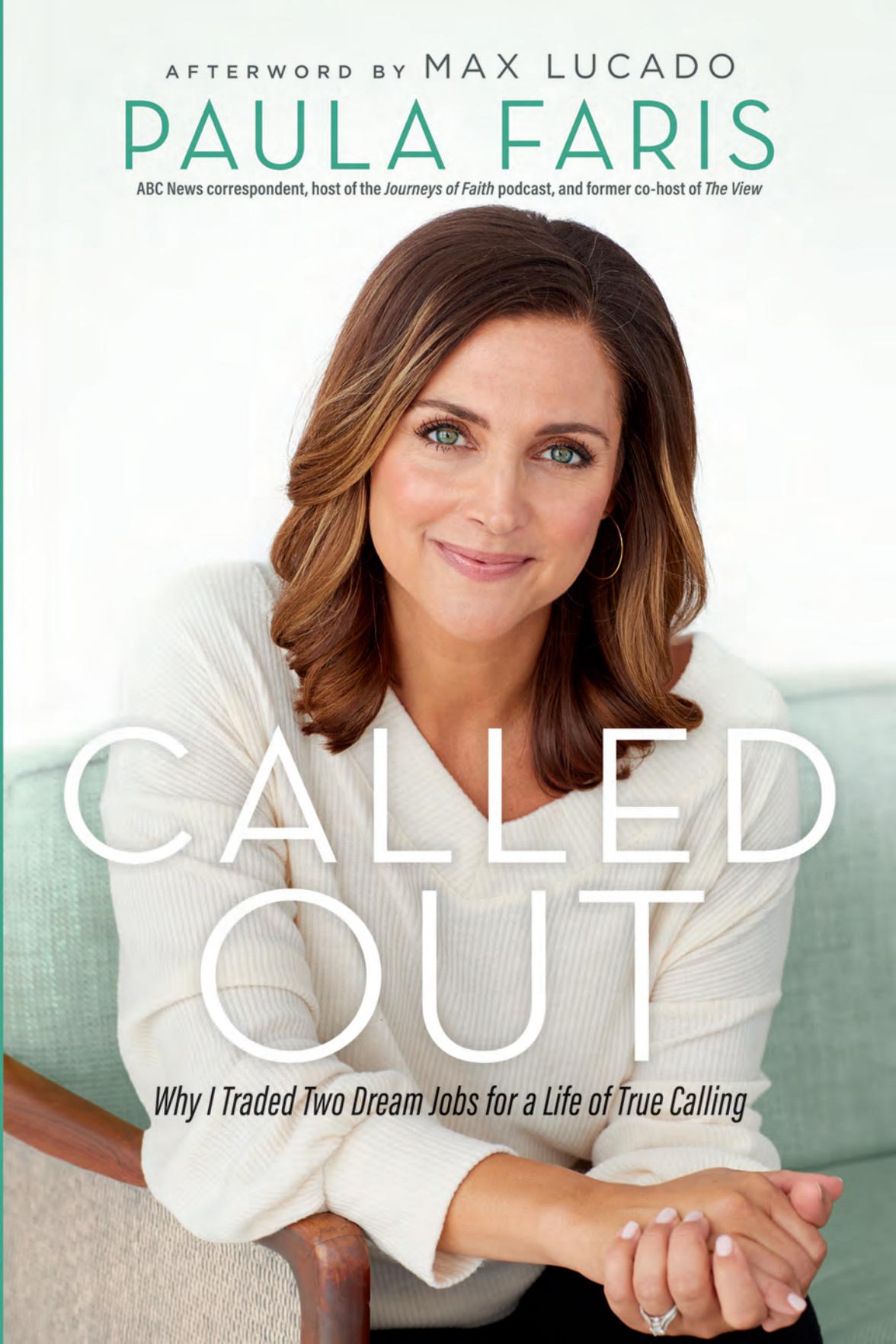


AFTERWORD BY MAX LUCADO

PAULA FARIS

ABC News correspondent, host of the *Journeys of Faith* podcast, and former co-host of *The View*

A portrait of Paula Faris, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a white ribbed sweater and gold hoop earrings. She is sitting in a chair with her hands clasped in her lap, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and white.

CALLED OUT

Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling

“I highly recommend *Called Out*! It is a heartfelt, funny, vulnerable guide to overcoming the pressure to ‘win’ at all costs, and instead live the life you were made for.”

—Michael Strahan

“I had the pleasure to take a seat alongside Paula on *The View* for two years. *Called Out* is an honest look into the very thing that holds many of us back: fear. Paula explains that God can move us through those fears and into a deeper sense of both our faith calling and the calling of our career. If you want to pepper more peace, purpose, and balance into your life, this book is a wonderful place to start.”

—Candace Cameron Bure, actress, producer,
and *New York Times* bestselling author

“Paula’s personal story of risking it all to pursue her God-given purpose will inspire you on your own journey of finding success God’s way.”

—Christine Caine, bestselling author and founder of A21
and Propel Women

“The way Paula unpacks her message that success doesn’t define you hit me right in the heart. Filled with funny stories and fascinating insight into her career, *Called Out* is a much-needed love letter to working moms everywhere—and Paula is one I continue to look up to!”

—Rachel Cruze, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author
and host of *The Rachel Cruze Show*

“We sometimes think of *calling* and *career* as the same thing, but Paula Faris does a beautiful job shining a light on the differences, helping us understand that our work isn’t our worth.”

—T. D. Jakes Sr., senior pastor/CEO,
The Potter’s House/TDJ Enterprises

“My friend Paula combines a raw, compelling personal story with an urgent question faced by so many of us: How do we make sure our professional choices line up with our professed values? Countless people will benefit from the bravery Paula exhibits in this book.”

—Dan Harris, ABC News anchor/correspondent
and author of *10% Happier*

“So many people feel trapped trying to follow the path of success yet know that something significant is missing. Paula Faris has written a gut-wrenchingly transparent book entitled *Called Out: Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling*. If you feel stuck and are longing for more, Paula’s encouraging story will stir your spirit, move

Called Out • Paula Faris

your heart, and build your faith to believe you can discover a divine calling instead of simply pursuing a career.”

—Craig Groeschel, pastor of Life.Church
and *New York Times* bestselling author

“In this compelling book, Paula makes herself vulnerable in order to enlighten us—not just about the perils of burnout, but about anything in our lives that gets in the way of us becoming all we were meant to be.”

—Melissa Joan Hart

“Paula is incurably curious. She asks astounding questions (I know this firsthand), and she is a wellspring of good advice. (Again, I speak from personal experience.) Most of all, she is in dogged pursuit of a life that lives out faith and values. If you desire to do the same, then you are holding the right book. It is well written and inviting. The ideas are timely and timeless. Thank you, Paula, for sharing them with us.”

—from the afterword by Max Lucado, pastor
and bestselling author of *How Happiness Happens*

“Paula is a modern-day working mama who inspires me with her candor and wit! She makes the tough calls, advocates for the next generation, and lives a life of courageous faith. In these pages you’ll find clarity on how to embrace your true calling and the courage to take the next step!”

—Rebekah Lyons, author, *Rhythms of Renewal* and *You Are Free*

“In *Called Out*, Paula Faris does a fabulous job of using her personal struggles with career, expectations, and purpose to encourage readers to push past their fears and step into their true calling.”

—Meghan McCain, co-host of *The View*

“Whether you’re just stepping into the job market or you’re a vocational veteran, *Called Out* has something for you. Paula’s honest look at work and life is refreshing. More important, it reminds us to stop fooling ourselves and to start anchoring our lives in the things that really matter.”

—Dave Ramsey, bestselling author and nationally syndicated
radio show host

“It is so easy to be defined by a job, by a title, or by worldly accolades. And yet, God calls us to a purpose so much higher. Paula’s story is such a relatable and inspiring example of this. If you are wrestling through a season of transition, this is the book for you.”

—Tim Tebow

CALLED OUT

Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling

PAULA FARIS



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This book recounts events in the life of Paula Faris according to the author’s recollection and information from the author’s perspective. While all stories are true, some dialogue and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

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For my dad . . . I love you forever.



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budding from the trees, pushing up from the street-side planters, and sprouting up from the window boxes of Lincoln Center. It's the right kind of day for hard conversations, the spring sun smiling down on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and as I walk, I study my notes and rehearse my lines. I've rehearsed them a hundred times—at home, in the car, in the bathroom, at the office. I've made my husband, John, suffer through my practice sessions. But this time, I'm not preparing for a TV appearance. This time, I'm preparing for the most important conversation of my career.

Rubbing shoulders with someone who'd refused to yield my side of the sidewalk—or had I crossed into hers?—I don't look up or apologize or make eye contact. Instead, I head south toward the Atlantic Grill restaurant, right fist balled up, flicking my wrist for emphasis as I tick off the bullet points. I tune out the street noise, the hissing of a stopping bus, the sounds of sirens, a person talking to a hot dog vendor. I can't forget a single word on this note pad.

I turn the corner to West 65th and as I do, my heart flutters and a hole opens up in my stomach. *I'm really doing this*, I think. Regardless of how much it scares me. I see the back entrance for the Atlantic Grill, a local hangout for journalists and news executives, and I pray no one else from the network is in there chowing down cheeseburgers with a side of gossip. I'd rather not be the subject of more rumors.

Through the door, I nod to the host and tell him I'm meeting James Goldston. Mr. Goldston hasn't arrived, he says. I thank him, letting him know I'll be back after running to the ladies' room. In the restroom, I stand directly in front of the mirror and give myself a little pep talk.

You know what you want.

Stay firm in your demands.

Even though he scheduled this meeting, you are in the driver's seat.

Don't let your fear get the best of you.

I check my hair, my glasses, my blouse. I look the part—confident, strong journalist—no matter how fast my heart pounds. I repeat the salient points to myself one last time: It's been a trying season (*no, a year of hell*) and I've worked through it all; the hours have been insane and there's no end in sight (*should I bring up the twenty-one straight shifts without a break?*); John and I haven't been able to take time off in years (*does this sound too whiny?*); God seems to be drawing me in a different direction (*careful not to over-spiritualize it, Paula*). I repeat the phrases, then put the notes down and try to recite them by memory, but my brain is at capacity, my thoughts muddled. I'd do anything for a teleprompter.

When I return to the dining room, the host leads me back to my table and takes my drink order. Water is fine, I say, then place my cheat sheet to my right while I wait for James to make his entrance. When he walks through the double doors of the Atlantic Grill, heads turn. Even if he weren't the president of ABC News, he'd attract attention. Tall, slender, and in his mid-fifties, he carries himself with purpose. And a smile. It's an easy smile, the kind that's a rarity among Manhattan movers and shakers. He walks kindly, if such a thing is possible, and I suspect this is what's made James an accomplished journalist.

I scoot out of the booth to give him a hug, and he tells me it's good to see me. I slide back into my seat, and once he is centered against the cherry-red leather back of the booth, he launches into the usual pleasantries.

How's John? Is he still enjoying commercial real estate?

What about the kids? Is Caroline doing well in school?

How old is Landon now? Has he started soccer yet?

I answer his questions and ask him a few of my own. James tells me about his wife, his three boys, and how much they are loving soccer. Speaking of soccer, we launch into a conversation about the international leagues. We play conversational tennis—a skill successful broadcasting professionals hone to a fine point—and as we do, I almost

forget the pit in my stomach and the fact that my hands tremble as I pick up my water glass.

I'm almost at ease, but then I remember why we're here. He has called this meeting to discuss my contract, and consequently, my future with the network. I pivot from the chitchat and create space to have a more meaningful conversation.

"So," I say, opening the conversational door. James walks through.

"We know it's been a tough season," he says, "but we don't want you to walk away from the ABC family. We love your work, your attitude, the joy you bring to the studio. What'll it take to keep you around?"

I glance at my notepad one last time, taking stock of the bullet points. How forceful can I be? How assertive? What if I say it all wrong? What if I'm too much? I imagine the headline: "News Anchor Kills Career Over Burger and Fries." But James already knows my struggles, my needs, even my demands. We're a part of the ABC family, and for better or worse, it's the kind of family that doesn't keep secrets well (after all, many journalists make a name for themselves by outing other people's secrets). He wants to hear it straight from the horse's mouth, though, and knowing it's now or never, all or nothing, I dive headfirst into the topic *du jour*.

"James, if ABC wants me to stay, I need to walk away from *The View* and the weekend anchor desk at GMA. The Wednesday-through-Sunday schedule is killing me. It's starting to affect my marriage. It's keeping me from my kids, and I don't think God's calling me to sacrifice my family for my career."

He nods but says nothing.

"Keeping the same schedule is an absolute nonstarter."

He nods again, says he understands, but I'm just getting started. I look at my cheat sheet, gathering my thoughts and my breath as I launch into a more detailed explanation.

"I don't think God's calling me to sacrifice my family for my career."

“This isn’t a rash decision,” I say, though James never said it was. “It’s been a year in the making.” He nods, reaches for his water and takes a long drink. I give him more history than he’s asked for and tell him I tried to step back last year.

“You did?” he asks.

“You don’t remember my conversation?”

“Vaguely. Remind me.”

I take him through a meeting I’d had the year before with another ABC executive, in which I had shared how the job was taking its toll, and recounted all my struggles on *The View*—how I’d been in the tricky position of attempting to be a neutral journalist on the show’s panel while trying not to out my own political leanings, which would affect my career as a balanced and impartial journalist. It had created tension with some of my co-hosts, I said, and when I’d tried to step back from the turmoil, I suffered a bout of negative press through various tabloids. The “reporting” had been unfounded, untruthful, and unfair—unfortunately, in my business, this comes with the territory. My schedule had been out of whack too, and there’d been multiple stretches when I’d worked almost a month straight without a single day off. All this stress and pressure led to deteriorating health, and I had told the executive that too. I’d suffered on-air asthma attacks that nearly led to on-air panic attacks. And this was to say nothing of how I felt about my growing family disconnection with John and the kids. They were getting my leftovers—leftover time, leftover energy, leftover joy. It wasn’t right, I’d told the executive.

James listens as I recount the story, then asks what his colleague had said in response.

“What any good boss would say: that I’d be crazy to leave, that it would hurt my career, maybe even set me back in the long term.”

That executive had reminded me I’d been given opportunities that other people would kill for. I’d risen from a relatively small market in Ohio and, according to the executive, with my talent and tenacity, there

was nowhere to go but up. I was a rising star, and walking away from the co-anchor desk would change the trajectory of my career, might hurt the assignments I received, I was told. Besides, if I kept working at the same clip interviewing the top politicians and celebrities, if I kept chasing down big stories, if I kept delivering as a co-anchor, my opportunities were limitless. The executive made a compelling case. As I listened, as I considered, it felt as if I were being dragged away from whatever resolve I'd had.

I could have been angry about this, I tell James, but I wasn't. That executive was just doing their job, trying to protect me from sabotaging myself—and from a certain perspective, was right. Still, this person hadn't lived in my shoes for the last year, and I hadn't shared my struggles with this person until that meeting, so I didn't cast blame for not knowing how broken and vulnerable I felt.

As I tell James the story, the words echoed in my head: *"You'd be crazy . . ."*

I chewed on those words.

"I don't blame the exec," I reiterate. "After all, they weren't the only one."

Just days before, when I'd told Dan Harris—my weekend *GMA* co-anchor and close friend—that I was considering leaving the co-anchor desk, he'd said much the same thing, that I was crazy to step away from both the career and the people I loved. (He supported me 100 percent once I explained my reasoning.) But the executive went a step further than Dan, warning me of the long-term vocational implications. And although just looking out for my career, the exec didn't know just how much fear their comments incited—didn't know I had a history of letting fear dictate my decisions. That exec didn't know how the conversation had revved up my internal dialogue.

If I walked away, would I be considered a failure?

If I took time off, would I ever make it back to the big stage?

Would people think I was too weak to hack it or that I was forced out?

Worse yet, if I wasn't in the spotlight, would I even know who I was?

I tell James that it was the fear that changed my mind, that kept me from stepping back. It was the fear that made me dig in. Stick it out. Work harder. What a mistake—one I was ready to own a year later.

I stop blabbering long enough to shove a bite into my mouth and wash it down with water. James responds, remembering the conversation now, at least in part. He hadn't realized how serious I'd been, though. I guess I hadn't either, I say, staring down at my burger. But this last year—my year from hell—had gotten my attention.

I take James through the hardest year of my adult life, one made all the more difficult because leading up to it, I thought I was in the clear. The rough season on *The View* had smoothed out, and despite burning the candle at both ends, I'd enjoyed it. I had a full portfolio of big interviews, with folks like Kim Davis, the controversial county clerk of Rowan County, Kentucky, who refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples after same-sex marriage was legalized by the United States Supreme Court in 2015. I had interviewed several of the Duggar children about coping with the sex scandal involving their brother Josh Duggar, who their parents admitted had molested five girls, including four of his underage sisters. I'd interviewed Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, and Joe Biden on *The View*. I had covered the Election Day results out of the swing state of Florida in November 2016. And in September of 2017, I'd landed an exclusive interview with Sean Spicer just after his controversial Emmy Awards appearance. And to put the cherry on top of it all, I'd found out I was pregnant with our fourth child. But in September of 2017, the winds seemed to shift. In fact, it was as if a tornado touched down.

First was the miscarriage, I tell him. Then an emergency surgery due to an infection from the miscarriage. Through it all, I hadn't slowed down. I couldn't tell James why I hadn't taken a break, really. But the reason was fear. Fear that I would let people down, or that I might have to deal with the grief. Maybe I was afraid the grief would turn to

despair. Ultimately, though, I was afraid of living without my narcotic of choice—work.

James offers a comforting, “You could have stepped away for a while, Paula. We would have understood.”

I know, I say, but I don’t think it was so much about them as it was about me. I pause, wondering if that sounds like some cheesy breakup line. (Yep, pretty sure it does.) Then I launch back into Hell Year, tell James the hits just kept coming after the miscarriage. There had been the incident outside the Stock Exchange, when an apple hurled by a pedestrian exploded against the side of my head just seconds before I was going live for *Good Morning America*. I remind him of the concussion that apple-sode caused, of how it sidelined me for weeks. Then there was the head-on car wreck the day I’d been cleared to return to work. (Even as I tell James the story, it’s hard to believe.) Still, after each time, I rolled back to the studio as soon as I could, sometimes still in a fog, sometimes not remembering who I’d interviewed the day before. (Had I really interviewed Jimmy Kimmel on *The View*? There was footage to prove that I had, but I had no recollection of it.) But when the worst case of influenza hit me, then turned into pneumonia, I knew I was either struggling through a season of “bad karma,” or God was trying to send me a message. In less than seven months I’d had five major events, each of which seemed to point to the fact that I had to slow down.

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I say it all to James, and even as I do, I realize how crazy I sound, and not because I think God is conspiring with the universe to try to send me a message. I sound crazy because I’m afraid of taking a break, walking away, finding an identity that’s not rooted in my ability to bounce back from adversity and dive back into work, regardless of how much I’m hurting myself or others. Am I an addict? The question

fully forms, though I don't admit it to James, and that's when I catch a small whisper.

Be still, Paula.

Slow down.

Find rest in me.

Find who you are in me.

I've spoken my piece, and I take a breath. I remembered all the points, and the panic hadn't set in. The air in the Atlantic Grill seems lighter, sweeter. James has taken in every word, offering empathetic *mm-hmms* along the way. He is a colleague, but sitting across the table from me, he seems more like an uncle or a brother now. And though I half expect him to argue with me, to tell me I need to stick it out for a few more years or keep climbing the ladder for a while, though I half expect him to promise me more opportunity, he doesn't. Instead, he smiles.

"You can't leave," he says matter of factly. "You're too important to this family. But that doesn't mean we can't make some changes. Do you know what you want?"

Did I know what I wanted? A great question, the short answer to which was *sort of*. The hole in my stomach fills with excited electricity. I want the calling of my faith and the calling of my vocation to align, but how do I say this?

"I want to cover the consequential stories. I want the big interviews. More Spicer interviews. More stories like the Roy Moore scandal in Alabama. I want to chase the stories where politics, life, and religion intersect too. I've been thinking it'd be great to have an ABC faith podcast, a place where my faith might direct some of the content. And I want to do it all on the weekdays. No more weekends."

James catches my energy, sees my enthusiasm. It sounds doable, he says as he slides his credit card out of the black bifold bill holder on the table and signs the receipt. It actually sounds amazing, he says.

We slide out of the booth, and James offers me another hug, thanking me for shooting straight. He's running late for another meeting, he

says, but we should keep talking. I assure him we will, and we turn our separate ways, he toward the front door, I toward the back.

On the sidewalk outside the Atlantic Grill, I see the city for the first time that day. The leaves of the trees springing up from the sidewalk are bright green. A man walks his dog past me. A woman passes with a grocery bag. I turn toward Columbus Avenue, toward a great mass of people driving and taxiing and walking. Who are these people? Do they know themselves and what they want, or are they so wrapped up in their careers that they have time for nothing else? Does fear keep them from stepping away, taking a break, slowing down, or exploring new vocational opportunities? Are they as I was a year ago, as I still am, even now? Are any of us all that different?

I reach for my phone, but then decide against it. I'll call John later, maybe when I figure out how I feel about my lunch conversation with James. And anyway, if I pulled out my phone, would I even call him? Wouldn't I get sucked back into the vortex of work emails and texts? That's the way I normally deal with fear, with ambiguity; I turn straight to work. Not now. Not today.

At the intersection of 65th and Columbus, I remember words attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King: "Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase." I guess this is why faith is so difficult for me, and for so many others. What if that staircase leads to nowhere? What if there's no next step at all and we fall off a cliff? And truth be told, I couldn't even see that first step. But the arc of my life reminds me that all those what-ifs are nonsense. I've been plagued by fear my whole life—fear of failure, fear of not fitting in, fear of being alone, fear of being embarrassed, fear that I didn't belong, fear that I wasn't good enough—and over the years, I'd almost lost myself to those fears. But time after time, God moved me through those fears and into a deeper sense of my callings, both my faith calling and the calling of my career.

When I was a teenager, he walked me through the fear and into a new season of calling.

In my first year of college, he walked me through the fear and into a new season of calling.

After 9/11, he walked me through the fear and into a new season of vocational calling.

As he'd been with Moses, he'd always been with me. He'd parted seas for me, led me to the right people at the right times. Right?

Columbus Avenue comes into view, and the truth falls on me like a piano dropped from the apartment window six stories above me: I really was crazy to take this step back.

What had I just done?

At the corner, I take a deep breath and lock eyes with a stranger. We smile at each other, and she offers me a good afternoon. I don't know where she's going, but I'm headed into a season of ambiguity, I guess. Relief holds one hand. Fear holds the other.

Calling, Career, and Vocation—The Buzzwords of an Age

We're inundated with messages on a daily basis.

"Live with purpose; walk in your calling," our pastors, priests, rabbis, and other faith leaders preach.

"Focus on the next achievable goal," our business leaders teach.

"Live with intention," the self-help gurus instruct.

Calling, purpose, focus, intention, balance are the buzzwords of our time. Forget about how to achieve those things—what do they even mean? And what if we're purposed, focused, and intent on pursuing the wrong thing? Will our lives be full of meaning? Will they be out of balance?

For years I thought I was living with purpose, focus, and intention as I followed my broadcasting career from Ohio all the way to the Big Apple. God had given me opportunity after opportunity and, committed to my vocation as I was, I put my head down and gave everything to those opportunities. I did my best to follow the best

advice of the spiritual leaders, the business insiders, and the self-help gurus. I thought that climbing the ranks meant I was achieving, that by all accounts, I was successful. Didn't society say as much? But if that was true, why did it feel as if I was letting everyone down? Why did I feel like John, my kids, my friends, and my church were getting my leftovers?

There were years I felt the tension and guilt, years I was afraid of stepping back and squandering my opportunities, but God has a way of disrupting unhealthy lifestyles, just as he did mine. Yet even as I walked out of the Atlantic Grill without any real plan, I still wasn't sure what God wanted to teach me. I didn't know he'd set me on a path of spiritual discovery, or that those discoveries would come through a series of interviews and life-altering loss. In fact, I didn't even know I needed new spiritual discoveries. All I knew was that walking away from the anchor desk felt simultaneously like freedom and the loss of my identity. It felt a little like hope and failure. And it was the freedom and loss of identity, the hope and failure, that exposed a deep fear.

Did I even know myself without this career?

Could I?

My worth had become my work.

My value, in my vocation.

Maybe you have been there too. Maybe you are there now. Maybe you've done your best to follow your vocational calling as a teacher, doctor, or stay-at-home mom, but somehow it doesn't quite feel right. You haven't found your fit, don't feel like you're living a life of purpose, one firmly rooted in an identity outside of what you do, your day-to-day vocation, day-to-day life. Like me, maybe you're afraid to reexamine your vocational calling, afraid to explore whether you're being called to something different, something more fulfilling, more whole. Maybe you're afraid to walk away from what you do because you have no idea who you are without it. If you've been there, if you're there now, I'm glad you're reading this book.

When I first sat down to put my thoughts on paper, I was a little (maybe even a lot) on edge. I was still sorting out my journey, still a little out of sorts. I wasn't sure I knew who I was without anchoring

Maybe you're afraid to walk away from what you do because you have no idea who you are without it. If you've been there, if you're there now, I'm glad you're reading this book.

the weekend edition of *GMA* and co-hosting *The View*, though I knew I'd better sort it out. And as a journalist, I knew the best way to sort out any story was to start investigating, start exploring, start asking questions and peeling back the layers, and that's exactly what I did. I began interviewing people for my faith podcast, and so often

the conversation turned to questions of calling, questions we all have. I read articles, books, and stories of people doing their best to sort out vocational questions—*what was it they were born to do?* In the months after my dad passed, I pored over his notes and journals, read the words of a man who was ever centered in his calling, one who gained his identity from who he was and not what he did. And as I researched, as I compiled a journalist's notebook, I came to see some truths about our calling, about the fear that limits those callings, and about the rooted identity that helps us push through the fear. This book is the culmination of my journalist's notebook on calling, purpose, and identity.

As you read along, I hope you'll explore the similarities between my life, yours, and the lives of those I've interviewed. Sure, you're probably not a Midwestern radio-sales-girl-turned-news-anchor, or an international spy, or a megachurch preacher, or a United States Marine. But the circumstances of your journey are as unique as my own, and if you're anything like me, you might find yourself wanting more clarity on the direction of your vocational calling. (And yes, vocational calling includes being a stay-at-home mom, which is one of the toughest.) You

might find yourself wanting more alignment between who you say you are and what you do. And hopefully it won't take getting hit upside the head with an apple to slow you down long enough to examine that alignment. (I hope it doesn't, because it hurts like Hades.)

If you feel a little lost in your vocation, if you feel as if you wouldn't know yourself outside of *what you do*, if you don't even know what you're called to do vocationally, if you're too scared to take a vocational leap of faith, or if you just want to find more peace, purpose, and balance in your day-to-day life, this book is for you. As you read, I hope you'll find a new way forward. More than anything, I hope you'll discover the true vine from which your vocational calling grows—your faith calling.

What is your faith calling?

Let's find out.