

CHAPTER 17

RIGHT ALIGNMENT

The next twelve months were a real awakening. Wrapping up one marriage in my life and embarking on another was super messy. Working full-time in retail did not fit. Not being home for the children when they finished school or to cook dinner was hard on me. Working late nights was also a challenge for me. I did my best to get my head around the figures and to mould into the department store's way of doing things. My heart was always for the people. I believed that if the team were happy, fulfilled and pumping, the figures would come. This business was started by a Christian; it was built on relationships, with collaboration, honesty and transparency being key. The business had moved far from this model. I found I was working in a business that was built on fear. "Don't cross the regional manager—if he doesn't like you, you're out." Funny; I'd been here before. Although the money was great to have in the bank account, I was not prepared to stand down on my values and principles, of honouring one another. The reality was that I had been brought in to do a job, turn the store over.

I really thought that a family business birthed out of Christian values was going to be open, honest and up front. The regional manager said many times, "We want new ideas, a fresh approach to build and grow the business." However, the reality was, "This is how we do it

here." The two didn't sit together. I watched manipulation and under-handed tactics play out before me. Private conversations, closed doors and calls behind people's backs. It was toxic. We produced the results, but it was all driven by fear. I genuinely believed that given an opportunity to empower, encourage and embrace the people, the store had the potential to really fly and outperform its larger neighbour (which was a constant bone of contention).

In the meantime, I was going to church on Sundays. Martha was getting lifts to shows and continuing to compete with her ponies. Arthur enjoyed tinkering on projects at home. They both continued with their school and regional level hockey. Sports, in this case, hockey and horses, have always been lifelines for us all. HB Hockey and their community were real people, there to support and help. I have a huge amount to thank all the coaches, organisers and parents for throughout this time.

New Year's Eve came. My children were with Alexander's family over this time, having fun at Lake Taupo on the boat and jet-ski, water-skiing, knee-boarding and biscuiting with cousins and friends. It warmed my heart to know this legacy was continuing. This time was always a special time of connection and fun for them.

A good friend Unathi came round and joined Jasper, Kev and myself for a BBQ to bring the new year in. She shared her story and testimony, and I made a commitment that night. In my head, I said to Jesus, "Okay, I'm in for a year. If you are as good as you appear to be, I'll stay; otherwise I am out. I'm all in for a year." I didn't tell anyone. I just had this real sense of peace, and I crossed over from the old Sally into the new Sally at the birth of the new year.

The first thing that happened was a Women's Conference that came up at church. I really did not want to go and yet I had said I was in for a year. This was a God thing at our church, and I was going to stand by my word of being all in. I didn't get to pick and choose. I just had to go. I swapped days off at work, and I dreaded it. However, it was the best event I had ever been to. God kindly gave me two visions at the

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end. One was a 'celebration' and the other was a BlackSticks shirt, like one worn by our national hockey players..

The celebration came when I left the Napier Store in March, exactly as I had seen the vision of the celebration at the conference. I had done my dash. Everyone was ready to step up, and the regional manager and I agreed that it was time for me to step out. I am very grateful for such a positive end to my time in this business, thanks to learning from my previous experience and an amazing gentleman named Alex and his team who navigated my exit beautifully. The Black Sticks shirt was fulfilled when Martha made the Under 18 Junior BlackSticks Squad and then the Under 21's the following year.

I strongly recommend seeking advice when you are unhappy at work, when you know things aren't sitting right. It has been a joy to see people work their stuff through and come out on top. Some of the clients I have worked with, who have been finding their work space challenging, end up seeing their current job differently, choosing to stay and quickly getting promoted. Others have soon had a new contract in their hand from another company and get to hand in their resignation with their heads held high. A win-win either way.

I was back on a mission, this time with a superpower I had no idea about. I dug deep and really thought about what I was good at, where I had been celebrated, where I was intrinsically motivated and where I had received favour. Where my brilliance really was. It was with people, and my last decade had been growing healthy teenagers both at home and in Project K, so that is where I started.

I applied for jobs in the youth development and careers space. One company could offer me a role that fit my gift profile and experience almost perfectly. However, it was in Wanganui (two and a half hours away). I considered it. It would mean being away Monday to Friday. That didn't fit with my aim to have more time with my family and being there for our children. However, I was up to see what they were about and offering. They couldn't interview via zoom, so they expected me to travel to Wellington (three and a half hours away) and were not prepared to reimburse travel costs. I quickly realised that, while the job

description fit, the location and culture did not. This wasn't the answer.

Kev and I were discussing options. He looked at me and said, "You have all the contacts and connections, you have all the skills to do this; why don't you run your own business here in Hawke's Bay?"

I had sworn to myself that I would never run my own business. I would work for someone else, give them my best, as if it was my own business, and not have the headache or responsibility of the finances or legalities. A bit like writing this book, it was never on my radar to run my own business or work for myself. I was and am a people-person and didn't want the stress. I quite liked the security of giving my best in return for a regular paycheque and no real responsibility. Anyway, it sat with me.

Lynette Breen had been amazing in my hour of darkness. She had been the life coach that I needed. She had the questions I needed when I couldn't forgive my ex-husband and needed to move on. When I was holding onto bitterness and resentment from way back, without knowing, she had helped me to release it. And she had taken each and every one of our family through "the gift", the previous summer, so that we could blend the family with a clear understanding of how we think differently. I wanted to start this family strong, with kindness, compassion and connection. It was really important to me to leave the past behind, and to make this a fresh and clean start. It looked like this might be the case for the next steps in my working career too.

The following Sunday, we invited Ken and Lynette for a coffee after church. And I shared that Kev thought instead of finding a business to fit me and my skill set, maybe I should start my own business. The need was there, and I had all the skills and talents, qualities and characteristics to make it work. However, I needed a mentor to help me with the how. They were both in and up for it. In April 2019, Inspiring Perspectives was born, and I coached my first client.

This was my cross-over point. It didn't seem to matter how many times I fell over, it turned out that it was how many times I got back up and stood that counted. And this time, I was in completely new

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territory. Looking back, I can see I was becoming really aware of the people who were around me. They weren't my enemies. They wanted the best for me.

This was a totally new experience for me, I was able to let people in. They wanted to help me and were there to share their wisdom, insight, skills and talents with me. It was like they knew me, yet they didn't know me. There was something special about them, something supernatural that I couldn't put my hand on. A warmth and a peace, a serenity about them, a calmness that whatever happened, they stood. They were fearless yet gentle. They were leaders, influencers and made a positive impact wherever they went. I wanted what they had. I was curious. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was home. I had spent forty eight years searching for love, for family and a place to call home and without knowing, this was it. I had no idea at the time how pivotal this time was or what had opened up inside of me to allow goodness to flow in and through my life.

I recall that, back when I was at high school, a group of us chose to study churches in the Isle of Wight for our Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition. I still have fond and clear memories of the churches. The peace, the craftsmanship, the legacy, and the history. Of being in awe of those who had gone before us to create a place of rest, of hope and of peace for others and many generations to come.

I have since become aware of how many leaders, influencers and impact makers have the same power source—their faith in God. Here are a list of a few I know who have positively impacted my life one way or another:

Dr Benjamin Hardy, cutting edge organisational psychologist of our time and pioneering author on future-self. Jordan B. Peterson with his perspective on 12 rules for life that bring absolute abundance. Graham Cooke and Dionne Van Zyl, who run Brilliant School of Leadership, transforming businesses and lives far beyond any normal or expected outcomes. Pedro Adao, who leads 100X, a kingdom entrepreneurship movement that is truly international in its reach, transforming people's lives. Tony Robbins and Dean Graziosi who run multi-million dollar

businesses in the personal development space. Denzel Washington, Matthew McConaughey and Tom Hanks whose wisdom and insight goes far beyond their outstanding acting careers. Dr Caroline Leaf, the leading neuroscientist of our time. C. S Lewis, whose books have a depth and resonance to them that go far beyond the pages themselves. I believe we'll see more and more of these blessed people creating more influence and impact.

Reflect and Reframe

The reality is, God had me from day one. I was coming full circle to where I started. It was time to come home. I had been brought up with the word at school, had been to Sunday school a few times and had loved my time in the choir. I had chosen to study churches as I was always aware of a presence. I had gone off for thirty years and done life my way. I thought it was all down to me, that I had to have all my ducks in a row.

I had no idea that I had a spiritual Father in heaven who loved me who wanted to bless me and was always looking out for me. Neither did I know there was this Jesus guy, who was my brother, who had laid down His life and died for me. That he had taken all my rubbish to the grave with Him so that I didn't have to live in guilt, shame, anxiety, stress, worry, judgement, condemnation etc. When He rose, so did I. I became the new Sally when I turned towards Him and said yes. And then I got the Holy Spirit who hangs out with my conscience and helps me move in the right direction.

It all sounds nuts. However, it could not be more real. I had been searching for answers all my life. I had read heaps of self-help books, had gone to events and sought help from counsellors and psychologists. Each had played a part, but it was all so piecemeal. Every time I took a step forward, it seemed like I took two steps back. Every time I learnt something new, I seemed to be more aware of how much I didn't know. So this Jesus/God thing was worth a go. It sat in my heart, and I had nothing to lose.

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Dear Reader

Where are you on your faith journey? Are you over all the “fix it” plans, courses and events that are great for the moment but make you feel emptier afterwards?

I said I was in for a year, and five years later I am still here. I hear you ask,

“Why? What is so good about your life now that you didn’t have before?”

Everything I have ever dreamed of or hoped for has been given to me, from a loving family to fulfilling work, beautiful friends, good health mentally, physically and spiritually, amazing homes, living in the fruit bowl of New Zealand, growing many of our own fruits and veggies—the list of blessings is endless. And all of this with no striving, no pushing, no having to prove myself or be someone that I am not.

I am finally free to be me, truly happy in my own skin, at peace in my heart and mind. And through it all, I get to pass everything that has been given to me on to you.

Everything that is available in Heaven is available to us here on Earth when we say yes to Jesus.

This is a crazy journey of adventure and discovery. One where I win... or I learn. One of continuous growth and development while I am here. Where I really do get to live my best life and have a guarantee of hanging out with Jesus when I am done.

If you would like to be where I am now, if you would like to accept Jesus into your heart, I encourage you to read this next section out-loud. This is just the beginning of a truly fulfilling life.

If you choose to read this out-loud, I encourage you to get in touch with me. It would be my personal joy and honour to connect you with the right people at the right time to walk with you on this wonderful journey of adventure and discovery we call L.I.F.E.

Hi, Jesus,

Thank you for laying your life down for me. Thank you for paying in full for all my stuff ups (my excess baggage). I give this excess baggage that I have been carrying to you now, all my rubbish (I encourage you to name the stuff that weighs you down, whether it is anxiety or guilt, worry or shame, addictions or violence etc. whatever it is for you, speak it out). I lay it all down and leave it with you. And I choose You in return.

I believe you are the Great Exchange. I choose to pick up my new luggage, the great exchange that you promised, a life full of love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, joy, faithfulness and self-control. I invite you to walk with me and show me how to live with and cherish these new gifts that you have blessed me with. Jesus, I invite the Holy Spirit into my heart to teach me and guide me, so that I can become the gifted, talented, amazing human being God created me to be before I was even born.

Thank you for my new beginning, for my fresh start, for the birth of the new (insert your name here). Thank you that I am chosen and loved, that you will never leave me nor forsake me.

I look forward to our wonderful future together filled with love, peace, joy and the goodness of God.

With love,

(insert your name here).

Call to Adventure

I was a shocker, making a deal with Jesus, telling Him how it was going to be. "I'm in for a year and if I like it I'll stay, and if I don't I'm out."

Everything I have today is because of Him. Every healthy relationship. Every piece of business acumen that I am learning. All the cool people I get to hang out with. It is all because He has gone ahead of me and is lighting the way. There is no pressure, no stress, no have-tos. I get to choose. I get to write this book. I get to help people in their darkest

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hour step out into the light. I get to be the vessel He uses to heal people, physically, mentally and spiritually. I am His firecracker. I ignite the flame within and set people free on their own unique and amazing path and journey of adventure.

My call to adventure is to challenge you with this invitation. No one is twisting your arm. No one is telling you what to do. It is an invitation to step into your divine purpose and calling. To join those that make the world a better place, to be counted as one with them.

If you are where I was, then, just as I did, you can read the commitment to Jesus above quietly to yourself. He will hear you and know your heart. And open yourself up as doors open and massive opportunities come your way. As I saw it then, I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. Come and make the rest of your life the best of your L.I.F.E. and live it with no regrets. Welcome.

"He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20-21, NIV)