

I'VE GOT BOOKS TO WRITE

The Second Half of My Life



Daryl Stevenett

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Introduction

I've always had the ability to find the blessing in every set back in my life. I admit, I'm a chronic dreamer, and I'm an Aquarius, but when I turned fifty-five it hit me that I was now on the down side of the hill we call life. I decided to have a "Come to Jesus" meeting with myself. I wanted to live out the second half of my life doing something that was totally fulfilling. This sounds selfish, and in a way, I guess it is, but I didn't want to be one of those people who had any death bed regrets. I didn't want to ever look back wishing I had done things differently. I started asking myself a series of questions when I realized that there was only one question that I needed to answer. The question was this. ***"How do I want to live out the second half of my life?"***

I immediately started writing down things I didn't like which I thought would lead me closer to writing down the things that I did like. I didn't like cold weather any more. I was tired of the snow and everything it brought with it. I grew up in Alberta, Canada. I remember the cold and all the snow up there. My father moved our family down to the states when I was almost twenty. We moved to Utah, a place that still had snow during the winter months, not as harsh as the Canadian winters, but it was still cold, icy, and now at age fifty-five, I was finally done with it. In contrast I realized that I loved warm weather. I loved the ocean. I loved walking on the beach as the waves came in; I loved how it made me feel every time I visited California. I loved warm weather, palm trees, the ocean, the sand, and I decided I wanted to live in warmth during the winter months. Okay, now I'm getting somewhere. Number one, I want to live by the ocean and live in a warm climate during the winter months. Number two; this was easy. I wanted to play my guitar, like, every day, for money. I had done that in the past and I knew I had what it took to make a living playing music. I had been playing part time on weekends pretty much my whole life and I had recently played on a cruise ship for several months down in Australia, so I knew it was a possibility. I learned however that being on a ship for four months at a time was not what I wanted. Through this experience I

learned to love the beaches and the ocean even more. I was sailing from Sydney to Fiji every two weeks and it was heavenly, but adhering to all the ship rules and having the same schedule every day was not what I was looking for and I felt almost captive living on a ship for months on end.

I'm not an avid reader of fiction. I never read many books as a kid but in my adult life I always loved buying and reading every self-help book I could get my hands on. I've always enjoyed writing songs and I always wanted to be self-employed and I always had creative ideas of how to make a living. Some ideas worked out in my life, some did not.

I was on YouTube one night when I came across a video of a young girl chatting about writing books. She was very young, maybe twenty or so, and she lived in a small farming community in Minnesota. The video showed a picture of her house out in a field. It was a square two story white house and it was surrounded with snow. It looked cold and very bleak but she found comfort in writing fiction books. She tried to get a publishing deal but it never worked out. She heard about self-publishing online with Amazon and she started posting her books there. I found the video interesting but I almost fell off my chair when she mentioned the income she was making. Money didn't start flowing in right away, but she told the secret of how she started making a six-figure income. I remember turning off my laptop and scratching my head. I always wondered if I could write books. I knew I had lots of ideas, but could I do it? Then I thought again, okay, what would be the perfect lifestyle for me? Then it hit me like a ton of rocks, "I've got it," I declared to myself. ***"I want to live by the ocean, write books during the day and play music at night."*** The perfect lifestyle and the absolute best way to live out the second half of my life! The jury had made a decision and the verdict was in. I realized that to make my dream a reality it would take some time and some planning, but hey, I was good at planning and I put things into motion right away and I started putting myself in the position where I could start writing. I was on my way to becoming a writer.

Chapter One

The first book I wrote was called Hobo Club. It's an idea I had about how maybe panhandlers and folks on street corners holding cardboard signs asking for money was all part of a very organized system that some group actually ran like a business. Getting homeless people at the soup line to stand on designated corners collecting money all day long by holding their hand out seemed plausible. I was curious and ended up talking to a guy who had actually stood on a corner for kicks and was amazed at how much money he could make. He found that corners turning into a Walmart were probably the most lucrative. He knew this because as he was standing there, a car approached and the man driving offered him three hundred dollars for his corner. He said he was already up two hundred and turned the man down. They agreed on five hundred cash and he turned the corner over to the stranger. Of course I needed a story line and I still had no idea as to how I would put it into a book.

I remember, I think it was Stephen King, the famous author who said on a TV interview, "The best way to write a book, is to sit down and write a book." I took this advice to heart and got up early one morning and started banging out Hobo Club on my laptop. I quickly discovered something about myself. I loved writing without a plan or without the slightest idea of where the story was going to go. I let the story unfold as I wrote. I don't seem to get writers block, I just take a break, take a nap, go for a walk, then come back and continue writing. The fact that I have no pressure on me to perform as a writer, I think, makes it much easier. I knocked out Hobo Club pretty fast. It's only about forty pages, but let me tell you, a four-page report in high school used to scare me half to death. I'm a lousy typist. Two fingers at best, but I love it. I love writing and the whole creative process that goes with it.

The second book I started right away. It's called, "I Can Hear You." It's based on a kid that created a laser microphone that he could point at anyone secretly listening in on their conversation. Writing this book was a crazy experience. I can't even tell you where all the ideas came from, the twists the turns the suspense. It

just started unfolding before my eyes and it was challenging and fun, and to me, exciting. I finished the book and am now writing the sequel. It called for more and I knew the story wasn't yet over.

Last January I got a call from an old friend of mine saying he had become very successful financially. He had placed himself in a growing trend industry called network marketing and eighteen years ago had signed up as an independent distributor with a company based in Utah. He was living in San Diego and invited me down for a visit. At the time I was visiting my sister in Santa Barbara when my friend called. It ended up that I stayed at his guest home for several months while writing his biography. The mere fact that I had already written two books that were on Amazon gave me enough credibility to be hired to write my friend's life story. The name of the book is called, "My Friend Dave," and is currently on Amazon. My son Gardner who is an amazing writer and is currently getting his masters degree in English literature was hired by Dave to take care of the editing. They say writing a book is the easy part; it's all the editing that takes most of the effort. It was explained to me like this. "The writing of the book is the equivalent of a sculptor just moving the slab of marble into his studio, the sculpting becomes the editing of the book."

Chapter Two

When my wife Gerri and I got the bug to live off the grid and to explore my new ideas of a lifestyle, writing books and playing music, our family and friends were not as enthusiastic about it as we were. I had just spent four months floating on the ocean playing guitar every night down in Australia. I arrived home to Utah the first week in December. It was cold and the Salt Lake Valley was socked in with its famous yearly inversion. A word that describes a heavy thick blanket of air that becomes trapped in the valley holding in all pollution from every car and every diesel bus and every wood burning fireplace for a two or three month period. Even though the city bans fireplace usage during these winter months; the only logical time to actually use a fireplace, the air becomes grey and thick and hospitals are at full capacity taking care of lung related illnesses while everyone else in town is encouraged to stay indoors. I looked at Gerri and explained that I had just come from visiting New Caledonia, the Fijian islands, New Zealand and Australia. I was used to seeing greenish blue water and feeling its mist on my skin. I had just left summer weather and clear blue skies only to return to the still thick sludge above the cold dim lit Salt lake Valley. The second day home I started coughing like everybody else. I said, "Gerri, let's get out of here, let's hit the road." We packed up and left Utah as soon as Christmas was over and we had attended to all our family duties. We purchased a used Chevrolet Custom van, took out the middle seats and used the back couch as our bed. I had been living in a small ship cabin with no windows and I would joke by saying I could sit on the toilet, type out an email on the desk in front of me, answer the door to my right and fluff my pillow to the left, all without moving, it was that small. All I had was a few clothes, a laptop, a guitar and I was really happy. Living in a van would be easy. I had received word that a friend of my brothers had just died. He had been given six months to live; he died in three. He left behind a beautiful wife and two small children. My attitude was, let's get away while we still have our health and we are still energetic to do so. Our trip lasted six months and it gave me another idea for a book, called "Six Months to Live."

It's a book about "living," not dying. Doing something you want to do for six months. So far our "six month adventure" has lasted over two years.

My father never smoked a day in his life. He went to his Doctor with a small cough and discovered he had stage four lung cancer. He died two weeks later. Yes I was motivated to go have some adventure, and the thought of finances never entered into my decision. Speaking of book titles and ideas, I decided to write down every book title I thought was clever and then design a book cover for it then write an introduction for each book. I've come up so far with thirty-one titles, or in other words, thirty-one ideas for books to write. I have so far designed eight book covers and have written ten introductions and have completed four of those books. My goal is to write at least thirty books before I'm dead and gone. Of course I would like to still be alive and hopefully enjoying the fruits of my labors. Stephen King has written over eighty books and is still going strong at sixty-nine years of age. He said in a recent interview that he'd only stop writing when it's not fun any more. That's the way I feel, and right now, I'm having a lot of fun. Imagine finding something to be passionate about at age fifty-five and to find out you actually have a talent for it. Am I the best author in the world? Far from it, but I don't care. I'll keep writing, hopefully getting better at my craft till I reach my goal of thirty books, then I'll decide where I go from there!

Chapter Three

I read somewhere what the definition of “living in a rut” was this. A “rut is a grave with the ends kicked out.” People who are not at all excited about what they do for a living sometimes feel they are living in a rut. I have a friend who worked for a gas line company for over thirty-five years, the same company for thirty-five years, but he loved it. They say when you totally enjoy what you do, you’ll never “work” another day in your life. But I’m talking about those folks who absolutely hate what they do for a living and they complain about it but never dream about making a change. I know there are various factors that enter in when it comes to changing your career path mid stream. You have to consider the kids, the mortgage and all the day-to-day bills. Some folks find it easier to just stay put, to not rock the boat, keep on keeping on, same ol’ same ol’. All I’m saying is that every one of us has options. We do have choices. We can make choices if we really want to.

Now let me share my thoughts about planning to make career moves or life altering choices. Some people can just jump ship quickly and land on their feet without any real repercussions. Most of us have to take some time to think things through. Gerri and I decided a few years ago that we wanted to downsize. We sold our home, sold furniture and got rid of stuff we felt we didn’t need. It took months and months to do this, as downsizing doesn’t happen over night. We still rent a ten by fifteen foot storage unit back in Salt Lake City full to the brim with stuff we still don’t really need. Paying two hundred bucks a month for stuff I have literally forgotten about, except there is a guitar in there I know I want to retrieve.

Real change takes place “in your mind.” Every night when you go to bed, fall asleep thinking about what it is that you really want. Is it living by the ocean, is it writing books and playing guitar at waterside resorts or is it moving across town to a newer subdivision. Is your dream to take the family on that super vacation? I learned that the months it takes to plan your vacation might be more enjoyable than actually going away for the planned two weeks. Vacations end and are over very quickly. Life is short but we seem to have the idea that we have time to do what we

have always dreamed about doing, I suggest doing it sooner than later. My father's dream was to fly in a hot air balloon. He always talked about doing it but never "got around" to it. "Someday" I want to go up in a hot air balloon he would always say. He would see the balloons every Fourth of July early in the morning when the air was still and watch as they lifted off floating west and out of site. How easy it would have been to go to where they lifted off from, drive there early, meet some of the pilots and ask a few questions about what it takes to fly in a big balloon. For whatever reason, my Dad never took those steps. I remember getting the doctor's diagnosis after my Dad's doctor visit. My brother Mark was working as an intern at the hospital and asked a Doctor who was a friend of our family if he could call in and listen to the tape-recorded diagnosis from our father's doctor. After putting the phone down, our Doctor friend looked at my brother and said, "If there is anything your father would like to do, he needs to do it tomorrow." Well, that tomorrow never came. Sadly, Dad never got to ride in that hot air balloon.

Question: Why do we seem to think that "One Day" we will do what we actually "Want" to do? We ignore the fact that time slips away, and it usually slips away much quicker than we realize. Twenty or even thirty years go by and we look back saying, "I can't believe where the time has gone." Someone asked me a question once. *"If you could do anything in the world, and money was not a factor, what would you do?"* That question has stuck with me for years. Looking back I think that that very question was the beginning of my planning to be a writer, and to enjoy the lifestyle I have now. I didn't know it at the time, but I was being groomed for something I think God had a hand in. Yes, I believe in a higher power. I was raised with the belief that God is an actual being who cares about me, and that my life matters to him. I find it easier to think of God in those terms because that's the way I was taught as a child. I sometimes feel that maybe God is all around me in the form of the universe and that I'm starting to better understand the laws that govern this world we live in. I believe in the law of attraction. That "like" feelings attract "like" feelings. If I'm happy, I'll attract happy people. If I'm upset all the time, I'll attract crabby upset people into my world. By feeling strongly about what I want, I can attract the people and the events into my life that will better help me fulfill my

destiny, and it all starts with thought and how deeply I “feel” about it. I love expanding my knowledge of people and things. I love reading about the history of others. I love thinking, “If they can do it, why can’t I.” I get excited when I find a heads up penny, because I believe that’s the universe’s way of letting me know that I’m on the right track. I love seeing 11:11 on my digital clock because I believe that my deceased parents are checking in with me, letting me know that I’m on the right path and to keep going. I believe in hammocks. I believe when I become stressed it is time to find two trees, hang up my hammock, kick back and sway with the breeze looking up into the treetops and the sky beyond. I believe in meditation and that those quiet moments allow my mind to rid itself of all the turbulence that has gathered there. I believe that only when my mind is clear can I be creative. And, I believe that it is creativity alone that makes us jump out of bed in the morning ready to greet a new day and to get to work building, creating, writing, doing something we love. I have found that most or even all of my life’s enjoyment has come through the creating process of an idea.

Years ago I wanted to invent a “Survival Pill.” A small pill that could sustain life, giving rescuers a chance to find those who are lost or in trouble. A product that could help hikers to coal miners, from boy scouts to those running from a gulf coast hurricane. I remember calling my friend who was a food formulator and having him see the possibilities of such an invention. I remember the excitement of securing the funding I needed for the project. I remember coming up with the name “LifeCaps” and applying for, then getting the registered trademark. I remember spending hours designing the labels. I remember getting the first case of the finished product. I remember going seventeen days without food, just LifeCaps, so I could go on a local TV program to talk about preparedness. I remember watching my computer as thousands of sales came in as a result of the local program. Years later I remember getting the phone call from a show called Shark Tank inviting me on the show. I remember standing in front of the sharks not having eaten in eight days to prove that my product did work. I remember how I dominated the conversation and also how the final edit was not in my favor at all. I remember the frustration and embarrassment of watching the show broadcast that made me look somewhat

foolish. I remember getting a call from a dear friend who told me how proud he was that I even went on the show and that because of my curious product it was the most watched show in the five-year history of Shark Tank. I have since turned LifeCaps over to another company and it's still being marketed today.

As I look back on the many things I have attempted, it's interesting to note all my successes and failures over the years. The funny thing is this. I wouldn't change one thing. Why? Because it has led me to where I am today. I love my life, I always have. Divorce is hard and I've been through it. Nothing is easy. Life is actually very difficult at times. What I have learned is this. Expect change. It's happening all around us. I've found that even a phone call can change your life, for the better or for the worst. We never know what tomorrow will bring. Life forces us to roll with the punches, to go with the flow. The quicker we can learn this, the better. Some people have a free spirit like mine; others are more conservative and have taken a safer route when it comes to employment and their path in life. I figured out that the friends I have who are ultra conservative; I don't share my plans with because they don't get it, and that's okay. In fact I've found that there are very few people who should share in your dreams. I've found it better to keep your dreams, your goals and your ideas close to the vest. I've heard it said that throughout your life you'll probably only have a handful of true friends. I have found this also to be true.

Chapter Four

My brother has a friend who is very wealthy. He made his fortune when he was still in his twenties and now at age forty-five he is extremely bored and, well, “in a rut.” I have spent hours chatting with my brother about his friend and his plight. Of course my brother finds it very hard to understand why his friend is so bored with life. Of course my brother could fill a book with ideas of what he could do with unlimited funds. My brother is extremely talented in music and has many other interests. He blurts out all the projects he would be involved with in the studio and who he would be producing. He has actually said that it’s not fair for some to have so much money but walk around with low energy because they have lost their zip. I wonder if it isn’t a detriment to young people making too much money too fast in life. It might take away their drive and eventually their happiness.

Being an entrepreneur and wondering if any money will come in month after month is maybe what keeps guys like me energized. You would think we have every reason to be down in the dumps. I guess our lack of financial stability may be a good thing as it keeps us in the thick of things and forces us to be creative and to keep moving forward keeping a positive attitude about the future. Maybe because it’s all we’ve got?

For the past few summers I have had the opportunity to play music at a little place called the Nugget Saloon right on main street in Deadwood, South Dakota. I play music there five days a week. I get Mondays and Tuesdays off. Gerri works next door at the gift shop, which is owned by the same people. I absolutely love what I do and every day I’m in heaven playing guitar and singing tunes for the tourists. Gerri loves the low pressure of selling T-shirts and souvenirs right next door and she can hear my music from the open doorway. The famous Sturgis motorcycle rally takes place every August just ten miles down the road and Deadwood gets over crowded with motorcycles and bikers. We have adjusted to our new life and so far we absolutely love it. We have met some of the most interesting people in our travels. Some have expensive motor homes and are

travelling across America. Some young folk hop from city to city, finding work as they seek new adventures. It's amazing to hear all their stories. I think the fact that we left out comfortable town where our families and friends are has made it easier to live the way we do. We have the understanding that we won't be doing this forever. This life style is great right now but the day will probably come when our hearts just aren't into it any more, and that's okay. Until then, we keep coming up with new places we want to visit. Currently during the winter, we are living in a little town called Englewood, Florida. It's located about forty miles south of Sarasota. Our little town is homey and very quiet, until December that is, when the snowbirds come down for the winter to enjoy the warmth, just like us. We knew nothing about Englewood but found through chatting with tourists and people we met during the summer, the word Englewood kept popping into the conversation. With the Internet it's so easy to scope out a place before you spend your time and money and just head south for the winter. We drove into town on a Tuesday evening and by the next night; we were sleeping in a beautifully furnished three-bedroom beach house. Everything seems to work out perfect for us. Everyone said we could never find a place to rent that would be in our budget. Well we did and we couldn't be happier. Getting up in the morning is a joy. Taking long morning walks on the beach collecting seashells or taking a bike ride along Manasota Key is something we both look forward to every day. Writing my books is a joy while seated in my favorite spot in the screened in lanai out back where we have all day shade provided by the huge pine and palm trees. And to think we would have never experienced any of this if we had of not started the thought process a few years back. I have no doubt that I'm supposed to be writing. It's becoming easier the more I do it. I looked at Gerri this morning and said, "Honey, this whole thing, the house, the ocean, the beach, the writing, the playing of music, everything is happening as I imagined it for so long." It's actually happening!

Chapter Five

Losing popularity may happen when you share with too many people your crazy plans to make a drastic change in your life. I know there is some talk circulating in my own family and beyond about what I'm doing. I mean what do my kids say when someone asks how their dad is doing or they ask, "What is your dad up to these days?"

"Well, he's playing music in a little bar in Deadwood, South Dakota and during the winter months he does the same thing down in Florida." People might say, "You mean he doesn't have a job, or a house?" People don't understand and I don't care. I think people's reaction is comical. I'm not living my life for other people's approval. This is "my life" and I'm really happy and pleased about the new direction it's taking!

I have known many people that say, "What if." What if you fail? What if you go broke? What if your books don't sell? What if you never get any gigs? What if, what if. My reaction to that is. What if I succeed? What if I make great money? What if I become a number one best selling author? What if I get more gigs than I can handle? What if, what if? My whole premise has always been this. Believe it or not, we are all going to die. Me, you, everyone. **Fact:** *We don't know when or how, we just know we will.* I have to say, if we have this information, we shouldn't fear death, we should fear that we refuse to "live" and do something extra ordinary with our lives. Who cares if you have more money than you can spend because you worked more years and retired ten years after you were supposed to? Here's a big "what if." What if you die before you reach retirement? What if you contract a terminal disease? What if your spouse dies? What if, what if? Am I wrong in saying, maybe the time is now to go out and do something you feel you were meant to do? Something you feel deep down in your soul, something that scares you to death because others may think you've lost your mind? I can personally say that the past few years of my life have been invigorating because I simply got the courage to follow my heart. For the first time in my life I feel I am doing what I am supposed to

do. I guess the timing was off before and now everything has lined up, only because I took the courage to seriously dream about what I wanted for the second half of my life. I have met many people along my new path that are retired. They travel in their posh motor homes and they are enjoying the fruits of their years of hard work. I think that is great, but what about the guy who will never be able to do that? He is past his prime and didn't put much away for a rainy day; he never planned out anything in the form of a retirement. Maybe guys like that are just out of luck. Every one's situation is different. There are still people out there who spend every minute clawing their way through life just trying to put food on the table and to pay the mortgage. I guess they need to answer the same question that I was presented with. *If money was no object, what would I do and how and where would I live my life?* I concluded that I had nothing to lose but so much to gain by taking a chance, a chance on myself. It's scary at first, but the more you really think, dream and ponder about the possibilities, things start actually making more and more sense and the fear dissipates. I was taught years ago that the true meaning of fear is found in the four letters that make up the word. F E A R – False Evidence Appearing Real. We make things up in our mind. We start fearing things that may not ever happen, and that very FEAR holds us back from making a decision. Remember the “what if” scenario? Have fun with it. Turn it around and say “what if” my hunch is right? “What if” things go my way? To me this makes life very exciting and it is definitely more fun than living in the rut that so many people become familiar with.

We are all faced with decisions every day. Some decisions are very hard to find the right answers to. The only purpose of this book is to maybe help you get out of your comfort zone a bit. I know that my lifestyle is extreme to most people. I know that what I'm doing may only work for me. I get that. My question to you is this. Have you ever had dreams then lost them because you were a people pleaser and you did “the right thing” and followed the path “they” told you to take. I for example was a people pleaser for many years. I was a pleaser to my religion, to my mother, to my spouse to everyone, except me. “Yes Bishop I will do what you ask. Yes Mom I'll do what you think is right. Yes honey, I'll do what ever you want me to do.” I was in my forties when I finally realized I didn't have a clue as to what I

wanted or to what would make “me” happy. I was doing everything everyone else wanted me to do. I realized I was living for them.

Doing the right thing: This sentence can literally become “a sentence” as it locks you into doing things you may not want to do, but because of the circumstances, you are forced to do. For example: You are living a lifestyle that is steady and secure. You are putting money away for retirement; you have a modest home and you budget to get things like your cars paid off in full. You keep all your credit cards at a zero balance. You make sure your credit is perfect and you plug along day after day doing the right thing, always. This is the American dream. Feeling secure financially is a wonderful feeling. Women especially love to know that there is money in the bank to take care of them and the family. Everything is going well then one day something happens that throws a wrench into the mix. One of your children gets into a situation that requires a lawyer. It ends up costing you a lot of money, which usually comes from your retirement fund. Someone in the family gets sick, maybe it’s a baby grand daughter and the parents need financial help. There are hundreds of things that could jeopardize your grand plan of retirement. What do you do in these situations? The answer is simple; you have to do “the right thing.” BUT... No matter what happens in your life, it is very important that you keep dreams alive in your mind. Sometimes it’s your dreams that keep you from going crazy. At least when things go wrong, you have something of comfort you can hold onto, your dreams. I feel it is very important to have a carrot out in front of you that makes your life worth living. Maybe you have a dream of one day owning a little cabin up in the woods somewhere. You dream every night about the family all gathering up at the cabin for thanksgiving. You imagine how fun it would be to have the grandkids swinging on the old tire swing that you put up, the one like you used to swing on when you were a kid. You imagine everyone sitting down and having the famous family turkey dinner, all together, all at your family cabin. The reality is, you might not ever live long enough to get your cabin, it may never work out, but think of the enjoyment of having that beautiful dream all your life. My thoughts are this. The chances of you getting your cabin are much greater if you dream about it day after day than not. The more dream detail the better. Imagine

building it all by yourself. Imagine pounding in every nail. Imagine where the logs come from, who helps you on the weekends, imagine it all. Like I said, when those thoughts that come from your imagination start turning into “feelings,” that’s when the magic starts to happen. When you start to “feel” what it will be like having the family at your cabin for thanksgiving, then the universe starts bringing everything together to help materialize your dream. Don’t ever say, well it’s a nice dream but it will never happen, and you’re right. When you say things aloud like that, your subconscious mind is trained to obey your command and it absolutely “won’t” happen. Rather, say things like, “Wouldn’t it be great to have a little cabin up in the woods, where we could all be together as a family for thanksgiving?” Dream Big, or don’t dream at all.

One of the things my former spouse accused me of was that I was a dreamer. I know because one day I picked up my young son and during our conversation he said, “Mom said I shouldn’t listen to you because you are nothing but a dreamer.” I took a breath, pulled the car over and decided to approach this the correct way. I didn’t get mad or lash out at my son’s mother, I simply said, “Son do you remember going to Disney Land?” He said, “Yes Dad, I love Disney Land.” We proceeded to talk about all the times we had been to Disney Land, all the rides and all the fun we had there as a family. I explained to him that right in front of the park there is a brass plaque that has the words of Walt Disney himself thanking all the people that made Disney Land a reality. He especially wanted to thank all the “dreamers.” He explained that without the “dreamers” Disney Land would never had been built. I went on to explain to my son that the very car we were riding in was a result of someone’s dream. I pointed to fancy homes and buildings as we drove and explained that someone had to dream those buildings in their head before they became a reality. I then said, “Son, I hope you never stop being a dreamer because it’s the dreamers that make the difference in life.” I have a friend named Ryan Shupe, he’s a musician and his hit song was “Dream Big.” I encourage you to find the song and listen to it. The message is wonderful. My father had many dreams. He was a builder and he was good at it. He raised and supported nine children. My mother never worked outside the home. The financial burden was all on my Dad.

Somehow he made it all happen for us. Somehow we all got the instruments we wanted, the music lessons we needed, the clothes, the books, the bicycles, the backpacks and the summer vacations at the lake. Somehow he figured it out. The scriptures say that God will never give us anything too big that we can't handle. I believe that. I remember Dad saying that problems in life help build your character. I also remember him saying that he wished he didn't have to keep building his character so much. He'd joke about the hard times, kept his head down and kept going. I know there were times when he would look up into the sky and see a hot air balloon floating high above, and imagine himself way up there looking down without a care. Maybe that was his escape, his dream, and his way of forgetting about life's problems for a brief moment. Yes dreams are a good thing, even if they never materialize. The fact that my father could imagine himself up high, standing in the basket of a hot air balloon, maybe that was all he needed, and in a way, he did manifest his dream, in his mind it was his reality. When I look at things that way I don't feel bad for my Dad thinking that he never got to live out that dream. I'm sure he was okay with it. The day he died, my oldest sister Diane and I got to spend the whole morning with him at the hospital. We had absolutely no idea that he would die at just after five o'clock that afternoon. He had just received his first chemotherapy treatment and he expressed that he wished he had never gone through with it and he definitely didn't want another one. We joked and laughed with him. We talked about the farm up in Canada where we were all raised as children. All the stray dogs and cats that showed up some how on the farm and how we accepted them all and took care of them until they moved on to somewhere else. I remember Dad making the statement that he didn't want to leave this earth and that he loved living life. His biggest fear was leaving our mother all alone. I will say my Dad was always a happy man and he and Mom were very much in love. They stuck together through the good and the hard times, they were a team. Later that afternoon, Dad encouraged us all to go down to the hospital cafeteria to eat. While we were gone, he took his last breath. We were shocked when we returned to discover our dear father had passed. We had no idea he would die. His father lived to be ninety-seven and we just thought he had many more years left. We just took it

for granted that he would recover and would be okay. Our father was just sixty-eight years old. We all felt cheated; Dad had died way too young.

Chapter Six

During the years that I was married and raising a family, I had a direct mail and advertising business. I created direct mail sales for car dealerships and also created and produced music jingles, a few of which are still on the radio today. When I'd sit down to write a jingle, common sense told me that the more **senses** I could relate to within that jingle, the more popular and memorable it would be. I would literally write down the five senses. **Touch, Sound, Taste, Sight, Smell**. I would make it a point to include words that would describe or include every one of the five human senses if at all possible in all my jingles. As I write this book about living out our dreams, it only makes sense to me that it's important to include all the senses while dreaming about what we want.

The cabin in the woods for example: When you dream about owning a cabin try to include phrases like, "I can **smell** the bacon on the stove every morning." "I love the **smell** of the pine trees when I walk out the door to greet the day." "I love to **feel** the warmth of the sun on my face as I **watch** it slowly rise up over the mountains." "I love **hearing** the enchanted call of the loon somewhere across the lake." "I love **tasting** the first sip of coffee from my cup."

These are some basic examples of how to make your dreams "more real" as you come closer to getting what you desire. Have you ever heard a song on the radio that takes you back to high school? We've all had that experience. Our five senses is what makes things real and memorable. When you can "feel" something deep inside it becomes very hard to forget.

I read a book once that described how we as humans think and process thoughts. It talked about our conscious and our subconscious mind. It explained that they are both very different but they indeed work together. The book described the conscious mind as the captain of the ship and the subconscious mind as the captain's crew. The crew's purpose was to carry out the orders of the captain. But,

the crew would only act if the captain commanded with deep emotion and feeling. For example: If you bump into someone at the mall, someone you haven't seen in a while and you are trying to remember their name. Your crew is sitting around playing cards when you say, "What is that persons name? I know that name, what is their name?" The crew gets up from playing cards and goes to the filing cabinet to find that persons name just as you say, "Oh, I'm terrible at remembering names, I can never remember anyone's name." With that, the crew turns away from the filing cabinet and goes back to playing cards. Why? Because you told them to. Try this the next time you see someone and can't remember their name. Say to yourself, "I know their name, what is their name, I know that person, what is their name?" You might not remember right away, but trust me, when you say, or command with enough feeling, your crewmembers have only one mission and that's to obey your command. You might wake up at three the next morning and say, "Oh that was Margaret Jones and she has a daughter in college and her son just got married a month ago." In other words you will remember everything about that person as soon as your crew finds the information. If you want to have your crew find the information quicker, stop telling yourself you can never remember names. Always say, "I know that persons name, what is it, what is it?" Practice demanding to remember things and you will train your crew to be much more efficient. Trust me, this works. I hear people all the time saying, "I'm so bad at remembering things, my mind is like a sieve, I just can't remember anything anymore." Just listen to the message you are giving your subconscious mind, you are literally telling your crew to kick back and to not find the information you need. Remember, you own that crew, you are the captain, make them work for you. The subconscious mind is there to make sure all your wishes or commands materialize. This is all part of the law of attraction. When you dream, when you plan, when you picture in your mind everything you desire, and you do it with the right emotion and feeling, your crew will pull situations and people and circumstances together in order to materialize, or "make real" your desires. I cringe when I hear parents tell their children, "Oh you're just a dreamer, you'll never do that." I remember telling my mother at age fifteen that I wanted to start a rock band. She told me, "Oh every kid your age thinks

they want to be a rock star, you could never be in a band.” That was probably the best thing she could have said to me because my mind set was, “Oh yea, just watch me.” By the time I was sixteen and driving, I had my rock band and we played every wedding, every Christmas party, every Legion and Moose Hall in the community. I averaged eight hundred dollars a month all through high school playing in bands while other kids my age were working for a dollar fifty an hour after school and on weekends. I remember saying to my dad, “I need an electric guitar.” He said, “Why? You already have a guitar.” I said, “I have an acoustic guitar and no one will hear it.” He said, “Well play it louder.” I said, “It doesn’t work like that.” I got my electric guitar. Next, “Dad I need an amplifier.” He said, “What do you need that for?” I said, “So people can hear my new guitar.” He said, “Just play it louder.” I said, “It doesn’t work like that.” I got my new amp. When I told dad that I needed a PA system with a microphone, he told me to just sing louder. My father didn’t have a clue as to what I needed. I finally got my drummer’s parents and my parents to agree to buy us a PA system complete with microphones and stands and power cords, all the things we needed to be in a band. They all agreed only if we paid them back for everything. We agreed and made good on our word. You see I imagined myself on stage singing in that band. I drew pictures of the band’s set up before I even knew who was going to be in the band. I drew the drums, the amps, the mic stands, the PA speakers, and I placed the paper under my pillow at night. You see, I was the captain and I left little doubt for my crew as to what I wanted. I ate, drank, slept and dreamt rock and roll. I learned the chords, the lyrics. I met older guys in bands and I got their advice, I asked questions. I remember renting halls in the outlying towns and promoting dances. I remember having the newspaper print all our neon green, pink and yellow posters. I remember stapling those posters to every wooden power pole in town. Man, looking back, I was really ambitious. Just thinking out loud, I haven’t thought about any of this for years. I don’t even think I’ve shared this with my two boys. By the way, when my boys were seven and eight years old, I taught one to play the drums and the other to play the bass and I played the guitar. We had our own rock band with a stage in the basement. I remember we needed a trailer to haul everything in, so I made a deal with the racetrack out west of Salt Lake City. We

would play rock and roll every Friday night for the people walking in, in exchange for a white enclosed Wells Cargo trailer. We played for kids at schools, we played anywhere we could get gigs. I remember running into upset parents at church because their kids wanted electric guitars and drum sets for Christmas thanks to our school performances. The first time we played out, we knew about five songs. The boys decided they wanted to put on a concert. I got the town we lived in to donate the old movie theatre for our venue. The boys went door-to-door selling home made tickets for a dollar each. Over sixty neighbors attended the concert, and I have a video somewhere to prove it, looking back, I have to laugh, those were good times. All those wonderful memories were a result of my mother telling me I could never play in a band. I thank her now for her wisdom in using reverse psychology as she did that a lot in order to motivate us all. At least that's what I say now.

Chapter Seven

My first grade teacher called me a daydreamer in class in front of all the other kids. They all laughed at me. I don't have a clue as to what I might have been daydreaming about at that age. I remember an ad for a bicycle that I kept under my pillow that I would look at several times a day. Maybe I was dreaming about that new bike, which I eventually got by the way. My point is this. When we are children, we tend to daydream about a lot of things. What we want to be when we grow up, the new bike that we want, the girl in the fourth row. Daydreaming comes easy to a kid. It's sad that as we get older, many of us lose sight of our dreams, or worse, we stop dreaming all together. I say we should all keep dreams alive in our minds even as middle age adults and beyond. Without dreams our lives become very boring. Maybe getting that new motorhome, the cabin, travelling. Those are all dreams that many adults still have.

My brother in law Frank was a cameraman for MSNBC in Los Angeles and one day he set up lighting getting ready for an interview with Donald Trump. After the interview Donald shook his hand and thanked him for the great lighting and camera work. Donald then handed him a signed copy of his book "The Art of the Deal." My brother in law said, "I going to read your book so I can retire rich." Donald Trump said, "Never retire Frank, when you retire, you expire." Great advice. I have watched retired folk stop being active after they retire. They do nothing, except watch TV. My advice for a long happy life is to keep active and to keep dreaming about what you want. This creativity makes life more interesting and much more fun. Deepak Chopra wrote in his book "The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success" that we should live our lives in uncertainty. He dedicated a whole chapter to teaching about finding security in the unknown. The only thing really secure is what we already know, and that's the past, and holding on to the past keeps us from growing. When we great each day not knowing exactly what is going to happen or who we are going to meet, life takes on new meaning that becomes full of mystery and excitement.

When we continually challenge ourselves to stretch a little more out side of our comfort zone, things can become very exciting. I have never attempted to write a book until two years ago. My mother raised nine kids and also took care of four foster children in our home when we lived in Alberta, Canada. I heard her say many times, "I'm going to write a book." Every time one of the kids said something comical or off the wall she would say, "I'm going to put that in my book." Well guess what, my mother never wrote her book. She had plenty of time after my father passed to do a lot of things. I felt that she was so heart broken after losing her husband and best friend; she didn't feel much like doing anything. She missed him so much she literally cried every day. I so wish she could have taken a class, read more books, travelled more, but she chose to be quiet and to mourn the loss of our father in her own way. Maybe she was worn out from all those children, I'm sure that had a lot to do with it. I've seen other folk open to learning new things, like getting a computer and learning how to use the Internet. How to send emails to loved ones, how to video chat etc. I guess people are different and will do what they want to do. I read some statistics once that said that only three percent of people who attend any type of "How-To Seminars" ever do what they were taught. Gym memberships are sold every day to folks who never go back to the gym. I happen to be one of them. I don't enjoy working out. I have purchased at least three gym memberships, that I can remember, and I probably have returned only a handful of times. I found that I would rather spend my time playing and practicing my guitar. That is what brings me the most joy. I love hiking and going for walks, especially on the beach. Am I in great shape? No, probably not, but I'm really happy. Here I am talking about goals and becoming motivated while I could myself afford to lose a few pounds. Does that make me a hypocrite? I certainly hope not. Hey, I'm just writing a book here, go easy on me, LOL. I once heard someone say, "If you learn something just from the title of a book, it was still worth buying the book."

I just got word two days ago that a dear friend of our family had passed away. His name is Brent Yorgeson and he was a favorite and famous author in Utah. He and his brother Blaine had written many books for teens and adults alike. Now he has passed away. I have to think that he left behind a huge legacy for others. He

wrote over a hundred books that will be read by many people for many years to come. I have read several of his books and I enjoyed them. I'm so glad that he took the time and the effort to write. Someone once said that all the best books and movies are lying in the cemetery. The cemetery is full of deceased people who never took the time or effort to write their stories. Every dream takes effort. But the more effort you put into the dream, the bigger the reward. A trout will only expel enough energy for the food it is about to eat. It will only sip a small gnat on the surface while it will vigorously chase a minnow into shallow water because it knows the reward is greater. If we attempt something that is difficult to accomplish, chances are the rewards will be greater. My goal is to write thirty books in the next few years, and if I feel like writing more, I will. I have no idea if I will ever sell many books, I can't let that be my motivation, but while I have this drive to do so, while I have these ideas in my head, I'm going to write books! One thing I realize is that everyone is different. Things that make sense to me probably makes no sense to someone else. Isn't that what makes life so interesting? I have also been taught to never force my beliefs on anyone. I guess this book is more for people who may be seeking inspiration by reading about my story and my experiences and hopefully it may inspire them to dig down deep to find their own hidden talents, talents they never dreamed they ever had. I never planned on writing even one book let alone having a goal of thirty. Looking back, the timing was never right for me to take the time to sit down and write. Timing, as they say, is everything. I will say that when I discovered I had the urge or the desire to write, I started dreaming about having a successful life style as a writer. I literally would dream about living in Key West and getting up every morning and writing till noon, stopping for a nap, then playing my guitar in a café somewhere to finish off my day. Well, I didn't make it to Key West, yet, but I must say, the life style I envisioned in my mind is pretty close to what I'm living right now. Another example of day after day painting a picture for my crewmembers as to what I desired and they brought the right set of circumstances in front of me to make it happen. Over the past two years I kept running into people from Florida. I would be amazed as to how many folks I met from Bradenton and the Englewood area. As we finished up working the past tourist season in

Deadwood, Gerri and I decided to head to Florida to check out Bradenton and Englewood. As we drove through Bradenton we didn't have that warm fuzzy feeling. It seemed too congested for our liking. We travelled a few more miles south to Englewood and as soon as we drove into town we looked at each other and smiled. This place felt right. It was late so we got a hotel for the night. The next day we looked at a phone app called Zillow and found a few furnished rentals. We drove to the first rental and found a cute little three-bedroom rambler. We looked through the windows and called the owner. We explained we would like to see the inside of her rental home. She said there was a key underneath a seashell and we could let ourselves in to see the cottage. We fell in love with everything and called her back saying we would like to rent her home. She said, "I have never done this before, but for some reason I feel really good about you, so go ahead and move your stuff in and I'll see you in an hour to collect a check." She arrived about an hour later. Her name was Sandy and she had just gotten remarried and had moved to another home with her new husband and had just put her home on Zillow. The timing was perfect for all of us. Imagine, driving into a completely strange town and the first place you look at to rent is the perfect house and the landlord becomes one of your best friends. The law of attraction is alive and well but only if you choose to use it. In the word "attraction" is the word "action." In order for the law of attraction to work, you have to actually "do" something to put your dreams into, "action."

Chapter Eight

When animals get ready to have their young, they prepare for their arrival by nesting. The female gets everything ready, especially birds. They spend all their time preparing a nest for their new family to be raised in until they can venture out on their own. The same is true with writing. I know that in order for me to write I have to have the correct set of circumstances that allow my thoughts and fingers to flow on the keyboard. This little seaside cottage had a vibe that couldn't be more perfect for me to write my books. We discovered that Sandy could only let us have the cottage until the middle of December because she had previously rented it to some snowbirds at double the rate we were paying. So, we had to find a new place to rent during peak season. I told Gerri that we are the luckiest people in the world and not to worry. The right place would present itself in due time and it would be even better than what we have right now. Every day Gerri would take a few minutes to see what was new on Zillow. Everything was so expensive and way out of our budget.

We got a call from Sandy saying she had a hunch that the lady who bought her large two-story home across our street might rent it to us through next May. This house was way more than what we needed. It had an enclosed swimming pool on one side and the back of the house was on the water that led to the gulf. Sandy and her late husband had lived there for twenty-eight years. They had a powerboat that they kept on the water which they enjoyed taking out to the gulf on occasion. Sandy had sold the boat and the home and was passing on the number of the new owner who said she might consider leasing it to us on Sandy's recommendation. Like I said, we needed a place until the middle of May, as we are to return to the black hills for our summer jobs. Gerri called the lady who now owned Sandy's old house. They hit it off over the phone. She allowed us to see the inside of the home and we negotiated a price that was very close to what we were paying Sandy for her cottage. Everything worked out so perfectly. When it was time to leave Sandy's beautiful little house on the fifteenth of December, we simply moved across the

street to a bigger home right on the water complete with a beautiful swimming pool. The law of attraction again was blessing us. I know God had a hand in all of this as well and I give him full credit always. I read somewhere that God can only work with those who are positive and are expecting the blessing. If we walked around negative, constantly complaining, God would have nothing to work with, and even if he sent a blessing our way, we would be too negative to recognize it. I have learned that it's best to always stay happy and positive.

Sandy was so excited when we told her about the deal we worked out for our next move. We told Sandy that she was our angel and that she had been such a blessing in our lives. Sandy came over the next day to bring us a couple of bicycles so we could ride up and down the beach. She needed a place to store the bikes and we needed bikes to ride. Another blessing. We started talking with her about angels and spiritual things. She told us a story that was very dear to her heart. She and her late husband had owned a kitchen cabinet store just down the street. When her husband became too ill to work, everything piled onto Sandy. She discovered that the business was forty thousand dollars in debt, and before she could sell the business she had to have that debt taken care of. She literally had her head bowed in prayer as a middle-aged man walked into her store. She raised her head and said hello to the man standing in front of her. In conversation she explained that she had decided to sell the business but she had this debt that needed to be taken care of. The man asked if he could use her computer as he knew of a government program that helped small businesses. He went to a page and filled out an application for Sandy saying that if all went well, she could expect a check within a few weeks. He smiled and shook her hand and left the store. Three weeks later Sandy received a government check within pennies of the amount of the debt she needed to pay off. She couldn't believe her eyes when she opened the envelope. She told us that she knows that God literally had sent her an angel when she needed help. The same thing happened when she sold her home after her husband died. She was in the yard pulling weeds from her flower bed when she looked up to a lady getting out of her car. She asked if Sandy's home was for sale. Sandy responded, "It could be." They ended up making a deal and Sandy sold her home to the lady and her husband

who were from Michigan and had been looking in the area for their retirement home for several years. This is the lady who rented Sandy's original home to us. She and her husband will not be moving in until he retires next year so everything worked out perfect for everyone. I feel that when you desire or need something to work out, don't panic, just know that everything will work out the way it is supposed to.

I was talking to a gal about a gig at a little place called "Pop's Tiki Bar." We started talking about a fundraiser they were organizing to help her little brother raise money to study abroad during the summer. I mentioned I had played on a cruise ship in Australia when she explained that her brother had lived there the previous summer. Come to find out that her brother has lived abroad for the last four summers. I was impressed to find out that her brother organizes and promotes the fundraising and he even involves the local newspaper getting free advertising for his fundraising events. I almost fell off my chair when she explained that her brother is only fifteen years old. Here is yet another example of getting what you want if you want it bad enough. I've tried to figure out why some people, even fifteen-year-old boys can be so driven towards their goals when others seem to have no goals at all. Her family didn't have the money her brother needed to spend his summers in distant lands but her brother didn't let that stop him, he found another way to get the money he needed. She explained that her brother is also taking flying lessons and she said he has a book written full of goals that he wants to accomplish. It's obvious that we are all different and what excites or motivates one person is of little interest to another. At the end of the day I still feel that everyone has had dreams at one time or another and I still believe that dreaming is a good thing for everyone regardless of age.

My wife Gerri has a best friend named Julie who has a son named Arie who is amazing. Arie is a certified scuba diver, has a collection of black powder rifles and he belongs to a club that target shoots every week. He is an accomplished archer and he knows a lot about aviation history and has a job as a guide at the huge Air and Space museum in Rapid City, South Dakota. Arie can take apart a pocket watch and repair it putting it back together better than new. He has created his own pistol design using cad computer software, a pistol that he will machine and build. The list

goes on and on of what Arie is into and he is only twenty-two years old. Ask him any question about history, be it any world war or about any General or President, Arie will know more than you and just listening to him talk keeps me interested for hours. Arie isn't sure about what he wants to be in life. I told him not to worry about it, in due time he will know. My feeling is he will invent something amazing and will be a millionaire before he hits thirty, just saying.

The world is filled with amazing young people and with the help of modern technology new products are being created at an unprecedented rate. We live in an exciting time!

Chapter Nine

Is there a God? I have a friend who is a proclaimed atheist. I once asked him, "You really are a true atheist?" He replied, "Yes, swear to God." He's an atheist with a sense of humor! So I ask the question, "Is there a God?" Isn't it interesting that the majority of fighting and bloodshed in the world is a direct result of religion, people fighting over whose beliefs are right?

Years ago I sold cars for a living. I was out of college and newly married and a friend of mine said I could make good money selling Toyota's. I was hired at a dealership in down town Salt Lake City, Utah and I began selling the best and only smart choice of car in the world. This was my first experience at selling cars and I was grateful that I happened to be selling the best line of cars ever built. To back up that claim was a magazine that we all had a copy of called Consumer Report. This magazine loved the Toyota line of cars and rated them higher than any other car in the marketplace. As salespeople we proudly opened the report and showed all the accolades written about Toyota's and how they exceeded in every area from safety to reliability. I was convinced that any one who didn't buy a Toyota was absolutely crazy. Toyota was the only choice and the only car that anyone should buy and I couldn't even comprehend anyone even considering a different line of car. You might say I was convinced that I had the only true product? In later years I owned and operated a direct mail company that conducted event sales for auto dealerships. We worked with Chevrolet, Dodge, Ford, Chrysler, Buick, Toyota and Nissan dealers. I quickly discovered that every, I mean every dealer looked at their line of cars as being the absolute best in the industry. Ford trucks are better than Chevy. Unless you were at a Chevy dealer, then that statement was reversed. It was like religion. I was raised Mormon. We were taught that we had the only true church. I believed it. My parents said so. Later in Life I became familiar with folks from other religions. I discovered that the Catholics believed that they had the only true religion and that the Jehovah Witnesses believed that they had the only true religion. Man was I confused. It would have been much easier to have never met anyone outside the

Mormon influence; I would have been secluded in my belief and uneducated at the same time. So the question remains, is there a God and is there one true religion?

First question: *Is there a God?*

Here is my take. We are all born into this world. *Some of us into very favorable situations.* Being born into a civilized and modern culture which we have in North America has many more advantages than being born into a third world culture. Since I was fortunate to have been born into a family in North America I will address my questions based on my upbringing, my family life and my personal observations. I find it interesting that we are born as helpless little babies that rely absolutely on the love and help of our parents to feed us, change our soiled diapers, keep us safe and warm, and hold our hand as we learn how to walk. We somehow manage not to get run over by a tractor on the farm. (I was raised on a farm.) We manage to survive all the things that could have gotten us killed as children from mini bikes to combines to huge animals such as getting kicked in the head by a horse or gored by a tusk bearing hog. My younger brother went missing one evening and we found him out behind the barn face down wearing only a diaper with a large turkey on his back pecking at the back of his head. Dad killed the turkey and we ate it for thanksgiving. (Life on the farm, crazy.) We had neighbors who had lost children due to farm accidents. Drowning's in near by ponds, getting caught up in machinery and killed. Many things on a farm can take the life of children, teens, and adults alike. For some reason I made it through all the life threatening hazards of farm life. I did however fall off the diaper table once when my mother elected to leave me there mid diaper change in order to answer the phone. Again, I survived. I went on to grade school where at six years old I was responsible for taking the school bus in the morning and making sure I got on the right bus coming home. I remember once in first grade missing the bus for the ride home and decided to walk the five miles back to the farm. I was crying and was noticed by my school Principal driving his car. He picked me up and asked where I was going. I said I had missed the bus but thought my mother might be at the beauty "saloon." He laughed and said, you mean beauty "salon." I didn't understand. He drove me the five miles home. I walked in and Mom and Dad were amazed at my story and that I had made it back to home

base beating the school bus. Once my brother Kevin asked if he could ride one of our horses in our town parade for Canada day. My mother told him no. I'll never forget standing on the side of the street watching our small town parade when we looked up to see my brother Kevin, all of eleven years old, riding our family mare with a blue ribbon attached to it's bridal. There was my little brother wearing a red straw cowboy hat, cap pistols complete with holster, a vest, cowboy boots, sitting high in the saddle. Who knows how he got the saddle on that big horse or how he managed to get his outfit all together, rode five miles into town, found the beginning of the parade, entered himself in the youth horse riding competition and won the blue ribbon. As he rode by, my mother stood there in disbelief with her mouth gaped open. The funny thing was, we didn't even realize Kevin wasn't in the station wagon as we all drove into town to watch the parade. Kevin was the same little brother who lit our tent trailer on fire and somehow escaped jumping out and over the small metal door saving himself. To this day he claims he felt someone lift him over the half door and pushing him to safety. I could go on and on about all the potential threats on all our brothers and sisters on the farm but let me say, we all survived the farm, the school bus and eventually high school graduation. My mother had nine children don't forget. *She would have had more but she hated kids.* A little joke I used to tell while introducing myself to my cruise ship audiences. *Back to my point.* We all survived all the years of farm life, elementary school and high school. I elected to go away on a Mormon mission for two years to Paraguay, South America after I graduated from high school. The stories I could tell you about that experience would even more solidify the point I'm about to make. So, many of us survive the school years, we become college educated, we find our careers, we find our mate, we raise our children then watch them become adults then watch them as they start their own families. We get older, retire, then we die. We go through all of this and then we die? If I find out, when that day comes, that there is no God, I'll be deeply confused and a little upset. I mean to go through all the heartache and trials along with the good times including personal accomplishments and victorious moments all to find out in the end that, "that's it, that's all there is," yes I'll be a little ticked off. I personally believe that it would be a cruel joke on all of us if we find out there

never was a God or a higher power and that we were all just winging it believing we were being guided by some thing or some one greater than us only to find out we were on our own stumbling around just trying to do our best. So, in light of all this, I believe there is a God who lives. That He organized the heavens and the earth that we live on. I believe we will be with our loved ones again and yes I believe there is some kind of life after this one. Maybe it's just another dream that I have, but that's okay, I like my dream, and I'll continue to dream it as it gives me comfort. As far as knowing if there is a true religion, I have decided not to worry about it. I love my life, and I will take my chances when I come face to face with my God, the God I believe exists. There I said it, that's what I believe and you will never see me trying to force my personal beliefs onto anyone else. Why? Because I feel topics like personal beliefs are just that, they are "personal." I just happen to be writing a book and felt like expressing my personal beliefs here on the written page. I am always happy to discuss religious topics but I try to listen more than I talk because what I think isn't always that important to others.

Chapter Ten

I wanted to write a chapter on the subject of “living simply.” There was a time in my life when having material possessions, or “things,” seemed so appealing to me. I remember owning a boat, which became too small which led to a larger boat, which led to a larger boat. I remember getting bored with our cars and always felt the need to continually upgrade. It seemed I was always stretching in the accumulation of stuff. When you get too much stuff you then feel the need to own a larger house that can now hold more of your accumulated stuff. I think this could be a trap for some of us. In a way it was for me. Looking back, I bought things that I didn’t really need, but felt I wanted. One day I proudly looked at all the guitars I owned. There they were, all sitting in their cases lined up along the wall. I realized that I was only playing the same two guitars the majority of the time. I decided to take a different guitar out of its case every day and to play it. I would open the case and think, “Oh, I remember this one.” I’d take it out, check the tuning and proceed to play a few bars of several songs that I knew. I’d smile and put it back in its case. After a while I felt guilty that these beautiful instruments weren’t getting the attention and were not being played like they deserved to be played. Currently, I have downsized and have narrowed it down to a few that I can’t live without. One in particular I play at all my gigs and it is my little reliable workhorse. The older it gets and the more it gets played the better I like it. It never let’s me down, and it sounds better than any guitar I’ve ever owned. I walk into a music store and spend an hour playing all the acoustic guitars in the place and I always leave empty handed because nothing compares to my little six-string jewel back home. (For those of you who play, it’s a Maton 808 made in Australia.)

We live in a day where everything it seems is disposable. Very few products I feel are built to last. Now I understand that when it comes to electronics, things change very fast and computers, TV’s, cell phones and the like become outdated within a few months of purchase. It seems some products become outdated the day they are released into the marketplace. Most products aren’t built to last. Software

is continually evolving and becoming better. Think of how fast computers work today versus just a few years ago. We live in an amazing day and age when it comes to technology. Take cars for example. I feel that automobiles have gotten better over the years. They are now very much computerized which allows technician's to pinpoint needed repairs much quicker than before. Diagnosing a problem now consists of plugging the car into a computer that tells the technician exactly what is wrong which in turn speeds up the repair process. The cool thing about cars is this. If a person is still old school, they can choose to drive an older car with the older style engines, carburetors etc. I have attended many a hot rod show and I enjoy talking to the older fanatics about their rides. We live in a fast paced world when it comes to change. As I look at the presidential race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump there are challenges that are creeping into that arena that are all related to technology. Twenty-five years ago a private server or the term emails was not ever thought of as being a problem during an election year. But when you think about it, technology never created the problems. Problems exist because of lack of integrity or lack of honesty. I think that technology has simply found a way to quickly verify dishonesty or integrity issues. I have always believed in this statement, "The truth always comes out, given enough time." I think it's important to always, "Say what you mean and to mean what you say." In other words, tell the truth, be honest and strive to be good to others. I was always taught the golden rule, which is, "Treat others the same way that you would like to be treated." I feel that regardless of religion or spiritual beliefs, most people wake up every morning with the best of intentions for their families and their fellow man. I don't believe there are many folks who wake up every morning wondering who they can bamboozle or take advantage of that day. For the most part, people are inherently good and want to do the right thing and want to help others who are less fortunate. I have to shake my head at some of the outlandish things being brought to light by the media regarding some of our political leaders. It's a shame. Some folks are power hungry and take advantage of their position of power. It's what drives them; it's in their DNA. It takes all kinds to run a world. We all have something to contribute no matter how great or how small our contributions might be. My mother always felt

her contribution to this world was through her children. My father was a builder. He loved to see homes being built and once they were done, he'd admire them, then immediately start another. He was definitely a builder. The thing I am so fascinated about is that we in North America are totally free to do what ever we want. The problem is trying to figure out **what** it is that we want. I feel that the youth of today have way more options than ever before. It must be confusing for some because they have so many choices. There are career paths today that didn't even exist a few years ago and new opportunities are being created every day. I owned a direct mail business, which required creative artwork that I hired out to several graphic artists. I remember one artist that allowed me to sit with him as I explained what it was that I wanted. He said, "Daryl, you could be doing this all yourself, you definitely have the talent." My response was that I was too old to start learning about software, as the learning curve was too great. Eventually he convinced me to branch out, get the soft ware and learn how to be a graphic artist. He offered to answer the phone with any questions I might have on how to do certain things. I eventually became very familiar with Illustrator and Photoshop, which I still use today for designing my book and CD covers. I have saved thousands of dollars over the years by learning this skill. My point is this, don't be afraid to branch out and learn new skills. My motto has become, "If others can do it, why can't I?" The same thing happened to me when it came to writing books. I started watching YouTube videos on how to best format text in order to self publish on Amazon and I have become very good at it. Everything you want to know can be found on YouTube. I have learned songs on my guitar from YouTube lessons. I have watched videos on hundreds of topics and most videos were very fascinating. What a wonderful learning tool.

I remember living "simply" on the cruise ship down in Australia. I wasn't allowed to travel with many possessions, pretty much just what I could carry. I had a roller suitcase in one hand, a guitar case in the other, and a computer bag over my shoulder. When I set up my cabin I realized that my possessions were sparse, a few clothes, toiletries, a guitar, a laptop but I had what I needed to be happy. I wrote songs, played my guitar into the wee hours of the morning and I was indeed living simply and I loved my life. This experience of living in a small ten by ten ship cabin

taught me much about myself. I really don't need much in order to be content. I hadn't made the decision to start writing books but this experience definitely pushed my understanding along and prepared me for my future decision to start writing and to "stick with it." Many of us try things. My advice is you can't try anything; you have to either "do it, or don't do it." The word "try" has no commitment value. Never has, never will. When you invite someone over and they say they will "try" to make it, chances are, they won't show.

I have also learned that living "simply" includes having the courage to tell people "no" once in a while. If they ask you to do something and you really don't want to do it, just say no, in a nice way as not to offend them. My father early on in his life had a hard time telling people "no." He would never say "no" and would agree to help everyone with everything and he would always let someone down because he was so over committed. Learn to control your life. Don't let others be in control of pulling your strings like the arms and legs of a puppet. I have found that when you don't control your own destiny it causes a lot of stress. Those who have learned to be in control of their life and the direction they are headed experience much less stress, if any, versus those who are being pushed around and controlled either by others or by their situation. Don't allow anyone to push you into something you don't want to do. There are two ways to deal with stress. Either raise your tolerance to stress, which eventually ends badly, or get rid of, or reduce the stress being caused against you. *Stress is caused when you are not in control of a situation.* Life does throw curve balls at all of us and it is impossible to always be in control. But the things you can control, such as what you want to do in life, you must figure that out on your own and not become a pleaser doing what others think you should do. The one big challenge I've found is that most people don't know "what" they want. The sooner you figure out what it is that you want, the better. Maybe start by eliminating the things you "don't" want in order to come closer to finding out what you "do" want. For example: I was trying to figure out what lifestyle would make me the happiest for the second half of my life. I concluded that I was done with being cold in the wintertime. I realized I needed to live further south where the warmth and sunshine was. I started to figure out quickly that I

loved warmth, the ocean, the beach, palm trees, hammocks, playing guitar and writing books. All of these things have allowed me to feel fulfilled and creative all at the same time. If I never make any money as an author, that's okay, I'm still determined to get better at writing, word-by-word, book-by-book! Writing has also made me appreciate those who have been successful as authors and my respect for great writers is immense because it's not that easy. Living simply creates an uncomplicated lifestyle, as time seems to slow down a bit. I find I now have more time to enjoy the things that I love.

Chapter Eleven

I wrote a song once that had my son asking for advice before he was to marry. My advice was, "Take advice from no one, especially me." I think too many times instead of pondering about solutions to our problems, we ask the advice from others. I have found that in the long run you will be happier following the decisions you feel that are correct deep down in your soul. When we involve other people's opinions, sometimes it muddies the water and it creates more confusion. The complete line in the song reads, "Advice is cheap, that's why it's free, son take advice from no one, especially me." Opinion's are like noses, everybody has one. We are all smart enough to follow our own conscience. It's not wrong to ask the opinion of someone else, but don't make a habit of asking all the time. Of course, if someone has expertise in gardening, ask their opinion before you plant. I'm talking about learning to make your own decisions not based on all the opinions of others. I talked about dreaming through out the chapters of this book. Dreaming helps us visualize ourselves doing things that we want to do. If we can see ourselves doing something we desire, and doing it well, we might be on the right track. Some people think they can do anything, really? They think that if they can visualize themselves doing it, they can indeed "do it." So if I'm in my mid fifties and I visualize myself playing in the World Series, that dream can come true, if I really, really see myself doing it? I don't think so. Common sense I have found isn't always abundant in some people's dreams. I call "common sense" our sixth sense. You have to get real, or be real in your dreaming. I encourage everyone to dream, but you have to be a realist as well. Playing in the World Series in your fifties won't happen. Have you ever played baseball before? Are you in shape? Have any mid fifty guys ever been recruited into baseball? Get the picture? Through a series of three questions it becomes pretty clear how crazy that dream is, move on to a different dream. Are you stuck in past dreams? Those dreams you had as a kid? You see the dreams I'm talking about are the identifying of "your options" then deciding which option is best to follow. Dreaming, or visualizing yourself in each option will help you better "feel" if you could really see yourself doing "the thing" you are dreaming about. Don't just

pick any dream. Be selective. Finding new talents that you never thought you had becomes exciting especially at my age. Don't settle for the excuse, "I'm too old to think about things like that." Maybe you are tired and beat up and you have so much cash on hand it really doesn't matter what you do. Doing nothing is like Donald Trump's advice to my brother in law, "When you retire you expire." Nudging yourself to do something unique, something you never had time for in the past might just be very fulfilling in your retirement years. The kids are raised, you don't have to punch a time card, "What do you do?" I've met some folks who are busier in retirement than they were prior. They are running around visiting family, attending dinners, taking trips and the like. Being busy is not hard to do. Finding something that brings more personal joy and pride is the real challenge. This requires finding a skill that you never knew you had. Maybe it's time to think, or to "dream big?" I spoke about the five senses. The reason it's so important to write down your goals is simply this. Writing things down involves more of your five senses. You can **see** the written goals in front of you, you can **touch** the paper, and you can **hear** the scratch of the pen. If only the pen had blueberry-scented ink then you would even be able to **smell** your goals. I guess you could eat the paper when you are done as well. The sweet **taste** of success! Involving as many senses as possible will always drive into your subconscious mind what it is that you want to have materialize. It all starts with your thoughts, your ideas and most important, your dreams. May you always continue to dream!

Until we meet again, "I've Got Books to Write!"

About the Author



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