

# **NOT EVERYONE WILL UNDERSTAND YOUR JOURNEY.**

**That's fine. It's not their journey  
to make sense of. It's yours.**

**PAGES 1-30 (of around 450 total)**

**(Minus the Table Of Contents, Copyright page and Foreword)**

**WORKING DRAFT**

**\*NOT FINAL\***

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**Lessons Learned from the  
Path Less Traveled.**

**ZERO DEAN**

# A message from Zero Dean

Let me be frank, at \*\$25 dollars, this is not a cheap book. I *know* this. And I wouldn't blame *anyone* for scoffing at the cover price. Having said that, I *sincerely* believe it's worth it.

If this book has as much of a positive impact on your life as I believe it has the potential to, I think you'll find it to be of far more value than what you pay for it.

*\*I should also point out that of those \$25 dollars, I earn roughly \$10. The rest goes to printing, supplies, and related services.*

## **I truly *want* this book to change your life for the better.**

I cannot claim that this book will change your life for the better, because the fact is, it may not. But I can promise you that if it doesn't, it isn't from a lack of effort in trying to write a book that will.

Not only is this book over 400 pages, it is densely packed with as much substance as possible. Unlike some books, I don't take a chapter to say something that can be wrapped up in a single paragraph.

I've tried to make every sentence, paragraph, and piece as potent as possible given my current level of understanding and my current skill as a writer.

Also, this is not a book that you read once, get pumped up about its contents, and then forget about. *Not Everyone Will Understand Your Journey* is a sort of reference book that you can dip into repeatedly over time — years, even. And I hope that you will.

## **And finally...**

You're probably wondering if my *real* name is Zero.

**Yes.**

*(And yes, it's on my birth certificate.)*

# What you should know about this book

## What this book is

*Not Everyone Will Understand Your Journey* is a compilation of lessons the author learned on his six-year journey along the path less traveled. This book provides encouragement, food for thought, and strategies to help readers cope with and overcome life's challenges.

## Topics of this book include:

*Attitude, gratitude, kindness, confidence, integrity, tolerance, success, failure, happiness, authenticity, leadership, communication, health, fitness, wellness, living beyond comfort, relationships, personal responsibility, and more.*

Readers will find that many of the lessons in this book have applications far beyond the primary topic they are organized into.

## Who this book is for

It's not for everyone.

*"The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases." — Carl Jung*

It's for those willing to work a little harder and go a little farther. Willing to keep an open mind. And willing to think critically.

It's for those who believe everyone has something to offer, whether they're an expert or not. Successful or not. Live the kind of life they aspire to live or not.

It's for those who believe there are multiple paths to success. And that anything worth having is worth working for.

It's for those who can still hear the whisper of the voice in their head that says, yes, they *can* change, they're *willing* to change, and they're open to *keep pushing forward* no matter how many times they fail.

It's for those who want a breakthrough. Those who are willing to work to get one. And those who know that the only thing that truly stands between who they are and who they want to be is *themselves*.

This book wasn't written to appeal to the masses — but it isn't intended to cater to a specific demographic either.

*Not Everyone Will Understand Your Journey* has something for everyone, but because everyone is different and at a different place in their journey — including the author when he wrote the lessons that make up this book — what some readers find meaningful, relatable, and relevant to their lives, others will not.

It is entirely possible that many of the lessons contained within the boundaries of this book will not be relevant to you because you've *already learned* what they have to teach or you have yet to have a relatable experience. But keep in mind that the *value* of this book is not in *how many* of the lessons are relevant to you at the time you read it, the value of this book is in the *one* thing you read that has the potential to change your life for the better by having read it.

Discipline yourself to *slow down* when consuming the contents of this book. Sometimes it isn't the lesson that holds as much power as a single line within it. That single significant line can cause you to make meaningful connections between thoughts, experiences, and concepts in ways you hadn't previously considered. Those connections can then create insight and that insight has the power to *change your life*.

Also keep in mind that as your perspective changes in life, so too, will the meaning of the contents of this book. As such, you are encouraged to revisit it at different times in your life.

### **What this book is not**

This is not a conventional self-help book. As such, how this book is designed — and designed to be read — may be off-putting for some

people. Be sure to have an idea of what you're getting into before you buy it (or before you buy it for someone else).

Some key things to note:

- In an effort to be as authentic as possible, there is a personal element to the book that provides readers with a sometimes intimate or unflattering view of the author.
- Some of the personal entries contain profanity.
- This book is not designed to be read quickly or chronologically.
- The author asks that you think critically, contemplate, and even question the content. Some of it is intended to challenge you.
- Many lessons are not explained in great detail and don't always provide the action steps of how to do something.

This is not a how-to book. The author deliberately leaves lessons (and phrases) open to interpretation so that they can be applied to a *variety* of different situations and circumstances. This approach allows the contents of this book to be of far more value to far more people than if it were full of lessons with limited applications.

For example, the value in the phrase: "*Not everyone will understand your journey. That's fine. It's not their journey to make sense of. It's yours.*" is that it means *different* things to *different* people — and even different things at different times in their lives.

Another way to view the contents of this book would be: *If the author attended a six-year course taught by Life, these would be his notes.*

Of course, if you *are* interested in more elaborate explanations of the topics covered within, there are numerous authors with books that specialize in such things.



## **The personal element**

To bridge the gap between the lessons in this book and the kinds of experiences that triggered them, each chapter begins with a personal element that provides insight into the author's journey. It should be

noted that these entries represent only a small portion of a much broader experience which will eventually be shared in *another* book.

*Please be aware that the personal entries at the beginning of each chapter do not necessarily correspond with that chapter's theme and those that do are by coincidence.*

## **For your consideration**

While this book is composed of content that reflects personal opinions, insights, and experiences — and the author hopes that some of the content challenges you — it is not his intention to impose his views on anyone.

Readers are *encouraged to carefully consider* the lessons within and adapt the content to their individual needs. If something doesn't apply to or ring true for you at this time, disregard it.

This is not a book intended to tell readers *how* to live, but rather points to things that were learned by and effectively put into practice by *the author* based on *his* personal experiences. How *you* connect the contents of this book to your own life is up to you.

## **But is it any good?**

A number of the lessons within this book were originally posted on the authors website. And from there made their way to other websites, social media networks, podcasts, radio shows, and beyond. In 2015, the "*Not everyone will understand your journey...*" excerpt was shared with a combined audience of over 30 million people *on Facebook alone*.

As a result of being exposed to the author's work, many people have expressed being touched by it and have gone so far as to say it changed their lives for the better. So while not all of the content in this book will be relevant to you, it *does* have the power to change lives because lives have *already* been changed by it.

## Your feedback is welcome

Whether you wish to praise, criticize, correct, or debate the contents of this book in a productive way, the author welcomes your feedback. You can find ways to reach Zero Dean at:

<http://zerodean.com/contact/>

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If you find value in *Not Everyone Will Understand Your Journey* — or better yet, if it makes a positive difference in your life — you don't have to tell the author, but *try not to keep it a secret*.



### Author's confession:

*The author (me) would like to formally apologize for writing the description of the book in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. After making a few attempts at writing this description in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, the author (still me) had to concede that there must be a good reason that book descriptions are written this way. See, I haven't lost my sense of humor. ;)*

# CHAPTER EXCERPTS

## Chapter 1: Break on through

*It's not about where you've been. It's about where you're going. You can sit there and do nothing or you can stand up and proclaim that this is the day you finally initiate massive & lasting positive change in your life.*

## Chapter 2: Are you awake?

*This day is not just a fresh start that comes but once a year, it comes every day — every moment you exist. This day is your life. And this day and all the days that follow are your legacy. No one has more of an impact on this day and every day that follows in your life than you do.*

## Chapter 3: Living with intention

*Don't squander your potential living a life that amounts to far less than the one you are capable of living.*

## Chapter 4: Taking action

*If you focus more on what you wish to accomplish in your life and less on what others are doing in theirs, you will be rewarded with an authentic life that fits you and not a poorly fitting imitation of someone else's.*

## Chapter 5: Living a life you're proud of

*The love you put into what you do always finds its way back to you.*



## **Chapter 6: Attitude & approach**

*You don't have to be happy to have a healthy attitude, but a healthy attitude is far more likely to lead to happiness than an unhealthy one ever will.*

## **Chapter 7: Focus & attention**

*If you want to see more of the things you desire in life, it's important to make a conscious effort to be grateful for what you already have and always focus on what you want — and what you want to see more of — not on what you don't want or the lack of something.*

## **Chapter 8: Personal responsibility**

*If you have the power to change something that is holding you back, and you don't, that's a choice, not a limitation.*

## **Chapter 9: Self-discipline, motivation & achievement**

*Self-discipline is a key to many doors. Not least of which is one that leads to a better, stronger, and healthier version of yourself.*

## **Chapter 10: Personal goals**

*If you create goals with confidence, but sometimes suffer from self-doubt, realize that it's a sign that you're on the right track, not the wrong one. Because if your aspirations don't push you beyond your comfort zone, you're not aiming high enough.*

## **Chapter 11: Living beyond comfort**

*Strength isn't built in one's comfort zone. One's strength is manufactured in the moments when one decides that the struggle to achieve something is more important than the temporary discomfort that comes from doing so.*

## **Chapter 12: Confidence & Criticism**

*Self-confidence is a byproduct of a stable sense of self-worth. A stable sense of self-worth is a byproduct of self-acceptance. If you wish to be more self-confident, learn to accept yourself as you are.*

## **Chapter 13: Self-talk**

*Don't fill in the blanks for things you don't know the true answers to with negative things that you convince yourself are the truth.*

## **Chapter 14: Authenticity & being yourself**

*Every time you change something unique about yourself in order to be just like someone else, a piece of the best part of you dies.*

## **Chapter 15: Kindness**

*Never underestimate the power of a single act of kindness to make a significant difference in someone's life. Your act may just be the added lift that someone needs to go from falling to flying.*

## **Chapter 16: Tolerance**

*If all you do is surround yourself with people that think, look, and act exactly like you do, you're willfully putting limits on what you are capable of learning, experiencing, and seeing in the world.*

## **Chapter 17: Leadership & Influence**

*Everybody wants to be a superhero, but if you're not already using the tremendous powers you already have to do good in this world, then why would anyone expect superpowers to make any difference?*

## **Chapter 18: The path less traveled (passion+)**

*Anyone who has ever struggled to achieve something great knows that the journey to accomplish worthy goals is often fraught with hardship. They know that great tasks may sometimes appear improbable — or even impossible — before completed.*

## **Chapter 19: Mistakes, success & failure**

— Materialism & accomplishment

*In order to succeed at any goal worth achieving, one must not only be prepared to face fear, challenges, hardships, and failure, one must be willing to overcome each of these things repeatedly.*

## **Chapter 20: Happiness**

— Depression

*The more you release yourself from the negatives in your life and let go of the things that are holding you back from being happy, the more you free yourself to adopt a lifestyle that creates an environment that allows for, nurtures, and sustains happiness.*

## **Chapter 21: Health & Fitness**

*Do more of what makes you healthy (and happiness will follow).*

## **Chapter 22: Interacting with others**

*Every experience we have in life — whether we choose to label it as "good" or "bad" — is an opportunity for growth. And every encounter we have with difficult people provides us with an opportunity to identify the things we need to work on in order to close the gaps between the person we are and the person we want to be.*

## **Chapter 23: Communication**

*Your voice is always a choice.*

## **Chapter 24: Role models & the media**

*We give assclowns and bad news the most press and then wonder why there is so much bad news and so many assclowns in the world.*

## **Chapter 25: Misc**

*Conventional thinking doesn't change the world, crazy ideas do.*

## **DISCLAIMER:**

Please note that the publisher and author do not offer any legal, medical, or other professional advice nor is this book intended as a substitute for professional advice.

In the case of a need for any such expertise consult with the appropriate professional. This book does not contain all information available on every subject or circumstances. This book has not been created to be specific to any individual's or organizations' situation or needs. Every effort has been made to make this book as accurate as possible. However, there may be typographical and or content errors. Therefore, this book should serve only as a general guide and not as the ultimate source of subject information. This book contains information that might be dated and is intended only to educate and entertain. The author and publisher shall have no liability or responsibility to any person or entity regarding any loss or damage incurred, or alleged to have incurred, directly or indirectly, by the information contained in this book. You hereby agree to be bound by this disclaimer or you may return this book within the guarantee time period for a full refund.

# HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

## Choose your own adventure

Due to the variety of topics covered in this book, *Not Everyone Will Understand Your Journey* is not intended to be read from cover-to-cover in chronological order. Instead, readers are encouraged to dip into this book and focus only on content that appears relevant to their life or is of interest at the time. *Please be mindful of the fact that reading too much content from this book in one sitting will likely reduce its effectiveness.* Also note, that due to how this book is designed to be read, readers will likely find that the print edition is more conducive to dipping into from any page than the digital version.

## Contemplate the content

The smiley 😊 that divides each entry exists to remind readers to take the time to truly consider the message and meaning within each piece. If you plow through this book without contemplating its contents, it will likely be of little benefit to you.

## If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you

As you navigate the contents of this book, always keep in mind that it's *not only* meant to motivate, encourage, and inspire readers, it's intended to *challenge* them as well. It's important to understand that the best coaches, the best bosses, and the best CEOs in the world don't do their jobs effectively by telling people what they want to hear. They make the greatest positive impact by saying what needs to be said, expanding perspectives, and encouraging people to rise to the challenges of life.

## Repetition

Because this book isn't designed to be read in chronological order, certain facts are *occasionally* repeated so as to provide context without requiring people to have read where it was originally mentioned. Also note that certain themes involving kindness, attitude, and leading by example are presented in multiple ways so as to stress their importance and maximize the impact of the message.

# PROLOGUE

## Who is this person?

It's a question I often ask myself of authors, life coaches, and others who offer advice. While they *may* have *much* to offer, I'm always inclined to wonder *where* they came from and *how* they know what they know. Did they learn it from experience or take a class or study it in a book? Are they simply recycling *other* people's wisdom or are they offering their own personal and independent insights based on *actual* experiences?

The way some people represent themselves, you'd think they sprung from the womb wearing a suit and tie — crying *not tears*, but words of wisdom. "*Yooooou can dooooo it!*"

Yeah. *That's not me.*

I wish to neither represent myself as an expert, a perfect person, or, frankly, anyone special — and you'll soon see from the contents of this book that I'm not. This is not to say I don't have anything of value to offer you, it is simply to say I have no illusions of grandeur. *Everyone* has something of value to offer others, not just people who make a show of their value.

While those who represent themselves in pretentious ways *may* inspire confidence in *some*, I've found that *how* people *act* is a much more accurate indicator of character than how they *represent* themselves with words, important sounding titles, or whether they wear a fancy looking suit or not.

One of the benefits of just being your authentic self and letting people come to their own conclusions about what kind of person you are is that it takes no effort on your part. You don't have to *try* to *convince* people of *who* you are — because *who you are* is demonstrated by how you naturally act.

So, yeah, I'm not going to *tell* you who I am by listing a bunch of titles or accomplishments. Let it simply be known that I've had my successes, but I've had my fair share of failures, too. And I've learned from both.

I'll leave the rest for you to discover in context.

## **Catalysts of insight**

Each chapter in this book begins with a personal journal entry or rumination written from the road. Each piece is intended to highlight experiences that were often catalysts for personal growth and — *eventually* — insight.

Some entries — which can be quite raw — are included to reveal personal challenges, frustrations, breakdowns, and contrast between the person who wrote those entries and the person writing this book.

It is my hope by including these entries, they help demonstrate that no matter where a person is in life — and no matter how dark or difficult things may appear — as they sometimes appeared to me — getting through hard times is mostly a matter of hanging on.

Hardships are not only *not* the end of us, they are often responsible for what become the most valuable lessons of our lives. No matter what the challenge may be, always remember that not only will it pass, there always exists within it an opportunity to become better, wiser, and stronger because of it.

Also, please note that *the contents of journal entries do not necessarily correspond with the subject of each chapter*. And those that do are only by coincidence.

## **Labels shmabels**

At this point, you may already have the sense that I'm not a huge fan of titles *or* labels. While I can see their value in providing information at times, I also see how they can be used to manipulate people.

Titles and labels are not only used to influence a person's sense of status, they can also be very self-limiting by creating artificial boundaries. People who associate themselves with an all-encompassing label often have difficulty thinking of themselves as something else.



One is *always* far more than the label that describes what they do for a living, what they do for fun, or what political party they associate with. And one is always far more than the labels that others use to describe them.

## **“Motivational blah blah”**

And finally, it should be known that it wasn't an aspiration of mine to be a "motivational" anything. It was an accident. The "motivational" label started taking shape shortly after I embarked on the journey from which most of the content in this book is derived.

At the time, I didn't feel like the actions I took leading up to my journey were particularly inspiring. And frankly, quitting my job during the height of the global financial crisis felt more like an act of *stupidity* than an act of *inspiration*. And using my savings to pursue my passions on a cross-country adventure... *who does that?*

I wasn't exactly sure what a mid-life crisis involved, but it didn't seem to me that the actions I took were too dissimilar from those that someone suffering from one would take. Nevertheless, I somehow found myself inspiring people — and I liked it. I just wasn't sure *how* I *did* it or how someone would go about doing it on purpose.

While an aspect of my journey involved *intentionally* living beyond comfort, I was challenged in ways I didn't anticipate. And as you'll see, my journey was almost unbearably difficult at times.

But as I learned to adapt to challenges, overcome obstacles, and get to know myself, I was more easily able to decipher the lessons that my journey presented. And as my attitude evolved, I no longer saw the events in my life as "good" or "bad", but rather as opportunities to learn something.

Not only did I discover that my journey was spurring my personal development, it provided me with potentially useful material that I could, in turn, share with others. And in sharing what I learned, I was able to continue my mission to make a meaningful impact in the world.

## **Culmination of content**

Please know that while the lessons within this book were prompted by personal experiences, *nothing is created in a vacuum*. The lessons & concepts that make up this book were influenced by or are the natural evolution of existing ideas.

And finally, while this book contains content that reflects personal opinions, insights, and experiences and I hope some of the content challenges you — it is not my intention to impose my views on anyone.

Please adapt the contents of this book to whatever lifestyle that suits you best.