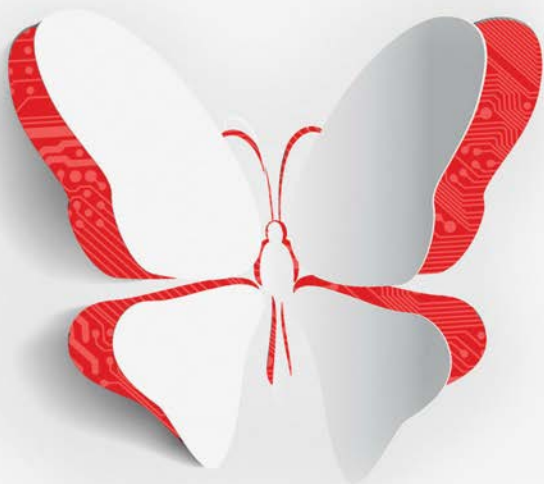


YOU ARE WORTH THE WORK

Moving Forward from Trauma to Faith



JUNI FELIX

Juni Felix has created a life-changing book by sharing practical guidance for emotional healing. With this groundbreaking work, readers can take tiny steps to open the door to personal transformation. If you need more hope in your life (and who doesn't?), I urge you to let Juni's book be your guide.

B. J. FOGG, PhD, behavior scientist and director of Stanford University's Behavior Design Lab

I love the Tiny Habits method and use it in our work every day. This is a powerful book that can change your life quickly and permanently. Juni Felix is a wonderful guide to help you move toward an abundant life.

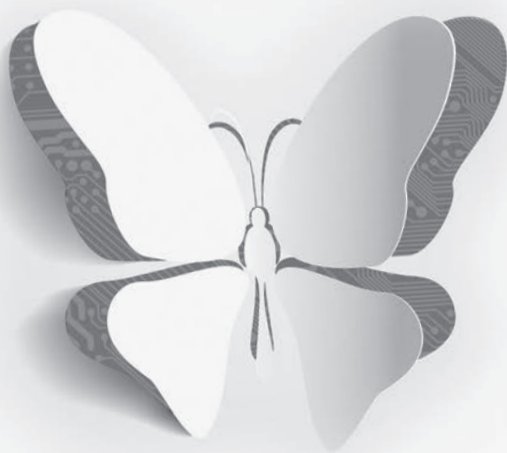
DANIEL G. AMEN, MD, founder of Amen Clinics and author of *Your Brain Is Always Listening*

When you meet Juni, she just loves on you with joy and honesty. Then you read this book and you understand where it comes from. It's from her life to help you in your life. It's real, and it's through the lens of God's Word. Good combo.

BEN CALHOUN, friend and lead singer of Citizen Way

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JUNI FELIX

NavPress 

*A NavPress resource published in alliance
with Tyndale House Publishers*



NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators, an international Christian organization and leader in personal spiritual development. NavPress is committed to helping people grow spiritually and enjoy lives of meaning and hope through personal and group resources that are biblically rooted, culturally relevant, and highly practical.

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Introduction

THE HEARTACHE you woke up with this morning, that pain in your soul that makes even the task of receiving hope for the new day exhausting—that heartache is not who you are. The abuses, losses, and betrayals you’ve experienced do not have to continue to cast a dark shadow over your life. Your journey is not over, and you are never alone. Your situation is not your destiny, and sorrow isn’t your permanent address.

Contrary to what many have taught and believed for too long, trauma recovery has nothing to do with praying all the right prayers and doing all the right things. Complex trauma affects every part of your body, mind, soul, and spirit.

This is why for most of us, praying a prayer, walking an aisle, or even making a heartfelt profession of faith is simply not enough. Soul-care is essential, and though God can bring order to any chaos and healing to every broken place, you and I must be wise, determined, focused, and willing to partner with Him every day if we want to move forward.

Recovery has very little to do with the amount of faith you have; it has everything to do with your acceptance of and commitment to a lifelong healing journey.

I'm so sorry for what you've been through. It wasn't fair. It wasn't right, and you didn't deserve it. You will never forget what it feels like to suffer so much—but you can be well. You can find peace and everyday rest for your soul.

Your recovery from deeply personal trauma is possible, and it unravels in the same way it was created: one decision after the next, accumulating into your present reality.

Please Stop Blaming Yourself

If you feel stuck in your sadness and sorrow, after nearly a lifetime of experience, I know it's an extremely hard way to live.

Perhaps (like me) you're a trauma survivor who is proactive and committed to fighting hard for wellness. You take your mental health seriously, reading articles, attending workshops and conferences. You set well-thought-out goals and work hard to make progress and to heal from the abusive scenarios that left you wounded.

Yet still you struggle to manage your symptoms and responses to the daily triggers that send you spiraling into discouragement, self-condemnation, and depression.

I want you to know that the cycle of trying, failing, and blaming yourself can end today, because human behavior is not random or unpredictable—it's systematic. Once you understand how human behavior actually works, you can design systems that will keep you moving forward for good.

The key to breakthrough is found when we learn how to scale down our behaviors and convert to a mindset and lifestyle of continual TinyHabits that move us toward good.

We were lovingly designed to grow and move forward through small, one-at-a-time baby steps. This is why we start life as tiny, helpless babies: Love from God is experienced incrementally and expressed as we grow.

Our culturally conditioned mindset of “go big or go home” has caused us to continually feel bad about ourselves for not achieving these big goals.

Behavior Design proves that long-term, sustained change for good is accomplished only by feeling good, not bad. We don’t change for good when we feel condemned or ashamed.

So please stop blaming yourself. It’s not a personal or moral failing—you need only to understand the system that God created and demonstrated thousands of years ago.

Because of the way your mind was designed, you’ve been gifted with the ability to rise above and move forward from any and every kind of trauma to faith and—if you really want it—to joy.

Say the Word *Quest* Out Loud

Recovery is a lot like embarking on a quest. It’s often difficult, and it requires courage like you’ve never known. It’s never about simply “getting over it.”

For many of us, parts of our stories are impossible to get over. You will never forget what you’ve been through, but you can move forward. It can be well with your soul.

A quest is an arduous journey filled with obstacles and opportunities that can only be completed one resolute step after the next. There will be battles fought, lost, and won. Times of rest and renewal will be mixed up with celebrations and ceremonies, birthdays and funerals. You will see times of faithfulness and disappointment swirled up with the mundane and the miraculous, all working together for you.

Many of us are born into a culture and a mindset that idolize health, wealth, and celebrity; and we join the chase in the unrelenting pursuit of happiness. Yet those of us who are trauma survivors struggle. We are often stumbling, staggering, and limping along as we try to keep up with the frenzied pursuit of this toxic abstraction that's always on the move.

We think we don't have time to invest in ourselves so that we can receive the healing gifts of peace, soul rest, and joy that are God's gifts to us through faith.

This book will help you stop the exhausting pursuit of happiness that always fades, and instead to begin an adventurous, joy-producing quest where each tiny step will lead you closer and closer to a life of fulfilling faith—the kind of faith that allows you to recover from and transcend anything this troubled world brings your way.

Because of the transcendent power of true joy, no matter what challenges and heartaches you face in your healing journey, as a person committed to true wellness, with an identity rooted in love, you will overcome. And your life will become a beacon of light that helps others find their way home.

When it comes to designing a life that isn't controlled by grief

and sorrow, you'll have to do some things that are different—things that feel weird and uncomfortable at first. That takes courage.

Reading this introduction is a tiny, victorious choice and a sure step in the right direction. I pray you'll take the next. Together we can move forward in what I call the *quest for joy*. Like all quests, it begins with one tiny step. You can begin right now by simply saying the word *quest* out loud. As one of my favorite authors wrote, "It is an extraordinary word, isn't it? So small and yet so full of wonder, so full of hope."¹

TinyHabits Keep You Moving Forward

As an expert Behavior Design teacher, I feel honored to have this opportunity to share with you one of the greatest blessings of wisdom I've ever encountered. The concepts, models, and methods you'll learn about are part of a personal treasury of more than twenty-five years of prayer, research, and practice.

Created by Dr. B. J. Fogg, a behavior scientist at Stanford University, Behavior Design is a comprehensive system for thinking clearly about human behavior and designing simple ways to transform lives.

This is a guidebook filled with TinyHabits, based on how human behavior and psychology actually work. If you are consistent in using these simple tools throughout your day, you'll soon discover how easy it is to weave hundreds of tiny—but mighty—moments of victory, encouragement, and celebration into your life.

When I write the compound word *TinyHabit* in this book, I don't mean that the habit itself is tiny (even though it often is).

I'm referring to behavior change using B. J. Fogg's innovative TinyHabits® method. I'm grateful to Dr. Fogg for what this method has meant in my life, and I believe it will help you as well!

Recovery quests are long and winding, like a multilevel role-playing game or the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Embarking on one takes much more than stumbling upon some doorway and simply walking through it. In order to make it to the other side of your sorrow, heartache, and regret, you'll have to armor up, train hard, learn your gifts, trust your allies, and do the work. But if you're unwilling, I'm sorry—you're not going to make it. And I really want you to make it. That's why I came back for you.

So if you're ready and you're willing, let's go. I'll show you the way.

Chapter 1

YOU ARE WORTH
DOING THE WORK

Life beyond Monstrous Things

*“Why is light given to those in misery,
and life to the bitter of soul,
to those who long for death that does not come,
who search for it more than for hidden treasure,
who are filled with gladness
and rejoice when they reach the grave?
Why is life given to a man
whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?
For sighing has become my daily food;
my groans pour out like water.
What I feared has come upon me;
what I dreaded has happened to me.
I have no peace, no quietness;
I have no rest, but only turmoil.”*

MY MOTHER’S PRAYER (JOB 3:20-26)

WHEN SHE FINALLY DIED, suddenly there was all this space in my life. My mother was severely mentally ill, with multiple diagnoses, for as long as I can remember. Orphaned in Tokyo at age four, she was never well enough to consistently care for my six siblings and me. As the second oldest, I spent most of my childhood on suicide watch, hoping every day that she wouldn't take her own life.

Every single day was a struggle. Every conversation and encounter offered uncertainty, tension, and—all too often—deep heartache.

Then, all at once, she was gone, and the anticipation of these familiar feelings burned away, leaving vast, empty spaces. Sad and overwhelmed by sorrow for as long as I knew her, the only aspiration she ever expressed was that she wanted to die. This became her legacy.

At some definitive moment in her life, she'd achieved and mastered a state of mind where sadness was no longer a feeling—it was her identity. It was what she believed was most true about herself.

For as long as I can remember, I did everything I could to help her see that regardless of what she was feeling, there was always hope. In many ways, though I know better, I still wonder deep within if I failed her. Maybe I was one conversation too early or too late. If you've ever been on suicide watch, you know exactly what I'm describing here.

Consequently, my journey requires acceptance and acknowledgment of the ongoing battle against the darkness I was born into. Despite all the confusion, abuse, hunger, and homelessness I experienced as a child, somehow I knew there had to be another way.

Throughout my growing years, many kind people made time

to help me navigate the labyrinth of my life. I started trauma therapy when I was only four years old. I may never know who suggested that I begin professional treatment so early, but I will always be grateful. I am living proof that the right care, determination, wisdom, and guidance make all the difference. Your life can show this too.

I spent my growing-up years trying to make sense of the chaos. I worked as hard as I could to manage my sorrow. By the time I was a teenager, I'd developed the habit of researching, studying, collecting, and testing every bit of information I could find about the human mind and recovery. I knew that there had to be something that would enable me to successfully navigate the nearly constant flow of reminders of my chaotic and pain-filled childhood. I also knew that I didn't want to become like my mother: a continual source of pain, frustration, and disappointment to herself and others.

I committed to doing everything I could to maintain my sanity and figure out how to actually live and not just survive.

There are few things as debilitating as unresolved sadness. When we are drifting around in our sad seasons, it's easy to believe the lie that something deep within us is irreparably broken. The feelings of fear, anger, and regret seem to overwhelm and consume us, and it's very difficult to imagine a way out.

Sadness left unchecked and unexplored leads to a state of pervasive sorrow. Once you've arrived at sorrow, everyday life becomes a chore and even the thought of getting out of bed can take everything you've got. Before you know it, you've chosen an identity sculpted by your sadness.

The Labyrinth

One of my favorite movies as a child was *Labyrinth*. It's the story of a teenage girl named Sarah who thinks she's pretending when she casts a spell and sends her baby brother to a land filled with goblins, warlocks, and other monstrous things.

The lonely Goblin King has been watching her and waiting for a chance to bring her to his world and keep her as his prisoner forever.

After she casts the spell, he appears to her and explains that she must solve the labyrinth if she wants to bring her brother home. His hope, of course, is that she will fail, just like all the others before her, so that he might keep her and her brother as his prizes in the chaotic, fear-filled, dangerous land he rules.

Maybe, like me, you grew up in a land of monstrous things. It was mostly dark, scary, confusing, and heartbreaking. You worried at times when you heard footsteps in the dark.

You may have suffered emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual abuse. Like background music playing 24/7 in your mind, the sadness threatens to consume you. One wrong move and the dam might break, allowing heartache to come rushing over you like a tsunami. So you're always on alert, and you're constantly tired from holding it all inside.

The Psychological Fun House Mirror Maze

Maybe you've been to a mirror maze at a carnival or state fair. Every mirror reflects back at you, but the images are distorted in various ways: Your head is stretched wide, or your torso is stretched

long and thin, or your features are ballooned out. You may even crash into a wall that seems to be a passageway.

Living with unrecovered trauma can be like this: Everything is distorted, confusing, hope depleting, and *just wrong*. You don't even know how you know it's wrong—you just know. I call this experience the *psychological fun house mirror maze*.

The entrances to these kinds of inner locations vary. Some people, like me, are born into the labyrinth. Others wander in because they can't let go of great losses in their lives. Or maybe someone led them there when they were too young to know any better. They trusted the wrong people, and by the time they realized this, it was too late and they'd lost their way. Maybe this is you. You have lost yourself. You no longer know how to live—you only know how to survive. No matter how you came to this place of sadness, once you arrive, you're branded in your soul with sorrow. As the years pass, you spend every minute of the day just trying to make it through. Sometimes you search for the way out, hoping to arrive in a place where you may never have been but you know exists: *a place of love, peace, safety, and even joy*.

The Most Important Decision

One of life's greatest mysteries is that every one of us knows there's a place eternally filled with hope, safety, rest, beauty, and joy. The longing for this place silently mocks the person trapped in their sorrow.

I felt trapped by that sorrow for most of my growing-up years, though I'd always been the family optimist who made it her

responsibility to remind everyone that no matter what happened, things would somehow work out for good and we'd all be okay.

Thankfully, in the midst of the chaos, I made the first part of a decision that made all the difference for my future.

When I was twelve, I was taken to Dachau, one of the largest death camps in Germany. I'm not sure whose bright idea it was to take a school bus filled with children to a concentration camp for a field trip, but there I was.

As we walked through the abandoned gas chambers and viewed the horrific incineration ovens, I felt the tangible presence of evil for the first time.

By then I already knew that life was very hard and often heart-breaking, but I had no idea that humans could be so utterly evil.

Right there, I made a decision: *There's enough abuse. Enough sorrow. Enough hunger. Enough evil, and enough suffering. I don't know how, but I will be a part of the good in this world.* I promised this to myself because I didn't know if anyone else was listening or even cared.

Fast forward to eleventh grade. I had to help take care of my family, so for half the day I went to high school, and during the other half I worked as a data-entry clerk at an insurance company. There I met a kind woman, Mrs. Linda Jarvis, who offered me my first Bible for teens.

She didn't pressure or preach. She just gave it to me and said that it might help me understand the truth about my worth. At that time, I sincerely believed I had absolutely no worth and that if

there was a god, he was uncaring, unfair, abusive, and unavailable when I needed him the most.

The more I read the Scriptures, the more I discovered that I was wrong about so many things.

Through those pages, I learned about the most kind, compassionate, good, and joyful person I'd ever heard of: *Jesus*. And as I got to know Him, I met God.¹ Jesus gave me faith to believe and offered me the chance to see that there was indeed an altogether different way to live: the way of love, gratitude, peace, and joy. Most importantly, He taught me how to pray.

It was then that I made the second part of my decision—and it fit quite nicely with the first. I decided, *I will be a part of the good in this world by doing all I can to live and love like Jesus*.

And so began my quest to try to reconcile what I knew and experienced about the reality of abuse and evil in this world with the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, loving God.

It's All So Unfair

In the Bible, there's a verse from the Psalms that beautifully describes the beginning of a journey marred by sorrow: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."²

Iniquity is a word that refers to immoral or grossly unfair behavior. It's the perfect way to describe how it feels to be born into a whirlwind of traumatizing experiences—events that culminate in decades of life wounded, stunted, and scarred by chaos, abuse, poverty, sadness, and loss.

It's all so unfair—but it's not the end of your story. Your life

did not end the moment the abuse and trauma began. Your story goes on, continues, and then ends like all the others—with one tiny decision after the next, as you design the life you believe you most deserve.

The choice I'm offering you right now can make all the difference for the rest of your life. If you want to be well, it's the most important commitment you can make.

It's simply this: *Will you accept your lifelong healing journey?*

This decision means you are ready and willing to consider new ways of thinking. New ideas and methods for designing new habits will continually empower you to keep moving forward toward the good and prosperous life God planned and wants for you.

Relationship Status: It's Complicated

Healing from deep emotional pain is not like the process of healing from physical pain. From diagnosis to remedy, when it comes to illness or injury, there's typically some sort of logical treatment plan. It starts with the doctors and nurses—your first allies in recovery—and often moves to prescriptions, specific instructions, and an estimated timeline. These elements subtly and continually produce hope for relief and recovery.

But the pain caused by personal, complex trauma is much more complicated. It drills down deep into every part of your being, and it's nearly impossible to design a sequential, linear plan for recovery.

The unique negative manifestations of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual disorders caused by trauma are often

surprising. Unexpected manifestations of unresolved pain can cause setbacks even after significant progress has been made.

For example, trauma caused by abuse from a parent or caretaker complicates every human relationship in your life—socially, professionally, and personally—because it so deeply wounds your ability to trust. You may not even trust yourself and your ability to discern what’s real or who is safe.

Depending on how early the trauma and abuse began, your brain will continually bathe itself in stress response hormones—especially if the abuse began before you could speak, as some of mine did.

The psychological term for this is *preverbal trauma*. Its effects linger well into the grown-up years, as survivors struggle to understand and mitigate what we’ve experienced during a time in which we literally had no words to describe what was happening to us.

In addition to the psychological damage, your relationship with your body is also complicated by continual fight, flight, or freeze reactions that you’re constantly trying to understand, soothe, and survive.

This is why commitment to your healing journey is so important.

Throughout the course of your day, you may be continually exposed to tiny reminders created by the original trauma. These reminders are commonly called *triggers*, and they serve as prompts—like notifications on your phone. They tell your mind that you must take specific action immediately to manage the pain.

You may either respond or ignore—and each of these behaviors creates specific outcomes.

Triggers are wounded spots in our damaged souls, and when something touches them, the pain rises up immediately. Triggers are subtle, and their sources lie deep within the subconscious mind. Until something activates them, they remain hidden. It might be a song, a scent, a person, or even the way a room is laid out.

Because of this, you may struggle to cope with the effects of experiences that wounded you deeply. The moments when these triggers and prompts cause you to stumble can be very discouraging.

The exhaustion caused by not understanding and managing them can negatively impact every relationship you have because they can cause you to feel out of control. And “it’s impossible to get close to someone who is always trying to be in control.”³

Your decision to commit to your healing journey opens the door for you to find the right tools, such as the TinyHabits you’ll learn about in this book. Creating and practicing TinyHabits will enable you to respond to your triggers in healthy, wise, and compassionate ways.

In time, you’ll see how your triggers will become healthy reminders of how powerful you are, and they will allow you to proactively overcome, grow stronger, and succeed.

The Message of Sorrow

Once I understood the superpower of TinyHabits for continual victory in every area of life, it was a breakthrough that helped me

see how I could move from any feeling of sorrow to celebration, then peace, and then joy.

You now have access to this wisdom as well.

The next step in the process is to slow down and listen to the messages your sorrow is trying to communicate to you. Think of it this way: If someone you care about is crying, the first thing you'll probably ask them is "What happened? What's wrong?" And then you'll listen to see if you may be able to help them recover.

Your sorrow is sending you a loving reminder to slow down, stop, and acknowledge and answer these questions.

Sorrow is a gift.⁴ It's a signal to slow down and stop running for your life, because *you can never outrun your sorrow*. It always catches up with you and eventually takes you down.

Sorrow is an invitation to stop and recover. It's the chance you're given to finally see that the ways you're choosing to numb your pain are harming you and the people you love.

Your sorrow is trying to tell you that though the trauma that created it was not your fault, recovery needs to become your new full-time objective, because ignoring this responsibility is costing you your life.

Trauma Is Bad Code

Though I began trauma therapy at age four, I can only vividly remember my sessions from around age nine. Thankfully, that's not the only memorable thing that started in my life that year. That was the year I fell in love with the Apple IIe computer at

school. The moment I pressed the power button and began loading up my digital wagon to conquer the quest of the Oregon Trail, I fell in love with the way things work: the entire concept of inputs, outputs, systems design, models, methods, creative communication and collaboration, and coding—the works! I took my first computer programming class in tenth grade simply because the earlier grades didn't offer the elective. Among other things, basic computer programming helped me understand the grand design and gift of our amazing human minds.

In coding and systems design, every keystroke, space, and symbol that makes up each line of code is necessary for the program to run efficiently and expertly. Research reveals that our minds, emotions, and nervous systems communicate, collaborate, and process information in similar and sometimes in exactly the same ways as the programs that run our technology.

Trauma is bad code. It infects your entire system and causes multiple processes to go wrong. In order to function and survive, your mind has created strings of thoughts and responses made up of countless tiny components.

Your negative thoughts directly generate the emotions that lead to the behaviors and habits that run like a bad program along familiar paths, generated by thousands of triggers embedded in your everyday life. And you're tired—worn out by sadness and even by the idea of receiving hope for the new day.

My ongoing studies in the psychology of systems design and coding eventually opened the door for me to learn directly from

and collaborate with one of my favorite professors: Dr. B. J. Fogg, a behavior scientist at Stanford University.

Quite some time ago, beginning with persuasive technology way back before anyone believed computers could be persuasive, Dr. Fogg discovered what I believe to be an $E=mc^2$ -equivalent theory and formula for human behavior. His theory revealed that human behavior is not random, and it's not unpredictable—it's systematic. Once you understand the system, you can design strategies for desired behaviors, outcomes, and aspirations that work for good.

This is why I teach Behavior Design—I know these systems, models, and methods work. They are used for innovative digital tools, such as Instagram, as well as in thousands of good products, helpful systems, and useful services enjoyed every day all over the world.

Your decision to make tiny yet transformative choices is exactly like determining the individual keystrokes that make up the lines of good code. These TinyHabits will keep you moving forward toward wellness every single day.

With consistent practice using TinyHabits, you'll soon become a master at creating a stream of Tiny Celebrations right when you need them to empower the next good step in your healing journey.

You Are Worth Doing the Work

Perhaps your sorrow is not because of something lost but because of something that was stolen. You are a trauma survivor—even on

your best days, you know your heart is still shattered. I've been there too.

I believe that sorrow is a gift from God that helps us do much more than just survive. Jesus was described as “a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.”⁵

The gift of sorrow is what fuels His passion and ongoing mission to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for captives, and to set free those who are oppressed, bruised, and crushed by tragedy.⁶

This is my favorite thing about living and loving by faith: The evidence of God's love shows up everywhere. If you cultivate the tiny but mighty habit of looking for God in every situation, you'll discover that He is constantly at work for good in this great universe.

It's important to understand that God didn't hire a messenger or send some angel to lead His children home. *God came Himself to show us the way.* Jesus suffered abuse, ridicule, rejection, torture, and murder to invite you into His joy and let you find completion in Him. And He did it because *you are worth doing the work.*

With His guidance, wisdom, and power, you'll become equipped to accomplish things that once seemed impossible.

And just in case no one has ever said this to you before:

I'm so sorry for what you've been through. It wasn't right, it wasn't fair, and you didn't deserve it. What happened to you matters because you matter. You may never forget what it feels like to

have suffered so much, but you can be well. It can be well with your soul.

You've already come this far. You are a survivor like me—that's how I know you can do this. Recovering from complex trauma is like facing a giant, and it requires courage and faith like you've never known.

If you want to make it to the other side of your sorrow, you'll need to *do the work, have self-compassion, be aware of the choices you have, celebrate hope, take courage, slow down, learn your gifts, find and trust your allies, armor up, train hard, make healing choices, and press on toward joy.*

TinyHabit #1: The Maui Habit

Emotions create habits. Your emotions prompt you to respond to things with specific behaviors, creating a network of habits that are systematically maintained.

Here's how it works: When you feel an emotion, you immediately respond in alignment with the habit you've chosen. This habit enables you to maintain or create the life you believe you most deserve. This is how every one of us designs our lives—for better or for worse.

The good news is that once you understand how habits work, you can design the ones you want and systematically reverse engineer and eliminate the ones you don't.

Habits can take root immediately—not in twenty-one days, or whatever the number is that's currently being promoted as the time it takes to create a new habit. Any parent who has given

their child a tablet or cell phone knows that new habits can be created in an instant.

Behavior and habits happen in sequence. In order to design your new, good TinyHabits, you only need to remember to “recode” things toward the good outcome you want to experience.

It’s as easy as **ABC**. (**C** is my favorite! It’s how we create “Shine” everyday! More on this in chapter 3.)

First, there’s a prompt that serves as an Anchor Moment (**A**). The behavior that immediately follows is the habit. For example, when you feel sincerely happy (emotion), you will probably immediately smile (tiny, habitual response).

It’s important that as you design new, good habits toward your recovery, the healthy TinyHabit you choose *immediately* follows the Anchor Moment.

And it must be tiny and simple. Break that behavior down to its simplest form. The tinier the better—even one push-up is better than none. Big moves don’t work when it comes to sustained lifestyle changes for good.

Your Anchor Moment must be an existing behavior in your daily life—a part of your everyday routine, such as brushing your teeth, using the bathroom, or starting your car.

One of my favorite Anchor Moments is the act of waking up—it’s simple and so easy. To begin your journey into the art of TinyHabits, you’ll need to identify your Anchor Moments.

For example, your Anchor Moment could be one of the following:

- > turning off the alarm
- > picking up your phone
- > waking up and putting your feet on the floor
- > turning on the shower
- > getting dressed
- > brushing your teeth
- > making your bed
- > starting your coffee or tea
- > waking up your child
- > going down the stairs
- > walking into the kitchen
- > turning on the light
- > moving into a different room in your home
- > going to the bathroom
- > taking a drink of water
- > seeing your child
- > hearing your phone chime
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____

Once you've identified your (A)nchor Moments, you're ready to create your first TinyHabit recipe by choosing the Tiny (B)ehavior and Tiny (C)elebration to wire the new habit into your brain.

My first TinyHabit is very special to me. It represents the beginning of a whole new way of life and freedom I'd never known. It's

kind of like the way Mr. Krabs in *SpongeBob SquarePants* feels about his first dime.⁷

The TinyHabit is called the Maui Habit.⁸ And it's so simple! Always remember, it's as easy as **ABC**. And it goes like this:

> Anchor Moment:

After I wake up and put my feet on the floor . . .

> Tiny Behavior (more on this soon):

I will say out loud, "It's going to be a great day."

> Celebration and Shine (my favorite part!):

To wire the habit into my brain, I will immediately smile. 😊 (And slowly take a deep breath.)

When I first began working toward mastering my own TinyHabits, Dr. Fogg taught me to modify the Maui Habit to make it easier. As I worked toward mastery, as Dr. Fogg taught me, I would add the word *somehow* to my Tiny Behavior.

"It's going to be a great day—somehow."

Alternately, you may choose a statement that reminds you of your favorite quote or Scripture.

I share more on the TinyHabit of Celebration and Shine (as well as learning to breathe) in chapter 3. For now, think of it as clicking the “like” button on your own social media post—*it’s the same reward system that instantly creates our digital habits.*

If you’re waking up and immediately feeling sorrow—the way I did before I mastered TinyHabits—know that there is nothing wrong with your mind. In fact, your mind and emotions are working exactly as they were lovingly designed to. They are alerting you to an area of your soul that needs care and should no longer be ignored, pushed aside, or numbed out.

I recognize that you may be in a place emotionally that makes this whole concept seem ridiculous. But please stay with me here: *To your mind, the Maui Habit is a tiny seed of hope.* And when it comes to moving forward in recovery, tiny is all you need. In many ways, it’s exactly what you need and right on time.

Think of how a similar but opposite statement such as “I hate my life” plants a poisonous seed in your soul. It automatically sets a destructive system into action as it recycles and churns up your old pain and then sends its stink gushing and sloshing into your brand-new day.

“It’s going to be a great day” is a seed that deserves a Tiny Celebration! It celebrates you! The day is great because you’re still here, and God is with you—whether you feel it or not.

One of my newest TinyHabits (of hundreds) is waking up and saying a tiny prayer: *Good morning, Father.* This reminds my heart first thing that God is with me and I’m never alone. I celebrate by smiling and taking a deep inhale and a slow exhale as if through an

imaginary straw. This is a proven way to calm your nervous system if you struggle with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), as I do. (More on this later.)

By reading this chapter, you've completed an amazing step in your healing journey, and as soon as you begin practicing your first TinyHabit, you will have successfully taken another. Great work today—well done!

Let's keep moving forward for good!