

1 more

THE BIRTH OF MORE

THE BEGINNING OF A
SACRED LONGING



Welcome to “more”

My goal is to meet you where you are, not to change you, to gently encourage you to allow a divine transformation to emerge naturally from the quiet place of Presence, where safety governs our every thought and action.

This story has been one of the most vulnerable efforts in my life, exposing sacred parts of me. I choose to risk, to share my story, knowing there are those who will not understand, those who will judge, those who will hate, and those who will resonate a longing that can only be quenched by the Divine.

I want you to open this book and immediately feel: I am safe. It's okay to be me.

I want you to discover the Wellspring of Life that resides within you, the One who has always been there. The Living Water that rushes to reward and refresh you, to overflow its banks into the lives of all who cross your path on your divine journey.

Interlude

The Beautiful Why

The Wisdom of Asking Why

One of the most beautiful gifts I've ever received has come through my wife, Amy.

Amy carries with her an honesty that refuses to pretend. She often comes to our conversations with questions, sometimes raw, sometimes tender, sometimes spoken with tears. They may sound simple at first: "*Why?*" "*How?*" "*What does that mean?*" Yet over time I've realized these questions are not signs of doubt or weakness. They are signs of wisdom.

For me, decades of study can sometimes become a disadvantage. And in that moment, I remembered: wisdom's first word is a question. My head gets filled with doctrines, arguments, and theological systems. Amy, though, brings me back to the sacred simplicity of wondering. She reminds me that wisdom is not found in having all the answers, but in daring to keep asking. In her voice I hear the echo of Proverbs: "*Wisdom cries aloud in the streets,*" not in locked classrooms, temples, synagogues or churches, but where ordinary hearts live. Questions are not the enemy of faith; questions are prayers with question marks.

When I first came to faith, a priest told me, "*Young man, it's what I say it is. Quit asking questions.*" I carried that silence like a stone. But Jesus did not say, "*Hush and obey.*" He said, "*Ask... seek... knock.*" He invited the child to the center of the room. He defended the shamed and said, "*Go in peace.*" The Teacher, who is Truth, made curiosity a doorway, not a crime.

So here is a house rule for this book and for our lives: No shame for honest questions. We handle the word of truth by asking; we receive wisdom by asking; we grow beyond partial answers by asking again. The River of Life needs a riverbed, and your questions carve it. Study is a gift, but wonder keeps it soft. If a voice uses certainty to control or belittle, it is not love's

voice. Love is patient with the long arc of understanding. Love walks the extra mile with your why.

Amy has shown me that wisdom often looks like a child asking “*why?*” again and again, not to tear something down, but to understand, to grow, and to see more clearly. Watching her ask questions has moved me to tears more than once. It is holy ground.

So, dear reader, if you come to these pages with your own questions, please know you are in good company. Your questions are not a burden, nor are they proof of a lack of faith. They are, perhaps, the purest evidence of your longing to know, to love, and to live in the light of truth. Amy’s courage to ask is one of the purest signs of wisdom I know. May it be yours too.

I’ve included questions at the end of each chapter, not as tests with right or wrong answers, but as kindling for the fire of *more* to burn brightly in you. May your “why’s” not lead you into despair, but into wonder, not into fear, but into freedom.

*Wisdom’s first word is a question.
Not a lecture, not a rule,
a whisper that dares to ask “Why?”*

*Amy’s questions remind me:
faith is not afraid of wonder.
Questions are not the enemy of truth;
they are prayers with question marks.*

*So, if you carry your own “why’s,”
hold them tenderly.
They are not signs of weakness,
but sparks of wisdom.*

*May your questions be kindling wood
for the fire of more to burn in you.
May your why’s lead you not to despair,
but to wonder.*

Preface

Dear Reader,

Before you turn these pages, I want to speak plainly from my heart: This book is not for sale; these writings are offered freely and sustained by the generosity of donations used to serve “more” people.

Yes, you may be holding it in your hands, someone may have printed it, formatted it, or even distributed it, but the soul of this book cannot be priced, merchandised or bought. You are holding something sacred, not because I am special, but because *you* are. This journey was never written to make a name for myself, nor born from ambition or hunger for acclaim.

It began in a hospital bed; It rose from the ache of loss.

It was shaped by the laughter of children who wanted more than rules.

It emerged from long nights in homes, detention facilities, prisons, hospital rooms, hospice beds and quiet places of prayer.

It came from the Spirit, and when the Spirit gives, you don't trademark it; you give it back.

If this book blesses you, please, let it move through you. Pass it on; read it aloud; quote it, share it, scribble in the margins. Let it do in you what it did in me: awaken the more. And if, by some means, money ever enters the picture, know this: every penny will be given back to those who are aching for more:

To the children who are labeled “too needy.”

To the hospice patients longing for someone to stay just a little longer.

To the caregivers who give until they're empty.

To the forgotten, the grieving, the overlooked.

This book belongs to them, and so do I.

I am your brother in the longing; I am your companion in the ache; I am one of the more-people and so are you.

With tenderness,

Part 1: The Birth of More

I am made for more. I've always needed more and refuse to apologize for that, for wanting more in life, in love, in relationships, and in faith.

I hate counterfeits. I despise substitutes, placebos and false promises; they've only ever distracted me from what is authentic, what is real, what is beautiful, what is **more**. You and I were created for more, it is our birthright, it is our destiny. It is not greed, it is not lack, it's the sacred ache of the soul to be whole. "More" is the pulse of the soul before it gets silenced. These words are written for the **more-people** of the world, the ones who cannot settle, who ache deeply, who carry the divine ache of longing within their bones.

These thoughts began to unfold, not in a sanctuary or a seminar, but in a place, a camouflaged oasis I never expected, while I was lying in a hospital bed, in an emergency room in Kansas City. I was physically exhausted, spiritually uncertain, and emotionally spent following a divorce. I hadn't gone to the emergency room seeking wisdom; I arrived simply surviving. This hospitalization certainly didn't make the list of what I thought "more" would look like. This was certainly not what I had in mind when I thought of "more." It didn't feel like more, it felt like loss, it felt like fear, it felt like failure and abandonment all rolled into one.

But it turns out, the road to more sometimes winds through the most unsuspecting places, places we would never choose.

I've come to learn, *"more" doesn't always come in gold wrappings*. Sometimes more comes wrapped in IV tubing and fluorescent lights. Sometimes more emerges when everything familiar is stripped away. Sometimes the road to "more" is disguised in suffering, sometimes it feels like pain, sometimes like confusion, sometimes like collapse. The road to

more is long, it winds, it disappears around corners I cannot see past. More mocks my illusion of control and exposes every part of me that thought I could navigate this journey alone, it laughs in the face of the false impression that my destiny could be a mere mortal, professional fixer as myself. But it was on *that “more- road”* that I began to see it, to name it, to embrace it, to surrender to it.

Here’s a confession: I thought I could “fix” anything. I recall an earlier time of life when my daughter Meagan was a child. Meagan was sitting by herself, attempting to tie her shoes for the first time. Meagan’s frustration was evidenced by her grumbles and sighs. “Want me to help?” I asked. “I can do it myself,” she said indignantly. I could relate. Why ask for help? Would that be a confession of weakness? I sat down beside her and said, “Did you know there was a time I didn’t know how to tie my shoes?” She looked at me skeptically, as if to say, ‘don’t patronize me’. “It’s true, do you know who taught me?” Meagan softly said, “who?” I explained to Meagan that her Nonno (grandpa) and Nonna (grandma) taught me to tie my shoes, I then showed her how, step by step. Meagan watched closely, it was only moments later she was able to do it herself. That moment was a picture of how I lived; the fixer, the teacher, the one who comes alongside to help others reach for more.

Over the years, my children saw me pour myself out for others while neglecting my own needs, it was rewarding, but it didn’t mend me. I received two coffee mugs over the years that read: *“If Papa can’t fix it, no one can.”* I wore the title of “fixer” like an imaginary armor. “I got this,” “No problem,” “I can fix this” supported the fortress of my self-assurances and achievements. All this collapsed when my marriage of more than three decades ended, a marriage full of trying, hoping, fixing, applying religious platitudes and instructions, yet only surviving at best, and finally, letting go. It doesn’t matter how many sermons you’ve preached or people you’ve loved - that kind of grief is a death of its own.

Divorce is a soul-tremor, a loss that reorders everything. Some of you know this trauma, the unexplainable chaos, this psychological amputation, the death of a union that masqueraded as my “normal”. Divorce is not just a legal event, it’s a tearing, a rearranging, and ultimately a place to build a

new *normal from the rubble*. But even there, especially there, I found my ache for more did not die, it intensified.

My ache for more, that began as a boy, grew and morphed as a husband, a father, a lover, a friend. I've always craved more, I not only craved more, but I also gave more too. I *loved* loving people. I've loved so deeply it sometimes overwhelmed others, overwhelmed myself. Some viewed my determination to *love, and be loved*, as a weakness; some, as a compensating insecurity; some, as a deep need to prove myself. Others assumed my "more" expressions were simply a twisted kind of narcissism, but I ask you to consider another lens: a demonstration *to reach out to the unknown, to grasp a sense of meaning and purpose in life*. Maybe, if you're honest, it's who you are too. I know now, what I didn't back then: I was born for **more**.

My Italian father, Vito, a giant in my life, would retell a favorite memory in his beautiful Italian accent, "When I come home, all my children would run to the door shouting, 'Papa's home, Papa's home!' I would kiss you all and tell you all to go play; four of you would run and play, one would stay. Can you guess who that one was? Yes, that one is you, Carlo." I am the more-child, the one who stayed, the one who needed more. I was never satisfied with a quick hug; I needed to be held. I wasn't okay with a smile from across the room; I needed to be seen, spoken to, valued, remembered. I stayed, I wanted more, more of him, more love, more time, more closeness, more of something I couldn't consciously comprehend or verbalize. Over the years, some found me adorable, others found me exhausting. Many teachers loved me, some tried to avoid me or to punish me. I wasn't bad; I was **hungry**; I was *the boy who "needed too much."* And when you don't know what to do with that kind of hunger, you try to feed it wherever you can: I rationalized it, minimized it, justified it.

In my early years, I relentlessly pursued substitutes for "more." Unhealthy love was certainly another drug-of-choice: relationships that numbed rather than nurtured. I even chased the shimmering illusion of the American Dream; and then there was the "religious zeal" phase: trying to win attention or favor through adhering to rules, to doctrines and dogmas. Religion was another attempt to surround myself with imaginary fences to feel safe, in an attempt to manage my inner cry. But none of it touched the

ache, none of it satisfied, because none of it was the authentic “more,” not the kind I ached for, not the kind I was born for. I was not meant to be less; I was not meant to be numb; *I was meant to reflect and long for love, to pursue and embrace love.* So now, after all these years, I’ve decided: I will stop apologizing for wanting more. I will stop shaming that boy who *stayed by the door*, I will love him; I will honor him, because he wasn’t needy, he was brave, vulnerable, honest; he was true. I confess, I am a “more” man, and I bless the boy in me who still dares to long for more, to stay at the door, arms open, heart unashamed. I will shamelessly be the image-bearer of the Divine.

I’ve made peace with my more-nature.

I’ve come to love the boy who just wanted more love.

The man who couldn’t stop loving others.

The soul who aches to love and be loved.

Yes, it’s exhausting. Yes, it sometimes hurts, but I wouldn’t trade it for anything, because I’ve learned this: more is not a weakness, it’s a calling, it’s a blessing and it’s who **I am**.

Let the boy stay by the door.

Let him reach, let him ache, let him yearn.

For the door is not weakness, it is the threshold to wonder.

May you never again apologize for the holy hunger within you.

May your ache lead you not to numbness, but to naming.

May you stay by the door, for the Beloved comes through it.

Reader Reflection:

What part of me still waits at the door, longing to be held, seen, or remembered?

What substitutes for more have I relied upon?

What do I need to bless, not fix, my younger self?