DRAWING THE LINE
How to Achieve More Peace and Less Burnout in Your Life
KATE CROCCO
“Cultivating relationships through loving boundaries not only enriches friendships but also enables you to live a more stress-free life. *Drawing the Line* will be your go-to guide to getting started!”

**Natalie Franke**, author of *Built to Belong*

“*Drawing the Line* is a breath of fresh air for a tired mama’s soul! Kate’s refreshing advice is exactly what Christian moms need today. If you’re craving deeper connection, faith, and happiness in a world that celebrates hustle and achievement at the cost of our sanity, then add *Drawing the Line* to your book list right away.”

**Emily Richett**, founder of HAPPY PR and host of the *Amplify Show* podcast

“What a timely, eye-opening, and necessary message to women! I feel like Kate has been reading my diary! This book has been so helpful in teaching me to reconnect with my God-given intuition, set better boundaries, and step forward in life with confidence. Bravo, Kate!”

**Polly Payne**, mompreneur and founder of Horacio Printing

“In each chapter of *Drawing the Line*, Kate artfully guides us through the valleys of self-reflection, never leaving our side as we journey to the peak of reclaiming the life of our dreams. Through the doorway of deep discovery, this book brings us back to what matters most. It’s elegant and grace-filled—a must-read for women seeking a more meaningful experience in their lives.”

**Amber Lilyestrom**, author, keynote speaker, and acclaimed business mentor
“Kate’s authenticity is breathtaking. This isn’t someone who just talks the talk but someone who has walked the walk. She will guide you in creating the balance you need in work and in life.”

Rachel C. Swanson, bestselling author and entrepreneur

“If you’ve ever found yourself burned out or feeling like you’re hanging on by a thread, Drawing the Line will serve as a guide to help you cultivate a life of boundaries and balance. With a focus on the importance of alignment and sustainability, Kate beautifully articulates the true freedom and life-giving joy that can be found in setting boundaries and showing up for your own life in a way that creates longevity for those big, bold dreams in your heart versus allowing them to become a flash in the pan.”

Kelsey Chapman, author of What They Taught Me
Annabelle, Charlotte and Drew.
Mommy loves you more than you’ll ever know.
This book wouldn’t have been birthed
if it weren’t for you.
CONTENTS

Introduction: Building Our Foundation  11

1. Never Say Never  25
2. Quit Ignoring Your Gut (And No, It’s Not Your Lunch)  45
3. Bye-Bye, People Pleasing  65
4. Stop the Worry Cycle  87
5. You Don’t Need Permission (You’re a Grown-Up)  105
6. Stop Overcomplicating Your Life—It Doesn’t Have to Be Hard  121
7. Bet on Yourself  143
8. Clear the Clutter and Get Intentional  167

Conclusion: Tying It All Together  189
Acknowledgments  195
A few years ago, as the December days grew colder and shorter, I found myself becoming unanchored. You might know the feeling: I was slowly slipping back into old behaviors that, in the past, had led to burnout. Exciting opportunities arose that I didn’t want to pass up. Past perfectionistic patterns began to resurface, and I began working more than ever before. I was also nearing the launch of my very first book. It was a monumental moment—a lifelong dream. As I rocked my sixteen-month-old to sleep, I caught a glimpse of the swaddle hanging above her bookcase imprinted with an interpretation of Esther 4:14 that said, “Perhaps, this is the moment for which you have been created.” At that moment, the pressure that had been building felt as though it might swallow me whole. I had no choice: I couldn’t fail this book launch. I had two months to get this right, to do everything and anything under the sun to ensure
that this book wouldn’t go unnoticed in the world. This would be my one shot to spread my message of hope to the women who needed it most, and failure was not an option.

Have you ever felt pressure like this before? The feeling that maybe you’ve got one shot at something you’ve always dreamed of? Interviewing for the VP position you’ve been working toward since you started ten years ago. Driving to that first date after months of deep, connected phone conversations in hopes that maybe this will be the one. Being asked to speak at the next women’s conference at your church to share your story of overcoming loss. These are the opportunities that we spend our lives waiting for, running them through our minds over and over again. These are also the opportunities that can throw our lives off-kilter. We become so consumed with having a positive outcome that we lose sight of the mystery in the journey, forgetting that God has predestined us for good no matter what our outcome is.

At the time, I felt immensely blessed. Not only was I launching my first book, but I was also writing my second, planning my first one-hundred-person live event, lining up dozens of podcast, radio, and print interviews, and launching another round of my business coaching mastermind program, all with just twenty childcare hours per week. But I was tired. I was running on adrenaline. And I had no idea how out of alignment I was about to become. I prayed that I could find a way to rest, disconnect from the pressures of work, and be more present for my family. I had created this business for myself so that I could intentionally live a life of alignment and enjoy my time with my family, not feel pulled in a million directions.
Maybe you’re there today too, barely hanging on by a thread. Not only are you striving to nail that opportunity and make the next right decision, but you’re also flooded with the pressure to impress your boss, be the best partner to your spouse, keep your kids’ juice cups filled and diapers changed, provide top-notch services to your clients, remember not to lock the dog outside in the rain, keep in touch with your high school bestie, serve at church, and text your mom back.

I wish I could say that cultivating a life of alignment happened right away, that I magically woke up one day and had the instant drive to change, but the lessons our souls need most don’t typically come that easily. They are most often solidified through intense pain and struggle. Let’s just say that over the next couple of months, in conjunction with the pressure I was putting on myself professionally, family issues that were swallowing us whole, and a soon-to-be global pandemic, I was even slowly losing grip on my marriage. My out-of-control life was about to hit me head-on like a freight train, and all was about to come crumbling down.

I am writing this book because this is the book I needed a year ago. After nearly a decade of owning businesses, I had become really good at thinking like a boss. I mean, come on, that is the title of my first book! I had my mindset down pat in my business. I was impeccable at stating and claiming what I wanted, taking consistent action, and crushing my goals. I was no longer afraid of failure. I ran straight through rejection. My strategies had worked. Yet, I was beginning to struggle everywhere else.

In my first five years of business, I had become unhealthily wrapped up in my accomplishments and titles: Licensed Psychotherapist, Private Practitioner, Business Mindset
Coach—you get the picture. These titles were my identity, and it took almost losing my businesses multiple times for me to begin understanding that God had more for me than career success. I truly couldn’t see beyond what was in front of me and never could have imagined having a life of fulfillment like I’ve been cultivating ever since. It feels like an honor (and a duty!) to share my story and journey with you today. To share how God knocked me off my feet (again) to show me what mattered most: my incredibly loving and patient husband; our two girls, Annabelle, three, and Charlotte (who we call Charlie), two; and our baby boy on the way. I know many of you are struggling like I was. You have strived for perfection in all areas for so long, and you’re just mentally spent. You live life going through the motions but aren’t exactly sure why you’re doing what you’re doing or how you got there. You are tired and feel overcommitted. You care so deeply about what others think of you, and you’ve neglected yourself to make them happy. You might not even know what you want out of life anymore. All that’s clear is that you could use a nice nap or a weekend away, not with those you love most but by yourself. You desperately want to throw the phone across the room and never hear a notification ever again, yet you sit on the couch at night craving connection, feeling lonely. You wonder if anyone else feels this way. From the looks of Instagram, you must be the only one. Everyone else seems to be able to handle career, family, friends, a Pinterest-perfect home, and gourmet meals. If they could look into your life, they’d see the dishes piled high, how you pick your outfit from a laundry basket full of unfolded (yet clean!) clothes each morning and pray no one notices the wrinkles, and those boxes you never unpacked from your move two years ago.
(true story) in the background of your Zoom calls. Why does it seem that everyone else has a picture-perfect life and you’re just getting by? Oh, how you wish life could be simple and you could leisurely read, organize your home, sit and laugh with your hubby, and collect lightning bugs outside with your kiddos without feeling the pull to refresh your screen just once more to make sure no emails have gone unnoticed.

What if I told you that it’s possible? That you can begin living a life of peace, simplicity, freedom, and abundance. Free from the pressure of missing the mark, passing over opportunity, failing the first time, or the dreaded FOMO. What if life could just feel like that four-letter E word that no one ever talks about? You know, easy? My husband used to cringe when I would say that word because even he didn’t believe it could be possible in this lifetime. Let me just say that easy isn’t a cop-out. It doesn’t mean exempt from struggling or challenges but a mindset of growth. An intentional choice that life no longer has to feel hard and burdensome.

And you ask, “How can I begin? How can I step into alignment, build a life that no longer feels burdensome, create relationships that fill me up, and feel rested and ‘at home’ even when things are not going as planned?” Well, here is my answer: It all begins by drawing the line—setting boundaries and limits in any and every crevice of our lives. Alignment is born from knowing our own boundary lines and fiercely guarding them. Allowing anything to cross those boundary lines will inhibit you from living the life God has available for you, a life of holy fulfillment. I close my eyes to breathe in this passage:

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

Kate Crocco, Drawing the Line
Introduction

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.
For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.
You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps. 16:5–11)

I believe this is God’s beautiful definition of drawing the line: standing firm in our limits and stepping into the aligned lives he has available for us. Our lines or boundaries being set in pleasant places, a trust of God’s great provision, a spiritual line connecting our hearts to God’s truth, an unshakable faith, security in his plan and the path he has placed before us, fullness, joy, and even more than we can ever fathom. How beautiful is this? Is this not the best depiction of God’s promise for you when you seek it?

Now, I’m sure you’re wondering, “Now that I know that in order to live a more fulfilled life I have to find this so-called place of alignment, how do I do it? How do I really grasp and conceptualize alignment? How long will it take me to get there? How will I know when I reach it? Does it change? How will I know if I am out of it?”

Kate Crocco, Drawing the Line
Let’s begin with good old *Merriam-Webster*. Here is the full definition of *alignment*:

1. the act of aligning or state of being aligned especially: the proper positioning or state of adjustment of parts (as of a mechanical or electronic device) in relation to each other
2. a: a forming in line + b: the line thus formed
3. the ground plan (as of a railroad or highway) in distinction from the profile
4. an arrangement of groups or forces in relation to one another

So first, *alignment* means the proper positioning of something. For example, when putting together Ikea furniture and two boards don’t quite line up, the screw will not make it through the two holes. When circumstances are properly positioned, alignment is present.

Second, it literally means the physical formation or drawing of a line. Where there is a line drawn, there are also rules made. Do not cross over the double yellow line. Please stand behind the red tape until we call your name. This state line dictates which laws are in place. We so often have to set clear lines with those we communicate with in order for us to feel at peace.

Third, *alignment* means a road map to follow. Stay within this plan in order to reach your destination. When we swerve outside of God’s plan for our lives, we go off track and out of alignment.

And last, it means the arrangement of groups or focus in relation to one another, meaning follow these guidelines for success.

Now think about examples of when things physically or metaphorically felt out of alignment for you. When you tweaked your neck at the gym and couldn’t work out for a week without being in excruciating pain. Or when your tires were out of alignment and your car wasn’t driving smoothly. Or how painful it felt when your line (boundary) was overstepped by a coworker. Or when you could sense in your spirit that something in a particular situation just felt off. We are faced with instances involving alignment each and every day, yet because alignment is not visible to the naked eye but a self-measured feeling, it is easily overlooked until something is completely off-kilter. Little by little, lines are crossed, conditions are blurred, situations snowball, and “out of nowhere,” we are hit at full impact. Just like that cold December when I was slipping out of alignment. I was in denial but about to be hit hard with the truth.

Can you identify with my story? Maybe you felt as though you were in alignment, but then you were knocked down. Do you have a clear picture of what true alignment could look like for you? I think it’s important before we go any further that you get a glimpse of what is possible for your life. When I hear the word *alignment*, some things that come to mind for me are being more patient with myself, playing princesses with my girls free from the pressure of needing to be productive, speaking truth to those I love without sugar-coating anything, saying no way more than saying yes, having margin in my schedule to sit and read a book with a hot cup of tea while petting my dog, being open to conversation
Introduction

with a stranger after yoga class, having time to write and mail a handwritten letter, not checking the time every twenty minutes, breathing and no longer holding my breath, and the best of all, starting my day in the Word with Jesus. We all desire to have what alignment ultimately delivers, which is greater peace, fulfillment, and intentionality.

Alignment for you today may look entirely different from what I describe as a slow and intentional life. Alignment for you may look more adventurous and have more movement and curiosity in it. No one way or another is wrong, and alignment will shift for each of us with the shifting of life’s seasons. So take a moment to sit, visualize, and meditate on the Scripture passage I quoted earlier. Close your eyes and slowly breathe in. Envision how different your day-to-day could be if you could infuse even just a bit of this passage into your future steps.

What felt aligned for you three years ago when you took that dream position at work may today feel like the completely wrong path. As we grow and stretch and reach goals, our barometers will shift. As we experience pain, as we uncover truth, as we better understand who God says we are, our barometers will also shift. Throughout this book, I will be sharing some very personal examples of how alignment has shifted for me throughout the years and the sort of power struggle I’ve had with it at times to keep myself feeling safe and comfortable. Bottom line: As humans, we despise change. We are creatures of habit, and once we settle into that new job or come up with a new sleep schedule for our kiddos or have a recurring date on the calendar with our childhood girlfriends, we want things to stay the same. But things never stay the same. We grow, our kids grow,
our perspectives shift, people change, we uncover new revelations, life happens, and often we are left with less time. Whatever the shift may be, it’s inevitable that some shift will happen. What felt like confident, aligned choices yesterday are not bound to feel the same tomorrow.

So now that we know alignment is ever changing, how do we know when we are no longer in it? Misalignment just plainly looks like the opposite of alignment. I can sense that I’m out of alignment when I am not finding joy and comfort in the little things. Life feels like going from point A to point B with zero margin. I slowly slip out of healthy habits and priorities to tend to fires. I fall asleep in front of the TV watching something to pass the time rather than filling my soul with a good book. I no longer set up my coffee maker at night and go to bed a bit earlier so that I can get up at 5 a.m. to read the Word, write, work on my other passion projects, or just have my coffee while it’s still hot and in silence before the kiddos begin calling for me. These examples are huge indicators of where I am at in life. Another clear indicator that I am slipping out of alignment is when I try everything I can to force something to work and it won’t budge, whether it’s a friendship I should let go of or a project that has me hitting a wall. Recently, it’s been a season of trying to do it all as a mama—full-time work-from-home job, full-time homeschooling—and realizing one of these has to give.

It really is hard to feel like you’re giving up on a dream. But do you know what’s even harder? Waking up one day and realizing that this thing you’ve been forcing has been out of alignment for ten years and that life would have been a lot easier if you had just trusted that God’s plan is always better than yours. Do yourself a favor and write this verse
somewhere handy, as I know you’ll be coming back to it in the future: “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jer. 29:11 NIV). In the coming chapters, I’ll be sharing stories of when it felt as though my dreams were being stripped away, but little did I know they were being replaced with something better. God’s plans are always better than ours.

So how will you know when you are in alignment? We know what it is, we know what it isn’t, but how can we clearly identify when we are living in it? Well, let’s just say this. I’ve wanted to write a book about alignment for years, yet I could never clearly communicate the steps it would take to reach this level of living. Looking back, it all makes complete sense. Although many times I felt I was in alignment, I hadn’t truly experienced it enough to really grasp the fullness of it. Alignment is really hard to quantify, and as humans, we want clear, concise steps, road maps, equations, or blueprints to follow to get results. We are also extremely impatient and at times reach levels of resistance because we haven’t accepted that what we so badly desire isn’t for us just yet. Oh, that sentence stung as I wrote it. I can’t tell you how many times I tried to force things into existence rather than wait my turn. And alignment, friend, is something that cannot be forced.

So the short answer to what is a rather long question and will take an entire book to answer is this: You will 100 percent know you are in alignment when, even if life is hard or devastating, your hope in Jesus is not shaken. You know that despite the grief, loss, uncertainty, or whatever you are facing, he hasn’t left your side for one minute. You may want
to throw in the towel and doubt his plan, but you know that you will be okay in time, and if you’re not okay, he is still working.

As I write this, my life is far from perfect. There are loads of uncertainty with our economy and the future of the businesses we are juggling. Friends around us are dealing with health issues. There is political and social unrest. I am in complete denial that we are welcoming another human into the world and will have three babies four and under. Yet, I am more confident than ever that my God is good and my God is in control. I know there is the possibility that everything can come crashing down around me at any time, yet I have an inner peace that God is always working things out for the good of those who love him (Rom. 8:28). You may have never felt a peace like this before, and guess what? That’s okay. We will get you there, sister. Yes, it will take some hard work—such as chipping away at outdated beliefs no longer serving you, learning new skills and behavior modifications, learning to work with (and not against) your feminine tendencies, and potentially seeking some professional help. Despite the discomfort, when we are finished, I can assure you that you will begin experiencing ease.

Before we get started, I want to celebrate the fact that you are reading this book. You are probably in a place of knowing something has to change. You know that God has a plan for you and that God’s desire for you isn’t for life to feel as daunting as it has felt. Maybe you have everything you’ve ever asked God for in your hands today, but more than ever before, you feel depleted and unfulfilled and just crave peace, stillness, simplicity, and wholeness. No matter how much you have, you can’t seem to shake the feeling that you
haven’t quite reached where you want to be. You are only desiring more and then striving more.

Well, first of all, know today that you are not alone. Our world has become so cluttered with bigger, better, louder, faster, and it’s taken a toll not just on you but on others as well, including myself. Even therapists struggle—we are human, after all! And you know what has helped tremendously in my journey to alignment? Allowing vulnerability to permeate my life. Not being afraid to share what’s true for me today and what no longer feels true for me tomorrow. We have been conditioned to act as if we have it all together, to never show weakness, to pretend everything is okay, and it’s slowly hurting our connection with each other. I’ve been there. “Therapists should have it all figured out. Therapists should never appear to struggle. Therapists should be the shining example of how to cope during tragedy.” I have had much more success helping women find their true calling and step into alignment now that I have gone against the grain, allowed vulnerability to take over, and bared it all. I know you might not be ready to let your guard down just yet. That’s okay. This is a beautiful journey that will forever be evolving as long as you are living and breathing.

So moving forward, I am going to help you find alignment by showing you how to do the following:

• Uncover, state, claim, and then draw your lines.
• Quiet the noise around you while turning up the dial to hear God’s voice.
• Discern God’s truth from the world’s truth.
• Uncover your deepest desires and create an unshakable belief in those dreams.
Introduction

• No longer allow disappointment to shake you by detaching from outcomes.
• Identify prideful or self-motivated places and lay them down.
• Become even more connected with your gut instinct.
• Ask for forgiveness rather than permission.
• Accept that you have a choice and life can be easy.
• Clear the physical and metaphysical clutter that adds weight to your life.

Are you ready? Grab hold of my hand. I’ve got you, sister. This will not be an easy ride, but I can assure you that new life and revelations will be born out of it.
CHAPTER 1

Never Say Never
You know what’s really painful? Being completely sure of something, maybe even having a pretty public stance on it, and then realizing that your belief or decision is no longer in alignment with your life and values. Holding on too tightly to what once was can really hold us back from living out God’s fullness for our lives. I bet some of you are living through this internal struggle today—doing all you can not to cave and change your mind about something that once felt so right for you.

I had spent two years anticipating February 2020. I had engaged in conversation after conversation with family, friends, mentors, business besties, my Bible study group, and most of all my public social media community. We would be enrolling our girls in full-time day care so that I would have the space to really dive back into my career and everything that comes with the launch of a first book. Up until this point, I had been scrappily working with whatever bread crumbs of time I could find outside the part-time childcare hours we had. As much as I loved my girls, I really wanted my career back too. Of course, nothing crazy like before, but just enough to build the momentum again. Pre-kids, I was known for working seventy-plus-hour weeks in my businesses. I had also worked very hard to get back to a mindset of “I can still be a good mom even if I allow others to watch my children so that I can focus on my dreams.” That department was a tough one, and I was still a pretty
newish mom at this point. Life was a whirlwind the first two years of motherhood, finding out we were having our second baby when our first was just nine months old and I was in the midst of full-fledged breastfeeding and raging hormones.

That February, the girls fifteen months and two and a half years old, I remember dropping by my parents’ and them casually asking if we had begun to think about schools for the girls. I literally was just trying to launch a book and get them out of diapers first, but I guess that’s what responsible adults do—plan ahead. And so, of course, I answered with, “Um, not a clue. We will think about it once they’re both out of diapers.” But then my father offered an idea that he thought was brilliant: the $H$ word. You know the thing that all the perfect moms do who devote their lives to the good of their children. Homeschooling. I almost spit out my water. *Me? Homeschool? You mean us living on a prairie, wearing matching hand-sewn dresses with Laura Ingalls Wilder braids, baking homemade bread, writing on chalkboard tablets?* I chuckled. “No way would I ever want to do that,” I said under my breath. I pushed the stroller home that day, particularly irked that my father would even offer such a piece of advice. If anything, I could see us someday traveling around the world during their school breaks so that I could speak to groups of women. But stay home all day long with nowhere to go? That would literally be my worst nightmare.

Before we move into the nitty-gritty of alignment in this book, it’s crucial that we get everything out on the table by focusing on three very important things. First, in order to step into the fullness and abundance that is available to us...
in life, we have to get vulnerable. We need to admit what feels uncomfortable to us. And sometimes we also have to release our pride. Vulnerability and pride are like oil and water—they just don’t mix. Second, we need to develop an awareness of the emotions that certain phrases and comments bring up for us. It’s important that we become aware of what irks us, like the homeschooling comment my dad casually brought up, and get comfortable sitting with these feelings and unpacking where they are coming from. And third, we need to develop flexibility in our thinking. As the title of this chapter states, “Never Say Never,” it is important that we release absolutes in order to open ourselves up fully to opportunities that we may have once rejected but are really for us. Before we dive in, I am going to leave you with a verse to read out loud and meditate on. I want you to ask God to soften your heart, help you let down your guard, and open you up to flexible thinking and discernment.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:2)

Shedding Our Pride

We are going to be spending quite a bit of time together throughout these eight chapters. I’m also going to be getting pretty vulnerable with you because I know how impactful our stories can be on others. So can you do me a favor? I can’t actually hear you, but can you hold yourself accountable to really do this work? I always say, “Don’t waste what
is in your hands,” so if you are going to read this book, do it wholeheartedly, immersing yourself in every page so that you can walk away with zero regrets rather than wishing you had paid a little more attention or practiced better intentionality. We will get into intentionality later in the book, but for now, just get honest with yourself in terms of pride. How is pride currently keeping you from living the abundant life God has for you? Are you struggling to apologize to your best friend after a misunderstanding? Are you having difficulty asking for help at your job because you’re afraid your boss will think you’re incapable of doing the work? Are you still in that volunteer position at your kids’ school not because you have the time or necessarily want to volunteer but because you’re afraid the other moms will think you’re a quitter? Get honest. We all have something we are doing that isn’t serving us, that is holding us back from living in full alignment, but that we continue to do because of our ugly pride.

Well, envision this. How would it feel to admit whatever it is you’re hiding and just speak the truth? Yes, this might ruffle some feathers, cause some people to feel angry or frustrated with you, maybe even push a loved one completely away for the time being, but, ultimately, the truth always wins. Maybe you’re like me and the person you are about to set off is actually yourself. You swore you would never believe or do a specific list of things, and now you’ve changed your mind, caught yourself red-handed, and are doing them.

Before we get started, it’s important we lean in to the power of being vulnerable. What does pride feel like inside? Pride feels like constant pressure and resistance, and when you carry it, you are on edge, tense, ready to fight and defend,
and you have a closed stance and a closed mind. When you are vulnerable, you experience fullness and freedom. You are confident speaking your mind and feel as though you are no longer hiding or keeping secrets. You are inviting of conversation that includes differing opinions, and you are open to what’s to come next. Which way would you prefer to live? I know I would choose the second, hands down. However, pride can easily weasel its way back in at any time, so we need to intentionally practice vulnerability. Practicing at all times in the little things will prepare you for the things that feel much harder to stomach in the future.

So let’s go back to me taking offense to the suggestion of homeschooling. The year 2020 was when everything I had not just asked but begged God for was now in my hands. I had such high hopes for all I would accomplish in my writing and coaching career. I felt unstoppable and firmly rooted in making my goals a reality. Then in early March, three weeks into my kiddos now having full-time day care and my book launch, something shook not only our world but also my pride and my strategic plan. A mysterious virus called COVID-19 hit our country, and no one really knew what to do, leaving us all panicked. We were living in New York, and so our city was one of the first to experience a mandatory lockdown. So, um, yeah, that meant my worst nightmare was about to play out: everyone home, under the same roof, 24/7 for six weeks, which at the time I had no idea would turn out to be months. What did I do to deserve this jinx? Was this a self-fulfilling prophecy? Okay, in all seriousness, this was not about me. Families were clearly suffering—caring for sick loved ones and suffering loss, experiencing jobs being stripped away, and missing weddings, birthday celebrations,
and even funerals. Everything that once seemed so secure no longer was.

My kiddos were not yet of school age, so instead of experiencing what I thought would be my big break, I laid down my career yet again to be the 2020 version of June Cleaver. And let’s just say I didn’t take this so gracefully—my pride was hurting big-time. And what does pride do? Pride eggs us on to kick and scream and hold on tightly to things that are no longer ours or that are no longer aligned with our life vision until we slowly can’t hold on any longer, lose grip, and watch what we were holding on to slip right out of our hands. You will hear me say this many times. One thing I am sure of is that God will always give us what we need, not necessarily what we want. I so love Isaiah 55:8–9, which says, “My plans aren’t your plans, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my plans than your plans” (CEB). Even though we can conceptualize this, it’s still not easy to accept that what we want is not always what God has planned for our lives. And to fully live out his promise for us, we have to set pride aside, begin living with an open heart and open hands, be ready and willing to lay down our egos, and take on what his plan is for us.

The year 2020 was a test for pretty much everyone. It was the year when many things became clear. Family members were forced to face one another every waking minute of the day, and those living alone were faced with the loudness of their internal dialogue 24/7. Big, grand plans were stripped away from us. This was a recipe for disaster, but also an opportunity for self-discovery, with new truths being
uncovered. Being locked inside, left to face myself, my feelings, and my family, I was met with a deeper truth, insight, and 20/20 vision. I began to see God soften my heart, strip me of my self-centered career plans, and call me to quit chasing all that I had been wanting. I felt him calling me to, quite honestly, the opposite of what I had prayed for. I had wanted opportunities to speak and use my voice in the business world outside the home, but instead he was calling me to stay planted and use my voice within my home. Yet, I resisted. My pride told me, “I can still do it all. Even with kids home, I’ll figure it out. I always do. I can’t fail my first book launch. I need to get my voice out there so I can make an impact in this world.” And so, even in the midst of a global pandemic, my pride convinced me that I could still make this grand plan happen, until God showed me who was really in charge. I mean, come on, we ultimately know it’s always his way or the highway.

When I tried to force something, each time he responded with a subtle, “I told you so. Just stop already.” Here are a few examples. Waking up at 3:30 a.m. to film videos and then losing them. Scheduling podcast interviews for 9 p.m. when the kids should be fast asleep but the dog had a barking fit at a leaf blowing in the wind in the backyard resulting in awake and screaming children. My husband having an emergency work meeting that needed to be kid-free when I was scheduled to present a training. You get the picture. I was forcing something that God was trying to show me was no longer lining up with his plan for me. In that moment, I clearly felt him impressing on my heart these words: “Kate, these gifts are all for you, but not for you right now. Don’t force what you can’t control. Embrace this season with your