

VALORIE BURTON

Brave Enough  
to Succeed



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## **BRAVE ENOUGH TO SUCCEED**

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## 8 Irrefutable Rules of Getting Unstuck

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 rosebushes. The roses hadn't quite budded yet so the bushes were really more thorns than flowers. This was dangerous for a drunk man stumbling home. When the farmer tripped over his untied shoelaces, he landed backward 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 sight 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 the 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 means 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 backward.** 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 which thoughts show up, but you can 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.





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Part 1

# CONFRONT THE TRUTH

The first step to getting unstuck  
is to tell yourself the truth.

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# Tell Yourself the Truth

## Declaration

Today, I choose to listen to the divine inner wisdom that whispers the truth to me. I will not ignore it. I will not hide from it. I have the courage to embrace it—regardless of the fallout—for it is God Himself speaking to me. When I follow His wisdom, I don't stumble. I don't get stuck. When I embrace the truth rather than fear it, I am unstoppable.

## Key Points

- When you face the truth, you are free.
- Your reality won't change until you do a reality check.
- Uncover the truth about where you are and you can begin to draw a map to where you desire to be.

**W**hy is it that we ignore the truth? Or even hide from it? You had an inkling that person wasn't who they appeared to be, but you got involved anyway...and now you feel stuck trying to get out of the relationship.

You knew instinctively it was not the right time to make that big purchase, but you wanted it, so you got it. Now you're stuck with the bill and it's causing problems.

You didn't want to take on that project. In fact, your stomach turned when you were asked to do it, but your people-pleasing personality led you to say *yes*, and now you're stuck, resentful, and completely overwhelmed!

You knew that wasn't the right career path for you, but out of fear or insecurity or bowing to what others might think, you chose it anyway.

To be clear, I don't say any of this to beat you up. I say it so we can start this journey in a place of honesty.

The first step to getting unstuck is a simple one: Tell yourself the truth and behave based on that truth. It is easier said than done. Telling the truth and acting on it ruffles people's feathers. It may make you quite unpopular. It will make you uncomfortable at times. But nothing gets people stuck more than ignoring that still, small voice that persistently speaks if only we will listen. Consider the area(s) of your life in which you currently feel stuck and write them down here:

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Now, answer this question: If God Himself were speaking from this page, writing these words to you right now, what would He have to say to you about the area(s) in which you are stuck? Write down every nudge, inkling, and spiritual message you have sensed, no matter how small.

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Now, based on what you sense God might be telling you:

What is it time to do?

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What is it time to say?

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What is it time to change?

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Telling yourself the truth is a simple act, but one of the most courageous. It will set you free and on a path to a life that is absolutely unstoppable. So as we start on this journey, I believe God is asking you first to be truthful. Answer some simple but bold questions:

- What are you afraid to admit?
- What are you really afraid will happen if you take action?
- Whose approval are you so afraid of not gaining that you forego your dreams, your vision, and your freedom?
- What do you avoid for fear of facing the consequences of change?
- And what would you have to let go of in order to move toward the life God imagined for you?

I realize these aren't easy questions, but I believe the answers lie within you. They are so powerful that when you answer them truthfully,

your next steps begin to unfold in a big way. You can run from them or ignore them, but they are not going away. That's the power of having the courage to tell the truth.

Truth awakens you from the deep slumber of lies. In pretending we don't hear the voice of the Holy Spirit or resisting the guidance of that voice, we live a lie. "God, did You say this man I'm dating is not 'the one'? But we've been together too long. I've invested too much. If I don't stay with him, then what? I'll be alone again. I'll never meet anyone else. God, that can't be You. No, that wasn't You. I'm going to stick with what I have." And more years progress and the relationship doesn't. You feel stuck.

Or maybe it's not the relationship. Maybe it's your money habits. You know God has nudged you to be a better steward, speak up, and negotiate what your contributions are worth, but the idea of doing so scares the dickens out of you. You imagine yourself groveling for a better salary and being thrown out of your boss's office, or telling the dealership you want a better price and having them laugh in your face. "No!" they might yell in disgust. "Who does she think she is?" And so you are quiet. You don't just want a better deal or higher pay, you *need* it. But feelings of insecurity may lead you to pretend all is well financially. But it is not.

If you embraced the truth of what you know deep down, you'd be free to walk onto the path God has for you—a life in which you are perfectly within His will. It is a life of faith. You step out with no guarantees except God's promise that He will never leave you nor forsake you and His declaration that if you delight yourself in Him, He will give you the desires of your heart.

## Get Moving!

1. **Go to a quiet place.** For two full minutes, close your eyes and breathe deeply—slow, cleansing breaths. Breathe in slowly for five seconds. Hold for five seconds. Then exhale for eight seconds.
2. **Meditate** on the words of Jesus found in John 8:31-32: "If

you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The truth of God’s Word will always set you free, and so will the truth of your situation.

3. **Tell the truth.** After meditating on the scripture, do a reality check on your biggest challenge and answer these questions: What truth(s) have you avoided admitting to yourself? In what way(s) has this affected your ability to move forward?

### Prayer

*Lord, give me the courage to face the truth and not ignore it. Give me the faith to trust Your nudges when the truth makes me afraid. Empower me with boldness and courage to take actions that matter. My power lies in Your presence within me. I want to honor that presence by acting on Your guidance in all things, especially when fear tries to paralyze me. Thank You, God, for speaking to me. Now help me act based upon what I hear. Amen.*