

Live Life Big or Stay in Bed

Realizing & Releasing Potential
in Women

© Lion Hudson plc

Heather Puffett
& Hazel Pattison

MONARCH
BOOKS

OXFORD, UK & GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

There is a sea of Christian books available on a range of useful subjects. Many books claim to be able to change your life, or at least declare themselves a “must read”. This book is genuinely one that needed to be written. It builds on a foundation of mentoring works already comprehensively documented and useful as background reading. I have personally witnessed the positive change in the lives of women in Jubilee Church as a result of the application of the principles outlined here. As I read this book, I realize how many treasured principles concerning the kingdom of God were hidden to me at the start of my full-time Christian ministry, but of which I now enjoy the benefit. As you read this book, I encourage you to read beyond a mindset of models and programmes that may increase the size of your church, and apply the kingdom principles that are costly and long-lasting. Well done to my wife, Hazel, her true friend Heather, and to all the ladies who contributed to the final product.

No more the grey lives of subjugated spirits.

Let women arise and receive their place, as they enjoy full life as co-workers in God’s kingdom.

Neil Pattison

Zone Pastor at Jubilee Church, Maidstone, UK

Introduction

Heather writes...

Life is a journey—and definitely not a straightforward one, either. James writes, in verses 2 and 3 of his first chapter, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.” I am sure that you have had your fair share of trials in life... Hazel and I both certainly have. These life experiences have a way of moulding us; shaping our thinking and behaviour. Some experiences have a positive outworking in our lives, whilst it is true to say that others leave us feeling a little the worse for wear. This is the wonderful reality of life.

At the time when Hazel and I first met we quickly discovered how much we had in common. We are both the same age (both born on the 30th), with similar-aged children; we’re the same height; we have the same initials; we both view shopping as therapy for stress; we enjoy having a good laugh together; and we even both feel comfortable when we are being less than our usual sensible selves and are having one of our *blond moments*. (Not too often, though, as our husbands’ exasperated sighs keep us in check!) We also both have husbands who are called to impact nations. No pressure!

When we scratched just beneath the surface, however, we realized that we also both felt battered and slightly bruised from the high expectations put on us by ourselves and by others. The desperate cry of our hearts was, “There

must be more than this!’ We began to journey side by side, and drew great comfort and strength and support knowing that we were *in it* together.

This book is about our lives: our friendship and our responsibility to offer the freedom we have found to others. Looking back, I can see how God supernaturally orchestrated the right people at the right time to cross our paths. God the Father responded to our hearts eager to be used by Him, and He gave us the tools to build deep, meaningful and purposeful friendships. We both carried the vision in our hearts to pioneer and lead a mentoring programme for women, initially within Jubilee Church, and later on further afield. Women who, when all is stripped away, are just like us; just like you. Journey with us, as we share our hearts and our lives, the ups and the downs and the lessons we have learned along the way.

Be encouraged... there *is* more than this. We have found incredible fulfilment as we have laughed and cried with many women as we have journeyed alongside them.

Some of the areas where Hazel and I have grown – and then gone on to see transformation in the lives of others – include:

- Knowing what it means to be part of God’s kingdom: understanding our place and how we fit into the bigger picture.
- Realizing that our value and worth is found in “who we are”, rather than in “what we do”. We are no longer performance-driven, because we understand that we are daughters of the King!
- Living with a deeper sense of security – we are free to be who God has created us to be, and no longer live under the curse of constantly comparing ourselves with others.

- We have grasped the fact that there is great safety and security in establishing godly boundaries in our lives.
- We understand that ultimately *we* are responsible for our own growth. God provides the tools and the resources, but we need to take hold of them and apply them to our own lives.

Hazel writes...

The title of this book is Live Life Big, or Stay in Bed. Bed is great. I love my bed. It is cosy and warm, and quiet and safe. One of my sons probably loves his bed even more than I love mine. Getting him out of bed is a nightmare... especially on a cold school morning, when he has to catch the bus in the rain. We call him “dormouse”, and the name fits him well. Even on the rare occasion when we succeed in getting him out of bed, he will appear with the duvet still attached to him, wound around him like a giant cocoon, and it takes more than one strong adult to prize it from his grasp.

Sometimes I get a very strong urge to stay in bed all day. I want to close myself away and sleep, so that I do not have to think about anyone or anything else. Very occasionally I have done it. But at the end of the day, when night is drawing in and the day is almost over, I feel full of regret that I have in fact wasted a whole day. I wonder what I have missed and what my day could have looked like... if I had just got up and let it begin... if I had lived life. This book is our story of getting out of bed and living life to the full. It is our journey: one that quite simply began by getting up from our places of slumber and embarking on a road full of adventure and excitement.

Our intention in writing this book is that you will find

within its pages keys, resources and inspiration to live in the fullness of all that God has intended for you. Wherever you may be on your journey, be encouraged that you are not alone and that there are others who, like you, desire to move further and deeper in their pursuit of the Father. We trust that through reading these pages you will not only have heard the cry of a woman's heart, but that you will also feel more equipped in responding to that cry. If He can use us, He can use anyone...

On a more personal note, if you had mentioned a few years ago that we would both be writing a book, we would probably have fainted! We have to say that, although it has been a busy season in our lives, it has also been one of the best. We have had more fun than you could imagine! Our friendship has developed to a place where we are both completely real and transparent with one another. We have cried and laughed and at times even proved that we are capable of being insanely silly, in an attempt to keep our little heads above water!

1

A Wake-up Call There Must be More than This!

by Heather and Hazel

The great thing in this world is not so much where we are but in what direction we are moving.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Hazel writes...

Friendships come in all shapes and sizes. Some are the kind that last forever; others just emerge for a key season in one's life and then seem to fizzle out. Some are intense, forged through tough times in extreme conditions, while others seem to have been there for ever: solid, consistent. Each one is unique, fulfilling a different role in a different part of our lives. Friendship is a gift from God.

The journey began for us some years ago, while we were away on holiday together with our families. To be honest, we hardly knew each other, and were probably a little apprehensive! We found ourselves staying together in

a caravan and a small tent: ten of us in total, in a beautiful place called West Wittering, near Chichester. In hindsight, we were both oblivious to the fact that our Heavenly Father was busy planning and orchestrating on our behalf.

Have you ever been in a situation where there is an element of the Divine at work? Where the Holy Spirit steps in and accelerates a process that could otherwise take years? There was a sharing of hearts and a frank openness and honesty that developed between us; it was as if God had taken two struggling individuals and caused their paths to collide.

One day Michael, Neil and the children all decided to go out crabbing and, although we were invited, we opted to stay behind, make a pot of tea and settle down for an afternoon of getting to know each other. Although one of us came from England and the other from South Africa, and our upbringings and experiences were quite different, there was a similar thread that had been woven through our lives. Sometimes it is very difficult to see the things in your own life that are holding you back. I once remember seeing a bumper sticker that read, “Blind spots kill”, which I have since realized can be true for our lives, too. As we chatted, we began to see the blind spots: the areas where we had been living under a lie, far from the truth of God’s word.

As Heather and I have stepped out and embraced our destinies, we have seen our own potential released. Together, we are committed to see others discover their potential and see it released to achieve their God-given destinies.

Heather writes...

New Year’s Day is always a great time to reflect upon the year just gone by and to set goals and resolutions for the

year ahead. We all start so well, but then somehow, usually even before the end of January, we find ourselves failing to live by the high standards we set ourselves. How does this make us feel? For me, words like “failure” and “defeated” come to mind. The Bible could not be clearer in stating that we are more than conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:37), yet how often do we end up feeling completely defeated in our daily lives? Then there are the lies... the many lies that the enemy constantly whispers as he seeks to gain control of our minds; lies that instil feelings of unworthiness, inadequacy, fear and insecurity.

Hazel and I both recognize now that we were living our lives under these lies. They defined who we were and who we were becoming. In reality, they left us both feeling completely bound up and ineffective in our callings. If I could describe pictorially how I was feeling at my lowest point, it would be like seeing a clip from a movie where some poor hostage is bound and gagged on a chair in the middle of a bare room. That is exactly how I felt. How sad is that? The frustration was almost unbearable, and it was only as Hazel and I shared the painful truth of where we were at in our lives that we realized we were bound by the same lies.

From the time when I first met Michael, I realized that here was a man whom God could use big-time. The age-old saying of “opposites attract” left me licking my wounds of inadequacy, as I began the fateful journey of comparing myself with my husband. Here was a man who was not only a gifted teacher and motivational speaker, but a visionary with the ability to pioneer new things and lead leaders. “What could I possibly bring to the table?” was the constant cry of my heart. Michael’s God-given ability to motivate and release people into God’s destiny seemed

to have the opposite effect on me! All I wanted to do was run away and hide from the glaring expectations that I felt people had of me as “the pastor’s wife”. I felt that I was a disappointment both to Michael and to God. This propelled me into a season where I began to despise the ministry, as I felt as though it was driving a wedge between Michael and myself. He had always been passionate about what God had called him to do and he did not seem to be waiting around for me to play catch-up! I was desperate to be a part of things, but as my feelings of inadequacy grew, I began to wonder whether God could ever use me – whether He even needed me – after all, He had Michael!

In a warped way, I felt strangely comforted by the fact that Hazel was also bound by a spirit of fear, and it was only through raw honesty with each other that we realized just how messed-up we both were! There had been so much in Hazel’s life that had terrified her, and at one point even leaving the house was a battle. Her fear of man and fear of failure overwhelmed her, to the point where she began to despise herself. For me, it was only after I had reached my lowest point that I was desperate enough to allow God into those secret places and bring about significant changes in my life. I believe that He sometimes allows us to journey to a place where we eventually despise where we are. I think that had I not reached rock bottom, I would have probably lived a mediocre life way below God’s original intent. For me, the road to freedom started with a firm decision and a real determination in my heart.

Hazel writes...

Although the journey is one that we have walked together, Heather and I had different areas where God was specifically working. For me, stepping up and taking responsibility,

particularly in the area of leadership, was a huge mountain to climb. Responsibility was something that had always terrified me, and that I would avoid at all costs. I can remember when my children were little, taking them into town with my husband Neil. I worried that they would get hurt by the busy road, but rather than take responsibility, I found myself shrinking back and distancing myself so far from them that I couldn’t even see them, let alone ensure that they were safe! Subconsciously, my thinking was probably that if any harm had come to them, it would have been Neil’s fault, because he was closer to them than I was. The root of this kind of behaviour was the genuine belief that I did not have what it takes; that I could not be trusted. I deeply doubted myself and my abilities.

The outcome was that I failed to step out and could not make myself fully available to God because of the fears and inadequacies that restricted me. By contrast, Heather’s biggest fear was probably public speaking – actually, she avoided anything that involved being in the public eye!

We both decided to tackle our fears head-on. Heather decided to organize a ladies’ conference with the theme “Closer, Deeper, Higher”, giving ladies an opportunity to press in and experience a greater level of intimacy in their Christian walk. It was huge bravado at the time, but nine months later, as the event drew closer, she became increasingly fearful. She couldn’t believe what she had done! If it was not for the fact that she had already organized a speaker, and that some of the ladies had already registered, I think she would have called it off.

But God was faithful, despite how she was feeling! We ended up having a brilliant time away, with seventy-four ladies, and I know that God did a major work in her life that weekend. He imparted faith for bigger things and planted

seeds of vision for launching a ladies' ministry within Jubilee Church, Maidstone.

At the conference, one of the things that came to light was that many other ladies were also wrestling with similar issues. A South African lady by the name of Edna Els was the guest speaker at the conference. Edna was running a mentoring programme in Jeffrey's Bay, South Africa. Edna and Heather took some time out from the conference on the Saturday afternoon, and Edna shared what they were doing with the ladies in her church.

Heather felt God beginning to stir something in her spirit. She knew that the timing was right for a similar work to begin in Maidstone, so decided to invite Edna back to England the following year (2004). We also invited leaders from the various churches with whom we worked in Maidstone, and by the end of the training day we were all bursting with vision and excitement. It was the beginning of a whole new adventure, and for the first time Heather was able to recognize the lie of the enemy that she had believed for so long. The truth was, she did have something to contribute after all!

When God begins a work in our hearts, it is never just about us. Heather and I realized that, although God was busy exposing issues in our lives, we were not alone in how we were feeling. The issues we were facing were bigger than just us. We understood that the ache we carried was not only ours, but that of numerous women who were trapped in loneliness and despair: women who were so hungry for the things of God, and yet so bound by the yoke of inadequacy that the enemy had placed upon their shoulders; women who longed to be effective in the hands of their Saviour, and yet found themselves unable to rise up from the ashes and fight for their deliverance.

I have always had a love for people, and I think God has used much of my life experience to shape me and plant within me a desire to see others walking in a freedom that only Christ can give them. Our freedom is a gift, bought at a terrible price, and yet it is only in very recent years that I have learnt how to claim and appropriate that freedom. So much of my life was spent in the shadows, bound by the lies that the enemy had planted in my mind. I never dreamt that God could use me to speak His truth to broken lives and experience the joy of seeing others set free to fulfil their original design. I was too busy nursing my wounds and feeding my own sense of inadequacy.

Heather writes...

The lies that we believe are exposed as we discover our true identity in Christ. So who are we? Why does the gap between who we are meant to be and who we really are seem so wide?

When my year group from high school celebrated its twenty-year reunion, I considered what it would be like seeing old friends again. I remembered old classmates exactly as I had last seen them... and concluded that this was the way they also saw me.

I thought about what my personality had been like whilst I had been at school. One evening, over a meal at a church planting conference, I had the chance to chat to a Christian psychologist. He explained to me that, over the years, one's personality does not actually change; that our personalities are mostly formed by the age of seven. In very simple terms, depending on the different circumstances that we may face, we either end up erecting walls to protect ourselves, or we become experts at wearing masks to conceal our true selves, for fear of being rejected. These

masks come in many different forms and show themselves in many different ways. For some people, loud bravado behaviour can be a mask, whilst for others it might be a sarcastic, or even a relentless “sense of humour”. A mask that Hazel and I have seen many times is the “invisible” mask, which, once on, allows the wearer to feel and be inconspicuous even in a crowded room. And then there is the “I am in control” mask: in control of circumstances, emotions and life in general.

I know that at our conception God has a unique plan and purpose for each one of our lives. I believe that in the design of who we are, God equips us with a basic personality type in order to fulfil the destiny that He has ordained for us. If the enemy can successfully cause us to lose our identity, it will be much harder for us to fulfil the purpose for which we were created. As I reflected upon my own life, I realized that “who I was” during the first ten years of my life was very similar to who I believe I am today – and that what had happened in the interim was a direct result of the enemy stealing my identity and preventing me from fulfilling God’s purpose for my life.

The enemy comes only to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10), and he had pretty much succeeded, in both Hazel’s and my life, in almost every way. He is set on our destruction and he often does this by isolating us. The truth is that we are daughters of the risen King. Paul boldly declares in Romans 8 that if God is for us, who can be against us? Even though we are a royal priesthood, we so often live our lives with our souls in the gutter. However, in His great mercy, God rescued us from this place and He is teaching us what it means to be His daughters; to truly know Him – the One to whom we belong. It is only as we allow Him to renew our minds that we can begin to walk with our heads

held high, as more than conquerors.

As we continue to be transformed, He begins to release us into the longings and dreams that have been dormant for so long. We can take our place in the dance of life and embrace His destiny for our lives. Our place in that dance is different to yours, but together we can reflect the beauty of our Saviour to a broken world.

Hazel writes...

Once we had discovered our true identity as daughters of the King, and became secure in the fact that we belonged and were totally loved and accepted, a strange and mysterious thing occurred. A righteous anger and shaking began to rise in us, stirred from hidden places, like a huge cat woken from a state of deep slumber. When revelation has done its work and the Spirit has opened your eyes to the wonders of the cross, you no longer want to return to those old places in which you have dwelt for so long. The book of Proverbs puts it another way:

Like a dog that returns to its vomit
is a fool who repeats his folly.

[Proverbs 26:11, NASB].

For Heather and I, there rose in us not only an anger for the years that the enemy had snatched from us, but also a new resolve and determination to keep moving forward and not return to those old places of captivity. We were tentative and afraid of what lay ahead, but we were no longer prepared to stay in the place we had been for far too long. I can clearly remember one Sunday morning sitting in church and thinking, “God, I’m terrified of changing, but

I'm even more terrified of staying the same." Have you ever felt like that? This was a defining moment for me. I was no longer content to remain in discontent. For so many years I had been aware of the discontentment I carried under the surface, but felt unable to rise up from beneath it.

Have you read the *Chronicles of Narnia*, by C. S. Lewis? One of my favourite books is *The Silver Chair*.

There is a part in the story that gives a powerful illustration of deception and how the enemy holds one captive. Rilian, prince of Narnia, has been held captive for over ten years by the evil Queen of Underland, and held so much under her spell that all day he has no memory that he ever was a prince. But at night he is bound underground to a silver chair, while his mind returns to him and he cries out for his old life: to feel again the wind and the sky overhead. The children, Jill Pole and Eustace Scrubb, along with a Marsh-wiggle called Puddleglum, have been sent by Aslan himself to rescue the prince from the Queen's grasp. After many adventures, the children find Rilian and, having hidden and witnessed the frightening enchantment he is under, have set him free and destroyed the silver chair. Rilian is shocked to hear it has been ten years that he has been in the power of the witch.

"Ten years!" said the prince, drawing his hand across his face as if to rub away the past. "Yes, I believe you. For now that I am myself I can remember that enchanted life, though while I was enchanted I could not remember my true self."

Once the power of darkness is broken, we see clearly and realize how the enemy has blinded us with his lies and deception.

The story continues and the Queen of Underland enters the room to discover three strangers (Jill, Eustace and Puddleglum), the silver chair destroyed and the Prince free, with his sword in his hand. Apparently unfazed by what she sees, she walks over to the fire and throws on it some green powder, which produces a sweet and drowsy smell that gradually fills the room. She takes a musical instrument rather like a mandolin and begins to play a slow monotonous tune that "the less you noticed it the more it got into your brain and your blood". This also made it hard to think. Slowly, Rilian and the children come under her spell, and Lewis writes, "and of course, the more enchanted you get, the more certain you feel that you are not enchanted at all."

The Queen goes on to say such things as "Narnia is all a dream, and there never was such a place," and the children repeat it after her. "There is no sun," says the Queen. "There is no sun," echo the children. Meanwhile, Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle is doing all he can to resist her power.

But Puddleglum, desperately gathering all his strength, walked over to the fire. Then he did a very brave thing. He knew it wouldn't hurt him quite as much as it would hurt a human; for his feet, which were bare, were webbed and hard and cold-blooded like a duck's. But he knew it would hurt him badly enough; and so it did. With his bare foot he stamped on the fire, grinding a large part of it into ashes on the flat hearth.

Three things happened all at once. The sweet smell became greatly less, the Queen cried out in horror, and Puddleglum, because of the pain in his foot, suddenly got a clear head

and saw things as they really were. All this broke the spell; Prince Rilian and the children were free again. As a result, they are able to fight off the evil and overcome.

I think this is a brilliant illustration of how the enemy seeks to lure us into a place of captivity and hold us captive with his lies. The longer we believe them, the more hold they have over us and become established as truth in our lives. Sometimes we need to hear someone shout “Wake up!” and rouse us from a state of slumber.

Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.

(Ephesians 5:14, NKJV)

This quotation is talking of a state of spiritual slumber that makes us vulnerable to the snares of the enemy. If we are not careful, we can be lured into a false sense of security and find ourselves out of the race, passive and indifferent to the purposes of God. Praise God, it was as if He had clapped His hands over Heather and I and shouted “Wake up!” to our souls. Things were beginning to stir. We were beginning to get out of our beds – our places of slumber – and a growing desire to start really “living life” began to push its way to the surface.

Heather had tried everything, from resisting her calling to trying to remain invisible. The only thing left for her to do was to press into God as if her very life depended on it. This was for her a key turning point; a decision of the heart that enabled God to break in and bring transformation from the inside out. She began to find God in a new way, with a fresh understanding that it was not what she could do *for* Him, but rather *who she was in Him*. This understanding

brought great healing. She attended a conference during this time and had an opportunity to receive prayer ministry from some key leaders. Heather received a prophetic word, saying, “God wants to do heart surgery; He wants to cut out those areas where you have hardened your heart and give you a new heart.” I have personally witnessed this work of restoration take place in Heather’s heart, and she is a testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of her God.

Each one of us is responsible for our own walk with the Lord – no one can walk it for us. No one is going to miraculously change our circumstances, or take away the hurdles that we face. Rather, we need the courage to face them head-on, one by one. I can remember a time when I was too afraid to drive, as a result of a car accident that I had been in twenty years previously. It had held me back for years and had been an area where I felt very ashamed and defeated. This was one of those things that I had to face head-on, overcoming gut-wrenching fear and putting myself, literally, in the driving seat. Initially it was immensely hard, and the physical manifestation of fear left me shaking, with my knuckles white on the steering wheel. However, I would get in, speak loudly to my soul that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” and start up the engine. On the bad days, when I felt the fear really had a grip, I would force myself to drive even if I had nowhere to go. I would turn up at unsuspecting friends’ houses demanding a big cup of strong coffee. No one could do it for me; but as He enabled me, I was able to face the monster head-on and deal with it. As we allow Him in, He gives us the strength to overcome. When we fully surrender to Jesus, there is no telling where it will take us, but one thing is for sure – it is a road to freedom.

As I sit here, my heart is racing with excitement and

anticipation! Heather and I have talked and shared on so many occasions of our desire to see you, God's women, released into the plans and purposes that He has for you. Although we may not know you by name, we certainly carry you in our hearts. We see that untapped potential, those unfulfilled dreams and desires that lie in the secret places of your hearts. We understand those longings for deeper friendships, accountability and a safe place where you can afford to be vulnerable. We are familiar with a cry that rises up from the depths of your being that says, "There must be more than this!" You are not alone; countless others echo your cry.

God's Spirit is moving to and fro across the earth, searching for hearts who will respond. Are you willing? Will you stand up and allow Him to use you, despite the whispers of inadequacy you may be hearing? You will need His strength to guide you and His grace to enable you. You will need to learn to fight like you have never fought before, but you will also learn to overcome! The challenges never stop, and each day we choose to move forward rather than shrink back into those dark places. But we have a great cloud of witnesses who are cheering us on, willing us to keep going, shouting from the wings, "Never give up, keep going, run the race and win the prize!"

The prize ultimately is Jesus, our Saviour and our King, the One who makes it all worthwhile. But on a day-to-day basis the prize probably looks different for each one of us. For Heather and me, the prize is found in knowing our true identity in Christ; in the realization that we have potential; in the joy of seeing that potential released, and in the privilege of seeing it unlocked in the lives of others.

2

Kissing the Comfort Zone Goodbye

Discovering Our Potential

by Heather and Hazel

Your potential is much greater than what you are right now.

Dr Myles Munroe

Hazel writes...

I have a mobile phone. So does my husband, and so do three of my four children. The youngest is chomping at the bit, but we are trying to hold off for as long as possible. I use my phone for calling people and for sending text messages. I love my phone. I use it every day, I understand how it works and I am confident with it. I have always had a Nokia phone and I always will. I get Nokia. I know what will happen when I press certain buttons. However, the other members of my family all have different types of phones from me. They use their phones