Get Unstuck, Be Unstoppable

8 Irrefutable Rules of Getting Unstuck

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When I was going through one of the most difficult challenges of my life and needed to make a life-altering choice, I came across a story that described exactly how I felt at the time—aware that I needed to move forward yet afraid of the pain that would ensue if I took action. Here’s the story:

After a long and particularly grueling week of work, a farmer walked into town on a Saturday night to relax at the local tavern with dinner and a drink. Problem was, he didn’t stop at one drink, or even two or three. He kept drinking until the bartender flat-out refused to sell him another round. So he gathered himself up and began to stumble back home. It was only a mile walk, but in his condition, the walk took forever. He decided to take a shortcut through his neighbor’s property and garden, which was filled with rose bushes. The roses hadn’t quite budded yet so it was really more thorns than flowers. This was dangerous for a drunk man stumbling home. When the farmer tripped over his untied shoelaces, he landed backwards in a bed of thorns. He tried to push himself up quickly, but his balance was so far gone, he just landed right back where he started. He lay there for a few minutes contemplating what to do, but the alcohol got the best of him and he dozed off to sleep.

The next morning, he awoke, startled at the site of bushes all around him. When he tried to jump up, he felt the most excruciating stinging pain he’d ever experienced! He attempted to gently extract himself from the thorns, but the slightest movement was so painful, he decided it wasn’t worth it to move at all. Instead he lay there as still as he could, in a bed of thorns—hating where he was, yet paralyzed by fear at the thought of moving.

Being stuck is kind of like that. In between realizing you need to move and being completely free lies your own bed of thorns. You can get up and move forward, but sometimes it feels more comfortable to simply stay put than bear the pain of making a change—whether it is real pain or the mental anguish of procrastination, anxiety and self-doubt.

Getting unstuck is a series of choices. When you’ve been stuck for a long time, that first choice to move can feel like the most agonizing. And the subsequent ones are sometimes scary, too. All are necessary if you are to break through to the amazing life God has in store for you—the life you’ll have when you squash your fears and operate in total and complete faith. But it will be worth it.
1. **You can’t move forward when you’re still looking backwards.** Stop staring at the closed door. Let go of the past. Live fully right where you are.

2. **Meditating on the obstacle only makes it bigger.** Keep your eye on your goal rather than your problem and the problem becomes smaller.

3. **Emotions are teachers.** Pay attention to the messages your emotions send you. Stop reacting to fear and start responding.

4. **Inspiration won’t chase you down.** Seek it wholeheartedly and it will always appear.

5. **You can’t control the thoughts that show up, but you do control which ones you entertain.** Choose your thoughts very intentionally.

6. **Your words are tools.** Your words can keep you stuck or propel you forward. Be careful what you say. Choose words that energize and strengthen you rather than victimize and weaken you.

7. **What is central in your life controls your life.** Rather than center your life on the achievement of your hopes and dreams, center your life on the One who never changes.

8. **To be unstoppable, you must master this moment.** The key to getting unstuck occurs in the heat of the moment, at the height of your fear, doubt, and hesitation, when you rally your mental, emotional and spiritual energy to take the next step forward.
Choose Your Cast and Crew

Declaration
Today, I choose carefully who I spend time with. Relationships empower me to move forward or remain stuck. Whatever courage I need to speak up, make changes, or show up differently in my relationships, I will muster that courage. My most important aim is to please God, not people. And I am at peace with the fact that sometimes it will be impossible to do both.

Key Points

• The secret to a great life is having great relationships.
• When you rewrite your script, be discerning about who plays the key roles in your life and who you play a key role for.

If you’re going rewrite your script, you need a cast and crew. These are the players who make your story possible. The movie of your life would not be very interesting if you are the only starring character in it. As you rewrite your script, create a picture that is amazing—exactly as God imagined it for you. No need to play small—this is your life! The best stories are rich with characters. You need a cast and crew that does all these things:

• **Brings out your best.** To be unstoppable, you need people around you who inspire your best self to emerge. These are people who stretch and challenge you, but also love and believe in you. Being around them doesn’t drain your energy. Instead, it is energizing.

• **Sparks good chemistry.** I’m not just talking about romantic sparks here (although having a member of the cast and crew who does that is a definite plus!), I’m talking about people who share your values. They get you and you get them. You are moving in the same direction. You are spiritually compatible.

• **Raises the bar.** Any actress will tell you that their breakout role was one that enabled them to test the limits of their abilities. Often that happens when they are acting alongside talented counterparts. The same is true in your own life. Include people in your cast and crew who raise the bar, inspire you, and whom you respect and admire for how they live their life. These include friends, family members, mentors, coworkers, and spiritual leaders.
• **Are better off with you.** While you play a starring role in your script, it is not all about you! In the best story, your life will have a positive effect on the people around you. You will make a difference. You have a contribution to make that serves your cast and crew, makes them better, grows them, and in some cases even inspires them to rewrite their own script! Some in your cast and crew won’t have much to give, except the opportunity to help you learn and grow alongside them.

**Not Everyone Can Play a Role**

As you made your list, you may notice some people you wish you could place on one of the lists, but being honest with yourself, you cannot. Or perhaps you were even tempted to try to make someone fit a list who simply does not belong there. You’re not alone. But here’s one way to keep from getting stuck in a dead-end relationship: Stop expecting people to get unstuck if they don’t want to. Accept them right where they are, but refuse to be stuck with them. If you have been holding your breath for someone to do right, show up, or be there for you and they simply haven’t, waiting longer is probably not going to make any difference.

Stop holding your breath. Instead, exhale. Expecting something another will not or cannot give keeps you stuck in a holding pattern, waiting for them to change before you change. And without you realizing it, they become your excuse for not getting on with your life and the divine assignments it is time for you to tackle.

Make this decision: “I do not expect from someone what they will not or cannot give me.” Now, with this decision, you can ask a question that will free you to move on with the business of life: “Assuming this person is not going to make a shift in their behavior, what shift do I need to make?” It is freeing to stop waiting on something that is not coming. It is empowering to realize God has a plan for your life, even if it often involves navigating around challenges and issues.

Sherry was holding out hope her boyfriend would finally decide to settle down, that he would see what a great catch she was and want to marry her. He was nice, but he was quite comfortable dating indefinitely. Sherry had committed to him, wasn't dating anyone else, and was becoming increasingly anxious and insecure about the relationship, which was neither empowering for her nor attractive to him.

“Why have you committed yourself to someone who doesn’t share your vision?” I asked.

“What do you mean?” she shot back.

“You want marriage and family. He seems ambivalent about it. But you’ve committed to a relationship on the hopes that he will change. He's perfectly happy. You're not,” I pointed out.

When you rewrite the script, make sure your cast and crew wants to be in the movie you’re writing. Otherwise, the story that gets written won’t be the one God has placed in your heart. It will be what others decide for you. If you’re not living your vision, you’re probably living someone else’s.
Be discerning and courageous about who plays a role in your life. Not everyone has earned the right to be in your inner circle. In fact, allowing the wrong people in can create potholes and detours on your path that take a long time to overcome. Not everyone will appreciate your spiritual maturity and faith. If you allow such an important part of who you are to be devalued by someone else, you will begin to devalue it, too.

Get Moving!

As you consider the criteria for your support system, who is officially in your cast and crew? Make a list. Becoming unstoppable requires being intentional about the people in your life. Write the names of your cast and crew in each of the below categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brings out your best personally and professionally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sparks good chemistry. Shares your faith and values and is easy to be with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raises the bar. Stretches and challenges you as a role model or mentor and has won your respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better off with you. People you serve and help even when they can’t return the favor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prayer

Lord, thank You for opening my eyes to the need to be as discerning as possible about the people in my life. Help me attract the type of people whose values and interests align with my own—people who bring out my best as I bring out theirs. Give me the courage to cut off friendships that are not fruitful and the wisdom to repair relationships that are broken, but divinely orchestrated. As I rewrite the script of my life, make clear the cast and crew who are meant to play a role! Who are my confidants? Who has my back? Who should I let go and who should I embrace? To live the amazing life You’ve always imagined for me, I know I need the right people in my life—iron sharpeners, people who bring out my best, not my worst. And I need to nurture my relationships with those closest to me. Strengthen my relationship skills so that I am my authentic self. Help me forgive. Help me step into the shoes of others and give me greater compassion, wisdom, and understanding. Show me habits that hold my relationships back and help me transform those habits. Bless my relationships. Amen.
Surrender

Declaration

Today, I choose to surrender everything that makes me anxious, fearful, and hesitant. I give myself completely to the all-knowing power of God. I let go of the need to control the outcome of my efforts, the timing of my desires, and the actions of others. I know that it is only when I surrender that I am truly free.

Key Points

- The idea of being in control is an illusion.
- Surrender frees you to live fully, let go and enjoy your journey.

Surrender. It is a word that conjures up thoughts of giving up and giving in. I picture soldiers on the battlefield, rifles above their heads, allowing all their hard-fought efforts to dissipate, all they've fought for coming to nothing. It is no wonder then that the idea of surrendering is not an idea I naturally embrace—even surrendering to God. I have to talk myself into it. I have to remind myself of the wisdom of surrender.

Sometimes, we find ourselves stuck because we are fighting the wrong battle—one we will never win because it is not ours to win. We work ourselves into a frenzy creating plans, devising strategies, and repeatedly hitting a roadblock. Determined not to give up on the goal, we go back to the drawing board, and come up with a new plan. Surely, this plan will work. We've learned from our mistakes, accounted for them, and sought advice from all the right people. We try again. And once again, we hit a roadblock. This cycle can go on for some time before we get so worn down we even secretly question whether God is on our side. Have you ever been there?

It isn't something I pride myself on admitting as a believer—the idea that I have ever questioned God. But I have. I have had my moments—quiet moments—lying in bed pondering a situation and wondering why God was withholding something from me. In those moments, I tick off my list of good deeds, my track record of obedience to God's guidance in the face of fear, and recount the scriptures that fill me with hope:

With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

I can do all this through Him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13).

Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory (Ephesians 3:20-21).
I replay those scriptures in my mind and I begin to wonder why they aren’t working for me. Am I being punished for something? What am I doing wrong? Why does it seem to happen so easily for so-and-so, but not for me? And as I ponder more, the temptation is to become angry. Instead, I grow curious. I’ve walked long enough with God to know those questions are the wrong ones to ask. I’ve been humbled frequently enough to know my good deeds and obedience fall short of deserving even the blessings that have already overtaken me. Those questions are the enemy’s whisper, not God’s. In moments of deep disappointment and frustration, when I lean on my own understanding rather than trusting God’s process, my ears are open to hear the lies. It is a line of thinking that gets me stuck, asking, “Why? Why don’t You know better what I need? Why don’t You see the timeline I see? Why don’t You open the door that would be so easy for You to open?”

Rather than look at such questions rhetorically, I believe God invites us to actually answer the questions. I mean, He is God. And there must be an answer, right? And if He truly loves us, there must be a reason your timing and God’s timing aren’t aligned – an explanation for that closed door.

Spiritual surrender is to stop fighting for your own agenda and turn yourself over to the service of the Almighty. It is to want what God wants for you. It is to stop battling with Him and ask, “Lord, what are You trying to show me? What are You trying to teach me? How do You want to use me?” There is a reason the door isn’t open. But in our finite understanding, we may never know the answer why. Our alternative is to keep fighting, to keep pushing against circumstances that push back with equal or greater strength—and remain stuck. Or we can throw our hands up in courageous trust of the Lord. When we do that, we are no longer stuck. We are no longer pushing against what is. Instead, we rest in God’s arms and flow in His plan. We find the good in what He has given us and trust that He knows best. We breathe. We trust Him. We surrender.

**Why are trying so hard to figure everything out?**

Do not be wise in your own eyes (Proverbs 3:7).

I vividly recall one afternoon in late 1999 when my mind was spinning with excitement at the possibilities of pursuing my purpose wholeheartedly. The questions in my head were coming more rapidly than I could possibly answer them. When could you sell enough books to do this full time? What would that take? What will you do with your public relations business? Who could manage it for you? How much money would you need? What about your clients? Will they stick around if you are not managing their accounts? How will you travel and speak and keep up with all that you have to do in this business? What if you focused first on growing that business so you can sell it and then do what you really want to do for living?
Are you getting tired just reading all these questions? I bet you are. So just imagine how tired I was getting trying to answer them! The truth is, I couldn’t answer them. At least not right in that moment. But as I drove down McKinney Avenue that day in uptown Dallas, my mind was on everything but the road. My blood pressure was rising. My shoulders were tense. My breath was shallow. And I was trying to figure it all out.

But…

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Let me say part of that again: Lean not on your own understanding. Trying to figure things out without God’s input is a sure way to get stuck and remain stuck. Intelligence and perfectionism can get you many things, but unstuck is not one of them. Those who consider themselves especially smart can be tempted to believe more in their own ability to figure things out than in God’s ability to come through for them. As smart as I thought I was, I simply could not see the big picture. It was not time yet to know all of the answers.

Shoot, I still don’t know all the answers! It can be so easy to demand we know the answers before we take another step forward. In reality, such a demand shows our lack of faith.

Such was the case for me. As I pondered rapid-fire questions that day, I came to an intelligent and logical conclusion: I would grow my business over the next few years and get it to the point where I could sell it and be financially independent enough to finally pursue God’s calling on my life. “That’s it!” I thought. “I just need to dig my heels in and make this happen.”

Just as I said that to myself, I heard the voice of the Holy Spirit interrupt. “A-hem,” he cleared his throat. “Nope, that’s not what you’re going to do.”

“I’m not?” I responded.

“No, you’re not,” He confirmed. “Let me tell you something. You will never make more money doing anything other than what I called you to do.”

He didn’t promise money would come quickly. He didn’t promise how much money would come. But He made it clear to me that following His promptings would lead to more success than anything I could do on my own. He interrupted me to let me know that all my strategizing and worrying had led me to a plan of action that was less than His plan for me.

The Bible asks us to trust God and lean not on our own understanding. When we do so, God will guide us. That means we have to have the faith to believe He will. We have to let go of the need to control. We have to push past our fear.
Get Moving!

What plan(s) are you creating without God’s input?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Write out a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for His wisdom in your specific situation.
__________________________________________________________________________
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Prayer

Your will be done, not mine, Lord. Your will is what I want because Your will is the perfect plan for my life. I ask You to come into my heart right now, God, and make Your desires for me my desires. I want to want what You want. Help me stop fighting for my way and trust that Your plan for me will unfold in the right timing with the right people in the right way. I cannot see what You see, but I can choose right now to trust You with all my heart. Help me surrender each day to You, Lord, focused on knowing that You have me in the palm of Your hand. Help me live in the place of knowing that if it is meant to be, it will divinely unfold. All I have to do is what You ask of me. You will do the rest. I choose right now to accept and embrace Your will peacefully and contentedly. Amen.