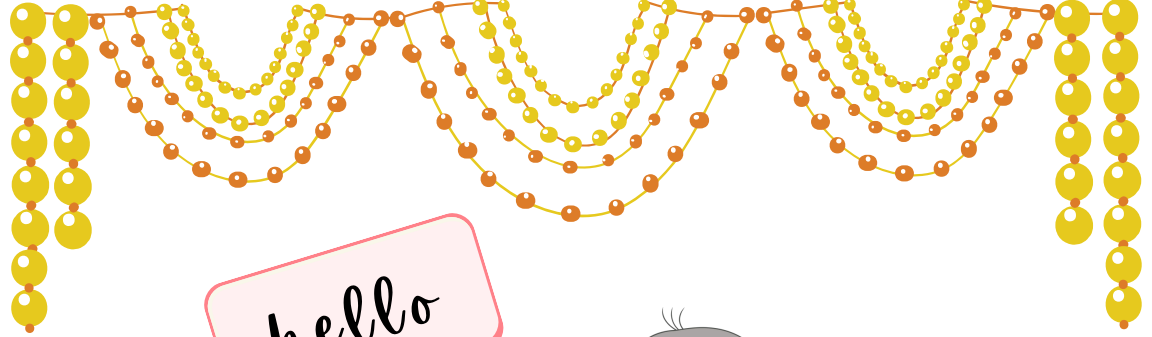


White Elephant



♥
Connie





hello



The white elephant gift exchange is a playful and often humorous holiday tradition where participants exchange gifts in a game-like format. The emphasis is on fun and laughter, with gifts that are typically inexpensive, quirky, or even intentionally ridiculous.

Life, in many ways, can feel a lot like a white elephant —you never quite know what you're going to get. Experiences can range from hilarious and unpredictable to heartwarming or even tear-jerking. The challenge, and the joy, lies in learning how to navigate the ride and find delight in the unexpected.

Welcome to my unique book, where we'll dive into the art of sailing more smoothly through life's twists and turns. Together, we'll explore how to embrace the surprises, let go of the baggage, and truly savor the journey.



HOME

Hey, I'm Connie, and I'm so glad you're here!

Have you ever stopped to think about what 'home' really means—not just the place you live, but the life you're creating for yourself? What makes a house a home? Is it the space itself—or the life you create within it?

I'm calling this chapter home, but it could just as easily be titled you, because the life you've created for yourself is, in many ways, your home.

Home. It's where you live, obviously, but think about this: You are where you are, and you've got what you've got. So the golden question is, how "at home" do you currently feel in your life?

At the end of the day—or a challenging trial, or even a lifetime—YOU'VE GOT YOU. There's no escaping that. So why not love and approve of yourself and make the most of this could-be-glorious life you've been given?

This chapter, and the whole book for that matter, is dedicated to helping you feel truly at home in your life. And I'm not just talking about surviving—I'm talking about THRIVING and FLOURISHING, like you would if money weren't an object and you lived in the most beautifully decked-out house imaginable.



Life is full of white elephants and rarely stays flawlessly perfect for long, but I've learned not to wait for the perfect situation to start enJOYing it. You have to jump right in, work with what you've got, and create a life that feels good to you. That's your job—to take what's in front of you and turn it into something beautiful.

The beauty of life isn't in waiting for perfection—it's in the joy, creativity, and love that you bring to it every single day. The trick? Sprinkle your own brand of majik all over it.

Your life is your masterpiece, and every moment is an opportunity to add your unique style to it.


Don't wait. Start now—work with what you have and watch how the ordinary transforms into something extraordinary.

Your life is your canvas, and every choice you make adds a brushstroke of color.

So sweep and vacuum the floor, clean the kitchen, wash your car, diffuse your favorite essential oils, take a rejuvenating shower, and buy yourself flowers. Do what it takes to make your life beautiful and appealing—turning the ordinary into something extraordinary.

Start elevating your life today—and watch your “home” come to life.





Once I realized my lack of belief in myself had been holding me back—because that was at the root of my sad and miserable life—I started to change things up. I'd love to say I smoothly switched gears and everything got better right away, but it didn't happen like that.


To a large extent, your life is a byproduct of your thoughts, dreams, aspirations, and subconscious beliefs. What you think about and expect to happen, you tend to attract. That's why turning my life around wasn't fast or easy.

I had a lot of old programming that kept me stuck, and changing it required consistent focus and commitment. Despite my good intentions, I repeatedly messed up and fell back into my old ways.

The good news? Every 24 hours, we get a reset—a fresh chance to start over and make better, more intentional choices. Over time, I upgraded my thinking and turned my unhappy life around.

Having a plan was essential. It didn't stop me from slipping into old patterns, but it made me more aware of my habits and helped me pull myself out faster. Planning ahead—writing down your goals and vision for the future—significantly increases your chances of following through and making it happen.

For instance, when I make a list for the day, week, or year ahead, I'm about 60% more efficient. With a list, I get things done and move forward. Without one, I tend to wander more and waste time.



Back when my friend suggested that I could create a life I loved—and challenged me to do it—it threw me for a loop.

Getting permission to say “I can” instead of “I can’t” rocked me to my core, but it was also a game changer.

When I went within and asked my heart what it really wanted—what I’d do if I knew I couldn’t fail—the answer came instantly:

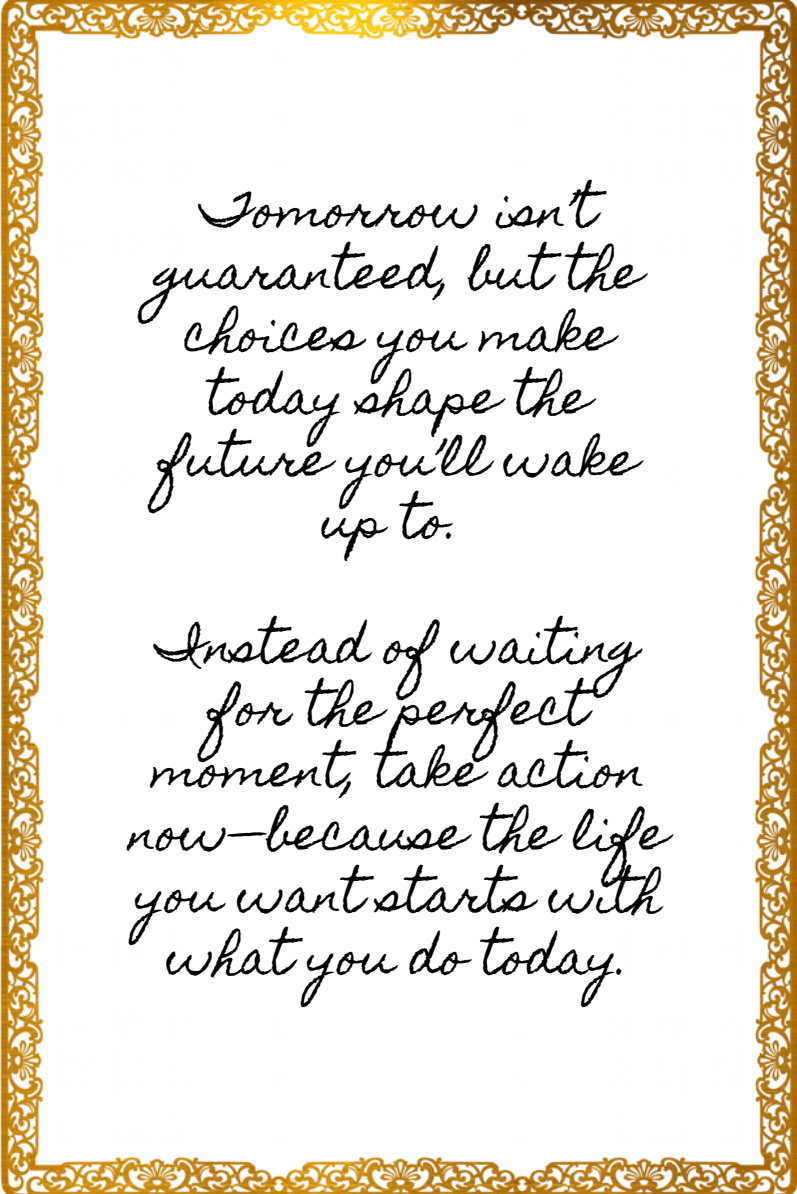
I wanted to write fun, colorful books with poignant messages.

Now, this seemed highly unlikely because I had barely squeaked through high school English and hardly knew how to type—but my heart was set on it. The desire was so strong that the moment I opened the door to it, it burst out—and would not go back in.

So, I began to peck away on an old computer, and against the odds, I taught myself everything I needed to know. And now?

This is my eleventh colorful book. I am a published author. I do what I love, and my heart is thrilled about it.

And in the process, I’ve created a beautiful and rewarding life for myself.



Tomorrow isn't
guaranteed, but the
choices you make
today shape the
future you'll wake
up to.

Instead of waiting
for the perfect
moment, take action
now—because the life
you want starts with
what you do today.



Develop + expand yourself:

- Write down one belief that has kept you stuck. Where did it come from? Is it really true?
- Rewrite that belief into an empowering truth. Example: "I'm not capable" → "I am fully capable and learning every day."
- If fear and doubt weren't factors, what bold step would you take in your life right now?
- Reflect on a recurring challenge in your life. What role have your thoughts, habits, or emotions played in keeping it alive?
- Think of a time when you overcame something difficult. What strengths did you gain from that experience?
- Imagine your life five years from now if you stepped fully into your power. How does it look, feel, and unfold? Write about your vision in detail.

SUCCESS

What's your definition of success?

Close your eyes and, on a scale of one to ten, rate your personal level of success at this moment in your life.

Now ask yourself:

- What did you measure that on?
- Who or what did you compare yourself to in order to feel successful—or not?
- How much of what you feel good about is based on comparing yourself to the world around you?
- How often does someone else's appearance or level of growth shadow the way you feel about yourself?

I used to look at others and decide they were successful, then hold myself to the same standard—as if their path should be my path.

That was a flawed plan—one that almost always left me feeling like I was coming up short.

When you compare yourself to others you almost always end up feeling like you're better than, or inferior to them. It's never a good way to go.

At that moment, I realized... I was already much more successful than I thought.

Another time, I was sitting on my deck, praying, telling God that I felt far behind my friends and peers. Then I heard God say,

“Look around you, Connie. You created all this. Do you know how many people would love to have your life?” That was a sobering moment.

I looked around and saw beauty everywhere—the life I had built, the joy I felt in my everyday moments.

And that’s when it hit me. . . I am wildly successful.

In fact, based on my own standards and desires, I am successful beyond measure!

Now, taking everything I’ve just shared into consideration, it’s your turn. Shake off the comparison shackles and ask yourself—what do you truly love and value?

Now, ask yourself again. . . How successful are you? On a scale of one to ten, rate your level of satisfaction with the life you’ve created.

If you’re feeling more satisfied and successful, great—that’s the goal!

If not, it’s okay. It just means you’ve got some work to do.

Keep reading. I’ll help you.



WORK WHILE YOU HAVE THE
LIGHT. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE TALENT THAT HAS BEEN
ENTRUSTED TO YOU.

HENRI-FREDRIC AMIEL



ALL THAT GLITTERS
IS NOT GOLD.

J.R.R. TOLKIEN

Divine

The world can be a chaotic and unsettling place, and if you don't know who you are in the grand scheme of things, it can leave you feeling unmoored and anxious.

But when you understand there's a bigger picture—and that God is in charge—it becomes easier to relax and trust the flow of life.

I have never doubted that God is my Heavenly Father and that I am His spirit child. From the time I was a little girl, I felt the truth of this deep in my soul. As an adult, I questioned the beliefs I was raised with. I let them all go and then asked God to show me what needed to return. That season of deep exploration was an intensely spiritual time—one where I sought truth, clarity, and a personal understanding of God and religion.

What emerged from that journey was a strong, unshakable connection to God and His Son, Jesus Christ, along with a deep love and respect for Them and Their commandments.

I don't care what the world thinks of me—my only desire is to please Them and feel Their peace. And let me tell you—it's a simple and deeply rewarding way to live!





IT IS NOT BECAUSE THINGS
ARE DIFFICULT THAT WE DO NOT
DARE; IT IS BECAUSE WE DO
NOT DARE THAT THINGS ARE
DIFFICULT.

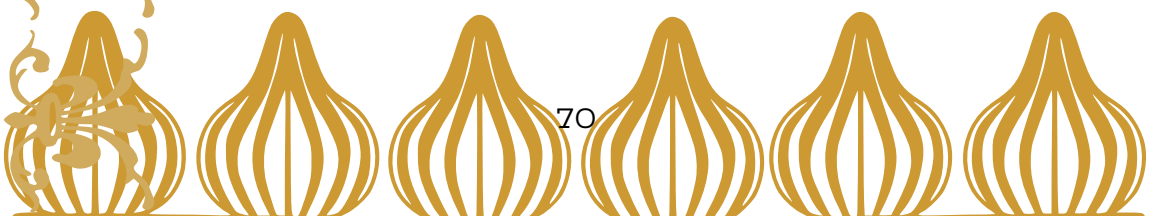
SENECA





REJOICE ALWAYS, PRAY
WITHOUT CEASING, GIVE
THANKS IN ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES; FOR THIS IS
THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST
JESUS FOR YOU.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18





Nurture yourself:

- Set aside time each day for quiet reflection, meditation, or prayer. Whether it's a few moments in the morning or before bed, use this time to center yourself and feel God's presence.
- Read something that lifts your spirit—whether it's scripture, a devotional, or words that remind you of your divine worth. Let these words anchor you in truth and peace.
- Keep a gratitude journal where you write down moments of grace, answered prayers, or simple blessings. Recognizing His hand in your life will deepen your connection and sense of peace.
- Play worship songs or calming instrumentals to bring light into your space. Let music lift your heart and keep your mind focused on things that bring peace and joy.
- Step outside, breathe deeply, and observe the beauty around you. Whether it's the warmth of the sun, the sound of the wind, or the stillness of a quiet morning, let nature remind you of God's presence.
- Diffuse or apply Frankincense during prayer or meditation to deepen your spiritual awareness and promote a sense of grounding and connection to the divine.

Ask yourself:

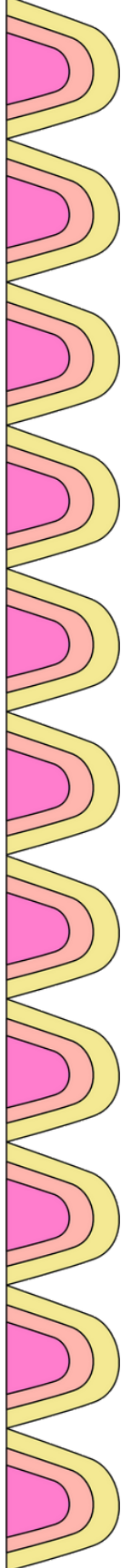
- What parts of your life feel unfulfilling or out of alignment with who you truly are?
- What is one change you can make today to move closer to the life you want?
- Are there habits or mindsets holding you back? What can you replace them with?
- Have you invited God, or a higher power you believe in, into your journey of growth? If not, what's stopping you?
- What's one area of your life where you feel God's guidance could make a difference?
- If you fully believed in your potential, what would you do differently starting now?
- What's one small step you can take today to begin creating a brighter future for yourself?




When I was thirty, I snapped—and suddenly, I found myself in a place I never imagined I'd be.

I never expected to be locked up, so to speak, in a treatment program.

And then, I had to make a choice.






Lavender herself was a treasure, filled with fascinating stories and wisdom. Everything from eating soup and bread in the kitchen by the Aga (aka stove), to sitting in her tiny living room for afternoon tea was a treat.

While Lavender's home was enchanting, our trip wasn't limited to her cozy kitchen and charming garden. We dined in pubs, had the best Indian food I've ever eaten, hiked across meadows to visit old stone churches, drove to Stonehenge, Avebury, and Glastonbury, and stayed in some very charming Airbnbs.

We even flew to Penicuik, Scotland, to spend a couple of nights with Lavender's brother and his wife, John and Elizabeth. The town was named after their family, who had once lived in a large family manor until it burned down in the 1800s. At that time, the family moved into the "barn," which was actually a very large, two-story, square-shaped stone building with a grassy courtyard in the center.

he "barn" was divided into two living spaces. In between them, on the bottom level, was a space used to shelter animals. John and Elizabeth lived on one side of the barn, and their oldest son and his family lived on the other. However, the building was so large that it was quite a walk to get from one "apartment" to the other.

John and Elizabeth's dining room was connected to a dance hall, and the combined area was much larger than my entire home.



Life is full of twists and turns and you never know what's around the corner, but I've discovered the key to thriving, no matter what, is saying yes to it all.

Yes to growth, yes to new opportunities, yes to love—even when it doesn't look the way you expected.

Every step, every choice, and every leap of faith has brought me closer to the person I was always meant to be. Through letting go of what no longer served me, I've found freedom, joy, and a deeper connection to myself and the people I love.

The beauty of life isn't in its perfection—it's in our ability to rise, rebuild, and rediscover ourselves over and over again. And the more I've said yes to life, the more life has shown up for me in extraordinary ways.

Saying yes to life is a powerful start, but authenticity is what grounds it all. What does it mean to truly live a life that reflects who you are?

In the next chapter, we'll explore this together—honoring your true self, embracing your unique voice, and discovering the endless possibilities of showing up as the real you.



THE JOURNEY IS WHAT
BRINGS US HAPPINESS
NOT THE DESTINATION.

DAN MILLMAN

GASP

There have been times when something so unexpected happened that the news of it left me completely reeling:

- My fifteen-year-old cousin, Linda, was hit by a car and killed over Easter weekend.
- My cousin, David, was killed in a car accident in his early twenties.
- My parents' friends died in a plane crash.
- While on a hike with my dad, a ten-year-old boy fell to his death after being knocked off a cliff by another hiker's dog.
- My forty-year-old daughter died from an overdose.
- My friend Al passed away after being hospitalized with COVID.
- My friend Marsha died after receiving a COVID shot.
- My friend's seventeen-year-old son, whom I adored, took his life.

The news of each event set me back.



Here's how you can support others who are going through the grieving process:

- Be Present, Not Just at First – People receive an outpouring of support immediately after a loss, but grief lingers. Check in weeks and months later.
- Listen Without Trying to Fix – Instead of offering advice, simply say: “I’m here for you. Tell me about them.” Let them talk as much—or as little—as they need to.
- Offer Practical Help – Instead of saying “Let me know if you need anything,” ASK what they specifically need. If they can’t tell you, try:
 - “I’m bringing dinner tonight. What time works?”
 - “Can I pick up groceries for you?”
 - “I’ll take care of [a specific task] so you don’t have to.”
- Respect Their Process – Everyone grieves differently. Don’t rush them or expect them to “move on” at a certain pace.
- Send Thoughtful Reminders – A handwritten note, a meaningful book, or a small token (like a plant or keepsake) can remind them they are loved.
- Encourage Self-Care – Gently remind them to eat, rest, and do small things that nurture their well-being.
-



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- Remember Special Dates – Anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays can be tough. A simple text or call saying, “I’m thinking of you today” means a lot.
 - Use Essential Oils to Create Comforting Spaces – Diffusing Bergamot for emotional balance, Cedarwood for grounding, or Myrrh for deep reflection can bring peace.
 - Pray for Them (or With Them, If They’re Open to It) – Grief can feel isolating. Knowing someone is praying for them can bring comfort.
 - Accept That Grief Never Fully Ends – The best support is ongoing. Even years later, remembering their loved one with them keeps their memory alive.

Grief is deeply personal, and everyone navigates it in their own way. Whether you’re supporting yourself or someone else, the most important thing is compassion, patience, and presence.

And remember, people who experience a great loss often need support the most after things have settled down.

Everyone shows up when they first hear the news, but once the initial shock fades, life moves on for everyone else—while the person grieving is still left carrying the weight of their loss.

A simple check-in weeks or months later can remind them they haven’t been forgotten—that their grief is still seen, and their loved one is still remembered.



ONCE IN A WHILE,
BLOW YOUR OWN
DAMN MIND.

SHAHIR ZAG



Life really is like a white elephant, and if you've ever played the game, you know how unpredictable and funny it can be.

But if you go in expecting to bring home a good gift, only to end up with a dud, and then decide to be mad about it, it takes the fun out of everything. And that's exactly how life works.

Majik doesn't just happen. There are no guarantees that you'll get a perfect package. But if you can learn to laugh at the goofy, unexpected, and unsettling moments and work with what you've got, you'll find yourself enjoying life—even when it's not optimal.

Majik isn't about perfection—it's about perspective. It's about seeing the beauty in the unexpected, finding joy in the ordinary, and creating something special out of whatever life hands you.

You don't have to wait for ideal circumstances to bring majik into your life—you are the majik. It's in the way you show up, embrace the moment, and sprinkle your own kind of sparkle on the world around you. So go ahead—play, create, laugh, and make the best of whatever comes your way. That's where the real majik happens.





I've learned that celebrating can be little—even just a thrill in your heart—and it's essential for keeping life joyful, balanced, and meaningful.

It's about pausing to acknowledge progress, soaking in the good moments, and letting yourself feel the happiness of the journey—not just the destination.

Whether it's a quiet smile of gratitude, a happy dance in your kitchen, or a full-blown party, celebration infuses life with energy and reminds us that even in the midst of hard work and challenges, there is always something worth appreciating.

At the end of my days, usually during a bedtime prayer, I look back and reflect on my WINS. I mentally list them, and in my mind, joyfully add them up. I also make note of the things I could've done better, but that's not the first thing I look for.

Counting my wins at the end of the day has changed the way I think about myself. It has helped tremendously in keeping me positive, grateful, and excited about what's next.

Even on the really hard days, there are wins to be found when you look for them. I have found there's always something you can celebrate!

And when life is HARD, that's when you need something to celebrate the most!!



Hallelujah!!

The trick to making your life beautiful and sweet is actually pretty simple. It's just a matter of choosing to do your best, which includes this:

- Love yourself and unpack your baggage—give yourself permission to release negative emotions and let go of the past.
- Live the Golden Rule—treat others as well as you want to be treated.
- Process through unpleasant emotions as they come up, rather than stuffing them down.
- Do the little things that make life majik and celebrate your wins!
- Keep your chin up and keep moving forward.

That's it. Do your best, love well, and create a life that feels good to live.

You are fully capable of it!

You're in the driver's seat and you can make your life as rewarding and fulfilling as you want!

Happy Happy Hallelujah!



FIND ECSTASY IN LIFE; THE MERE
SENSE OF LIVING IS JOY ENOUGH.

EMILY DICKINSON



Rise

In each of our lives, there are hinge points—moments where we must decide which way to go next. At these times, we have three choices:

1. Stop moving and settle into a rut—become a quitter.
2. Keep going but take the path that appears easiest—the path of least resistance.
3. Step up, take the hard route, and go the distance that leads to the top of the mountain.

I've tried all three, and at this point in my life, I go the distance—because I much prefer life at the top. Settling made my life hell, and the so-called easy paths? They turned out to be anything but easy, often complicating my life tremendously.

I can't blame life or the hinge points for how things have played out. The only one responsible for my journey—is me.

I've created the messes, the trials, and the extreme joys that I've experienced, and they all stemmed from a series of choices.

There is a choice that you must make in everything you do, but you must always keep in mind the choice you make, makes you!





Over twenty years ago I told God I wanted the most out of my life and I was willing to go the distance. I asked Him to disrupt me when I was headed down a go-nowhere path, and give me a hard push in an upward direction. I've seriously prayed for this since that time, and oh what a loaded prayer it's been.



Not only have I repeatedly been disrupted, a couple of time my life has been turned upside down. And it's all worked out in my favor, because each time I've (eventually) landed on my feet and been significantly elevated in the process.



In 2023, during an especially fervent prayer where I was asking for direction, I saw God calling me on a mission, and I knew it meant I needed to move. I didn't want to. I thought I was comfortable and didn't want to be uprooted. But I wanted to obey God, and so I gave away or sold almost all of my stuff and moved from Utah to Virginia.



Gulp. But what a life-changer it was. It shifted me and caused me to grow in a way I never could've if I had merely stayed in my old groove.



Making such a big move without a solid plan took me way out of my comfort zone. It pushed me to face my demons and develop myself and it opened doors that have enormously blessed me.



I can't imagine how different my life would be if I hadn't been willing to close the door on my old life and make that kindof scary move.





DO STUFF. BE CLENCHED, CURIOUS.
NOT WAITING FOR INSPIRATION'S
SHOVE OR SOCIETY'S KISS ON
YOUR FOREHEAD. PAY ATTENTION.
IT'S ALL ABOUT PAYING ATTENTION.
ATTENTION IS VITALITY. IT
CONNECTS YOU WITH OTHERS. IT
MAKES YOU EAGER. STAY EAGER.

SUSAN SONTAG

I loved Northern Virginia. I've lived in Virginia twice—the first time in Southern Virginia when I was younger. The second time, I told myself I was never leaving.

I did a lot of soul-searching and appreciated every day, until I started feeling a clear nudge to move back to Utah. And then, things started falling apart, literally pushing me back home.

When I got back, I had no plan and no place to live, but dear friends took me in while I figured things out. Three months later, I moved into an apartment, and in many ways, I started over. This put me in a growing and developing stage, where I wrote books and started a business.

I grew, developed myself, expanded my network of friends, and increased my income until I was able to move into a home again.

For a while, life felt comfortable and good. I didn't take it for granted, especially since my gut told me to enjoy it—because it wouldn't last.

And my instinct was right.

It didn't last.

In March 2026, I had a perforated bowel that completely halted life as I knew it. After an emergency surgery saved my life, I woke up with an ostomy bag and enough health challenges that I needed to be in ICU for more than three weeks.





THE REASON WHY WE
STRUGGLE WITH INSECURITY
IS BECAUSE WE COMPARE OUR
BEHIND THE SCENES WITH EVERYONE
ELSE'S HIGHLIGHT REEL.

STEVEN FURTICK



Life is a mixed bag for sure, and there are always going to be some white elephants, but you don't have to spiral when you get a dud, you can laugh about it and move beyond it when your mindset is right.

Life really is what you make it, and regardless of what you've been handed, you can make your life outrageously good. I am proof of that.

Hallelujah!

Hallelujah for this life—for the unexpected joys, the messy moments, the lessons learned, and the majik created along the way.

Hallelujah for second chances, fresh starts, and the power of choice.

Hallelujah for the courage to live fully, to embrace the surprises, and to keep stepping forward—no matter what.

Life isn't perfect, but it was never meant to be. It was meant to be lived, felt, and celebrated.

So, my friend, here's my final thought for you:

Go live.

Take the trip.

Buy the flowers.

Say yes to what excites you.

Laugh more.

Love deeper.

Be extra.

Make your life the masterpiece it was meant to be.



Move yourself forward.

Rising isn't just about knowing you're capable—it's about taking action and stepping boldly into what's next. Here's how to move yourself forward with confidence and purpose:

- Take a brave step today—What's one action you've been hesitating on? Do it today—even if it feels small. Every step forward builds momentum.
- Diffuse Cypress & Lemon—Cypress supports forward movement and emotional strength, while Lemon refreshes and energizes your mindset, helping you step forward with clarity and courage.
- Identify one fear that's been holding you back. Ask yourself, "What's the best thing that could happen if I push through?" Then, take the first step toward it.
- Be honest: What are you telling yourself that's keeping you in the same place? Rewrite the narrative with a statement of strength, such as: "I am ready. I am capable. I rise now."
- Do something today that aligns with the person you're becoming.

These steps help you step into your power, move past fear, and take real, tangible steps toward the life you're meant to live!

