

Emphasis  
on *Integrity*



**THE SOLUTION  
TO BURNOUT**

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## FORWARD AND FORWARNING

This book is not in your hands by chance. It contains truths that apply to everyone, particularly those who have pushed too hard for too long, neglecting themselves. It will bless you and bother you on multiple levels. Set aside doubt and trust that the revelation will bring the answers you have sought for so long.



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All Scripture References taken from the English Standard Version.

## THE TRUE STORY

I was in the fetal position between the coffee table and the couch. Every breath felt like fire. Something strange was happening throughout my veins. It wasn't something I could explain; I'd never experienced it before. I apologized and asked the person in the room with me to sit quietly in the chair behind me.

"Please, don't talk to me, don't make noise, just sit there and be with me." Talking and breathing increased the flow of what felt like fire throughout my body. I was anxious. All I knew was that stillness was the only solution at this moment. Was this it? Was this the beginning of the end? What was happening?

Burnout is real. It starts in the mind with less-than-healthy thoughts, but you push through. Warning signs start with physical issues and weaknesses, but you push through. Until one day, you find yourself incapacitated or even in a compromising situation. That's it. Full breakdown...and it sucks.

Who am I, and why should you listen to me? Hi. I'm Leah, and I used to struggle with self-neglect. Today, I'm recognized by many for my award-winning excellence in business performance. I've served over 1.5 million people over 35 years in multiple industries. I am an author, speaker and operate as a strategy pro. I am the Founder of Armed Ambassadors, which equips individuals who have pushed too hard for too long and don't know how to stop. *Oh, hello.*

I'm honored to have achieved personal and professional goals I never dreamed possible. Humbly, I developed *Emphasis on Integrity*, a program officially recognized as an expert system with qualifications in strategy planning and self-recovery. *But enough about me... let's talk about me.*

Like many, I came from a broken home. We lived below the poverty level. Neither of my parents went to college, nor did they encourage me in that way. We were blue-collar workers, and the message was that *you*

*work hard all day, every day, 40-plus hours until you die. And sometimes, you get a vacation.* A union job was hitting the jackpot and I did all that. The only problem was that no one told me that having a spirit of excellence didn't require me to kill myself. So, believing my job was my identity and that if I wasn't producing, I wasn't a valid human being... I worked and worked and worked some more until the line between my personal and professional life barely existed. I poured every ounce of my being into everything I did until, not once but twice, I suffered debilitating health crashes that left me broken down and even bedridden. By grace, I've overcome some difficult things and emerged successfully. Now, I want to give you the benefit of what I've learned.

In 2009, I was working full-time for a Christian adoption agency. I was in a very unhealthy marriage (to put it lightly), and the combination of stress, thyroid, hormone imbalance, and a revelation of hidden IRS issues all slapped me in the face. I knew I wasn't functioning properly. I remember walking into work one day thinking, *'If I got in a car accident and broke both my legs, no one could judge me for lying in bed all day doing nothing.'* My next thought was, *'Okay. That's not healthy thinking.'* So, what did I do? Nothing. I went to work and gave everything my all. Duh. I pushed and kept going. That's what you do... right?

I went to my general practitioner and asked for help. I had suffered from anxiety years earlier and went through a series of anti-depressants until, finally, the doctor relented and prescribed Xanax. I wasn't depressed. I was anxious (another story). I don't encourage substance abuse, legal or otherwise, but I praise God for whoever invented Xanax. It was the perfect solution. It wasn't like being on drugs; the lights didn't look hazy, and I could fully function. It just... shut off the "crazy" thoughts that hounded me nonstop. So, when I wasn't functioning well in 2009, I thought perhaps it was time to revisit some chemical help I believe in when appropriate.

This time, however, I *was* depressed. The doctor prescribed something, and I insisted on the lowest dosage available. I'm a type-A, and I don't like anything messing with my sense of control (another story yet- sound familiar?) I'm also very sensitive to drugs and wanted to start with half of the lowest dosage. So, I took half of the first pill and called my mother. We talked on the phone until I became anxious, feeling the drug start to course through my body. I hung up and, within 30 minutes, ended up in the aforementioned fetal position. My body

was so depleted that it couldn't handle even a minor dosage of a new drug, and my mind couldn't cope with one more life event. It just couldn't.

God is abundant in His generosity. Working at the adoption agency, I was surrounded by social workers and counselors who all recognized my issues and led me to the right doctor while lovingly counseling me. I had a counselor, but he was loyal to my narcissistic spouse. I started seeing an MD who had become a naturopathic doctor, so she was the golden jewel with all the answers to my depleted condition. My insurance didn't cover her treatment, and even though I was living well below the poverty level, she was worth every scraped-together dime.

What happened? The stress levels in my life caused me to deplete my serotonin and cortisol levels, which makes individuals suffering from chronic stress highly vulnerable to mood disorders and infection. I was still drinking caffeine in those days, so I constantly told my body to go, go, go while depleting my adrenal glands and any source of properly-produced energy. And hey, who doesn't want cookies, brownies, and any other goodies that may be offered at every turn? I do! But sugar is a significant cause of inflammation in the body, as well as a carcinogen.

So, I was pushing, pushing, pushing, not sleeping, resting, or refilling, and I couldn't afford any leisure. I couldn't stop because the money I was making was our only income at the time... oh, except the IRS had levied my wages, taking my entire (*yes, entire*) paycheck. An angel at the corporate office suggested we change my withholding status, giving me \$235 every two weeks. Needless to say, we weren't paying our rent, paying our bills, or eating well. Guess what happened next... my body said, *'You're on your own, jerk.'* And shut down.

I couldn't take time off work. I couldn't say *no* to ministry without feeling guilty. I feared being a bad employee, a poor leader, and failing. I didn't feel good, but I had to keep pushing forward. No one was going to do things for me or take care of me. I had responsibilities and no one I could delegate the work to. I had to keep going.

I had to. Again... *sound familiar?*

"Mental health is vital. As it goes with our thought life, so it goes with our joy, hope, peace, and our perspective on all things."

*John Eldredge*



## **THE POWER OF COMMUNITY**

### **MY SALVATION**

Your story is probably different, but I'm sure you can relate to some of the pain points:

- Overwhelmed
- Exhausted
- Unhealthy thoughts
- Physical warning signs of fatigue
- Pressure to push through
- Cannot relinquish control
- Trying but feelings of failure
- Fear of...

You get the idea. I want to speak candidly for a moment. It's just you and me sitting across from each other. We're friends, right? Okay. From my heart to yours, I say, "Hey, Stupid. Knock it off."

Who do you think you are? Do you see a red "S" pasted across your chest? Who told you that you were the only one responsible for all you are doing? What makes you think you are the first person in history who doesn't need help? Why are you ignoring the warning signs and pushing, pushing, pushing? If you go down... everything for which you've been working so hard will be in jeopardy.

A counselor once told me, "Kudos! Good for you! You've made it this far...but whatever you used to do isn't working anymore. It's time to reevaluate and readjust." So, I now say it to you. Kudos! But it's time for a change.

We've all heard the saying, "No man is an island." Well, that's true. But some of us have learned to feel that we must do it alone. We are the only ones who can do what we do, or we must carry the weight of the

world... *or else*. Well, again, candidly, I say... that's bull. Not only is it bull, but it's a lie from the pit of hell.

Why did God give Eve to Adam? To be his *helpmate*. Why are coaching and counseling among the top-paid professions? Because we need them. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Without counsel, plans fail, but with many advisers, they succeed." It doesn't get much clearer than that. You've most likely heard the definition of insanity: *Doing the same thing over and over, expecting a different result*. Are you thinking things are going to improve miraculously? Friend, they won't. I'm sorry... but they won't. It's a choice.

So, what did I do? First, Celebrate Recovery changed my life. I used to think that recovery was for *those people*—those people who had addictions to drugs or alcohol. I used to believe they either chose or were genetically prone to whatever issues they had until God smacked me and opened my eyes.

I was asked to sing for the ministry and thought, *yeah, I could do that*. But as I sat in the audience, heard the 12 steps read aloud, and listened to the testimonies, I realized, *Oh...this is about me*. This is about adjusting my perspective and understanding that I have developed behaviors that have become detrimental to my wellness. And if you're reading this book, so have you. We all have. Mine? Anger, enabling, codependency and...you guessed it... working too hard without proper self-care.

You've heard that saying, it takes a village [to raise a child.] Well, it does. Making changes and adjusting our perspectives takes a safe place and accountability. If you want to realize how fortunate you are, sit in a group across from someone whose sixteen-year-old daughter is in the hospital hooked up to IVs because she's anorexic and thinks she's ugly.

You were not created to be a Lone Ranger. I know, I know. But saying anything out loud is too much. Then don't talk. Just go and see what happens. You can find a Celebrate Recover near you here: <https://locator.crgroups.info/>

Next, I found a good doctor. I know that can be challenging. I wouldn't say I like shopping for a doctor, just like I dislike shopping for a church, a dentist, or a chiropractor. But once you find the right one... *gold, baby*. I strongly encourage a naturopathic doctor to work in

conjunction with your MD. MDs are fine, but they don't tend to read your bloodwork numbers the same. I've had a doctor look at my bloodwork and say, "Whoa. You're nowhere near where you need to be," but not tell me one thing about how to fix it. I've also had them say, "Your numbers are good, well within normal range." Okay, then why do I feel like cah-cah?

A naturopathic doctor will go deeper and encourage supplements and methods that have long been utilized but aren't offered by the mainstream pharmaceutical industry (don't even get me going.) For example, instead of Xanax, I now use Gaba if I need to take that edge off. I strongly encourage working with your doctor and naturopathic doctor for support and a plan to recover the years the locusts have depleted and stolen.

Also, don't be intimidated to try counseling. It's insane to me that people still hold the opinion that counseling is for *those people*. "Oh, it's not that bad." Why must it be *that bad* before seeking a counselor to help your plans succeed? That's called "wisdom," and the last time I checked, we are all called to exercise wisdom. Not only that, but God graciously says in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, Who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." Hmm. Makes sense to me.

Finally, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. Be careful. It's easy to relapse.

In 2014, I was living the life. I was delivered from my marriage in 2011 and went to Bible School in Hawaii in 2012. In 2013, I accepted a staffing position and could not have imagined things being any better. Silly rabbit. It took four years to recover from my health crash in 2009, four years before I functioned normally and considered myself entirely well. Four years of exercising discipline in my routines, embracing community accountability, and staying away from caffeine. I worked my plan. But what happened? I was still operating out of the mindset of performance and pushed myself beyond what my still fragile system was willing to offer.

So, in June 2014, I ended up bedridden from fatigue once again. I felt like I was losing my mind. I kept telling myself; *it's not that much; I should be able to handle it*. I could do nothing but lay in bed. I couldn't work, I couldn't eat and I couldn't sleep. I watched the clock for every hour that I could take another downer, Xanax, and 5-HTP, all meticulously on the allotted hour so as not to cause any possible interaction. Paranoia, anxiety, weight loss, and my poor roommates! I couldn't read or watch TV– they were too much stimulation. I couldn't stand to hear my neighbors laughing. I was miserable. All I could do was play Bejeweled on my phone or crochet for distraction. I couldn't afford much medical care and was released from my staffing position. All I could do was spend all day every day in bed for an entire month, waiting to be well enough to get on a plane back to California. There, I could once again start the journey to recovery. Burnout is real, and it will cost you.

So, what's the answer? How did I go from broken and bedridden to the founder of Armed Ambassadors, an author, speaker, and strategy pro with a proven program? How can you avoid burnout or come back from it? Let me tell you...

\* 5-Hydroxytryptophan is a naturally occurring amino acid, chemical precursor, and metabolic intermediate in the biosynthesis of the neurotransmitter serotonin.

I'm a brand snob. I recommend Nature's Way or Source Naturals.

"We cannot  
become what we need  
by remaining what we are."

*Max de Pree*



## WHERE TO BEGIN

Have you ever thought, “If only I could catch a break and get a better night’s rest?” If so, this might be the most important thing you’ll read all year. Here’s why...

Have you ever said any of the following?

- I don’t know how to get from where I am to where I want to be.
- I don’t want to have a breakdown, burnout, or a heart attack from pushing too hard.
- I don’t know where to begin to change things.
- I can’t trust anyone else to do what I do.

If you can relate to any of these statements, then this information is going to change your life. In the following chapters, you will discover the top three ways to kick exhaustion in the rear and regain your energy.

Before I unpack the specifics, I want you to consider the result of doing nothing for a moment. Ignoring a problem doesn’t make it go away. It makes matters worse! I have often found that after putting something off, the confrontation is never as bad as I imagined, and I always wish I had handled it sooner.

So, how bad can things get? Well, if you ignore the emotional and physical warning signs, these are the long-term results you are highly likely to experience:

- Restricted to bed by the doctor’s orders.
- Inability to function normally because of the debilitating effects of stress and its aftermath.
- Forced to relinquish your time, money, and responsibilities.
- Muscle tension or pain.
- Change in sex drive.
- Upset stomach.
- High blood pressure.

- Obesity and diabetes.
- A heart attack that leaves your family lost or alone.

Do you think I'm exaggerating? I'm not.

The Mayo Clinic reports that the symptoms of stress can affect your health even if you don't realize it. That annoying reoccurring headache, frequent insomnia, decreased productivity... can you relate? I can. But it's not just physical. Stress can also affect your inner man, your thoughts, behaviors, anxiety, sadness or depression, and social withdrawal.

I pray that you are reading this before your crash or burnout, but if you're not and you've already experienced the devastation, then you know what I'm trying to say without words to describe the misery adequately. So, to start the shift and regain peace of mind, where do we begin?

### **It's Crucial to Get Clear.**

The vital first step in achieving any goal and becoming an all-around healthier person...is clarity. You must get a clear picture of where you are and where you want to be. You can diagnose your current state and reposition yourself at any time by asking a series of Clarifying Questions.

What are the core beliefs that keep you stuck or have the power to propel you forward? Why do you believe these things? Who is pushing you? Who told you to do that?

When did these beliefs start, and if necessary, are you willing to adjust your thinking? With clarity comes the understanding of whom you've become versus whom you are called to be. How do you do it? Lean in, little padawan, and take the journey you must. It's all about perspective.

ECCLESIASTES 7:12

“Wisdom is a shelter, as money is a shelter,  
But the advantage of knowledge is this:  
*Wisdom preserves those who have it.*”

What do you need? Wisdom. Know-how. Adherence to that still,

small voice that keeps telling you something's got to give. Ephesians 5:15-16 says, "Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." It doesn't say to *push yourself without care because you're running out of time*. It says to *make the best use of the time*. How wise is it for you to run yourself into the ground, prohibiting you from producing your best fruit and having less to offer emotionally while telling yourself you should be able to do it all? I know. I sincerely believed that, too. I really, really did! But hey, if cracks are starting to show...pay attention and remember, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2). You aren't supposed to do it all. Pride tells you that you can and should.

What else do you need? Vision. It is best to have realistic hopes, dreams, and goals with a strategy plan to reach them. I call it a Battle Plan. (Can't you hear the motivational drums pounding?) Remember Proverbs 29:18, 'Without vision, the people perish!' "Perish" ... we can't take that lightly. *To die or be destroyed through violence, privation, etc. To pass away or disappear*. I rebuke that in the name of Jesus! You will not be destroyed through any plan. You will not disappear! You will rise. You will recover. And you will fulfill your assignment and vision. I decree it... and you should, too!

Let's keep going... what else do you need? A "Why." Statistics show that people with a solid *why* succeed, whereas people who are unsure of why they are doing what they are doing are most likely to fail. What do I mean?

- What am I pursuing?
- Why am I pursuing it?
- Why now? (what is the cost of doing nothing?)
- Why have I allowed myself to...

What else do you need? Remember, it's all about perspective. You need to understand who you are in Christ clearly. Your identity and core beliefs contribute to why you trigger when you do and how you recover (or don't).

If you're fully walking in your faith, you've heard about identity in Christ for a while now. But, if we operated out of who God says we are, we wouldn't struggle in the ways we do. It's always appropriate to remember who He says we are and ask for the wisdom to operate out of

these truths. He never called you to strive. He calls you to abide in His presence.

2 Peter 1:3-11, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him Who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” I can’t stop. It all applies. Verse five continues, “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. *For if these qualities are yours and increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, **for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall.** For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

This is a fantastic beginning for your battle plan. A battle plan is like a “stop loss” in the trading world. Stock traders put a stop loss in place, so when the trade begins to go against them, an automatic exit keeps them from losing beyond a specific amount of money.

Wouldn’t you like to have an automatic exit in place for when things go beyond your calling and election? We need to practice the qualities in 2 Peter 1 so that when life overwhelms us, we don’t react emotionally but by the behaviors set in place. How’s that for clarity?

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity."

*Melody Beattie*



## THE MEAT & POTATOES

### HOW

Gear up, boys and girls, because this is where it gets squirrely. I will tell you right now that the enemy does not want you to have the information I am about to give you. You may have even heard it before, but I assure you he wants you to avoid a full understanding. He doesn't want your life to change; he likes you exhausted and too pooped to pop. That loser doesn't have to take you out– he just has to wear you out. Voilà! Job done.

#### **GALATIANS 5:1**

“For freedom, Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

When I walked into work thinking about an accident breaking both my legs that would allow me to have downtime, I was submitted to a yoke of slavery. I believed that I had no choice but to push forward. After all, I couldn't let the car run off the road; I had to grab the wheel! Or did I?

Just as a stop loss provides an automatic exit in trade, a boundary provides automatic protection in life. *Ah, yes! I've heard about boundaries.* Great! And how's that going?

Here's a quick definition and example for those who haven't learned about boundaries yet. A boundary is something that indicates bounds or limits. Just as a property line defines what belongs to you and what you are responsible for, a boundary defines where something begins and ends. It keeps the good in and the bad out. Even though this makes perfect sense, boundaries are something that many people struggle with daily. Not just individuals... our society struggles with respecting boundaries, so it's no surprise that individuals live with blurred lines.

I had a client come and tell me the story of a young man she hired.

His mother called and asked if my client would hire him. She gave his story and why he needed a good job. My client hired the young man.

On day one, he went to lunch and didn't come back for two hours. Her other employees called her to let her know and ask if she knew his whereabouts. On day two, he was a no-call-no-show. He didn't call, and he didn't show up. She called and had 'the talk' with him. On day three, he called her at 4 am, saying he had been in an accident and didn't think he could make it to work.

By the time she got to my office for our appointment, she couldn't focus and was carrying the weight of this young man on her shoulders. We had to clear the road and move all the junk out of the way before we could get down to our intended business; we had to deal with her boundaries.

"I feel bad for him," she said, "He's just a kid; he's trying."

"Why do you feel bad?" I asked her.

"Because I was a kid once and know how hard it can be. He's trying."

Do you know where my client's first red flag was? When the mother called! If this woman wants to enable her son and do his bidding for him, that's their business, but if she doesn't ever push him out of the nest, he will never learn to fly or be responsible. I said the proper response to the mother would have been, "That's great. Tell him if he's interested in working for me to give me a call, and we can discuss it." If he doesn't call himself, he isn't serious. If he isn't serious, we can't use him on our team. It may have saved her and her employees the added stress.

I told her one of my favorite questions is, 'What am I responsible for, and what am I not responsible for?'

"Are you responsible for raising this kid?"

"No."

"Are you responsible for your other employees and the clients paying you for a job he's not doing?"

"Yes."

And there you go.

Boundaries keep the good stuff in and the bad stuff out.

Sometimes, people think you're mean when you exercise a boundary...but that's not true. If you set a standard for how things will go, it's not you being the bad guy, but the standard.

If you tell people up front what is expected, they can choose to be a part of that or not. And when they drop the ball or fail you, it is not your fault or responsibility to save them. That's called enabling...but that's another book.

Remember, it's all about perspective, so along those lines, a boundary makes things easier on you. Huh? How is it easier to tell people *no* and deal with the consequence of their attitude? Well, let me give you another example.

I used to be the manager of a health food department in an upscale grocery store. I always say that I worked harder up front to make things easier on the back end. What does that mean? It means that I made an extra effort to do things right in the beginning so that I could flow with ease later. Once things were set in place correctly, it was easier to work. How does that look?

When my load came in (a pallet of product), I would break it down according to where it belonged. This way, when I stocked the shelves, I wasn't volleying between aisles wasting time and energy; I worked one aisle, then the next aisle, until done. It was more work upfront to organize the items as I removed them from the pallet, but it made the workflow on the floor easier where I was sure to be interrupted by customers, expected to swiftly replenish the shelves and manage my time properly. You may have to do more work upfront to make the flow easier later.

James 1:2-6 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be *perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the seas that is driven and tossed by the wind. *For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways,*"

Are you feeling perfect and complete? Or have you, perhaps, for lack of boundaries, been driven and tossed by the sea and wind? Don't worry; you're not alone. There's still time to learn the art of what I like to call, The Guilt-Free No. (Try it, you'll like it!)

"Hey, Bob, can you pick my brother up from the airport at 3 pm?"

"I'm sorry, Joe, I wish I were in a position to help, but I don't get off until 5 pm." You are not responsible for Joe's brother not having a ride; it's okay to say *no*. *But what will he do?* Friend, that's not your problem. In a world with Uber, they can figure something out.

"Sue, can we have bible study at your place tomorrow? My place is a mess, and I won't be able to prepare by then."

"Wow, I'm sorry, Carol. That's not going to work. I wish I were better positioned to help, but I just can't this time."

"But why? Your house is always company ready!"

"I appreciate that! But Wednesday won't work."

"Are you serious?"

"Yes. I appreciate your understanding and thank you for thinking of me!"

"You're seriously going to hinder bible study because it doesn't work for you?"

"I'm not hindering bible study; I'm just saying tomorrow won't work."

"Wow. I didn't realize you were such a selfish person. Thanks a lot."

"I'm sorry you feel that way, Carol. I'd be happy to help another time."

"Whatever."

We all know there will always be those people who push you to handle their problems and then manipulate you when you won't. Many will even cut you off if you don't comply with their bullying, and as hard as that may be, we need to let the toxic people be toxic and not take on their drama. I love the saying, "Poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine." Amen, brother!

Other boundaries may come in the form of actually leaving work at the designated time, allowing others to feel the consequence of their choices without rescuing them (often at your expense), or simply holding your hand up in the stop position and saying nothing.

**Boundaries, like the law, are not meant to keep you down; they are meant to create freedom within a safe parameter.**

"...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

*Ephesians 4:22-23*



## IT'S JUST GOOD BUSINESS

*“If you don’t handle this season right, you will never return to the full capacity you had before.”* Anonymous Psychologist.

So... what do we do to implement a system where you do what you need to do, get what you need to get, and relinquish the chaos that leads to the destruction of all you’ve so painstakingly built? That’s a good question, but you may not like the answer.

Suffering will change you but not always for the better. You do have a choice to make. You can go on the way you have been, or you can put the emphasis of this season on integrity and change the tides. According to 1 Peter 4:19, there is a way to suffer according to God’s will. Done wrong, it will destroy you. Done correctly, it will reform you. Hardship can absolutely be a pathway to peace, but it doesn’t have to be a way of life.

Some of you just thought, “Oh, don’t be so dramatic. I’m not suffering,” and others thought, “Yes! Yes! Someone understands I am truly suffering!” I’m not being dramatic. I’m telling you firsthand how things can go when you don’t willingly learn to slow down and prioritize filling your tank. It’s the law of nature... you will hit empty at some point. Wayne Cordeiro, the pastor of New Hope Church on Oahu, says, “The road to success and the road to losing everything (nervous breakdown) start on the same path.”

So, what should I do? Well, you should start by getting clarity. Next, you draw some hard lines and embrace the Guilt-Free-No. Be honest about what you are responsible for and what you’re not responsible for. And finally, you learn to rest. Yes, *Rest*.

### HEBREWS 4:9-11

“There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God;

For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works,  
**just as God did from His.**

Let us, therefore, make every effort  
**to enter that rest so that no one will perish**  
by following their example of disobedience.”

You have to replenish your resources. That's just good business. Once your resources are depleted, there's nothing left... until you do something to replenish them.

I'll be straight with you; your body does not function like your cell phone. You can't let the battery run to empty and expect it to fully charge in a few hours. It can't recharge in a few days. If you're quick to listen and swift to take action, you may be able to replenish in six to eight months. Not six to eight weeks... six to eight months. This is if your diagnosis comes before the full physical breakdown. If you've already hit that wall, you will wish it would only take six to eight months.

If you're catching the warning signs, the unhealthy thoughts, the exhaustion, the persisting physical issues, and the inability to 'catch up,' then listen now! Oh, friend... listen now! You don't have to crash before you correct your course. You don't have to be so stiff-necked that you ignore the signs and pay the price.

Proverbs 29:1 says, “He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be *broken beyond healing*.” Yikes. Then 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision the people perish, but blessed is he who keeps the law.” What law? The law of rest. The law of nature in the way you were created to perform. Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

**Rest is holy. Rest is worship. Rest is commanded.**

“Well, I've never been someone who can sit still for very long.” Who has been whispering that to you? If you were created in God's image and He gave the example of rest, then that must be a false belief. Or possibly a chemical imbalance for which there may be help.

“I feel guilty when I am lazy for too long.” What's too long? I agree.

As a doer, I sometimes have a hard time, but I will not feel guilty for doing something God ordained. Rest is not laziness. Rest is not laziness. *Rest is not laziness.*

“I don’t know what to do with myself.” Psalm 37:3-4, “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” When was the last time you paused and *delighted* in the Lord?

Rest doesn’t mean you have to be still. Yeah, you should be still! “Be still and know that I am God,” Psalm 46:10. But the point here is rejuvenation. Find things that fill your tank. You can golf, knit, watch a movie, fish, take a walk, read a book for leisure, swim, garden, have lunch with friends, draw, do pottery, pet your dog, and take a nap! Inconceivable!

- Psalm 62:1, “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him.”
- Isaiah 30:15, “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.”
- Psalm 116:7, “Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.”
- Exodus 20:8-10, “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.”

We could go on and on about rest.

Let’s face it, back in the day, you thought you were invincible. We all did. Now that we have something to lose, we see young people dart in and out of traffic and think, ‘Yikes! Slow down! You’re going to kill someone.’ They think they are invincible. You can clearly see it as you watch them and know the warning signs of inexperienced behavior. So why are you rushing in and out of the lanes of your life, pushing with reckless abandon as if nothing could happen to you? There is so much at stake. It’s time to let go of the pride that says you are invincible. Stop violating the natural law of rest and abusing the gift of your body.

When Olympians run with the Olympic Torch between cities, the goal isn’t to get there a breakneck speed. The goal is to protect and deliver the flame. What happens if the runner is so concerned with running, running, running that the flame goes out? He would have to go

all the way back to the place he began to replenish the flame.

Look, kudos to you! You've done your best. But the you who used to be is no longer, and the old ways are no longer working. Don't let the flame you are called to carry be extinguished because you're pushing, pushing, pushing. There must be a new way to manage your stress and preserve the flame so you can take every step the Lord has ordered for you without burning out. He wouldn't give you the dreams and ability to start these tasks only to leave you ill-equipped for their completion. That's not who He is.

2 Chronicles speaks of King Asa and tells the story of his lack of discipline when he failed to rely on God but put his trust in other things. When he did trust God, his armies were victorious. [v.9] "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward Him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on, you will have wars." Asa goes on to become sick, yet even in his sickness, he does not repent and seek the Lord, so his ailments become severe, and he dies.

There are healthy ways to confront the ailments that threaten you today. The best course of action you can take is to address the state of your heart and admit what you have been relentlessly pursuing while neglecting yourself. If you persist in pushing and relying on your own strength and plans, you can trust, as Asa did, that there will be a breaking point that leads to death. Death of your plans, death of all you've built, and God forbid... the death of you.

"Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control."

*Proverbs 25:28*

"Practicing self-control is one of the best forms of self-protection you can have."

*W. Douglas & R. Teixeira*



## QUIT PUSHING

It's been fifteen years since I helplessly lay on the floor between the couch and the coffee table. I'm grateful for everything the Lord has taught me and how He has healed me. I'm not perfect, and sometimes I do push myself beyond what is healthy, but it is not a lifestyle, and I'm quick to pull back and rest.

Anxious, emotional, and physical warning signs are trying to tell you one thing... burnout and breakdown are real. With all due respect, you are not unique. Chronic stress and neglecting to replenish your resources can only lead to one thing... burnout. You have a choice: willingly take action and change course or be forced. It truly is that simple.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord, your God, will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

Life or death? Walk in His restorative ways or keep pushing? Live and multiply or hobble and be hindered? If your heart turns away and you will not hear but put everything else first, you shall surely perish. Something will. Therefore, choose life! Love the Lord and hold fast to Him by obeying His voice, for He alone is life and gives us the strength

to accomplish everything we are called to. *Everything*. If you've got too much on your plate, maybe it wasn't Him that called you to it.

The first thing you must do to avoid a crash or recover from one is to get clarity. Understand that the choice is life or death, blessing or curse. Does exhaustion sound like a blessing to you? Yes, it can work together for good, but don't you wish you didn't have to experience the misery and depletion of your body to get there?

Clarity allows you to reevaluate and readjust your priorities. "What am I responsible for, and what am I not responsible for?" We need wisdom, vision, and an understanding of why we do what we do. We also excel when we have professional individuals and a community to hold us accountable as we pursue wellness. What do you need? Perspective and a Battle Plan.

Once you've asked the right questions and come to the right answers, it's imperative that you learn to exercise healthy boundaries. Oh, yeah. It can be challenging, and people have a tendency to ruffle but guess what? We teach people how to treat us. So, teach people how to treat you, and it won't take long before they realize they can't push or manipulate you anymore. Like a muscle that is exercised grows more robust, so will your boundaries as you use them more and more.

Finally, the only way to effectively manage stress and carve out a sustainable strategic plan for moving forward is to rest and replenish your resources. It would be best to emphasize integrity in your life, allowing you to identify the season and respect it.

Take a moment to pause and consider what the cost of avoidance has brought and what it can cost you if you carry on pushing yourself.

- What price has your body paid?
- What will happen if you keep pushing?
- What thoughts have been badgering you?
  - What do they threaten if you don't put them in check? (take them captive)
- How will things be handled if you experience a full-blown breakdown? Or how were they handled?
  - What do you wish you could have done differently?

Take another moment to think of everything you've tried in the past to handle these unpleasant symptoms. What strategies did you use (intentionally or subconsciously) to avoid recurring threats?

How did that work out for you?

I know that this can all be overwhelming. Even with all of the truth that you've just been offered, you may be saying, "Okay, that's great, Leah...but I still don't know where to begin or how to do these things."

I hear you. I get it. You don't need one more thing to try and "do" right now. However, you do need to get off the rat wheel and shut down the chaos in your life. You need perspective, clarity, and a clear-cut path to get there. You need someone who's been there and is trustworthy. You need to learn how to put Emphasis on Integrity. And I won't leave you hanging.

My mission is to help stressed-out, exhausted people get clarity and draw hard lines so they can bind the beast of 'too busy' and regain peace of mind. With proven biblical methods of success, Armed Ambassadors provides tactical training for today's soldiers in the Lord's Army.

We live in a world at war.

Retreat is not possible.

Arm yourselves.

[Paraphrase, Leif Enger/John Eldredge]

I encourage you to visit my website at [leahdesalles.com](http://leahdesalles.com) and check out the tools on the Tactical Training tab. Nothing would make me happier than to know that everything God has taught me is working together for the good of His kingdom and warriors on the battlefield by blessing them with proper training and equipment. You're not alone and community is key. He did it for me; **He will do it for you.**



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leah DeSalles  
Ideologist  
Founder of Armed Ambassadors

Leah DeSalles operates as an Author, Speaker, and Strategy Pro. She is a visionary best known for advocating biblical rest. She has an outstanding ability to construct systems of ideas. Leah has traveled, spoken, and coached in India, Japan, Ukraine, Mexico, the Netherlands, Canada, France, and at the University of the Nations in Kona, Hawaii, to international students worldwide.

With over 35 years of Award-Winning Business Performance, Leah developed *Emphasis on Integrity*, a program officially recognized as an Expert System with qualifications in strategy planning and recovery.

As an Author, Leah is known internationally for her blog, *Grapplings*, and Christian Fiction Novels. As Leah DeSalles, LLC, she is the Founder of Armed Ambassadors, an equipping entity.

Short, vocal, and fiercely loyal, Leah lives in Arizona with her husband, Rudy, and their dogs, Dash and Dot.

<https://www.facebook.com/leahrdesalles>

<https://www.leahdesalles.com/blog>

Ideologist:

An expert in [ideology](#).

- a person who deals with systems of ideas.
- a person advocating a particular ideology.
- a visionary.

“I am a Warrior.  
I am a  
Truth Speaker.  
I am geared up and  
ready to lead you into  
your  
Promised Land,  
but you must be willing  
to march.  
I cannot and will not  
drag you...*much*.  
Are you ready for a  
change?”

*leahs*♥



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