

Have you ever felt stuck? We know from experience that is one of the worst feelings in the world. Yet for those of us in our twenties, it is a feeling that has become all too familiar. At a time when we should be forging ahead and accomplishing all we've ever dreamed of, many of us find ourselves simply trying to get unstuck. Or worse yet, sitting back in frustration, assuming that being stuck is our lot in life. *Is it ever going to get better than this?* Our minds race, yet our feet stand still, firmly planted where it is safe, and we are stuck.

The thought of getting from where we are to where we want to go in life is almost too much to bear. We begin to think it is virtually impossible. And it is—if you choose to look at the big picture apart from the smaller, more reasonable steps it will take to get there. Getting unstuck will happen only one way: by choosing to deliberately live your life—dreams and goals included—*now*.

Easy for you to say, you might think. But what you probably don't realize is that this book was written by two people in their twenties who discovered a way to get unstuck and want desperately to share it. We're not experts

from another generation. We haven't yet "arrived." You want proof? We live in an apartment and drive cars more than five years old. Enough said.

Although we may not have found the latest get-rich-quick scheme, we have found the secret to getting unstuck. It's the secret that allowed me (Shannon) to sign a contract for my first book when I was only twenty and release my tenth book by the age of twenty-five.

It's the secret that allowed Michael to begin a career he merely likes (selling insurance), which provides him with a generous income and a flexible schedule so he can pursue a life he truly loves (writing and teaching God's truths to others). Needless to say, we think it works. We're sure you have heard of the analogy of bridge building before, and usually it sounds slow and rather boring: "Take baby steps to get where you want to go." Yuck. Our view of bridge building isn't like that. Early in our twenties we began putting our heart and soul into everything we did. We gave our all to anything that would help catapult us ahead on the bridge toward our dreams. Passion was poured into everything we did. In our minds we weren't just building bridges, we were watching as our dreams came alive with each step we daringly took toward where we wanted to go.

As a result, we learned to make intentional decisions that helped us live with purpose and get closer to achieving our goals each and every day. We call this concept *living the bridge*. One step at a time we started toward our goals. And while we were building, we kept right on living, until one day we eventually found ourselves living our dreams.

Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well, it's not. But it *is* possible.

And at least possible is an easy enough place to start. We have found that there are primarily ten things that affect our ability to live the lives we dream of. Throughout the book you will see these ten things referred to as Challenge Points. Each chapter will focus on how to meet each Challenge and get closer to living your dreams. Let's briefly touch on them now, and then we will spend the rest of the book taking a deeper look at them.

Fear: It takes on many shapes and forms and can sometimes creep into our lives in subtle ways. Maybe you are afraid of making sacrifices in order to pursue your dreams, or maybe you are deathly afraid you will fail if you get out there and try. If we don't learn to handle fear correctly, we will never get beyond the first step.

The Approval of Others: We all crave it. Those of us who claim we don't are liars. Because of this, we tend to stick with people we are comfortable with or those we have known for a long time. If they aren't willing to support us in our dream, we abandon it. As a result we become "secure" by being part of a group even if that group is seemingly going nowhere.

The Comforts of Home: By nature most people are not risk takers. We like to be comfortable. And home—wherever that may be—is usually one of the most comforting places we know. Perhaps you still have the benefit of living under your parents' roof rent free, or you attend the same church with the same friends you have spent your whole life knowing. Things like these aren't easy to leave. But if you have a dream that requires venturing out, these are things you will have to part with to some degree. Just think of it this way: There is a new home somewhere out

there just waiting to offer you its comforts.

A Normal and Average Life: *Normal* is a relative word, we'll give you that. But *average* is something that can be defined pretty easily. It means we are just like everyone else. We do what's expected—what's been done before, what others are doing. And chances are, in doing this we are selling ourselves short. In all honesty, no one wants to be remembered for being average; we want to be remembered for being excellent. But you have to abandon average to get to excellent.

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A Sense of Control: Come on now, who *doesn't* like to be in control? Although many times the sense of control we do have is really false, we still like to believe that we are in charge of what happens to us and that we are in control of what is going on in our lives.

Even if our dreams are absent and our lives are less than we desire them to be, we want to claim that we allowed it to happen and that we didn't really want to pursue our dreams anyway.

Knowledge of Where to Start: Having the knowledge of where to start when it comes to getting from where you are to where you want to go can be tough—especially if your dream is big. That's why breaking your dream down into smaller, easier-to-reach goals is important. Just like stepping-stones, these small goals will ultimately lead you all the way to living out your dream.

The Money to Make It Happen: Life takes money, and

many times a lot of it. Chances are, if you are in your twenties, you just don't have it. Thanks to student loans, credit cards, and automobiles—and our dependency on them—twentysomethings have now been dubbed “Generation Debt.” But even with bank accounts hovering just above zero and interest rates soaring through the roof, we can get a handle on our finances and make progress toward being able to fund the things we desperately want to see happen in our lives.

The Motivation to Do It: There is something risky about pursuing our dreams. We might fall on our faces or go broke (if it is possible to get more broke than we already are), or we might succeed—and sometimes *that* is the scariest thing of all since it would change absolutely everything. Many times it can be difficult to actually get motivated to step up and give the lives we desperately want to live a try, and it can be even harder to stay motivated if our dreams don't come together all at once.

The Vision to Follow Through: Making it all the way from where we are to where we want to go is not going to happen overnight. Sometimes it takes more work than we realized when we started; other times we have to go through long periods of failure and discouragement before achieving success. Quitting is easy. It's continuing on that is tough. That's why having a vision of what life will look like on the other side of your dream is absolutely vital.

A Knowledge of How Your Dream Fits Into God's Will for You: Many times we try to write our dreams off as a crazy notion or a child's silly musings. But chances are the dream you hold dearest—the one you just cannot seem to shake—is more than that. It very well could be God's will

for your life. If you don't take a chance, an absolute risk, and get out there and live it out, the world will be at a loss. More often than not our dreams are part of God's plan, and it's just a matter of letting Him put the pieces together and show us how they fit.

These ten things are important to talk about and wrestle with, because it is only in wrestling with them that we will be able to break free from the chains that hold us back from living the lives we desperately long to live. It is our hope that this book gives you insight and encouragement as you reflect on the topics discussed and you emerge from the shadows to embrace the life you were destined for. Each chapter includes reflection questions and an action point to help you start making progress toward living your life *now*. The appendix in the back of the book lists a few additional resources you may find helpful, and if you visit our Web site, www.yourmomentisnow.com, you will be able to find a more extensive list of resources that may help you on your quest.

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Now is the time to get unstuck, build your bridge, and get from where you are to where you want to go. If we can do it, you can too. And we'll tell you how. The clock is ticking. We're all running out of time. Your moment is *now*.