

The title 'Fresh START' is rendered in a black and white design. 'Fresh' is written in a flowing, cursive script, while 'START' is in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The word 'Fresh' is flanked by decorative, symmetrical flourishes that resemble stylized leaves or petals. The 'S' in 'START' is large and loops under the word 'Fresh'.

Embracing the gift of newness on life's journey

DR. TIFFANY E. KING

Fresh Start

Embracing the Gift of Newness on Life's Journey

Author: Dr. Tiffany E. King

Cover design & illustrations: Kayleen Scott

Layout: Claudia C. Pech Moguel

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402.486.8800

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



v	PREFACE
1	THE JOURNEY
5	THE TURBULENCE
11	BELOW ROCK BOTTOM
15	THE CYCLES
21	THE PURPOSE
25	THE POSSIBILITIES
29	THE RESIDUAL
33	THE PERSEVERANCE
37	THE ASCENSION
41	THE RECOVERY
49	THE FRESH START
57	THE PINNACLE

PREFACE



THE CRAZY thing about a “Fresh Start” is you can be gifted this new beginning and not even know it or find yourself unreceptive to it. When life-shattering events arise, whether unexpectedly or with some preparation, you are actually being gifted a fresh start. The problem? You could be, and mostly likely are, so boggled down and engulfed by your own pain that the notion of a fresh start often becomes overshadowed and washed out by the acute or chronic nature of the painful circumstances. What could’ve been an innovative opportunity has been overcasted by disappointment, depression, anxiety, fatigue, or suicidal ideations.

Maybe you process differently during turbulent times. Remained calm through the sudden crisis, accepted what is, packed up your disappointments and placed them into a locked mental closet, and kept it moving. You weren’t gonna allow something or someone to deter or delay your life. But did you ever recognize and accept the opportunity to start over? Recognizing the opportunity to start afresh and courageously run toward your exciting, new, present and hopeful future?! Sure, you were able to quickly surpass the typical drawn-out grievance phases that most go through and avoided the risk of being stuck on the spin cycle of grief for an unknown timeframe, but you never recognized that the gift of newness was pending in your

shopping cart of dreams. Dreams that might've been placed aside because of an unexpected death, early pregnancy, failed marriage, unsuccessful business plan, a growing family, abuse, disbelief in your own capabilities, or just plain lack of desire or time.

That's how I discovered my fresh start. From the echo of shattered dreams was birthed an opportunity to not only allow God to make me completely over but also giving myself and my aspirations another chance. Another chance to show the same self-grace that He gifts me with each day. The same grace that is easily given to others before self. The gift of starting over, blowing that mental dust off those aspirations, fully diving in, no lookbacks, no fear, no hesitation. Just go! And go full throttle! Only packing my personal promise to give everything, every day, in every moment.

I decided to write this book in hopes that someone would also receive healing through their own journey, as I have in mine.

So, I dedicate this book to you, the reader.

I love you simply for choosing you, like I did. ♥

THE JOURNEY



A FRESH START isn't a new place; it's a new mindset. There are countless paths in life that can lead one to the fresh start journey. How did I arrive here? Well, it was definitely kickstarted by a few minor and major turbulence of events. Events that I did not foresee as opportunities to start afresh; at least not initially. In time, I recognized the opportunities at stake! Stopped that vicious grieving spin cycle that welcomed self-pity, depression, regret, hurt, pain, over-processing, mental paralysis, and unhealthy living and took my chance to start over, again. An opportunity to make this side of my journey different; better, deeper, genuine, and even more beautiful. Because who really knows what a day will bring. Tomorrow may never come. And if it does, it'll never be like today. No two days, moments in time, etc., will ever be the same.

Don't get me wrong, progression through the phases of grief is important, will be difficult to get around, and often does not flow in exact order. The challenge: stopping the chronic, vicious cycle and actively choosing to move forward. Transitioning from a dependent cycle of grief to a functioning cycle of grief. In other words, moving from perseverating thoughts and emotions and transitioning to a thriving daily routine while maintaining

awareness of those specific areas where continued treatment, growth, and healing are needed.

This is not a time to be oblivious to the work that needs to be done to successfully heal from and rise above whatever the crucible is that landed you here. It is an opportunity to take a messy situation and allow God to mold you into the masterpiece that you have always been.

Oh! And you didn't know? A fresh start is definitely a second chance! Or third, fourth, fifth....it's another chance! Which is why it's so pivotal to jump on the train of opportunity right now! Nothing is gonna change about the past. And the future is not guaranteed. Life and the time granted during one's lifespan is so fragile that the next breath, next day, next year, next birthday cannot be promised. Acknowledge and respect those two variables. Take that fresh start. Booking that one-way ticket, vowing to only look forward. Carrying only one personal bag that's generously packed with self-grace and promises to live only at your very best each day, no matter the challenge. Quickly forgiving any moments of relapse from past pain.

That's exactly what I chose. But it didn't happen right away. It took practice, fight, repetition, rewiring, and a yearning for more than what my past had attempted to define me as. Recognizing the value of such a gift and the limitless opportunities it guaranteed to bring, if I could only let go of what I couldn't change, modify, or revive.

In my experience, that's the hardest part: relinquishing control when you feel you've completely lost control. How do you give up something that

you don't even seemingly have? This is where the tough work begins and is necessary to process through to achieve a fresh start that is soul-nourishing and worthwhile. So, let's roll up our sleeves, dig deep into the soil of our lives, and dissect the turbulence that could be delaying the plans He has in store for you.

THE TURBULENCE



EVERYONE HAS their reasons for choosing to remain on the same path versus changing paths. Truth is, the turbulence roots may be deeper than the recent challenges you've faced. That chronic state of feeling stuck can only be absolved if you're willing to heal from every detour that's delayed your arrival to this fresh start.

Here's mine.

It wasn't the small hurdles for me: being bullied, picked on for being too muscular, too wild, too loud, too hyper, misdiagnosed dyslexia, and inappropriate male encounters. Somehow, I was able to rise above those difficult moments, but it did take some time. My desire to start fresh stemmed from memories and life lessons that remained etched despite their twenty plus year history. Moments where I experienced failure that I deemed was equally or fully my fault and subconsciously never let go of the residual impact. I recognized later on that I had no control over the actions, opinions, or misunderstandings of others. I could, however, control my own. But before that realization, I punished myself for not controlling what I thought I could control because I didn't recognize the power of two other variables: human failure and perfectionism. Two oppositional variables at that. Oh, I knew of

their presence, in my own life and definitely in others; perhaps more easily in others than in myself at first. In time the pendulum shifted, and I began to place such a heavy weight of expectation on myself that even God doesn't require or demand from His children, while simultaneously showing so much grace toward others. But after a few failed friendships, not achieving higher academic goals in high school, having to repeat a year of physical therapy school, diagnosed with an unexplainable autoimmune disorder, and an unexpected divorce after nearly 10 years of marriage, something shifted. Indefinitely.

Although it took some time, a lot of time, I believe this birthed an opportunity to start in a fresh way that was right on time; once finally realized and embraced.

The thing about a fresh start, it likely won't happen or even be realized right away. In fact, I now believe that's the beauty of it. You'll protect this new beginning a bit more. That opportunistic mentality that you've longed to have in order to achieve the best, most courageous you, that didn't exist before, or maybe it did but fear dimmed its dazzle, is finally within reach. Not a physical distance, as it's been attainable for some time, but an emotional reach because of the transformation your heart and mind have undergone. Once you've gone through what you've deemed to be your tumultuous storm and fought to rise above and thrive beyond the circumstances facing you, that's when true healing, rebirth, forgiveness, new opportunity, new vision, new strength, new perspective, new understanding, new acceptance, and new hope is established. And not just to a level of survival, but a thriving

experience that seemingly melts away anyone or anything seeking to wreak havoc, divel, or send you back down pessimism lane.

Another unexpected blessing on this new journey, one that I don't even recall praying for, is the impact of your transformation on the lives of others. Specifically those close to you, and surprisingly an audience that you weren't intentionally seeking to reach. Those who saw your worst of days and watched you bloom from your withered phase. Particularly the individuals who you didn't know were watching. Those who unknowingly purchased tickets to watch a movie highlighting the metamorphosis of your life-journey, and who received in return the gift of conversion, courage, and a desire to also start anew. That has been the best part of the turbulent journey for me. As challenging as my own circumstances have been, I would relive each moment if it meant guiding someone else to find their fresh start, while simultaneously discovering my own.

In time I learned the blessing and beauty of human failure, broken promises, heartache, misfortunes, disappointments, abuse, unforgiveness, anxiety, fear, anger, disloyalty, and bitterness. It's being able to completely let go, literally letting God, and taking a big step forward—no lookbacks—right into your own 'fresh start' destiny. Trusting only in God's grace and promises, your gut, your authentic unwavering support system, and believing in yourself. The moment you accept human failure as a beautiful blessing, true growth and preparedness for what lies ahead is wholeheartedly discovered. Accepting in advance that you might, no, will have moments of relapse. Feelings that reflect who you *were* will emerge. But let those moments be

very brief, infrequent, and forewarned not to overshadow the gift of a new beginning; to live each day without fear or doubt about this bold, courageous, and intentional decision. You know, the one you made the day you recognized where and who you were was no longer enough, so you shifted mental gears and hopped on another train of promised hope, new opportunity, and newness. Plus, you owe it to those whom you unknowingly invited, so they may also reflect on and embrace this newfound journey you've chosen.

One of my favorite quotes, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world” paraphrased from Mahatma Ghandi’s perspectives on life and personal development, has now become more than just a nice quote that can be found stamped on one of my favorite tea mugs in my home. Likely in my early 20s, I purchased a black mug quoting Ghandi; but not fully grasping the concept of change. If I’m being honest, not knowing, at that time in my life, that change doesn’t always start on a well-renown platform. Retrospectively, I believed change paralleled with popularity and was only deemed true change if it impacted and captivated an uncountable audience, more specifically the popular audience. The problem was not the mug, it was me. My idea of change was as premature as my understanding of my turbulent journey. Ghandi was the epitome of this belief that change starts with just one; just you; just me. In fact, it could be argued and likely has been researched that igniting change is best achieved within small groups that could evolve in time to the “uncountable audience” I had envisioned. It is indeed that quiet inner spark that slowly but assuredly catches the attention of those seeking similar, opportunistic, meaningful, and achievable change,

if the person longing to be the change is sincere and the one seeking change is open-minded.

I do believe my own challenging journey would not have led me here if I hadn't changed the course of how I viewed and valued my life, and believing that God could turn any ole thing into more than anything. Perhaps my trials needed to occur to bring me to this predestined moment. Beauty was being birthed amongst the ashes of regret scattered along the turbulent path, and a beautiful new person was birthed from these experiences. I know the same metamorphosing can happen for you too.