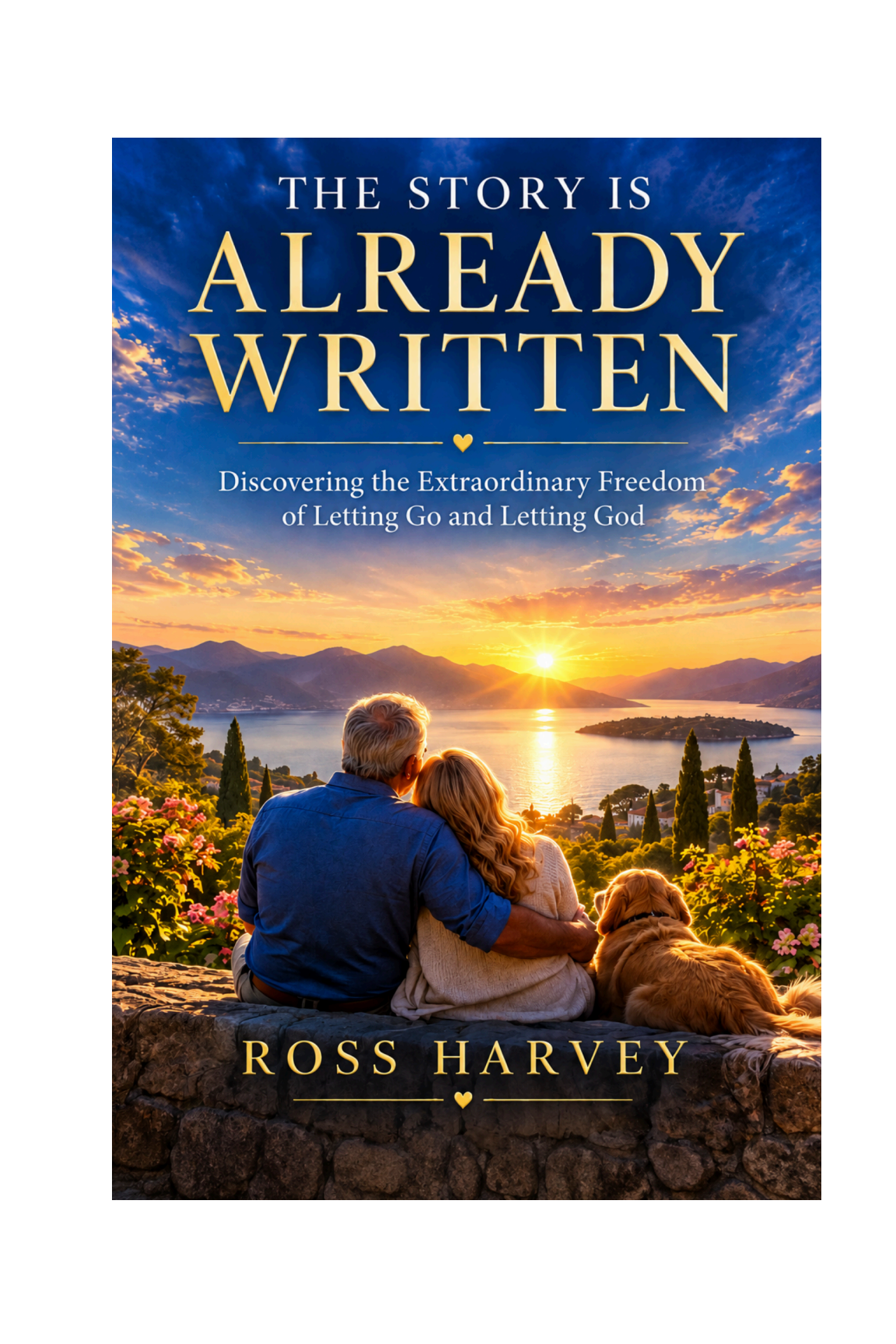


The background of the entire cover is a photograph of an elderly couple and their golden retriever sitting on a stone wall, looking out over a scenic landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water, mountains, and sky. The couple is seen from behind, and the dog is sitting to their right.

THE STORY IS ALREADY WRITTEN



Discovering the Extraordinary Freedom
of Letting Go and Letting God

ROSS HARVEY



Introduction

What If You Never Had to Worry Again?

What if I told you that you could stop worrying?

Not tomorrow. Not next week. Not when your finances improve, your relationships become easier, your health is restored, or your dreams finally come true.

Right now.

What if I told you that everything you have ever experienced, every person you have ever encountered, every decision you have ever made, and every moment you have ever lived was part of a story that had already been written?

And what if I suggested that the author of that story was God?

Think about that for a moment.

You were born into a world you did not choose, to parents you did not select, at a time and place over which you had absolutely no control. You inherited a body, a mind, a personality, and a collection of circumstances that would influence everything that followed.

You didn't choose your first breath. You didn't choose your earliest thoughts. You didn't choose the people who entered your childhood or the experiences that shaped your understanding of the world.

And yet, somewhere along the way, you began to believe that you were responsible for directing the entire course of your life.

You began to believe that you had to make all the right decisions, seize every opportunity, avoid every mistake, and somehow arrange the future according to your own expectations.

What an extraordinary burden to place upon yourself!

And what if that burden was never yours to carry?

The Possibility That Changes Everything

For centuries, philosophers, theologians, and ordinary people have wrestled with one of life's greatest mysteries: Do human beings truly possess free will?

Do we independently choose our thoughts and actions, or are those thoughts and actions the inevitable consequences of circumstances and forces beyond our control?

And if God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and present throughout creation, could it be that everything unfolds according to a divine plan?

This is the central proposition of a philosophy known as theological determinism.

In its strongest form, theological determinism suggests that God determines everything that happens, including every human decision.

It is a profound and controversial idea. Many religious traditions reject it, arguing that God grants human beings genuine freedom to choose. Others believe divine sovereignty and human responsibility can coexist.

I do not intend to settle a debate that has occupied some of humanity's greatest minds for thousands of years.

Instead, I want to invite you to consider something.

What would happen to the way you live if you believed that your life was already known to God, that nothing could take God by surprise, and that you did not have to control every outcome?

Would you worry as much?

Would you spend so much time regretting yesterday?

Would you be so afraid of tomorrow?

Would you find it easier to forgive yourself and others?

Would you begin to appreciate the extraordinary gift of simply being alive?

I believe these questions deserve our attention.

My Own Journey

I have lived an extraordinary life.

I have been a world champion athlete, a businessman, an entrepreneur, an author, and a dreamer. I have experienced remarkable successes and devastating disappointments. I have pursued ambitions that seemed impossible and endured experiences I could never have imagined.

My spiritual journey has been particularly profound.

For more than two decades, I have understood certain experiences in my life as communications from God. Those experiences have shaped my convictions, my writing, and my understanding of why I am here.

I recognize that other people may interpret such experiences differently. This book does not ask anyone to accept my personal spiritual conclusions as established facts.

What I hope to share is something more universal: the peace that can come from trusting that our lives have meaning, even when we cannot understand what is happening.

Today, much of my happiness comes from remarkably simple things.

Preparing breakfast for my wife, Christy.

Sharing a cuddle.

Enjoying a cup of tea.

Greeting neighbours as they begin their day.

Watching a wonderful television program together.

Helping someone feel noticed, appreciated, or loved.

I still have enormous dreams. I envision communities in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive. I imagine a world in which love and generosity replace fear and scarcity. I continue to write, create, and develop ideas that I hope will make a meaningful difference.

But increasingly, I am discovering that the quality of my life does not depend upon how quickly those dreams become realities.

I do not have to make everything happen today.

I can simply be present today.

And perhaps that is one of the greatest freedoms available to any human being.

Being Rather Than Doing

Most of us have been taught to measure our lives by what we accomplish.

How much did you earn?

What did you build?

How many people recognize your name?

How many goals did you achieve?

How productive were you today?

We have created a world in which doing has become so important that we frequently forget the extraordinary significance of being.

But consider a mother holding her sleeping child.

Consider two elderly people sitting together, holding hands.

Consider a stranger who smiles at someone having a difficult day.

Consider a husband preparing a bagel for his wife.

Nothing spectacular may be happening.

No fortunes are being created. No records are being broken. No great announcements are being made.

And yet, something beautiful is taking place.

Love is being expressed.

Life is being experienced.

Perhaps heaven on Earth is not something we must wait to create in some distant future.

Perhaps we can begin experiencing it in the moments we already have.

Let Go and Let God

Four simple words have become central to my understanding of life.

Let Go and Let God.

For me, they represent an invitation to release the exhausting belief that I must personally arrange every detail of my existence.

They do not mean that I should stop caring, stop dreaming, or stop acting.

They mean that I can care without being consumed by anxiety.

I can dream without demanding immediate results.

I can act without believing that the entire future rests upon my shoulders.

And I can love without needing to control the people I love.

There is an important difference between surrender and resignation.

Resignation says, "Nothing matters, so why bother?"

Surrender says, "Everything matters, but I do not have to control everything."

Whether we understand our actions as freely chosen or divinely determined, kindness still matters. Compassion still matters. The way we treat one another still shapes the world we experience.

Indeed, if our lives are part of a greater story, then perhaps our everyday acts of love are among its most important passages.

A Different Way to Live

Imagine waking tomorrow morning without immediately thinking about everything you must accomplish.

Imagine opening your eyes and simply appreciating that you are alive.

You breathe.

You stretch.

You smile.

You remember that you have been given another day in which to experience this extraordinary world.

There may be challenges ahead. There may be disappointments. There may be unexpected difficulties.

Trust does not guarantee a painless life.

But perhaps you no longer need to face uncertainty with the belief that you must personally prevent every possible misfortune.

You can prepare for the future without living in fear of it.

You can learn from the past without remaining imprisoned by it.

You can participate fully in life without demanding that life follow your preferred script.

And you can begin to discover something extraordinary.

Peace does not have to wait until everything works out.

Peace can begin when you release the demand that everything must work out exactly as you imagined.

The Invitation

This book is not intended to tell you what you must believe.

It is an invitation to explore a possibility that has the power to transform the way you experience your life.

What if the story is already written?

What if your responsibility is not to control every chapter, but to live each page with as much love, appreciation, and awareness as possible?

What if the disappointments you have endured do not mean that your story has gone wrong?

What if your greatest accomplishments are not necessarily the things for which you will be remembered?

And what if, at the end of your life, you discover that the moments that mattered most were the moments when you simply loved and were loved?

I cannot promise you answers to every mystery.

But I can invite you on a journey.

A journey away from fear and toward trust.

Away from endless striving and toward peaceful participation.

Away from the need to control and toward the extraordinary freedom of surrender.

And perhaps, along the way, we will discover that the greatest adventure of our lives is not learning how to write the perfect story.

It is learning how to live beautifully within the story we have been given.

Let go. Let God. And live.

Part One: The Great Illusion of Control

Chapter One

The Story Is Already Written

What if nothing in your life has ever happened by accident?

There is a wonderful moment that occurs when you are reading a particularly good book.

You become so immersed in the story that you forget everything around you. You experience the joys and disappointments of the characters. You wonder what will happen next. You hope for certain outcomes and fear others.

And yet, something rather extraordinary is true.

The entire story has already been written.

The author knows what happens on the next page. The author knows which characters will enter the story, which ones will leave, and how everything will eventually unfold.

But you, the reader, do not.

You experience the story one page at a time.

Now imagine that your life works in much the same way.

Imagine that God is the author and that every moment of your existence is part of a story already known, from its very beginning to its very end.

You do not know what tomorrow will bring.

But God does.

You cannot see around the next corner.

But God can.

And perhaps the greatest source of peace available to us is the realization that we do not have to know what happens next in order to enjoy what is happening now.

The Extraordinary Mystery of Being Alive

Consider the circumstances that brought you into this world.

Of all the billions of people who have lived throughout human history, you were born to two particular parents, in one particular place, at one particular moment.

A slightly different sequence of events, and the person you know as yourself might never have existed.

Your parents had to meet. Their parents had to meet. And before them, countless generations of people had to live their lives in precisely the ways that eventually made your existence possible.

Think of the extraordinary chain of events involved.

A chance encounter.

A conversation.

A journey.

A decision to take one road rather than another.

A meeting that might never have happened.

We often describe such things as coincidences.

But what if they are not coincidences at all?

What if every event belongs to an intricate unfolding reality whose full meaning we cannot yet comprehend?

This possibility lies at the heart of theological determinism.

In its strongest form, this philosophy proposes that everything that occurs, including our thoughts and decisions, has been determined by God.

It is not merely the suggestion that God knows what we will do.

It is the much stronger proposition that God determines what we will do.

The distinction is enormous.

Knowing that something will happen is not necessarily the same as causing it to happen. But under hard theological determinism, God is understood as the ultimate determining source of all events.

If this is true, then the story of our lives is not being improvised as we go along.

It is unfolding.

And we are experiencing that unfolding from within.

The Decisions We Think We Make

Let me ask you a simple question.

Why are you reading this book?

Perhaps someone recommended it.

Perhaps you were intrigued by its title.

Perhaps you have been struggling with questions about God, destiny, or the meaning of life.

Perhaps you simply happened upon it while looking for something else.

Whatever the reason, you probably feel that you chose to read it.

But consider everything that contributed to that choice.

Your upbringing influenced your beliefs. Your experiences shaped your interests. Your circumstances affected your opportunities. Your emotional state influenced what appealed to you at that particular moment.

Even your curiosity has a history.

Did you choose to be curious about this subject?

Did you choose the experiences that made these questions meaningful to you?

Did you independently create the thoughts that led you to open this book?

Or did those thoughts arise from an extraordinary combination of influences over which you never had complete control?

These questions have occupied philosophers for centuries.

Some argue that genuine freedom requires the ability to have chosen differently under precisely the same circumstances.

Others believe we can meaningfully call ourselves free when we act according to our own desires and reasons, even if those desires and reasons have causes.

Still others maintain that our capacity to make choices cannot be fully explained by deterministic processes.

The debate remains unresolved.

But imagine, for the purposes of our journey, that every thought and decision is ultimately part of God's plan.

What would that mean?

It would mean that the decisions you regret were also part of the unfolding story.

It would mean that the opportunities you missed did not take God by surprise.

It would mean that your life has never escaped the boundaries of divine knowledge or purpose.

And perhaps it would invite you to reconsider the enormous burden of regret.

What If You Had Never Taken the Wrong Road?

How many times have you looked back upon your life and wished you had done something differently?

Perhaps you chose the wrong career.

Perhaps you entered a relationship that ended painfully.

Perhaps you made a financial decision that cost you dearly.

Perhaps you said something you wish you could take back.

We all have moments like these.

We imagine an alternative life in which we made different choices and everything turned out beautifully.

But there is something curious about this exercise.

We never actually know what would have happened.

The career we did not pursue might have brought disappointment. The relationship we avoided might have introduced difficulties we cannot imagine. The opportunity we missed might have led us somewhere we would never have wanted to go.

We compare the reality we experienced with an imaginary alternative that we tend to make more attractive.

And then we suffer because reality does not resemble our imagination.

What if we stopped doing that?

What if we accepted that the past is the past, that it cannot be changed, and that we can still learn from it without continually wishing it away?

Under theological determinism, this acceptance takes on an additional dimension.

If everything unfolds according to divine determination, then even the experiences we would never have chosen belong to the story.

This does not mean that suffering is good, that wrongdoing is acceptable, or that we should avoid making amends for harm.

It means that regret need not become a lifelong prison.

We can acknowledge what happened.

We can learn.

We can apologize.

We can repair what is within our power to repair.

And then we can continue living.

The past may help explain who we are, but it does not have to prevent us from appreciating who we are becoming.

The People Who Enter Our Lives

One of the most fascinating aspects of life is the way people appear in our stories.

Some remain for decades.

Others are present for only a few minutes.

Some bring extraordinary happiness. Others challenge us in ways we could never have anticipated.

And occasionally, someone enters our life and changes almost everything.

That is how I think about meeting Christy.

For much of my life, I could not have imagined the relationship we would eventually share.

And yet, through an unexpected series of circumstances, our paths crossed at a food bank.

Think about the countless things that had to happen for us to meet.

We both had to be alive at that particular moment. We had to be living in the same community. We had to arrive at the same place within a narrow window of time.

And then we had to notice one another.

From that encounter grew a relationship that has become the greatest daily joy of my life.

Was it coincidence?

Was it the result of countless independent choices?

Was it providence?

I understand it through my faith as part of God's unfolding plan.

Someone else might interpret it differently, and I respect that.

But whatever explanation we prefer, the experience invites us to appreciate the extraordinary significance of human encounters.

The person you greet tomorrow morning may become an important part of your life.

The stranger you help may remember your kindness for years.

A conversation that lasts thirty seconds may change someone's entire day.

We rarely know the significance of these moments while they are happening.

And perhaps that is precisely why we should approach them with love.

Does This Mean We Should Do Nothing?

Here we encounter one of the most important questions in this entire book.

If God has already determined everything, why should we make any effort?

Why work?

Why dream?

Why help other people?

Why attempt to improve ourselves or the world?

Why not simply sit back and allow whatever is going to happen to happen?

The answer, within theological determinism, is both simple and profound.

Our actions are part of the story, too.

If a farmer believes the harvest is part of God's plan, that does not mean planting seeds is unnecessary.

The planting, watering, and tending of the fields may themselves be the means through which the harvest comes.

Similarly, if you are destined to help another person, your kindness is not irrelevant.

It is part of how that help occurs.

If you are going to write a book, the hours you spend writing are part of its creation.

If you are going to build a better community, your conversations, relationships, and efforts may be among the means through which that community develops.

Theological determinism does not necessarily lead to inactivity.

It can lead to a different understanding of activity.

You participate without imagining that you independently control the entire outcome.

You make an effort without assuming that every result depends exclusively upon you.

You care deeply without allowing the uncertainty of tomorrow to destroy the peace available today.

That distinction has become increasingly meaningful in my own life.

Dreams Without Desperation

I have enormous dreams.

I envision A NuVo World, a world in which every person has opportunities to experience health, happiness, friendship, security, and love.

I imagine NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres serving communities around the world.

I envision G3 Golf helping people discover greater enjoyment, friendship, and fulfilment through the game.

I have written books and developed creative projects that I hope will reach and inspire people far beyond my immediate community.

These are ambitious visions.

Some may become realities in forms I recognize. Others may change dramatically. Some may never come to fruition.

I cannot know their outcomes in advance.

But I can appreciate the experience of imagining them, developing them, and sharing them.

I can take the next useful step without requiring certainty about the destination.

And I can recognize that the value of my life does not depend upon the size of my accomplishments.

If I spend an afternoon helping someone feel less alone, that afternoon matters.

If I make Christy smile, that moment matters.

If I encourage a stranger, that encounter matters.

The great dreams and the little moments need not compete.

They can belong to the same beautiful life.

And perhaps one of the greatest benefits of surrender is that we no longer have to choose between dreaming magnificently and living peacefully.

We can do both.

What About Suffering?

No serious exploration of divine determination can avoid the question of suffering.

If God determines everything, what are we to make of illness, injustice, cruelty, and tragedy?

This is not a question that can be dismissed with a comforting phrase.

It is one of the deepest challenges to the idea of an all-powerful and perfectly loving God.

Some theologians argue that suffering may have purposes beyond our understanding.

Others emphasize human freedom, believing that much suffering arises from choices God permits rather than determines.

Still others question whether every event should be understood as specifically intended by God.

These differences matter.

I would never want someone who has experienced terrible suffering to believe that their pain is insignificant or that they must immediately find something beautiful within it.

Pain deserves compassion.

Injustice deserves resistance.

People who suffer deserve help.

And questions deserve to be asked.

For me, trusting God does not require pretending that every experience feels good or that I understand why it happened.

It means remaining open to the possibility that meaning can emerge even from experiences I would never have wished to endure.

Sometimes that meaning becomes apparent.

Sometimes it does not.

And sometimes the most loving thing we can do is simply sit beside another person and acknowledge their pain.

We do not need an explanation for everything in order to offer compassion.

The Freedom of Not Knowing

There is a curious paradox at the centre of this philosophy.

If the story is already written, then we may possess less independent control than we imagine.

And yet, accepting that possibility may help us experience greater psychological freedom.

Freedom from the endless need to predict tomorrow.

Freedom from the belief that every disappointment represents a personal failure.

Freedom from the exhausting responsibility of trying to control other people.

Freedom from the constant fear that one imperfect decision will destroy our future.

This is not the freedom of being able to do absolutely anything.

It is the freedom of releasing the demand that life must obey our expectations.

I think of it as the freedom to participate.

To wake up in the morning and greet the day.

To notice the people around us.

To do what seems loving, useful, and appropriate.

To respond to difficulties as wisely as we can.

And to appreciate the extraordinary experience of being alive.

We do not have to know how the story ends.

We are here to live it.

The Next Page

Imagine once again that you are holding a wonderful book.

You have reached the end of a chapter.

You do not know what happens next.

Perhaps there will be an unexpected reunion. Perhaps a new opportunity will appear. Perhaps the main character will face a challenge that changes everything.

You could spend hours worrying about the possibilities.

Or you could turn the page.

Life invites us to do much the same thing.

Tomorrow will arrive.

People will enter and leave our lives.

Opportunities will emerge.

Circumstances will change.

We will experience joy and disappointment, laughter and tears, beginnings and endings.

And through it all, we will have opportunities to love.

That, to me, is the most beautiful part of the story.

Not that we can predict every event.

Not that we can explain every mystery.

Not even that we can prove the story has been predetermined.

But that we can choose—or, under theological determinism, experience ourselves being moved—to meet the next moment with openness, appreciation, and love.

Perhaps that is enough.

Perhaps it is more than enough.

Perhaps the great secret of a peaceful life is not learning how to control the next chapter.

Perhaps it is learning to appreciate the page we are on.

The story may already be written. But the experience of living it is happening right now.

And right now is where life is found.

Chapter Two

The Illusion of Free Will

Are we really making our own decisions, or are we simply experiencing decisions that have already been made?

Every morning, we awaken to what appears to be a world of unlimited choices.

We decide when to get out of bed. We decide what to eat for breakfast. We decide what clothes to wear, where to go, whom to speak with, and how to spend our time.

At least, that is what we believe.

But have you ever stopped to consider where those decisions actually come from?

Why did you wake up when you did? Why did you feel like having a particular breakfast? Why did one thought enter your mind rather than another?

Did you consciously create those desires?

Or did they simply appear?

And if they appeared without your consciously choosing them, how much control did you really have?

These questions take us to the very heart of one of humanity's oldest philosophical debates.

Do we possess free will, or is the experience of choosing simply part of a much greater process that we do not fully understand?

Where Do Our Thoughts Come From?

I would like you to try a little experiment.

Close your eyes for a moment and wait for your next thought.

Do not deliberately think about anything.

Simply wait.

Perhaps you will remember something that happened yesterday. Perhaps you will think about someone you love. Perhaps you will wonder what you are going to have for dinner.

Whatever thought appears, ask yourself a simple question.

Where did it come from?

You may have been aware of the thought when it arrived, but were you aware of creating it?

Did you choose that particular thought from among all the thoughts you could possibly have had?

Or did it simply enter your awareness?

This is one of the most intriguing aspects of human consciousness.

Thoughts frequently arise spontaneously. Memories surface unexpectedly. Ideas appear while we are walking, showering, or doing something entirely unrelated.

We may be able to direct our attention, evaluate our thoughts, and develop habits that influence our thinking. But even those abilities raise further questions about where our intentions originate.

The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer famously distinguished between doing what we want and choosing what we want.

We may be able to act according to our desires.

But can we independently choose the desires themselves?

You might decide to eat an apple rather than a piece of cake.

But why did you prefer the apple?

Perhaps you are concerned about your health. Perhaps you enjoy apples. Perhaps you are trying to lose weight.

And why do those particular considerations matter to you?

Each answer leads to another question.

Eventually, we discover an extraordinary network of influences extending far beyond our conscious awareness.

The Person You Never Chose to Become

Consider everything about yourself that you did not choose.

You did not choose your parents.

You did not choose your genetic inheritance.

You did not choose the country into which you were born.

You did not choose your earliest environment, your first language, or the circumstances of your childhood.

You did not independently design the brain through which you experience the world.

And yet, all these things have influenced the person you have become.

Imagine two children born on the same day.

One grows up surrounded by love, encouragement, security, and opportunity.

The other experiences neglect, uncertainty, and hardship.

Their lives may develop very differently.

Their expectations, fears, habits, and opportunities may differ in ways neither child chose.

Does this mean that neither child can ever make a meaningful decision?

Not necessarily.

But it does suggest that our decisions emerge from circumstances we did not create.

The more deeply we examine human behaviour, the more difficult it becomes to identify a completely independent self that exists outside every influence.

We are shaped by biology, experience, relationships, culture, and countless events beyond our control.

And perhaps, if theological determinism is true, all these influences are themselves part of God's unfolding plan.

The Remarkable Chain of Causes

Imagine that you are walking down the street when someone unexpectedly smiles at you.

You smile back.

Your mood improves.

A few minutes later, you encounter someone who appears upset. Because you are feeling cheerful, you stop and offer a kind word.

That person feels a little better.

Later, they go home and treat a family member with greater patience.

The family member, in turn, responds more kindly to someone else.

One small encounter has created a chain of consequences extending far beyond the original smile.

Now consider what caused that first person to smile.

Perhaps they had just received good news.

Perhaps they were remembering a happy occasion.

Perhaps someone had been kind to them earlier that morning.

And what caused that earlier kindness?

We could continue tracing the chain backward almost indefinitely.

Every event appears connected to other events.

This is one of the central insights of determinism: the idea that what happens arises from prior conditions rather than occurring independently of them.

Theological determinism adds a further proposition.

It suggests that God is ultimately responsible for the determining order of reality.

From this perspective, the smile, the conversation, the kindness, and the consequences all belong to a greater unfolding story.

Of course, this is a philosophical and theological interpretation, not an established scientific conclusion.

But it invites us to consider something beautiful.

Perhaps even the smallest expressions of love are connected to consequences we will never fully understand.

What About the Science?

Modern neuroscience has added fascinating dimensions to the discussion of free will.

Researchers have studied the brain activity associated with decisions, sometimes identifying neural signals that precede a person's reported conscious awareness of intending to act.

These experiments have prompted questions about whether conscious intention initiates decisions or whether some decisions begin through processes outside awareness.

But the findings do not establish that all human decisions are predetermined.

Many experiments involve simple movements or limited choices, and scientists continue to debate what the results mean for complex reasoning, moral responsibility, and conscious control.

Science has not demonstrated that God determines every human decision.

Nor has it conclusively resolved the philosophical question of free will.

What it has done is remind us that our minds are far more complex than our everyday experience suggests.

We often feel that we are fully aware of why we do things.

But much of what influences our behaviour remains outside conscious awareness.

And perhaps that realization should make us a little more humble.

Understanding Other People

One of the most powerful implications of questioning free will concerns the way we judge others.

How often do we become frustrated because someone does not behave as we think they should?

Why doesn't that person understand?

Why won't they change?

Why did they say something so hurtful?

Why can't they simply make better decisions?

But suppose we begin to recognize that every person has been shaped by circumstances we cannot fully see.

The angry person may have experienced years of disappointment.

The fearful person may have endured experiences that made trust difficult.

The person who appears unkind may be carrying pain we know nothing about.

This does not excuse harmful behaviour.

People still need boundaries. Communities still need rules. Wrongdoing still needs to be addressed, and those who have been harmed deserve protection and justice.

But understanding the influences behind behaviour may help us respond with greater wisdom and compassion.

Instead of immediately asking, "What is wrong with this person?" we might ask, "What has happened in this person's life that helps explain their behaviour?"

That is an extraordinary change in perspective.

And it is one that can make our relationships more peaceful.

I have come to appreciate that I do not need everyone to understand me, agree with me, or respond to me in the way I would prefer.

People have their own lives, circumstances, interests, and difficulties.

Their responses are not entirely about me.

Recognizing that can free us from a great deal of unnecessary disappointment.

The Difference Between Responsibility and Blame

If our decisions are determined by causes beyond our ultimate control, does personal responsibility disappear?

This is an important question.

Some philosophers argue that genuine moral responsibility requires the ability to have acted differently.

Others, known as compatibilists, maintain that responsibility can exist even in a determined world.

They argue that our actions can still express our values, intentions, and character, even when those qualities have causes.

From a practical perspective, responsibility remains essential to healthy relationships and communities.

We can acknowledge harm.

We can encourage better behaviour.

We can establish consequences.

We can learn from mistakes.

And we can work to prevent suffering.

None of these activities becomes meaningless simply because we question whether human choices are ultimately independent.

Indeed, if our actions are influenced by our experiences, then kindness, education, encouragement, and support may become even more important.

They help shape the circumstances in which future actions occur.

Imagine a world in which we devoted less energy to condemning people and more energy to helping them become healthier, happier, and more compassionate.

Imagine communities organized around understanding rather than humiliation.

Imagine children growing up surrounded by encouragement, security, and love.

Would that not be a wonderful world?

It is certainly the kind of world I envision through A NuVo World.

The Freedom to Stop Blaming Yourself

Now let us turn this same compassion inward.

How often have you criticized yourself for decisions you made years ago?

Perhaps you trusted someone who disappointed you.

Perhaps you pursued an opportunity that did not succeed.

Perhaps you failed to recognize something that seems obvious in hindsight.

You look back and say, "I should have known better."

But did you know better at the time?

You made your decisions with the understanding, circumstances, emotions, and information available to you then.

Today you know things you did not know yesterday.

And tomorrow you may understand things you cannot understand today.

There is little value in endlessly punishing yourself for not possessing knowledge you had yet to acquire.

You can acknowledge mistakes without defining yourself by them.

You can take responsibility without surrendering your peace.

You can make amends where appropriate and still allow yourself to move forward.

And perhaps, if you believe that your life is unfolding within a divine plan, you can find additional comfort in the thought that even your most difficult experiences have not placed you beyond God's care.

You do not have to spend the rest of your life fighting yesterday.

Yesterday is finished.

Today is here.

And today deserves your attention.

Living Without the Need to Control

I have spent much of my life creating things.

Businesses. Books. Websites. Programs. Ideas. Visions for the future.

I enjoy imagining what might be possible.

I enjoy developing concepts and considering how they could improve people's lives.

But I am increasingly discovering that there is an enormous difference between creating because I love creating and creating because I believe I must force a particular outcome.

The first brings joy.

The second can bring anxiety.

When I create from joy, the process itself is rewarding.

When I create from desperation, my happiness becomes dependent upon results I cannot guarantee.

The same is true of relationships.

I can invite someone to lunch.

I can write a thoughtful letter.

I can offer friendship.

But I cannot require another person to accept my invitation, answer my letter, or become my friend.

Their response belongs to them and to the circumstances of their lives.

My peace need not depend upon it.

This is one of the most practical applications of surrender.

Do what seems loving and worthwhile.

Allow other people the dignity of their own responses.

And release the belief that you must control what happens next.

The Beautiful Paradox

We began this chapter by asking whether human beings truly possess free will.

We have explored the extraordinary influences that shape our thoughts, desires, and actions.

We have considered the possibility that our experience of independent choice may not tell the whole story.

And we have examined how theological determinism interprets those influences as part of a divine plan.

But here is the paradox I find most fascinating.

The less I feel compelled to control everything, the more freely I seem able to live.

I can enjoy a morning without worrying about how productive it will be.

I can spend an hour cuddling with Christy without thinking about all the things I should be accomplishing.

I can greet my neighbours simply because I enjoy greeting them.

I can write because I love sharing ideas.

I can dream without insisting that every dream must become reality according to my timetable.

None of this requires me to settle the philosophical debate about free will.

It simply requires me to recognize that much of life is beyond my control.

And that I can still live beautifully within it.

Perhaps the greatest freedom is not the power to determine every event.

Perhaps it is the ability to meet whatever happens with wisdom, appreciation, and love.

A Thought to Carry With You

The next time you find yourself becoming frustrated because life is not unfolding as you expected, consider asking yourself three questions.

What can I meaningfully do in this moment?

What am I trying to control that is not mine to control?

And how can I bring a little more love into whatever is happening?

You may discover that these questions change the way you experience your day.

You may find yourself becoming more patient.

More forgiving.

More understanding.

More peaceful.

And perhaps you will begin to appreciate that you do not need to understand every cause, predict every consequence, or resolve every mystery in order to enjoy the extraordinary experience of being alive.

Whether free will is ultimately real, limited, or an illusion remains a profound philosophical question.

But the peace that comes from releasing unnecessary control is something we can explore in our lives right now.

Let go of the need to control everything. Let God be God. And allow yourself the extraordinary pleasure of being alive.

Chapter Three

Who Is Really Making the Decisions?

If God is the author of our lives, perhaps our greatest responsibility is not to control the story, but to participate in it with love.

Every day, thousands of thoughts pass through our minds.

Some are ordinary. We think about what to eat, where to go, what needs to be done, or whom we should call.

Others seem to arrive unexpectedly.

An idea appears.

A memory surfaces.

A sudden desire to contact someone enters our awareness.

We experience an impulse to help a stranger, pursue a dream, or change direction.

And occasionally, a thought arrives with such clarity and conviction that we wonder whether it has come from somewhere beyond ourselves.

Where do these thoughts originate?

Are they simply products of our brains, shaped by memories, experiences, emotions, and circumstances?

Are they expressions of an independent will?

Or could they, as theological determinism proposes, be part of a divine process through which God determines the unfolding of our lives?

These questions have fascinated me for many years.

And they lead to another extraordinary possibility.

What if the decisions we believe we are making are themselves part of the way God's plan unfolds?

The Mystery of Inspiration

Have you ever experienced a moment when an idea seemed to arrive fully formed?

Perhaps you were walking through a park, taking a shower, or lying quietly in bed.

You were not deliberately trying to solve a problem.

And suddenly, there it was.

An answer.

An insight.

A possibility you had never considered.

Artists, writers, scientists, inventors, and entrepreneurs have described experiences like these throughout history.

Sometimes inspiration emerges after months of concentrated effort. At other times, it seems to arrive without warning.

We may describe such moments as intuition, creativity, insight, or inspiration.

Religious people may understand some of these experiences as divine guidance.

Others may interpret them as the result of unconscious mental processes bringing together information in new ways.

These explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive for someone who believes that God works through the natural processes of life.

But the experience itself raises a fascinating question.

If we cannot always explain where our ideas originate, how certain can we be that we independently create them?

Consider the musician who hears a melody in their mind.

The author who suddenly knows how a story should begin.

The entrepreneur who sees a possibility that others have overlooked.

The person who unexpectedly feels moved to perform an act of kindness.

Something happens within consciousness.

And then, perhaps, that something becomes an action.

An idea becomes a song.

A thought becomes a book.

A desire becomes a friendship.

An act of compassion changes someone's day.

Whether we understand these moments through neuroscience, philosophy, or faith, they remind us that human creativity is an extraordinary mystery.

My Experience of Ideas

Throughout my life, I have been blessed with an abundance of ideas.

Some have concerned sports, particularly racquetball and golf.

Others have involved businesses, books, websites, and creative projects.

And still others have grown into visions for improving the lives of people throughout the world.

One of the most significant is A NuVo World.

At its heart is a simple desire: to help create a world in which every person has the opportunity to experience the very best that life can offer.

I envision communities in which people care for one another, where essential needs are met, where health and happiness become priorities, and where love becomes the foundation of daily life.

I have imagined NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres, community programs, new approaches to transportation, and systems designed to help people flourish.

Where did all these ideas come from?

Certainly, they have been influenced by my experiences, interests, education, relationships, and observations.

I have spent decades thinking about how people live and how their lives might be improved.

But from my own spiritual perspective, I also understand inspiration as something that can be connected to God.

I do not expect every reader to share that interpretation.

Nor do I believe that feeling inspired guarantees that an idea is correct, divinely intended, or destined to succeed.

Ideas still deserve examination.

Plans still require practical evaluation.

And inspiration is most valuable when accompanied by humility, wisdom, and a willingness to learn.

But I find great joy in the experience of receiving an idea, developing it, and discovering where it might lead.

Perhaps that joy is itself part of the gift.

The Difference Between God's Will and Our Understanding

There is an important distinction that I want to make.

Believing that God determines everything is not the same as knowing exactly what God intends.

This distinction is essential.

Throughout history, people have sometimes confused their own convictions with certainty about God's purposes.

They have assumed that because they felt strongly about something, God must have ordained it.

But human beings are capable of misunderstanding their experiences.

We can be mistaken about facts.

We can misinterpret circumstances.

We can become attached to outcomes.

We can confuse what we deeply desire with what is certain to happen.

Even within a deterministic understanding of God, our knowledge remains limited.

If God knows the entire story, we do not.

We experience only the page before us.

And that means humility remains necessary.

We can hold meaningful spiritual convictions while acknowledging that our interpretations may be incomplete.

We can pursue dreams passionately while remaining open to unexpected developments.

We can trust God without claiming to possess perfect knowledge of God's intentions.

Indeed, perhaps genuine surrender requires precisely that kind of humility.

To trust God is not necessarily to know what tomorrow will bring. It is to accept that we do not need to know.

What Is Prayer, Then?

If everything has already been determined, why pray?

This is one of the most interesting questions raised by theological determinism.

If God has already established what will happen, can prayer change anything?

Some religious traditions understand prayer as a means through which God brings about predetermined outcomes.

In this view, prayer is not an attempt to persuade God to abandon a plan.

Prayer itself is part of the plan.

Other traditions believe prayer can influence events through a genuine relationship between God and human beings.

And still others emphasize prayer primarily as a practice that transforms the person praying.

I find this last dimension particularly meaningful.

Consider what happens when we pray for someone we love.

We direct our attention toward that person.

We become more conscious of their needs.

We reflect upon their circumstances.

We may become more patient, compassionate, and willing to help.

Even when we cannot determine whether prayer changes external events, it can change how we experience and respond to them.

And perhaps that is one of its greatest gifts.

Prayer can be an expression of gratitude.

An acknowledgment of uncertainty.

A request for wisdom.

An opportunity to release fear.

A quiet moment in which we remember that we do not have to carry every burden alone.

For someone who believes that God has already written the story, prayer can become less about demanding a particular ending and more about seeking the grace to live the present chapter well.

A Different Kind of Prayer

Imagine beginning each morning with a simple prayer.

"God, thank You for another day.

"I do not know everything that will happen today.

"I do not know whom I will meet, what opportunities will appear, or what challenges I may encounter.

"But I am grateful to be alive.

"Help me recognize opportunities to love.

"Help me respond to difficulties with patience.

"Help me appreciate the people who enter my life.

"And help me release the need to control everything.

"Let me live this day beautifully."

There is no demand in this prayer.

No insistence that life unfold according to a particular timetable.

No attempt to negotiate a preferred future.

Only gratitude, openness, and trust.

I find something deeply appealing about that.

And perhaps it offers a practical way to experience the philosophy of Let Go and Let God.

The Quiet Voice Within

Many people describe experiencing a quiet inner voice.

Sometimes it feels like conscience.

Sometimes intuition.

Sometimes an unexpected sense that a particular action would be right.

A person may suddenly feel moved to telephone an old friend.

To apologize.

To forgive.

To offer assistance.

To reconsider a decision.

Religious people sometimes describe such experiences as the prompting of God or the Holy Spirit.

But how do we distinguish spiritual guidance from ordinary thoughts, emotions, or wishes?

There is no universally accepted method.

And feelings of certainty, however powerful, are not by themselves proof of divine origin.

That is why discernment matters.

When I consider an idea or an inner prompting, I find it helpful to ask whether acting upon it would express love, kindness, honesty, and respect.

Would it benefit others?

Would it cause unnecessary harm?

Does it respect another person's dignity and freedom?

Can it withstand thoughtful examination?

Am I willing to reconsider it if new information emerges?

These questions do not solve every spiritual mystery.

But they offer practical safeguards against confusing conviction with wisdom.

And they remind us that love should remain central to our actions.

The People We Are Meant to Meet

One of the most enjoyable parts of my daily life is greeting people.

For years, I have made a habit of spending time in my neighbourhood, often early in the morning.

I see parents taking their children to school.

Delivery drivers beginning their work.

Neighbours walking their dogs.

People heading to their jobs.

Sometimes we exchange only a few words.

"Good morning!"

"Have a wonderful day!"

At other times, a conversation develops.

I learn someone's name.

I hear about their family.

I discover that their child has played a wonderful hockey game
or that they have welcomed a new pet into their home.

These encounters bring me enormous pleasure.

And I often wonder about their significance.

What if the person I greet is having a particularly difficult
morning?

What if a smile makes them feel a little less alone?

What if remembering someone's name helps them feel valued?

I cannot know what effect these encounters will have.

But I do know that kindness is worth offering.

From a theological determinist perspective, even these ordinary
moments could be understood as part of the divine unfolding of
life.

And I love that possibility.

Not because it makes me important.

But because it suggests that ordinary moments may carry significance beyond anything we can measure.

When the Answer Appears to Be No

Of course, life does not always unfold according to our hopes.

We reach out to people who do not respond.

We develop ideas that attract little interest.

We make invitations that are declined.

We work toward goals that remain distant.

I have experienced all these things.

And I know how tempting it can be to interpret disappointment as rejection.

But what if we considered another possibility?

What if a disappointing response is simply information about the present moment?

Perhaps the timing is not right.

Perhaps the other person has different priorities.

Perhaps our approach needs to change.

Perhaps we have something to learn.

Or perhaps the particular outcome we imagined will never occur.

We cannot know which explanation is correct without further evidence.

But we can respond constructively.

We can listen.

We can adjust.

We can try another approach.

Or we can decide that our energy would be better directed elsewhere.

This is where surrender becomes practical.

It is not an excuse to ignore reality.

It is an invitation to face reality without allowing disappointment to destroy our peace.

A closed door does not necessarily mean that life has gone wrong. It may simply mean that this particular door is closed.

We can accept that and continue living.

The Extraordinary Freedom of Participation

There is a wonderful difference between believing that we must control life and recognizing that we are participants in it.

When we believe we must control everything, every uncertainty becomes a threat.

Every delay becomes a problem.

Every disagreement becomes an obstacle.

Every disappointment becomes evidence that something has gone wrong.

But when we begin to see ourselves as participants, our relationship with life changes.

We can make plans without becoming prisoners of those plans.

We can work diligently without measuring our worth exclusively by results.

We can love people without requiring them to respond in precisely the ways we desire.

We can dream magnificently while remaining grateful for what we already have.

And we can recognize that life is not merely a series of problems waiting to be solved.

It is an extraordinary experience waiting to be lived.

This does not mean abandoning responsibility.

If someone needs help, we can help.

If a problem requires attention, we can address it.

If a relationship needs care, we can offer it.

If an opportunity appears, we can explore it.

But we can do these things without the constant fear that the entire future depends upon our personal ability to arrange every outcome.

The Wisdom of Being

Recently, I have been reflecting upon the difference between being and doing.

For much of my life, I have been a doer.

I have pursued goals, developed projects, written books, and imagined possibilities.

I still enjoy doing all those things.

But increasingly, I am discovering the beauty of simply being.

Sitting quietly with a cup of tea.

Listening to beautiful music.

Sharing a meal with Christy.

Enjoying an afternoon together.

Watching the world go by.

These experiences do not require me to accomplish anything.

They ask only that I be present.

And perhaps that is something our achievement-oriented world has forgotten.

We are human beings, not merely human doings.

Our worth is not determined by the number of tasks we complete.

Our lives are not failures because we have not accomplished everything we imagined.

We do not have to earn the right to experience joy.

Joy can be found in the simple act of being alive.

What a wonderful realization!

So Who Is Making the Decisions?

We began this chapter with a question.

Who is really making the decisions?

From the perspective of hard theological determinism, God ultimately determines every event, including the thoughts and actions through which our lives unfold.

From other philosophical perspectives, human beings possess varying degrees of genuine agency.

And from the standpoint of everyday experience, we continue to deliberate, evaluate, plan, and act.

These perspectives raise questions that cannot be resolved simply by declaring one of them obvious.

But perhaps there is something we can learn regardless of which interpretation we accept.

We do not control everything.

We never have.

We cannot guarantee tomorrow's events.

We cannot control other people's thoughts.

We cannot undo yesterday.

And we cannot force the world to unfold according to our expectations.

But we can participate in the life before us.

We can respond to the present moment.

We can cultivate kindness.

We can seek understanding.

We can express gratitude.

And we can discover that peace does not require complete control.

For me, that is one of the most beautiful implications of trusting God.

I can continue to dream.

I can continue to create.

I can continue to love.

And I can release the exhausting belief that everything depends upon me.

A Life of Trust

Imagine reaching the end of today and looking back upon everything that happened.

Perhaps you accomplished something meaningful.

Perhaps you encountered an unexpected difficulty.

Perhaps you enjoyed a wonderful conversation.

Perhaps the day was quiet and uneventful.

Whatever happened, imagine being able to say:

"Thank You for this day.

"Thank You for the people who were part of it.

"Thank You for the opportunities to love.

"I did not understand everything.

"I did not control everything.

"But I was here.

"And I am grateful."

What a peaceful way to live.

Perhaps tomorrow will bring something extraordinary.

Perhaps it will bring another ordinary day.

Either way, there will be opportunities to experience life.

And perhaps that is the greatest gift of all.

We do not have to be the authors of the universe to find meaning in our place within it.

We can simply live.

We can love.

We can learn.

And we can trust.

Let go.

Let God.

And enjoy the story.

Chapter Four

Nothing Happens by Accident

What if every moment of your life belongs to a story far greater than anything you could have imagined?

Have you ever looked back upon your life and marvelled at the extraordinary sequence of events that brought you to where you are today?

Perhaps you met someone unexpectedly, and that encounter changed everything.

Perhaps an opportunity disappeared, only for something entirely different to emerge.

Perhaps you experienced a disappointment that seemed devastating at the time, but years later discovered that your life had taken a direction you never could have anticipated.

Or perhaps something happened that seemed so unlikely, so perfectly timed, that you found yourself wondering whether it could possibly have been a coincidence.

Most of us have experienced moments like these.

We look backward and see connections that were invisible while we were living through them.

We recognize that one conversation led to another, that one experience opened the door to something unexpected, and that events we once considered insignificant became important chapters in our lives.

And sometimes we ask ourselves a remarkable question.

What if none of it happened by accident?

The Extraordinary Tapestry of Life

Imagine standing very close to an enormous tapestry.

From your position, you can see only a few threads.

Some are brightly coloured. Others are dark. Some appear to move in straight lines, while others twist and turn in ways that seem to make no sense.

You cannot see the picture.

You see only the threads immediately before you.

Now imagine stepping backward.

As you move farther away, patterns begin to emerge.

The colours connect.

The seemingly random threads become part of a larger design.

And eventually, you discover that what appeared chaotic from one perspective forms something beautiful from another.

Life can feel much the same way.

We experience it one moment at a time.

We know what happened yesterday, but we cannot see tomorrow.

We encounter difficulties without knowing how they will be resolved.

We meet people without understanding the roles they may eventually play in our lives.

And we sometimes find ourselves in circumstances that seem entirely disconnected from our hopes and dreams.

But years later, we may begin to recognize connections.

The job we lost introduced us to a new career.

The move we resisted brought us into contact with someone important.

The disappointment we endured encouraged us to reconsider what truly mattered.

Of course, not every painful experience produces a happy outcome, and we should never pretend otherwise.

But the tapestry offers us a useful image.

Our inability to see the entire picture does not necessarily mean that there is no larger picture to see.

Coincidence or Providence?

There are several ways to understand the remarkable events of our lives.

We can describe them as coincidences.

We can understand them as the consequences of countless interconnected causes.

Or we can interpret them through the lens of faith, believing that God is present within the unfolding of events.

The concept of divine providence has occupied an important place in religious thought for centuries.

It refers broadly to God's care for, guidance of, and involvement in creation.

But there is an important distinction between providence and theological determinism.

Many believers in divine providence maintain that human beings possess genuine free will.

They believe that God can guide, sustain, and respond to creation without determining every individual decision.

Hard theological determinism makes a stronger claim.

It proposes that every event, including every human thought and action, is ultimately determined by God.

Under that understanding, nothing happens independently of the divine plan.

Every event belongs to the story.

But believing this does not mean we can identify God's specific purpose behind each occurrence.

That distinction is essential.

We may believe that life has a divine order while acknowledging that we do not know the reasons for particular events.

And perhaps this humility is part of what makes trust possible.

We do not have to explain everything.

The Encounters That Change Everything

Think about the most important people in your life.

How did you meet them?

Perhaps you grew up together.

Perhaps you attended the same school.

Perhaps you worked in the same building.

Perhaps you happened to be in the same place at the same time.

Now consider how easily those encounters might never have occurred.

A different job.

A different neighbourhood.

A missed appointment.

A delayed journey.

A conversation that never began.

Our lives are filled with relationships that depend upon extraordinary combinations of circumstances.

My relationship with Christy is a wonderful example.

For many years, we lived separate lives.

We experienced different circumstances, met different people, and followed different paths.

Then, through an encounter at a food bank in our community, our lives became connected.

Neither of us could have known, years earlier, how important that meeting would become.

Today, Christy is at the centre of my daily life.

The simple things we share bring me enormous happiness.

Our mornings together.

Our meals.

Our conversations.

Our cuddles.

Our ordinary routines.

When I look back, I find it extraordinary that so many events had to occur for us to find one another.

I understand our meeting through my faith as something deeply meaningful.

Another person might describe it as a beautiful coincidence.

But whichever explanation we prefer, the gratitude remains the same.

And perhaps that is what matters most.

We do not have to settle every metaphysical question in order to appreciate the people we love.

The People Who Stay for Only a Moment

Not every meaningful encounter becomes a lifelong relationship.

Sometimes a person enters our life for only a few seconds.

A stranger holds open a door.

A driver offers a friendly wave.

Someone notices that we are struggling and asks whether we need assistance.

A child smiles.

A neighbour remembers our name.

These moments may seem insignificant.

But their effects can extend far beyond what we realize.

One of my favourite parts of the day is greeting people in my neighbourhood.

I have come to know many of the people who pass through the area during the early morning hours.

Some are delivery drivers.

Some are parents taking their children to school.

Some are neighbours heading to work.

Others are simply people going about their daily lives.

I enjoy saying hello.

I enjoy remembering their names.

And I particularly enjoy wishing them a wonderful day.

I have no way of knowing how much these greetings matter to the people who receive them.

Perhaps they matter very little.

Perhaps they brighten an otherwise difficult morning.

Perhaps someone who feels overlooked experiences a brief moment of connection.

I cannot know.

But I do know that the experience brings me joy.

And if a small expression of kindness can improve another person's day, even slightly, then it is worth offering.

Perhaps the great story of life is not composed only of extraordinary achievements and dramatic events.

Perhaps it is also composed of millions of little moments in which people make one another's lives better.

When Life Takes an Unexpected Turn

We often imagine that a successful life should unfold according to a carefully prepared plan.

We set goals.

We establish timelines.

We develop expectations.

And then life happens.

Circumstances change.

People make different decisions.

Opportunities disappear.

Unexpected difficulties arise.

Suddenly, the future we imagined no longer seems possible.

Our natural reaction may be disappointment, frustration, or fear.

But what if we learned to see unexpected turns differently?

What if we recognized that a change in direction does not necessarily mean that our lives have gone wrong?

Sometimes we discover opportunities we never would have considered.

Sometimes we learn something important about ourselves.

Sometimes we recognize that a goal we once considered essential is no longer what we truly want.

And sometimes we simply have to accept that life has become different from what we expected.

There is no guarantee that every change will lead to something better.

But there is an opportunity to meet change with curiosity rather than immediate resistance.

We can ask, "What is possible now?"

We can consider, "What can I learn?"

And perhaps most importantly, we can remind ourselves that our worth is not dependent upon everything unfolding according to our original plans.

The Danger of Explaining Everything

There is something important I want to emphasize.

The belief that nothing happens by accident can be comforting.

But it can also become harmful if we use it to explain away suffering or dismiss the experiences of others.

Imagine telling someone who has lost a loved one that the tragedy happened for a reason.

Perhaps that person believes it did.

Perhaps they find comfort in that belief.

But perhaps they are overwhelmed by grief and cannot imagine any explanation that would make their loss acceptable.

We should never demand that someone find meaning in suffering before they are ready.

Nor should we assume that we know why another person has experienced hardship.

A person facing illness does not need to be told that God intended their pain.

A family experiencing poverty does not need an abstract explanation for its circumstances.

Someone who has suffered injustice needs compassion, protection, and support.

Theological determinism raises profound questions about the relationship between divine will and human suffering.

Those questions deserve serious consideration.

But they should never become excuses for indifference.

If we believe that our lives are part of a greater story, then perhaps our response to suffering is one of the most important parts of that story.

We can comfort.

We can help.

We can listen.

We can work to make the world kinder and more just.

And we can acknowledge that some mysteries remain beyond our understanding.

The Gift of Hindsight

There is a wonderful expression: hindsight is twenty-twenty.

We understand things afterward that we could not understand beforehand.

But even hindsight has limitations.

We may recognize how one event led to another without knowing whether the outcome was inevitable.

We may see meaning in an experience without knowing whether that meaning was predetermined.

And we may interpret a remarkable coincidence as providential without being able to demonstrate that interpretation to someone else.

I think it is possible to appreciate these distinctions without losing our sense of wonder.

Indeed, perhaps wonder becomes even more beautiful when accompanied by humility.

We can look back upon our lives and marvel at the extraordinary sequence of events that brought us here.

We can express gratitude for the people we have met.

We can appreciate the lessons we have learned.

And we can remain open to the possibility that our lives possess a significance we do not yet fully understand.

We do not have to claim certainty about every detail.

We can simply be grateful.

A World of Extraordinary Connections

One of my greatest dreams is to help create a world in which people recognize how deeply connected they are.

I envision communities in which neighbours become friends, people support one another, and everyone has opportunities to experience a healthier, happier, more fulfilling life.

Through A NuVo World, I have imagined programs and facilities designed to bring people together.

But increasingly, I have come to appreciate that the foundation of a better world is not necessarily a magnificent building, an elaborate program, or an enormous financial investment.

Those things may be useful.

But the foundation is love.

It begins when one person notices another.

When someone offers assistance.

When a neighbour becomes a friend.

When people discover that their lives are richer because they share them with others.

Imagine an entire community in which everyone made a conscious effort to brighten the lives of the people they encountered.

Imagine children growing up surrounded by kindness.

Imagine elderly people knowing that they were valued.

Imagine families experiencing a genuine sense of belonging.

Imagine strangers becoming friends simply because someone took the time to say hello.

Would that not be a beautiful world?

And perhaps it could begin with something as simple as a smile.

The Freedom of Accepting What Is

One of the greatest sources of human suffering is our tendency to resist reality.

Something happens that we do not like.

We wish it had not happened.

We imagine how things should have been different.

We replay the experience in our minds.

And sometimes we spend years struggling against something that can no longer be changed.

Acceptance offers another possibility.

Acceptance does not mean approval.

It does not mean that injustice should be tolerated or that difficult circumstances should never be improved.

It simply means acknowledging what is true in the present moment.

If it is raining, it is raining.

If someone has declined an invitation, they have declined.

If a project has encountered difficulties, those difficulties exist.

If yesterday did not unfold as we hoped, yesterday is finished.

Once we acknowledge reality, we can respond to it.

We can carry an umbrella.

We can invite someone else.

We can revise our plans.

We can learn from our experiences.

But we no longer need to waste our energy pretending that reality is something other than what it is.

This is one of the most practical expressions of Let Go and Let God.

Accept what is. Respond with love. Release what you cannot control.

The Beauty of an Ordinary Day

I sometimes wonder whether we make life more complicated than it needs to be.

We spend so much time thinking about what we want to accomplish that we overlook what we are already experiencing.

We imagine that happiness lies somewhere in the future.

When we have more money.

When we achieve greater recognition.

When our plans succeed.

When our circumstances become easier.

But what if happiness is available in the ordinary moments we already possess?

A quiet morning.

A warm cup of tea.

A delicious meal.

A favourite song.

A conversation with a friend.

A wonderful afternoon with someone we love.

These experiences may not attract attention or produce impressive achievements.

But they can make a life extraordinarily rich.

I have come to appreciate this more deeply as I have grown older.

I still have magnificent dreams.

I still enjoy imagining possibilities that extend far beyond my immediate circumstances.

But I no longer want to overlook the life I am living while waiting for the life I imagine.

The future may hold extraordinary things.

I hope it does.

But today is already extraordinary in its own way.

And I do not want to miss it.

Every Moment Belongs

Let us return to the central question of this chapter.

What if nothing happens by accident?

Under hard theological determinism, every event belongs to the divine order.

Every encounter.

Every thought.

Every decision.

Every unexpected turn.

Every moment of joy.

Every moment of difficulty.

But because we cannot see the entire story, we must be careful not to confuse our interpretations with perfect knowledge.

We can believe in divine purpose without claiming to understand every purpose.

We can trust without predicting outcomes.

We can hope without demanding certainty.

And we can love without needing to know what will happen next.

Perhaps that is the most beautiful way to live within the possibility of a predetermined world.

Not by attempting to decode every event.

Not by searching for hidden messages in every coincidence.

Not by believing that every difficulty must have an explanation we can discover.

But by approaching each day with gratitude, humility, curiosity, and love.

If the story is already written, we are still here to experience it.

And the experience matters.

The Miracle of This Moment

Consider where you are right now.

You are alive.

You are breathing.

You are reading these words.

Somewhere nearby, other people are living their own extraordinary stories.

Some are celebrating.

Some are struggling.

Some are beginning new adventures.

Others are saying goodbye.

The world is filled with countless lives unfolding simultaneously.

And somehow, you are part of it.

You do not know everything that brought you here.

You do not know everything that will happen next.

You cannot see the full tapestry.

But you can appreciate the threads immediately before you.

You can love the people in your life.

You can offer kindness to those you encounter.

You can respond to challenges with patience.

You can pursue dreams without becoming imprisoned by them.

And you can discover that the present moment is not merely a stepping stone toward something more important.

It is life itself.

Perhaps nothing happens by accident.

Perhaps everything belongs to a story whose full meaning is beyond our understanding.

Or perhaps reality contains forms of chance and freedom that remain mysterious.

Whatever the ultimate answer, one truth remains beautifully clear.

We are here now. And we have an extraordinary opportunity to make this moment a loving one.

Let go.

Let God.

And appreciate the wonder of being alive.

Chapter Five

The Extraordinary Wisdom of God

What if the greatest wisdom we can acquire is the realization that we do not need to understand everything?

There is something rather wonderful about being a child.

A young child does not understand how the entire world works.

They do not know how electricity reaches their home, how food arrives at the grocery store, or how the countless systems supporting their lives operate.

They simply live.

They play.

They laugh.

They explore.

And when they feel safe and loved, they often experience an extraordinary sense of freedom.

They do not spend their days worrying about interest rates, retirement accounts, world affairs, or what might happen twenty years from now.

They are present.

Of course, children have fears and worries of their own, and not every child enjoys a secure upbringing. But there is something we can learn from the simplicity with which a child can experience life.

Somewhere along the way, most of us begin to believe that growing older means assuming responsibility for understanding and controlling everything.

We imagine that wisdom means knowing what will happen, preventing every possible difficulty, and making decisions that guarantee the outcomes we desire.

But what if true wisdom involves something quite different?

What if wisdom begins when we recognize the limits of our knowledge and discover the freedom of trusting what we cannot fully understand?

The Limits of Human Understanding

Think about how little any one person actually knows.

We live in an extraordinary universe.

Scientists estimate that it contains hundreds of billions of galaxies, each potentially holding billions of stars.

Our planet is home to an astonishing diversity of life.

Within our own bodies, countless biological processes operate continuously without requiring our conscious attention.

Our hearts beat.

Our lungs breathe.

Our cells carry out intricate functions.

Our brains coordinate activities of such complexity that scientists are still working to understand them.

And all this occurs while we go about our ordinary lives.

We make breakfast.

We talk with friends.

We listen to music.

We enjoy a beautiful afternoon.

Most of the processes that make these experiences possible remain completely outside our awareness.

If we understand so little about the mechanisms supporting our everyday existence, perhaps we should be humble about our ability to understand the ultimate nature of reality.

We can study.

We can learn.

We can develop increasingly sophisticated explanations.

But there will always be questions that extend beyond our present knowledge.

Why does anything exist?

Why is there something rather than nothing?

What is consciousness?

Does life possess an ultimate purpose?

What, if anything, lies beyond death?

And if God exists, what is the relationship between divine knowledge and human experience?

These questions have occupied philosophers, theologians, and scientists for centuries.

Perhaps they will continue to do so for centuries more.

And perhaps that is perfectly all right.

We do not need to possess all the answers in order to live meaningful lives.

The Wisdom We Attribute to God

In many religious traditions, God is understood as possessing knowledge far beyond human comprehension.

God is not limited to our narrow experience of time.

God does not see only the immediate circumstances of an individual life.

God is understood as knowing creation in its entirety.

Within classical Christian theology, this understanding is often described through the concept of omniscience: God's complete knowledge of all things.

But an important philosophical distinction remains.

Knowing everything that will happen is not necessarily the same as determining everything that will happen.

Some theologians maintain that God knows future free choices without causing them.

Others believe that God's knowledge and sovereignty are inseparable from divine determination.

Hard theological determinism adopts the latter understanding.

It proposes that the entire unfolding of reality, including every human thought and action, is ultimately determined by God.

If that proposition is true, then the distance between divine knowledge and human knowledge is extraordinary.

God would know the entire story.

We would experience it one moment at a time.

But what might that mean for the way we live?

The Freedom of Not Needing to Know

Imagine that you are travelling through a beautiful countryside.

You are sitting comfortably in a vehicle, looking out at the scenery.

You pass forests, fields, rivers, and small villages.

Occasionally, the road curves, and you cannot see what lies ahead.

But you are not driving.

You are a passenger.

You can appreciate the journey without needing to know every turn in advance.

Now imagine that you suddenly decide you must personally control the route.

You begin questioning every turn.

You worry about every hill.

You become anxious whenever the destination is not visible.

Before long, you are so preoccupied with the journey's uncertainty that you stop enjoying the countryside.

Nothing about the scenery has changed.

Only your relationship with the experience has changed.

I think life can be much the same way.

We become so concerned about what will happen tomorrow that we overlook the beauty of today.

We worry about circumstances we cannot control.

We imagine difficulties that may never occur.

We rehearse conversations that have not taken place.

We create elaborate scenarios about futures that exist only in our imaginations.

And then we suffer because of things that have not happened.

What an extraordinary use of our precious time!

Perhaps trust offers another possibility.

Perhaps we can acknowledge uncertainty without allowing it to dominate our lives.

We can prepare responsibly for tomorrow while appreciating today.

We can make plans without demanding guarantees.

We can recognize that we do not know everything and still feel at peace.

Faith Is Not the Absence of Questions

I want to make something very clear.

Trusting God does not require abandoning reason.

It does not require ignoring evidence, refusing to ask questions, or pretending to understand things we do not understand.

Indeed, I believe that genuine spiritual exploration benefits from curiosity.

Questions can deepen our understanding.

Doubt can encourage reflection.

Disagreement can reveal perspectives we have overlooked.

And uncertainty can remind us to remain humble.

Throughout history, thoughtful religious people have wrestled with difficult questions about God.

Why does suffering exist?

Why do prayers sometimes appear unanswered?

Why do people of different faiths arrive at different conclusions?

How should sacred texts be interpreted?

What is the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility?

These are not necessarily signs of spiritual weakness.

They are expressions of the human desire to understand.

We can have faith while acknowledging that our understanding is incomplete.

We can hold convictions while remaining willing to learn.

And we can recognize that a deeply meaningful personal experience does not automatically establish a universal truth.

For me, faith is not about possessing an explanation for every event.

It is about approaching life with trust, gratitude, and a commitment to love.

When Our Plans Do Not Succeed

One of the greatest challenges to trust arises when life does not unfold according to our expectations.

We work toward a goal.

We invest time and energy.

We imagine a wonderful outcome.

And then something happens.

The opportunity disappears.

The person we hoped would respond remains silent.

The project develops more slowly than anticipated.

The circumstances we expected never materialize.

It is easy to become discouraged.

We may wonder whether we made a mistake.

We may question our abilities.

We may feel that life is somehow working against us.

But perhaps there is another way to understand disappointment.

Perhaps we can recognize that our plans are possibilities rather than promises.

A dream may inspire us without guaranteeing its realization.

An idea may be worthwhile even if it never becomes commercially successful.

An act of kindness may have value even if it produces no visible result.

And an effort may be meaningful even when the outcome differs from what we imagined.

I have spent much of my life pursuing ambitious ideas.

Some have produced wonderful experiences.

Others have encountered considerable difficulties.

And many remain dreams that I continue to explore.

I cannot know which will eventually become realities.

But I can enjoy the process of creating.

I can appreciate the people I meet.

I can learn from experience.

And I can recognize that my happiness does not have to wait for every project to succeed.

The value of a life cannot be measured solely by the number of dreams that become realities.

The Wisdom of Enough

One of the most important realizations of my life has been that I already possess so much of what matters.

I have Christy.

I have the pleasure of sharing our days together.

I have opportunities to write, learn, imagine, and create.

I have neighbours to greet and people whose lives I may be able to brighten.

I have food to enjoy, music to listen to, and countless ordinary experiences that bring me happiness.

I do not have everything I have ever imagined.

Far from it.

But perhaps I do not need everything I have imagined in order to experience a wonderful life.

This is the wisdom of enough.

Enough does not mean abandoning ambition.

It does not mean refusing opportunities or pretending that material needs are unimportant.

Food, housing, healthcare, financial security, and supportive relationships matter enormously.

And when those essentials are missing, practical action is necessary.

But once we begin recognizing what we already possess, something remarkable can happen.

Our dreams become expressions of possibility rather than desperate attempts to complete ourselves.

We can pursue abundance without believing that we are fundamentally lacking.

We can enjoy success without making it the foundation of our identity.

And we can appreciate today without requiring tomorrow to be extraordinary.

Perhaps one of the greatest gifts of trusting God is the freedom to recognize that our lives are valuable before we accomplish anything else.

Love as a Measure of Wisdom

How should we evaluate wisdom?

Is it measured by intelligence?

By education?

By wealth?

By the ability to explain complicated ideas?

Certainly, knowledge and understanding are valuable.

But I believe wisdom should also be reflected in the way we treat one another.

Consider two people.

One possesses extraordinary knowledge but treats others with impatience and contempt.

The other has little formal education but consistently demonstrates kindness, generosity, and compassion.

Which person contributes more to the happiness of those around them?

The answer may depend upon the circumstances, but it reminds us that knowledge and wisdom are not identical.

Wisdom involves judgment.

It involves understanding consequences.

It involves recognizing the dignity of other people.

And perhaps, above all, it involves knowing how to love.

If we believe that God is perfectly loving, then surely love should occupy a central place in our understanding of divine wisdom.

Not simply as an emotion.

But as something expressed through action.

Helping someone who is struggling.

Listening without judgment.

Offering encouragement.

Providing food to someone who is hungry.

Forgiving when forgiveness is appropriate.

Protecting those who are vulnerable.

Creating opportunities for people to flourish.

These are practical expressions of love.

And they are available to us regardless of how much money, influence, or recognition we possess.

The Wisdom of Small Things

I have often found that the smallest moments of life bring the greatest happiness.

Preparing Christy's breakfast.

Sharing a laugh.

Enjoying a quiet afternoon together.

Greeting someone by name.

Holding a door open.

Taking a moment to listen.

These things are not complicated.

They do not require elaborate planning.

They do not demand enormous resources.

But they can make life beautiful.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons I have become increasingly interested in being rather than doing.

Doing has its place.

We need to work, create, solve problems, and fulfil responsibilities.

But being reminds us that life is not merely a sequence of tasks.

It is an experience.

We are here to notice.

To appreciate.

To connect.

To love.

And sometimes the wisest thing we can do is stop trying to accomplish something and simply enjoy the people and experiences already before us.

When We Cannot Understand

There will be moments when life makes very little sense.

Someone we love may become ill.

A relationship may end.

An unexpected loss may leave us searching for answers.

A carefully developed plan may collapse.

In such moments, simplistic explanations can be deeply unhelpful.

We should not pretend that every tragedy contains an obvious lesson.

We should not insist that suffering is secretly wonderful.

And we should never use religious language to discourage someone from seeking help or addressing a harmful situation.

Sometimes the wisest response is simply to acknowledge that we do not understand.

We can grieve.

We can ask questions.

We can seek support.

We can take practical action.

And we can allow ourselves time.

Trust need not mean that everything feels acceptable.

It can mean that uncertainty and sorrow do not have to extinguish every possibility of hope.

For someone who believes in divine providence, faith may provide comfort during these experiences.

For someone who does not share that belief, comfort may come through relationships, compassion, reflection, and the recognition that life can remain meaningful despite uncertainty.

In either case, kindness matters.

And no one should have to face life's most difficult moments alone.

The Extraordinary Possibility of Surrender

Let us imagine, once again, that God has already written the story.

Every encounter.

Every opportunity.

Every challenge.

Every thought.

Every decision.

Every moment.

If this is true, then perhaps our attempts to control the entire future are not only exhausting but unnecessary.

We can still plan.

We can still work.

We can still pursue dreams.

We can still seek to improve ourselves and the world.

But we can release the belief that we must personally guarantee every outcome.

We can approach each day with curiosity.

We can respond to circumstances as they arise.

We can appreciate what is beautiful.

We can address what needs attention.

And we can trust without claiming to know exactly what will happen.

This is not passivity.

It is peaceful participation.

It is the recognition that we are part of something far greater than ourselves, whether we understand that greater reality through faith, philosophy, or the extraordinary interconnectedness of life.

The Wisdom of Today

Tomorrow will arrive soon enough.

There may be wonderful surprises.

There may be unexpected challenges.

There may be opportunities we cannot presently imagine.

But today is here.

And today deserves our attention.

I think of the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, encouraging people not to be consumed by worry about tomorrow.

The message is beautifully practical.

Tomorrow has its own concerns.

We have today to live.

We can take care of our responsibilities.

We can prepare where preparation is useful.

But we do not need to experience tomorrow's imagined difficulties before tomorrow arrives.

We can return our attention to the present.

To the people around us.

To the opportunities for kindness.

To the simple pleasures that make life worthwhile.

And perhaps we can discover that peace is not something we must earn through perfect planning.

It is something we can cultivate through trust.

The Greatest Wisdom

As I reflect upon my life, I find myself returning to a simple realization.

I do not know everything.

I never have.

And I never will.

I do not know precisely what tomorrow will bring.

I do not know how all my dreams will unfold.

I do not know what opportunities may appear or what challenges may arise.

But I do know that I can appreciate this moment.

I can love Christy.

I can greet my neighbours.

I can continue to write and create.

I can help someone when the opportunity appears.

I can learn.

I can laugh.

I can enjoy a beautiful meal, a favourite song, or a quiet afternoon.

And I can release the exhausting belief that I must understand and control the entire universe.

Perhaps that is wisdom.

Not the possession of every answer.

But the recognition that we can live beautifully without them.

If God has written the story, I do not need to know every chapter in advance. I need only live the page before me with as much love as I can.

And if I can do that, perhaps I have already discovered something extraordinary.

The freedom to be.

The freedom to appreciate.

The freedom to trust.

Let go.

Let God.

And live.

Part Two — The Freedom of Surrender

Chapter Six

Let Go and Let God

The extraordinary freedom of realizing that you were never meant to carry the weight of the entire world upon your shoulders.

Four words.

Just four simple words.

Let Go and Let God.

I have come to believe that these four words contain one of the most liberating philosophies of life imaginable.

They invite us to release our fears, surrender our anxieties, and abandon the exhausting belief that we must personally control everything that happens.

They invite us to trust.

And perhaps most importantly, they invite us to live.

Not someday.

Not when our circumstances improve.

Not when our dreams become realities.

But right now.

Because the extraordinary possibility we have been exploring throughout this book is that our lives may already be unfolding according to a divine plan.

And if that is true, perhaps we have been worrying about things we were never meant to control in the first place.

The Burden We Place Upon Ourselves

Think about how much of your life you have spent worrying.

Worrying about money.

Worrying about relationships.

Worrying about your health.

Worrying about your career.

Worrying about what other people think of you.

Worrying about what might happen tomorrow, next month, or ten years from now.

We worry about things that have already happened and cannot be changed.

We worry about things that have not happened and may never occur.

And sometimes we become so consumed by worry that we forget to enjoy the extraordinary life taking place immediately before us.

What a remarkable burden!

Imagine carrying an enormous suitcase everywhere you go.

Inside that suitcase are all your fears, regrets, disappointments, expectations, and concerns about the future.

Every morning, you pick it up.

You carry it through your day.

You take it to work.

You bring it home.

You carry it into your relationships.

And when you finally climb into bed, you place it beside you, ready to pick it up again tomorrow.

Now imagine discovering that you never needed to carry that suitcase.

Imagine simply setting it down.

What would that feel like?

Perhaps that is what surrender can offer us.

Not the elimination of every difficulty.

Not a guarantee that life will always be comfortable.

But the freedom to stop carrying unnecessary burdens.

What Does It Really Mean to Let Go?

Letting go is frequently misunderstood.

Some people imagine that surrender means giving up.

They believe that if we stop trying to control everything, we will become passive, indifferent, or irresponsible.

But I see surrender very differently.

Letting go does not mean abandoning our responsibilities.

It means releasing our attachment to outcomes we cannot guarantee.

It does not mean that we stop caring.

It means that we can care without allowing anxiety to consume us.

It does not mean that we stop dreaming.

It means that our happiness no longer depends upon every dream becoming reality.

And it certainly does not mean that we stop loving.

Indeed, I believe surrender can help us love more freely.

When we release the need to control other people, we can begin appreciating them for who they are.

When we stop demanding that life unfold according to our expectations, we can become more receptive to the beauty of what is actually happening.

And when we stop measuring ourselves exclusively by our accomplishments, we can discover the extraordinary value of simply being alive.

Surrender is not the absence of participation. It is participation without the constant burden of control.

The Difference Between Effort and Attachment

Imagine planting a beautiful garden.

You prepare the soil.

You select the seeds.

You plant them carefully.

You water them.

You provide sunlight and nourishment.

You remove weeds.

You do everything reasonably within your power to encourage the plants to grow.

But can you guarantee that every seed will flourish?

Of course not.

Weather, soil conditions, disease, and countless other factors influence the outcome.

You can care for the garden.

But you cannot command it to grow.

Now imagine spending every day standing over the garden, worrying about whether the plants will survive.

You become frustrated when they do not grow quickly enough.

You compare your garden with your neighbour's.

You begin to believe that your worth depends upon producing the most magnificent flowers.

Before long, the garden that was supposed to bring you pleasure has become a source of anxiety.

But what if you approached it differently?

What if you enjoyed preparing the soil?

What if you appreciated the experience of planting?

What if you found pleasure in watering the flowers and watching them develop?

And what if you accepted that the final outcome was influenced by things beyond your control?

You would still be a gardener.

You might even become a better gardener.

But you would no longer be a prisoner of the harvest.

I think our lives are very much like that garden.

We can plant.

We can nurture.

We can learn.

We can work.

But we cannot control every result.

And perhaps we were never meant to.

My Dreams Are Still Enormous

I have never been someone who thinks small.

Throughout my life, I have imagined extraordinary possibilities.

I have pursued athletic excellence, developed businesses, created programs, written books, and envisioned ways to make the world a better place.

Today, my dreams remain enormous.

Through A NuVo World, I envision communities where people can experience the highest possible quality of life.

I imagine NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres serving people throughout the world.

I envision G3 Golf facilities that make the game more enjoyable, accessible, and rewarding.

I dream of books, films, music, and creative projects that inspire people to recognize the extraordinary possibilities within their lives.

I would love to see these visions become realities.

But I am learning something important.

I do not have to sacrifice today's happiness in pursuit of tomorrow's dreams.

I can work toward my goals while appreciating what I already possess.

I can create without desperation.

I can invite others to participate without demanding that they accept.

I can pursue opportunities without believing that rejection diminishes my worth.

And I can recognize that some dreams may develop differently from what I originally imagined.

There is tremendous freedom in this realization.

My dreams can remain magnificent.

But my peace need not depend upon their fulfilment.

The Extraordinary Gift of Christy

One of the greatest blessings of my life is my relationship with Christy.

Our daily life together is filled with simple pleasures.

We enjoy our mornings.

We share meals.

We watch television.

We laugh.

We cuddle.

We take care of one another.

Sometimes I prepare her breakfast, and sometimes she prepares little treats for me.

These moments bring me enormous happiness.

And increasingly, I have come to recognize that they are not merely pleasant interruptions between more important activities.

They are among the most important activities of my life.

Imagine spending an entire morning worrying about a business opportunity while the person you love is sitting beside you.

Imagine being so concerned about what might happen next year that you fail to appreciate the warmth of someone's hand in yours.

Imagine reaching the end of your life and discovering that you had spent years pursuing a future while overlooking the extraordinary love available in the present.

I do not want to live that way.

I want to appreciate Christy now.

I want to enjoy our time together now.

I want to recognize that the happiness we share is not something I must postpone until I accomplish everything else.

It is already here.

And perhaps one of the greatest expressions of surrender is learning to give our full attention to the people we love.

What About Money?

Financial concerns are among the most common sources of human anxiety.

We worry about having enough.

Enough to pay our bills.

Enough to care for our families.

Enough to handle unexpected expenses.

Enough to enjoy life.

These are legitimate concerns.

And I would never suggest that someone facing genuine financial hardship should simply stop worrying and assume everything will resolve itself.

Practical planning, responsible decisions, and seeking assistance when necessary are important.

But there is a difference between taking care of our finances and allowing financial uncertainty to dominate our lives.

I have experienced both abundance and difficulty.

And I have come to appreciate that money, while useful and often necessary, is not the ultimate measure of a successful life.

Money can provide comfort.

It can create opportunities.

It can help us care for others.

It can support extraordinary projects.

But it cannot guarantee love, friendship, peace, or fulfillment.

Some people possess enormous wealth and remain deeply unhappy.

Others have relatively modest resources and experience extraordinary contentment.

Perhaps the wisest approach is to care responsibly for our material needs while refusing to make wealth the foundation of our identity.

We can plan for the future.

We can pursue opportunities.

We can make thoughtful decisions.

And we can still appreciate the life available to us today.

When People Do Not Respond

One of the more difficult experiences in life is reaching out to someone and receiving no response.

Perhaps we send a thoughtful message.

Perhaps we extend an invitation.

Perhaps we share an idea that means a great deal to us.

And then we wait.

Nothing happens.

We begin wondering why.

Did we say something wrong?

Are they uninterested?

Do they dislike us?

Have we somehow failed?

But the truth is that we often have no idea why another person has not responded.

They may be busy.

They may be dealing with personal difficulties.

They may have overlooked the message.

They may not know what to say.

Or they may simply have different interests and priorities.

We cannot know without further information.

And even when we do know, we cannot force someone to respond.

This is where surrender becomes extraordinarily practical.

We can reach out with kindness.

We can make a reasonable effort.

We can follow up when appropriate.

And then we can release the outcome.

Another person's silence does not determine our worth.

Another person's refusal does not invalidate our dreams.

And another person's lack of interest does not mean that our lives have become less meaningful.

We can continue loving people without demanding that they respond according to our expectations.

What a wonderful freedom that is.

The Courage to Accept Reality

Surrender requires courage.

It is not always easy to acknowledge that something is beyond our control.

We may have invested years in a dream.

We may have built our identity around a particular ambition.

We may desperately want a relationship to develop in a certain way.

And then reality presents us with something different.

We can resist.

We can argue with circumstances.

We can replay events in our minds.

Or we can acknowledge what has happened and consider how best to respond.

Acceptance does not mean that we must approve of everything.

It does not mean tolerating mistreatment.

It does not mean abandoning worthwhile goals at the first sign of difficulty.

It means beginning with reality rather than fighting against it.

If something needs to change, we can work to change it.

If something requires attention, we can address it.

If someone needs protection, we can help protect them.

But we can do these things more effectively when we acknowledge the circumstances before us.

There is great wisdom in recognizing the difference between what we can influence and what we cannot.

And there is great peace in releasing what lies beyond our reach.

Trusting God Without Demanding Guarantees

There is an important distinction between trusting God and believing that God has promised us every outcome we desire.

We may feel deeply inspired by a dream.

We may believe that our lives have a purpose.

We may experience powerful spiritual convictions.

But none of these experiences gives us certain knowledge of what will happen tomorrow.

Trust does not require certainty about particular outcomes.

Indeed, perhaps trust becomes most meaningful precisely when certainty is unavailable.

We can believe that our lives matter without knowing exactly how they will unfold.

We can believe that love is worthwhile without knowing whether it will be returned.

We can believe that kindness matters without seeing every consequence.

And we can believe that God is present without claiming to understand every event.

For me, Let Go and Let God means releasing the demand that I must know the ending.

I can live the story without possessing the entire manuscript.

The Beauty of a Day Without an Agenda

Imagine waking up tomorrow morning with nothing extraordinary planned.

No major meetings.

No urgent deadlines.

No enormous projects demanding immediate attention.

Just a day.

What would you do?

Perhaps you would enjoy a leisurely breakfast.

Perhaps you would take a walk.

Perhaps you would read something interesting.

Perhaps you would spend time with someone you love.

Perhaps you would simply sit quietly and enjoy being alive.

Would that day be wasted?

I certainly do not think so.

We have become so accustomed to measuring life by productivity that we sometimes forget that living is valuable in itself.

A peaceful day is not an unsuccessful day.

A quiet afternoon is not a failure of ambition.

And an hour spent enjoying the company of someone we love is not time taken away from something more important.

It may be the most meaningful hour of the entire day.

I am increasingly discovering the extraordinary pleasure of allowing life to unfold without feeling compelled to fill every moment with activity.

Sometimes I write.

Sometimes I dream.

Sometimes I work on an idea.

And sometimes I simply enjoy being with Christy.

All of these experiences belong to my life.

And all of them can be worthwhile.

The Freedom to Be Yourself

There is another burden that many of us carry.

The need to become someone else.

We compare ourselves with people who appear more successful, more attractive, more intelligent, or more accomplished.

We imagine that if we could somehow become like them, our lives would be better.

But what if we stopped comparing?

What if we recognized that every human life is unique?

Your experiences are yours.

Your personality is yours.

Your interests, abilities, relationships, and circumstances combine to create a life unlike any other.

You do not have to become someone else in order to possess value.

You can learn.

You can grow.

You can improve.

But you can do so from a foundation of self-acceptance rather than self-rejection.

I believe this is another beautiful expression of surrender.

Let go of the need to be someone else.

Let go of the need to impress everyone.

Let go of the belief that your worth must be earned through extraordinary accomplishments.

And begin appreciating the person you already are.

Living One Day at a Time

Perhaps the most practical application of Let Go and Let God is learning to live one day at a time.

Yesterday is finished.

Tomorrow has not arrived.

Today is here.

We can learn from yesterday.

We can prepare for tomorrow.

But we can only experience life in the present.

And what an extraordinary gift the present can be.

A smile.

A conversation.

A warm embrace.

A beautiful song.

A delicious meal.

A quiet moment of gratitude.

These experiences do not require us to understand the entire universe.

They simply invite us to be present.

I think that is one of the greatest lessons I am learning.

I do not have to accomplish everything today.

I do not have to solve every problem.

I do not have to know how all my dreams will unfold.

I can simply live this day as beautifully as possible.

And tomorrow, if it comes, I can do the same.

The Great Surrender

Let us return to the central possibility of this book.

What if God has already written the story?

What if every event, every encounter, every thought, and every decision belongs to a divine unfolding?

If this is true, then surrender takes on an extraordinary significance.

We are not abandoning the story.

We are participating in it.

We are not refusing to act.

Our actions are part of what unfolds.

We are not giving up on love.

We are discovering how to love without demanding control.

And we are not abandoning our dreams.

We are learning to pursue them without sacrificing the peace available today.

Perhaps that is the great surrender.

Not the surrender of hope.

Not the surrender of responsibility.

Not the surrender of love.

But the surrender of the illusion that we must personally control everything.

What a remarkable freedom.

A Simple Practice

Tomorrow morning, before you begin your day, take a quiet moment.

You do not need an elaborate ritual.

You do not need to be in a particular place.

You do not need to use any special words.

Simply pause.

Take a comfortable breath.

And consider saying:

"Thank You for this day.

"I do not know everything that will happen.

"I do not need to know.

"I will do my best to respond with kindness, wisdom, and love.

"I will care for the people and responsibilities entrusted to me.

"I will appreciate the beauty around me.

"And I will release the need to control everything beyond my reach.

"Let go and let God."

Then begin your day.

Make breakfast.

Greet someone.

Take care of your responsibilities.

Enjoy the people you love.

Respond to whatever arises.

And whenever you find yourself becoming anxious about something beyond your control, return to those four simple words.

Let Go and Let God.

Not as a guarantee that everything will happen exactly as you wish.

But as a reminder that you can live meaningfully and peacefully without controlling every outcome.

The Extraordinary Freedom of Trust

I have come to believe that one of the greatest achievements of a human life is not the accumulation of wealth, recognition, or accomplishments.

It is the development of a peaceful heart.

A heart that can love without demanding.

Dream without desperation.

Work without constant anxiety.

Accept without surrendering compassion.

And trust without needing to understand everything.

I still have magnificent dreams.

I still imagine extraordinary possibilities.

I still want to help make the world a better place.

But I also want to enjoy my life.

I want to appreciate Christy.

I want to greet my neighbours.

I want to laugh.

I want to learn.

I want to create.

And I want to recognize that every day offers opportunities to experience something beautiful.

Perhaps the story is already written.

Perhaps God knows every chapter.

Perhaps the extraordinary events of our lives are unfolding according to a wisdom beyond our understanding.

I cannot demonstrate that this is so.

But I can explore what it means to live with trust.

And I can appreciate the freedom that comes from releasing the belief that everything depends upon me.

I do not have to control the entire story to live a beautiful life within it.

I can simply be here.

I can love.

I can participate.

I can appreciate.

And I can trust.

Four simple words.

A lifetime of possibility.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Seven

Being Rather Than Doing

What if the greatest accomplishment of your life is discovering that you never needed to accomplish anything to be worthy of love?

There is a question that has occupied an increasingly important place in my thoughts.

What is the purpose of life?

Is it to accomplish things?

To build businesses?

To accumulate wealth?

To achieve recognition?

To leave behind an impressive collection of accomplishments?

Or is there something far more fundamental, something so simple that we have somehow managed to overlook it?

What if the purpose of life is simply to live?

To experience.

To appreciate.

To learn.

To love.

To be.

For much of my life, I have been a doer. I have pursued goals, developed ideas, created businesses, competed in sports, written books, and imagined extraordinary possibilities.

I have enjoyed doing these things, and I still do.

But increasingly, I am discovering something that feels wonderfully liberating.

I do not have to do something extraordinary today in order for today to be extraordinary.

Perhaps that is one of the greatest lessons I have ever learned.

The World of Doing

From the time we are children, we are encouraged to accomplish things.

We are praised for good grades.

We are rewarded for winning competitions.

We are encouraged to pursue successful careers.

We are taught to work hard, set goals, and strive for improvement.

There is nothing inherently wrong with any of this.

Achievement can be deeply satisfying.

Learning new skills can bring enormous pleasure.

Hard work can improve our circumstances and contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.

But somewhere along the way, many of us begin confusing what we accomplish with who we are.

We begin measuring our personal worth by our achievements.

If we succeed, we feel valuable.

If we fail, we feel inadequate.

If we are productive, we feel good about ourselves.

If we spend a day doing very little, we feel guilty.

And gradually, the extraordinary experience of being alive becomes a never-ending examination in which we are constantly trying to earn a passing grade.

But who decided that life was supposed to be an examination?

Who decided that every day must produce measurable results?

And who decided that we must continually prove our worth?

Perhaps we have been asking the wrong questions.

Instead of asking, "What did I accomplish today?" perhaps we could sometimes ask, "How fully did I experience today?"

Instead of asking, "How much did I produce?" perhaps we could ask, "How much love did I express?"

And instead of asking, "Am I becoming successful?" perhaps we could ask, "Am I enjoying the extraordinary gift of being alive?"

The Extraordinary Freedom of Being

Imagine a beautiful Saturday morning.

You awaken naturally, without an alarm.

There is no urgent appointment.

No deadline.

No particular place you must be.

You make yourself a cup of tea and sit quietly.

Perhaps you listen to some music.

Perhaps you watch the sunlight entering the room.

Perhaps someone you love is still sleeping nearby.

You are not accomplishing anything remarkable.

You are simply enjoying the morning.

Now imagine that a thought enters your mind.

"I should be doing something productive."

Suddenly, the peace disappears.

You begin thinking about unfinished projects.

You remember emails you have not answered.

You consider all the things you could be doing to improve your future.

And before long, a perfectly wonderful morning has become a source of guilt.

What happened?

Nothing changed about the morning.

The tea is still warm.

The music is still beautiful.

The person you love is still nearby.

Only your thinking has changed.

You have moved from experiencing life to judging your experience according to an imagined standard of productivity.

What if you simply allowed yourself to enjoy the morning?

What if you recognized that rest, appreciation, and companionship are not rewards we must earn through sufficient work?

They are valuable parts of life itself.

What an extraordinary freedom that would be.

A Wonderful Morning With Christy

Recently, I experienced a morning that brought this realization into particularly sharp focus.

I stayed home rather than following my usual early-morning routine.

I awakened a little later than usual.

Christy was already up and had begun preparing her breakfast.

I helped with her bagel, and we enjoyed our familiar little routine together.

Later, I listened to music and some inspiring reflections.

Christy and I spent a long time cuddling.

There was no great accomplishment.

No business transaction.

No major project completed.

No extraordinary announcement.

And yet, it was a wonderful morning.

I felt peaceful.

I felt loved.

I felt grateful.

And I realized that I did not need to add anything to the experience to make it worthwhile.

It was already enough.

For someone who has spent much of his life pursuing enormous dreams, this is a significant realization.

I still love my dreams.

But I am discovering that the present moment does not have to justify itself by contributing to some future achievement.

A cuddle does not need to be productive.

A conversation does not need to lead somewhere.

A beautiful song does not need to inspire a new project.

Sometimes the experience itself is the gift.

And perhaps we should allow ourselves to receive it.

The Difference Between Becoming and Being

There is another fascinating aspect of our achievement-oriented culture.

We are constantly encouraged to become something.

Become successful.

Become wealthy.

Become influential.

Become healthier.

Become happier.

Become the best version of yourself.

Again, there is nothing wrong with growth.

I believe deeply in learning and improving.

I want to become a better husband.

A better friend.

A more compassionate neighbour.

A more thoughtful writer.

A person who contributes positively to the world.

But there is a subtle danger in the language of becoming.

We may begin to believe that the person we are today is somehow insufficient.

That our present life is merely preparation for a more important future life.

That happiness will arrive only when we have finally become the person we imagine we should be.

But what if we recognized that we can grow without rejecting ourselves?

What if we could appreciate who we are while remaining open to who we may become?

A tree does not need to apologize for being a sapling.

A flower does not need to feel inadequate because it has not yet blossomed.

And a human being does not need to earn the right to be loved through extraordinary achievements.

We can grow because growth is part of life.

Not because we are fundamentally unworthy until we reach some imagined destination.

We can become more without believing that we are presently less.

What Does This Mean If God Has Written the Story?

Now let us connect this realization to the central philosophy of our book.

If hard theological determinism is true, then every thought, action, and experience belongs to an unfolding divine order.

The days when we accomplish extraordinary things belong to that order.

But so do the quiet days.

The days when we work belong.

The days when we rest belong.

The moments when we pursue great ambitions belong.

And the moments when we simply enjoy being alive belong.

From this perspective, we need not imagine that only our productive moments have significance.

A peaceful afternoon may be as much a part of the story as a great achievement.

A conversation with a neighbour may be as meaningful as an important business meeting.

An expression of love may matter more to someone's life than anything we could build or sell.

We cannot know the full significance of every moment.

But perhaps we can stop assuming that significance must always be measured through visible accomplishments.

This does not mean that we should ignore responsibilities.

Our actions still have consequences.

People depend upon us.

Promises matter.

Practical needs must be addressed.

But we can fulfil our responsibilities without making productivity the measure of our worth.

The Miracle of Presence

There is a wonderful gift we can offer another person that costs absolutely nothing.

Our presence.

Not our advice.

Not our money.

Not our ability to solve every problem.

Simply our willingness to be there.

To listen.

To notice.

To care.

Imagine someone who is feeling lonely.

Perhaps they have spent much of the day without meaningful conversation.

Perhaps they feel invisible.

Perhaps they wonder whether anyone notices their existence.

Then someone stops.

They smile.

They ask how the person is doing.

And they genuinely listen to the answer.

Nothing spectacular has occurred.

But something important may have happened.

For a moment, one human being has helped another feel valued.

I have experienced the pleasure of such encounters many times.

Whether greeting neighbours in the morning or speaking with people I meet throughout the day, I enjoy making connections.

Sometimes the conversations are brief.

Sometimes they develop into friendships.

And sometimes I never see the person again.

But the opportunity to offer a little kindness is always worthwhile.

Perhaps presence is one of the purest expressions of love.

It says, without requiring elaborate words, "You matter."

And what could be more beautiful than that?

The Art of Doing Nothing

There is a phrase that makes many people uncomfortable.

Doing nothing.

We tend to associate it with laziness, wasted time, or missed opportunities.

But what does doing nothing actually mean?

If you are sitting quietly and appreciating the beauty of a sunset, are you doing nothing?

If you are listening to music that moves you deeply, are you doing nothing?

If you are holding the hand of someone you love, are you doing nothing?

If you are resting after a difficult week, are you doing nothing?

Perhaps the problem is not the activity.

Perhaps it is the way we define value.

We have become so accustomed to measuring worth through production that we sometimes overlook the importance of experiences that cannot be measured.

Rest restores us.

Reflection helps us understand ourselves.

Quiet moments allow us to notice things we might otherwise miss.

And companionship enriches our lives in ways that no financial statement could adequately describe.

I am not suggesting that we spend our entire lives avoiding effort.

I am suggesting that we stop treating every moment of rest as a failure to work.

There is a time for action.

And there is a time for stillness.

Both belong to a beautiful life.

The Joy of Creating Without Pressure

One of the things I love most is creating.

I enjoy developing ideas.

I enjoy writing books.

I enjoy imagining new possibilities.

And I particularly enjoy considering how those possibilities might improve people's lives.

But I have noticed something important.

Creating is most enjoyable when I am not consumed by the need for a particular result.

When I write because I love writing, the experience itself is rewarding.

When I develop an idea because I find it fascinating, the process brings me pleasure.

When I share a vision because I hope it may inspire someone, I can appreciate the opportunity to communicate.

But when I begin demanding that every idea attract attention, every book become successful, or every invitation receive a positive response, the joy can disappear.

The creative process becomes a test.

And the outcome becomes a judgment of my worth.

What if we approached creativity differently?

What if we created because creation is a beautiful expression of being alive?

What if we shared our ideas generously while accepting that others may respond differently from what we hope?

What if we pursued ambitious projects while remaining completely willing to enjoy an ordinary afternoon?

I believe this is possible.

And I believe it offers an extraordinary way to live.

You Are Not Your Accomplishments

Imagine meeting someone who has never achieved anything that society would consider particularly impressive.

They have not become wealthy.

They have not written a book.

They have not won a championship.

They have not built a successful business.

They have lived a relatively quiet life.

But they have been kind.

They have loved their family.

They have helped their neighbours.

They have treated people with respect.

They have offered encouragement.

And they have made the lives of those around them a little better.

Would you consider that person unsuccessful?

I certainly would not.

Now imagine someone who has accumulated enormous wealth and recognition but has spent much of life treating others poorly.

Which life has been more meaningful?

There may be no simple way to compare entire human lives, and we should be cautious about judging either person.

But the question reminds us that achievement and character are different things.

Our accomplishments may influence the world.

But so does the way we treat people.

And perhaps the most enduring contributions we make are not always the ones that attract the greatest attention.

Perhaps they are the expressions of love that continue influencing others long after we have forgotten them.

A Better Way to Measure a Day

Suppose that tonight, before going to sleep, you reflected upon your day.

Instead of counting the tasks you completed, imagine asking yourself a few different questions.

Did I appreciate something beautiful?

Did I make someone smile?

Did I spend meaningful time with someone I love?

Did I learn something interesting?

Did I treat myself and others with kindness?

Did I allow myself to enjoy being alive?

Perhaps some days the answers would be more satisfying than others.

That is perfectly natural.

But notice how different these questions are from the usual measures of productivity.

They invite us to consider the quality of our experience rather than simply the quantity of our output.

And perhaps they help us recognize that a wonderful day does not have to be an exceptionally busy day.

Sometimes a day filled with quiet appreciation is exactly what we need.

Heaven on Earth Begins Here

For years, I have envisioned helping create Heaven on Earth.

Not as a distant fantasy, but as a practical possibility grounded in love, compassion, generosity, and community.

I imagine a world in which people care for one another.

A world in which everyone has opportunities to flourish.

A world in which health, friendship, learning, creativity, and happiness become central priorities.

But I am increasingly recognizing something important.

Heaven on Earth cannot be only a destination.

It must also be a way of living.

If we spend our lives struggling to create a wonderful future while remaining miserable in the present, something essential has been lost.

If we speak constantly about love but fail to appreciate the people closest to us, our priorities may need reconsideration.

And if we dream of a peaceful world while allowing our own lives to be dominated by anxiety, perhaps the work of creating peace must begin within.

I cannot create Heaven on Earth for everyone by myself.

No one can.

But I can contribute to a little more heaven in the moments I experience.

I can love Christy.

I can encourage a neighbour.

I can help someone who is struggling.

I can share an idea.

I can enjoy a beautiful day.

And perhaps, through countless ordinary expressions of love, something extraordinary can begin to emerge.

The Freedom to Be Enough

There is a wonderful realization available to every human being.

You do not have to become famous to matter.

You do not have to become wealthy to possess dignity.

You do not have to accomplish extraordinary things to deserve love.

And you do not have to wait until tomorrow to begin appreciating your life.

You are here.

You are alive.

You are part of an extraordinary world filled with possibilities.

There may be things you want to improve.

There may be responsibilities that require attention.

There may be dreams you wish to pursue.

But none of these things requires you to reject the value of your present existence.

You can begin from enough.

Enough does not mean that every need has been met or that every difficulty has disappeared.

It means that your worth is not something you must continually earn.

And perhaps that realization is one of the greatest freedoms of all.

Being Is Not the Opposite of Doing

I want to emphasize one final distinction.

Being and doing are not enemies.

We do not have to choose between them.

Indeed, some of our most meaningful experiences of being arise through doing.

Preparing a meal for someone we love.

Writing a heartfelt letter.

Helping a neighbour.

Creating something beautiful.

Working toward a worthwhile goal.

These activities can be expressions of presence rather than distractions from it.

The difference lies in our relationship with what we are doing.

Are we acting because we love the experience?

Because we care about the people involved?

Because the activity expresses something meaningful to us?

Or are we acting primarily because we believe we must prove our worth?

Perhaps the ideal is not to stop doing.

Perhaps it is to allow our doing to flow naturally from our being.

To create from joy.

To serve from love.

To work from purpose.

And to rest without guilt.

What a beautiful way to live.

The Gift of This Moment

As I write these words, I find myself reflecting upon the extraordinary simplicity of the message.

We spend so much of our lives preparing to live.

We study so that we can eventually begin our careers.

We work so that we can eventually enjoy financial security.

We save so that we can eventually retire.

We pursue goals so that we can eventually feel successful.

And somewhere along the way, we may forget that life is happening throughout the entire process.

The years of preparation are life.

The ordinary workdays are life.

The quiet evenings are life.

The moments of uncertainty are life.

The laughter, the tears, the conversations, the meals, the music, the friendships, and the embraces are all part of the extraordinary experience we have been given.

We do not have to wait for the perfect circumstances.

We can begin appreciating life now.

And perhaps, if the story has already been written, we can find comfort in knowing that even the quietest pages belong.

Not every chapter needs a dramatic event.

Not every day needs a magnificent accomplishment.

Sometimes the most beautiful part of a story is a peaceful moment in which nothing extraordinary happens at all.

Simply Be

Tomorrow morning, when you awaken, consider giving yourself a wonderful gift.

Before thinking about everything you need to accomplish, take a moment to appreciate that you are alive.

Notice your breathing.

Feel the comfort of your bed.

Listen to the sounds around you.

Think about someone you love.

Allow yourself to experience gratitude without immediately turning it into another task.

Then, as the day unfolds, do whatever needs to be done.

Take care of your responsibilities.

Pursue your interests.

Help where you can.

Create if you feel inspired.

Rest when you need rest.

And remember that your value does not rise and fall with your productivity.

You are not merely a collection of accomplishments.

You are a human being.

And being alive is already an extraordinary experience.

Perhaps the greatest thing we can learn to do is simply to be.

To be present.

To be grateful.

To be compassionate.

To be loving.

To be at peace.

And to recognize that we do not have to earn the right to enjoy the life we have been given.

Let go of the endless need to accomplish.

Let God be God.

And allow yourself the extraordinary freedom of simply being alive.

Chapter Eight

The End of Worry

What if tomorrow is already taken care of, and your only responsibility is to live beautifully today?

There is something rather extraordinary about worry.

We can be sitting in a perfectly comfortable chair, in a warm room, with food in the refrigerator, surrounded by people we love, and still manage to make ourselves miserable by imagining something that might happen tomorrow.

Nothing has happened.

No disaster has occurred.

No problem has actually materialized.

And yet, through the remarkable power of our imaginations, we can experience fear, frustration, and anxiety about events that exist only as possibilities.

We worry about money we might need.

We worry about illnesses we might develop.

We worry about people who might reject us.

We worry about opportunities we might miss.

And sometimes we become so concerned about what might happen that we completely overlook the wonderful things that are happening.

What an extraordinary paradox!

We possess the ability to imagine magnificent futures, but we frequently use that same ability to imagine futures that frighten us.

And then we allow those imagined futures to diminish the quality of our present lives.

But what if there were another way?

What if we could learn to prepare responsibly for tomorrow without sacrificing the peace available today?

And what if the philosophy we have been exploring throughout this book offered us a remarkable new perspective on the entire subject of worry?

If the story is already written, perhaps we can stop trying to write tomorrow's chapter before we have finished living today's.

The Difference Between Concern and Worry

Let us begin with an important distinction.

Concern is not necessarily a bad thing.

If we are concerned about our health, we may decide to exercise, eat more nutritious food, or seek medical advice.

If we are concerned about our finances, we may create a budget, reduce unnecessary expenses, or explore opportunities to increase our income.

If we are concerned about someone we love, we may offer assistance, encouragement, or companionship.

Concern can motivate useful action.

Worry, however, often becomes something quite different.

Worry occurs when we repeatedly imagine possible difficulties without moving toward a constructive response.

We replay the same questions.

What if something goes wrong?

What if I cannot afford it?

What if they do not respond?

What if I make a mistake?

What if my dreams never become realities?

We ask these questions again and again, hoping that somehow our thinking will provide certainty.

But certainty rarely arrives.

And the more we worry, the more possibilities we may discover to worry about.

Perhaps the solution is not to eliminate every concern.

Perhaps it is to recognize when concern has stopped being useful.

We can ask ourselves a simple question.

Is there something meaningful I can do about this right now?

If the answer is yes, we can consider doing it.

If the answer is no, perhaps we can allow ourselves to return to the present.

That is not always easy. Anxiety can be persistent, and some people benefit from professional support in managing it.

But the distinction between useful action and repetitive worry can be enormously helpful.

The Extraordinary Cost of Imaginary Problems

Imagine that you are planning a wonderful afternoon with someone you love.

Perhaps you are going to enjoy lunch at a favourite restaurant.

You are looking forward to the meal, the conversation, and the pleasure of spending time together.

But then you begin thinking about something that might happen next month.

Perhaps an expense will arise.

Perhaps a project will encounter difficulties.

Perhaps someone will disappoint you.

Before long, your attention has moved away from the afternoon you were anticipating.

You are no longer enjoying the present.

You are mentally living in a future that has not occurred.

And the remarkable thing is that worrying about that future has not necessarily improved your ability to deal with it.

You have simply allowed a possibility to diminish a reality.

The lunch is real.

The companionship is real.

The opportunity to enjoy the afternoon is real.

The imagined difficulty may never happen.

And even if it does, you will have an opportunity to respond when it arrives.

Why sacrifice today's happiness to a problem that may not exist tomorrow?

This is one of the questions I have increasingly been asking myself.

And I find the answer wonderfully liberating.

I do not need to experience tomorrow's difficulties today.

The Wisdom of Jesus

One of the most beautiful teachings attributed to Jesus concerns the subject of worry.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus encourages people to consider the birds of the air and the flowers of the field.

The birds do not organize their lives around elaborate financial plans.

The flowers do not struggle to make themselves beautiful.

And yet, within the natural world, their lives unfold through processes that sustain them.

Jesus uses these images to invite his listeners to trust God's care rather than become consumed by anxiety.

The teaching culminates in an encouragement not to worry excessively about tomorrow.

I find this message profoundly meaningful.

It does not suggest that people should ignore hunger, poverty, illness, or other genuine needs.

Nor does it guarantee that every difficulty will disappear.

Instead, it invites us to reconsider the place that worry occupies in our lives.

We can attend to today's responsibilities.

We can care for ourselves and others.

We can take reasonable precautions.

But we do not need to live every future difficulty in advance.

Perhaps the wisdom is not that tomorrow will always be easy.

Perhaps it is that today deserves to be lived without being overwhelmed by tomorrow.

What If God Already Knows?

Now consider this teaching through the philosophy of theological determinism.

If God has already determined the unfolding of every event, then tomorrow is not an unknown possibility from the divine perspective.

It is part of the story.

The opportunities that will appear are already known.

The difficulties that will arise are already known.

The people we will encounter are already known.

And the actions through which we respond are themselves part of that unfolding.

If we accept this philosophy, then worry takes on a rather curious character.

We are attempting to control an outcome that, according to the philosophy, is already determined.

We are mentally struggling with a future we cannot independently rewrite.

But there is an important distinction.

Believing that an outcome is determined does not mean we know what that outcome will be.

Nor does it mean that practical action is unnecessary.

If we need to pay a bill, we still need to consider how to pay it.

If we are experiencing concerning symptoms, we should still seek appropriate medical care.

If someone needs our assistance, we should still respond.

Within a deterministic worldview, those actions are part of the causal process through which events unfold.

The invitation is not to abandon responsibility.

It is to abandon the belief that anxiety itself gives us control.

We can act responsibly without worrying endlessly.

And perhaps that is one of the most valuable freedoms available to us.

My Relationship With Money

Money has played many different roles throughout my life.

I have earned it.

I have spent it.

I have invested it in businesses and ideas.

I have experienced times of greater financial comfort and times when circumstances were more challenging.

And I continue to imagine projects that would require substantial resources to develop.

My visions for NuVo, G3 Golf, and A NuVo World are enormous.

If some of these projects eventually attract significant support, they could create opportunities to improve many people's lives.

But I cannot know whether that will happen.

I cannot guarantee that my books will reach millions of readers.

I cannot guarantee that investors or benefactors will support my ideas.

And I cannot know exactly how my financial circumstances will develop.

What I can do is approach money with a combination of responsibility and trust.

I can understand my present circumstances.

I can make thoughtful decisions.

I can pursue worthwhile opportunities.

I can avoid unnecessary risks.

And I can appreciate the resources already available to me.

I do not need to spend every day imagining either enormous wealth or financial disaster.

Neither imagined future needs to determine the quality of my present life.

Perhaps the greatest financial freedom begins not with possessing unlimited money, but with developing a healthier relationship with what money can and cannot provide.

The Worry of Being Understood

There is another kind of worry that can be particularly painful.

The desire to be understood.

We share our thoughts.

We express our convictions.

We explain our dreams.

And we hope that other people will recognize what these things mean to us.

Sometimes they do.

Sometimes they do not.

And sometimes they respond with silence.

It can be tempting to interpret that silence as rejection.

We may wonder whether people dislike us, misunderstand us, or consider our ideas unimportant.

But the truth is that we cannot know what another person is thinking without meaningful communication.

Even when someone openly disagrees with us, that disagreement does not necessarily mean that they reject us as human beings.

People possess different experiences, priorities, beliefs, and perspectives.

They are entitled to those differences.

And we are entitled to continue living meaningful lives without requiring universal agreement.

I have come to appreciate that I do not need everyone to share my convictions.

I can express what I believe.

I can listen to other perspectives.

I can remain open to learning.

And I can allow others the freedom to arrive at their own conclusions.

There is tremendous peace in that realization.

We do not need to be understood by everyone in order to live with love and purpose.

The Extraordinary Freedom of Enough

Worry frequently arises from the belief that something essential is missing.

We imagine that we need more money.

More recognition.

More security.

More accomplishments.

More certainty.

And perhaps, in some circumstances, we genuinely do need more resources or assistance.

But there is another kind of wanting that can continue indefinitely, regardless of how much we possess.

The belief that happiness is always waiting somewhere beyond our present circumstances.

If only I had more.

If only I accomplished more.

If only people appreciated me more.

Then I could finally relax.

But what if we reversed that thinking?

What if we allowed ourselves to experience peace while continuing to pursue worthwhile goals?

What if we recognized that our lives can be meaningful even when they are incomplete?

What if we appreciated the people we love before worrying about all the people we have yet to meet?

And what if we discovered that some of the greatest pleasures in life require very little money at all?

A beautiful morning.

A warm embrace.

A favourite song.

A delicious meal.

A friendly conversation.

A quiet afternoon.

These experiences do not eliminate every practical concern.

But they remind us that life contains extraordinary riches that cannot be measured financially.

The Worry of Time

As we grow older, our relationship with time often changes.

When we are young, the future seems almost limitless.

There are decades ahead.

Endless opportunities.

Countless possibilities.

But as the years pass, we become increasingly aware that our time is finite.

We may begin worrying about everything we have not yet accomplished.

The books we have not written.

The places we have not visited.

The projects we have not completed.

The dreams that remain unrealized.

And we may feel an increasing urgency to do more.

But perhaps this is precisely when the wisdom of being becomes most important.

If our time is precious, why would we want to spend so much of it worrying?

Why would we sacrifice a beautiful afternoon because we are concerned about something that may happen years from now?

Why would we overlook the people we love while concentrating exclusively upon unfinished ambitions?

I am not suggesting that we abandon our dreams.

I have no intention of abandoning mine.

But I want to pursue them from a place of joy rather than desperation.

I want to write because I love writing.

I want to create because I love imagining possibilities.

I want to help people because I care about their happiness.

And I want to appreciate Christy and our life together every day.

The future matters.

But the present matters, too.

And the present is the only part of life we are experiencing right now.

What About Real Difficulties?

It would be unrealistic to suggest that worry can always be eliminated through a change in perspective.

People experience genuine hardship.

Financial insecurity can create serious stress.

Illness can bring uncertainty and fear.

Relationships can become painful.

Loss can leave us feeling overwhelmed.

And anxiety can sometimes become persistent enough to require professional care.

In these circumstances, telling someone simply to stop worrying may be neither helpful nor compassionate.

Trust should never become an excuse to avoid necessary action.

If a problem can be addressed, we should consider addressing it.

If we need help, we should seek it.

If someone is suffering, we should offer support.

And if circumstances are beyond our immediate control, we can acknowledge the difficulty without criticizing ourselves for feeling afraid.

The goal is not to become incapable of concern.

It is to develop a more peaceful relationship with uncertainty.

Sometimes that peace comes through prayer.

Sometimes through conversation.

Sometimes through practical planning.

Sometimes through professional assistance.

And sometimes through something as simple as sitting quietly beside someone who loves us.

We do not have to face every difficulty alone.

A Practical Way to Release Worry

I would like to suggest a simple exercise.

The next time you find yourself worrying, take a moment to identify exactly what concerns you.

Then ask yourself whether there is something useful you can do about it today.

If there is, consider taking that step.

Make the telephone call.

Review the information.

Ask for assistance.

Prepare the document.

Have the conversation.

Do whatever seems reasonable and appropriate.

Then recognize that you have taken the action available to you.

If there is nothing useful to do at the moment, consider allowing yourself to set the concern aside temporarily.

You can return to it when new information becomes available or when action becomes possible.

Meanwhile, life continues.

There are people to love.

Experiences to enjoy.

Opportunities for kindness.

And moments of beauty that deserve your attention.

You do not have to solve every future problem before allowing yourself to appreciate today.

The End of Worry Is Not the End of Caring

There is a distinction I want to emphasize.

A peaceful person is not necessarily an indifferent person.

Indeed, peace may allow us to care more effectively.

When we are consumed by anxiety, our attention becomes narrow.

We focus upon imagined difficulties.

We become preoccupied with our own concerns.

And we may overlook the needs of the people around us.

But when we experience greater peace, we may become more available to others.

We can listen more attentively.

We can respond more patiently.

We can recognize opportunities to help.

And we can offer reassurance without becoming overwhelmed ourselves.

Perhaps this is one of the most beautiful consequences of surrender.

We become less consumed by controlling life and more available to participating in it.

We can care deeply without carrying every possible outcome as a personal burden.

A Wonderful Day Is Already Available

Imagine waking tomorrow morning and deciding that you are going to have a wonderful day.

Not because everything will necessarily go according to plan.

Not because you have received a guarantee that nothing difficult will happen.

But because you intend to appreciate whatever opportunities for joy, kindness, and connection the day provides.

Perhaps you will share breakfast with someone you love.

Perhaps you will enjoy a walk.

Perhaps you will meet an interesting person.

Perhaps you will accomplish something meaningful.

Perhaps you will spend a quiet afternoon listening to music.

Whatever happens, you can remain open to the possibility that the day contains something worth appreciating.

And if difficulties arise, you can respond to them as best you can.

You do not have to decide in advance that tomorrow will be wonderful in every respect.

You can simply approach it with an open heart.

That is a very different way to live.

Tomorrow Can Wait

I have come to appreciate the extraordinary simplicity of this philosophy.

I do not need to know exactly how my books will perform.

I do not need to know whether every person I contact will respond.

I do not need to know how every project will develop.

I do not need to know what opportunities may appear next month or next year.

I can continue to act thoughtfully.

I can continue to pursue my dreams.

I can continue to care for my responsibilities.

But I can also enjoy today.

I can make Christy breakfast.

I can share a laugh.

I can greet my neighbours.

I can listen to beautiful music.

I can write another chapter.

And I can recognize that the quality of my life is not determined exclusively by what happens tomorrow.

Perhaps the story is already written.

Perhaps God knows every chapter.

Perhaps the future contains extraordinary experiences I cannot presently imagine.

Or perhaps it contains challenges that will require courage, patience, and support.

I do not know.

And I do not need to pretend that I do.

What I can do is live this moment.

With gratitude.

With compassion.

With curiosity.

And with love.

The Peace of Surrender

Let us return to the question with which we began.

What if tomorrow is already taken care of?

That does not have to mean that tomorrow will be easy.

It does not mean that every dream will become reality.

And it does not mean that we should ignore the practical responsibilities of life.

It can mean something quieter and more profound.

Perhaps we do not have to carry tomorrow's uncertainty as though it were today's emergency.

Perhaps we can prepare without obsessing.

Care without controlling.

Dream without desperation.

And love without fear of every possible loss.

Perhaps we can recognize that life is happening now, not merely in the future we imagine.

And perhaps we can begin to experience a peace that is not dependent upon knowing how everything will turn out.

The end of worry is not the discovery that nothing difficult will ever happen. It is the discovery that we can live meaningfully, lovingly, and peacefully without knowing everything that will happen.

What a wonderful freedom.

Let go of yesterday.

Release tomorrow.

Appreciate today.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Nine

When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan

Sometimes the life we never imagined becomes the life we are most grateful to be living.

I have spent much of my life dreaming.

Big dreams.

Extraordinary dreams.

Dreams that have sometimes seemed far beyond the possibilities of my immediate circumstances.

I have imagined businesses, sporting achievements, books, films, magnificent facilities, and entire communities transformed through love and generosity.

Some of my dreams have become realities.

Others have taken unexpected directions.

And many remain possibilities whose futures I cannot know.

But through it all, I have discovered something rather remarkable.

Life does not always unfold according to our plans.

And perhaps that is not necessarily a problem.

Perhaps the problem arises when we become so attached to the life we imagined that we fail to appreciate the life we are actually living.

The Plans We Make

Human beings are extraordinary planners.

We plan our education.

We plan our careers.

We plan our finances.

We plan our vacations.

We plan our retirement.

And sometimes we plan the next twenty or thirty years of our lives as though we possess a detailed map of the future.

There is nothing wrong with planning.

A thoughtful plan can help us organize our resources, establish priorities, and work toward meaningful goals.

But a plan is not a promise.

It is an expression of what we hope might happen, based upon what we presently know.

And what we presently know is always incomplete.

We cannot predict every opportunity.

We cannot anticipate every challenge.

We cannot control every decision made by the people around us.

And we cannot know how our own interests, abilities, and circumstances may change.

Yet we sometimes treat our plans as though they represent the only acceptable future.

When something interferes with them, we become frustrated.

When an opportunity disappears, we feel defeated.

When a dream takes longer than expected, we begin questioning ourselves.

But what if our plans were meant to guide us rather than imprison us?

What if we could dream magnificently while remaining open to the extraordinary possibilities we have not yet imagined?

The Unexpected Roads of My Life

When I look back upon my own life, I see an extraordinary collection of experiences.

I have been a competitive athlete.

A world champion in racquetball.

A golf and racquet sports professional.

A businessman.

A restaurant owner.

A writer.

A creator of ideas and programs.

And a person who has spent many years imagining ways to help make the world a better place.

If someone had asked me when I was a young man to describe the exact course my life would take, I could never have predicted all these experiences.

Some emerged from deliberate decisions.

Others arose through unexpected opportunities.

Still others developed from circumstances I would never have chosen.

There have been successes.

There have been disappointments.

There have been periods of excitement and times of considerable difficulty.

And yet, looking back, I recognize that all these experiences have contributed to the person I am today.

That does not mean I would choose to repeat every painful moment.

Nor does it mean that every difficulty was necessary or beneficial.

But it does mean that my life has been far more complicated, surprising, and interesting than any plan I could have prepared in advance.

And perhaps yours has been, too.

The Difference Between a Dream and a Demand

I believe dreams are wonderful.

They inspire us.

They encourage creativity.

They invite us to imagine possibilities beyond our present circumstances.

And they can motivate us to contribute something meaningful to the world.

But there is an important distinction between having a dream and demanding that the dream become reality.

A dream says, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if this happened?"

A demand says, "I cannot be happy unless this happens."

A dream opens our imagination.

A demand can imprison it.

A dream allows us to enjoy the process.

A demand makes every obstacle feel like a personal defeat.

And perhaps most importantly, a dream can coexist with gratitude for the present, while a demand may convince us that the present is insufficient.

I want to continue dreaming for the rest of my life.

I want to imagine magnificent possibilities for NuVo, G3 Golf, A NuVo World, and the many creative projects I enjoy developing.

But I also want to remain free.

Free to appreciate what I already possess.

Free to revise my plans.

Free to learn from experience.

And free to recognize that a beautiful life does not depend upon every ambition being fulfilled.

Dream magnificently. Work thoughtfully. And hold the outcome gently.

When Doors Remain Closed

One of the more difficult aspects of pursuing a dream is discovering that other people do not necessarily share our enthusiasm.

We develop an idea that excites us.

We imagine the possibilities.

We prepare a thoughtful explanation.

And we reach out to someone we believe might be interested.

Perhaps they respond positively.

Perhaps they decline.

Or perhaps we hear nothing at all.

When we care deeply about an idea, silence can be particularly disappointing.

We may feel that people are overlooking something important.

We may question whether our efforts are worthwhile.

And sometimes we may begin to wonder whether the lack of response reflects something about our personal value.

But it does not.

Other people have their own lives.

Their own responsibilities.

Their own interests.

Their own priorities.

They may not have the time, resources, or desire to participate in what we are proposing.

And they have every right to make those decisions.

We can extend invitations.

We can explain our ideas.

We can listen to feedback.

And we can continue developing worthwhile possibilities.

But we cannot demand enthusiasm.

Nor should we allow someone else's response to determine whether our lives are meaningful.

Sometimes the wisest response to a closed door is to knock elsewhere.

Sometimes it is to reconsider the idea.

And sometimes it is simply to enjoy the rest of the day.

The Lessons of Express Indien

One of the projects that has brought me considerable pleasure is helping support Express Indien, a neighbourhood restaurant.

My hope has been to encourage more people to enjoy the food, develop friendships, and discover a welcoming place to gather.

I have reached out to people.

I have extended invitations.

I have developed ideas.

And I have spent enjoyable afternoons there with Christy.

Not every invitation has been accepted.

Not every idea has unfolded as I hoped.

And I cannot know exactly how much influence my efforts have had upon the restaurant's business.

But I do know something important.

The experience has given me opportunities to express friendship and encouragement.

I have enjoyed wonderful meals.

I have met interesting people.

I have had the pleasure of supporting someone whose work I appreciate.

And I have learned more about the practical challenges of bringing people together.

Would I love to see the restaurant flourish?

Absolutely.

But even while that goal remains uncertain, the experience itself has value.

Perhaps that is an important lesson for all our dreams.

An undertaking can be worthwhile even before we know its ultimate outcome.

The Life We Never Expected

Sometimes an unexpected turn brings something extraordinarily beautiful.

I think again of Christy.

For much of my life, I could not have imagined the relationship we now share.

Our paths had not yet crossed.

Our circumstances were different.

And the future we now experience together was not something I could have described in advance.

Then we met.

And gradually, our lives became intertwined.

Today, some of my happiest experiences are the simplest moments we share.

Preparing breakfast.

Watching television.

Enjoying a meal.

Laughing together.

Cuddling.

Taking care of one another.

These experiences are not the magnificent achievements that once occupied so much of my imagination.

But they are extraordinarily precious.

And they remind me that life sometimes offers gifts we did not know enough to ask for.

What if we remained open to those gifts?

What if we stopped assuming that the future must resemble the one we originally imagined?

Perhaps we would discover possibilities that our plans could never have anticipated.

When the Unexpected Is Painful

Of course, not every unexpected turn brings happiness.

Some experiences are deeply painful.

A serious illness.

The loss of someone we love.

The end of a relationship.

Financial hardship.

An accident.

A dream that becomes impossible.

These are not merely inconvenient changes to our schedules.

They can alter the entire direction of our lives.

And when such things happen, we should not feel obligated to pretend that everything is wonderful.

Grief is real.

Disappointment is real.

Fear is real.

And sometimes life is extraordinarily difficult.

The philosophy of surrender should never be used to deny these experiences.

Nor should we insist that people immediately discover some hidden benefit in their suffering.

Sometimes the appropriate response is to grieve.

Sometimes it is to seek help.

Sometimes it is to rest.

And sometimes it is simply to take the next manageable step.

Acceptance does not require us to celebrate what has happened.

It asks only that we acknowledge reality so that we can respond to it as wisely and compassionately as possible.

Can a Predetermined Life Still Surprise Us?

There is a fascinating question at the heart of our philosophy.

If the story is already written, how can anything be unexpected?

The answer is wonderfully simple.

It may be determined without being known to us.

Imagine reading a novel for the first time.

The author has already written the ending.

The characters' experiences have already been established.

The events of the story are fixed upon the pages.

But as a reader, you do not know what will happen next.

You experience surprise.

You experience anticipation.

You may feel joy, sadness, excitement, or concern.

The fact that the story has already been written does not eliminate the experience of discovering it.

If theological determinism is true, perhaps human life possesses a similar quality.

The unfolding may be known from a divine perspective while remaining mysterious from our own.

But there is an important difference between a novel and real life.

We are not merely observing events.

We are participants whose actions have consequences.

We make plans, form relationships, solve problems, and respond to circumstances.

And whether those actions are ultimately predetermined or freely chosen remains a profound philosophical question.

What matters practically is that our participation is real.

Our love matters.

Our efforts matter.

Our responses matter.

And our inability to predict the future does not diminish the value of living it.

The Wisdom of Changing Direction

Sometimes we become so attached to a particular goal that we fail to recognize when a different approach might be more effective.

We continue doing the same things.

We invest more time.

We become increasingly frustrated.

And we interpret every obstacle as something that must be overcome through greater effort.

But persistence is not always wisdom.

Sometimes wisdom means changing direction.

Perhaps an idea needs refinement.

Perhaps the timing is unsuitable.

Perhaps the resources are unavailable.

Perhaps the people we hoped would participate have different priorities.

Or perhaps our own interests have changed.

There is no shame in reconsidering a plan.

Indeed, flexibility may be one of the most important qualities we can develop.

We can remain committed to our values while changing our methods.

We can continue caring about a goal while recognizing that a particular strategy is not working.

And we can release a project without believing that the time spent exploring it was wasted.

Every experience can contribute to our understanding.

Even those that do not produce the results we hoped for.

The Freedom to Begin Again

One of the most beautiful things about life is that we can begin again.

Not necessarily by erasing the past.

We cannot do that.

But by approaching the present with a renewed perspective.

Perhaps yesterday was disappointing.

Perhaps a project failed.

Perhaps a relationship became strained.

Perhaps we made a mistake.

Today offers another opportunity.

We can apologize.

We can learn.

We can make a different decision.

We can ask for help.

We can explore a new possibility.

Or we can simply give ourselves permission to rest and recover.

Beginning again does not require a dramatic transformation.

Sometimes it begins with a quiet decision.

Today, I will be kinder to myself.

Today, I will appreciate what I have.

Today, I will stop measuring my worth by yesterday's disappointments.

Today, I will live.

And perhaps that is enough.

A Better Definition of Success

I have been thinking increasingly about what it means to live a successful life.

For many people, success is measured through accomplishments.

Wealth.

Recognition.

Professional achievement.

Influence.

Possessions.

These things can provide opportunities and satisfaction.

But I wonder whether they offer a complete picture.

Imagine reaching the end of your life with an impressive list of accomplishments but very few meaningful relationships.

Imagine possessing enormous wealth but rarely experiencing peace.

Imagine achieving widespread recognition while feeling unable to enjoy an ordinary afternoon.

Would that necessarily be a successful life?

Now imagine a life filled with love.

A life in which you treated people kindly.

A life in which you enjoyed friendships.

A life in which you appreciated beautiful experiences.

A life in which you helped others whenever possible.

A life in which you continued learning, growing, and finding reasons for gratitude.

Even if many of your ambitions remained unfulfilled, would that not be a life worth celebrating?

I believe it would.

Perhaps success should be measured not only by what we accomplish, but also by the quality of the life we experience and the love we contribute.

Letting the Future Remain a Mystery

There is something wonderfully liberating about not needing to know exactly what happens next.

We can have hopes.

We can develop plans.

We can prepare responsibly.

But we can also allow the future to remain a mystery.

I do not know what will happen with my books.

I do not know which of my ideas may attract support.

I do not know how the many projects I have imagined will develop.

And I do not know what unexpected opportunities or challenges may arise.

But I do know that I can appreciate today.

I can love Christy.

I can enjoy writing.

I can greet my neighbours.

I can help someone when the opportunity presents itself.

And I can recognize that my life is already filled with experiences worth celebrating.

Perhaps the future will bring remarkable developments.

Perhaps some dreams will change.

Perhaps entirely new possibilities will emerge.

Whatever happens, I want to remain open to life.

Not simply to the life I planned.

But to the life that actually unfolds.

The Extraordinary Gift of Flexibility

Think about a tree standing in a strong wind.

A rigid branch may break under pressure.

But a flexible branch can bend.

It moves with the wind.

It adapts.

And when the wind passes, it continues growing.

Perhaps we can learn something from that tree.

We do not have to become rigid in our expectations.

We can remain grounded in our values while allowing our circumstances to change.

We can hold firmly to love, compassion, honesty, and kindness.

But we can hold our plans more gently.

We can adapt.

We can reconsider.

We can learn.

And we can recognize that a change in direction does not necessarily represent defeat.

Sometimes it simply represents life.

The Story Continues

If our lives are part of a story already written by God, then perhaps unexpected turns are not interruptions to the story.

They are part of its unfolding.

But because we do not know the ending, we must remain humble about what particular events mean.

We cannot assume that every disappointment is secretly a blessing.

We cannot guarantee that every closed door will lead to a better one.

And we cannot know whether a dream that has been delayed will eventually be fulfilled.

What we can do is continue living.

We can respond thoughtfully to the circumstances before us.

We can seek help when we need it.

We can offer kindness.

We can remain open to new possibilities.

And we can appreciate the beautiful experiences already available.

Perhaps this is the extraordinary freedom of surrender.

Not the guarantee that life will follow our plans.

But the discovery that life can remain meaningful even when it does not.

A Wonderful Life, Right Now

As I reflect upon everything we have explored in this chapter, I return to one simple thought.

I do not want to spend the rest of my life waiting for my dreams to come true before allowing myself to be happy.

I want to be happy now.

I want to enjoy Christy.

I want to appreciate our mornings together.

I want to share wonderful meals.

I want to listen to music.

I want to write.

I want to create.

I want to make people smile.

And I want to continue imagining a world in which everyone has opportunities to experience a wonderful life.

My dreams remain enormous.

But my happiness need not depend upon their fulfilment.

I can pursue them with enthusiasm while recognizing that today is already a gift.

And perhaps, when life takes an unexpected turn, I can respond with curiosity rather than immediate resistance.

Perhaps I can ask what possibilities remain.

Perhaps I can learn something.

Perhaps I can begin again.

And perhaps I can remember that a beautiful life does not require a perfectly executed plan.

The purpose of life may not be to make everything happen exactly as we imagined. Perhaps it is to learn how to live beautifully with whatever life brings.

Let go of the plan when the plan no longer serves you.

Hold on to love.

Remain open to possibility.

And trust that your story is still unfolding.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Ten

Love Is the Reason

What if everything we have ever searched for has been leading us toward the simplest and most extraordinary truth of all—that we are here to love and to be loved?

I have spent much of my life searching for answers.

I have explored business, athletics, education, philosophy, spirituality, and the extraordinary possibilities of human achievement.

I have pursued dreams that seemed enormous.

I have imagined creating things that might improve the lives of millions of people.

And I have spent countless hours considering what it means to live a truly wonderful life.

But increasingly, I find myself returning to one beautifully simple realization.

Love is the reason.

Not money.

Not recognition.

Not power.

Not the accumulation of possessions.

Not even the achievement of our greatest dreams.

Love.

Perhaps everything else is simply an opportunity to express it.

The Question Behind Every Dream

Why do we want the things we want?

Why do we pursue wealth?

Why do we seek recognition?

Why do we build businesses, develop ideas, and strive for success?

The answers vary, of course.

Some people seek security.

Some seek independence.

Some enjoy the challenge of accomplishment.

Others hope to make a meaningful contribution to the world.

But if we continue asking why, we may eventually arrive at something more fundamental.

We want to experience happiness.

We want to feel valued.

We want meaningful relationships.

We want our lives to matter.

And we want the people we care about to flourish.

Consider someone who dreams of becoming wealthy so that their family will never experience financial hardship.

The money is important because of what it might provide.

Security.

Comfort.

Opportunity.

Peace of mind.

And perhaps, beneath all these things, love.

Or consider someone who dedicates years to developing a program that helps disadvantaged children.

The program may require funding, organization, and extraordinary effort.

But what motivates the work?

Often, it is compassion.

A desire to improve the lives of others.

A form of love expressed through action.

Perhaps many of our ambitions are attempts to create the conditions in which love can flourish.

And perhaps we sometimes become so absorbed in the ambitions themselves that we forget the love that inspired them.

The Greatest Gift of My Life

When I think about love, I naturally think about Christy.

Our relationship has transformed my understanding of what makes life wonderful.

There was a time when I imagined happiness primarily through accomplishments and possibilities.

I still enjoy those things.

But today, some of my greatest pleasures are astonishingly simple.

Making Christy's breakfast.

Sharing a laugh.

Enjoying a meal together.

Watching a favourite television program.

Holding her close.

Knowing that we have someone with whom to share our lives.

There is something extraordinarily comforting about ordinary companionship.

We do not have to impress one another.

We do not have to accomplish something magnificent every day.

We can simply be together.

And I have come to appreciate that this is one of life's greatest treasures.

A relationship does not become valuable because the people involved achieve extraordinary things.

It becomes valuable through the care, affection, trust, and attention they share.

Of course, love is not always easy.

Relationships require patience.

They require understanding.

They require the willingness to listen, apologize, compromise, and grow.

But perhaps that is part of their beauty.

Love invites us to move beyond ourselves.

It encourages us to consider another person's happiness as something genuinely important.

And it reminds us that life becomes richer when it is shared.

Love Is More Than a Feeling

We often think of love as an emotion.

The excitement of falling in love.

The warmth of affection.

The happiness of being with someone special.

These experiences are wonderful.

But love is also something we do.

It is expressed through choices, attention, and care.

Love is preparing a meal for someone who is tired.

It is listening when someone needs to talk.

It is remembering a person's name.

It is offering encouragement.

It is helping someone carry a heavy bag.

It is visiting someone who feels lonely.

It is being patient when another person is struggling.

And sometimes love means respecting another person's boundaries, even when we wish circumstances were different.

Love is not always dramatic.

It does not always require sacrifice on a magnificent scale.

Sometimes it is almost invisible.

A small kindness.

A gentle word.

A thoughtful gesture.

A moment of genuine attention.

And perhaps these ordinary expressions of love are among the most important things we do.

The Love We Offer Strangers

One of the beautiful things about love is that it need not be limited to family and close friends.

We can express care toward people we barely know.

I have experienced this through my morning encounters in the neighbourhood.

I enjoy greeting people.

I enjoy learning their names.

I enjoy wishing them a wonderful day.

Sometimes our conversations last only a few seconds.

Sometimes they become longer exchanges.

And sometimes friendships begin to develop.

I cannot know what each encounter means to the other person.

But I know what it means to me.

It brings me happiness.

It makes me feel connected to the community.

And it reminds me that we are surrounded by opportunities to make life a little more pleasant for one another.

Imagine what might happen if everyone approached their daily encounters with this attitude.

The cashier at the grocery store would be treated with kindness.

The delivery driver would be greeted warmly.

The elderly neighbour would be acknowledged.

The child waiting for the school bus would receive a friendly smile.

The person who appeared troubled might be offered a listening ear.

These actions would not solve every problem in the world.

But they could make our communities more welcoming.

And perhaps that is how a better world begins.

Not with a magnificent announcement.

But with millions of small expressions of love.

Love Without Expectation

There is an important distinction between loving someone and expecting them to behave according to our wishes.

We may offer friendship and hope it will be returned.

We may extend an invitation and hope it will be accepted.

We may share an idea and hope others will appreciate it.

But genuine care does not give us ownership over another person's response.

People are free, at least in the practical sense, to express their own preferences and boundaries.

They may not wish to participate.

They may disagree with us.

They may have different priorities.

And sometimes they may choose not to maintain a relationship.

These experiences can be disappointing.

But love should not become a demand.

We can care about people without requiring their agreement.

We can wish them well without insisting upon their attention.

And we can recognize that respecting another person's autonomy is itself an expression of love.

This can be difficult, especially when we feel misunderstood or rejected.

But it offers a remarkable freedom.

We can allow our kindness to reflect our values rather than making it dependent upon a particular response.

What Does Love Mean in a Predetermined World?

Now we arrive at a fascinating philosophical question.

If God determines every thought and action, what does it mean to love?

We commonly think of love as something freely chosen.

We imagine that its value depends upon the possibility of choosing otherwise.

But theological determinism invites us to consider another perspective.

What if love is not diminished by being part of a greater causal or divine order?

What if the experience of loving someone remains meaningful regardless of how that experience ultimately arises?

Consider the warmth of an embrace.

The comfort of a familiar voice.

The happiness of seeing someone we care about.

The relief of receiving help during a difficult moment.

These experiences are real to the people involved.

Their significance does not necessarily disappear because we adopt a particular explanation of human decision-making.

Philosophers disagree about whether genuine moral responsibility requires free will.

Theologians disagree about how divine sovereignty relates to human love.

And these questions deserve thoughtful exploration.

But perhaps we can agree upon something practical.

Whether our actions are ultimately determined or freely chosen, kindness improves lives.

Compassion can relieve suffering.

Friendship can reduce loneliness.

And love can transform the quality of human experience.

Perhaps that is reason enough to make love central to the way we live.

The Greatest Commandment

Within the Christian tradition, love occupies an extraordinary position.

When Jesus is asked about the greatest commandment, he speaks of loving God and loving one's neighbour as oneself.

What a remarkable foundation for a philosophy of life.

Love God.

Love your neighbour.

Love yourself.

These principles are simple to express, but their implications are enormous.

If we genuinely love our neighbours, how can we remain indifferent to their suffering?

If we recognize the dignity of every person, how can we justify treating others as though they are unimportant?

If we believe that love is central to our spiritual lives, should it not also become central to our communities, institutions, and relationships?

And what about loving ourselves?

That does not mean believing that we are superior to others.

It means recognizing that we, too, deserve care, compassion, and respect.

We can acknowledge our mistakes without defining ourselves by them.

We can seek improvement without constantly criticizing ourselves.

And we can recognize that our own well-being matters alongside the well-being of others.

Perhaps a loving world begins with people who have learned to treat both themselves and their neighbours with kindness.

The Vision of A NuVo World

When I consider my vision for A NuVo World, I increasingly recognize that its deepest purpose is love.

The programs, facilities, products, and services are important.

But they are not the ultimate objective.

The objective is to improve human lives.

Imagine communities in which everyone has access to nutritious food.

Where people can pursue optimal health.

Where children have opportunities to learn, play, and develop their abilities.

Where older adults remain valued and connected.

Where neighbours help one another.

Where loneliness is reduced through genuine relationships.

Where people are encouraged to discover their interests, develop their talents, and contribute to their communities.

These possibilities excite me enormously.

But the most important element is not the physical infrastructure.

It is the spirit in which everything is created.

A magnificent building without compassion is simply a building.

An elaborate program without genuine concern for people is merely an administrative structure.

And an organization that loses sight of the individuals it was created to serve risks losing its purpose.

Love must remain at the centre.

It must influence the way people are treated.

The decisions that are made.

The resources that are shared.

And the relationships that develop.

Perhaps that is the true meaning of creating Heaven on Earth.

Not merely building extraordinary places.

But creating environments in which people experience extraordinary care.

The Love That Changes a Community

Imagine a neighbourhood in which every resident made a small commitment.

Each day, they would try to improve the life of at least one other person.

Nothing complicated.

Nothing expensive.

Just one thoughtful action.

A friendly greeting.

A telephone call.

A helping hand.

A shared meal.

A few minutes of conversation.

A gesture of encouragement.

Now imagine thousands of people doing this consistently.

The effects might be remarkable.

People who once felt isolated could begin developing friendships.

Neighbours who had never spoken might discover common interests.

Families facing difficulties might find support.

Children could grow up seeing kindness demonstrated as a normal part of daily life.

And the entire atmosphere of the community might gradually change.

Of course, kindness alone cannot replace the need for effective healthcare, adequate housing, economic opportunity, and responsible public institutions.

A loving society requires both compassionate individuals and systems that support human dignity.

But perhaps the two can strengthen one another.

Good institutions can create opportunities for people to flourish.

And loving communities can help ensure that those opportunities are shared.

Love Is Not Always Easy

It is tempting to speak about love only in beautiful terms.

Smiles.

Hugs.

Friendship.

Generosity.

But genuine love sometimes requires difficult action.

It may mean having an uncomfortable conversation.

It may mean acknowledging that we have hurt someone.

It may mean setting a necessary boundary.

It may mean telling the truth when silence would be easier.

It may mean protecting someone who is vulnerable.

And sometimes it means recognizing that we cannot solve another person's problems, no matter how deeply we care.

Love does not require us to accept mistreatment.

It does not mean agreeing with everyone.

And it does not mean neglecting our own needs.

Healthy love includes respect.

It includes honesty.

It includes responsibility.

And it recognizes that every person possesses dignity.

Perhaps the most mature expressions of love are not always the most comfortable.

Sometimes they are the ones that require courage.

Love and the Passage of Time

As we grow older, our perspective often changes.

The things that once seemed enormously important may gradually lose some of their urgency.

The competition for recognition.

The desire to impress.

The accumulation of possessions.

The endless pursuit of more.

Meanwhile, the importance of relationships may become increasingly clear.

We begin to appreciate the people who have shared our lives.

We recognize the value of ordinary companionship.

We remember acts of kindness that occurred many years earlier.

And we may discover that some of our happiest memories involve moments that seemed insignificant at the time.

A family dinner.

A holiday.

A conversation.

A shared adventure.

A quiet evening.

Perhaps this is one of the gifts of growing older.

We begin to recognize that the richness of a life cannot be measured simply by its accomplishments.

It must also be measured by its relationships.

And by the love that was given and received.

What If Love Is the Point?

Let us return to the central question.

What if God has already written the story?

What if our lives unfold according to a divine wisdom beyond our understanding?

What if the extraordinary complexity of human existence belongs to a larger purpose?

We cannot establish these propositions simply through personal conviction.

They remain matters of faith and philosophical inquiry.

But within such a worldview, we can ask a beautiful question.

What if love is central to the story?

What if the significance of our lives is found not primarily in what we accumulate or accomplish, but in the ways we care for one another?

What if our greatest opportunities are not always the most dramatic ones?

Perhaps the opportunity to comfort someone who is grieving matters more than an impressive business achievement.

Perhaps the opportunity to encourage a child matters more than receiving public recognition.

Perhaps the opportunity to care for someone we love matters more than completing another project.

And perhaps the ordinary moments we so frequently overlook are among the most meaningful parts of our lives.

A Life Worth Living

I have come to appreciate that I do not need to choose between having magnificent dreams and enjoying a simple life.

I can have both.

I can imagine extraordinary possibilities for the world.

And I can find enormous happiness in preparing Christy's breakfast.

I can dream of magnificent facilities serving thousands of communities.

And I can enjoy greeting a neighbour.

I can hope that my books will reach people around the world.

And I can appreciate the pleasure of writing even if only a few people ever read them.

The dreams are expressions of what I hope to contribute.

The ordinary moments are expressions of the life I am privileged to experience.

And love connects them.

It gives meaning to the ambitions.

It gives richness to the relationships.

And it reminds me why any of it matters.

The Simplest Question

Perhaps we could begin each day with one simple question.

How can I express love today?

Not how can I become famous?

Not how can I accomplish something magnificent?

Not how can I persuade everyone to agree with me?

But how can I express love?

Perhaps the answer will be preparing breakfast.

Perhaps it will be offering encouragement.

Perhaps it will be listening.

Perhaps it will be helping someone who is struggling.

Perhaps it will be working diligently on a project intended to improve people's lives.

And perhaps it will be taking care of ourselves so that we can continue caring for others.

There are countless possibilities.

And we do not have to wait for extraordinary circumstances to begin.

The Reason Behind Everything

As I reflect upon my life, I recognize that many of the things I once considered essential are no longer quite so important.

I still enjoy accomplishment.

I still love imagining possibilities.

I still hope to contribute something meaningful to the world.

But I increasingly understand that the greatest joys of my life are rooted in love.

The love I share with Christy.

The friendships I enjoy.

The kindness I experience.

The opportunities I have to help others.

And the pleasure of imagining a world in which everyone feels valued.

Perhaps the ultimate meaning of life is more mysterious than any of us can fully understand.

Perhaps there are dimensions of existence that lie beyond our present knowledge.

Perhaps the story is already written.

Or perhaps the future remains open in ways we cannot comprehend.

Whatever the answer, I believe we can live beautifully by placing love at the centre of our lives.

Because love gives meaning to the simplest moments.

It brings purpose to our efforts.

It enriches our relationships.

And it encourages us to make the world a better place.

If I accomplish nothing else today but help someone feel loved, perhaps today has already been a wonderful success.

And if tomorrow offers another opportunity to love, I will welcome it.

One day.

One person.

One moment at a time.

Let go of the need to impress.

Let go of the need to control.

Let go of the belief that your worth depends upon extraordinary achievements.

And allow love to become the foundation of your life.

Let Go and Let God.

Because perhaps, when everything else has been said and done, the greatest truth is also the simplest.

Love is the reason.

Part Three — Living the Story

Chapter Eleven

Every Person Has a Part to Play

What if every person you encounter is part of a story far greater than either of you can imagine?

I have met thousands upon thousands of people throughout my life.

Some have become lifelong friends.

Some have played important roles in my personal and professional development.

Some have encouraged me.

Others have challenged me.

And countless others have passed through my life for only a few moments.

Yet increasingly, I find myself wondering about the extraordinary significance of these encounters.

What if every person has a part to play?

Not necessarily a dramatic part.

Not necessarily a part that brings fame, wealth, or recognition.

But a meaningful part in the great unfolding story of human existence.

Imagine for a moment that your life is a magnificent novel.

There are principal characters.

There are supporting characters.

There are people who appear for only a page or two.

And there are people whose presence changes the entire direction of the story.

Now consider something remarkable.

In the story of your life, you are the central character. But in the stories of countless other people, you may be someone whose influence you will never fully understand.

What an extraordinary possibility.

The People We Overlook

We live in a world that celebrates certain kinds of achievement.

We recognize famous athletes.

Successful entrepreneurs.

Entertainers.

Political leaders.

Scientists.

Writers.

And others whose accomplishments attract public attention.

There is nothing inherently wrong with celebrating excellence.

But sometimes we become so fascinated by extraordinary achievement that we overlook the extraordinary value of ordinary people.

Consider the person who prepares food for others every day.

The caregiver who helps someone who cannot manage alone.

The school bus driver who safely transports children.

The neighbour who checks on an elderly friend.

The parent who patiently comforts a frightened child.

The volunteer who spends an afternoon helping people in need.

These individuals may never become famous.

Their names may never appear in history books.

But their contributions can be enormously important.

Indeed, much of what makes human society possible depends upon people whose work rarely attracts attention.

Perhaps the significance of a life should not be measured by how many people recognize a person's name.

Perhaps it should also be measured by the care, reliability, and kindness they bring to the world.

My Morning Community

One of the most enjoyable parts of my life has been developing relationships with people in my neighbourhood.

For quite some time, I have spent early mornings greeting people near our local Metro supermarket.

I have come to know delivery drivers, parents, children, and neighbours who pass through the area.

There is a wonderful group of families whose children gather to wait for their school bus.

I enjoy seeing them.

I enjoy learning about their activities.

And I particularly enjoy wishing everyone a wonderful day.

Some mornings are busy.

Other mornings are quiet.

Sometimes we have interesting conversations.

And sometimes our entire interaction consists of a smile and a wave.

But I have come to appreciate these encounters enormously.

There is something beautiful about becoming a familiar, friendly presence in a community.

We do not need an elaborate program to begin developing relationships.

We do not need a committee.

We do not need funding.

Sometimes all we need is a willingness to show up.

To notice people.

To remember their names.

To express genuine interest in their lives.

And to offer a little kindness.

I cannot know what each encounter means to the people involved.

Perhaps some hardly think about it afterward.

Perhaps others enjoy the familiarity.

But the experience has certainly enriched my life.

And that, in itself, is something worth celebrating.

The Extraordinary Power of Recognition

There is a difference between seeing someone and recognizing them.

We see people constantly.

At grocery stores.

On sidewalks.

In elevators.

At restaurants.

On public transportation.

But how often do we genuinely acknowledge them?

How often do we look beyond their immediate function and recognize that they are human beings with lives as rich and complicated as our own?

The cashier has a story.

The delivery driver has a story.

The person cleaning the building has a story.

The elderly neighbour has a story.

And the stranger standing beside us has a story.

Each has experienced hopes, disappointments, relationships, challenges, and moments of happiness.

Each has people they care about.

Each has concerns we may know nothing about.

And each possesses a dignity that does not depend upon their occupation, income, education, or social position.

Perhaps one of the simplest ways to express love is to recognize that dignity.

To treat people as individuals rather than as background characters in our own lives.

A smile.

A greeting.

A sincere thank-you.

A moment of attention.

These things may seem small.

But they communicate something important.

You matter.

And perhaps we all need to hear that from time to time.

The Ripple Effect

Imagine dropping a small stone into a perfectly still pond.

The stone creates a ripple.

That ripple moves outward.

It creates another.

And another.

Eventually, the disturbance reaches places far beyond the point where the stone entered the water.

Human relationships can work in a similar way.

Suppose you offer a kind word to someone who is having a difficult morning.

Perhaps that person feels a little better.

Perhaps they become more patient with a colleague.

Perhaps the colleague, in turn, offers encouragement to someone else.

The original kindness may influence people you will never meet.

Of course, we cannot know whether any particular gesture will produce such a chain of events.

Human behaviour is complicated.

But the possibility reminds us that our actions can have consequences beyond what we immediately observe.

And this is true of unkindness as well.

An impatient remark may affect someone more deeply than we realize.

A dismissive response may discourage a person who was already struggling.

Our behaviour matters.

Not because we can control every consequence.

But because the way we treat people contributes to the quality of the world we share.

A Determined Story and Meaningful Participation

Now consider the central philosophy of this book.

If God has already determined every event, then every encounter and interaction belongs to that unfolding.

The person we greet.

The conversation we begin.

The help we offer.

The opportunities we accept.

Even the moments when we choose to remain silent.

Within hard theological determinism, all these events would be part of the divine order.

But this raises an important question.

If our actions are predetermined, do they still matter?

I believe the practical answer is yes.

Consider a physician treating a patient.

The treatment matters because it may improve the patient's health.

Consider a parent comforting a child.

The comfort matters because it can reduce the child's distress.

Consider a neighbour delivering food to someone who is hungry.

The food matters because it meets a genuine need.

These consequences remain meaningful regardless of the philosophical explanation we adopt for the actions that produced them.

Determinism does not make kindness ineffective.

It does not make relationships imaginary.

And it does not remove the importance of addressing suffering.

If anything, reflecting upon the interconnectedness of events may encourage us to appreciate how deeply our lives influence one another.

Not Everyone Has to Change the World

There is a phrase we hear frequently.

"Change the world."

I love the ambition behind those words.

But I wonder whether they sometimes create an unnecessary burden.

We may begin imagining that our lives are meaningful only if we accomplish something enormous.

We may feel inadequate because we have not founded an organization, created a major invention, or influenced millions of people.

But perhaps we should reconsider what changing the world means.

The world is not merely an abstract collection of nations, economies, and institutions.

It is also the immediate experience of individual human beings.

For someone who is lonely, a friendship can change their world.

For a hungry child, a nutritious meal can change their afternoon.

For someone experiencing despair, a compassionate conversation can make a meaningful difference.

For an elderly person who rarely receives visitors, an hour of companionship may be extraordinarily valuable.

We do not have to transform the entire planet in order to improve someone's experience of living upon it.

And perhaps that is where meaningful change begins.

One person.

One encounter.

One expression of love.

The People Who Challenge Us

Not everyone who enters our life will make it easier.

Some people disagree with us.

Some disappoint us.

Some misunderstand our intentions.

And occasionally, relationships become genuinely difficult.

It can be tempting to view these people simply as obstacles.

But sometimes disagreement can help us grow.

Someone who questions our ideas may encourage us to examine them more carefully.

Someone who offers thoughtful criticism may identify a weakness we had overlooked.

Someone whose experiences differ from ours may help us understand the world from another perspective.

This does not mean that every difficult relationship is beneficial.

Nor does it mean that we should tolerate abuse, manipulation, or mistreatment.

Healthy boundaries are important.

But we can remain open to learning from people who see things differently.

Perhaps we do not need everyone to agree with us.

Perhaps we can appreciate the extraordinary diversity of human experience.

And perhaps our lives become richer when we recognize that other people have something to teach us.

The People We Love Most

Among all the people who enter our lives, some occupy a particularly important place.

Our partners.

Our families.

Our closest friends.

The people with whom we share our ordinary days.

For me, Christy is at the centre of this experience.

I love spending time with her.

I enjoy caring for her.

I appreciate the companionship we share.

And I recognize that our relationship deserves my attention more than any distant ambition.

This is an important lesson for someone who loves creating and dreaming.

It is easy to become absorbed in magnificent possibilities.

There is always another idea to develop.

Another letter to write.

Another project to explore.

Another opportunity to pursue.

But the people closest to us are not interruptions to our work.

They are among the greatest reasons our work matters.

I do not want to become so preoccupied with creating a better world that I overlook the person sharing my world today.

I want my love to be visible in ordinary moments.

In patience.

In affection.

In attention.

And in the simple pleasure of being together.

The Role of Community

One of my deepest interests is the possibility of creating stronger communities.

I envision neighbourhoods where people know one another.

Where friendships develop naturally.

Where individuals feel supported.

Where children, families, and older adults have opportunities to flourish.

And where helping others becomes an ordinary part of daily life.

Through A NuVo World, I have imagined extensive programs and facilities that could contribute to this vision.

But I recognize that community cannot simply be constructed through buildings and organizations.

Community develops through relationships.

It grows when people begin recognizing one another.

When they share experiences.

When they offer assistance.

When they establish trust.

And when they discover that their lives are richer because they belong to something larger than themselves.

Perhaps the most important resource in any community is not money.

It is people who care.

Money can help create facilities.

It can support services.

It can provide essential resources.

But genuine community requires human connection.

And that begins with each of us.

The Quiet Heroes

I often think about the people whose contributions are rarely celebrated.

The parent who gets up early every morning to care for a family.

The nurse who offers reassurance to a frightened patient.

The teacher who notices a child struggling to understand.

The volunteer who quietly serves meals.

The neighbour who helps someone carry groceries.

The friend who listens during a difficult evening.

These people may never receive awards.

They may never become wealthy.

They may never be recognized beyond their immediate circles.

But their lives can be filled with extraordinary meaning.

Perhaps we need a different understanding of greatness.

One that recognizes kindness alongside achievement.

Compassion alongside intelligence.

Service alongside success.

And love alongside ambition.

A truly great life need not be famous.

It can simply be a life that makes other lives better.

What Part Am I Meant to Play?

This is a question I have considered many times.

What is my role in the world?

What am I here to contribute?

I have imagined extraordinary possibilities.

I have written books.

I have developed programs.

I have created visions for businesses, recreation, community development, and human well-being.

I hope some of these ideas will make meaningful contributions.

But increasingly, I recognize that my role does not have to be defined exclusively by what I may accomplish in the future.

It can also be expressed through what I do today.

Perhaps today my role is to encourage a neighbour.

Perhaps it is to help Christy enjoy a comfortable morning.

Perhaps it is to write something that inspires a reader.

Perhaps it is to support a local business.

Or perhaps it is simply to be present with someone who needs companionship.

I do not need to know the ultimate significance of every action.

I can simply try to make my participation in the world a loving one.

The Extraordinary Value of Your Life

Now I would like you to consider your own life.

Think about the people you have known.

The friendships you have developed.

The family members you have loved.

The colleagues you have worked beside.

The strangers you have helped.

The people who have encouraged you.

And the people you may have encouraged without realizing it.

Your life has intersected with countless other lives.

Some of those encounters have been significant.

Others have been brief.

But together, they form a remarkable network of human experience.

You may never know the full extent of your influence.

You may never discover how much a particular kindness meant to someone.

You may never hear about the encouragement that helped another person continue through a difficult time.

But that does not mean your actions were unimportant.

Your life matters beyond what you can measure.

Not because you must accomplish something magnificent.

But because you are a human being whose presence and actions can influence the lives of others.

The Story We Share

Perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of the story of life is that none of us experiences it entirely alone.

Our lives overlap.

Our experiences intersect.

Our relationships influence one another.

We learn from people.

We care for people.

We sometimes disappoint people.

And we have opportunities to offer kindness, forgiveness, encouragement, and support.

If the story is already written, then perhaps every person occupies a place within an extraordinary unfolding whose full significance remains beyond our understanding.

But we should remain humble about what that means.

We cannot know the divine purpose of every encounter.

We cannot claim that every relationship was arranged for a particular reason.

And we cannot assume that we understand the roles other people are meant to play.

What we can do is recognize their dignity.

We can treat them with kindness.

We can respect their choices and boundaries.

And we can appreciate the opportunity to share a small part of life's journey.

Your Part Begins Today

You do not have to wait for a special opportunity to make a meaningful contribution.

You do not have to become wealthy.

You do not have to become famous.

You do not have to create a magnificent organization.

You can begin today.

Notice someone.

Offer a smile.

Remember a name.

Express gratitude.

Help where help is needed.

Listen when someone wants to be heard.

And appreciate the people who make your own life richer.

Perhaps your actions will have consequences you never discover.

Perhaps they will simply brighten a moment.

Either possibility is worthwhile.

Because the quality of human life is influenced by countless ordinary encounters.

And each of us has opportunities to contribute to that quality.

Every Person Matters

As I reflect upon the extraordinary diversity of human lives, I find myself returning to one simple conviction.

Every person matters.

The wealthy and the poor.

The young and the old.

The celebrated and the unknown.

The confident and the uncertain.

The people whose lives appear successful and those who are struggling.

Every person possesses dignity.

Every person has a story.

And every person deserves to be treated with compassion and respect.

If we could begin approaching one another with this understanding, imagine how different our communities might become.

Imagine a world in which people were valued for their humanity rather than simply their accomplishments.

Imagine a world in which kindness was considered a form of greatness.

Imagine a world in which no one felt invisible.

Perhaps such a world would not emerge overnight.

But perhaps it could begin through the ordinary ways we treat one another.

And perhaps that is a beautiful part for each of us to play.

You do not need to be the most important person in the world.
You can make a world of difference by helping someone else feel important.

Let go of the need to be extraordinary.

Recognize the extraordinary value of others.

And appreciate the wonderful opportunity to share this story together.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Twelve

The Miracle of Ordinary Moments

What if the most extraordinary thing about life is that we have been surrounded by miracles all along?

I have been thinking a great deal lately about what makes a day wonderful.

For much of my life, I associated wonderful days with extraordinary experiences.

Winning a championship.

Achieving a business objective.

Developing an exciting new idea.

Completing an important project.

Receiving recognition for something I had accomplished.

These experiences can be enormously satisfying.

But increasingly, I am discovering that some of my happiest days contain very little that anyone else would consider remarkable.

A leisurely morning.

A warm cup of tea.

A beautiful piece of music.

A friendly conversation.

A delicious meal.

An afternoon spent cuddling with Christy.

Nothing spectacular.

Nothing that would attract public attention.

And yet, these moments can fill me with an extraordinary sense of happiness.

I have begun to wonder whether we have misunderstood the nature of a wonderful life.

Perhaps we have been looking for miracles in the wrong places.

Perhaps we have been expecting something magnificent to happen while overlooking the magnificence of what is already happening.

What if the miracle is not something we are waiting for? What if the miracle is life itself?

The Extraordinary Experience of Being Alive

Consider what is happening at this very moment.

Your heart is beating.

Your lungs are breathing.

Your brain is processing these words.

Your body is carrying out countless functions without requiring your conscious direction.

Somewhere outside, people are going about their lives.

Children are playing.

Birds are singing.

Trees are growing.

Clouds are moving across the sky.

The world is alive with extraordinary activity.

And somehow, you are part of it.

You have the remarkable ability to experience.

To see colours.

To hear music.

To appreciate beauty.

To remember the past.

To imagine the future.

To love another person.

And to recognize that you are alive.

We have become so accustomed to these abilities that we rarely stop to consider how extraordinary they are.

But imagine experiencing the world for the very first time.

Imagine seeing a sunrise without ever having seen one before.

Imagine hearing a beautiful song for the first time.

Imagine tasting a ripe strawberry without knowing what sweetness was.

Imagine feeling the warmth of someone's embrace without ever having experienced affection.

Would these not seem miraculous?

Perhaps they still are.

We have simply become accustomed to them.

The Morning Bagel

One of the little pleasures of my life is preparing Christy's morning bagel.

It is a simple routine.

The bagel is toasted.

Butter is added.

Then comes the cream cheese and raspberry jam.

And, of course, there are my much-anticipated tastes!

There is nothing complicated about this experience.

It does not require elaborate preparation.

It does not cost a fortune.

It does not involve anything that would impress the wider world.

But it brings me happiness.

There is pleasure in helping Christy.

There is pleasure in our familiar routine.

There is pleasure in sharing something delicious.

And there is pleasure in simply being together.

I could easily overlook these moments.

I could regard breakfast as something to complete quickly before beginning the important work of the day.

But increasingly, I recognize that breakfast may be among the most important experiences of the morning.

Not because of the food itself.

But because of the love it expresses.

Perhaps this is one of the great secrets of happiness.

The extraordinary is often hidden within the ordinary.

And we discover it when we begin paying attention.

The Beauty of Familiarity

We often associate excitement with novelty.

A new place.

A new experience.

A new opportunity.

A new adventure.

And there is certainly pleasure in discovering something unfamiliar.

But I have come to appreciate the beauty of familiarity.

The comfort of a favourite chair.

The pleasure of hearing a familiar song.

The warmth of returning home.

The enjoyment of a favourite television program.

The happiness of seeing someone whose presence has become part of our daily life.

Familiarity can create a wonderful sense of belonging.

We do not have to continually search for new experiences in order to enjoy life.

Sometimes the experiences we repeat are the ones that bring us the greatest comfort.

A familiar morning routine.

A favourite meal.

A regular walk.

A weekly visit with a friend.

These things may appear unremarkable from the outside.

But they can become the foundations of a deeply satisfying life.

A Wonderful Afternoon Doing Very Little

Imagine spending an afternoon at home.

Perhaps you listen to music.

Perhaps you read.

Perhaps you watch a favourite television program.

Perhaps you share a meal with someone you love.

There are no great achievements.

No important announcements.

No dramatic developments.

Just an ordinary afternoon.

Would you consider it wasted?

I would not.

Indeed, I have come to appreciate afternoons like these enormously.

There is something wonderfully liberating about allowing ourselves to enjoy life without feeling compelled to accomplish something.

We can rest.

We can reflect.

We can laugh.

We can enjoy companionship.

And we can recognize that happiness does not always require activity.

Sometimes it requires attention.

The willingness to notice what is already beautiful.

The Miracle of Human Connection

One of the most extraordinary aspects of ordinary life is our ability to connect with other people.

Think about how much happiness can emerge from a simple conversation.

Someone remembers your name.

Someone asks how you are doing.

Someone shares a funny story.

Someone offers a kind word.

These moments may last only a few seconds.

But they remind us that we are not alone.

I have experienced this repeatedly through my morning encounters in the neighbourhood.

I enjoy seeing familiar faces.

I enjoy greeting the parents and children waiting for the school bus.

I enjoy exchanging a few words with delivery drivers and neighbours.

And I enjoy the sense of community that develops through repeated encounters.

There is something beautiful about becoming part of another person's ordinary day.

We may not know everything about one another.

We may not share the same interests or beliefs.

But we can still exchange kindness.

And perhaps these small connections are among the most important ingredients of a happy community.

The Extraordinary Gift of Attention

There is a fascinating difference between experiencing something and appreciating it.

We can eat a delicious meal while thinking about work.

We can walk through a beautiful park while worrying about tomorrow.

We can sit beside someone we love while concentrating upon an unfinished project.

The experiences are taking place.

But our attention is somewhere else.

And because our attention is elsewhere, we may miss much of the pleasure available to us.

Perhaps appreciation begins with a simple decision.

To notice.

Notice the flavour of the food.

Notice the beauty of the music.

Notice the expression on someone's face.

Notice the warmth of the sunlight.

Notice the pleasure of being comfortable.

Notice the extraordinary fact that we are alive.

We do not need to analyze every experience.

We do not need to transform every moment into a spiritual revelation.

We can simply appreciate it.

And perhaps appreciation is one of the most accessible forms of happiness.

The Ordinary Moments We Remember

Think about some of your happiest memories.

Perhaps they involve extraordinary achievements.

But perhaps they also involve moments that seemed entirely ordinary at the time.

A conversation with a parent.

A childhood holiday.

A family dinner.

A walk with a friend.

An afternoon spent laughing.

A quiet evening with someone you loved.

Why do these memories remain precious?

Often, it is not because anything remarkable was accomplished.

It is because of how we felt.

Loved.

Safe.

Connected.

Happy.

At peace.

The emotional richness of the experience gave it meaning.

And perhaps this should influence the way we approach the present.

The ordinary moments we are experiencing today may become the treasured memories of tomorrow.

The breakfast we share.

The conversation we enjoy.

The laughter we experience.

The time we spend together.

One day, we may look back upon these moments with enormous affection.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to appreciate them while they are happening?

What If Every Moment Belongs to the Story?

Now let us consider the central philosophy of this book.

If God has already written the story of our lives, then perhaps every ordinary moment belongs to that unfolding.

Not merely the dramatic events.

Not merely the great achievements.

Not merely the extraordinary encounters.

But the quiet moments as well.

The cup of tea.

The morning walk.

The shared meal.

The friendly greeting.

The afternoon rest.

Within theological determinism, these experiences would be no less part of the divine order than the events we consider important.

But even without accepting that philosophy, we can recognize their value.

Our lives are composed primarily of ordinary moments.

If we reserve happiness exclusively for extraordinary occasions, we may overlook most of our existence.

Perhaps the wisest approach is to discover how much beauty is available within the everyday.

The Pleasure of Enough

One of the most important realizations of my life has been that I do not need extraordinary circumstances to experience extraordinary happiness.

I still enjoy dreaming.

I still imagine magnificent possibilities.

I still hope to contribute something meaningful to the world.

But I am discovering that the quality of my life is not dependent upon the realization of every ambition.

I can enjoy today.

I can appreciate Christy.

I can listen to music.

I can write.

I can learn.

I can greet my neighbours.

And I can recognize that these experiences are already worthwhile.

Perhaps this is the wisdom of enough.

Not the belief that we should never seek improvement.

Not the denial of genuine needs.

But the realization that we can appreciate what we possess while remaining open to what may come.

We can dream without desperation.

We can work without constant anxiety.

And we can rest without guilt.

A Different Kind of Wealth

Imagine two people.

One possesses extraordinary financial wealth but spends most of life worrying about losing it.

The other has sufficient resources to meet their needs and enjoys meaningful relationships, peaceful days, and a deep appreciation for ordinary pleasures.

Which person is wealthier?

Financially, the answer may be obvious.

But in terms of lived experience, the question becomes more interesting.

Wealth can provide comfort, security, and opportunities.

It can support worthwhile projects and improve lives.

But the ability to appreciate life is a different kind of richness.

A person who can find happiness in a beautiful morning possesses something enormously valuable.

A person who enjoys loving relationships possesses something precious.

And a person who can experience peace without requiring perfect circumstances has discovered a remarkable form of freedom.

Perhaps the richest life is not necessarily the one containing the most possessions.

Perhaps it is the one containing the greatest capacity for appreciation.

The Miracle of Today

There is something extraordinary about this particular day.

It has never happened before.

And it will never happen again.

The precise combination of people, circumstances, conversations, experiences, and opportunities that exists today is unique.

Tomorrow will be different.

Some things may be similar.

But the day itself will be new.

We cannot preserve today indefinitely.

We cannot return to it once it has passed.

We can remember it.

We can learn from it.

But we can only live it now.

Perhaps that is reason enough to appreciate it.

Not every day will be easy.

Some days will bring disappointment.

Some will involve grief, illness, or genuine difficulty.

We should never feel obligated to describe painful experiences as wonderful.

But even during challenging periods, there may be moments of comfort, connection, or beauty worth noticing.

And on the many ordinary days when life is relatively peaceful, perhaps we can allow ourselves to enjoy that peace without searching for something more dramatic.

Heaven on Earth in the Everyday

I have often spoken about the possibility of creating Heaven on Earth.

I envision communities in which people care for one another, share resources, develop friendships, and enjoy opportunities to live healthier and happier lives.

But perhaps Heaven on Earth is not merely something we must build.

Perhaps it is also something we can experience.

In a loving embrace.

In a shared meal.

In a moment of kindness.

In the laughter of children.

In the pleasure of helping someone.

In the comfort of knowing that we belong.

These experiences do not eliminate the world's difficulties.

They do not remove the need to address poverty, injustice, illness, or loneliness.

But they offer glimpses of the kind of world we might wish to create.

And perhaps they remind us why that work matters.

We want people to experience lives filled with dignity, connection, and joy.

We want the ordinary moments of human existence to become more beautiful.

And perhaps the first step is learning to appreciate those moments ourselves.

The Art of a Wonderful Day

Suppose you decided that tomorrow would be a day devoted to appreciation.

You would still take care of your responsibilities.

You would still address whatever needed attention.

But throughout the day, you would make a conscious effort to notice what was good.

The warmth of your morning drink.

The comfort of your home.

The beauty of the sky.

The kindness of another person.

The pleasure of a favourite meal.

The opportunity to learn something.

The happiness of spending time with someone you love.

You might discover that the day contains far more beauty than you usually recognize.

Not because the circumstances have changed.

But because your attention has changed.

Perhaps this is one of the simplest ways to improve the quality of our lives.

We do not always need more.

Sometimes we need to notice more.

Nothing Ordinary About Love

As I reflect upon the extraordinary happiness I experience through simple moments with Christy, I find myself returning to one thought.

There is nothing ordinary about love.

We may express it through ordinary actions.

Preparing breakfast.

Sharing a meal.

Holding hands.

Offering comfort.

Spending time together.

But the love itself is extraordinary.

It gives meaning to experiences that might otherwise seem insignificant.

It transforms routine into companionship.

It turns a house into a home.

And it reminds us that some of life's greatest treasures cannot be purchased or manufactured.

They must be experienced.

The Miracle Is Here

Perhaps we have spent too much time searching for extraordinary experiences.

Perhaps we have imagined that happiness lies somewhere beyond our present circumstances.

Perhaps we have become so concerned about the future that we have overlooked the wonder of today.

But what if we began living differently?

What if we treated an ordinary morning as something worth celebrating?

What if we recognized the extraordinary value of a familiar smile?

What if we appreciated the people we love while we have the opportunity?

And what if we stopped demanding that every day produce something magnificent?

Perhaps we would discover that life has been offering us extraordinary gifts all along.

The ability to experience.

The opportunity to love.

The pleasure of friendship.

The beauty of nature.

The joy of learning.

The comfort of companionship.

And the simple wonder of being alive.

We do not have to wait for a miracle to happen. Perhaps the miracle is that we are here to experience this moment at all.

So tomorrow morning, when you awaken, take a moment.

Before thinking about everything you need to accomplish, appreciate the extraordinary fact that another day has begun.

Enjoy your breakfast.

Notice the people around you.

Offer a little kindness.

Listen to something beautiful.

And remember that your life is not merely preparation for a future that has yet to arrive.

Your life is happening now.

In this moment.

On this page of the story.

Let go of the need for something extraordinary to happen.

Let God be God.

And appreciate the extraordinary beauty of an ordinary day.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Thirteen

Dreams, Desires, and Divine Timing

What if we could dream without limits, work without desperation, and trust without needing to know how everything will turn out?

I have always been a dreamer.

Not a little dreamer.

An enormous dreamer!

Throughout my life, I have imagined possibilities that extend far beyond my immediate circumstances.

I have dreamed of becoming a champion.

I have dreamed of developing successful businesses.

I have dreamed of creating extraordinary recreational facilities.

I have dreamed of writing books that might inspire people around the world.

And I have dreamed of helping create communities in which everyone has opportunities to enjoy a wonderful life.

Some of my dreams have become realities.

Others have changed along the way.

And many remain possibilities whose futures I cannot predict.

But I have come to appreciate something enormously important.

The value of a dream does not depend entirely upon whether it comes true.

A dream can inspire us.

It can encourage creativity.

It can motivate us to learn.

It can bring people together.

And it can give direction to our efforts.

But perhaps the greatest freedom comes when we learn to dream magnificently without allowing our happiness to depend upon a particular outcome.

Where Do Our Dreams Come From?

Have you ever wondered why certain ideas capture your imagination?

Why one person dreams of becoming a musician while another dreams of becoming a physician?

Why someone feels drawn toward teaching while another becomes fascinated by engineering?

Why some people love creating businesses while others find their greatest satisfaction in caring for children or helping their neighbours?

We are all different.

Our interests vary.

Our abilities vary.

Our experiences shape us in different ways.

And our desires often emerge from a complicated combination of personality, upbringing, opportunity, relationships, and circumstance.

But within the philosophy we have been exploring, another possibility arises.

What if our dreams are themselves part of the story?

If God determines the unfolding of our lives, then perhaps the desires that arise within us belong to that unfolding as well.

Our interests.

Our inspirations.

Our ambitions.

Even the ideas that appear unexpectedly.

But this raises an important distinction.

Having a dream does not mean we know its ultimate purpose or that its fulfilment is guaranteed.

A desire may inspire a successful project.

It may lead us toward something entirely different.

It may teach us about ourselves.

Or it may simply provide an enjoyable opportunity to explore a possibility.

We do not have to know the ending in order to appreciate the experience.

The Extraordinary Power of Imagination

Consider how many of humanity's achievements began with imagination.

Someone imagined travelling through the air.

Someone imagined communicating instantly across enormous distances.

Someone imagined creating medicines that could treat diseases once considered incurable.

Someone imagined building bridges, designing computers, composing symphonies, or exploring space.

These possibilities began as ideas.

But ideas alone were not enough.

They required investigation.

Experimentation.

Resources.

Cooperation.

Persistence.

And sometimes extraordinary patience.

Many ideas failed.

Many were revised.

Some required generations of effort.

And others became realities in forms their original creators could never have anticipated.

This is an important lesson.

Imagination opens possibilities.

But reality determines which possibilities can be developed, and under what conditions.

I believe we should celebrate imagination.

We should encourage people to dream.

We should remain open to extraordinary ideas.

But we should also appreciate the value of evidence, planning, collaboration, and practical experience.

A magnificent dream deserves thoughtful development.

My Vision for G3 Golf

Golf has played an important role in my life.

I love the game.

I love its challenges.

I love the pleasure of learning and improving.

And I love the opportunities it creates for friendship, recreation, and personal development.

Through G3 Golf, I have imagined an extensive system designed to help golfers enjoy the game and develop their abilities.

My vision includes championship golf facilities, indoor golf centres, clubmaking services, instruction, and programs intended to make the experience more rewarding.

I have imagined thousands of facilities around the world.

It is an enormous undertaking.

One that would require substantial investment, careful planning, capable partners, and many years of development.

I cannot know whether it will ever exist on the scale I have imagined.

But I can appreciate the vision itself.

It has encouraged me to think creatively about how people experience golf.

It has helped me identify possibilities for improving instruction, accessibility, and enjoyment.

And it remains a source of enthusiasm.

Perhaps one day parts of the vision will attract the support necessary for implementation.

Perhaps the ideas will evolve.

Perhaps other opportunities will emerge.

I do not know.

But I can continue enjoying the game and exploring worthwhile possibilities without demanding certainty about the future.

The Dream of NuVo

My vision for NuVo is even broader.

I have imagined an extraordinary collection of products, services, programs, and facilities intended to improve human well-being.

I have envisioned NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres offering opportunities for recreation, health, education, friendship, personal development, and community participation.

I have imagined systems designed to help people pursue healthier, more fulfilling lives.

And I have envisioned communities in which essential needs are met and people have greater freedom to develop their interests and abilities.

The possibilities are enormous.

But so are the practical questions.

How would these programs be funded?

How would resources be allocated?

How would the facilities be managed?

How could services remain accessible, effective, and sustainable?

How would communities participate in making decisions?

And how could the results be evaluated?

These questions do not diminish the vision.

They help turn imagination into something that can be examined and developed.

Perhaps one of the most important things we can do with a dream is invite thoughtful questions.

Not every question is an obstacle.

Sometimes a question is the beginning of a better idea.

A NuVo World

At the heart of my broader vision is a simple desire.

I want people to experience wonderful lives.

I want children to have opportunities.

I want families to feel supported.

I want older adults to remain connected and valued.

I want communities to become more compassionate.

And I want people to recognize the extraordinary possibilities that emerge when we care for one another.

I have called this vision A NuVo World.

It is an ambitious concept.

But I increasingly recognize that its most meaningful expression may begin on a very small scale.

A neighbour helping another neighbour.

A family receiving a nutritious meal.

A lonely person developing a friendship.

A child discovering an enjoyable activity.

A community organization finding a new way to serve people.

These experiences may not require magnificent facilities or enormous financial resources.

They may begin with people who care.

And perhaps that is one of the most important lessons my dreams have taught me.

We can imagine a better world while contributing to a better neighbourhood today.

The magnificent vision and the ordinary action need not compete.

They can complement one another.

The Desire to Be Known

There is another aspect of dreaming that deserves thoughtful consideration.

Recognition.

Most people appreciate being acknowledged.

We enjoy knowing that our work matters.

We appreciate encouragement.

And we may hope that our ideas will reach a wider audience.

I certainly hope that my books will find readers.

I would love for *Come Away With Me* to reach people who find its story meaningful.

I would be delighted if some of my ideas attracted the attention of people capable of helping develop them.

But recognition is an uncertain outcome.

Books do not become widely read simply because their authors care deeply about them.

Films do not reach audiences without development, production, distribution, and public interest.

And ambitious projects do not attract investment merely because their creators believe in them.

There is a great deal involved.

Timing.

Quality.

Resources.

Relationships.

Market conditions.

And sometimes circumstances no one could have predicted.

I can work toward recognition.

But I cannot require it.

And perhaps the most important freedom is recognizing that I do not need widespread recognition to live a meaningful life.

My value does not depend upon how many people know my name.

What Do We Mean by Divine Timing?

We frequently hear people say that everything happens in God's time.

It is a comforting expression.

And within many religious traditions, it reflects a belief that human beings do not possess complete knowledge of divine purposes.

But what exactly does it mean?

For some, divine timing means that God has a particular plan for every event.

For others, it means trusting that God can work through uncertain circumstances without necessarily determining every detail.

These are different theological perspectives.

And thoughtful people disagree about them.

Within hard theological determinism, divine timing would mean that events occur according to an already established divine order.

But we must be careful not to confuse that belief with knowledge of specific future outcomes.

We cannot assume that a delayed dream is guaranteed to come true later.

We cannot assume that a disappointing result means something better is waiting just around the corner.

And we cannot know the divine meaning of every event.

Perhaps the practical value of divine timing lies in encouraging patience and humility.

We can recognize that our understanding is limited.

We can act responsibly.

And we can release the expectation that life must unfold according to our preferred schedule.

The Difference Between Patience and Passivity

Patience is a wonderful quality.

But patience should not be confused with doing nothing.

Imagine someone who dreams of becoming an accomplished musician.

They may believe that their abilities and opportunities are part of a divine plan.

But that belief does not eliminate the value of practice.

They still need to learn.

They still need to develop their skills.

They still need to listen, experiment, and improve.

Similarly, someone who dreams of creating a successful organization may need to develop a business plan, obtain resources, establish partnerships, and evaluate results.

Trust does not replace practical effort.

It changes the spirit in which we approach that effort.

Instead of acting from desperation, we can act with purpose.

Instead of demanding immediate results, we can appreciate gradual progress.

Instead of interpreting every setback as failure, we can consider what it teaches us.

And instead of allowing uncertainty to destroy our peace, we can recognize that uncertainty is part of pursuing anything meaningful.

Patience is not the absence of action. It is the ability to act without demanding that everything happen immediately.

The Freedom to Dream Without Desperation

Imagine pursuing a dream while believing that your entire happiness depends upon its fulfilment.

Every delay becomes painful.

Every unanswered message becomes discouraging.

Every obstacle becomes a threat.

And every day without visible progress feels like a day lost.

Now imagine pursuing the same dream from a different perspective.

You enjoy developing the idea.

You appreciate the opportunity to learn.

You welcome constructive feedback.

You take reasonable steps.

And you remain open to possibilities you had not anticipated.

The dream still matters.

But it no longer controls your emotional well-being.

You can experience happiness while working toward it.

You can enjoy relationships.

You can appreciate ordinary pleasures.

And you can recognize that your life is already worthwhile.

This is the freedom I want to cultivate.

I do not want to abandon my dreams.

I want to enjoy them.

When Dreams Change

Sometimes a dream that once seemed essential gradually becomes less important.

Our interests evolve.

Our circumstances change.

We discover new possibilities.

Or we recognize that a particular goal is no longer realistic or desirable.

There is nothing wrong with this.

We are not obligated to pursue every ambition indefinitely.

A dream can serve a meaningful purpose for a period of our lives without becoming a permanent commitment.

Perhaps it introduced us to interesting people.

Perhaps it encouraged us to develop useful skills.

Perhaps it helped us discover what matters most.

And perhaps its greatest contribution was leading us toward something we had not originally imagined.

Changing direction does not necessarily mean giving up.

Sometimes it means growing.

The Dreams We Share

One of the most beautiful things about a dream is the possibility of sharing it.

An idea that begins in one person's imagination may eventually attract the interest of others.

People contribute different skills.

Different perspectives.

Different resources.

And different experiences.

The original idea begins to evolve.

It becomes something no single person could have created alone.

I find this possibility enormously exciting.

But collaboration requires mutual respect.

We must recognize that other people have their own dreams and priorities.

They may wish to participate.

They may offer suggestions.

They may disagree.

Or they may choose not to become involved.

A healthy collaboration cannot be built upon pressure or obligation.

It must develop through shared interest, trust, and a willingness to work together.

Perhaps the most successful dreams are not those that remain exactly as one person originally imagined.

Perhaps they are the ones that become better through the contributions of many people.

The Small Steps That Matter

There is something wonderfully encouraging about taking a small step toward a meaningful goal.

Writing a page.

Making a telephone call.

Developing an outline.

Meeting someone for coffee.

Learning a new skill.

Helping one person.

These actions may seem insignificant compared with the magnitude of our dreams.

But they are real.

They represent participation.

And they allow us to make progress without requiring immediate transformation.

Sometimes a small step leads to another.

Sometimes it reveals a difficulty.

Sometimes it produces an unexpected opportunity.

And sometimes it simply gives us the satisfaction of having done something worthwhile.

Perhaps we should celebrate these small steps more often.

Not because they guarantee magnificent results.

But because they are meaningful parts of the journey.

What If the Dream Never Comes True?

This may be the most important question in the entire chapter.

What if the dream never comes true?

What if the book does not become a bestseller?

What if the business never develops?

What if the magnificent facility is never built?

What if the world does not change in the ways we imagined?

Would our lives have been wasted?

I do not believe so.

A life cannot be reduced to the completion of a list of ambitions.

We are more than our projects.

We are more than our achievements.

We are more than our public recognition.

We are human beings capable of love, friendship, creativity, learning, and appreciation.

A dream may enrich our lives even when its ultimate outcome is different from what we hoped.

And sometimes the most meaningful contributions are the ones we never planned.

The friendship we developed.

The person we encouraged.

The kindness we offered.

The love we shared.

These things matter independently of whether our grandest ambitions become realities.

My Greatest Dream

When I look beneath all my projects and ambitions, I discover something beautifully simple.

My greatest dream is not merely to build facilities.

It is not merely to sell books.

It is not merely to develop businesses.

It is not merely to become widely recognized.

My greatest dream is to contribute to a world in which people experience more love, happiness, dignity, and opportunity.

The projects are possible expressions of that desire.

But they are not the desire itself.

And this realization changes everything.

Because I do not have to wait for enormous resources to begin expressing that dream.

I can express it today.

Through kindness.

Through friendship.

Through generosity.

Through encouragement.

Through the way I care for Christy.

And through the way I treat the people I encounter.

Perhaps the greatest dream is one that can be lived in small ways even before it is realized on a magnificent scale.

A Beautiful Relationship With the Future

I want to continue imagining extraordinary possibilities.

I want to remain curious.

I want to explore new ideas.

I want to write.

I want to create.

And I want to contribute wherever I can.

But I also want to enjoy the extraordinary life available to me right now.

I want to wake up feeling grateful.

I want to appreciate my morning tea.

I want to share laughter with Christy.

I want to enjoy the company of my neighbours.

And I want to approach each day with enthusiasm rather than anxiety.

The future may contain remarkable opportunities.

It may also contain challenges.

I cannot know.

But I do not need to know in order to live meaningfully today.

The Wisdom of Trust

Perhaps divine timing is ultimately an invitation to humility.

We can recognize that our plans are incomplete.

We can accept that our understanding is limited.

We can pursue worthwhile goals without insisting upon particular outcomes.

And we can appreciate that life may contain possibilities we have not yet imagined.

Within a deterministic philosophy, this can be understood as trusting an unfolding already established by God.

Within other perspectives, it may be understood as remaining open to uncertainty while acting with faith and responsibility.

Either way, the practical lesson can be similar.

Dream.

Create.

Learn.

Contribute.

And allow the future to reveal itself.

Do not surrender your curiosity.

Do not abandon your imagination.

Do not stop caring about the world.

But release the belief that your happiness depends upon controlling what happens next.

The most beautiful way to pursue a dream may be to give it your love and effort without giving it ownership of your peace.

The Story Is Still Unfolding

As I reflect upon the extraordinary dreams and desires of my heart, I feel grateful.

Grateful for the imagination that has allowed me to envision so many possibilities.

Grateful for the experiences that have shaped my life.

Grateful for the people I have met.

Grateful for the opportunities I have had to create and contribute.

And especially grateful for the love and companionship I share with Christy.

I do not know how the remaining chapters of my life will unfold.

I do not know which dreams will become realities.

And I do not know what unexpected possibilities may emerge.

But I can continue living.

I can continue loving.

I can continue dreaming.

And I can appreciate every wonderful day along the way.

Perhaps that is enough.

Perhaps that is more than enough.

Dream magnificently. Live gratefully. Love generously. And let tomorrow arrive in its own time.

Let go of the need to know.

Let go of the demand for certainty.

Let go of the belief that happiness must wait for success.

And enjoy the extraordinary privilege of participating in the story.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Fourteen

Heaven on Earth Begins Within

What if Heaven on Earth is not merely a destination we hope to reach, but a way of living we can begin experiencing today?

For many years, I have dreamed of helping create Heaven on Earth.

Not simply as a beautiful expression.

Not merely as an inspiring idea.

But as a vision of human life in which people experience greater love, happiness, health, security, freedom, and opportunity.

I have imagined magnificent communities.

Extraordinary recreational facilities.

Systems designed to help people achieve optimal well-being.

And a world in which everyone has access to the essentials of a wonderful life.

It is an enormous vision.

Perhaps larger than anything I could accomplish in a lifetime.

But increasingly, I have come to appreciate something that has changed the way I think about the entire undertaking.

Heaven on Earth cannot begin exclusively with what we build around us. It must also begin with what we cultivate within us.

We can construct magnificent buildings.

We can develop extraordinary technologies.

We can create sophisticated programs and institutions.

But if people remain consumed by fear, resentment, loneliness, and endless dissatisfaction, have we truly created Heaven on Earth?

Perhaps we have improved the circumstances of life.

And that is enormously important.

But have we improved the experience of living?

This is the question I want to explore.

Because perhaps the most extraordinary transformation begins much closer to home than we imagine.

What Is Heaven on Earth?

When people hear the words Heaven on Earth, they may imagine different things.

Some envision a world without poverty.

Others imagine universal peace.

Some picture magnificent natural beauty.

Others think of loving relationships, good health, meaningful work, and the freedom to enjoy life.

Within religious traditions, Heaven may have meanings that extend far beyond earthly experience.

But for the purposes of this chapter, I want to consider Heaven on Earth as a practical ideal.

A world in which people have opportunities to flourish.

Where basic needs are met.

Where human dignity is respected.

Where kindness is ordinary.

Where relationships are meaningful.

And where people can experience a deep appreciation for being alive.

Such a world would not necessarily be free from every difficulty.

Human life involves uncertainty, change, vulnerability, and loss.

But perhaps Heaven on Earth does not require the elimination of every challenge.

Perhaps it requires creating conditions in which people can live with greater security, compassion, connection, and joy.

And perhaps it also requires learning how to appreciate the beauty already available to us.

The World Within Us

Two people can experience remarkably similar circumstances and respond to them very differently.

One may concentrate upon everything that is missing.

The other may appreciate what is present.

One may become preoccupied with imagined future difficulties.

The other may approach the day with curiosity and gratitude.

One may interpret an inconvenience as a disaster.

The other may regard it as something manageable.

Of course, our emotional experiences are influenced by many factors.

Health.

Personal history.

Relationships.

Economic circumstances.

Stress.

And sometimes medical or psychological conditions beyond our immediate control.

We should never assume that happiness is simply a matter of choosing the correct attitude.

But our patterns of attention and interpretation can influence the way we experience life.

And these patterns can sometimes be developed.

We can learn to notice what is good.

We can practice responding more thoughtfully.

We can become more aware of unnecessary worry.

And we can cultivate habits that support greater peace.

Perhaps this is part of creating Heaven on Earth within ourselves.

Not pretending that everything is perfect.

But learning to experience life with greater appreciation, resilience, and compassion.

The Extraordinary Freedom of Enough

One of the greatest obstacles to happiness is the belief that we must continually acquire more.

More money.

More possessions.

More recognition.

More accomplishments.

More certainty.

And more evidence that our lives are important.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to improve our circumstances.

Financial security matters.

Health matters.

Opportunity matters.

And meaningful achievement can be deeply satisfying.

But there is a difference between pursuing improvement and believing that we are fundamentally incomplete until we achieve it.

If our happiness always depends upon something that has not yet happened, we may spend our entire lives waiting.

Waiting for more money.

Waiting for success.

Waiting for recognition.

Waiting for retirement.

Waiting for circumstances to become perfect.

But what if we began appreciating life while continuing to improve it?

What if we recognized that our worth does not depend upon our accomplishments?

And what if we allowed ourselves to experience enough, even while remaining open to more?

Perhaps this is one of the foundations of inner peace.

Enough does not mean that we have everything we could ever want. It means that we can appreciate what we have without allowing what is missing to consume our lives.

The Heaven I Experience With Christy

When I think about Heaven on Earth, I naturally think about Christy.

I think about our mornings together.

The familiar routine of preparing breakfast.

The pleasure of sharing a meal.

The laughter.

The conversations.

The cuddles.

And the simple comfort of being together.

These experiences are not magnificent in a conventional sense.

They do not require enormous financial resources.

They do not attract public attention.

But they bring me extraordinary happiness.

And perhaps that is precisely the point.

I do not have to wait for the realization of my greatest dreams to experience something beautiful.

I can experience it today.

In our home.

In our relationship.

In the ordinary moments we share.

Of course, our lives are not free from difficulties.

There are practical responsibilities.

There are health concerns.

There are days when one or both of us may feel tired or uncomfortable.

But love provides a wonderful foundation for navigating these experiences.

We can care for one another.

We can offer patience.

We can enjoy the moments that are pleasant.

And we can support each other through the moments that are difficult.

Perhaps Heaven on Earth begins when we recognize the extraordinary value of the people we love.

The Difference Between Pleasure and Peace

Pleasure is wonderful.

A delicious meal.

A beautiful song.

A warm bath.

A favourite movie.

A sunny afternoon.

These experiences can enrich our lives.

But pleasure and peace are not exactly the same thing.

Pleasure often depends upon a particular experience.

Peace is a deeper quality that may remain available even when circumstances are less enjoyable.

We may experience peace while waiting for news.

We may experience peace while reconsidering a plan.

We may experience peace while accepting something we cannot change.

And sometimes we may experience moments of peace even during periods of sadness or uncertainty.

Peace does not mean that we never feel fear.

It does not mean that we never experience disappointment.

And it does not mean that every problem has been solved.

It means that we are developing a healthier relationship with life's uncertainties.

We are learning to respond rather than constantly resist.

We are learning to care without demanding control.

And we are learning that our inner lives need not be governed entirely by external events.

Letting Go of the Need to Control

Throughout this book, we have explored the extraordinary possibility that our lives unfold according to a divine order.

Within hard theological determinism, every event would ultimately be part of God's determining will.

This perspective raises profound questions about freedom, responsibility, suffering, and the nature of God.

It does not provide easy answers to every difficulty.

And thoughtful people have reached very different conclusions about these matters.

But one practical insight remains especially meaningful to me.

We do not control nearly as much as we sometimes imagine.

We cannot control other people's thoughts.

We cannot control every outcome.

We cannot control the passage of time.

We cannot guarantee that our plans will succeed.

And we cannot eliminate every uncertainty.

But we can participate in life.

We can make thoughtful decisions.

We can care for people.

We can prepare responsibly.

And we can respond to circumstances as they arise.

Perhaps inner peace develops when we stop demanding control over everything and begin concentrating upon the responsibilities and opportunities immediately before us.

Heaven on Earth Is Not Denial

There is something important I want to emphasize.

Speaking about Heaven on Earth should never become a way of ignoring suffering.

We live in a world where people experience poverty, illness, violence, discrimination, loneliness, and injustice.

These realities matter.

They cannot be eliminated simply by encouraging people to think positively.

Someone who is hungry needs food.

Someone without adequate housing needs shelter.

Someone experiencing a medical emergency needs appropriate care.

Someone living in an unsafe environment needs protection.

And someone who is grieving may need compassion rather than advice.

If we genuinely want to create Heaven on Earth, we must take these needs seriously.

Inner peace and practical action are not opposites.

Indeed, they can strengthen one another.

A person who experiences greater peace may become more patient, compassionate, and effective in helping others.

And a society that meets people's essential needs may create conditions in which more individuals can experience peace.

Perhaps Heaven on Earth requires both.

The transformation of our inner lives.

And the improvement of the world around us.

The Art of Neighbouring

One of the ideas I have developed through A NuVo World is what I call The Art of Neighbouring.

At its heart is a simple proposition.

A wonderful community begins when people care about the people around them.

We do not have to become best friends with everyone.

We do not have to agree about everything.

And we do not have to become involved in every aspect of our neighbours' lives.

But we can recognize one another.

We can be friendly.

We can offer assistance when appropriate.

We can respect differences.

And we can create opportunities for genuine connection.

Imagine a building in which residents know the names of their neighbours.

Imagine a street where people greet one another.

Imagine a community where older adults are not forgotten.

Where families can find support.

Where children feel welcomed.

And where people experiencing difficulties know that help may be available.

These are practical expressions of Heaven on Earth.

Not because they create perfection.

But because they make ordinary life more humane.

A Moneyless Community

One of the more ambitious aspects of my vision is the possibility of communities in which essential goods and services are available without requiring payment at the point of use.

I have imagined systems that could provide access to food, transportation, recreation, and other necessities through shared resources and sustainable funding.

The idea is rooted in a desire to reduce hardship and increase opportunity.

But such a vision raises serious practical questions.

Resources remain finite.

Goods and services require labour, infrastructure, maintenance, and investment.

Communities must determine how resources are produced, distributed, and governed.

And any system must consider fairness, accountability, incentives, and long-term sustainability.

These questions deserve careful examination.

A compassionate intention is a beginning, not a complete implementation plan.

But perhaps the underlying principle is worth exploring.

What if we organized more of our communities around the goal of helping everyone flourish?

What if we measured success not only by financial activity, but also by health, happiness, connection, and access to opportunity?

And what if we developed practical experiments to discover which approaches genuinely improve people's lives?

Perhaps a better world will emerge not from one perfect idea, but from many thoughtful efforts informed by evidence, compassion, and cooperation.

The NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres

I have imagined NuVoWay LifeStyle Centres as places where people could develop their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

Facilities where recreation and learning are accessible.

Where people can discover new interests.

Where families can spend time together.

Where friendships can develop.

And where individuals can receive appropriate support in pursuing healthier lives.

The buildings themselves could be magnificent.

But the true measure of their success would not be their size or appearance.

It would be the experiences of the people they serve.

Does a child discover a love of swimming?

Does an older adult develop new friendships?

Does someone find an enjoyable way to become more active?

Does a family experience greater connection?

Does a person who once felt isolated begin to feel included?

These are the outcomes that matter.

Perhaps Heaven on Earth is not measured by how impressive our facilities become.

Perhaps it is measured by how much better people's lives become because those facilities exist.

The Extraordinary Importance of Gratitude

I have found gratitude to be one of the most valuable practices in my life.

Not because it guarantees that everything will go well.

Not because it eliminates every difficulty.

But because it encourages me to notice what is already good.

I can be grateful for Christy.

For our home.

For a warm cup of tea.

For the opportunity to write.

For music.

For friendships.

For the people I encounter.

For the ability to imagine and create.

And for another day in which to experience life.

Sometimes gratitude arises naturally.

Other times it requires a conscious effort.

Especially when we are disappointed or concerned about something.

But perhaps that is when it can be most helpful.

We can acknowledge a difficulty while also recognizing that other parts of life remain meaningful.

We do not have to choose between honesty and gratitude.

We can practice both.

A Heaven on Earth Morning

Imagine beginning tomorrow morning without immediately reviewing everything you need to accomplish.

Instead, you allow yourself a few moments to appreciate being alive.

You notice the comfort of your surroundings.

You enjoy your morning drink.

You greet someone warmly.

You offer a little kindness.

And you approach the day with curiosity rather than urgency.

Perhaps you have important responsibilities.

You can attend to them.

Perhaps you have dreams you want to pursue.

You can take meaningful steps.

Perhaps unexpected difficulties arise.

You can respond as thoughtfully as possible.

But throughout the day, you remember something important.

You do not have to wait for the entire world to change before allowing yourself to experience moments of happiness.

You can appreciate life now.

And perhaps your appreciation will influence the way you treat others.

Perhaps your kindness will improve someone's day.

Perhaps your patience will make a difficult situation easier.

And perhaps your presence will contribute to a more welcoming community.

This is how an inner experience can become an outward contribution.

From Inner Peace to a Better World

There is a beautiful relationship between the world within us and the world around us.

When we cultivate greater patience, we may become more considerate.

When we practice gratitude, we may become less preoccupied with comparison.

When we experience love, we may become more generous.

When we recognize our own dignity, we may become more attentive to the dignity of others.

And when we develop greater peace, we may become better equipped to respond to the difficulties of life.

These changes may appear small.

But communities are made up of individuals.

And the way individuals treat one another influences the quality of community life.

Of course, individual attitudes alone cannot solve every social problem.

We also need effective institutions, responsible leadership, adequate resources, and fair systems.

But perhaps personal transformation and social transformation can proceed together.

We can work toward a better world while learning to live more beautifully within the one we already inhabit.

The World I Want to Help Create

When I imagine A NuVo World, I see people enjoying life.

I see children playing.

Families laughing.

Friends gathering.

People exercising.

People learning.

People creating.

People helping one another.

I see communities in which everyone has opportunities to participate.

Where people are valued.

Where kindness is encouraged.

And where the pursuit of happiness is not restricted to those with substantial financial resources.

It is a beautiful vision.

And I hope that some of the ideas I have developed will contribute to making aspects of it possible.

But I also recognize that I do not need to wait for the realization of the entire vision to begin living according to its values.

I can practice kindness today.

I can help someone today.

I can appreciate my relationships today.

And I can experience moments of Heaven on Earth today.

Perhaps that is the most important realization of all.

Heaven on Earth Is a Way of Living

What if Heaven on Earth is not merely a place?

What if it is also a way of approaching life?

A way of seeing people.

A way of appreciating experiences.

A way of responding to difficulties.

A way of expressing love.

And a way of recognizing the extraordinary value of ordinary existence.

We may never create a world entirely free from suffering.

We may never eliminate every disagreement.

We may never achieve perfect harmony.

But we can work toward communities that are more compassionate, more inclusive, and more supportive.

And we can cultivate lives that contain greater gratitude, peace, and connection.

Perhaps that is a worthy aspiration.

Not perfection.

But continual improvement.

Not the denial of difficulty.

But the development of resilience and compassion.

Not endless striving for something we do not possess.

But a growing appreciation for what makes life meaningful.

The Beginning Is Here

As I reflect upon everything we have explored, I find myself returning to the simplest experiences of my life.

Christy's smile.

Our morning breakfast.

A familiar greeting.

A wonderful meal.

A beautiful song.

A quiet afternoon.

The pleasure of writing.

The opportunity to help someone.

These experiences may not represent the complete realization of my vision for Heaven on Earth.

But they remind me why the vision matters.

I want more people to have opportunities to experience lives filled with love, dignity, security, friendship, and joy.

And perhaps the best way to begin is to live according to those values myself.

To appreciate what I have.

To care for the people around me.

To pursue meaningful ideas without allowing them to consume my peace.

And to recognize that a wonderful life is not necessarily something waiting at the end of a magnificent achievement.

It may already be unfolding in the ordinary moments of today.

Heaven on Earth begins when we recognize the extraordinary value of life—and allow that recognition to shape the way we live and love.

Let go of the belief that happiness must wait.

Let go of the need for perfection.

Let go of the endless demand for more.

Appreciate today.

Love the people around you.

Help where you can.

And allow your own life to become a small expression of the world you hope to create.

Let Go and Let God.

Chapter Fifteen

The Story Continues

The story may already be written. But the extraordinary privilege of living it belongs to this moment.

And so we arrive at the final chapter.

Or do we?

Perhaps this is not really an ending at all.

Perhaps it is simply another page in a story that continues to unfold.

A story that began long before we were born.

A story that has carried us through extraordinary experiences, unexpected encounters, magnificent joys, painful disappointments, and countless ordinary moments.

A story that has brought us to this very moment.

You are reading these words.

I am sharing these thoughts.

And somewhere beyond our immediate awareness, billions of other human beings are experiencing their own remarkable stories.

Some are celebrating.

Some are grieving.

Some are working.

Some are resting.

Some are falling in love.

Some are beginning again.

And some are asking the very questions we have been exploring throughout this book.

Why am I here?

What is the purpose of my life?

How much control do I really possess?

Does God have a plan?

And how can I live with greater peace, happiness, and love?

These are extraordinary questions.

Questions that have occupied philosophers, theologians, scientists, and ordinary people for thousands of years.

And perhaps the most remarkable thing about them is that we do not need to answer every question before we can begin living beautifully.

The Extraordinary Mystery of Existence

Consider, for a moment, the sheer wonder of being alive.

Of all the possibilities that might have existed, here you are.

A unique human being.

With your own experiences.

Your own memories.

Your own relationships.

Your own interests.

Your own hopes and dreams.

You have travelled through years of experiences that no one else has encountered in precisely the same way.

You have met people who have influenced your life.

You have made decisions.

You have experienced consequences.

You have learned.

You have grown.

And you have become the person you are today.

How extraordinary!

We often become so accustomed to living that we forget how remarkable life itself is.

We concentrate upon our responsibilities.

We worry about tomorrow.

We revisit yesterday.

And sometimes we overlook the simple wonder of being here.

But perhaps the first lesson of this entire book is that life deserves our attention.

Not merely the extraordinary achievements.

Not merely the dramatic events.

But the experience of living itself.

The Question of Free Will

We began this journey by exploring one of the most fascinating questions in philosophy.

Do human beings possess free will?

Or are our thoughts, decisions, and actions determined by causes beyond our ultimate control?

We considered the possibility that every event belongs to a divine order.

That God has already determined the unfolding of human existence.

That the story, in some profound sense, is already written.

This is the philosophy of hard theological determinism.

It is a serious philosophical and theological position.

But it is not the only position.

Some believe that God knows the future without determining every human decision.

Others believe that genuine freedom requires the ability to choose among alternatives.

Still others understand freedom as acting according to our desires and reasoning, even if those desires and reasoning have prior causes.

And some approach the entire question without reference to God.

Thoughtful people disagree.

The relationship between divine sovereignty, human freedom, moral responsibility, and the nature of consciousness remains deeply contested.

I do not expect every reader to adopt the same conclusions.

But perhaps we can recognize something valuable in the question itself.

It encourages humility.

It reminds us that our understanding is limited.

And it invites us to reconsider how much control we truly possess.

The Illusion of Complete Control

Throughout our lives, we make plans.

We establish goals.

We pursue ambitions.

We attempt to influence circumstances.

And we hope that our efforts will produce particular results.

There is nothing wrong with this.

Planning and purposeful action are important parts of human life.

But we cannot control everything.

We cannot determine how other people will respond.

We cannot guarantee that our investments will succeed.

We cannot prevent every illness.

We cannot ensure that every relationship will unfold as we hope.

And we cannot know exactly what tomorrow will bring.

Yet we sometimes behave as though happiness depends upon achieving complete control.

We worry.

We struggle.

We become frustrated.

And we resist circumstances that do not conform to our expectations.

Perhaps much of this suffering arises from demanding something life cannot provide.

Certainty.

Complete predictability.

And control over every outcome.

What if we released that demand?

What if we continued acting responsibly while accepting that some things remain beyond our influence?

Perhaps we would discover a remarkable freedom.

Let Go and Let God

These five words have become central to my philosophy of life.

Let Go and Let God.

To me, they express an invitation to surrender the endless struggle for control.

Not to abandon responsibility.

Not to stop caring.

Not to become indifferent.

But to recognize that I do not need to manage the entire universe.

I can attend to the opportunities before me.

I can care for the people I love.

I can pursue worthwhile goals.

I can learn from experience.

And I can allow the future to unfold without demanding that I know its every detail.

For someone who believes in divine providence, this may be understood as placing trust in God.

For someone approaching life from a different perspective, it may resemble acceptance, humility, or the willingness to live with uncertainty.

Either way, the practical invitation is profound.

Do what is reasonable.

Care about what matters.

And release the burden of trying to control everything else.

The Freedom of Being

One of the most important realizations I have experienced is that I do not need to spend every moment accomplishing something.

For much of my life, I have loved activity.

Competition.

Business.

Writing.

Creating.

Developing ideas.

Pursuing opportunities.

And imagining magnificent possibilities.

I still enjoy all these things.

But I have discovered an extraordinary pleasure in simply being.

Being with Christy.

Being present in my neighbourhood.

Being attentive to a beautiful piece of music.

Being grateful for a wonderful meal.

Being comfortable in our home.

Being alive.

These experiences do not require impressive accomplishments.

They do not depend upon public recognition.

And they do not require enormous financial resources.

They require presence.

Perhaps this is one of the most beautiful freedoms available to us.

We can appreciate our lives without first having to prove that we deserve to enjoy them.

The End of Endless Worry

We have also explored the extraordinary cost of worry.

How easily we can sacrifice today's happiness to tomorrow's imagined difficulties.

How often we replay possibilities that may never occur.

And how frequently we confuse worry with responsible preparation.

But concern and worry are not the same thing.

Concern can motivate useful action.

Worry can become repetitive thinking that produces little benefit.

We can prepare for the future.

We can manage our responsibilities.

We can seek assistance when necessary.

And we can acknowledge genuine difficulties.

But we do not have to experience every possible problem in advance.

Tomorrow may bring challenges.

It may also bring opportunities.

We cannot know.

And perhaps we do not need to know.

Today deserves to be lived.

When Life Takes an Unexpected Turn

We have considered what happens when our plans do not unfold as expected.

When an opportunity disappears.

When someone declines an invitation.

When a project encounters difficulties.

When a dream changes.

Or when life presents challenges we never anticipated.

These experiences can be disappointing.

Sometimes they can be deeply painful.

But perhaps we can learn to distinguish between a disappointing outcome and an unsuccessful life.

A project may fail without making its creator a failure.

A relationship may change without erasing the love that was shared.

A dream may remain unrealized without making the years spent pursuing it meaningless.

And an unexpected turn may reveal possibilities we had never considered.

We can grieve what has been lost.

We can learn from experience.

We can revise our plans.

And we can begin again.

Perhaps surrender means allowing life to be different from what we imagined without concluding that it has lost its value.

Love Is the Reason

Of all the ideas we have explored, this may be the one closest to my heart.

Love is the reason.

I have imagined extraordinary achievements.

Magnificent businesses.

Books reaching millions of readers.

Films touching people's lives.

Recreational facilities around the world.

And communities transformed through compassion and generosity.

But beneath these ambitions lies something wonderfully simple.

I want people to experience better lives.

I want people to feel valued.

I want them to enjoy friendship.

I want them to experience love.

And I want them to discover the extraordinary pleasure of being alive.

When I think about my own happiness, I return again and again to Christy.

To our ordinary mornings.

Our shared meals.

Our laughter.

Our companionship.

And the simple pleasure of being together.

These experiences remind me that the greatest treasures in life are not necessarily the ones we can purchase or achieve.

Sometimes they are the ones we share.

Every Person Matters

Another important lesson is that every person has a meaningful place within the human story.

We are connected through countless relationships and encounters.

Some last a lifetime.

Others last only moments.

But every interaction offers an opportunity to recognize another person's dignity.

We can be kind.

We can listen.

We can encourage.

We can help.

And we can recognize that the people around us have lives as meaningful and complicated as our own.

I have experienced the pleasure of these connections through my morning encounters in the neighbourhood.

The familiar faces.

The greetings.

The conversations.

The children waiting for their school bus.

The neighbours passing through the lobby.

These experiences have enriched my life enormously.

They remind me that community begins with people recognizing one another.

And that a wonderful world can begin with a wonderful interaction.

The Miracle of Ordinary Moments

Perhaps one of the greatest surprises of this journey has been the recognition that ordinary moments can contain extraordinary happiness.

A cup of tea.

A delicious breakfast.

A familiar song.

A favourite television program.

A warm embrace.

A friendly greeting.

A quiet afternoon.

These experiences may not seem remarkable.

But together, they make up much of our lives.

And if we learn to appreciate them, we may discover that happiness is far more accessible than we once imagined.

We do not have to wait for a magnificent achievement.

We do not have to wait for wealth.

We do not have to wait for recognition.

We can appreciate life now.

Not because every circumstance is perfect.

But because there are meaningful experiences available within the present.

Dreams Without Desperation

I have no intention of abandoning my dreams.

I still love imagining possibilities.

I still enjoy writing.

I still envision extraordinary opportunities for NuVo, G3 Golf, and A NuVo World.

I still hope that Come Away With Me will find an audience.

And I still want to contribute to making the world a better place.

But I am learning to hold these dreams differently.

I can pursue them without allowing them to determine my personal worth.

I can work toward them without demanding immediate results.

I can appreciate constructive criticism.

I can remain open to collaboration.

And I can recognize that their ultimate outcomes remain uncertain.

Perhaps some will develop.

Perhaps others will change.

Perhaps entirely new possibilities will emerge.

Whatever happens, I want to enjoy the experience of living.

I want my dreams to enrich my life rather than become conditions upon which my happiness depends.

Heaven on Earth Begins Within

Throughout my life, I have imagined Heaven on Earth as a world in which people experience extraordinary opportunities for health, happiness, friendship, security, and personal development.

I continue to find this vision deeply inspiring.

But I have also come to recognize that Heaven on Earth cannot be created exclusively through buildings, programs, or financial resources.

It must also involve the way we experience life.

The gratitude we cultivate.

The kindness we express.

The relationships we develop.

The respect we offer.

And the peace we discover within ourselves.

We cannot simply think away poverty, illness, injustice, or suffering.

These problems require practical solutions and compassionate action.

But perhaps the creation of a better world begins when we combine inner transformation with outward responsibility.

We can become more peaceful while working toward more peaceful communities.

We can become more compassionate while supporting systems that protect human dignity.

And we can learn to appreciate our own lives while helping others gain greater opportunities to enjoy theirs.

My Life Is My Message

There is a statement attributed to Mahatma Gandhi that has become especially meaningful to me.

"My life is my message."

What a remarkable philosophy.

It suggests that the most important expression of our values may not be what we say.

It may be how we live.

We can write about love.

But do we express it?

We can speak about kindness.

But do we practice it?

We can imagine wonderful communities.

But do we contribute to the happiness of our neighbours?

We can describe the importance of gratitude.

But do we appreciate our own lives?

These questions matter to me.

I have written many books.

I have developed many ideas.

And I have shared many thoughts about how the world might become a better place.

But perhaps the most meaningful expression of my philosophy is found in the ordinary way I live.

How I treat Christy.

How I greet my neighbours.

How I respond to disappointment.

How I approach my responsibilities.

How I treat people who disagree with me.

And how I appreciate the extraordinary privilege of being alive.

I want my life to reflect the values I write about.

Not perfectly.

I am human.

I will make mistakes.

I will experience frustration.

I will sometimes fall short of my own aspirations.

But I can continue learning.

I can continue growing.

And I can continue trying to express love in the ordinary moments of life.

Perhaps that is enough.

What If the Story Is Already Written?

Let us return one final time to the central proposition of this book.

What if the story is already written?

What if every event belongs to a divine unfolding?

What if our lives are part of a reality whose full nature lies beyond our understanding?

I cannot demonstrate that this philosophy is true.

And I recognize that others may arrive at different conclusions.

But I find the possibility profoundly thought-provoking.

It encourages me to reconsider the burden of control.

It invites me to trust.

It reminds me that my knowledge is limited.

And it helps me appreciate the extraordinary mystery of life.

Yet perhaps the most important question is not whether we can establish every detail of the philosophy.

Perhaps it is what kind of life we create through the way we understand it.

Does our philosophy encourage compassion?

Does it help us become more patient?

Does it inspire us to care for others?

Does it encourage responsible action?

Does it help us appreciate life?

And does it make us more willing to recognize the dignity of every human being?

If so, perhaps it offers something valuable.

Not merely as an intellectual theory.

But as a practical way of living.

The Page Before Us

Imagine that your life really is a book.

The earlier chapters have already been lived.

They contain everything you have experienced.

Your childhood.

Your relationships.

Your accomplishments.

Your mistakes.

Your disappointments.

Your happiest memories.

And the countless ordinary moments that have shaped your life.

You cannot rewrite those chapters.

But you can learn from them.

You can appreciate them.

And you can recognize that they have brought you to the person you are today.

The later chapters remain unknown to you.

You may have hopes about what they will contain.

You may have plans.

You may have dreams.

But you cannot read them in advance.

What you possess is the page before you.

This moment.

This opportunity.

This experience.

Perhaps you are sitting comfortably with a cup of tea.

Perhaps you are spending time with someone you love.

Perhaps you are preparing for an important responsibility.

Perhaps you are facing a difficult situation.

Whatever your circumstances, this is the part of the story you are experiencing now.

And perhaps the wisest thing you can do is give it your attention.

A Wonderful Life

I have come to appreciate that a wonderful life does not require every dream to come true.

It does not require unlimited wealth.

It does not require widespread recognition.

It does not require perfect health, uninterrupted happiness, or complete certainty.

A wonderful life can contain challenges.

It can contain disappointments.

It can contain periods of sadness.

But it can also contain love.

Friendship.

Gratitude.

Purpose.

Beauty.

Laughter.

Learning.

And the extraordinary pleasure of ordinary moments.

Perhaps we should stop imagining that a wonderful life is something we will finally experience when everything is complete.

Perhaps it is something we can cultivate throughout the journey.

One day at a time.

The Promise I Make to Myself

As I bring this book to a close, I want to make a simple commitment.

I want to continue becoming a better person.

Not because I believe I am fundamentally inadequate.

But because I recognize the value of learning and growing.

I want to become more patient.

More compassionate.

More understanding.

More appreciative.

And more attentive to the people around me.

I want to continue caring for Christy.

I want to enjoy our life together.

I want to maintain friendships and develop new ones.

I want to continue writing and creating.

I want to pursue worthwhile ideas.

And I want to contribute, in whatever ways are realistically available to me, to making the world a better place.

But above all, I want to appreciate the extraordinary privilege of living.

I do not want to spend the rest of my life waiting for something magnificent to happen.

I want to recognize the magnificence already present.

In love.

In friendship.

In kindness.

In beauty.

And in the simple experience of being alive.

The Story Continues

And so we arrive at the final words.

But the story does not end here.

Tomorrow will bring another day.

Another opportunity.

Another collection of experiences.

Perhaps there will be something exciting.

Perhaps something unexpected.

Perhaps something challenging.

Or perhaps it will be a beautifully ordinary day.

Whatever happens, I hope to approach it with gratitude.

I hope to appreciate the people I love.

I hope to express kindness.

I hope to continue learning.

And I hope to remember that I do not need to know the ending in order to enjoy the journey.

Perhaps God has already written every chapter.

Perhaps the future remains open in ways we cannot fully comprehend.

Either way, the extraordinary experience of living continues.

And perhaps the most important thing we can do is live with love.

Not tomorrow.

Not when our dreams come true.

Not when we finally possess everything we imagine we need.

But now.

Today.

In this moment.

The story may already be written. But the beauty of the story is experienced one moment at a time.

So dream magnificently.

Live gratefully.

Love generously.

Care for one another.

Appreciate the ordinary.

And recognize that your life is already an extraordinary gift.

Let go of yesterday.

Release tomorrow.

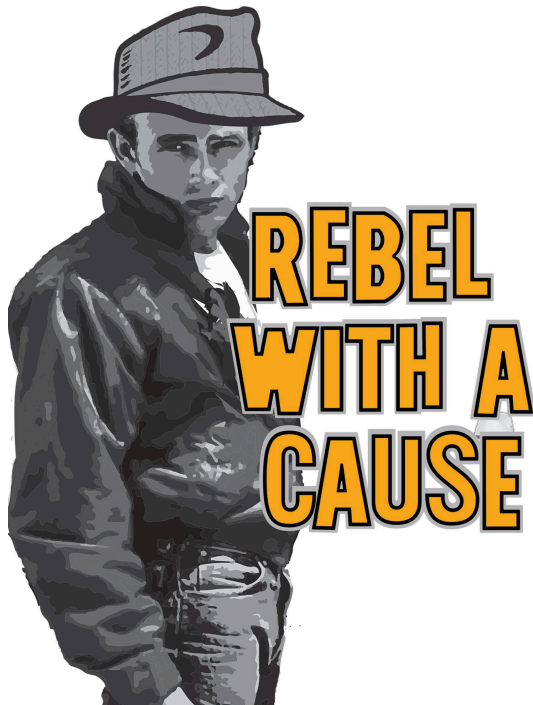
Embrace today.

And remember the five words that have become the foundation of this philosophy.

Let Go and Let God.

Because the story continues.

And what a wonderful story life can be.



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