



Greetings, my friend.
This is your tour guide speaking.

Wherever you find yourself at this moment
—excited, stressed, curious, tired—
I invite you to settle in, buckle up, and hold on,
because we are going for a ride.

You will not be bored on this road trip.
This is no ho-hum *jOURney*.

These days together will kindle and awaken,
such that by the end, you are different,
seeing yourself and the world anew.



Welcome

DEAR FRIEND, WELCOME. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING AND PREPARING FOR YOU TO ARRIVE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. I'M SO GLAD YOU ARE HERE. THIS IS NO ACCIDENT THAT TODAY IS THE DAY TO BEGIN. THIS IS DESTINY.

The forty-day journey ahead is a radically simple—simply radical—way to fuel your life, still the noise, and discover your next steps, allowing you to connect more with yourself and others as you go. It promises to provide you with deeper meaning in every aspect of your life.

This journey builds deep strength within and cultivates a greater-than-ever capacity to act with boldness, bravery, and inspiration, no matter what life brings. Along the way, you'll find that there are many kindred others traveling with you and you'll feel less alone. Throughout this journey, you will weave soulful learnings and practices into more bits of your life in ways that will create *plentiful peace, flourishing freedom, herculean hope, and limitless love.*

You may be wondering, "Why should I go?" "What is the cost?" "What can I expect?" "When does it begin?" Indeed, these are important considerations for the road. So, my friend, let's pour ourselves a virtual cup of tea and settle in. We'll move through each one of these thoughtful queries together.

Why should I go?

THIS JOURNEY WILL UNLEASH WITHIN YOU A NEW VISION FOR YOUR UNIQUE WAYS TO BE A VITAL PART OF THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO MATTER MOST TO YOU IN YOUR FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND IN FAR-FLUNG PARTS OF THE WORLD.

It will amplify your purpose on the planet and help you cultivate a tribe of people that will delight and surprise you. It will fan the flame of your dormant or blazing dreams. One step at a time, your life will begin to light up with an unmistakable glow.

This journey includes sojourns on the road—beautiful and restorative resting places to cultivate energy to emerge up and out of the soil. These regular rhythms of pausing and tending to what your body, mind, and soul are clamoring for will bear great and surprising gifts.

This journey is profound. It will meet you just where you are. You will listen to and look for nudges rooted in wisdom and the realities of your life *here and now*. You will start where you are and work with what you have. Whether you're worn out from operating for too long in service and action without a moment to catch your breath, or you've been too long stuck and stationary, you will discover just what you need in here. You will discover and deepen your sense of security and peace, even when your way seems murky, unclear, and when life is just plain hard.

This journey will reveal your ever-unfolding story and next steps. Breakthrough and epiphany reside here. Watch for it. Count on it.

This is where the fire of your life is *stoked*.

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What Can I Expect?

**FORTY POPS (PLACES OF PAUSE) ARE AT THE CORE OF THIS JOURNEY.
THESE POPS ARE ESSENTIAL.**

**Each of the PoPs has three parts: *Be Still*, *Ponder*, and *Engage*.
Collectively, they are opportunities for contemplation and action.**

The times to *Be Still* and *Ponder* are all about intention and attention. Refreshment is found here. They offer moments to cultivate discernment, thoughtful planning, and momentum for change. Your inspiration to *Engage* will be rooted in the stability and wisdom you cultivate in stillness and pondering, free of the frantic or forceful energy that often accompanies quests for transformation. You may find yourself inspired to act in big or small, local or global ways. Whatever the scale, the locale, and the perceived impact, what comes to you will be *life-changing*, *peace-making*, *bridge-building*, and *change-making*.

You can use this book on its own or as a companion to *Live Ablaze: And Light Up the World*. Each of the *Ablaze* books provides distinct experiences. Both books are all about you. Both are *about setting your life ablaze* with more than you have dared to *dream about*, think of, or imagine. Both are about living life with more riveting connection within yourself and with others. And yet, the spotlight in *Soulfully Ablaze* is even more deeply focused on you, with shorter stories about others excerpted from *Live Ablaze*, providing ample space for you to deepen and cultivate your journey through the forty Places of Pause (PoPs).

The world gives itself up to incessant activity merely because it knows of nothing better. The inspired man works among its whirring wheels also, but he knows whither the wheels are going. For he has found the centre where all is stillness...

-Paul Brunton

The Three Elements of pops

MY FRIEND, LET'S TAKE A DEEPER LOOK AT EACH OF THE ELEMENTS OF OUR POPS.

1st ... Be Still

It's one of those simple, but often not easy, things to do. Here, you will take time to stop. To breathe. To take a moment to do nothing. It may be ten seconds or ten minutes. But, for many of us, it may be ten seconds or ten minutes longer than we typically allow ourselves. This moment to *Be Still* may feel exceedingly uncomfortable or profoundly peaceful ... or somewhere in between.

If you are able, before this time to *Be Still*, carve out an additional minute or two to pour yourself a glass of something cool and refreshing or warm and cozy to enjoy. Light a candle to bring a bit of beauty to your day, as a symbol of the fire you are stoking in your journey, or as a bit of good juju for someone in your life in need of a spark of light and hope.

There is a simple free verse reading to set up each nudge to *Be Still* that includes bits of surrender and invitations to cultivate silence and quiet. As you slow down, you may discover that you need a bit of extra rest. If so—and if you can make it happen now, later, or tomorrow—take a moment. Lie down. Even if you only have one, five, or ten minutes to shut your eyes, do it. Set your timer and take a breather.

2nd ... Ponder

Before you plow forward into the time of *soulFULL* reflection, hold off on pulling out that journal just yet. Scan yourself, gently and intently. Ask: *What do I need or want? What would feel good today, in this very moment?* Allow what you need from day to day to change.

One day, you may want to record your impressions, thoughts, and feelings into a voice memo on your phone ... another day you may want to draw and/or write. At times, you may want to step outside for a walk, in silence and solitude, taking one of the section's questions along with you for consideration. As you go, breathe deeply, feel the fresh air on your skin, and be surprised and delighted by what comes to you as you walk.

You'll find that I've included a song at each place of pondering, to share with you some musical artistry and beauty. See what you love (or don't) in the words, the harmonies, and the rhythms. Put on your headphones and walk around the block with the song as your companion, get up and dance, or sit down and let the music wash over you. If you don't dig my jams, not to worry. I get it. Music is a deeply personal preference—maybe you'll choose to create your own PoP mix of inspiration that you love.

As you respond to the inquiries in this *Ponder* moment of the PoPs, imagine and articulate as many details as you possibly can. Get specific. Be creative. Be honest. Feel free to respond to each of the questions, a few of them, or none at all.

However you choose to enter into the prompts to *Ponder*, these moments will form and inform the roots you are creating, so that you flourish ... deeply and wholeheartedly. Here, you will tend to your heart's desires, longings, and needs. You will cultivate and uncover inspiration, direction, *enCOURAGEment*, and energy for the days to come.

3rd ... Engage

This third, more active element generates mighty momentum and direction for your life. You will have the opportunity to choose what you want to do. What or who are you beckoned to *commit to*, *connect with*, or *create*—whether in small or big ways? These elements of inspired action will clarify, strengthen, and more deeply root some of the ideas percolating within you.

This is a place to play, to experiment, to explore in the midst of the realities of your

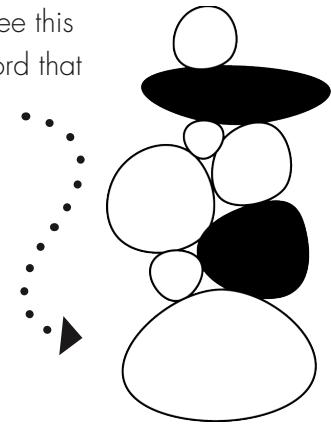
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life here and now. These will be catalysts for what might come next for you—possibly something that appears *big*, like writing a book, making a film, quitting your job or starting a new one, volunteering, or taking a service-exchange trip. Or maybe it doesn't look *big*, but it changes your day-to-day—how you walk through life, think about and treat those nearest to you, and see your part in the world.

This is about bit-by-bit, step-by-step, leap-by-leap living into extravagant love, jaw-dropping creativity, not-yet-seen innovation, and small, medium, or large actions. These inspired actions will, over time, change your life and bring change to the world. You will do good and feel better than ever.

Each PoP ends with a one-word reflection. You'll see this image, a cairn. In the bottom of the stack of rocks, write a word that reflects what is capturing your attention during each PoP. This is a way to simply refine into some gold, as a result of each PoP, a bunch of ideas, opportunities, and feelings.

These one-word reflections open you up to a creative and dynamic way to grow and learn, cultivate clarity and focus, and engage and wake up your brain. Over time, these one-word reflections of your PoPs will create a snapshot of what matters most to you. They will become an archive of your story.



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When Does It Start & End?

CONSIDER MOVING THROUGH THE POPS AS A FORTY-DAY EXPERIENCE, LIVING WITH EACH POP FOR A DAY.

The timeframe of a forty-day journey is rooted in the power of both the spiritual and scientific to notably *reframe, restart, and regenerate*. As you go, you'll actually be making brand new neural pathways in your brain. (And how amazing is that?)

Research in the field of neuroscience has proven that after just thirty days of repetition, a practice becomes effortless. It becomes a habit. A new route in the brain has been forged. In the spiritual arena, forty days is a sacred time period that is found across many of the world's religions, marking many rites of passage around the globe related to birth, death, and transition. This journey has some strong roots and it will cultivate the same strength in you.

The final chapter "Taking Flight" is a celebration of your forty-day journey. From that vantage point, you'll get a *panoramic view* of your path to discern the gold that has emerged in your life. If you choose to move through this chapter as a continuation of your forty-day journey, might you set aside a few extra hours to move through this final chapter? You may need to break it down into a few days, which will also work beautifully. See what works for you. Either way, think of this final chapter as a simple and soulful private retreat with a bit of a *rollicking finale*.

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How might I Create a Daily Rhythm?

IN LATIN, THE WORD FOR JOURNEY IS "DIURNUS," MEANING "OF A DAY OR DAILY."

So, my friend, I invite you to explore ways to integrate this journey of forty PoPs into a daily practice, or even a practice you enter into a few times throughout the day.

As you create your daily rhythm of quiet time to *Be Still, Ponder, and Engage*, fueled by *soulFULL* insight and inspiration, watch for game-changing ripples in your life.

For a glimpse at how these rhythms of PoPs look in my everyday life, I start my mornings with a PoP that always involves a steaming cup of coffee, a lit candle, my journal, and my sacred text, the Bible, while the house is quiet and before I jump into the day's demands. Sometimes it's ten minutes; sometimes it's an hour. At midday, I pause for another PoP, and I head outside for a few minutes to take in some fresh air or read something that inspires me. (This one takes the most discipline for me to honor, and yet, it never fails to refresh me.) At night, before I go to sleep, I take a final PoP to review my day and prepare for the day ahead, paying attention to any niggling bits of worry or unresolved challenges, and surrender them to the Sacred. I always end with one or two things to be grateful for. These PoPs are done within the context of a full-to-the-brim life of family, work, vacation, sickness, the unplanned and unexpected, the minutia of to-dos. They bookend and fuel my days.

It may take a few days or weeks to settle into your personal feel-good rhythm of PoPs—or you may find it right away. As you create your daily rhythm of quiet time to *Be Still, Ponder, and Engage*, fueled by *soulFULL* insight and inspiration, watch for game-changing ripples in your life.

How Much Does It Cost?

LIFE IS NOT EASY. THIS JOURNEY IS ROOTED IN THE REAL, THE RAW, THE NITTY-GRITTY REALITIES OF BEING HUMAN. SO, IT'S NOT EASY. BUT, IT IS SO GOOD.

I have a hunch it will awaken and set your heart ablaze. When it does, a life of palpable purpose and one-of-a-kind destiny will be yours. You will experience peace, ease, grace, passion, and joy to your very core. Love will pulse in you, as effortlessly as the thrum-thrum of your heart.

It may be daunting to set off on a journey of exploration for your purpose on the planet. It may be demanding to consider the nudge to connect more deeply with your global human family—whether near or far. Listening, tending to, and responding to this journey may disrupt and ruffle some feathers.

The cost will vary—depending on where this journey finds you in your life at this very moment. It may be challenging and costly to block out a few minutes every day and stick to it for forty days. No doubt, your life is full to the brim and your bandwidth may seem at an all-time low. But, the lower the bandwidth and the greater the overwhelm, isolation, and doubt within you, the greater the need for this journey.

Struggle and pain abound, whether in the lives of those you love or in the greater world *out there*. The bigger the pain, the more we need these PoPs. You may be knee deep, feeling as though you're treading water in your care of children, parents, friends, or work. (My friend, kudos—big kudos—for all that you do every day to keep going ... especially on the really hard days.) The more you have to do and the more you are committed to caring for others, the more essential are these PoPs. Responding frantically and reactively to each and every need that comes your way can burn you out and leave you running on fumes. If you are deafened by a plethora of needs clam-

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oring for your attention in your family, work, or in the world, carving out this time for a forty-day journey will be a well-deserved gift.

Even if you are rock solid and crystal clear about your purpose on the planet, your life's *why*, and the *who* you are committed to serve, practicing these PoPs daily will energize you. Doing so will cultivate fuel for your heart's compassionate pulse, illumination and discernment of your next steps, and knowledge that your worth is not tied to your external success and performance.

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Your pop plan

WHAT MIGHT YOUR FORTY-DAY POP JOURNEY LOOK LIKE?

How much time can you set aside each day for your PoPs?

If you are able, try to keep it to the same time of day. Scan your days for even a pocket of time that you can carve out and commit to. Don't put this off for later when you will be less busy or have more energy. Start with what you have and where you are right now. If you miss a day, not to worry—just pick up the PoPs the next day. Keep it simple, my friend.

As we continue on this journey, my friend,
may your life become
more than you thought to ask for or imagine,
with a spring in your step you didn't have before.

In the forty days to come,
may you find more of your own story
and discover and experience
that,
together,
we are mighty.

