

## CHAPTER 15

# NO TURNING BACK

Eight months down the track from separation, I started to calm down and think more clearly. At the ripe old age of forty seven, the storm was beginning to pass. I realised finding land and building a place was a pipe dream. I couldn't even buy the land, let alone all the work needed to put in all the amenities and then build on it. This would mean another mortgage I couldn't afford. I had to cut back, so I started looking in town. The kids were not keen. They had only known a rural lifestyle. However, we found a gorgeous little home on Nelson Street, Hastings. And after six months of renting, we moved into a four bedroom home with a garden big enough for Buster, our black labrador, to run around in. My dream of being mortgage-free was finally realised. Arthur could bike to school, and Martha could bike to the pony, which was now back at friends. This was a wonderful and truly blessed time.

I was still struggling to make ends meet as I really needed to be working full-time. I called the director for Tupperware New Zealand, who I had worked under previously. She just happened to be in the area and could meet for coffee the next day. Perfect timing—Tupperware Hawke's Bay was struggling, and they needed a manager.

I said I would give her a year, get it back up and running, replace myself and move on. She was up for it. A win-win-win for us all.

Tupperware soon picked up, I had a full diary of parties in the evenings and the company car within a month. I did exactly what I said I would, taking out the top new team award at the conference and setting HB up for success. Two amazing ladies stepped up as managers this time and took the team from strength to strength, one of whom stayed with them until Tupperware pulled out of New Zealand towards the end of 2022. This was a great fill-in while I was negotiating full-time work. The board decided, after verbally agreeing to take on another school, that 'Project K' was too high risk for them and they would rather invest in the 'Kiwi Can' programme. To be fair, I was a risk to them at this time, so my hours were not going to increase. It was time to get a full-time job, and that meant going back to where I started, where I had thrived. Back into a role I could do standing on my head: Retail Management.

I applied for a few management roles, from deputy manager in a rural retail company (where I was interviewed by one of Alexander's friends) to a department store as an assistant manager role. Their HR manager called me to find out more and felt a deputy or store manager's role would be more suitable to my skill set (and thankfully for my finances too). After four interviews, I was offered the opportunity of store manager in Napier.

Wow. There's nothing like being out of your comfort zone! I had been out of retail for fifteen years. In that time, I had had my children, emigrated to NZ and spent my whole time growing and developing people. From teaching at Pony Club for eight years, using all the skills I had learnt growing up in a riding school, to seven years with Project K working with 120 mentors and students. To my surprise, the job I thought that I could do standing on my head was not going to be long-term for me.

The regional manager had employed me to turn the store around. He made it plain that the previous manager had been there for eighteen years and it was time to clear out the dead wood and bring in some

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fresh faces, me being one of them. He also made it quite clear that some people only stay for a couple of years. I was initially gutted when the existing deputy managers walked away in my first three months. Both of them chose to run their own businesses, which was awesome for them. However, it left me with a serious lack of knowledge and support in the business. No worries, we got the right people in and a full team of externals. Within nine months, there was a clear succession plan. The operations manager would step into my shoes, one of the sales managers would step into his and the ball started to roll with an amazingly talented full-time member of staff who could step up into the sales manager role. It was a win-win-win situation. I had a blast working with the people; not so much with the logistics. I was there to do one job. Clear out and turn the store's people around. That was absolutely my bag. Job done in twelve months.

Arthur and Martha were both in regional representative teams for hockey—Martha in the last batch of Under-11's which practiced 9-11am and Arthur in Under-13's which practiced 11am-1pm. Both were on Sundays, so going to church was not an option. However, there was one Sunday where there was a tournament on, and Arthur didn't need to be there until 1pm. I was engaged to Kev by this time, and I knew how important church was to both Kev and his son, Jasper. This was my window of opportunity to go and support them.

We snuck in at the back; the place was packed. Kev had warned me that it may go on a bit as they had a guest speaker. He knew I was used to the preparatory school chapels where you were in and out within half an hour. That was my expectation.

So there we were singing. Surprisingly, I really liked the songs. They weren't the traditional ones I was used to. The kids start messaging me at 10.15am: "How's it going?" My reply: "We're still singing." Same again at 10.25: "How's it going?" "We're still singing." And at 10.40am: "How's it going?" My reply: "The guy has just started talking." By 11am he had started to have 'words' for people. I was so cynical. Each time he spoke to people, I was thinking, "She could have told you that at dinner last night" or "That's easy to pick up," and then he said "And you, sir, at the back, what's your name?" That was not what I

was expecting, and it was a bit close for comfort. He was talking to Kev. “And who are you with?” Kev replied, “My son Jasper, (who was in the sound desk) and my fiancée Sally.” The whole church turned round (so much for sitting quietly at the back where I wouldn’t be noticed). None of them knew that Kev even had a girlfriend, let alone a fiancée.

To cut a very long story short, Tony Saxon had some words for me. The words that really resonated were the words of knowledge. “About a year or so ago you really wanted to go to an island, but for some reason you couldn’t.” No one on this planet knew how I had spent that first weekend, when my children went off to their dad’s. I desperately wanted to go home, to England, to be with family, and I couldn’t. How did this man that I had never met before know that?

Tony then continued to let me know there would be a big celebration in March and I would get to go on that trip. The only thing I remembered was that no one knew how wrecked I was during the split and how desperately I wanted to go home to the UK, an “island.”

I had no idea what prophecy was or how this man knew my innermost, deepest desires of my heart, but this was a turning point for me. God got my attention at that moment.

I left the service early to get Arthur to hockey and then popped back to thank Tony for his words. Weird, as I would normally just have gone onto the next thing, but I had a real sense to go back.

Hockey season ended, and every Sunday I went to learn more and to support Kev and Jasper in their “thing.” I came out every week spitting tacks. “I can’t believe he said this or that! That’s not God!” Oh, my goodness, did I have an opinion or what? Poor Kev had to take me for coffee after every service while I kicked off and calmed down before I went home to the kids. I still remember the comment about the two kids, the nice home and the picket fence—which is exactly what I had had back in England. I took offence every week at what was being preached. I have so much to thank God and Cliff Cherry for, as between them, they nailed a whole heap of ugly stuff to the cross without me even knowing.

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Every week I would work through my offence. It was never about the person speaking; it was always about me. I'd get it sorted and then go back for more the following week. Funny, it's only now, looking back, that I see the pattern. I was oblivious of this at the time.

I was so grateful when it was hockey season and I had five months off. Except after two weeks, I realised I was missing the singing, the people and the message to consider for the week. It was crazy. That hockey season finished, and I never missed another Sunday again. I had found my home, my family and my happy place—in the place I had been so rude about (and still have my moments), with people I looked down on and mocked. Who would have known but God?

### **Reflect and Reframe**

Offence is a shocker; it can take us from winning in the game of our lives to being completely out of the game. It can keep us trapped in unforgiveness, where we are literally dying inside, piece-by-piece, every day without knowing. When we are wrapped up in our own worlds and being self-righteous, we can get ourselves into some real pickles rather than being self-aware and centered on what is right, noble and true.

Offence is what has held me back from walking into my calling almost every time. It places me back into victim mode, in a defensive corner, and in FEAR mode. It put me on edge and ready to attack anyone or anything that came across my path. It is one of the enemy's number one tools to keep us trapped and locked away in our own mental prison. The worst part of it all is that we are, generally speaking, completely unaware! However, as I see it now, every fence round a paddock has a gate. And every week God would work out of me the hurt and pain that was causing the 'a fence' and I would walk through the gate. The funniest thing looking back is I had no idea that this was happening. Every week I would go back for another round, not realising I had already been in the ring the week before.

I now say "Oh, the fence, let me see if I can find the gate." The gate is the crossover point from unforgiveness to forgiveness, from pain to joy, from being trapped to freedom. While I can't read the label from inside the jar, I can check in with my feelings. I can get tripped up with feelings of anger or frustration, wanting to point the finger at someone else when it needs to turn the corner and point back at me. I am so grateful that my emotions are signs to show me whether I am on the right track or not. I get to consider and respond. The old Sally lived by them, like a pinball in a pinball machine, bouncing around all over the place from emotion to emotion until I was exhausted.

I firmly believe that the wisdom and insights I have been sharing in this book will bring you to a place of complete freedom, peace and joy. You have nothing to fear from the world around you. You can live a life of no worries, no anxiety and no stress, as long as you don't invite them in. Being aware of offence and how ruthless it is, bringing disconnection, judgement and condemnation rather than connection, compassion and understanding has been massive for me. I pray that as you take time to think, consider and ponder over your own journey of adventure, your mind will be renewed, and you too will be free to be the awesome person you were called to be.

*"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* (Romans 12:2, NIV)

### **Dear Reader**

I encourage you to consider who you have an issue with right now. Who is getting under your skin? Who is ruffling your feathers? Who is wrong when you are right? It is so good to write it down, so you can see it for what it really is. It is good to then sit and rest in this. I ask God: "What am I not seeing here? What heart posture do I need to change? Where is the gate?" I have been absolutely amazed at the answers I have written down and the peace, rest, grace and favour this has brought.

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If you are a verbal processor like me, it may be helpful to discuss it with people you trust, who are ahead of you on your journey of discovery and adventure. Not to take it any further, but to gain clarity, wisdom and insight. What I need in these moments is to be able to understand and move forward, not to have people agree with me or go and share it with others and make it worse. Kev, Ken and Lynette, over this time, have totally become my go-tos. I am so grateful to them for their kindness and compassion as I “kick off” because there’s something else I need to work through. It is about going to one or two people who you respect, who will ask the right questions of you, so that you can see a new perspective, a bigger picture, find your peace again and move on.

### **Call to Adventure:**

My life has changed so dramatically. I feel loved, chosen, safe and abundantly blessed. Everything I had lost or never had was restored, and I am now in alignment. I was a divorcee with no family, no authority and no love, desperately trying to make things work.

This is a journey, not a destination.

It is a process, and it takes time. For now, I hope that this is sowing good seeds into your heart, ones of hope and a future. There is more to life than what we see in front of us. I continue to be a work-in-progress, but I am loving the adventure each and every day brings.

This was a season of faith-over-fear. I encourage you to consider: Who or what are you angry or frustrated by? Where are you feeling wounded, hurt, or misunderstood? Where you are hitting a brick wall? Who are you blaming or going to, to justify your actions?

Now is a really cool time to pause, breathe, and think of something that brings you real joy. Rest in that, laugh and bring yourself back into the now, in love and peace with patience, kindness and compassion so you can think clearly and respond rather than react.

### Inheritance Scriptures

Graham Cooke recently took us through some teaching around our identity scriptures—the words or passages in the Bible that really ring true to us. I was immediately taken to Psalm 23. This, in itself is a crack-up, as I know the words in my heart, I can rarely tell you where in the Bible words come from.

For those of you who are Christians or familiar with the Bible, I encourage you to ask God what your inheritance scripture is. Ask Him to show you how this relates to you and your journey together.

For those of you not on this journey yet, walk with me as I reveal my journey in this space with you. I pray it will help you to gain an inspiring perspective into your new identity and into the nature of God.

The first thing that God showed me was this beautiful meadow I played in once with my brother and family friend when I was ten, just before our lives shifted and changed. I remember laughing so much I couldn't run very fast. I remember the sun shining and it being a perfect summer's day in the UK. I remember a picnic. The birds were singing, and I had no cares or worries. I was completely free.

About six months ago, an amazing lady, Zelda Cronje, did an exercise with us at a ladies event. She asked us where Jesus was. For me, He was right behind me. Then I felt Him massage my shoulders. This was gold—I hold a lot of tension in my shoulders. Then I was in that meadow, laughing and running. I was like a child running away from my dad or older brother, laughing so much as I knew He'd catch up. I felt Him hold my hand, just as he had been throughout my life. I was safe. I had nothing to fear—the angel of the Lord was here. And there I was in Psalm 23.

As I read this psalm recently, I realised this was my favorite hymn at school, one of the ones I would sing along the hallways or on my walks.

*“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me*

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*along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23, NIV)*

**The Lord's my Shepherd, lyrics by W. Whittingham; F. Rous, arrangement by Jessie Seymour Irvine (1836-1887)**

*1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green; He leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.  
2 My soul He doth restore again,  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness,  
E'en for His own name's sake.  
3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill;  
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.  
4 My table Thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes;  
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows.  
5 Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me,  
And in God's house forevermore  
My dwelling-place shall be.*

I share these with you to inspire you, to give you hope and a future, and help you step out in faith to become the mighty man or woman of God you are called to be. The last part of Tony's words for me were:

“This may be brand new to you. This is the calling to the woman of God that you are meant to be. Continue to press into God. Who is Jesus to you? I feel like this is a whole new experience to you. Encouraging you.” (Saxton, 2017)

I encourage you to consider these words for yourself. In the next few chapters, I will share with you the phenomenal difference leaning in has made to my life. And how prosperity and abundance has flowed from this place. Enjoy.

*“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you.” (Joel 2:25-32, NKJV)*