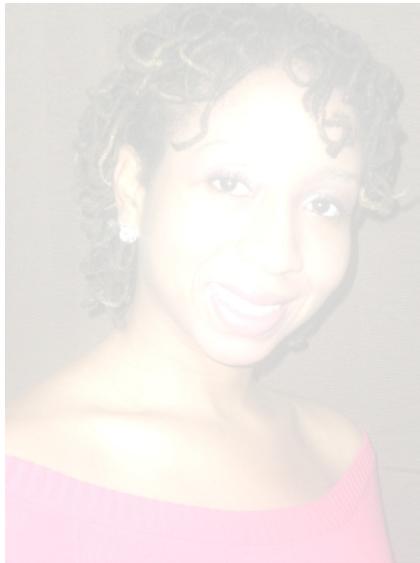


A Sky Dive of Faith

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"A Sky Dive of Faith" is the author's intimate look at her unexpected, life altering transition. Through sincere honesty and wit, others are encouraged to discover and pursue their passion.



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Keep Smiling Baby!**

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Thanks for being a true example of unconditional love!**

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See you at the top!**

**And a sincere appreciation to my family (both near and far) and
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today without your influence.
Thanks for your nurturing and
a
WHOLE LOT OF MEMORIES...*Right Danyell!***

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Aggressive, bold, confident ... these are just a few of the words which were used to describe me. I was the one who people came to for advice. Thought to be ready for any challenge, and known to motivate and encouraged others to be likewise. But was that perception authentic or merely a cover-up for my intimate uncertainties?

Imagine the picture perfect family...great husband, adorable daughter in private school, flexible and good paying job, beautiful home, dream vehicle, and multiple investment properties. Well, that was and still is my life, only now... minus the job.

"Girl, if you aren't happy, it's time to move on!" Those were the words that I spoke to my dear sister-friend, who was complaining about the job she hated. *"You are a child of the All Mighty King, royalty! We were not put here on this earth to be sad and miserable, but to have an abundant life. A life filled with joy, peace, and prosperity."* I remember going on to say, *"God gave each one of us a special gift, it's up to us to discover our passion, pursue it, and then live it!"* Now, I rely on *those* words to get *me* through.

Growing up, I was always creative and crafty. Besides arts and crafts, I found great interest in the traditional girly activities, like doing nails, fashion design, making jewelry, and doing hair. I always viewed those likes and interests as just hobbies, never taking my God given talents seriously enough to think any more of them. I mean, wealthy people aren't the ones doing hair, they're the ones getting their hair done... right?

Then suddenly, my life began to come full circle. Although I had a great successful and flexible career, I was always into doing and learning something else. Not to mention, switching companies of employment every year or two. To

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most, it just appeared that I was being the aggressive go-getter that I was known to be. But deep down inside, I knew it was something more. I knew I was in search of my passion, effortlessly trying to discover my own mark in this world. Trying to fill a void that I didn't even realize I had.

You named it, I've tried it (and made money from it). Known for my professional marketing skills, it was nothing for me to decide on a new venture and promote it. But for some reason, I never stuck with any of it. I was never the type of person to start and not finish projects; opportunities would just kind of come and go on their own. I sold Mary K, became a wellness coach, created a greeting card and invitation company, sold and still sell real estate, practiced holistic and nutritional counseling, founded and still have a non profit organization, sold pre-paid legal services, even ventured into selling adult toys ... and that's just to name a few adventures!

Through it all, the thought never crossed my mind that I was doing all of these things in search of me. After all, I was just living up to my reputation of being aggressive and determined! Like many others, I believe that experiencing a variety of life's possibilities and keeping side hustles are necessary in pursuit of one's own pot of gold. But, what I have now realized is that it was also an effort to define my purpose, and better rely on the power I have within.

The confident and self proclaimed go-getter was lost. I wasn't just out to make a buck; I was out trying to discover my passion. It was so easy for me to tell others that their lives are meant to be meaningful, but was mine? Looking back on it all, I hated my job. But did I have a right to? After all I was getting paid quite well to work independently and to go out and socialize. Not being

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stuck in an office all day, not answering telephones, but socializing and delivering gifts to referral sources. Who wouldn't want that position? How ungrateful would I be to not be satisfied with it?

Knowing how good I had it, I was going to love it...whether I wanted to or not! I had a plan. I would just keep working as a healthcare marketing professional full time, and dip and dap into all of my hobbies and new found interest on the side. Not really being able to give complete focus to anything, but confident enough to know that I was strong enough to multi task. It was my master plan! But as they say, "you should always plan, but nothing is ever promised".

As I stated earlier, one of my interest was and still is holistic nutrition. (Details of how that came about in my upcoming e-book [Reading Improved My Health & Maintained My Weight](#).) Through this journey, both my husband (Devin) and my life were altered in such a positive way, that we knew the information needed to be shared with others. As a result, we founded the company Simple Wellness LLC.

In our continuous studies, we learned a lot of valuable information, and developed a sincere desire to help and educate others. Devin and I regularly discussed our goals and anticipated the outcome. We had both started to recognize our sincere passions, and were moving in the right direction. As time went on we continued to build upon our dreams... knowing that one day soon, it will all become our reality. We had a plan and we were committed!

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Then it happened, God had altered our sure fired plans! I remember it like it was yesterday. I woke up my regular time at 4:30 a.m., but unlike any other day, I had a horrible migraine. The pounding pain was severe, which forced me to move slowly while doing my a.m. preparation. Instead of taking a shower, I took a relaxing bubble bath and took time out to meditate. I enjoyed my breakfast, and a nice hot cup of herbal tea. My feet were grounded and my mind was clear. I was focused, and now mentally settled to move on about my day.

With sheer peace and calmness, I began my professional duties and tasks. Always having to play catch up on my data input, I tried to log onto my laptop before going out into the field. And wouldn't you know it, I couldn't get in. Just great, now I have to spend my precious time on the phone with the I.T. department! But since I was definitely not in the mood for that at that time, I decided to call them later. So out the door I went... headed to my first referral source in an effort to beg and assists.

Midway through my day, I received a call from my supervisor. I immediately thought... oh here it is my regular check in phone call from boss lady who's hoping to hear that I've gotten a lot of referrals and doing well ... to make her look good. And since I hadn't had any referrals at that point, I was not excited about the call. But this call was different, and she sounded differently. It wasn't really what she said, but more of her overly calm tone of voice. That type of calmness that only comes through self control, in prevention of a hysterical rage.

She greeted me, and then asked if I had any challenges logging on to my corporate laptop. I quickly answered yes, and explained that I was planning to

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call the IT department before the end of the day. All the time thinking, what's the big deal... computer problems seem to be a regular with this company anyway! But then she went on to hesitantly say, "okay, so it must be happening to you too", and paused. Huh??? Me too what, was everyone having computer problems? I was just not in the mood for the guessing games! Not able to wait patiently, until her pause was complete. I aggressively asked, "What's happening to me?" Somehow knowing that this conversation was no longer about computers!

"I just want to give you a heads up... I think you along with others are about to be fired, I just was and"... wha wha wha (just like that teacher on Charlie Brown, all I heard was wha wha wha). I heard nothing else clearly after that. Fired, fired, me, fired??? That's not in the plan, that's not how it's supposed to happen. I was supposed to continue working, collect my steady paycheck until Simple Wellness LLC was well established and financially stable! I was supposed to proudly walk into the office give them my two weeks notice, confident and sure that I'll survive! I was supposed to smoothly transition out, when I felt that the time was right... not fired! The inner voice in my head just kept repeating the word fired. Only, there was an even louder internal voice saying "it's okay, now is the time". So there I was driving in downtown lunch hour traffic, on the cell phone with a weary supervisor, and feeling like an under medicated schizophrenic listening to the multiple voices having a discussion, in my head! Not only were the voices battling against each other, but I was also struggling with how I was feeling, and how I was supposed to be feeling.

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For some miraculous reason, I felt peace, relief, and joy. That's right - joy! All of those years of internalizing affirmations, bible verses, and quotes were finally coming to light. "When a door closes, a window opens", "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart...", "everything happens for a reason and in your favor" are just to name a few. All the encouragement that I had spoken to myself and others, had gracefully prepared me for this moment. It was as if I was being set free... but only I was being pushed. Pushed was what I needed because had I not been, I know I would have continued to rely on my comfortable safety net. Later on, I received another call (only this time from the corporate office); they were calling to inform me that I and the rest of the Marketing Department had a mandatory meeting at 3:00 p.m. I hung up the phone, and I thought "*How nice of them to allow me to work all day before terminating me!*" Onto the meeting I went, feeling a little nervous, but excited about my next chapter. Nevertheless, I was now jobless, and part of the rising number of unemployed people!

So here's the part where I wish I could tell you about the next chapter, and how I lived happily ever after. But really, *would it be much of a story if I did?* Of course not! But for some crazy reason, I think that's what I was expecting; the next chapter of my life to be a world of lilies. After all, I recognized my blessing from the beginning... so I outstandingly passed the test of the universe... *right?* Wrong, it was just the beginning of what I now refer to as my sky dive of faith.

I've never been skydiving before, but I would imagine it to be a gorgeous sight. Soaring like an eagle, seeing the world from that astonishing view, overlooking all of God's wonderful creations. Wow! How nice would that be... if I could just relax enough to enjoy it! If I could just get over the fact that I'm 14,500

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feet above ground level, and that I am dependent upon a *parachute* for a safe landing... yeah, if I can just get pass that, then I'm sure I would enjoy it. Both scary and exciting... *see the similarity?* Well that's how my journey has been. One moment I'm soaring and enjoying the view, and then suddenly, I'm wondering if my parachute will even work. And then I snap back, and convince myself to continue to trust that I am in for a safe landing, and go back to admiring the amazing scene. I have decided not to wait to write this book (once I've landed) but to write it as I am floating through. Not from the perspective of one who has "been there", but from one who "is there". I am writing this as one who is now practicing what she has preached.

So as I mentioned before, Simple Wellness LLC was already in existence. But we were only in the developing stages. Hubby and I was still building on our ideas. With our broad range of interest, Devin and I had decided that Simple Wellness would offer a variety of services, all in an effort to promote holistic health and wellness. We would perform some services ourselves, but mostly outsource to other professionals. And that takes money! Well anyway, one newly added component was a natural hair school. I was really excited about it, and thought it was definitely a geographical need! I think it's important for persons to be educated about their hair in its natural state and to be made aware of habits and products that are harmful. Being one who has natural hair and who loves to learn all she can about it, I figured there were others with similar interest. After all, I sought out the knowledge in an effort to become my own stylist. After years of being dependent and frustrated with unreliable and unprofessional beauticians, I made the decision to stop giving my money away to

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persons who thought they were doing me a favor. So I studied and practiced, and studied and practiced, until eventually I was turning down business.

Although I was truly flattered, I would proudly tell persons of interest that I don't really do hair, I just my own.

So you see, in no way were we ready to be dependent upon our company for our lively hood! Yeah, Devin was still employed, but we are a two income family. We like having nice things and experiencing all that life has to offer. We like living with no limitations! Not that we are shallow, but we are realistic. Money can not buy happiness, but it sure can help. And at the end of the day; peace and happiness comes from within at any financial state, but financial freedom offers choices, opportunities, and experiences. In addition, it takes investing money into our company to build it, and it takes money as a capital for others to invest in us. And on top of all of that, is it really fair that I've been set free from what felt like corporate slavery, when we both were in bondage? It just wasn't part of the plan!

Now don't get me wrong, I have a lot to offer a company. And with my education and experience, finding new employment seemed doable... even in this crazy job market. But deep down inside, I knew that was not the right direction. I knew, just like the voice in my head so boldly shouted, now was the time. It was now time to transition from employee to employer. But what I didn't know was how. How would we ever make it, how would we be able to maintain our lifestyle, and how would my *business* partner feel about the unintentional plan alteration?

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So with all the components set up in our massive strategy, it was obvious that now was not the time to neither focus nor depend merely on Simple Wellness LLC. *But was it?* It felt like it was, but it just didn't make any sense. It was like making an offer and preparing to purchase a mansion, then writing out your bills and budget, realizing that you can barely afford your current one bedroom apartment.

Reality has a strong way of kicking in! But sending out my resume and applying for jobs just didn't seem like the next step either. So I did what any confused individual should do when he/she doesn't know what to do. First I prayed, and then I did nothing.

I remember that prayer sounding something like this...

Dear Lord, I need you!

I'm at a point right now, where I don't know what to do. I'm lost Lord, I need guidance, I need your wisdom, and I need clarity.

Lord, you know, I've always have had a hard head, so whatever I am suppose to be doing, I need it to be made simple and plain, loud and clear.

I pray that you will open the doors wide in the direction I should go, and slam them shut where I should not be headed.

Give me an extra dose of faith and courage, and where I am weak, make me strong.

Allow me to look to you for my miracles, and to stay focus on you being the God of all possibilities, with nothing being impossible!

in Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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Then after that, I gave myself three consecutive days to just do nothing. *And that in itself took tremendous faith and control.* But I learned that praying is only part one, that is when you ask. But without part two, listening, it's hard to get an answer. So, for three days I listened for the answers to my prayer. Now please note; I was not sitting Indian style in a corner meditating for three days, and I did not admit myself into the nearest monasteries to obtain a divine word. No, I went on about my day (with my now new jobless routine and schedule), but for three days, I made a conscious modification. For three days, I will not try nor expect myself to make any decisions. I will live in the now and embrace the present. Meaning, I will not allow myself to think of what I should have and could have done differently (i.e.; saved or passed on the recent outlet shopping spree), and I definitely would not allow myself to worry about tomorrow. The most thinking ahead I would do for these three days is plan dinner for that evening. And even that became too much to think about by the third day. And when concern loved ones or nosey associates would ask "so what are you going to do?" I would politely answer "I don't know, God hasn't told me yet". This always seemed to work, because no one really wants to challenge a response centered on God.

After my calming three days, I felt better balanced. It was like I had switched over to the passenger side, and asked God if he could drive. Sure, I was still going for the ride, only now I'm not in the driver's seat. You see, this mental shift is important because this symbolizes control. I had finally reached the point of knowing that I had very little control... that whatever way I was headed was much bigger than me! Now don't get me wrong, it's not magic, and

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I hadn't discovered a special genie lamp! I knew I was in for a challenge, and a heck of a ride! I know one has to put forth much work and effort to succeed at anything. But for the first time, I was working toward achieving the unknown. At this time, my only plan was to be spiritually led to my next step and my life's purpose. I was now able to refocus and determine my next step.

It was concluded that being a traditional full time corporate employee was not my next move. Although financially it made no sense, it was as if I had outgrown that era in my life. It was no longer fulfilling, and was like my soul was crying out for more. But only, I didn't know what "more" was? Relying on my training as a wellness coach, I knew it was time for self reflection. Time to analyze and evaluate me! So I asked...What brings me joy, satisfaction, and gratification? What do I enjoy doing, even for free (now that question posed a slight challenge)? What could I enjoy doing for a large amount of time daily, everyday? And lastly what could I do for work that would feel like play? After all "if you do what you love, you'll never have to work a day in your life!" Now, in answering these questions, one must respond as if money is not a factor. In fact, one must answer as if there are no factors at all (i.e.; not education, time, nor experience). You must also allow your mind to think as far back as possible, even connecting back to those carefree days in your childhood. This is necessary because nine times out of ten, those were the days when your sole motive was to be happy. I recommend that you take the time now and ask yourself the above referenced questions.

➤ **Tip**

It's important that you write out your answers to all thought questions.

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-Writing your answers permits you to do a thorough evaluation. It will allow an overall review and create a sound decision based on the collective data.

1) What brings you joy, satisfaction, and gratification?

2) What could you do for free?

3) What could you enjoy doing for a large amount of time daily, everyday?

4) What could you do for work that would feel like play?

Now that exercise required that you remove all factors, not allowing them to be barriers. This next task asks that you look at your current factors and create a wish list. So take a minute and consider your factors; not as barriers, but as your desires. Examples; do you wish to be home before and after school with your children, do you wish to travel, do you seek balance in domestics duties and work. This is the time to create and add the details to your picture perfect life.

1) What are the factors that would enhance your happiness?

After long walks, relaxing baths, and much quiet time in the park, I did it. And to my surprise, I discovered that what I love doing had been subconsciously considered not a career option. It did not require my hard earned degree, it did not fit society's image of a wealthy profession, and it was what I was told to be a hobby and not a real job! What I loved doing, what has brought me much joy for as long as I could remember, and what gives me sincere satisfaction and gratification upon completion is hair styling. I have always loved doing hair... I have always taken great pride in my work! But only now I enjoy it even more; because now I have applied education and theory to my God given talent. I find it exciting to connect holistic nutrition and hair, to discover which herbs and natural products benefit and treat the hair. I find it exhilarating to be familiar with an understanding of ingredients, recognizing which are harmful and knowing the resulting long-term effects. This is a unique combination of knowledge and skills; which I've come to identify as, holistic hair care and styling.

*Hair stylist...*really, that's my purpose? But why not, it brings me joy. I'm good at it, and I could do it all day, everyday! I guess deep down inside, I was not confident enough to do what others might have thought was not enough. Here I was, a former corporate marketing professional, diverse in many fields, and I've decided to trade my business suits and pumps in for smock and a pair of easy spirits. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't that I thought I was better than anyone. But ever since I could remember, I was encouraged to go to college and get a good education; a trade was simply not enough. I was always encouraged

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to reach for the stars, strive for greatness, and dream big, and doing hair was never considered big enough! But I now stand firm and say... it's not what you do, but how you do it! And please note I am grateful that I obtained my degree and would never consider education from any source a waste! But even with an education, it is important that one does not look any interest as not being sufficient enough to be a career.

My childhood love, my education, my corporate backing, and my genuine dissatisfaction with the unpleasant experiences of multiple salons, has shaped me to provide exceptional and quality service. That is why I said my life was coming full circle. That passion I've had early on was subconsciously categorized as not an option because it was thought to be not enough. I am now doing what I love and working under the umbrella of services of our own company. Our company that I thought was not ready, and in a field that I thought was only worthy of being my hobby. I was one of many who were trained to chase the pay check and not the passion. I was brainwashed to believe... that if I enjoy it, then it's a hobby... not a career. But I now know and often share with others... that if you have discovered your passion, pursue it! Research it, and learn it! Give it your all, 210%, do this and the paychecks will come!

It's important to know and feel led that you are walking in your purpose. After all, giving it your all can be exhausting, especially if you're giving it to the wrong focus. That is why I recommend silence. If you're anything like me, you get a lot of great ideas in the shower. Well, could that be because that is the one time when there is usually silence. With the exception of the American Idol

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“wannabe” moments, it’s quiet. Quiet enough to hear your inner thoughts. And unless someone is working towards creating a completely waterproof cell phone, like the watches and radios, we are limited to how many disruptions can occur. But I encourage you too extend this silence beyond the shower. Seek clarity and guidance, by listening. The universe often tells us what we need to know, it’s just up to us to hear it. Now don’t get me wrong, I know that it’s hard to find the time to do nothing. That as much as we would like to *just be*, everyday life, tasks, and responsibilities don’t always allow. So I challenge you to think of times when out of habit, you elect noise over silence.

For me, it was driving. After turning the key in my truck, I immediately hit the radio power button. Every time! It was as if the two were connected... ignition, radio... ignition, radio. So in an effort to be mentally still, I broke the habit. And surprisingly, my vehicle still drove with the radio off. And just like that old saying, “silence *IS* golden”!

It is very important that you get to the point of not only hearing, but listening to your inner voice loud and clear! Because even after you discover your purpose and began your own journey, fear and doubt will attempt to creep in. In other words, you start to wonder if that parachute that you’re *supposed* to have is really going to work or not. You may seek reassurance and clear cut confirmations that you’re going in the right direction. I know I did! I thought, maybe I’m crazy... maybe I should try to get another traditional full time job. So I pursued it. I sent my resume out and spoke to various people. Efforts that resulted in nothing! The few responses I got, wanted to pay me less than half of what I was making before for the same job. Same job, same duties, same head

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ache... just less than half the pay. Yeah right, like that's going to happen! But the point is I wavered, I got scared, and I wavered. But through my quiet time, I got the peaceful reminder of what I prayed for. That doors would be slammed shut if it was not the direction that I should go in. Well, paying me less than 50% of what I was making for a job that I excelled in, definitely was slamming the door in my face! So, I had to decide to stay focused, and trust that if it was something else that I should be doing, I would know. It would be made clear and simple, just like I asked. And, as I mentioned before, I've been known to have a rather hard head (just ask my mom, I'm sure she would attest to that), so every now and then, I entertain the ounce of question, and explore the job market. Seeking my confirmation that I'm still on the right path... thank goodness for clarity! And thank God for *slammed doors*! My goal is to eventually mature to the point where I am no longer seeking confirmations, but it's a journey... right! And just as I now have no need for validation, I'm confident in knowing that confirmations will one day be a need of the past as well. The energy I spent (and shame to say spend) exploring, is time that I can't recoup. And as we all know, "time is the currency of the universe"! So with a lot of prayer, support from loved ones, and some prn (prn is the medical term for as needed) encouragement from my best friend (who's no stranger to giving tough love), I'm soaring and enjoying the view. And I know that I'm in for a safe landing!

Stepping out on faith, is not for the faint at heart", but it is for the determined! This book was written in an effort to share my experiences and knowledge with others. With the hopes that my daring transition will be support to someone else. It was not written from the perspective of someone who has

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reached her pinnacle level of success, but from someone who is learning to enjoy the view. After all, not everyone gets the opportunity to sky dive!



Wishing You Much Peace & Prosperity,

Angela A. Hardy

Co-Owner & Operator of Simple Wellness LLC

www.simplewellnessllc.com