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DANNY HOLLAND

Significance

Contribution

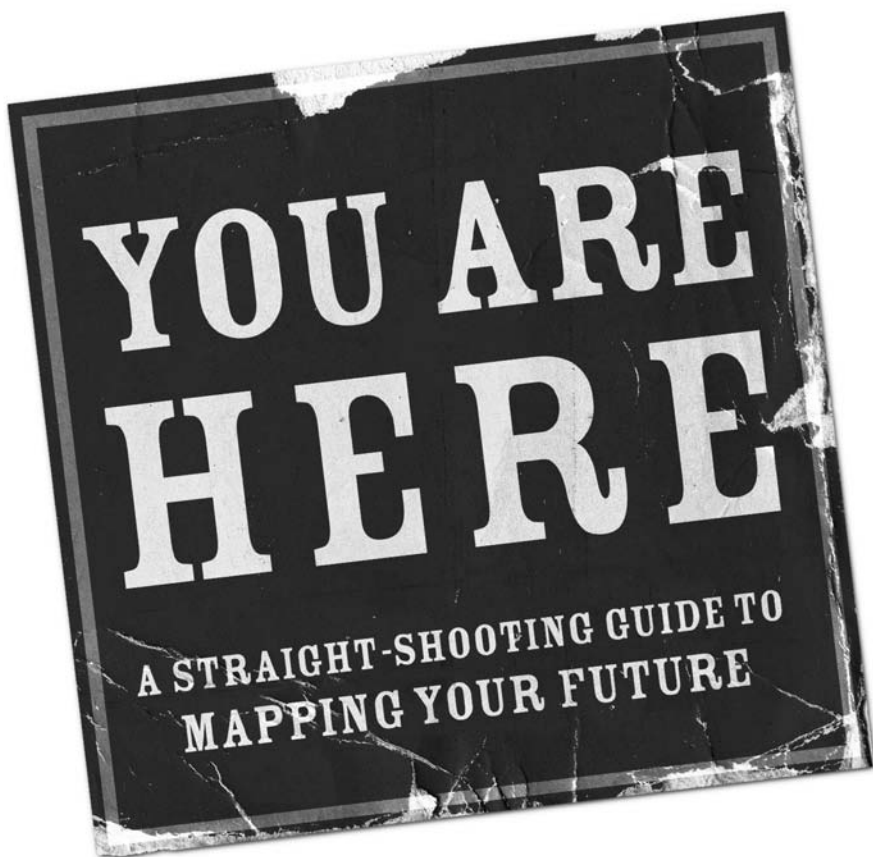
Reality

**YOU ARE
HERE**

**A STRAIGHT-SHOOTING GUIDE TO
MAPPING YOUR FUTURE**

Legacy

Impact



DANNY HOLLAND



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iii

YOU ARE HERE

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FOREWORD

*That you may know the way by which you shall go,
for you have not passed this way before.*

—JOSHUA 3:4, NASB

Each of us gets one chance
at this thing called life.

Often we prepare more for a weekend athletic contest than we do for eternity. We spend more time stretching our muscles in order to decrease the probability of injury than we do to lessen the years of damage caused by poor decisions.

Danny Holland does not teach from concepts or knowledge alone (although he is very knowledgeable).

Danny teaches from scars.

And knowing that God never wastes a hurt, neither does Danny. He

FOREWORD

leaves lessons like trail markers to help others navigate successfully. He lays down his life in poignant lessons so others who read these lines may pick up their futures and live the optimum life they were designed to live.

Danny's experiences in outrigger canoes will whet your adventurous spirit. You'll ride into the open ocean and dance with the waves, and the lessons learned will add rhythm to your journey.

Follow with anticipation.

It will require humility. It will require discipline. It will require imagination.

Imagination always trumps fear. Imagination reveals what could be, and when combined with God's promises, it becomes the raw ingredient that produces great people, great futures, and the delights of a great God! So launch out. It will be an adventure filled with lessons for avid students of the beyond. And for a brief moment, look behind you. The One who is steering has been this way before, and with nail-pierced hands He pats your shoulder and whispers, "Welcome home."

—DR. WAYNE CORDEIRO, Senior Pastor
New Hope Christian Fellowship, Oahu, Hawaii

INTRODUCTION

We've all either been there, are there, or will be there—standing on the shores of the known, gazing into the waters of the deep, wondering if there is *more*. Perhaps, like me, you've felt a tug to leave the security of the known and enter the chaos of the unknown in pursuit of deeper meaning.

Each of us has been created with a special purpose. We have been uniquely fashioned for greatness, yet that greatness often eludes us. The concepts in this book will help you recognize where you are, where you are going, and how to make the right transitions through each stage of your life journey.

What do you know of your future? I don't imagine you have a map with pins marking all the major events you will one day experience. And what about all the smaller events? Do you have enough pins? The journey we call life is filled with extraordinary moments packaged in the most mundane wrappings. They may seem uneventful, but these sometimes frightening, sometimes painful moments are crucial to the completion of the assignment God has for you.

You are here. Today is the next step in your journey, and each step is crucial. The skills you learn now are essential to success along your journey.

INTRODUCTION

I wrote this book to help you recognize the purpose of your life and maximize each moment. Nothing in your life has escaped God's attention. Everything you and I experience, the way we were created, and the gifts we possess can all work together to accomplish great things.

The synergy of our experiences and resources prepares us for the journey. Like a highly experienced paddling team, as we hone the key skills, we prepare for success.

Your life is part of a grand plan, and you can help make that plan happen when you cooperate with your Creator. This book will help you successfully discover and navigate how to do that—how to live the life you were meant to live.

Let the journey begin!

Section 1

**WHAT MAP
ARE YOU
IN?**



Look

I can't explain it. I suppose I made the decision the moment I gazed at the royal blue and turquoise water of the Hawaiian shore. As I stood in a parking lot filled with vehicles adorned with racks for canoes and wave-riding gear, I felt the salty fragrance of the ocean, the sun's gentle warmth, and the whisper of the water calling me.

I left the shore and headed into the deep.

I can do this, I thought, my eyes scanning the ocean canoes that rocked gently with each wave of the crystal sea.

No. I have to do this.

Passion, excitement, and a sense of destiny surged through my veins. I'd been offered a position with New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu. But there was something else, something more—an inaudible voice calling me to something greater. Would I embrace the call? Or would I shrink back to the safety and comfort of my normal life?

This was the moment of truth. I had to face facts and accept my calling—suddenly, somehow, all at once. You've probably felt something like that too: times in your life when you've felt called to respond, act, and do something extraordinary.

But then something gets in the way.

Either all at once or over time, we raise barriers or develop systems to silence that little voice. We ignore it. Bury it. Drown it out. Regard it as nonsense. And we slide back into the familiar life, back to thinking *reasonably* and *responsibly*. We carefully craft logical reasons to shove the wild notions aside and begin to wonder why we ever allowed the thoughts to enter our mind in the first place. We tell ourselves to grow up, to quit being impulsive. We “hang up” on the call.

What if I had listened? What then?

• **EVERYONE GETS ONE** •

Without exception, every one of us gets a unique, one-of-a-kind purpose. The Bible tells us that God knows how many hairs are on our head and that, like Jeremiah, before we ever entered the world, He knew us and had plans for our lives (Luke 12:7; Jeremiah 29:11). Maybe it's not so easy to see. Maybe it's been damaged or even crushed by the heavy things we've

piled up around it. A purpose can be as elusive as a tigerfish or as reclusive as a great white shark. But the truth is, our purpose is what calls us into the deep of the unknown.

A purpose can be as elusive as a tigerfish
or as reclusive as a great white shark.

As we stand on the shore with the gentle waves lapping at our feet and our backs to the road we've traveled before, we feel the pull of that purpose. We feel the call to leave the lesser dream of a gray, undiscovered life and embrace the vivid colors of a life of true purpose.

The process of determining your unique purpose isn't always easy. You will face risks, and fear will threaten to overwhelm your senses. But what are your options? Well, you can reject what God planned for your life and slip into the predictable grind...or you can embark on a lifelong, amazing, God-directed adventure.

Two maps, one journey. Which map will you follow?

• **FOR THIS MOMENT** •

I like to contemplate life (isn't that what Starbucks is all about?), and I know many others who enjoy standing on a metaphorical shore, staring into the unknown and pondering, *Am I ready? Do I have what I need? What if I fail?* We're pretty good at listing reasons not to get our feet wet. But what if we've spent our entire life in preparation for this moment?

Each of us is hard-wired with signature strengths and a specific, genuine

personality designed for accepting our specific, genuine call. Sure, we possess our parents' DNA, but each of us is also infused with unique spiritual DNA strands stamped with our assignment from our heavenly Father. We have been thoroughly and meticulously equipped for everything we're called to do. Helping you to find your assignment is a key goal of this book. But as you prepare to respond according to your skills, talents, personality, and preferences, you will feel the surge of something bigger—something more. The call to what you were created to do isn't a distant destination. It is an everyday journey from mediocrity to excellence. The call is what turns those mundanely wrapped moments into extraordinary events.

• THE JOURNEY OF EXCELLENCE •

This morning at Starbucks I cracked open my Bible and examined the life of Daniel. Between sips of my latte, I read about a young man who wasn't all that different from you and me. He discovered and embraced his assignment. Daniel stood at the shore of his call and then dove into the deep.

We all experience mediocrity. The word *mediocre* literally means “halfway up the mountain.” It implies a moderate level of success blended with failure. Being mediocre doesn't mean your class rank is the same number as the total number of students in your class, but it doesn't mean you're the valedictorian either. It's the “good enough” life we give up the best for. Of course we can't all be the academic genius or the fastest runner, but that's no shocker. What *is* a shocker is that every one of us was created to live out an assignment that is light-years beyond mediocre. Interestingly, in the original languages of the Bible, the word *excellence* means “a mountain over the horizon standing above everything else.”

This assignment is more than we can accomplish with our natural gifts and initiative. We need power. *God's* power. Our strength pales in comparison to what God can provide. The best-lived life will only reach excellence through preparation and alignment with that power—alignment with God's greater plan.

When Daniel was about fourteen years old, he was taken hostage by King Nebuchadnezzar. The famous king wasn't taking just anyone hostage but was grooming future leaders to supercharge his culture with his ideas, ideology, and standards. The king narrowed his search by selecting noble-men's sons who were handsome, bright, and well educated.

The best-lived life will only reach excellence through preparation and alignment with God's greater plan.

According to the account, Daniel was “ridiculously good-looking” (to quote the eloquent Derek Zoolander) and also well prepared. Daniel awoke each day with a readiness to respond to God's call. He knew his life had value. And he knew he had important things to learn.

Then something spectacular happened to Daniel, something others would probably have considered tragic. His journey out of mediocrity, which began while he was a young boy, was about to accelerate dramatically. Daniel was about to enter the epicenter of his life assignment. And he was prepared for “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

For a season in history, Daniel's purpose, preparation, and gifting aligned perfectly with God's agenda and timing. The habits Daniel had practiced in obscurity became a platform that God would use to impact several

regimes and even a nation. The Bible tells us that as a dream interpreter, Daniel was ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Daniel yielded to his assignment, which eventually led him to become the top man in the kingdom.

• **THE SECRET FORMULA OF EXCELLENCE** •

Like you and me, Daniel was hard-wired for excellence. God planted gifts, signature strengths, purpose, and a personality in him to equip him for his journey. Had Daniel used these tools for personal gain, he might have become rich or achieved high status and fame. Others might have considered that a successful life. But even at his best, at the top of his game, in light of God's assignment for him—his purpose—he would have been mediocre. He was created to be a vital part of God's agenda, not just some smart, ridiculously good-looking rich guy.

While Daniel was a very young man, he discovered the tools that made him a great dream interpreter. He recognized strengths that made him stand out among others. Not only did he discover them, he also developed them to maturity. We know from the way Daniel looked, from his strict diet and prayer life, that Daniel lived a disciplined lifestyle. Through this discipline, Daniel prepared himself for future events where he would align with his purpose and achieve moments of excellence.

What motivated Daniel to live his life this way? I believe he felt a sense of destiny every day. Because he understood the importance of his life to God, even in seasons when he could have gotten away with less, he always remembered he had been created for something great.

Daniel also yielded himself to God. He surrendered his gifts to God to be used for a greater purpose.

When we participate with God in seeking excellence, we have to act in faith. If we hesitate to act, fear can paralyze us. When we look straight in the face of our life's purpose, we *will* feel fear. *What if I fail? I'm not capable of this. What if I'm wrong? What will my family think? Nobody believes I can do this.*

**When we participate with God in seeking excellence,
we have to act in faith.**

I am the father of two boys and have invested plenty of time teaching them to swim. There are small victories in the process, like the first time the boys put their faces in the water. Getting them to leave the side of the pool was another triumph. Every time I arrive at the pool, I am reminded of the old Coke commercial featuring a mother polar bear and her cubs. Mama patiently tries to entice a young cub into the arctic waters. She slaps the water with her paw, but the cub just backs away, groaning with fear. What's a mother polar bear to do? Here's an idea: grab a Coke! She reveals a bottle of the refreshing beverage and enticingly shows it to her cub. Separated from his mother by a small gulf of frigid water, the cub hesitates while contemplating the risk and reward. The temptation seems overwhelming. Convinced of the reward's worth, baby finally overcomes his fear and dives underwater, paddling to the ice where Mom and the Coke wait. As junior climbs out of the water, mom embraces him with pride and joy, then hands him his sweet reward.

I could have stood on the side of a pool until a glacier melted and neither of my boys would have traded their fear for a Coke. Fear can act like a lead weight anchoring your feet to the shore. Fear says:

- “Don’t move. You might fail.”
- “You can’t do that. You’ll never make it.”
- “Be reasonable.”
- “That’s for someone else. You can do better elsewhere.”

Faith, however, embraces risk and acts. Faith says:

- “You can do this with God.”
- “God will intervene and help. You cannot fail.”
- “Choose to trust Him. Let go!”

• **FAVORED** •

When our hard-wired gifts, strengths, and abilities are honed through seasons of preparation and discipline and then dedicated to the use of a greater purpose, we are destined to collide with our God-given assignment. As Daniel experienced, when these key ingredients interact, the result is a divine reaction that the Bible describes as *favor*.

Daniel, Joseph, and Esther all experienced the phenomenon of favor. Mary, the mother of Jesus, encountered an angel who announced that she was “highly favored”—chosen to become pregnant with Jesus (Luke 1:28). When her prepared heart met her God-ordained assignment, she found great favor.

We might be tempted to believe these people achieved an elite status that’s beyond us, but we must remember it’s the assignment that makes the person, not the other way around. I wonder if so much of David’s life

would be recorded in Scripture if King Saul had not failed to fulfill *his* calling. David's assignment made him the legend. He was a shepherd boy who prepared and yielded himself to God and intersected with God's agenda. That's why we remember him as a great man.

Each of us has been
designed for excellence.

While we may not be called to greatness as our world defines it, each of us has been designed for excellence. We may try to fill that desire with material things, unhealthy relationships, fancy titles, or other alternatives, but nothing can satisfy like experiencing the divine reaction—God's favor.

No matter how arduous the reality of our earthly assignment, we must heed the call.

The moment has come. Are you ready? Then jump!

JUMP IN

1. Daniel practiced lifestyle traits in obscurity that were evident in public. What are three things you must master in your daily life that are foundational to future success?

What two steps are you committed to taking to grow in these areas?

2. Fear paralyzes us. What are three fears that keep you from moving?

What is one way you can combat each fear with faith?

3. Take inventory: list ways you are hard-wired—the gifts, strengths, and abilities God has given you. (Ask God for insight here.)

Write at least one point or step of action you need to take to develop each of these hard-wired qualities.
