

## CHAPTER 4

# CARVING MY OWN PATH

At the age of nineteen, I was about to embark on the first step in my career. As one of the top applicants for the Trainee Management programme with the supermarket, Sainsburys, I was placed in one of the outer London stores. I was given accommodation as a boarder in someone's home to begin with. That lasted only a few months. I had done my time at boarding school and wanted to be free to come and go as I pleased. The poor couple who took me in were so worried about me being out until the early hours of the morning. My journey to find myself and love didn't go as I expected. Moments in the backs of cars left me with some delightful sexually transmitted diseases on the outside and a real sense of loneliness on the inside. I was looking for love in all the wrong places and found myself feeling cheap, used and even more "less than" or "not good enough."

"Not good enough" was a growing lie in this season. When I was sent off to boarding school, I felt my parents didn't want me. I had been suspended twice, once from Scarborough College for the shortcut through the changing rooms, and once from the Royal Naval School for getting caught smoking in the dorms. Smoking was the cool thing to do. I was pushing boundaries and testing waters. There was a risk and a thrill to it, and in my case an ignorance. I had no idea how much

it would smell. I thought I could smoke a cigarette with the window open and all the smoke and smell would go outside. It's like those who vape in the toilets at school now. It is super obvious to anyone who walks in.

For every action there is a reaction. While I had leadership potential and qualities, the consequence of breaking the school rules stopped any further opportunities for the top slots. I had a super high conversion rate for the school tours, where I would take prospective parents and students around the school and share how awesome it was. Most then enrolled their girls following their interview and tour. My ability to connect with people, to hear their hearts and be honest with truth and love in my answers, spoke volumes. I was in one of the first batches of sub prefects to be awarded in the penultimate year before leaving high school (year 12/5<sup>th</sup> form). Others had seen the potential in me as a leader. And here I was, working at a supermarket because I failed to get into University. The world was giving me more of what I believed to be true "I wasn't good enough." But that wasn't the truth. I *was* good enough. However, I had made some poor choices and did not have access to the necessary help needed to achieve my desired result.

While the actions were real, "not good enough" was a lie. I was loved by my parents; they just had open wounds from their lives, and until they addressed them they would pass on the infection without knowing. *You can't give what you don't have.* I had broken the rules (and got caught), because I was desperate to be seen and heard... only I got seen and heard in the wrong way.

I had been loved deeply by my dad, but once my parents split, there was no way to contact Dad. There were no mobile phones, no internet, email, no social media apps, nothing. I thought mums doing their own thing was normal. I went from one house to another, one family to another. In many ways, I was quite happy. I had ponies and a life full of people. I was loved dearly by my godmother and her friend. They were so kind and generous. They always had time for me, saw me, heard me and cared. I didn't know I was missing and grieving my dad. I had no idea how to navigate men or my emotions. Going to an all-

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girls boarding school, riding horses and ponies, living in an all-female environment didn't give me any opportunities to see healthy relationships with men either. I had to learn from my 'miss-takes' which continued to feed the "not good enough" lie.

Looking back though, I always had some great people around me to learn from. One of the deputy store managers took me under his wing, possibly because we both came from the north of England. He drove a cool sports car, had a great family and inspired me to dig in and keep going. While I may not have had love and inspiration from my parents at the time, I had some amazing role models around me in every season. People who were real, honest, took time to see me, ask questions and invest in me.

At the time, work was great. I had a blast. I loved working with the management team, having a laugh, making good money, and working hard physically and mentally. I settled down in many ways, moved into a flat with my then boyfriend and his mates. I completed the eighteen-month course in twelve months and then had two promotions in quick succession to night shift assistant manager and then customer service assistant manager. I was on a roll, earning good money, learning how to cook and look after myself, again with good, kind people around me.

My boyfriend and I bought our first property together in Bedford, an hour's commute to work in the store in Uxbridge... and then the opportunity of becoming the Store Manager at The Body Shop in Bedford came up. No more commuting for over an hour each way. The franchisee had worked for Sainsbury's and I was in. At twentyone, I became a store manager, a homeowner and settled in a relationship. We had fun, smoked a bit, drank a bit, and played Dungeons and Dragons with his mates. It was also during this time I rekindled my love for reading when I was introduced to Terry Pratchett and his discworld series. I was fascinated by his ability to characterise people and our behaviours so well.

And then I found myself attracted to another man who took my fancy. I couldn't live with my boyfriend and find someone else attractive—

that was wrong. So I called it a day and broke up. Our flat was in massive debt—the stock market had crashed at that time and it was worth less than half the price we had originally paid. My ex-boyfriend walked away from the flat as I earned more than him. He went to live with his parents, and within six months found the woman of his dreams, got married, and had beautiful children with her. It was so good to see him happy and on fire in his life.

I, on the other hand, had to work two jobs to pay the mortgage and still couldn't afford to eat. Interesting how he was the faithful one and did the right thing, and it turned out good for him. I was back on the "looking for love" journey. However, I had a purpose in this season, even if it was only to pay my bills. Working a full-time role as the store manager and being a key role in the pilot scheme "Body Shop Direct"—doing parties in the homes for our customers—gave me value and meaning. I had so much fun. I was actually in my element, passing on the love and knowledge of an awesome product to others. I loved serving others, being in their homes and blessing them.

As mentioned before, I had reconnected with my dad at age seventeen. We were driving to pick up my brother, Richard, from school and for the first time ever, I asked him for his side of the story. This opened up a whole new world of understanding and perspective. Dad and I were very alike, and our relationship grew year after year. It was Dad who I turned to when I needed help to get back on my feet again.

I was working four nights a week as well as my full-time job and still had to have an allowance from Dad of fifty pounds a week so I could eat. My dad was amazing. I had got myself into a real pickle with my finances. My ex-boyfriend and I had bought some furniture on my credit card, and I had no idea how it worked. With the added interest, the furniture cost me three times as much in the end. Dad came and helped me do a budget, showing me how to keep track. And he lent me the money to eat until I was straight again. I remember cutting up the credit card, which had been my lifeline, feeling scared and relieved at the same time. It was symbolic of no more debt. I sit here now, with two mortgage-free properties, having never used a credit card again.

### **Release to Receive**

Funny how once we cut the cord on what doesn't serve us, we are then released to walk into our destiny. Yet often where we get stuck is exactly where our destiny calls us. The breakthrough comes as we face the problem, reframe it and take action to walk away from it and into our calling.

This time in my life was tough, yet awesome. I was stoked not to have "gone" with another guy while I was with my boyfriend. I had not overridden my conscience or moral code. While I had caused him real pain, it had ended really well for him and better than it could ever have been for us. I learnt to stand on my own two feet with help from the right source, someone who had walked the path and come out the other side with flying colours (my dad).

I learnt I could manage and create money, and get myself out of a hole. In my toughest time, the right people and opportunities came up and I embraced them. While I was alone on my journey, I was never alone. God always placed the right people around me at the right time to help. I was blind to His hand in my journey at the time. However, looking back, it is so clear that His Word was so true:

"I will never leave you or forsake you."

In my darkest hours, God has always been there, whether I acknowledged Him or not. I always sensed His presence. I was truly blessed to have eyes to see those around me and to accept their help. So many people I work with are completely blind to the gifts and blessings He has placed around them and given them.

However, I wasn't there yet; I still had another thirty years to go before I was blessed with the grace and favour to look back and see truth in love. I was still looking for love with my blindfold on. The focus on work and limited cash was a blessing in disguise as it actually grounded me. I learnt to be happy in my own skin with what I had. I learnt to love myself and to be grateful for what I had.

**L.O.V.E. Over F.E.A.R.**

We can't give what we don't have. We can only give what we have experienced.

Somewhere along the line, this was sown into my brother Richard and me. We are generous with what we have. We would both give the shirts off our backs for someone in need. We were never without physically, so I guess "freely given to freely give" was part of our lives. The Word says: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything will be given to you," not that I knew this at the time. I was a good kid trying to make my way in life, my heart and mind were open, and I always looked to see the best in people.

Blessed to be a blessing is the key. God always blesses us first to then pass on. Sadly, the enemy knows this principle too, so we can pass on bad in the same way. I find more is caught than taught. I had been given real love and kindness through key people in my life and caught that love, so I had it to give.

I had also had a deep sense of rejection and "not being good enough" sown in at the same time, so that also manifested in my actions. I gave what I had been given, what I had learnt. That "not good enough" lie was the enemy's way of keeping me bound, stuck and less than. So instead of being a blessing, I was a curse, mainly to myself, without knowing. In this case, I had misinterpreted my life through the "not good enough" lens and taught myself it was true.

There is another scripture in the Bible I recently discovered:

*"Today I am giving you a choice. You may choose the blessing or the curse. You will get the blessing if you listen and obey the commands of the Lord your God that I have told you today. But you will get the curse if you refuse to listen and obey the commands of the Lord your God. So don't stop living the way I command you today, and don't follow other gods that you don't know." (Deuteronomy 11:26-29, NIV)*

While I had no idea what any of this was about at the time, the principles here have been a thread that has run throughout my life. I am now so aware that we have the choice, in every moment of every

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day, to choose. We get to choose what we accept into our lives and what we reject out of our lives. We can take the high road that aligns with love, bringing us courage, joy and a sense of adventure and opportunity. Or we can take the low road, one of reactions, which takes us on a downhill spiral that leads us to a prison cell in our minds, restricts us and keeps us chained to being “less than” or “not good enough.”

“The choices we make determine the directions our lives take... and the people we become.” (Gibson, 2015)

Choosing L.O.V.E. (Living Out Valour Everyday) over F.E.A.R. (False Evidence Appearing Real) has turned my upside-down world the right-way-up, opening the doors to Love Freedom Insight and Engagement.

I was introduced to an amazing lady, Dr Libby Smales, just after I turned forty, and she introduced me to Dr Stephen Karpman’s Dreaded Drama Triangle (DDT). This concept blew my mind as I suddenly realized that this triangle was where I had been living all my life—in F.E.A.R! And it was all about control and codependency. Super unhealthy and super unhelpful. It looked good and seemed okay, yet it was literally Hell on earth. I was dying, not living, feeling trapped, unloved, unheard and “less than,” and I had no idea.

Around the same time I read a book called *The Empowerment Dynamic* (TED) by Dave Emerald. It’s a delightful short book about L.O.V.E. It is all about taking responsibility and shifting from one to the other.

### **Another Great Exchange**

The victim in the DDT becomes the Creator in TED, asking questions like: What can I do to change this? What patterns of behaviour do I need to shift? What is God revealing or showing me so I can move into the upgrade?

The persecutor in the DDT becomes the Challenger in TED. Instead of the situation, circumstance or person being bad, you see it as the

stepping stone to the next level. It's the challenge that is going to grow you exponentially and bring out the best in you as you overcome it.

The rescuer in DDT becomes the coach in TED. I loved Libby's share on this... as I was the rescuer at the time... that the rescuer is the 'caretaker'—they take the action for you and take the care away—whereas the coach is the 'caregiver'—they show you how to do it for yourself. This is the epitome for me of "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

### **Loving Ourselves First**

I had to be happy in my own skin, with my own body, with my own life before I could be in a healthy relationship. Standing on my own two feet and taking responsibility for my actions allowed me to be thankful for what and who I had in my life. I still had my own open wounds, however I was making the most of what I had. I have always been a glass-half-full girl, as whatever has happened in my life, I have always bounced back. I believe more of these seeds were sown in this season.

I believe there is always a tension or gap between the world and the Kingdom, between the ideal and the real, the lies and the Truth. The ideal—a lie I had in my head, the thing all the movies and fairy tales—led me to believe that there was a knight in shining armour that would come and save me, and I wouldn't have to do the hard yards. We'd just magically live happily ever after without doing the work. That someone else had the keys to my happiness, and when I found Mr Right and his bank balance, all would be well.

L.I.F.E. is an inner game. It's an inside-out world, not outside-in. I was never going to find Mr Right until I sorted out Mrs. Right out (me). I was not broken and I didn't need fixing. There was nothing wrong with me, I was merely out of alignment. Until I knew what brought me joy, what the real desires of my heart were, what I really valued and

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what I didn't value, what was important to me and what was not—until I sorted that out, I was never going to be truly happy. I was going to be like a pinball, bouncing from one relationship, one shiny object, to another. I was looking for the answers in all the wrong places, looking for the missing piece only to find the peace was within. There was no missing piece; there was a missing peace. I was filling myself up with doing, not being. Hoping that if I did all the right things I would feel better.

Albert Einstein is attributed as saying, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” It was time to look internally and love myself first.

Hurt people hurt people. And healed people heal people. Research done by Gabor Mate indicates that autoimmune diseases are eighty percent higher in women, and they can be linked directly back to suppressed emotion. Suppressed emotion has been reckoned to take fifteen years off your life. (Dr Gabor Maté, 2023) Science has shown us that our emotional system and auto-immune system are directly linked. In my coaching practice, I help people see life through an inspiring perspective. I help them to clear the decks of the lies and hurt that can keep them trapped emotionally. This releases them so they can be free to live life the way it was designed—full of love, peace, joy and connection. A life where they are seen and heard, valued and honoured.

You may relate to the hedonic treadmill, where I'll feel better when I get the promotion, or when I own a specific car or when I get that degree. And yes, you do feel amazing when all these things happen, however that feeling soon drops back down to your personal level of happiness. You are back, feeling the same again and are now on the treadmill to find the next thing to lift you up. It is never-ending and always short-lived.

I saw life through the DDT lens: “I wasn't good enough, I was the victim. The teachers, matron, and universities were all against me.” I was looking for that rescuer. Every time, I got the persecutor instead, and away I would go around the mountain again.

Are things starting to stir for you? Does some of this resonate with your own life experiences? I hope that you may be feeling curious that there could be another way. You may be feeling hopeful and inquisitive.

I hope these chapters and shares are starting to spark in your heart, as it is out of our hearts our mouth speaks. I was in real pain internally at this time in my life (eighteen to twentyfour). I was feeling lost, alone and that no one cared. Now I feel loved, chosen and on fire for life. I have found my place in life and it is with such joy in my heart that you are receiving another key to the treasure within now.

Being intentional with my choices in life has opened up a whole new world of empowerment and fulfilment. Choosing to live in L.O.V.E. (The Empowerment Dynamic) so I could live by design rather than by default has relieved so much pressure, stress, anxiety and worry. It opened doors in my mind and life that seemed impossible at the time. Living in F.E.A.R. (The Dreaded Drama Triangle) had been my norm. I was so unaware of this. Understanding these principles has literally turned my upside-down-world the right-way-up and allowed me to be truly free. Free from guilt, shame, condemnation, judgement of others and so much more.

I spent forty years in the wilderness waiting for this key to transform my life. It cost me dearly, not having this wisdom and insight. It was freely given to me, and now I freely give it to you.

### **Dear Reader**

I encourage you each time you feel like you are the victim, ask yourself: *"What can I do?" What action can I change to upgrade the outcome?"* Put the keys to happiness back in your own hands and become the creator.

Each time you feel like someone or something is coming against you, let it go, pause, breathe and look for the step up. Every problem comes with a possibility attached. There is always an open door to your next level when you see this as a challenge to raise you up, not as a

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persecutor to take you down. In this chapter, I learnt to flex the 'I can do this' muscle.

Each time someone tries to do it for you when you are capable of doing it for yourself leaves you dependent on them. When you are doing something for someone else that they can do for themselves, you are engaging in an unhealthy codependent relationship, disempowering and robbing others of their joy, to make you feel better. I was a shocker for being the 'fix it queen'. I thought I was helping people by doing things for them when what I was actually doing was making them dependent on me. I encourage you to find a coach or someone in your life who is a little further along in the area you are struggling in so they can help you overcome it on your own. I used my dad to help me with my finances, when it was really an alignment coach that I needed. Someone to unravel the internal knots and pain so I could move forward in love, not in fear.

The choice is always ours, and we make those choices in our heads. What choices are you going to make today?

### **Call to Adventure:**

Where are you in the Dreaded Drama Triangle? Where are you blaming others or justifying your actions? Where are you looking for others to see it or do it your way and finding resistance?

When I am in this space, I often feel angry, cross, frustrated, hurt or offended. I get on my high horse and start spouting off. Below is my L.I.F.E. strategy on how I turn my upside-down-world the right-way-up again.

**1. Life:** Look at what is triggering you as the issue is never the issue. There is always something deeper that is sitting behind the situation or circumstance, and that is what is challenging your thinking and character. Dig deep and find the root cause. I often have to keep asking myself why until I get there. Sometimes this can take me seven why's.

**2. Insight** into where this comes from is key. It is often from our childhood and gets put on like a school bag. It then grows and gets added to along the way, becoming a backpack, then possibly a trailer. For some of the people I have coached, there has been a forty-foot truck of stuff that has been holding them back and tying them down. It is so good to write this down, identify it and see it for what it really is (a lie).

**3. Freedom** is to then go back and relook at this as you are now. Reframing the experience with compassion, empathy and understanding. This comes from an inspiring perspective, and helps produce the capacity to see that there may have been other things going on that actually had nothing to do with you. This can take some practice; however, once you get this skill, you'll be able to reframe anything.

**4. Engagement** is about seeking help, wisdom and insight. It's about replacing the lie with the Truth. It's about The Great Exchange, having faith and believing you are chosen, loved and uniquely designed to be brilliant. Knowing that you have a special place in this world, where your life matters to others as well as you.

I use this process to nail stuff that does not belong to me to the cross so I can be free to be the best version of me each and every day. One lady in the 100X community in the U.S. has her whole business based on this principle and has used it to get rid of ninety five limiting beliefs. Have fun releasing the real, authentic, awesome you.

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NIV)*