

I WAS A SHINING STAR in the corporate world. I had a gift for getting the job done. This trait didn’t go unnoticed, and I was moving up that ladder on a fast track.

Externally, all appeared well to the casual observer. I was, it seemed, living the American dream. The only issue was this: I knew I didn’t belong in the world of suits and boots. Where did I belong? I had this persistent and gnawing urge to write, to write for my own self and make a living at it. This would require a radical shift of priorities on my part. It is hard to cut the umbilical cord to a hefty paycheck.

This feeling to write wasn’t a whim. I was sitting in my office one chilly fall afternoon after returning from a successful meeting with a client who committed substantial money for a project that my department would handle. My phone was conspicuously silent. Looking through the glass window that faced a row of work stations, I could see my secretary typing at her desk. I got up, closed the blinds and sat back. Although I had gotten approval for everything necessary from my client in the end, the meeting had been intense. I’d have to perform and had to do better with each client to keep the billable dollars coming in.

Suddenly, a dense fog began to appear in my office. How could this be, I thought. At first, it seemed that smoke was coming in through the ventilation system—but no. Feeling dizzy, I sat down. Then, I began to make out a gray and foreboding scene forming in the mist. I saw people hidden by umbrellas huddled together in the rain. It was a funeral. The casket had already been lowered into the earth. Trying to see deeper, I squinted and made out a headstone off to the side near a mound of earth. My name was on the slab of marble. My body shuddered. Was I having a clairvoyant episode? Then, as the people began leaving the gravesite, the vision revealed its purpose. Underneath my name, I read these words etched in the stone: *Business Man—he paid his bills on time.*

I felt both devastated and liberated. The epiphany was undeniable. Is this how I want to be remembered? Is this the extent of my legacy? Forget that—is this how I want to live? The answer was immediate: No. I wanted

Every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority.

THOMAS H. HUXLEY

to be the inventor, not the cog. I blinked a few times. The fog and the disturbing vision were gone, dissipated back to their own realm. I opened the blinds, and my secretary was still at her typewriter. Everything looked normal again.

I had no issue with people who made business their career. I felt my destiny was along another path. I knew then that this moonchild in a suit and tie would have to make crucial life-altering decisions before that headstone would turn up again.

My boss was the executive vice-president who ran the day-to-day operations of the company. I didn't like his management style, which relied on belittling people and fear. He never showed that dark side of himself to me.

For some reason, he had taken me on as his protégé when I was first hired, and I didn't disappoint him. I had recently been promoted again, and my future seemed secure and bountiful.

One late afternoon, some weeks after my vision into the future, I met with my boss in his office suite. When I told him that I would be leaving the company, his eyes ignited as if a devil had woken up. But then he sighed and even looked pleased. He thought this was a tactic of mine for more money. "If you had a better offer," he said, "then maybe I would do better." He didn't like losing.

I explained it had nothing to do with another job. I wanted to write and I needed time to do it.

"Why now? Why now?" he said. "You've got possibilities here for very big things."

"I had a premonition," I said.

"What? Are you kidding? Ah, that's bull. Premonitions are for those loony folk out there in California. You've got it too good, or is someone from another company whispering in your ear like I thought?"

He went on. He told me I was making a major mistake at this time in my life. He stood up and let me know that if I left now I would be ruining a fine career and a rich future.

When he realized he couldn't sway me from my decision, he asked me to follow him.

Once we were both outside in the company parking lot, he pointed to his parking space and said: "What is that?"

"A car," I said.

"No. No. No. Not a car," said my boss. "You're missing the point. It's a Rolls Royce Phantom. Don't you want that for your life? Don't you want that and all that goes with it? The world will be yours."

I said, "No. But I appreciate your concern for my future."

"I'll tell you again," he said. "If you leave now to follow some crazy notion to become a writer, or whatever it is you're looking for, you will be making a horrendous mistake. You will regret it." He could be extremely convincing.

"If it is a mistake," I said, "then it will be mine."

I returned to my office, loosened my tie and sat down. My boss was furious, but I had made my decision. In my mind's eye I saw that the headstone in my vision was now blank; my future wasn't set, not etched in marble; and to find my life's purpose was solely up to me.

Not knowing what or why you are doing something is the breeding ground for insecurity. Rejection and its minions are at the door, ready to cause havoc for the unprepared soul.

EDEN

In less than forty-eight hours, I was an ex-employee who hasn't looked back since. No thing except your intuition can guide you toward your dharma, your purpose in life. In my case, it didn't preclude having a Rolls Royce; it simply meant that working for one wasn't my goal.

The executive vice-president had been right about one thing. Some *thing* had been whispering in my ear, which I now know to be my intuition.

Don't hit the snooze button when you get that wake-up call.

INNER NEED: FOREVER SHINING

As I have learned since my phantom experience of years ago, expression in a pure sense isn't limited to artists. The world is full of people who desire inner fulfillment, peace, and dignity. Who among them will grab the brass ring with the key to the universe?

In his book, *The Third Force*, Frank Goble, who condensed many of Abraham Maslow concepts and ideas about psychology, summarizes Maslow's understanding of inner needs and self-fulfillment: "The specific form that these needs will take will of course vary greatly from person to person. In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in still another it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions. It is not necessarily a creative urge although in people who have any capabilities for creation it will take this form."

Or, put another way in the context that concerns us here, each one of us is seeking our own dharma, which is our reason for being here. Respect your intuition and the form of your art will follow as surely as gratitude opens the heart and mind to compassion and awareness.

As the sages of the ages have taught, knowing who you are is a supreme achievement. Do you know your self? If not now, then perhaps later, for it is also your dharma to find out.

Make it happen. Answer the core questions in this book.

You are a child of privilege.

You and none other than you are the final arbiter of success, wealth, and well-being—the crowning achievement in our temporal space-time continuum.

EDEN