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When asked, few people I meet in my travels as a speaker and author, or at home with friends or family, tell me they live an abundant life. Though I understand this from an experiential level, it saddens me. We were made for abundance. How do I know? Because God clearly tells us so.

Ephesians 3:20 promises, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us . . .” (nkjv). Read this Scripture again—carefully. How many of us are plugging in to this Source and receiving the benefits of its power?

The Bible is clear: we were made to live life more—exceedingly, abundantly more. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (nkjv). So let me ask you: “Are you living in abundance?”

If not, I hope that by the time you finish reading this book, you will already see a transformation taking place. I believe God wants you to know that you were made on purpose, with a purpose, and for a purpose. Sometimes God gently introduces us to our purposes. More often, he uses drastic measures.

And I am no different. My journey to living exceedingly started in 1997.

My youngest sister needed an organ transplant, and for me, there was no hesitation or question. I would test and see if I matched. I did.

On Monday, May 19, 1997, doctors opened up my left side and removed my kidney, then immediately placed it inside my sister’s body. The surgery went well for both of us. But by Wednesday, my condition spiraled.

Throughout the transplant testing process, doctors, nurses, and other specialists asked me the same question over and over. I heard it so much, I got tired of answering. But I dutifully played along.

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Each medical professional said, “Are you allergic to any medications?” I answered, “Not that I’m aware of.”

“Good.” Chart noted.

But in the days following our surgery, I discovered I was allergic to something—Dilaudid.

By the wee hours of Friday morning, my blood pressure was somewhere in the range of 64/36, and my oxygen was 70. I could feel my body shutting down as my life on earth slipped away. In desperation, I began to pray.

It was only in those terrifying moments when I couldn’t breathe that God finally got my full attention. He’d pursued me for quite some time, but I had repeatedly tuned him out and turned his invitations down. I had been too busy to slow down and listen to God. Truthfully, I often wondered if he even existed.

But in my near death, my true beginning was birthed. There’s nothing like getting kicked in the gut with the reality of life’s short span to help you realize the importance of seeking your purpose and fulfilling it while you still can. The running stopped, and as I allowed myself to hear the urgency of God’s whispers, I began to understand what he wanted for my life.

Back then, I felt utterly ordinary, untalented, and inadequate. But God kept sending one prevailing message. Through books, interviews, movies, everyday conversations, and from the Bible, his voice rang in my thoughts: “I made you for more than mere existence. I handcrafted and designed you with a special plan in mind. You have a special purpose.”

The challenge for me, and for all of us, was figuring out what that amazing purpose was, something I now call “my high calling.” What did abundant living look like, and how could I have it?

I was just beginning to understand what Jesus meant when he promised us life to the full the day I met a celebrity—though I didn’t know who he was at first. This manuscript is a result of our meeting.

In a single day, Troy became my friend. I am sad to say he died very

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recently, at a young age, just before I was able to share the news that Kregel Publications had bought this book. My friend would have been happy, maybe even ecstatic, since the news might have helped answer the question he asked the day we met. The question many others have asked me since.

Because of who he was, Troy's heartfelt query speaks to the burning desire every man and woman wrestles with. No matter who we are, we all have inquiring minds; we need to know why we're alive.

Missouri Augusts are typically hot and humid, especially around noon. Thursday, August 23, 2012, was typical. Sweat rolled down the center of my back while I brainstormed with radio execs about sound-check schedules, green room meals, and backstage access for VIP fans. At the time, I was the general manager of Ozark Outdoors Riverfront Resort, and we were discussing our tenth annual music festival, partnering with one of St. Louis's biggest country radio stations.

I'll be upfront right now: the entertainment industry is not typically a Christian climate. But I've watched God's hand at work in it more times than I can count. Like Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding reception, God will unveil a plan at times and places you never expect.

That day, eight of us stood in a circle talking details. A dark-haired man approached. I didn't see him at first. But I looked up when I heard his deep, warm, male voice. He offered me his hand. "Hi. I'm Troy."

His clothes were ordinary fare for a country music stagehand or lighting tech—jeans and a tee shirt. I thought he was one of those guys, since dozens of them milled around.

I simply smiled, shook his hand, and said, "Hi. I'm Anita. Nice to meet you."

He tilted his head slightly as we released. "You don't know who I am. Do you?"

I instantly said, "No. Should I?"

Have you ever had that moment, when the words slipped from your lips before you even knew they were coming? That's exactly what

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happened. I felt bad immediately. I hadn't meant to sound rude. But I was so absorbed in the necessities of what we needed to accomplish, that I spoke mindlessly.

The man gave me a half grin, one of those sly "I know something you don't know" looks. He did a slow-motion, 180 degree turn backward. The speed of his words was as measured as his rotation. "I'm. Troy. Gentry. Of Montgomery Gentry." He pointed to one of the super-luxury artist's buses parked neatly behind us. Then he grinned slower and wider. "That's my picture. Right there." His statement wasn't boastful, merely playful.

I didn't want to offend, but I'm also not one to fawn over celebrities. I'd met quite a few famous, wealthy, and powerful people through some pretty unusual situations and found all of them to be as human as the rest of us. This is why it wasn't out of character for me to carry on—as if he hadn't just come off a whirlwind concert tour, including stops at major New York morning television shows. I was simply being myself when I responded to his picture pointing.

I tried to maintain my professional composure. "I apologize that I didn't recognize you. I'm the manager here at Ozark Outdoors, but I actually don't listen to much country music. Sorry."

He chuckled from his belly, as if he was pleasantly amused. "That's okay. But do you mind my asking what you do listen to? If you listen to music at all."

I quickly warmed to his easygoing manner. "I don't mind a bit. I mostly listen to contemporary Christian. My faith is very important to me."

His face lit up. "I love contemporary Christian music. That's so cool."

"I think so."

We chitchatted a bit, small talk mostly. Then he asked me where he could find the closest workout place.

I laughed out loud at that one. "You aren't in the city. The closest workout you're going to get is jogging down the gravel road outside of our entrance. The nearest gym is thirty minutes away."

"Perfect. Thanks, Anita."

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“My pleasure,” I said, turning back to the business at hand. However, my conversation with Troy did not end there.

About two and a half hours later, I made a stop at the green room area to make sure things were in order for the artists and working crews who needed to eat and relax before the music festival started. I saw Troy’s duo partner, Eddie Montgomery, their bandmates, and the rest of their entourage at a table. Not wanting to disrupt, I simply smiled, nodded, and walked on.

But as I came out of the kitchen, I stopped when I saw Troy walk in the door.

“Got my workout,” he said with a smile. Looking rather proud of himself, he sat down to join Eddie and their crew.

I chuckled, then went to work checking in with our resort staff. When I came out of the kitchen a second time, Troy, Eddie, and the rest of their group were standing up to leave. But Troy surprised me. By the expressions on their faces, he apparently astonished his crew, too.

He looked straight at me and said, “You guys go on ahead. I’d like to talk to this lady.”

I stopped, curious more than anything.

A big guy, who I can only assume must have been part of their security detail, said, “I’ll wait with you.”

“No. That’s okay. You go on ahead. I’d like to talk to her alone.”

I confess I didn’t know what to think.

Someone else in the group said, “We’ve got sound checks in an hour.”

Troy answered firmly, “I know. Don’t worry, I’ll be there. I just want to talk to her before we start. All right?”

The group left, and Troy navigated me outside, onto the large, wrap-around resort deck for privacy. He didn’t waste any time getting to his point. “It was refreshing to hear you talk so openly about your faith today. I don’t get to hear a lot of positive talk about God on the road, and your transparency was inspiring. You weren’t pushy about it, but you also didn’t hide it. It just felt natural.”

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I admit I was stunned. But the shocks didn't end there.

With a tinge of pink to his cheeks, Troy looked me directly in the eyes and continued. "You can imagine some of the mistakes I've made. Being on the road is tough on a marriage, but my wife is an angel. Actually, her name is Angie, so it fits," he smiled wide.

I noted the tenderness in his tone. It was my turn to feel refreshed, hearing a man honor his wife behind her back.

Troy seemed to be on a mission with what he wanted to say, so he didn't leave much time for my reflections. For several minutes, his face shone as he shared more about his love and admiration for Angie and how much he adored his daughters. But he was also interested in hearing my faith story.

He listened intently when I told him about things I'd been through and how God was using them to reveal his magnificent plan for my life. The more I talked, the more serious Troy became. I noticed the sparkle increase in both of his eyes as they watered.

He leaned just a little closer, as if he wanted to share a conspiratorial secret. I didn't guess what he would say next.

"Anita, do you mind if I ask you a question?"

"Not at all," I said.

"How did you discover your true purpose? How do I find out what God's purpose is for me? I'm not sure I'm living the life God wants."

I pulled back a little, surprised by his questions. Here was a guy who, night after night, stood on a stage while screaming fans shouted his name. I'd seen his tour bus; it was gorgeous. He didn't hurt for money, and from his description, Troy had a beautiful home with a wife he treasured. He explained how homesick he often felt, missing time with his girls. He appeared to be a man who had all the boy-toys a guy could want, and plenty of friends to share them with. People clamored to be close to him. He had the fame and fortune most people desire. And yet, these important questions burned in his heart. *Am I doing what God wants me to do with my life? Is this all there is? Am I experiencing everything I'm supposed to?*

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We talked at length. I shared my story about how God finally showed me that I was supposed to write.

When I asked if he had a home church, Troy said he did. He told me he attended every chance he could off tour. I encouraged him to speak with his pastor and to search the Bible while asking God to make his purpose clear. “Keep looking until it becomes obvious,” I told him.

The last time I saw him was later that night, just before he boarded his bus. Troy suddenly turned back. He walked up to me and asked, “Would you mind if we stayed in touch?”

“If you’d like,” I said.

“I would,” he grinned. “I could use an extra boost of faith every now and then.” He leaned down and wrote his email address on the back of a restaurant ticket.

I jotted mine on the edge of a napkin.

We didn’t correspond regularly. Both of us led busy lives. But occasionally, one of us would reach out to the other with a word of encouragement or piece of news. He was especially excited the day he let me know his youngest daughter was getting baptized after asking Jesus Christ to be a part of her life. I was thrilled for him.

On September 8, 2017, Troy tragically died in a helicopter crash. We had just emailed a couple weeks prior—nothing special, just a benign exchange between friends. I never dreamed it would be our last communication on earth. His death hit me hard. But it also spurred me to wonder . . . *did Troy feel his questions were answered? If not, could writing this book play a role in seeing Troy Gentry’s abundant purpose fulfilled?*

I’m not sure, but I’m willing to explore the possibility that this body of work could help unveil the meaning Troy was made for. If through his story one person decides to passionately seek the real reason for their existence, then Troy made a lasting impact beyond what many might have imagined.

Most people looked at Troy through the eyes of celebrity. I saw a friend who was also an emboldened seeker. Not because of me, but for him, I’ve

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often wondered if one of the last songs Troy recorded, *Better Me*, had anything to do with our exchange. Only God truly knows.

If questions like Troy's ring through your mind, I pray you find answers in this book. If you realize life is short, and you want to experience all that God desires for you while you can, my hope is to provide inspiration as well as practical prompts. At the end of each chapter, I'll share brief but powerful insights, called Mind, Body, and Spirit Strengtheners, to help you discover why you exist and what God desires for you to know about your life. These are designed to help you reach deep within, so you can pull out all you were made to be. God's favor doesn't depend on position or platform; his promises exist for everyday people. *You* were made for an abundant purpose. The question is, do you believe?

CHAPTER 1

Made for an Abundant Purpose

We are what we believe we are.

—Benjamin N. Cardozo

Why on earth are *you* here? Why was *I* made? Why are you breathing? Why am I alive? These are questions most of us ask, often regularly. Who doesn't want to unearth the real reason they exist?

Some people wonder if they're even supposed to take up space on this planet, possibly believing they are an accident, or some cosmic mix-up. Does this describe you? Are you afraid to believe you deserve more?

Or perhaps your issue isn't wondering but wandering.

Are you tired of doing nothing but existing—getting up, going through the same old motions, stumbling through life in a zombie-like trance? Do you feel like there should be more?

Or do you fall in the camp of those who have gotten a glimpse of something more? You know your purpose but feel stifled in living it out. Are you fired up, much like a thoroughbred behind the gate, stomping and snorting, waiting to be released? Are you ready for more?

If any of these scenarios describe you, I have great news. Those stirrings in the deepest part of your soul are there for a reason: you *are* made for more. You were made *on* purpose, *with* purpose, and you are meant to *fulfill* an abundant purpose. As a person created in the image of God, your creator, you are marked for more than a humdrum, stuck-in-a-rut, there-has-to-be-more-than-this life.

As we go through our days, something inside our human spirits

whispers to us, “You are marked for more,” but discovering precisely what our purpose is can seem as elusive as a cool drink in a hot desert. Often, the more we hunger for an answer, the less satisfied we feel.

Two Essential Questions

If you’re like me, I suspect there are two essential questions you have asked at least once, either in the privacy of your own thoughts or verbalized publicly to anyone who might provide a clear answer:

Why was I born?

What happens when we die?

The earliest memory I have of these questions comes from when I was a child.

I remember the rising summer sun streaming through my bedroom window. I turned my head beneath the covers in hopes of returning to my former dreamy state. Our house was so still that my stomach’s growl sounded ten times louder than normal. At first I wanted sleep more than food, but then my belly won out.

No one else was awake as I walked to the kitchen and reached far above my head to pull a fresh tomato off the counter. Thanks to Mom’s gardening skills, we always had organically grown vegetables and fruits in season.

As I bit into the soft, crimson flesh, tomato juice and seeds gushed out of my mouth. The acidic flavor burst across my tongue, and strange thoughts sparked inside my young brain.

Where did the first tomato come from? Who created tomatoes? Why were they made? How did a big red tomato come out of the tiny white seeds we planted in the ground?

And then, for some unknown reason, a deeper question followed. *Why was I born?*

Why these musings came at such a tender age, I don’t know, but I suddenly felt an odd compulsion to know the answer. Even stranger, I simultaneously had a soul-deep inner knowledge of an important truth: I was made for something special. These stirrings have never left me.

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At that time, I somehow felt absolutely confident. Someone had made me on purpose. Later in my life, I would come to question that fact, especially when other voices had a chance to rewire my thinking, and new information about myself surfaced. But even then, after much investigation and soul-searching (I'll share details of that quest as we go), I would once again arrive at the same conclusion.

I exist for a reason. A unique, extraordinary, and powerful intention was grafted in me when I was formed in my mother's womb.

I was made for more. The same is true for you.

A second, mysterious question came to me within days of the first while I was playing outside. This memory is as vivid as the first.

Next to the house I grew up in stood a massive cedar tree. Pieces of its ancient bark curled off of the trunk, releasing a strong evergreen aroma. Sometimes I would sit beneath the blanket of its dense branches, hiding from the world, nestled in the soft yet prickly bed of loose needles covering the ground. Other times, the happy tomboy in me would scale the thick branch hovering mere inches above the needle-carpeted soil. From there, it was easy to traverse from limb to limb, making my way higher than my mom would have allowed—if she knew.

It never took me long to arrive at my favorite spot: a hammock-shaped merge of two strong branches near the top. It was the perfect crook for me to burrow into while the wind swung and swayed, making the cedar trunk creak and the needles murmur. Maybe the distance from my perch to the ground is what caused the second question to flit across my young brain.

What happens when we die?

As an adult, I know I'm not alone in my musings. From speaking to many women and men through the years, I've found that most people want answers to the same two questions.

1. Why do we exist?
2. What happens when we die?

I shared my story about finding answers to the second question in my book *Getting Through What You Can't Get Over*, so I won't readdress the topic here. Instead, for *Exceedingly*, I want to explore and share my experiences, and those of others, in solving the mystery of the first matter. *Why DO we exist?*

An Answer

Not so long ago, my own quest for discovering why I exist came roaring back to the forefront, through the revelation of an almost fifty-year-old secret.

The year was 2010. I was forty-six. Not the age you expect to discover a life-changing disclosure about yourself.

When I awoke on the morning of September 23, I felt good as I settled into a chair on my back deck, unaware that stunning news was on the way.

Warm sunlight dappled the fading green oak leaves surrounding my outdoor haven. A couple of cheerful warblers tweeted background music while I worked. A silken breeze brushed my cheeks and shuffled my notebook pages, forcing me to stop typing on my computer. I put things back in place and took a sip of bubbling ginger ale before placing my fingers on the keyboard again. I was searching for the perfect verb to strengthen my sentence when a ping interrupted my thoughts—the ping that started a cascade of events that challenged everything I believed about myself.

The Facebook notification alerted me to a private message from an acquaintance of over thirty years. My friend asked a question about her attempts to find the identity of her biological father, hoping I might offer direction or advice. We ended up meeting for dinner, and I took copious notes, particularly when we discussed the possibility of DNA testing with someone I knew who was a potential candidate. We would eventually find out he was not her birth dad. But her search set me on my own quest—one I didn't see coming.

A few days later, on the phone with my mom, I asked what I believed

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was a rhetorical question. To this day, I'm not sure why those specific words crossed my mind, compelling me to voice them out loud. The only explanation I have is God's prompting. I was chuckling while they spilled from my lips. I was sure I knew the answer—yet, I asked anyway.

“Mom. Dad is absolutely my father. Right?”

Her reaction was unexpected and instantaneous.

Guttural sobs stilted her sentences. “I'm. So. Sorry. I never. Wanted to hurt you.” She sucked air and moaned. “I knew I'd have to tell you someday. I didn't want to cause you any pain.”

My laughter turned to shock. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. What was my mom telling me?

I crumpled onto my bed. A rippling heat started inside my skull, spreading down my face, neck, arms, chest, torso, legs, all the way into my toes. I heard myself speaking, though my brain seemed disconnected from my mouth.

“What. What are you saying? Are you telling me that Dad isn't my father?”

Mom sniffled. “No. I'm not saying that—I think he is.”

And there it was. A secret my mom had kept for almost fifty years—a secret about me.

Mom finally calmed enough to tell me the story of a young man she had worked with in 1963 at a burger joint called the Hi-Spot, in Corona, California. He lived in an apartment behind her house and invited her in on Halloween. It was just three months before her eighteenth birthday. She went to show him the cowboy shirt and hat she wore for the occasion. But when she entered his apartment, the click of the lock behind her changed everything.

Two days later, my mom met my dad at my uncle's wedding rehearsal. The following evening after the nuptials, Mom and Dad enjoyed the reception, along with some adult refreshments.

As my mother told the story, I could hear the poignancy in her voice. Especially when she said, “I remember the moment clearly. I thought,

What am I saving myself for anyway? At least this time it would be my choice.”

And so three days apart, two potential conceptions occurred.

As Mom finished, I felt lightheaded and breathless. Her unexpected revelation raised a new question inside my brain, demanding an answer.

Who was my father?

We got off the phone shortly after Mom finished telling me her secret. I felt dazed.

I was blindsided about the questionable nature of my identity and, wondering what the future might hold, I was a mess. My poor husband watched helplessly, afraid to say much of anything—but he did the best thing possible: he held me while I cried.

I slept little and got up early the next morning. Wanting to occupy my mind, I drove to work, hoping productivity would distract me. But the prevailing question of who I was plagued me. If my dad wasn't my dad, what did that mean for me? Was I still a loved, desired child or merely a by-product of another man's sins?

Within weeks, DNA results provided the truth of my biology. I was an emotional wreck by the time the emailed report hit my inbox. I expected a particular result. Instead, the truth pulled the rug from beneath my world—it said my dad was *not* my biological father.

Suddenly, everything I thought I knew about myself was wiped away. Now I had to come to terms with not only who I was but how I was conceived.

Instantly, I went from feeling like a grown, mature woman to feeling like that child all those years before who had asked, *Why was I born?*

My nervous system was on full overload. No other human being knew what I was wrestling with deep inside the darkness of my soul.

I cried for three solid nights and days, hardly eating, barely drinking, getting little sleep. By the end of that period, my eyes were almost swollen shut. Alone in my house that third afternoon, sitting on my couch, I closed my eyes and imagined myself in the body of the little girl who

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now controlled my mind. A little girl who needed her daddy. And I made a decision.

Mentally, I scurried up into my Daddy God's lap. I laid my head against his chest and wailed, releasing my confusion and pain into his care. Telling him all the things I'd bottled up over the previous days. I expressed my fear of being an accident—someone he probably regretted allowing to exist. The ugliness I felt over how I was created poured out.

Then it happened.

I felt a sensation, as if my heavenly Father brushed my bangs across my forehead, away from my eyes. He stroked my cheek. He kissed the tip of my nose, tilted my chin up, and kissed it too. Then he whispered in my ear, "Daddy's here. You are not alone. You are wanted. I love you. You look like me."

I lay there for a very long time, hiccupping like a young child at the end of a hard cry.

Finally, when I felt somewhat composed, I prayed.

Daddy God,

You know all of the things hurting my heart right now. You especially know how I feel about myself, the things I've told no one else. Could you please do something for me? I'm going to open my Bible, trusting you to speak to me from it, and could you give me something really personal? Could you make it so plain that I know it's a private word from you?

I opened my burning eyes and picked up the NIV Bible next to me. Then I closed my eyes again and gently tugged on each side of the cover.

The tissue-like pages fluttered softly, whispering as they fell on top of each other. When the sounds stopped, I opened my eyes again, and I saw chapter fifteen in the book of John. I was familiar with the passage, but the precise Scripture my eyes were drawn to did not stir any memory. It

was as if I'd never seen it before, though by now I'd read through the Bible multiple times.

I read John 15:3 silently at first—then again out loud. “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

For the first time since I'd opened the DNA test results, I smiled. The message penetrated my empty living room and infused my aching spirit. Only God had known just how much the facts of my conception hurt both me and my mother. Only my heavenly Father knew how worthless and impure I felt. Only he knew the depth of compassion I carried for my mom, the seventeen-year-old who chose to allow me life. My mom needed my understanding, not condemnation—she'd carried undeserved guilt far too long already.

That day, alone on my couch, I received from God exactly what I requested, a personal word, both special and plain, yet powerful in its cathartic touch. It was the beginning of a long healing journey, one that would ultimately prove to me why I was born. But God had a lot more to teach me first.

When I share this story from a speaking platform, people ask me afterward if I've tried to find my biological father. The answer is yes, but not like I did immediately following my discovery. I haven't given up on finding him entirely, but where I searched obsessively the first couple of years, today I've stopped allowing the hunt to control my life. I've asked God to protect me if it would be unhealthy or even dangerous for me to find my biological father, but to also provide a miracle if it is safe. My trust is in the Lord.

Learning the truth of my identity caused me much grief at first, but it also taught me to crawl into my Daddy God's lap. It was there that the Father to the fatherless told me who I really am (Ps. 68:5).

I now know I am not defined by my conception and DNA. I exist on purpose, with purpose, and for a purpose no other human being can fulfill.

But my story isn't just about me—it's also about you.

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God's Plan for You

I don't know the story of your conception, but I do know this: before birth, you were designed, planned, and created in intricate detail (Ps. 139:13–14). You were marked uniquely for greatness—though its expression may be seen by one, by many, or by you and your heavenly Father alone.

Science still cannot figure out many of the miraculous ways our human bodies operate. I believe this single piece of evidence points to our Maker's existence. The Grand Creator made you because he desires a relationship with you (Acts 17:26–27).

We were made to be loved. We were marked for more. *You* were made on purpose, with purpose, for an abundant purpose.

But most of us miss these important truths. Even in God's greatest commands, we often overlook one of the most important foundational pieces.

I pray that by the time you finish this book, you will be transformed as God awes you through the treasure of the purity of his plan for you. You were not made to simply exist; you exist for exceedingly more.

MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT STRENGTHENERS

YOUR ABUNDANT PURPOSE CHALLENGE

Look at yourself in the mirror with fresh eyes. You are made in the image of God. You! What new things do you see about yourself?

YOUR ABUNDANT PURPOSE EXERCISE

Daily, for the next month, express gratitude for at least one thing about your life. Write each down in a notebook. Then review all of them at the end of thirty days.

YOUR ABUNDANT PURPOSE SCRIPTURE

Psalm 139:13–14: "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it."

ANITA AGERS-BROOKS

YOUR ABUNDANT PURPOSE PROMISE

You exist on purpose, with purpose, for a purpose.

YOUR ABUNDANT PURPOSE STUDY AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Are you comfortable in your own skin?

Is your conception and childhood story “normal”? Why or why not?

Do you see God as a loving Daddy who will allow you to scurry up into his lap so he can love on you?