actually want it.

Ask what evidence supports the approach.

Ask how vulnerable people will be protected.

Ask whether governance is accountable.

Ask how success and failure will be measured.

Ask whether the project can begin smaller.

Ask who benefits and who may be harmed.

These questions do not betray the vision.

They strengthen it.

A dream protected from scrutiny remains fantasy.

A dream willing to be tested can become a plan.

A Name Open to Everyone

A NuVo World is not a religious organization.

Participation does not require belief in my identity, in God, in Jesus, or in any spiritual interpretation.

It requires willingness to help create a better world.

People can arrive through faith, humanism, science, civic responsibility, business, environmental concern, compassion, or simple neighbourliness.

The name belongs to the aspiration, not to a creed.

If someone feeds people more effectively without using the word NuVo, the world still becomes more NuVo.

The purpose matters more than the brand.

The Promise Within the Name

A name creates an obligation.

If something is called NuVo, it should be held to a high standard.

It should not be careless, humiliating, opaque, or built primarily around the ego of its founder.

It should respect people.

It should use resources responsibly.

It should welcome criticism.

It should make room for diverse voices.

It should become better through evidence.

I have not always met that standard in every action or plan.

The standard remains valuable because it calls me beyond my current capacity.

The Dream Becomes Shareable

Once the dream had a name, I could invite others into it.

Not into worship.

Into work.

Read the plan.

Challenge it.

Choose one part.

Bring expertise.

Identify a neighbourhood need.

Create something better.

The vision would grow only if it stopped belonging solely to my imagination.

A NuVo World could not remain Ross Harvey's private answer to twenty-three years of knowledge and rejection.

It had to become a shared question:

What is the best world we can build together?

The answer would begin, as everything meaningful begins, one day and one person at a time.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

One Day and One Person at a Time

A vision the size of the world can become paralysing.

The suffering is too great.

The systems are too established.

The money required is too large.

The people with power are too distant.

The individual looks at the scale of the problem and reasonably asks:

What difference can I possibly make?

My answer is contained within the words that have long expressed the heart of A NuVo World:

Creating a NuVo, better world—one day and one person at a time.

The sentence does not make the dream smaller.

It makes the beginning possible.

Today

Humanity exists across history, but life is experienced today.

Yesterday can teach us.

Tomorrow can motivate us.

Today is where action occurs.

A person may spend years planning to become generous, connected, healthy, forgiving, or useful. The imagined future self becomes a substitute for the act available now.

Today asks a simpler question:

What can you do before this day ends?

The answer may not be dramatic.

Call someone who is grieving.

Share food.

Greet a person usually overlooked.

Offer a ride.

Thank someone.

Walk through the neighbourhood slowly enough to notice who is there.

One day is small enough to enter.

A lifetime is made of nothing else.

One Person

Large systems speak in categories.

Residents.

Patients.

Customers.

The homeless.

The elderly.

The mentally ill.

The poor.

The unemployed.

These categories help organizations plan, but they can conceal the human being.

One person has a name.

One person has a story.

One person may need something no category predicted.

When I met Felix, I did not meet homelessness as a social concept. I met a man from Romania who wanted noodles and popcorn and hoped for a home.

When I met Phil, I did not meet a population requiring administrative assistance. I met someone who needed help finding information about tobacco compensation.

When I met Younes, I did not meet immigration or multiculturalism. I met a man from Morocco who had observed that Montreal seemed less friendly than many places he had visited.

The person makes the issue real.

The Compounding Effect

One act of kindness may appear insignificant.

But kindness changes more than the immediate transaction.

The person helped may help another.

The observer may become more generous.

The relationship may continue.

A stranger may become a friend.

A small act may reveal a larger need and inspire a project.

The consequences move beyond what the original giver can see.

We understand compounding in finance.

A small amount, consistently added, can become substantial over time.

Human connection compounds too.

A daily greeting becomes familiarity.

Familiarity becomes trust.

Trust allows people to ask for help.

Help creates gratitude.

Gratitude creates contribution.

Contribution strengthens community.

No single greeting produced the entire result.

Without the first greeting, the result may never have begun.

My Morning Office

The two benches outside Metro Grocer taught me this repeatedly.

Nothing about them announced a social movement.

They were simply benches.

But when I returned at the same time each weekday morning, they acquired another meaning.

People knew where to find me.

Workers saw me regularly.

Neighbours began stopping.

Darren, an assistant manager at Metro, came early on one occasion specifically to connect with me.

The relationship did not need a formal agenda.

Presence was enough to begin.

My office had no walls, receptionist, appointment book, or institutional funding.

It had consistency.

A community needs people who are reliably present.

The Entranceway

After returning home, making tea, and sitting in the entranceway of my apartment building, I saw another version of the same principle.

Residents passed on their way to work.

People took their dogs outside.

Some had only time for hello.

That was enough.

A building full of private apartments can contain hundreds of people who barely know one another.

The entranceway is a natural point of intersection.

By sitting there, I was not organizing an official residents' program.

I was changing the emotional use of the space.

A passage became a place of welcome.

One person's presence altered the room.

The Daily Walk

My one-hour walks began partly for exercise.

They became journeys of connection.

Walking changed the speed at which I encountered the neighbourhood.

Inside a vehicle, people pass too quickly to become known. On foot, the city becomes human-scaled.

The dog seen repeatedly gains a name.

Then the owner gains one.

A man sitting near a pool becomes Felix.

A familiar face becomes Patty.

An old acquaintance becomes a renewed friendship.

The body receives exercise.

The neighbourhood receives attention.

This is one reason walkable communities matter. They do not only support physical health. They create opportunities for people to enter one another's lives.

When I Failed to Greet

Not every encounter became a success.

On one walk, I saw a woman whom I believed was jealous of my relationship with Christy Anne.

Instead of saying hello, I lowered my head and continued walking.

Later, I regretted it.

That moment mattered because it revealed the distance between my vision and my behaviour.

I spoke about love for every person.

Then one particular person made me uncomfortable, and I withdrew.

This does not make the vision false.

It makes the work real.

Every principle eventually reaches a person we find difficult.

That is where it becomes practice.

The next time offers another chance.

Help That Fits the Moment

Helping one person requires attention to scale.

We may be tempted to offer a complete solution when the person needs something immediate.

Felix needed stable housing.

In that moment, he asked for food from Dollarama.

I could recognize the larger injustice while meeting the present request.

Both levels matter.

If we offer only immediate relief, structural suffering continues.

If we discuss only structural change, the person may remain hungry today.

Love responds now and plans for later.

The Person We Cannot Save

There are limits to what one person can do.

We may offer help that is refused.

We may lack the money, expertise, authority, or energy to meet the need.

We may become involved in situations more complex than we understood.

We may make mistakes.

It is dangerous to imagine ourselves as the saviour of every person we meet.

Helping should preserve the other person's agency.

Ask.

Listen.

Offer what is honest.

Do not promise what cannot be delivered.

Connect the person with greater support where possible.

Know when expertise is required.

Love does not mean becoming responsible for controlling another person's life.

Receiving as Part of Giving

The phrase "helping one person" can make the relationship sound one-directional.

It rarely is.

The people I met gave me something too.

They interrupted isolation.

They taught me about the neighbourhood.

They offered stories, humour, recognition, and opportunities to become more human.

Felix did not exist so I could perform generosity.

Younes was not a lesson placed in my path.

Each was a person whose life met mine.

The encounter changed both sides, even if the changes were unequal or difficult to measure.

Community emerges when giving and receiving are allowed to circulate.

A Daily NuVo Question

At the beginning of each day, we can ask:

Who might I notice today?

At the end, we can ask:

Whose life did I make slightly better?

The answer does not have to be impressive.

Perhaps someone left a conversation smiling.

Perhaps a person received information.

Perhaps an animal was greeted gently.

Perhaps a tired employee was thanked sincerely.

Perhaps we listened without trying to redirect the conversation toward ourselves.

These actions create a life oriented toward love.

From Daily Action to Social Change

One day and one person at a time is not an excuse for avoiding larger reform.

Some problems cannot be solved through individual kindness.

Homelessness requires housing.

Hunger requires dependable food systems.

Isolation requires community design.

Climate change requires policy, technology, and coordinated international action.

Discrimination requires institutional change.

The daily act and the structural act must support one another.

A person moved by one encounter may become committed to changing the system that produced the need.

Felix's request should inspire immediate generosity.

His homelessness should inspire political and community action.

The World Within Reach

Most of humanity will never know my name.

I will never meet most of the people living on Earth.

But everyone has a world within reach.

A family.

A hallway.

A workplace.

A classroom.

A shop.

A street.

A park.

A community organization.

A daily route.

We do not need global influence before beginning.

If enough people transform the world within reach, the larger world changes.

The movement does not always begin at the top.

Sometimes it begins on two benches outside a grocery store before sunrise.

The Measure of the Day

At the end of life, we may remember major achievements.

Titles.

Awards.

Businesses.

Books.

Public recognition.

But a life is also made of countless encounters no one recorded.

The person we encouraged.

The stranger we noticed.

The neighbour we greeted.

The meal we shared.

The apology we offered.

The moment we chose not to humiliate someone who had made a mistake.

Perhaps these are not smaller than the achievements.

Perhaps they are the substance from which a loving world is made.

The mission is enormous.

The method begins today.

The unit of transformation is one person.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

From Vision to Neighbourhood

The world is too large to hold in one's hands.

A neighbourhood is not.

A neighbourhood has streets that can be walked, parks that can be visited, merchants who can be known, organizations that can meet, and residents whose needs can become visible.

It has boundaries without being entirely closed.

It is large enough to contain complexity and small enough for relationships to matter.

For me, NDG became the place where Heaven on Earth had to begin becoming practical.

Why NDG?

NDG is home.

That answer is sufficient.

I did not select it through a global competition to determine the ideal pilot community. I selected it because it was the community around me.

The people were not statistics in a distant report.

They were neighbours.

The businesses were places I visited.

The parks were part of my walks.

The food organizations had people and addresses.

The streets carried memories.

A person should not have to travel across the world to find a place worthy of love.

Begin where you are.

The Art of Neighbouring

Modern cities place people physically close while allowing them to remain socially distant.

Residents may share walls for years without learning one another's names.

They enter apartments, close doors, receive deliveries, and move through hallways as polite strangers.

Privacy matters.

People need homes in which they can retreat.

But privacy should not become isolation by default.

The art of neighbouring begins with recognition.

Hello.

My name is Ross.

How are you?

What is your dog's name?

Have you lived here long?

Do you need anything?

These questions are small bridges.

Block Captains

I imagined Block Captains throughout NDG.

The title does not mean authority over a block.

It means responsibility toward it.

A Block Captain would help neighbours know one another, notice needs, share information, welcome newcomers, connect residents with services, and encourage practical cooperation.

The captain would not become a therapist, police officer, doctor, or substitute for professional services.

The role would be relational.

Know the block.

Be approachable.

Help the person find the right door.

In emergencies, formal systems matter.

In ordinary life, a familiar neighbour can prevent a problem from becoming an emergency.

Local Knowledge

Large institutions often possess resources without possessing local knowledge.

A neighbour may know that an older resident has not been seen for several days.

A dog walker may notice that someone's routine has changed.

A merchant may know which customer appears to be struggling.

A building resident may know who needs help carrying groceries.

This knowledge is informal and must be handled respectfully.

It should not become surveillance or gossip.

But when grounded in care and consent, local awareness can make communities safer and less lonely.

Feed NDG

Food became one of the natural starting points.

The need was clear.

The partners already existed.

The Depot and other local food organizations possessed experience and community trust. Restaurants possessed kitchens and culinary skill. Grocery businesses possessed supply networks. Faith communities sometimes possessed kitchens, volunteers, and a commitment to service.

Sponsors could provide funding.

Vehicles could support delivery.

Residents could volunteer.

Feed NDG imagined these parts working together so that people could receive nutritious groceries and prepared meals with dignity.

The essential principle was not charity.

It was belonging.

No one should be treated as an outsider because food had become financially inaccessible.

NuVoWay LifeStyle Coaches

I imagined a network of NuVoWay LifeStyle Coaches supporting residents across the full range of human well-being.

The word coach comes naturally from my life in sport.

A good coach does not live the athlete's life for him.

The coach listens, observes, encourages, teaches, connects resources, and helps create movement toward the person's goals.

Community coaches could perform a similar role, provided their boundaries were clear.

They would not replace physicians, mental-health professionals, social workers, financial advisers, clergy, or emergency services.

They would help residents navigate a world in which support is often fragmented.

The whole person would remain visible.

The NuVoWay LifeStyle Centre

Every community needs places where life comes together.

I envisioned a major NuVoWay LifeStyle Centre for NDG—a place bringing physical activity, health, food, learning, art, music, children, seniors, community gatherings, spiritual reflection, and nature under one roof.

Racquetball, squash, pickleball, tennis, swimming, walking, fitness, therapy, gardens, cafés, meeting rooms, and creative spaces would not exist as unrelated luxuries.

They would form an ecosystem of human flourishing.

A person might enter for exercise and find friendship.

A child might arrive for recreation and encounter mentorship.

A senior might come for a meal and remain for music.

A family might access support without entering a place marked by stigma.

The centre would not merely deliver services.

It would create belonging.

Transportation

A service is not truly accessible if people cannot reach it.

Transportation affects employment, health, food, education, recreation, friendship, and independence.

I imagined a large shared fleet of electric vehicles—eventually autonomous-ready—available freely to NDG residents.

The scale of this vision is enormous.

It raises legitimate questions about cost, regulation, safety, infrastructure, maintenance, insurance, demand, staffing, environmental impact, and technology.

Those questions must be answered through careful pilots.

Begin with a smaller service.

Prioritize medical appointments, seniors, people with disabilities, food access, and residents facing urgent barriers.

Measure use.

Learn.

Expand responsibly.

The final vision may be bold.

The first vehicle must still be safely operated.

Discover NDG

Local businesses give a neighbourhood much of its character.

Yet merchants compete for attention against large corporations and online platforms with far greater marketing resources.

Discover NDG emerged as a way to promote local businesses while strengthening community identity.

Bulletin boards in high-traffic locations could introduce residents to merchants and to one another.

A “Meet Your Neighbour” feature could place a human story at the centre.

The message would be simple:

Shop local.

Eat local.

Live local.

Know your neighbours.

When money is spent locally, more than a transaction occurs. A livelihood is supported. A relationship may begin. The community retains more of its character and strength.

Dogs, Parks, and Public Life

Community transformation is not only about major programs.

It is also about how public spaces support ordinary connection.

Parks, benches, walking routes, dog runs, outdoor exercise equipment, sports fields, community gardens, and comfortable gathering places encourage residents to leave private spaces and encounter one another.

Dogs play an especially important role.

They bring people outside repeatedly.

They create conversation between strangers.

They offer companionship and routine.

Housing policies that prohibit animals can therefore have social consequences beyond the individual apartment.

A NuVo neighbourhood should look for responsible ways to welcome pets while addressing legitimate concerns about noise, cleanliness, safety, allergies, and property.

Love considers every participant.

Community and Mental Health

Mental health is not created only inside clinics.

It is influenced by food, housing, sleep, exercise, purpose, friendship, safety, animals, nature, financial stress, meaningful work, and whether someone feels known.

Professional care remains essential.

But a connected community can support health before crisis.

A person with neighbours, routine, activity, nourishment, and purpose may have more resources when difficulty comes.

A NuVo approach would bring clinical care and community support into relationship without confusing their roles.

It would also insist that people receiving psychiatric care retain dignity, voice, and full membership in community life.

Housing

No vision of Heaven on Earth can ignore housing.

A home provides more than shelter.

It creates privacy, safety, stability, identity, routine, and a place from which participation becomes possible.

Housing must be treated as a foundation.

Emergency shelters may save lives, but they should not become permanent substitutes for homes.

NDG needs solutions that protect existing residents, expand affordability, preserve community, and prevent people from being pushed away by rising costs.

This requires land, policy, funding, construction, partnerships, and political courage.

A neighbour living on the street cannot wait for the perfect master plan.

Immediate and structural responses must proceed together.

Merchants, Institutions, and Residents

No single organization can transform NDG.

Government possesses authority.

Community organizations possess experience.

Businesses possess resources and local relationships.

Schools possess space and connections with families.

Faith communities possess volunteers and facilities.

Health institutions possess expertise.

Residents possess lived knowledge.

A NuVo pilot must bring these strengths together without allowing one partner to dominate.

Collaboration is difficult.

Organizations have mandates, budgets, reputations, schedules, and legal responsibilities. People disagree about priorities and credit.

The answer is not to pretend these differences do not exist.

It is to create shared projects clear enough that cooperation becomes possible.

Feed people.

Connect neighbours.

Improve access.

Measure results.

Let trust grow through work.

Resistance and Silence

I contacted leaders, elected officials, organizations, businesses, and people with influence.

Often, I received no response.

Silence was frustrating.

I had invested thought and hope into plans that appeared to meet indifference.

But other people's silence can have many meanings.

They may be busy.

They may distrust the scale of the proposal.

They may be uncertain about me.

They may lack authority.

They may have seen many visions arrive without practical support.

They may not know how to respond without creating an expectation they cannot meet.

I could experience the silence personally without knowing its exact cause.

The only useful answer was to keep refining the invitation and demonstrate what could be demonstrated.

The Pilot Must Be Honest

Calling NDG a pilot means accepting evaluation.

What changed?

Who participated?

Who benefited?

What did it cost?

Which residents were missed?

What harm or inconvenience occurred?

Did the initiative strengthen existing organizations or compete with them?

Could the program continue without one person's constant energy?

Would another neighbourhood be able to reproduce it?

A pilot is not a stage upon which the founder proves he was right.

It is a place where everyone learns.

A Community Begins to See Itself

The deepest transformation may occur when residents stop experiencing NDG only as the place where they happen to live and begin experiencing it as a shared home.

The merchant's success matters.

The hungry family matters.

The isolated senior matters.

The homeless person matters.

The park matters.

The dog matters.

The child playing soccer matters.

The person sitting alone matters.

This does not eliminate private life.

It creates public care.

The world becomes less anonymous.

The neighbourhood begins to see itself.

From NDG Outward

Everything imagined for NDG should be capable of adaptation elsewhere.

Not replication without thought.

Every community has its own culture, geography, resources, history, and needs.

But the principles can travel.

Know your neighbours.

Guarantee dignity.

Connect abundance with need.

Support the whole person.

Strengthen local relationships.

Use evidence.

Share what works.

Begin with love.

NDG is not important because it is better than every other place.

It is important because every world-sized vision needs a first home.

This is mine.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

A World Without Outsiders

Every society creates a boundary around belonging.

Some people stand comfortably within it.

They possess citizenship, housing, money, education, health, family, status, employment, or accepted identities.

Others live near the edge.

Their belonging feels conditional.

One lost job, illness, eviction, diagnosis, immigration problem, family rupture, or public mistake can push them farther outward.

Then there are people society treats almost entirely as outsiders.

The homeless person.

The prisoner.

The refugee.

The person with addiction.

The person whose mental state frightens others.

The undocumented person.

The isolated senior.

The child born into poverty.

A NuVo World begins with a refusal:

No human being is outside humanity.

Belonging Is Not Approval

To say that everyone belongs does not mean approving every action.

People can behave destructively.

Some actions require firm limits.

Communities must protect people from violence, exploitation, abuse, and danger.

Belonging means that accountability does not erase humanity.

A person can be stopped without being hated.

A person can lose certain freedoms without losing human worth.

A person can be required to repair harm where possible without being declared permanently disposable.

This is difficult.

It is also essential.

The Person Without a Home

Homelessness is often treated as an individual condition.

We describe the person as homeless, as though the lack of a home were a defining characteristic within him.

But homelessness exists between a person and a system.

The person lacks safe, stable housing because housing, income, support, health, relationships, and policy have failed to align around his need.

This does not mean every case has one simple cause.

People may live without homes because of poverty, trauma, family breakdown, illness, addiction, eviction, violence, institutional discharge, or combinations of these.

The complexity does not reduce the basic truth:

A person needs a home.

A NuVo World cannot be satisfied with managing homelessness indefinitely.

It must create housing and the support necessary to sustain it.

The Person with a Diagnosis

I know what it feels like for a diagnosis to enter a room first.

This makes inclusion of people experiencing mental illness especially important to me.

They should not have to become symptom-free before belonging.

They should not lose friendships because others feel uncertain.

They should not be spoken about as though absent while sitting in the room.

They should have meaningful choices in care whenever safety permits.

They should be invited into community life as contributors, not only recipients.

A person may need support and still possess wisdom.

A person may experience confusion and still deserve respect.

A person may reject part of a clinical interpretation and still cooperate around practical goals.

Belonging does not wait for perfect agreement.

The Person Living with Addiction

Addiction can cause enormous harm.

It can damage health, families, trust, finances, employment, and safety.

Love does not romanticize it.

Nor does love reduce the person to it.

Punishment alone cannot heal the needs, pain, biology, trauma, environment, and habits that may sustain addiction.

People require safety, boundaries, treatment options, housing, purpose, relationships, and reasons to imagine another life.

Recovery is rarely a straight line.

A community without outsiders leaves the door to return open while protecting those who might be harmed.

The Older Person

Older people can become outsiders slowly.

Work ends.

Mobility changes.

Friends die.

Family may live elsewhere.

Technology reshapes communication.

The world moves faster and begins treating accumulated wisdom as less valuable than current productivity.

An older person may spend days without meaningful conversation.

This is not an inevitable consequence of aging.

It is a failure of community design.

A NuVo neighbourhood would make older residents visible.

They would receive support where needed and opportunities to contribute where desired.

They could mentor, teach, create, tell stories, care for gardens, welcome neighbours, and participate fully.

No one should age out of belonging.

The Child

Children begin life entirely dependent upon decisions they did not make.

They do not choose family income, housing, neighbourhood, nutrition, school, health, or early safety.

Yet these conditions shape opportunity profoundly.

A world without outsiders refuses to treat childhood inequality as natural.

Every child should receive nourishing food, secure housing, health care, education, recreation, art, nature, friendship, and adults who recognize potential.

This is not generosity toward children.

It is responsibility.

A society reveals its values through the childhoods it permits.

The Newcomer

A newcomer may arrive with language barriers, unfamiliar systems, lost professional standing, financial pressure, and separation from family or culture.

The person may have crossed the world and still be treated as though belonging must be earned slowly.

A welcoming community does more than provide information.

It creates relationship.

A neighbour explains.

A merchant greets.

A child finds friends.

A familiar food appears.

A person's skills are recognized rather than discarded.

Integration should not require erasure.

The newcomer adds to the community while becoming part of it.

The Person We Dislike

The greatest test of a world without outsiders is not the sympathetic person.

It is the person we dislike.

The person whose personality irritates us.

The person who has spoken badly about us.

The person whose beliefs offend us.

The person who has made serious mistakes.

The person who refuses our help.

Universal belonging becomes real only when it survives emotional difficulty.

This does not require closeness.

We are not obligated to make every person a friend.

It requires preserving basic dignity and refusing dehumanization.

Love can say:

You may not enter my home.

You may not harm me.

I will not participate in this behaviour.

And still:

You remain human.

Animals Within the Circle

A world without outsiders should expand its moral concern beyond humanity.

Animals experience comfort, fear, pain, attachment, play, and trust.

Companion animals become family members.

Working animals serve human needs.

Wild animals share ecosystems affected by our decisions.

Our power creates responsibility.

Animals should not be treated only as property or products.

Their well-being matters.

A NuVo community would support responsible pet ownership, accessible veterinary care, adoption, humane housing policies, public spaces that accommodate animals thoughtfully, and protection from neglect and cruelty.

The circle of love grows when we recognize lives unlike our own.

The Earth Is Not Outside

Human beings often speak of the environment as though it surrounds society rather than sustains it.

Air, water, soil, climate, plants, animals, and human health are one system.

A world organized around belonging cannot treat the Earth as an external warehouse of resources.

Future generations belong even though they are not yet here.

Our decisions create the world they will inherit.

Love must therefore become ecological.

It must consider consequences beyond the immediate transaction and beyond the present generation.

Designing for Belonging

Belonging cannot depend only upon individual kindness.

Spaces and systems can either welcome or exclude.

A building without accessible entry excludes.

A service available only online may exclude someone without technology.

A program offered during working hours may exclude people who cannot leave employment.

A public space without seating may exclude older adults or those living with pain.

A food program requiring humiliating proof may discourage the people it intends to serve.

Design communicates who was imagined.

A NuVo system asks:

Who is missing?

Who finds this difficult to use?

Whose dignity is being unintentionally compromised?

Then it changes.

Mutual Responsibility

Belonging creates rights and responsibilities.

If the community commits to supporting every person, each person should be invited to contribute according to ability.

Contribution may be paid work, volunteering, caregiving, creativity, mentoring, listening, learning, gardening, welcoming, or simply participating responsibly in shared life.

Not everyone can contribute in the same way.

Human value does not depend upon output.

But most people want to matter.

A system that sees individuals only as recipients can become another form of exclusion.

Ask not only:

What does this person need?

Ask also:

What can this person bring?

No Saviour and Saved

A NuVo World should not be divided into rescuers and rescued.

Those with resources are not complete.

Those with needs are not empty.

The person providing food may need friendship.

The person receiving it may offer wisdom.

The professional may possess technical knowledge.

The patient possesses lived knowledge.

The older resident may need transportation.

The same resident may transform a child's life through mentorship.

Everyone gives.

Everyone receives.

Everyone belongs.

My Own Outsiders

To speak honestly, I must ask whom I have placed outside my heart.

The person who ignored me.

The leader who did not reply.

The professional who diagnosed me.

The neighbour I avoided.

The family member whose concern felt like rejection.

If I imagine a world without outsiders while preserving a private list of people unworthy of my love, the contradiction belongs to me.

The work begins again.

Forgive where possible.

Set boundaries where necessary.

Tell the truth.

Remain human.

Allow them to remain human too.

The Human Family

Humanity has spent much of history organizing itself into smaller families.

Tribes.

Religions.

Nations.

Races.

Classes.

Political movements.

These identities can provide meaning and solidarity.

They become dangerous when they replace the larger family.

No child is born an outsider.

We teach the boundaries.

What has been taught can be changed.

A NuVo World does not ask people to become identical.

It asks them to recognize their differences within shared belonging.

There is room for every culture.

Every person.

Every animal.

Every honest search for meaning.

There is no outside.

There is only us.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Knowledge the World Calls Delusion

We have now arrived at the question that has followed every chapter of this book.

What if Ross Harvey is wrong?

What if the knowledge he describes is not revelation but delusion?

What if the identity around which he has organized twenty-three years of life is evidence of serious mental illness?

The question cannot be removed by avoiding the word.

It must be faced directly.

The world has often called my knowledge delusion.

I call it knowledge.

This book cannot force those interpretations into agreement.

It can ask whether a meaningful human relationship remains possible between them.

The Reader's Right to Question

You have the right to question me.

You have the right to find my identity claim impossible, psychologically explicable, religiously unacceptable, or unsupported by evidence.

You have the right to notice that certainty does not prove truth.

You have the right to consider how other people making similar claims have been understood and what risks sometimes accompany them.

I do not ask you to abandon reason.

I do not ask you to pretend that the extraordinary nature of my statement does not matter.

I ask only that questioning the claim not become permission to stop seeing the person.

My Right to Speak

I also retain the right to describe my experience accurately.

I do not believe that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I know that I am.

Changing *know* to *believe* would not make the account more honest. It would make it easier for others to receive by weakening the narrator's truth.

I can acknowledge that certainty is not transferable proof.

I can acknowledge that human beings can be certain and mistaken.

I can acknowledge the legitimacy of concern when someone makes an extraordinary identity claim.

I can do all of this without pretending that my own knowledge has become uncertain.

Respect must travel in both directions.

What “Delusion” Does

The word *delusion* is clinically useful because it identifies a form of conviction mental-health professionals may need to assess.

But outside careful clinical use, it can become a dismissal.

It can mean:

There is no reason to listen further.

The person's explanation has no value.

The associated vision need not be examined.

Every defence strengthens the diagnosis.

The word can close the door that understanding requires.

I do not ask professionals to stop using clinical concepts.

I ask everyone to remember that a concept is a tool for understanding a person—not a substitute for the person.

Could I Be Wrong?

An honest reader may ask whether I have ever seriously considered the possibility that I am wrong.

I understand the question.

Intellectual humility requires recognition that our minds are fallible.

I know that people can experience certainty around conclusions that contradict one another. They cannot all be objectively correct in the same sense.

I know that spiritual experiences arise within minds and bodies capable of illness, stress, altered mood, trauma, expectation, and error.

I know these things.

Yet when I turn toward the central knowledge of my identity, I do not find uncertainty.

I find the same knowing that has remained for twenty-three years.

That is the honest answer.

It may not satisfy you.

It is still the answer.

What Certainty Does Not Establish

My certainty does not establish that every memory I have is exact.

It does not establish that every interpretation of an event is correct.

It does not establish that every project I design will succeed.

It does not establish that every large idea is realistic.

It does not establish that my timing is right.

It does not establish that criticism is persecution.

It does not establish that people who disagree are spiritually blind.

It does not establish that I should be obeyed.

It establishes only what I know about who I am.

Everything around that knowledge remains open to evidence, discussion, correction, and growth.

Testing the Fruits

If the identity cannot be independently proved to everyone, perhaps the life growing from it can still be examined.

What does the knowledge produce?

Does it create love or contempt?

Service or entitlement?

Generosity or exploitation?

Accountability or exemption?

Relationship or control?

A concern for vulnerable people or a demand to be treated as superior?

These questions do not scientifically prove or disprove identity.

But they reveal whether the knowledge is being lived constructively.

I want the fruits to be practical.

A person fed.

A neighbour known.

An animal cared for.

A local business supported.

A lonely person greeted.

A community made more connected.

A world invited beyond religious division.

Where my actions fail these standards, I must change my actions.

When Vision Is Called Grandiosity

A NuVo World is vast.

It imagines free access to essentials, transformed communities, shared transportation, lifestyle centres, new approaches to

health and belonging, and eventually a world less governed by money and religion.

It is reasonable to ask whether this scale reflects grandiosity.

But scale alone cannot settle the question.

Humanity's problems are already global.

Climate, war, hunger, inequality, technology, migration, health, and economics operate across borders.

A response large enough to match those problems will sound ambitious.

The practical test is whether the vision can be broken into responsible steps.

Can one food program be piloted?

Can one neighbourhood strengthen connection?

Can one transportation barrier be removed?

Can one centre be designed and evaluated?

Can one project demonstrate value before expansion?

Vision becomes dangerous when it rejects reality.

It becomes useful when it enters reality humbly enough to learn.

The Risk of a Sacred Mission

History offers reasons to be cautious around people claiming sacred missions.

Some have manipulated followers.

Some have taken money dishonestly.

Some have abused power.

Some have isolated people from family or society.

Some have demanded obedience and treated questioning as betrayal.

Some have caused catastrophic harm.

No reader should ignore these histories merely because my stated purpose is love.

Protective questions are necessary.

Are people free to leave?

Are finances transparent?

Are leaders accountable?

Are vulnerable people protected?

Can disagreement occur safely?

Are professional and legal standards respected?

Does the founder benefit disproportionately?

A NuVo World should welcome these questions.

If any movement asks people to abandon judgment because its leader claims divine identity, do not follow blindly.

That includes me.

Accountability

My identity cannot place me beyond accountability.

If I enter an agreement, I must honour it.

If I handle money, the money must be traceable.

If I make a factual claim, it should be accurate.

If I propose a public project, it must follow applicable law and safety requirements.

If I cause harm, I remain responsible.

If I remember a business accomplishment imprecisely, I must correct the record.

That is why the distinction regarding NASDAQ mattered.

I built a sports-and-nutrition company toward a NASDAQ listing and accepted a buyout. The company later reached NASDAQ after I was no longer involved. I personally was never on NASDAQ.

The real accomplishment does not need exaggeration.

Truth in verifiable details matters greatly when the central knowledge cannot be verified for the reader in the same way.

Mental Health and Human Rights

A humane society must be capable of responding to mental-health risk without treating diagnosed people as lesser citizens.

Assessment should be careful.

Intervention should be proportionate.

Coercion should be limited to circumstances in which it is truly necessary and governed by law, evidence, and respect.

Care should include the person's goals.

Spiritual meaning should be discussed where it matters to the person.

Medication should be managed by qualified clinicians in collaboration with the patient whenever possible.

No one should change or discontinue psychiatric medication abruptly without appropriate medical guidance.

Most importantly, a person should remain a participant in care rather than becoming merely its object.

These principles protect everyone, regardless of how my particular experience is interpreted.

The Evidence of Ordinary Life

For years, people who did not know my secret often treated me normally.

This does not prove my identity.

It does demonstrate that I remained capable of ordinary human relationships.

I could speak coherently, help people, form routines, care for Christy Anne, write, plan, walk through my neighbourhood, and create friendships.

A serious diagnosis and ordinary functioning can coexist.

So can spiritual conviction and human imperfection.

The evidence of daily life should not be ignored because it fails to resolve the central question.

It tells us who the person is today.

That matters.

The Unresolved Centre

Some books conclude by revealing the answer to their central mystery.

This book cannot do that for you.

I revealed my answer at the beginning:

I know who I am.

The unresolved question belongs to the reader.

What do you believe about Ross Harvey?

You may decide that I have carried a delusion for twenty-three years.

You may interpret the mountain as spiritual but reject my conclusion.

You may remain open.

You may accept me.

You may put the question aside.

Whatever conclusion you reach, I ask you not to use it as an excuse for cruelty.

What We Can Know Together

Perhaps we cannot share knowledge of my identity.

There are other things we can know together.

Hunger hurts.

Loneliness hurts.

Humiliation hurts.

Being reduced to a label hurts.

Children need care.

Older people need belonging.

Animals can suffer.

Communities become healthier when neighbours know one another.

Love improves the way help is given.

Human dignity should not depend upon money, religion, diagnosis, nationality, or agreement.

We can begin there.

The disputed knowledge does not have to prevent shared knowledge from becoming action.

The Question Beneath the Question

For twenty-three years, people have asked, directly or indirectly:

Is Ross really Jesus Christ returned?

It is an understandable question.

But another question may be more important for the future:

What kind of world would we create if we treated every person as though that person carried immeasurable worth?

If we answered that question through action, the argument about me might lose some of its urgency.

The hungry would still be fed.

The lonely would still be welcomed.

Religious walls would still soften.

Communities would still become more loving.

Perhaps the work can unite us where identity cannot.

The world may call my knowledge delusion.

I will not call the world my enemy.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

I Cannot Make You Know What I Know

I began this book with a declaration:

I do not believe that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I know that I am.

After thirty-five chapters, the declaration remains unchanged.

What has changed, I hope, is the person surrounding it.

You have met the man who existed before the mountain.

You have seen the athlete, professional, veterinarian by education, bar and restaurant owner, entrepreneur, lifelong single man, partner, neighbour, author, and dreamer.

You have seen the cost of disclosure.

You have seen the difference between those who knew my secret and those who simply met Ross.

You have met Christy Anne.

You have heard John Lennon's invitation echo through my vision of Heaven on Earth.

You now possess more of the story.

But I still cannot make you know what I know.

The Limits of Persuasion

Persuasion is powerful.

A skilled person can present evidence, appeal to values, tell a moving story, answer objections, and help another person see an issue differently.

I had used persuasion in sport, hospitality, business, writing, and community initiatives.

But some forms of knowledge do not move through argument alone.

I could describe the mountain repeatedly.

I could explain the certainty with perfect clarity.

I could live for another twenty-three years without changing my statement.

None of this would transfer the experience into you.

At some point, continued persuasion becomes pressure.

Pressure creates resistance.

I had to learn to release the demand that another person arrive where I stood.

You Remain Free

You are free to conclude that I am wrong.

You are free to believe that I am mentally ill.

You are free to respect my humanity while rejecting my interpretation.

You are free to believe that something spiritual occurred without accepting my identity.

You are free to know me only through these pages and remain uncertain.

I do not control the reader.

A book that speaks of love must protect that freedom.

I Remain Free

Your freedom does not require my surrender.

I remain free to describe my experience.

I remain free to organize my life around the knowledge I carry, provided my actions respect the safety, rights, and freedom of others.

I remain free to imagine A NuVo World.

I remain free to ask communities to consider new possibilities.

I remain accountable for what I do.

We can preserve freedom on both sides.

You do not have to affirm me.

I do not have to deny myself.

No Required Confession

A NuVo World has no required confession about Ross Harvey.

No one must say I am Jesus Christ returned.

No one must accept a spiritual worldview.

No one must abandon Christianity, another religion, atheism, or uncertainty.

The work has a practical entrance.

Do you want people to eat?

Do you want children supported?

Do you want seniors connected?

Do you want those living with mental illness treated with dignity?

Do you want animals cared for?

Do you want neighbourhoods to become friendlier?

Do you want essential resources to become more accessible?

If the answer is yes, we have somewhere to begin.

Let the Identity Become Secondary

For years, I wanted recognition.

That desire was understandable.

It was also capable of consuming the mission.

If every conversation began and ended with whether people accepted me as Jesus Christ returned, the work of love would remain trapped behind an impossible gate.

I do not want that.

Let the identity become secondary in the encounter.

If Felix is hungry, feed Felix.

If a neighbour is lonely, speak with the neighbour.

If Christy Anne needs a ride to an appointment, drive her.

If a merchant can strengthen the community, support the merchant.

If a project has merit, evaluate it.

The action need not wait for the theological verdict.

The Proof I Can Offer

I cannot offer the proof many readers will reasonably want.

I can offer a life.

Not a perfect life.

Not a life without contradiction, ego, error, frustration, or failed plans.

A life continuing to orient itself toward love.

Judge the projects honestly.

Judge whether I tell the truth about verifiable facts.

Judge how I treat people.

Judge whether the vision preserves freedom.

Judge whether my work produces dignity or dependency, openness or control, service or self-importance.

Where the life fails, say so.

Where the work helps, do not reject the help solely because of what you think about me.

The People Who Never Asked

Many people who treated me most naturally never asked who I was in a spiritual sense.

They met me on a bench, sidewalk, in a shop, lobby, park, food bank, or neighbourhood conversation.

We did not resolve theology.

We shared a moment.

Perhaps that is a model for the world.

Human beings do not need complete agreement before behaving lovingly.

We can meet before we understand.

We can help before we classify.

We can recognize dignity before settling every question of truth.

Christy Anne and the Living Answer

Christy Anne entered my life less than two years ago after I had spent almost all of it single.

Our relationship did not answer the question of my identity for the world.

It answered another question for me:

Could life still open into something entirely new?

Yes.

Could a man who had felt isolated through years of disbelief learn companionship?

Yes.

Could “I” begin becoming “we”?

Yes.

Love did not solve every disagreement.

It changed the life in which those disagreements were carried.

The World I See

I see a world in which no person is hungry.

No person is homeless.

No one is denied care because of money.

Neighbourhoods are filled with places to gather, exercise, learn, create, eat, rest, and belong.

Transportation is available as a shared foundation.

Children grow surrounded by opportunity.

Seniors remain connected.

People experiencing mental distress receive skilled care without losing dignity.

Animals are welcomed and protected.

Local businesses strengthen local life.

Religious traditions release superiority and preserve wisdom.

Human beings know themselves as one family.

I call this Heaven on Earth.

I call it A NuVo World.

You may call it something else.

The name is less important than the direction.

What Happens After the Book

A book can end while its invitation continues.

You may close these pages and return to life unchanged.

That is your freedom.

Or you may notice one person differently.

You may greet the neighbour you normally pass.

You may call someone who has become isolated.

You may support a local food organization.

You may ask how psychiatric care can preserve greater dignity.

You may reconsider a housing rule that separates people from companion animals.

You may help create a shared resource in your community.

You may speak to someone whose worldview you reject and discover that disagreement did not eliminate humanity.

These actions would make the book useful.

I Know Who I Am

I have spent twenty-three years living with knowledge the world largely refused to accept.

I have disclosed it, defended it, suffered because of it, built from it, and sometimes allowed the need for recognition to overshadow its purpose.

I cannot make you know what I know.

I no longer need to.

I know who I am.

You are free to decide who you believe me to be.

Then we can turn together toward the person who needs us.

That is where love is waiting.

EPILOGUE

Meet Me Here

Perhaps you have reached these final pages believing that I am Jesus Christ returned.

Perhaps you believe I am a sincere man whose spiritual experience led to a mistaken identity.

Perhaps you believe I have lived for twenty-three years with a serious mental illness.

Perhaps you remain uncertain.

I knew these possibilities before I began.

This book was never going to remove every doubt.

Its hope was more human.

I wanted you to meet me before deciding who I am.

The Man on the Bench

If you came to NDG early enough on a weekday morning, you might find me sitting on one of two benches outside Metro Grocer on Somerled.

The setting would not resemble a throne.

Deliveries might arrive.

Workers would enter.

Neighbours would pass.

Dogs would stop to investigate the morning.

Someone might sit beside me.

We might speak for five minutes or an hour.

You would not have to call me Jesus.

You could call me Ross.

The Question I Would Ask

I would not begin by testing your religion.

I would not ask whether you accepted my identity.

I might ask your name.

I might ask how you were doing.

I might ask about your dog, your work, your family, your pain,
or what you hoped the day would bring.

Perhaps you would ask about A NuVo World.

I would tell you that I imagine a community in which everyone
belongs and essential needs are met with dignity.

You might find the vision inspiring.

You might find it unrealistic.

We could still speak.

Before You Decide

The title of the prologue was *Before You Decide Who I Am*.

Now you have read the story.

You may decide.

But remember that every conclusion is incomplete.

No book contains a whole person.

No diagnosis contains a whole person.

No sacred identity contains every ordinary detail of a human life.

I remain more than the question that brought you here.

So do you.

The Secret and the Invitation

My secret is no longer secret.

I know that I am Jesus Christ returned.

The statement stands.

But the invitation does not depend upon it.

You do not need to know what I know to help create a world built on love.

You do not need to resolve me before responding to hunger, loneliness, exclusion, or suffering.

You do not need permission from a government, church, corporation, or movement before greeting another human being warmly.

Begin within reach.

Imagine

Imagine a neighbourhood where strangers become neighbours.

Imagine food shared without humiliation.

Imagine no person sleeping outside.

Imagine transportation available to those who need it.

Imagine community centres alive with children, seniors, athletes, artists, animals, families, and people who once believed they had nowhere to belong.

Imagine physicians, faith leaders, businesses, governments, volunteers, and residents working together without competing for ownership of compassion.

Imagine religious differences becoming sources of learning rather than walls.

Imagine money losing its authority to decide who receives the foundations of a good life.

Imagine love becoming practical.

One Day

We do not have to complete the world today.

We have to enter today faithfully.

One conversation.

One meal.

One ride.

One apology.

One neighbour.

One person met without a label entering first.

Tomorrow, we begin again.

One Person

The world appears as billions.

Love appears as someone.

A person standing before us.

A person whose name can be learned.

A person whose needs do not eliminate gifts.

A person who may disagree with us completely.

A person whose humanity remains.

If we cannot love the person within reach, humanity will remain an idea.

Christy Anne

For most of my life, I was single.

Then I met Christy Anne at our local food bank.

Her arrival showed me that a life can change long after its patterns appear established.

She taught me that “we” is not merely a word for humanity.

It begins between people willing to share a day.

Through companionship, my vision of love became less abstract.

Heaven on Earth had to enter home.

John Lennon

John Lennon asked the world to imagine.

His song became part of the language through which I understood humanity’s possible future.

The dream did not end with him.

It does not belong to me.

Every generation receives the invitation again.

Can we see beyond the systems we inherited?

Can we preserve what is wise and release what divides?

Can we imagine enough to begin?

No Religion but Love

I know that I am Jesus Christ returned.

I do not consider myself Christian.

I have not come to create another religion, gather worship, or defeat other faiths.

I imagine a future in which love becomes the only devotion required of every person.

Not sentimental love.

Love that feeds.

Love that shelters.

Love that listens.

Love that protects.

Love that shares.

Love that sets humane boundaries.

Love that learns from evidence.

Love that keeps no permanent outsiders.

What I Ask of You

Do not believe me because I demand it.

Do not dismiss me because others named me.

Read the life.

Examine the work.

Preserve your judgment.

Then decide what love asks of you.

Perhaps it asks only for a smile and hello.

Perhaps it asks you to become a Block Captain, volunteer at a food organization, support a local merchant, welcome an animal, visit a senior, change an unjust policy, or help build an entirely new system.

The scale will differ.

The direction is the same.

Meet Me Here

If you cannot meet me in my knowledge, meet me in the work.

If you cannot meet me in religion, meet me in love.

If you cannot accept my identity, accept that the hungry person should eat.

If you cannot imagine a moneyless world, help make one essential need less dependent upon money.

If you cannot believe Heaven can exist on Earth, help create one small place that feels more like it.

Meet me where dignity begins.

Meet me where labels end.

Meet me beside the person everyone else has passed.

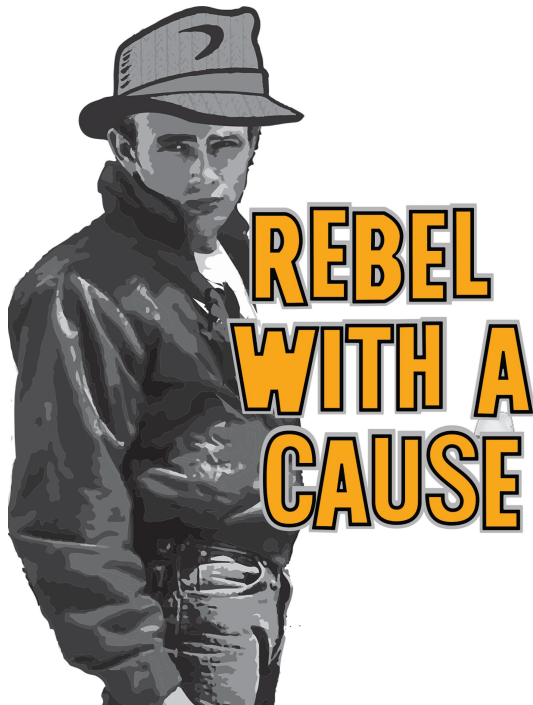
Meet me at the table.

Meet me on the bench.

Meet me here.

You do not have to believe my secret to help build the world it inspired me to imagine.

And perhaps that is where our NuVo World begins.



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