Touchstone Exploration Guide

AVERAGE IS EXTRAORDINARY

How Your Life Is Anything But Mediocre

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Welcome

Welcome to the Touchstone Exploration Guide!

This is a little time for you: time to curl up and treat yourself with some personal reflection, time for you to release yourself from the to-do list, and time for you to explore how extraordinary your average life is.

I have included a few reflection questions for each of the Touchstones so you can follow along one by one. Grab your journal, a pen, and get comfy.

Take your time.

Enjoy yourself!

1

Touchstone 1: Embrace the Average

"I just miss - I miss being anonymous." *- Barack Obama*

Reflection

1. The majority of us will be average. We will not be famous, rich, or top of our fields. Think about the millions of people who came before you who were average, the millions who will come after you who will be average. Write a letter to one average person from your family tree - you know - the one you feel connected to but never really knew - let them know your wishes for them and their average life. Write a second letter from that family member to you. Send one to yourself.

There is freedom in being average. No spotlights, no paparazzi, no tabloid articles or constant invasions of your privacy. We take this freedom for granted! Write all the things you love to do that would be ruined if someone was there with a camera or asking for an autograph, or recording your every move.

2

Touchstone 2: Use What You Have

"You can't call it an adventure unless it's tinged with danger. The greatest danger in life, though, is not taking the adventure at all. To have the objective of a life of ease is death. I think we've all got to go after our own Everest." *- Brian Blessed*

Reflection

I offer you the following exercises. See what comes up for you when you think "Climb your Everest."

1. Think about rocking in your rocking chair on the porch with an old friend. The two of you are reminiscing about your lives. What are the two or three stories you want to tell them? What do you want to be able to look back at and say "I did THAT!"?

What dreams and passions do you have but you are too embarrassed to do? What dreams have you set aside because someone you know will judge you? It might be something like: singing, starting a side business, going into politics, writing a book, or doing art. It might also be something like a dramatic change from what you do now like: CEO becoming a chef, accountant becoming a comedian, or a carpenter becoming a business consultant. Write down all your crazy, amazing,

and inspiring dreams despite what others might think.

3

Touchstone 3: It is Only About Your Journey

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." *— Helen Keller*

Reflection

I offer up these few exercises to think about your own journey.

1. You do not need to be an ultra-marathoner or a best selling author to have used your own power for success. Think about something that you have done that surprised you? What accomplishments make you most proud and are extraordinary in your own life?

Think about a time in your past that really challenged you. What did you learn about yourself? How have you benefited from the ways it stretched you since then?

4

Touchstone 4: Shed the Shoulds

"Should is a futile word. It's about what didn't happen. It belongs in a parallel universe. It belongs in another dimension of space." — *Margaret Atwood*

Reflection

1. Think about your life and write down your definition of success in the following areas: finances, health, learning/personal development, career/business, family, spirit, and relationships. Now really challenge yourself, how many of these definitions are still the world's?

Think about an area of your life that you have spent much of your life trying to improve. It might be your status, your waistline, your finances, etc. What would happen if you stopped striving? What would happen if you stopped flogging yourself about this? What if it was okay to be where you are right now?

5

Touchstone 5: Doing Less Is More

> ***"All that is important comes in quietness and waiting."*** — *Patrick Lindsay*

Reflection

I offer up the following exercises to help you discover your own brand of doing less and how to tap into it regularly.

1. Keep an energy journal over the next few weeks. (You can find out all about Energy Journaling in my blog post "Get More From Your Moments"). When did you feel jazzed up and when were you working hard to find enough fuel? What were you doing? Then set up a few situations and see if they had the effect on your energy that you expected.

Get real with your family. All of us need time for fuel. How can you work together to ensure that each of you has an opportunity to rejuvenate?

6

Touchstone 6: Belonging over Popularity

"There's only one thing more precious than our time and that's who we spend it on." — *Leo Christopher*

Reflection

1. Think of the people you spend the most time with. Who lifts you up? Who supports your dreams? How can you spend more time with those people? If you don't have anyone who meets these criteria, where could you meet some?

What do you bring to your circle of belonging? How could you help those closest to you step more fully into their dreams?

7

Touchstone 7: Tiny Impact Ripples

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another." — *Charles Dickens*

Reflection

1. Think about the people you come into contact with. Who needs extra help? Who could benefit from something you could offer, even if it is only your time (especially if it is your time)? What could you do in the next few weeks to make a difference to that person?

Make a list of people from your past who made a difference in your life, even if it was something small. Send a note of thanks to a few of these people and tell them how grateful you are that they impacted your life.

8

Touchstone 8: Be Courageously Curious

> ***"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day." —*** *Albert Einstein*

Reflection

1. Discovering our curiosity can be hard if we haven't done it in a while. Where does your mind wander to when it has spare time? What have you read lately that made you think "hmmm...that's interesting." Is there a section in the bookstore or library that you've always wanted more time to read from?

If you cooked up a crazy experiment to try in your life, what would it be? Remember that you don't need to know the outcome or follow 'the rules.' This is about courageous curiosity, let loose a little!

9

Touchstone 9: Extraordinary is Ordinary

"The simple things are also the most extraordinary things, and only the wise can see them." — *Paulo Coelho*

Reflection

1. Gratitude for our lives helps us realize that our lives are anything but mediocre. Think about all the "free" things you experience and write them down. Spend some time contemplating your thankfulness for these simple but extraordinary things.

Many of us are waiting until that next big thing to be happy. What if we had the choice to be happy without that?

More!

I hope you enjoyed the Touchstone Exploration Guide.

If you want a little email from my heart each week, subscribe here.

Check out my book! Before I Let You Go: Stories for My Grown Son.