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# Average on Purpose

Choosing Comfort, Losing Myself, and  
Starting Over Without Bullshit

**By Roland Hughes**

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Starting Over Without Bullshit

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# Dedication & Gratitude

To Divinity—

The Infinite. The Eternal.

All that is, all that was, and all that ever will be.

The presence behind the pulse.

The silence beneath the noise.

The home we never really left.

To the version of me  
who thought playing small was safer—  
I'm writing this so you know you were never meant to stay there.

If you've ever felt scared, stuck,  
or found yourself silently screaming inside a life you didn't choose—  
this one's for you.

To my mother—  
Thank you for teaching me gentleness, kindness, and sincerity.

To my dad—  
You adopted me, raised me as your own,  
and taught me honesty, respect, and loyalty.  
That shaped more of me than you know.  
Rest in Peace.

To my brothers and sisters—  
I love you all.

To my love, mi amor—Adriana—  
A special thank you isn't enough.  
Your presence, support, and belief in me made this possible.  
None of this would exist without you.

To some of the finest people this world has to offer:  
Tyler Tubbs, Shawn Mangrum, Kellen & Christine Carey, Bummer Ritz,  
David Stonehouse, Jen Dodson, Larry Gunyon, Curtis Merrill, Liz  
Campbell, Brian Avila, Tony Jones, Zach Woolard, and Rob Jordan.  
Your friendship is stamped on these pages.

To the father I never got to meet—  
Curtis Wayne Hughes—I feel the thread. I hear your echo.  
Rest in peace.

Honorable mentions: John Deaton, Jeff Spradley, & Marcus Adorno

And finally—  
To all the liars, cheats, low-lives, scoundrels, and scalawags:  
Your example is beyond measure.

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"You could leave life right now.  
Let that determine what you do and say and think."

-Marcus Aurelius

## Prologue

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My greatest failures never resulted out of things I did—  
they were the dreams never followed.  
The things I was too scared to put heart into.  
The things planned for tomorrow.

Fear kept punking me out of life, time and again.  
Pleasing others became the lifestyle—  
dodging criticism to feel safe.

Some call it imposter syndrome.  
I call it *survival*.

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Taking a beating from my own imagination  
seemed simpler than facing rejection from the world around me.  
Folding under the weight of "what if" always felt safer  
than risking it, looking stupid, being judged—  
or worst of all...  
finding myself abandoned.

I was obsessed with what people might think of me.  
Their opinions meant more than my own.

Hell, I didn't even *have* my own.  
I just memorized what made other people look happy.

Somewhere along the line, I bought into the lie:  
if I could just get someone to love me, approve of me, *see* me—  
then maybe I'd finally be able to love myself.

Turns out, it doesn't work like that.

And the more I tried to please everyone,  
the more miserable I became.  
Their approval started tasting like old crunchy paper.

I faded into a life of emotional autopilot—  
*surviving*.

Just getting by.  
Smiling through the ache.  
Nodding when everything was not fine.

The smile wears thin.  
Anger simmers.  
Routines frayed...  
My life crumbling beneath the weight of:  
*"good enough"*.

As a kid, I had big plans.  
I was going to be *great*.  
I swore I'd never end up like *them*.

But greatness never showed up.  
Life did—  
responsibilities, jobs, bills,  
along with and a gnawing ache that whispered...  
*this isn't it*.

Before I knew it, I was an adult—  
a version of the people I swore I'd never be:  
average.  
Mediocre.  
Settling for what was available.

And yeah—  
the thought still scares the hell out of me.  
The idea of being "just another person" in the crowd.  
Another name nobody remembers.

But now,  
I don't let that fear drive.

It can ride in the back seat,  
but it doesn't get to touch the wheel.



Here's the deal:

a good life isn't about social status, how cool your shoes are,  
or how many commas are in your bank account.

It's about how often you face fear—  
how *deeply* you choose what matters.

If money bought happiness,  
billionaires would be dancing in the streets...  
not dead-eyed and chasing the next acquisition.

Most of us are stuck in a cycle.  
We go to bed on time,  
so we can wake up on time,  
so we can drag ourselves to work,  
make our boss happy,  
climb the ladder,  
support a reputation,  
and buy the house we hate cleaning  
just to impress people we barely like.

*For what?*

To look good for people who will never spend a day in your shoes.

We spend decades performing for an audience that doesn't care—  
only to wake up at the age of seventy,  
wondering what the hell happened...  
why we never actually lived.

Mediocrity isn't just a lack of greatness—  
it's forgetting who you are.  
It's the slow drip of comfort,  
the lies we're fed about what matters,  
the shame we carry that keeps us small.

This book dives into that mess—  
how mediocrity takes root,  
why we resist change,  
and how to start facing the purpose you were built for.

Let's face it together.

"We stop reaching.  
We stop dreaming  
Our lives start feeling like a script we did not write."

## Chapter 1: The Curse of Comfort

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Mediocrity doesn't knock.  
It slips in quietly—  
disguises itself as planning, relaxation, responsibility, safety, even peace.  
Its message soothes us into settling—  
that "good enough" is destiny.  
That's the trap.

Mediocrity isn't about doing less or having less.  
It's a state of numbness—  
the space that exists between giving up, and trying—  
where you convince yourself survival counts as living,  
even while a deeper part knows you were built for more.

It's the slow fade of potential, rooted in comfort's seductive pull.  
It's staying in the job you outgrew.  
Smiling through a relationship that drains your spirit.  
Telling yourself, "*This is fine*,"  
while something deeper goes silent.

We worship comfort like a god.  
But it's a sedative, not our salvation.  
It lures us with notions of stability—  
marked as destiny, framed as peace.

We fear being seen as average...  
yet we build lives that blend into the background,  
chasing predictability over possibility.

We become pros at looking productive  
while quietly abandoning our potential.

We wear ambition like a mask,  
while surrendering to patterns that demand nothing more than survival  
and a paycheck.

Survival may be necessary...  
but it isn't living.

We all do it.  
We accept lives that are just "good enough,"  
stay in flat relationships that are littered with resentment,  
settle into jobs that pay the bills but starve our souls.

Success always feels just within reach...  
yet we never seem to really touch it.

I've been there.  
Choosing admiration over authenticity—  
the reward over the process.

For years, I called it stability,  
when it was really just fear with a retirement plan—  
a life built out of others' opinions,  
not my own truth.

We check-out.  
We numb the ache with distractions.  
We over-work,  
over-eat,  
over-shop...  
Endless scrolling, TV binging, doping, boozing, gambling, gossiping,  
sexting, masturbating—  
anything to drown out the hollowness that whispers...  
*This isn't it.*

We become experts at maintaining.  
At performing.  
At appearing to be fine.

I used to call that stuff decompression.  
I used to call it rest.  
I even called it fun.  
But it was avoidance—a dopamine fix.

Mediocrity thrives in our habits.  
It hides behind busyness  
and grows stronger every time we trade risk for comfort,  
potential for the familiar.

The more we cling to what feels easy,  
the less we believe in what is possible.

We stop reaching.  
We stop dreaming.  
Our lives start feeling like a script we did not write.

Comfort becomes our prison.  
It convinces us we're safe...  
when really, we're stuck.

The pull of safety outweighs the pursuit of our purpose.  
And that's the real tragedy:  
mediocrity doesn't just steal joy—  
it buries the brilliance, the passion,  
the unique voice we're born to share.

We tell ourselves we're not ready.  
That "someday" we'll have more time, more energy, more clarity.

But mediocrity feeds on delay.  
It grows on the lies we're taught—  
about what success looks like,  
about what we're allowed to want.

It suffocates ability.  
It keeps us playing small.

"Someday" is the lie we use when we're too scared to start today.

If someone read your life's story,  
would it feel alive—  
or like you were just keeping the lights on?

***So ask yourself:***

**“Am I willing to sacrifice lifelong fulfillment  
for the fleeting comfort of the familiar?”**

*Or even better:*

**“What would my life look like  
if I stopped settling?”**

When I asked that, the answer was ugly.  
It resembled a B-level horror flick—predictable.  
But it *was* a worthwhile first step.

“In preparation, mediocrity finds potential.”

-Roland Hughes

"Rest isn't retreat.  
Stillness isn't failure."

## Chapter 2: The Price

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### Survival

We've all been there—the daily grind.  
Wake up. Push through. Do what needs to be done.  
Call it discipline. Call it being responsible. Call it strength.

But let's call it what it really is:  
survival...just existing.  
And that isn't living.

Many of us mistake the two.  
We think if we're paying the bills, showing up to work, making the boss  
happy, keeping up appearances—  
that's enough.  
That we're doing okay.  
That we're a part of life.

But deep down, we know better.

We know when we're just getting by.  
We carry it in the emptiness of our routines.  
We hide in it when the silence starts to ache.  
And we feel cursed by every compromise we swore was necessary.

My life?  
It's been full of compromise.  
Not the kind couples make about what to eat for dinner—  
but the quiet, soul-stealing kind.  
The kind that often looks harmless on the outside  
but costs everything on the inside.

Since I was young, I was taught how to follow the rules.  
To do it *right*.  
Color inside the lines.  
Don't make waves.  
Be good. Be agreeable. Be *easy* to love.  
Be quiet.

And I was.  
For years.

But no one told me the lines were made-up.  
That "right" and "wrong"  
were usually the opinions of whoever had control over the room.  
No one showed me I could decide what I wanted my life to resemble—  
that I had the ability to decide for myself.

Most of us are told we can be whatever we want...happy even—  
without a single lesson on how to actually *do* it.

So I didn't choose.  
I conformed. I followed directions. I found circumstance.

So much of my identity was formed by the need to appear as  
"doing the right thing."  
Not *my* right thing.  
Just whatever looked good to other people.  
Whatever didn't get me into trouble...or made fun of.

But at a certain point, trouble even lost its edge.  
It became something expected.  
Natural.  
Deserved.

That's what survival does.  
It trains us to blend in.  
To be digestible.  
To avoid risk at all costs.  
To remain silent.

But there's a cost to that too.  
A pretty steep one.

# Thriving

Thriving requires more than just existing.  
It requires intention, passion, and a deep connection to purpose.

It demands that you take risks,  
face discomfort, accept uncertainty,  
and learn from every experience.

Every one of our experiences, good or bad—  
serves best when it's viewed as a gift.

Choose the mess. Step into the chaos.  
That's where living actually begins—  
that's where we wake up.

Not in autopilot.  
Not as cheerleaders.

No one sitting in the bleachers did a thing to win the championship—  
no matter how much they feel the victory.

# The Emotional Toll of Playing it Safe

When we choose comfort over what feels awkward,  
we forfeit potential.

The emotional toll of playing it safe  
is far greater than the fear we're avoiding.

Fear is a mile wide...  
but *only* paper thin.

The longer we live in survival mode,  
the more disconnected we become from ourselves.

In time, everything grows—everything expands.  
Physically, and formless.  
Reality, and abstract.  
Even the parts we avoid grow untethered.



The darkness consumes.  
But so can the light.

We start living a double life—  
putting on a brave face, pretending everything's okay,  
while inside we're dying a little more each day.

I've laid years of my life into a toxic wasteland.  
The fear of being unseen and abandoned  
has led me down so many gut-wrenching paths:  
in jobs, in relationships, in sports, in school, in society—  
and in the justice system.

I wanted promotions,  
but shied away from the path to earn them.  
I dreamed about winning,  
but never trained past my talent.  
I craved love,  
but got lost trying to prove I was enough.

I would lose myself in trying to provide satisfaction for my partner,  
then blame her when my own needs weren't met.

I didn't play sports to push my limits.  
I played to let my natural ability outshine someone else.  
I never made it far.

And when I didn't start, I blamed my coaches—  
said they were short-sighted, or jealous,  
or just giving the spot to their own kid.

Truth was, I never really earned it.  
I never owned it. Never rose above it.

In school, I crushed the exams,  
but skipped the work—  
missed the effort,  
the real test.

In life, I followed whatever energy filled the room...  
often ending up manipulated, disappointed,  
in detention, or in handcuffs.

The haunting thing is—  
when survival is natural to us,  
we're often blissfully unaware that we're really being lied to.

We acting on instinct.  
On fear.  
On programming.  
It's how politicians maintain power,  
and how McDonald's is marketed as food.  
It's what is happening when we seek *our* answers from others.

That disconnection?  
It isn't just uncomfortable—  
it's unsustainable.

Over time, it leads to resentment.  
To burnout.  
To a complete loss of individualism.

We begin to resent our lives,  
and the very things we worked so hard to protect:  
our pride, our jobs, our relationships, our routines...

because none of it actually fills that hungry void within.

The cost of staying comfortable is too high.  
And the emotional toll is too damn great.

## The Lost Art of Risk

When was the last time you bet on yourself  
and took a real risk?

Not something small.  
Not trying a new food or swapping fashions.  
A real risk.  
One that shakes you to your core.  
One that challenges everything you think you know about yourself.

For most of us, it's been years...  
if ever.

Why do we stop?  
Why do we avoid taking chances on ourselves?  
Fear and imagination.  
Fear of failure.  
Fear of judgment.  
Fear of rejection.

Along with an imagination  
that tells us what's in store for tomorrow—  
before we've even finished out today.

But the longer we avoid risk,  
the more our potential dissolves.

Risk is where growth happens.  
Without it, we stay trapped in comfort—  
never taste an ounce of our own greatness.

My greatest risk?  
You're holding it.  
You're reading it.  
You're in the front seat, watching it unfold with me.

It scares the hell out of me.  
What people might say—  
or worse, what they don't say.

Maybe it's reckless.  
Maybe it's bold.  
But I'm writing my first book about the very thing  
that's haunted me most:

Mediocrity.  
Fear.  
Playing small.  
Drawing attention to what I really think and feel.

I don't consider myself an author.  
I barely call myself a writer.

Because the moment I claim a title,  
I risk becoming trapped by it.  
And I've spent too long escaping cages like that.

The limitless—the infinite—  
who we really are—  
is void of titles and description.

When we name things,  
we stop seeing them for what they are—  
and start seeing them through the lens of what we *want* them to be.

A bee can mean honey to one person.  
To another, it's a violent allergy  
followed by a hospital visit.

Making distinctions clouds what is *real*.  
What is *true*.

Risk isn't always a leap.  
It's the quiet, daily decisions to stretch—  
to *lean* into the things you wish to avoid.

Each small step into discomfort builds resilience.  
Every risk expands who we are becoming,  
what that aching feeling inside is asking from us.

## The Cost to Self-Worth

Living in survival mode doesn't just stunt happiness,  
it fractures self-worth.

When we choose safety over risk,  
we reinforce the belief that we aren't capable of more.  
We stop believing in our potential.  
We settle for less  
because we think we deserve less.

A time I was offered a position that could've changed everything comes  
to mind.  
It paid well.  
Matched my skills.  
And the person offering it seemed to believe in me more than I did.

But I didn't take it.  
I was too busy in my current patterns and role.  
I told myself the timing wasn't right.  
That I'd circle back later.

But the truth?

I didn't believe I was good enough,  
no matter what I told others.  
I didn't have the appetite to be seen as an amateur.  
I couldn't see what they saw—  
only what I hadn't fixed.

That moment stayed with me.  
It still does.

Because it wasn't just about the job.  
It was about what I believed I was allowed to hope for.

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When your self-worth is low,  
you stop dreaming.  
You shrink your goals down to what feels "reasonable"—  
just to avoid being disappointed again.

That's what survival mode does.

It convinces you that dreaming is dangerous.  
That failure is fatal.  
So you stop reaching—  
and start fading.

When you resign to survival mode,  
you're telling yourself you're not worth the effort.  
You're saying your dreams aren't worth chasing.

But the truth?

Dreams are what fuel self-worth.  
Pursuing them affirms your value.  
The very act of striving says:

I matter...*my life matters*.  
I'm worth the challenge, the discomfort—  
and the reward.

## Reconnecting with Purpose

How do we break free from the trap?

It starts with reconnecting to something we lost:  
**Purpose.**

Purpose isn't handed to us.  
It's something we find—then choose...  
again and again.

It's what drives us.  
What pulls us out of bed with meaning.  
It's that voice that says...*This*.

For the better part of 35 years,  
I died inside trying to figure out what my purpose was.

I was so wrapped up in listening to the room,  
I missed the voice that had always been there...  
my own.

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**My purpose is me.**

One day it's writing. The next, climbing a mountain.  
The day after that...tightening a pipe beneath the sink.

Same purpose.  
Different form.

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**My purpose isn't a title.**

It's my life.

Every experience I've lived.

Every skill I've learned.

Every scar I carry.

Every interest that fills me.

My purpose is to expose my experiences through art.

To make meaning.

To tell a story.

To offer something useful.

My life is my purpose.

And my life is the totality of everything I've survived,  
witnessed, built, and destroyed—  
they outline my abilities.

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Our abilities are shaped by what we've paid attention to.

They lead us toward where we can add value.

We add value to what we understand.

And understanding grows from what we're willing to accept—  
without a need to label it.

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We're not meant to run endlessly.

**Purpose doesn't demand constant motion—**

it asks for presence—for attention.

Thich Nhat Hanh once said,  
"Don't just do something, sit there."

Rest isn't retreat.

Stillness isn't failure.

Give your every action a *purpose*.

(Yes, resting is an action—it serves a purpose.)

Sometimes the most radical act of self-worth  
is giving yourself permission to stop.  
*To listen.*

Integration demands it.

Debating the color of water doesn't change what it is.

Questions worth considering:

**"Am I willing to sacrifice lifelong fulfillment  
for the fleeting comfort of the familiar?"**

*Or even better:*

**"What would my life look like  
if I stopped settling?"**

If you want your life back—  
if you want to stop living like a passenger in your own story—  
these questions matter.

"We're all rookies here—  
Living today for the first time."  
-Roland Hughes



"My life felt like it was unraveling in slow motion.  
I could feel the dysfunction—  
I just didn't know how to name it yet.  
Or who else to blame for it."

## Chapter 3: Staring into the Void

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Every romance I've ever been in was built on codependency from the start.

I used to chase women, thinking I had so much to give.  
But what I really had was a hole—  
right through the center of my spirit.

I needed someone to like me, to love me,  
to fill that hole with their presence and attention.  
Reassurance became the glue that kept me an invested partner.  
And in some twisted way, it gave my life a sort of meaning.

Hell, I even built an identity around whoever was with me.  
"If I'm good enough for her, I must be good enough for everyone else."  
That's how my value was measured—  
or the lack of it.

When single, I didn't just feel lonely...  
the feeling was pretty worthless.  
Like I didn't even deserve to breathe.

But the moment attraction showed up, everything inside me shifted.  
My self-loathing turned electric—powerful even.  
Wanted.  
Alive.  
Like what I imagined a person was supposed to feel—  
walking on air.

Then came 2017.

Two back-to-back hit-and-run motorcycle accidents, two months apart.  
The painting my life by the numbers routine was wearing thin.  
Something had to change, or I wasn't going to make it another week.

I had never felt so abandoned—depressed. So invisible.  
Especially that final month before I left everything and everyone behind  
to move across the country—sight unseen—to Oregon.

The cops never prosecuted the man who ran me over in his Suburban.  
Later, it was found out he was a police informant. Protected.  
The driver from the second accident just vanished into the night.

But what broke me wasn't the ones who hit me.  
It wasn't the lack of honesty or diligence from law enforcement.  
It was the four cars that drove past during the second crash  
while sliding down the road on my back—bleeding, broken—  
watching them stare like I was some pitiful thing to avoid.

Not one of them stopped.

That's when the message sank in, loud and clear:  
*You don't matter. No one sees you.*  
*No one cares.*

Everyone I knew seemed to want something from me,  
but no one seemed to be *with* me.

I felt like a joke—something my family mentioned in whispers.  
At the same time, my graphic design business was circling the drain.  
My life felt like it was unraveling in slow motion.

I could feel the dysfunction—I just didn't know how to name it yet...  
or who else to blame for it.

My rope was frayed and short.  
I needed a change.

That change came from a plan I had made ten years earlier—  
moving to the West Coast to start a marijuana farm.

Back then, planning became an escape.  
A never ending cycle of mapping out ideas that rarely saw any sun.

I never actually made that move—just dreamed of it—  
Just talked about it for a couple years.  
But this time, it wasn't dreaming.

My business was coming with me,  
hoping it might finally find traction in a new land.

One conversation with a friend flipped everything I thought I knew  
just the day before—  
and 27 days later, I was packed and headed to Oregon.

Crossing into Oregon felt like salvation.  
I'll never forget it.  
Every cell in my body screamed:  
*You're free.*

I believed it.  
I *wanted* to believe it.

A buddy made the journey with me—  
he was going through his own unraveling.  
He passed away a few years later. I sure do miss him.

He was one of the few people I could speak to without a filter and be  
met with honesty—not judgment.  
He genuinely wanted to live well,  
even when he didn't know how.

The years I've lived here have been the most challenging of my life.  
Not the worst—just the most revealing.

Not long after arriving, I fell into another codependent relationship.  
Turns out, 3,000 miles wasn't enough to outrun my insecurities.

This time, the overly dependent one was me—  
and for the first time, someone called me out.

She didn't sugarcoat it. She said it plainly:  
"Your emotions are more than I can handle."

And I hated her for that.

At the time, I saw her as cruel. Cold.  
Closed off.

What she said burned through me.  
My chest physically hurt for months.  
It felt like a blade lodged in my heart.

I blamed her for the pain. I resented her.  
I resented myself for loving her.

I felt betrayed—  
but it would be another year before I saw the betrayal as my own.

The truth is—  
*I didn't love her.*  
I loved how I *felt* when she approved of me,  
and I mistook that for love.

I was in love with the idea of being in love—  
even if I had it confused with something it wasn't.

I didn't really see *her*.  
I saw what I wanted from her.  
What I needed from her.

And she knew it.

Looking back, I respect her.  
For her honesty, her boundaries,  
her ability to stand in her truth.

She wasn't some single mom in need of saving.  
And I wasn't a gift.

In the years that followed,  
I tried everything to keep my heart from tearing itself apart—  
short of falling back into old patterns  
and getting plastered.

The pain bled into everything—  
especially my work.

Then one day on my lunch break,  
I was scrolling YouTube,  
and came across this Indian mystic I never heard of—Sadhguru.

He was talking about heartbreak and attachment.  
Something clicked.

Over the next few weeks,  
I kept up on his videos—  
read one of his books.

And for the first time,  
the things I'd been avoiding began coming into view:

The dysfunction I blamed on everyone else...  
was me.

I couldn't outrun it anymore.  
I was too tired.

Starting over just to land in the same place had run its course.

So I looked into that void inside me—  
and this time,  
I didn't cower.

I saw myself staring back.

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For the next few years, I stayed mostly closed off emotionally.  
I attempted dating casually,  
but nothing lasted longer than a month or two.

I didn't trust myself, or anyone else—with anything real.

Spiritual seeking became my new romance.  
Reconciling with who I'd been.  
Trying to understand what the hell I kept running from.

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In the summer of 2021, I dipped back into dating.  
Not for love—for entertainment.  
Something to fill the weekends.

I still didn't trust my ability to hold anything deeper.

That's when I met her.

We clicked fast. Easy conversation.  
No pressure.

I liked that we lived 60 miles apart—  
far enough that I didn't have to worry about getting swallowed whole,  
or dealing with unannounced visits.

It was the first time I met someone  
who didn't *need* a relationship—  
and neither did I.

But I had red flags.  
Things I wasn't proud of.  
Things I felt too damn afraid to share.

But this time,  
lying about my red flags felt worse  
than the rejection I feared because of them.

With a burning discomfort smoldering inside of me,  
I told her everything.

My history with relationships.  
The DUI charges I was facing.  
The shady stuff I've pulled.  
All of it.

She didn't flinch.  
She met me there.

And in that moment,  
the connection was more than I had in years.  
Maybe ever.

That first year brought up every insecurity I had.  
I nearly walked away more than once—  
convinced she'd eventually see through me  
and realize I was just a spineless joke.

That's the only version of myself I really knew.

But she didn't leave.  
She stayed.

She's beside me now as I write this.  
She knows my wounds. She sees my insecurities.  
And she still loves me.  
She reflects me.

She doesn't need me.  
And I don't need her.

That's what makes this work.

She's not who I once imagined I wanted.  
She's who I didn't know was needed.

And now I know something else, too:

If I ever try to possess her love,  
it'll disappear.  
If I want her in my life,  
she must be honored as she is.

If I see her—  
not just what she gives me—  
but *her*,  
as a whole person,  
separate from me,  
beside me...

Then love will prosper.

And the life where I used to beg for certainty—  
is now ripe with opportunity.

The void stares into me.  
I am not shy...  
I stare right back.

And the truth stays with me.

“Between what is said and not meant,  
and what is meant and not said,  
most love is lost.”  
-Kahlil Gibran



"Most mornings,  
I still feel like I'm learning from nothing.  
Still feel like a kid most the time.  
Still figuring it out."

## Epilogue: The Return

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I haven't sold my first manuscript.  
I haven't published a book.  
Or an essay.  
I haven't won a damn thing.

Most mornings,  
I still feel like I'm learning from nothing.  
Still feel like a kid most the time.  
Still figuring it out.

I haven't taken center stage.  
I haven't earned a title.

Outside the few who know me—  
I'm still nobody.

And that's okay.

To me,  
I am all I need to be.

For the first time in my life,  
I know I'll be okay.  
I know there'll be more days.

And if there aren't...  
this one will do.

No one's promised anything.

So today, Roland—  
Do the best you can.  
Meet yourself where you stand.  
Be constructive with your hands.  
Show up for the day  
and be an honest man.

Mediocrity is whatever the hell you allow it to be.

It's what creeps in when opportunity retreats.  
When potential folds under the weight of planning.  
When your past runs the show.  
When pain calls the shots.

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**Note to reader:**

I wrote this book because I couldn't stand the way mediocrity had taken root in me.

If you saw yourself in these pages—even a little—  
then maybe you're not as stuck as you thought, either.

Sit with silence.  
Lean into weakness.  
Follow your fear.  
Act on what you avoid.

Love yourself in the very way you always needed—  
but never received.

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***Remember:***

Fear is a mile wide,  
*but only paper thin.*

“One day—

You will wake up...

Into a morning where you’ve had enough.

On this day, a shift in your story begins.

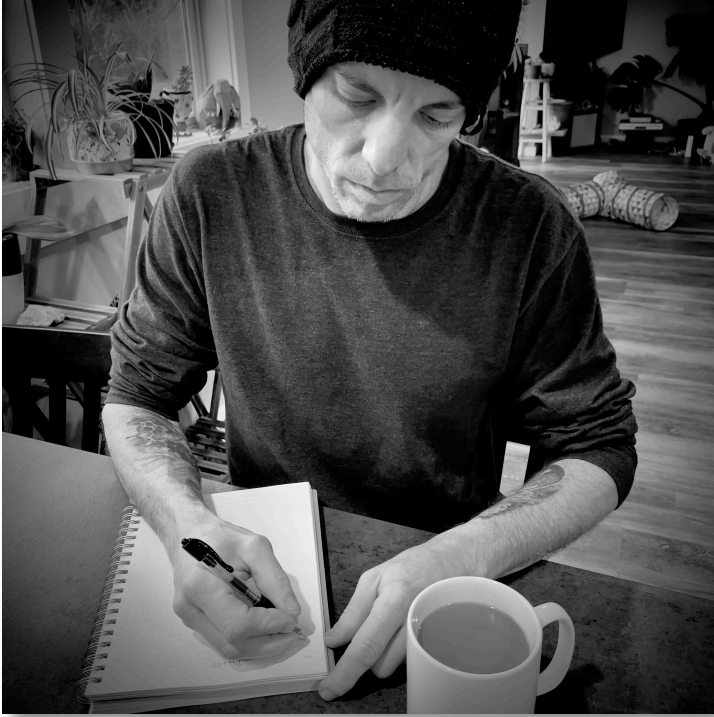
Courage begins to fill the space fear occupies.

Soon, you begin to understand—

How cruel you have been to yourself.”

—Roland Hughes

# About the Author



My name is Roland Hughes.

I've always been drawn to learning—  
through nature, work, travel, and asking hard questions.

My favorite hobbies and activities are: writing, road trips, camping, hiking, foraging, rock hounding, woodworking, photography, floating rivers, live music, BBQs, and seeking simple answers to complicated problems.

Road-tripping through Mexico, wandering small villages, dropping into the ocean, flying and jumping out of planes, crawling through caves, and floating over the Willamette Valley in a hot air balloon have been some of my most valued adventures.

I'm always up for a challenge—something that pushes me.

I started working young.

I traveled the country with my parents selling products at markets and events.

I was homeschooled for two of those years.

By 13, I was mowing lawns on weekends.

By 15, I was working in carpentry.

Since then, I've worked across trades and industries—tinting windows, installing fire sprinklers, making signs, to running an eBay store.

Maybe it's because I never stayed in one school longer than a year. Or maybe I just don't like staying still.

Either way, I've always been drawn to change.

It's helped me grow—  
and forced me to confront challenges.

I've spent a life building things:  
houses, cars, relationships, businesses, and identities.

This book is a continuation of that same curiosity.

I look forward to writing more.  
And one day, standing on a stage to tell the rest.

Until then, I'll keep showing up everyday—  
grateful for the life I have,  
while striving for the one I know is possible.

# Resources & Next Steps

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If you saw yourself in these pages—if you're done living on autopilot—here are a few places to start digging deeper:

## Morning Practice

Start with three handwritten pages each morning, for yourself, before you let the world in. No goals. No judgements. Just write fluidly as possible—Everyday. Do not read them, and do not share them.

You'll be amazed what shows up when you begin providing your emotions a physical place to exist, void of judgement.

(Yes, this is where *my* clarity really took root.)


## One-on-One Coaching

Having a therapist and a coach helped challenged my patterns, called out my bullshit, and pushed me to stop living from a place of fear and avoidance.

That support can be incredibly useful—and now, I offer the same.

I offer personal coaching and mentoring rooted in compassion, honesty, understanding, and accountability.

You can learn more at:

 [www.RLHughes.com/coaching](http://www.RLHughes.com/coaching)

## What's Coming Next

This book is just the beginning.

More books and resources are in the works—focused on how to navigate the volatility, setbacks, and quiet shifts that unfold once you stop numbing—coping—surviving, and start living with intention.

Letting go of the coping isn't the end.

It's the beginning of something broader—  
and far less predictable.

That's where integration begins.



## Books That Helped Me Wake Up

These books helped rewire the way I see myself, others, and the world we live in:

- *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield
- *The Four Agreements* by Dr. Don Miguel Ruiz
- *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron
- *Reconciliation* by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius



## Follow Along

I write regularly about purpose, resistance, emotional honesty, and the work of returning to the Self—  
not who the world told you to be.

Stay connected here:



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*Thank you* for reading.