

## INTRODUCTION

As I was thinking about the title for this book and how I describe my journey, I kept coming back to the word “becoming.” Yet I felt that it somehow insinuated that I am not already that which I am “becoming,” which doesn’t align with my belief that I am already whole and complete just the way I am. I kept looking for another word ... to no avail. So I decided to look up the definition, and, voila! This is it. This is what my—and, dare I say, your—journey is all about: beginning to be that which I already am, which is “enough” (to the required degree or extent).

This book is a story of becoming. Becoming that which I already am.

It takes you on a heroine’s journey—my journey—to discovering the truth. After years and years of living in a story and under the impression that I am unlovable, unworthy, and lacking in some way, I travel to a land where all this is turned around and I am shown reality.

This book is about shining awareness on everything I learned along the way in the hopes that it serves as a light for you. As Saint Paul says, “Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light, itself becomes light.” May this journey become a light for you.

This is what my heroine’s journey is about. Rather than offering a solution, it offers a reflection of the human experience and predicament so that you might see it more clearly. It isn’t a means to an end, unless you see the end as full recognition of your true essence and no longer living a lie. In which case, it’s a means to the end of my belief that I am not enough. Not so that I can make more money, or travel more, or get a new job, or find a new partner, but rather so I can bring this illusion—this false belief—into the light and release it once and for all.

The journey begins in a very ordinary world—one with which you are probably quite familiar—full of fear, worry, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression, and disappointment. Experiences that turned into stories, which then became beliefs that I would spend the next three decades unraveling.

One day, I begin to notice this persistent nudge, feeling of discontent, dissatisfaction, dis-ease, but I can’t quite put my finger on it. These stories or beliefs had become false rationale for which I need to defend and protect myself.

They had become armor that I had added, piece by piece, until there was no way the reality of who I am could be seen or felt. It’s understandable—when you believe you are unlovable and all you want is to feel love, you will go to great lengths to go out on the hunt for it and protect yourself from getting hurt along the way, forgetting that the hunt wasn’t necessary in the first place.

The journey to the already perfect self is a bit like traveling down the rabbit hole—without knowing exactly where it will lead, the further I go, the more I uncover. More than once I am caught off guard by what I find. I think for sure I know the answer and have it all figured out, only to be pleasantly (and sometimes uncomfortably) surprised.

The journey asks that I garner up the courage to accept my soul’s longing—to venture into the Land of Non-Judgment, to become enough and refrain from believing otherwise. I am only able to do this after

years of hearing and ignoring it, all of which prepares me to be ready to accept it. As the mentors and teachers in my life offer me their reflections and understanding of truth, I receive the necessary courage and energy to accept the call fully and never look back.

Once I accept the summons to adventure, I am in for a ride of a lifetime. It takes me through the perils of perfectionism, doubt, and comparison. It asks that I lower my shield of judgment, which has been falsely protecting me my entire life.

As I open myself up to the vulnerability of being empty handed and exposed, I reveal heavenly treasures that have been waiting eagerly for me to claim. With courage, curiosity, and a sincere willingness, I find what is waiting for me on the other side of each perceived danger. Each fear reveals another deeper fear, until I get to the innermost one and discover what I have been searching for was within me all along.

I confront my fear of not being perfect head-on without my go-to defense of perfectionism. I learn what it feels like to move through the world without my shield, feeling things hit me for the first time—like making mistakes, saying the wrong thing, or flat out dropping the ball. What do I discover? That I'm still okay. It doesn't kill me.

Then I face my fear of uncertainty without my typical mask of self-doubt. I face all the discomfort that comes with feeling uncertain without equating it with something lacking within me. I no longer have the excuse of "I don't know," or "I'm not sure," or any other number of phrases that come out of my mouth when I'm feeling doubt. Instead, I face the discomfort of the unknown with assuredness, confidence, and trust that goes deeper than anything I've ever known. And guess what? I'm still all right. I don't die.

Lastly, I face my fear of disconnection without my well-worn cloak of comparison. I learn how we are more alike than unlike. I come to terms with the fact that I am no better or worse—nor any more or less special—than anyone else. And, while I'm still alive, my ego starts to perish, little by little.

With all the treasures I unbury in the Land of Non-Judgment, I am ready to face my biggest fear of all. I am ready to stop hiding what I have tried to keep secret all these years. This journey teaches me that these false disguises cover up lies and that, ultimately, I'm not afraid of the lie, I'm afraid of the truth. By becoming enough, I realize that my True Self is greater than I could have ever imagined.

With my treasures in tow, I return home to the land I once knew, this time a person changed from the inside out. My external world may not have shifted, but my inner perspective certainly has. I no longer need to wear my armor of judgment to be loved, worthy, or even okay. I now see there is no right or wrong, good or bad—there just is. And I experience the freedom that comes with living from this knowing.

Yet the journey is not over. It has just begun.

This is the first part of my journey as I learn how to observe what is happening and see myself as other than my ego with all its doubts, fears, comparisons, and striving. I start to see that there is something much more constant and always free from danger that is noticing all this—the already perfect self.

PART 1  
THE CALL

## CHAPTER 1 Opening the Door

Some of my earliest memories are of feeling left out, cast aside, unwanted. No. I wasn't abused or abandoned or mistreated. I was a healthy, well-loved, well-taken-care-of little girl. This is the power of story.

The story of a three-year-old in the bathtub crying as her siblings splash around laughing in the pool out back. A five-year-old being told, jokingly, by her siblings on the way to their grandparents' for Christmas that she is adopted. A seven-year-old waking up to get a drink of water and finding her family out in the kitchen having a pizza party without her. A lifetime of being called the "oopsie" baby. These stories (which are not at all accurate but simply how my mind has chosen to remember them) quickly turned themselves into a deep wound I would carry with me for more than 30 years, and they became the things I would point to, either consciously or subconsciously, as an example of how I am unlovable. The seed was planted—the seed of unworthiness, separation, and doubt—and I would spend more than 30 years doing whatever it takes to make sure I am good enough to be loved.

I can see the picture vividly. A little girl of about two years old with her cute, curled pigtails. Dark hair and dark eyes, shining brightly. Wearing her little blue and red polka dotted dress. She is full of hope. Full of anticipation for what life will bring. Full of light and love for everything around her. She is whole and complete with her chubby little arms and legs, and her round, pink cheeks. She is love. She is fearless. She is limitless. She is enough.

This little girl grows up. Along the way, she begins to adopt stories as truth. She learns from others that there are limitations, things to fear, ways to behave, ways not to behave, what is lovable, and what is unlovable. She loses touch with that which she once was. She forgets who she is. She dims the light that was once in her eyes. For who is she to shine so brightly? She begins to doubt, to compare, to strive. She starts to go through life looking to others to tell her how pretty she is, how smart she is, how good she is.

She forgets what Wordsworth so poetically expressed:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,  
From God who is our home.

At a very young age I created a story that I was unwanted, unlovable, and not good enough. This tale is not unique. Each one of us has our own version of this story. Our own story that taught us how we are not enough. Our own experience of separation that created the first and deepest wound of feeling unloved. Many of us then spend years or an entire lifetime attempting to recover what we thought was lost, to repair what we thought was broken, and to take whatever precaution necessary to protect ourselves from ever feeling unloved again.

Most of us are inundated with self-help and self-improvement and think, “If I just find the missing piece or figure out my problem or join this class or get the certification or have the relationship or lose the weight or fix the neurosis, *then* I will be okay.” But what we don’t realize is that we are missing a *crucial* step that is keeping us in our loop of suffering. We are ignoring a truth that prevents us from ever feeling loved and reaching the level of joy and “okay-ness” we are seeking through all these other means.

My life was fairly ordinary. Sometimes I use the word “boring” to describe it; others might say “simple,” as in not complicated. I grew up the youngest of four in a middle-class family in middle America. My three siblings and I were all raised by two parents who are still married to this day. I got good grades, excelled in extracurricular activities, went to college, got married, and made my way into a corporate job. I experienced no trauma or life-changing events like others I knew. And, I judged myself for this. Why was I having such a hard time with life? I hadn’t lost my brother to a tragic train accident. I wasn’t battling a life-threatening disease. I didn’t lose a parent at a young age, either through divorce or death. I wasn’t beaten or abused or raised in an environment of addiction. What was wrong with me? Why was I suffering so much? Why couldn’t I just figure it out?

My problems seemed so petty. Yet all I could do was think about how life was so difficult. Why couldn’t it be easier? Why did it have to seem so hard? Obviously, I was doing something wrong. I convinced myself the only way I would feel loved and good enough was if I did things “their way.” Maybe not consciously but in everything I did, from striving to get good grades to saying “yes” to the man who proposed to me.

As a freshman in high school, I came home with straight A’s on my report card anxious to receive adoration and praise from my parents. Instead, I would hear them say, “As long as you do your best, we’re proud of you.” I remember thinking, “How dare they! Don’t they realize how important it is that I get straight A’s? Don’t they get that my best isn’t good enough? Don’t they know how much I am longing to hear them say, ‘Wow, Amanda! That’s amazing! You are so smart! You just proved how lovable you truly are!’?”

The funny thing is, I imagine most people would be *thrilled* to have parents say what mine said. Yet it wasn’t enough for me. Spending my entire life believing I am not enough means that what others do or say is equally never enough. I didn’t want to hear that all I had to do was do my best. After all, getting those straight A’s was easy. I could definitely have worked harder. I could have spent more time studying. I could have learned the material better. I could have gone the extra mile, whatever the extra mile even means.

I chose not to hear what they were really saying: “Amanda, no matter what you do, we will always love you. No matter what you do, we are proud of you.” Instead I thought I needed to hear: “Amanda, by meeting our expectations via these external representations of success, you are worthy of our love.”

My heart aches for that 15-year-old who didn’t yet realize her own brilliance but needed to hear it from someone else or receive it through a letter on a report card. A 15-year-old who couldn’t trust that her best truly *was* good enough, just like her parents said.

Starting at a fairly young age, I tuned into the social directives to work harder, study more, and reach your full potential. I witnessed time after time how hard work pays off and that there is always room for

improvement. I bought into this—hook, line, and sinker. I figured if I didn't try hard enough, I wasn't good enough. If I wasn't good enough, I wasn't lovable, and "good enough" needed to be damn well near perfect.

Recently, I have started labeling myself an "unwitting overachiever." I know plenty of overachievers and, according to me, I am not one of *those people*. Those people do so much. They work so hard, achieve great feats, make lots of money, run successful businesses, volunteer, and serve on boards. They spend more time on their passions than I do. They work hard at achieving their dreams.

On the contrary, I feel like I am *never* doing enough. Even as I recount tales of my childhood I find myself diminishing all the activities I did well and eventually stopped doing. I minimize being a "good test-taker" or "not having to try hard at school." Time and time again, I find myself thinking if it came easily or if I was a "natural" at it, then it wasn't enough. As if my natural abilities—who I am at my core—simply aren't enough.

My standard of "enough" has been quite skewed my entire life. By the time I got to high school, I read self-help book after self-help book because I most certainly was in need of help. This went on for over a decade. I learned how we lie to ourselves, how not to sweat the small stuff, how to be happy while not being perfect, and so much more.

Still, I was doing something wrong. How hard did I have to try? How much more of myself did I need to fix? How many more books would I need to read before I was okay?

It would be many more years before I was offered relief, but this was the start of no return. These books (and everything else I was doing to "better myself") were the beginning of the unraveling, the beginning of receiving my Call to adventure—the journey to becoming enough. The journey wasn't about trying harder, doing more, or being better; it was about revealing my True Self by trusting I am enough.

Each of us hear this plea at one point or another in our lives. It is the nudge that there is something else, something we have forgotten or put aside, something to rediscover. Many of us misinterpret this as the quest for something "more" or "better." This is how it started for me. I felt there was something lacking or missing in my life. I felt the need to improve things and believed that the only way to discover my true essence was by looking to others for the answers.

The invitation came multiple times, not with a bang but a whimper. The True Self has a way of being quiet and patient. I experienced an uneasiness in my being that kept telling me there had to be another way—this couldn't be it. Another way that didn't require me trying harder or doing even more. I had tried that, to no avail. The adventure awaiting me was the discovery of my already whole and complete self. It was the journey to unlearn everything I had previously learned and adopted as truth.

The first time this soft voice tries to get my attention, I am at the ripe age of 19. A theatre major in college, I spend the winter auditioning for acting conservatories around the country. I plan to take my future acting career to the next level (and receive my "enough-ness" from my auditors). One day in March, I receive the letter I have been waiting for—an acceptance letter from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City! Here I am, just about to complete my freshman year of college at a small liberal arts school in a

small Midwest town, and I have the opportunity to pursue my dream of becoming a professional actor and move to the Big Apple.

After months of making plans and getting excited that my dream is becoming a reality, I find myself sitting at a local eatery with my best friend, Kira, and making the hardest decision of my life. I choose to listen to my parents and mentors and deny the acceptance in order to finish college. Out of a desire to “do the right thing” and receive their blessing, I reject the Call. I ignore that inner whisper that says, “I will be okay.” Instead, I listen to the fears that I won’t make it, can’t afford it, and will never find a “real” job if I don’t get my college degree. I do what any “good girl” does and finishes college magna cum laude all while being engaged to get married.

A couple of years later, I receive the nudge again. This time that soft, quiet voice within says, “You don’t want to marry this man.” I am brave enough to tell this to my father who, to my surprise, immediately gives me his blessing to call off the wedding. This time, it isn’t *his* validation I want—it is the guests, my future husband, and my future in-laws that I desire to please. I allow the fear of “what will people think” and “what about the money we spent” to fill my mind. I once again allow the fear of “doing the right thing” make the decision for me and walk me down the aisle. This was yet another rejection of that quiet summons to adventure—to trust that I am safe no matter what.

It is not until I am 24 years old, working as an actor and living in Oakland, California with Scott, my husband of three years, when the whisper gets a bit louder. “This marriage isn’t working.” This time the voice is too loud to ignore, even though I try. I spend months feeling split in two at the thought of getting a divorce. That isn’t something someone like me does. It’s not acceptable, certainly not in my family. That isn’t how a “good girl” behaves. The idea alone makes my stomach churn...imagining how my family will react. What will my grandma say? Will my cousins ever speak to me again? Will I be the outcast of the family? Not to mention how his family will feel. The thought of what might happen and what people might think terrifies me.

So we try to make it work. I give it another chance. I deny my true knowing. For another few months, I weep and I feel like I am being torn apart from the inside out. I get angry with God and wonder where He is in all this. I pray and write and explore my feelings. To the best of my knowledge, I am the first of my entire extended family to end a marriage. Thoughts of letting people down, looking bad, being one of those “divorcees,” hurting Scott fill my mind. After months of agonizing, I make my decision. I want a divorce. I feel as if I am dishonoring my husband, my family, and God all at the same time. But the murmuring deep within is too loud—I do what I trust is best for me no matter what others might think and no matter how “wrong” it might be.

The decision to get a divorce starts the unraveling of my need to seek my “enough-ness” from the external world—from my parents, my husband, an audience, a job. I trusted that quiet voice within for one of the first times in my life and did what I thought was best for me no matter the consequence. And guess what? I didn’t die and neither did Scott. I discovered that my imagination is far worse than reality when it comes to how people might respond. I opened the door to learning the greatest lesson of my life—I am always okay.

Yet, even though the door has been opened, I am not ready to walk through. I am not ready to let go of what I still believe to be true—that I am broken and need to be fixed. How in the world can I be all right

and accept what is when I don't like who I am? How can I be at peace with myself if I still have such a long way to go? How can I trust myself when there is still so much to improve?

For most of my life everything told me, "You're not okay the way you are. You're only good if you do things the right way. You need to be different/better/smarter/faster and try harder." So, even though I listened once, there will be many more years of rejection before my soul's request is fully accepted. For now, I still see myself as imperfect and untrustworthy. I still need others to tell me what to do, how to live, and how good I am.

The following years serve as a training ground for me to experience what is ultimately holding me back and has me stuck in this loop. I continue to reject the Call time and time again. I reject it looking for the "fix"—the thing that will make me good, whole, and complete—whether it be the next book, spiritual path, boyfriend, job, or diet. I reject it by continuing to seek approval and validation of my goodness, my enough-ness, from a voice that is not my own. My primary way to distract myself from my soul's truth is with men and relationships, placing my worth and wholeness in what *he* thinks of me or how I perceive myself when I am with him. So I look for it from my boyfriend, the guy at the bar, or the guy online.

Before the ink is even dry on the divorce papers, I find my way into another partnership that will last nearly six years. I know immediately this guy is different. Early on in the relationship I learn that one of Daniel's favorite phrases is, "You're good in and of yourself." I desperately want to believe him. I admire him for seeing life this way. Still, the hair on the back of my neck bristles every time he says it. It is the very thing I am running away from, the last thing I want to hear. It goes against everything I have spent my entire life believing. I can't inherently be good; I've got to *kick, punch, and scream* my way to being good.

Daniel encourages me to find my worth and validation within. He doesn't want to give into my demands to be the one to validate me. Oftentimes, he flat out refuses. I see this as unkind and unloving, as if he doesn't care about me. I get upset and throw plates and tantrums when he "makes" me feel bad about myself or not good enough. I storm down the street in a huff, burst into tears, blame him for why I am so upset. He simply doesn't love me the way I want him to, which is a total setup for him since I don't yet love myself that way. Even though he sees me as "good in and of myself," I refuse to accept it.

While hiking together along the 2200 miles of the Appalachian Trail, there were many times I refused to adopt the way he saw me. On the third day of hiking, we were going down the rocks of Blood Mountain. There was about five feet drop of stone that we needed to get down. There were little weathered "steps" all over its face, so you could go down many different ways. I went down very hesitantly and with great focus and concern. When I reached the bottom, I turned around and watched Daniel just hop down a completely different way than I did. I got angry. I raised my voice and said in a very agitated tone, "If you're going to go down a different way than me, you should at least have the decency to tell me!" When it came to hiking, I looked at Daniel as more "in the know," as more *right*. So the fact that he went down another way was drawing attention to my being *wrong*. But there's no right way to step down from a stone ledge. I was down. I was *right*, too, but I couldn't see that I was already good with the choice I made.

I keep resisting and searching for why I am the way I am and what I can do to fix it and make me more loving, more hard-working, less irritating, and less anxious. There is always something to improve, something to fix. I reject the Call by picking up yet one more self-help book that has the answer for why I



am highly sensitive, why I am a perfectionist, why I have a hard time committing to things, and what I can do about it.

It is no wonder I continue to reject the undertaking to trust myself and listen to that voice within. The beliefs that I have carried from a very young age serve me well and keep me safe, or so I think. For as long as I can remember, I feel enough when concealed behind my perfectionism, doubt, and comparison. I have all these strategies that are well formed and, up until now, seemingly quite effective. When I do things just right, I am rewarded. When I second guess myself and do it the way they do it, I am rewarded. When I compare how I am doing with everyone else, I am rewarded. Why would I do it differently?

That is what we are up against when we hear the plea—the voice within that says, “There’s got to be another way”...the quiet voice within us that sounds like truth, but we are too afraid to follow it. We are up against a lot. We are up against having to stare our fear in the face without our layers of protection.

Still, through all my rejection over the course of these years, the appeal keeps at it. I get tired of the endless dating, or the endless drama of only feeling good enough when I have someone return my texts or tell me how pretty I am, or the endless seeking for what is wrong with me and how I can fix it. I am ready for another way. I am guided to pick up books on Buddhism, nudged to seek out atheism and evolutionary biology. I stumble across more spiritually minded people and am gently guided to what will eventually bring me back to myself. I make deep friendships with women for the first time in my life. I start seeing myself as separate from the guy I date, or the job I have, or the city in which I live.

I begin to reveal how all of my beliefs and strategies start from a place of judgment. Right versus wrong, good versus bad, needing to be more or less. None of it just *is*. In the months to follow, I have a lot of judgment to clear away before I am able to hear my soul’s request again and, this time, accept it wholeheartedly. Judgment is what is keeping me from accepting the charge of feeling enough...the judgment I have of myself, of the world, and of others. Judgment that comes in the form of the shield of perfectionism, the mask of doubt, and the cloak of comparison.

## CHAPTER 2

### Meeting the Enemy

I have another story to tell. It's a story of a six-year-old girl standing in the kitchen, proudly helping her mother clean up after dinner one night. She is placing all of the dishes into the dishwasher, one by one, thinking what a good little helper she is. She completes her job and turns to her mother for loving approval and affirmation of a job well done. Her mother, a lovely woman who takes great pride in her homemaking and problem-solving skills, smiles at her daughter and goes to the dishwasher where she promptly begins to rearrange things in an effort to teach her daughter the most effective way to load it. Sadly, while this may have taught the little girl how to utilize the space most effectively, it taught her something else—there is a “right” way to do things and she had just done it “wrong.”

I was this little girl. Whether or not this actually happened, this is the story I choose to remember as an example of where I learned what it means to do things “right.” It may sound silly that something as innocuous as loading a dishwasher could have had such an influence on my life, but when I think back to my first memories of learning right from wrong, this one comes to mind immediately. To this day, I can still feel the power of this story as I notice my stress levels begin to rise by the simple act of loading a dishwasher fearing that I might do it wrong.

For as long as I can remember, I have had a desire to do things the “right” way. This means I have lived most of my life in judgment. Judgment forms an opinion or a conclusion about everything—it is either “too much” or “not enough.” There is a right and a wrong, good or bad, black or white. If I am not right, then I must be wrong. If I am not good, then I must be bad. If I am not more than enough, then I must be less than enough. It all boils down to this: if I am one and not the other, then I must be unlovable. The reason there is always something to fix is because I judge things as “right” or “wrong” and feel the need to right my wrongs. It never just is. This is why I wore a shield of judgment for most of my life—without one, I feared I would not be okay.

If I wasn't judging the hair on my arms, I was judging the outfit that girl was wearing. I judged myself for being too opinionated. I judged my boyfriend for being too opinionated. I judged myself for being too lazy. I judged others for being too lazy. I judged myself for working too hard. You guessed it, I judged others for working too hard. *I even judged myself for being judgmental.*

In all these cases, someone wasn't doing it “right.” It was me or them and, often times, it was both. Sometimes it was easier to judge myself; other times it was easier to judge them—it was one way of relieving myself from the weight of carrying around this shield, like letting air out of a balloon that is about to pop. I so desperately wanted to rid myself of this judgment and thought the only reason it existed was because someone was doing something wrong. I didn't realize I had it backwards. It's not as though I was judgmental because you were doing it wrong, rather the reason I even perceived it as wrong was due to my judgment. So long as I view the world through the lens of right versus wrong, judgment begets judgment and prevents me from being with what *is*.

On my journey to get things “right,” I enslaved myself to perfectionism, self-doubt, and comparison. I read countless books to find the answers. I signed up for endless emails and seminars and workshops. I wanted to be the perfect wife, the perfect friend, the perfect actor, the perfect meditator, the perfect

writer. At the same time, I wanted you to be the perfect parent, the perfect boss, the perfect sibling, the perfect husband, the perfect mentor.

No pressure.

Through all this, I was looking to feel good enough. I thought *if* I shaved the hair off of my arms, *then* I would be pretty. *If* I was the perfect wife, *then* I would feel cherished. *If* I read all the self-help books, *then* I would no longer be broken. *If you* were the perfect partner, then *I* would be okay.

Each of us has our own incident that teaches us right from wrong and what it means to be perfect. Mine happened to be loading a dishwasher in order to please my mother. When I chose to interpret her rearranging the dishes as a sign of my doing it wrong, I internalized if I didn't do it right I was unlovable and, therefore, to be loved I must be perfect. And to be perfect meant always doing it right and never doing it wrong. Quite an extreme way to live. It crept into how I loaded a dishwasher to the way I tied my shoes to how I composed an email to the way I practiced meditation.

I want to point out that the loading of the dishwasher is simply a symbol, an event that I chose to place meaning on and interpret in a certain way. This is what we humans do, often when we are young and forming our ego's identity. In no way do I blame my mother for what she did or for my interpretation of the event. I simply use it as an example of how we turn events into stories with meaning and then how those stories and meanings can affect the rest of our lives. That is until we decide to question it, take responsibility for it, and, ultimately, transform it.

Because of this pervasive belief that there is such a thing as right or wrong, perfectionism ruled my life. This often meant that I ended up quitting sooner or starting way later than I would have liked. It also meant I would inevitably doubt myself and constantly look to others to see how I was doing—always looking outside for validation. As soon as something was no longer easy for me to do “perfectly,” I wanted to give up. It felt so much safer than continuing and risking doing it wrong, which terrified me. Equally, I would hem and haw and put things off out of fear that I would eventually reach the point of doing it wrong, which only meant one thing: failure. This paralyzed me. Failure was by far *way* worse than not doing anything at all.

I have had a love affair with perfectionism for most of my life. There were things I loved about it and was exhilarated by, and things I hid and was ashamed by. I used it as an excuse for why I did not take action, why I took so long to do something, and why I was so judgmental of others. I took great pride in it being the reason I have such a great attention to detail and am such a reliable employee. Many of us look at perfectionism and see it as having “positive” qualities (the ones to accentuate) and “negative” qualities (the ones to minimize or fix). I certainly did. It was my way of justifying this protective device. It wasn't until I redefined perfectionism altogether that I would be able to see how both the positive and negative qualities are “perfect” and inherent in who I am, and all of them are worthy of my acceptance. I no longer needed the label to hold me back or propel me forward.

The way I see it, we tend to get hung up on perfectionism in three ways: (1) we believe we are inadequate and reach for a false sense of perfection because we forget that we are already perfect as we are, (2) we paralyze ourselves thinking that “perfect” is how we think it should go (based on our limited and false

understanding) as opposed to how it is *meant* to go, and (3) we believe perfection is achieved by *doing* things a certain way as opposed to *being*.

So long as I carried around this shield of perfectionism, I would never feel enough. I understand why I used it; it was the best tool I could find at the time and all I knew. As I got older, I started to look at my perfectionism for what it truly was: a shield that kept me from feeling loved and a weapon that kept me from loving others. Whenever I held up my shield believing that I have to do things a certain way (and more times than not it wasn't good enough or done right), I kept myself from truly connecting to and withholding love from who I am at my core. I experienced a barrage of insults and an inner dialogue full of critiques. "You didn't work hard enough on that," "You should have proofread that one more time," "You are such a slob!" Then, I projected those beliefs out to everyone else. Holding up my shield of perfectionism, I demanded that *they* do it a certain way and do it right. When anyone fell short of that, I withheld my love from them. The very thing I started using this shield for was the very thing it kept me from feeling—love and connection.

Another reason I postponed my adventure to becoming enough was because of my debilitating doubt. Doubt is another way fear and judgment parade around and keep us from trusting the voice within. *We cannot trust ourselves so long as we live in judgment since it keeps us from simply observing what is.* Much like perfectionism, doubt springs from the dualistic belief that there is a this *or* that (as opposed to this *and* that), as if one choice is better than another and that there even *is* a good and bad—as if we are applying a valuation of sorts to our existence. Doubt keeps us stuck in the loop of "less than" and not enough.

My striving for perfection went hand-in-hand with my nagging self-doubt, a total lack of trust in my own knowing and unique gifts. This doubt kept reminding me that there is always more to fix. I don't know enough, I'm not capable, worthy, or important enough. Who am I to trust myself? Am I working too much or not enough? Did I say too much or too little? Should I have married this person or gotten a divorce? Did I make a mistake?

Mistakes are born of judgment. If there is no right or wrong, there can be no mistakes; only gifts. Lots and lots of gifts. To doubt if what I did or did not do was a "mistake" requires judgment. Turning left instead of right is only a mistake if I believe turning left is wrong. Choosing this school, career, place to live, person to marry, car to buy, meal to order is only a mistake if I see it as right or wrong versus a gift no matter what. As humans, we like to have an answer—sending that message was "wrong" whereas not sending it would have been "right"—because not knowing feels uncomfortable. But it is not the uncertainty that is keeping us from not feeling enough; it is our unwillingness to live with the uncertainty.

Should I do this or that? Should I buy this or that? Is this or that better? It's like watching a ping pong match ... for 30 years. Whether I spoke my mind or refrained from saying what I thought, doubt set in. Much like perfectionism, paralysis can be a result of doubt, keeping us from shining our light. I can think of so many times where my doubt would lead me to think through every possible scenario, without ever landing on a suitable option. While seemingly harmless, ordering from a menu would often induce sweaty palms, an increased heart rate, and a deep sense of dread bordering on panic attack. I would scour the menu, reading each and every option, wavering between them, asking others what they were getting or thought I should get. I would be the last to order, delaying the inevitable, feeling the fear well up in my chest and apprehension tighten in my throat as I stated my decision to the server, disappointment

washing over me the moment the words escaped my lips. Undoubtedly, the next breath would be me saying, “I should have gotten *that*.” And it didn’t help when the meals arrived and somehow I always seemed to prefer what someone else had ordered, just proving how I, once again, made the wrong choice.

The mask of doubt not only colored how I reacted to my decisions; it also tainted how I saw myself. I doubted my enough-ness, but not in the way I would have suspected. It’s not like I thought, “I’m not good enough to approach that guy” or “I probably won’t get the role so why even bother?” Surprisingly, I went after a lot of stuff. I got leading roles. I got accepted into schools. I got the guy. My doubt did not keep me small by always paralyzing me; it kept me in check when my ego thought I was getting a little too big for my britches. “Who do you think you are?” it would ask in a snarky voice. “You’re not talented enough to have this role. You’re not pretty enough to keep this guy.” This is what is lying dormant beneath the cape of arrogance—more doubt, more fear.

If my perfectionism had me seeking validation of my goodness from those around me, my doubt made sure I would never accept it. It would sneak up on me afterwards and say: “They’re just saying that. They don’t really mean it. You just got lucky. You’ll still never be as good as she is.”

This is where the cloak of comparison comes in, seeking outside validation—either by being “better” or “worse.” If there is a right and a wrong and I am striving to do it right, I constantly look to others to determine my goodness. Using judgment as my measuring stick, I can immediately assess where I stand. Comparison offers me a false sense of security. Either I get to be “wrong” and avoid taking responsibility for my own truth or risk making my own “mistakes” by doing it your way, or I can feel safe in knowing that I am “right” and therefore better than you. Either way, I determine my goodness by those around me.

When comparing myself with others, I don’t have to listen to my own inner voice. I don’t have to trust myself. I get to offload my responsibility and trust *you*, and then I get to blame you when it doesn’t work. It’s not *my* fault I failed; I was just doing what *you* did. Comparison allows me to determine my enough-ness by focusing on what others have, do, wear, and look like, and then see how I measure up. The cloak of comparison can be quite inconsistent. One day it has me thinking just how smart and frugal I am, because I don’t spend endless hours shopping for clothes and material possessions that “don’t matter.” And, the very next, it has me thinking just how stupid and destitute I am, because I don’t have more money in the bank. Either way, I am not “enough.” I’m not accepting who I truly Am. When we compare ourselves to others, we deny our equality as well as all the beautiful, authentic qualities we each possess.

Much of my perfectionism, self-doubt, and comparison stemmed from the false belief that I am lacking goodness, and the only way to achieve it is by *doing* or efforting. One of my favorite tools for understanding the human and spiritual condition is the Enneagram—a seemingly simple, yet subtly complex system to support the journey of self-discovery. It explains that there are nine personality types that describe human behavior. Each type has its own basic desire and fear that dictates how we operate in the world. The journey for each type is to awaken to the realization that what we are seeking to receive “out there” is already “in here.” For me, my primary belief is that I am not inherently good—that I am somehow broken and bad—and that I need to *do* something in order to *be* good. Get good grades, please my parents, excel at everything I do (and avoid anything that I am not naturally inclined towards), and do more, work harder, and constantly improve.

Ironically, this belief kept me from experiencing the one thing I thought I was lacking—my innate goodness. No matter how hard I tried or how much work I did, I was still never good enough. It was forever out of reach; an elusive idea that I could not seem to grab hold of. So I did what any sane person would do—I kept trying harder and doing more work to achieve it. That makes sense, right? If something doesn't work, just keep doing the same thing only harder this time.

This is why it wasn't easy to lay down my shield. I feared that without it I was open to attack. People might not like me or accept me. Ultimately, they will not love me. As a human, this is the worst fear we have. And, to some degree, I was correct. Until I could love and accept myself as intrinsically good, no one else could either.

For other types, it might be that you do not believe you are inherently loved or valuable or beautiful or wise or supported or free or peaceful or strong. These are what you think you are lacking and therefore pick up whatever shield or protective device you think you need in order to go into battle and reclaim it from your external world.

The mistake we keep making, however, is that the shield (or mask or cloak) does not open us up to experience that for which we are searching. It is a protective force; its whole purpose is to keep things from penetrating us. This is the opposite of what we are really going for—to receive more love and connection. Not that this actually is found outside ourselves, but when we keep our shields up, we do not allow for what is already within us to reach others and be reflected back. As Saint Francis of Assisi says: “For it is in giving that we receive.” We only receive from others a reflection of what we have already given, and this only happens when we lower our shields.

While visiting my boyfriend's family for Christmas in Texas, I was standing in the bathroom thinking about these concepts. Inspiration loves to strike me while snugly contained within these four walls, oftentimes while standing in the shower when I can't write it down. On this particular day, an image of a shield pops into my awareness. I start to make this connection to how I have used perfectionism, doubt, and comparison to protect myself for so many years. Then, I make the connection of how I see others using the corporate ladder, alcohol, building a successful business shopping, or accumulation of money to do the same thing. At the end of the day, whichever shield we choose, we are defending ourselves from feeling vulnerable to attack while on the hunt for what it is we seek. Here lies the paradox: *we are invulnerable to attack because we already have within that which we seek without, but we can only discover this once we lay down the shield.*

When I was in the early stages of writing this book, I didn't want to read anything about perfectionism, including Brené Brown's book on the topic, out of fear that it might fill my mind with someone else's experiences and conclusions. Still, I deeply respect her work and what she stands for, and I wanted to include a quote of hers in this book. So I did what anyone in this day in age would do: I Googled “perfectionism quote Brené Brown.” Lo and behold, this is the quote that the search engine returns to me: “Understanding the difference between healthy striving and perfectionism is critical to laying down the shield and picking up your life.” Great minds, I suppose.

The lesson I keep learning each time I lay down my shield, remove my mask, and hang up my cloak is that I am already good. It's already within me and there is nothing I need to *do* in order to *be* good. Equally, I am inherently lovable and valuable and beautiful and wise and secure and free and peaceful and strong.

Each of us is, and there is nothing we need to *do to be* these things. This is why it's safe to lay down our shields. Sure, at first it feels scary, vulnerable, open to attack. But it's only by doing so that we can learn the Truth, with a capital "T." As we lower our shields, we begin to see all the things we desire reflected back to us time and time again in everyone we meet and everything we experience. This is our proof that it already exists within. If I didn't already know what love or peace or goodness felt like, I wouldn't be able to recognize it in another. If I didn't already have a reference point for beauty within, I wouldn't be able to perceive it in the flower.

My shield of judgment kept me under the illusion that without it I am not enough; it kept me from being who I truly Am. While I might have thought it was keeping me safe, it was actually keeping me from experiencing what I truly desire. My invitation is that we lay down our shields and learn to trust that what we are seeking is already within, and then give that to others more than ever before. When I began to lay down my shield of judgment, as heavy as it was, I began to transform the way I looked at perfectionism, doubt, and comparison, preparing myself to once-and-for-all accept my ultimate quest.

My adventure to becoming enough was founded on learning to transform fear into love. I was unable to see myself as whole, complete, and worthy so long as I was afraid of what that would mean. I was unable to trust the all-knowing voice within so long as I feared the outcome. I was unable to realize my innate enough-ness without comparing myself with others so long as I was afraid of what it means to be connected with all things. I had to stop trying to be perfect so others would love me and instead love myself. I had to stop seeking others' opinions and listen to my own inner wisdom. I had to stop comparing myself with what everyone else did or didn't do to feel special and instead see our sameness.

Becoming enough meant I had to find the perfection within, trust myself, and see myself reflected back to me in everyone I see. And it wouldn't happen until I was ready.

## CHAPTER 3

### Accepting the Call

I finally caved. Probably from pure exhaustion. I was fed up with not feeling enough, tired of constantly analyzing myself and seeing what needed to be worked on next. I was done thinking that the only answer was found in doing more or trying harder. I was having brunch with a couple of friends in San Francisco, divulging some of my frustration. We launched into a fairly philosophical and spiritual conversation about our lives and how we were feeling. Eventually, my friend said, “Have you read *The Power of Now*?” It sounded vaguely familiar, but I had to admit I hadn’t. Something nudged me to order it immediately, and so I did. A few days later, I was talking with another friend of mine who was in town visiting her boyfriend. As it tends to happen with me, the conversation turned towards our views on life and what it all means. She said, “I just started reading this book. I think you’d love it. It’s called *The Untethered Soul*.” Again, this voice within said, “Get it. Now.”

Within the month, I read both books, back-to-back, devouring the wisdom they contained. It felt like a huge breath of fresh air, as if a weight were lifted off of me. In both books, the author was pointing to the power of awareness, observing what *is*. These are not the only two books in the world, and certainly not the first, to speak about this. I had heard about the importance of being present and aware of things plenty times before. Yet for some reason, as I flipped through these pages, underlining gem after gem, writing in the margins, it finally clicked. Not necessarily have the pleasure of meeting a yoda, I did. But recommended two great books by dear friends of mine, I was. The student was ready, so the teacher arrived.

We are each ready to hear the whisper in our own time. As *A Course in Miracles* says, “You will awaken to your own call, for the Call to awake is within you.” It may look different or adhere to a different timeline, but we can’t escape it; we each will awaken eventually. We each have our own “rock bottom;” a moment when we are energetically, spiritually, or physically forced to take a look at our life and examine how we are choosing to live. My rock bottom was not as deep as some, but it was deep enough.

I may not have been lying in a ditch, or overdosing on poisons every day, or in a near-death accident to wake up and accept the Call. This is not to suggest that my awakening was “better” than someone else’s; I say this because I think it’s important to realize that it doesn’t always come to that. For some of us, we might not need to create a nightmare from which to awaken; being asleep is enough. It’s enough to be fed up with things feeling kind of shitty at times, to walk around numb or disconnected from life. It’s enough to say, “Why am I making things so hard? There has got to be another way.” It’s enough to say, “Just because I have a lot to be grateful for doesn’t mean I can’t awaken even more to the Truth within.”

My awakening was spurred by a much more subtle nudge. I simply got to the point where I was fed up—I had had enough of not being enough. I was done with the suffering and the struggle that, on some deep level, I knew I was creating. My life was “good” by so many people’s standards. I had a boyfriend, a respectable job, a respectable income, lived in one of the greatest cities in the world, was healthy, beautiful, well-liked, creative. Why was I having such a hard time? Why was this not enough? How much more did I need to suffer?

This was my doorway into seeing the Truth. My first pinprick of light. If my life was considered so “good,” why was I choosing to suffer in this way? I was covering up this light with an obsession to fixing, perfecting,



doubting, and comparing. Our portal to accepting our soul's work differs. Instead of alcoholism or workaholism, I chose perfectionism. Judgment appears in each of these disguises. It doesn't matter whether we choose a pint of ice cream, a bottle of vodka, hours of screentime, or mentally spinning in circles to create our own suffering. Each of these distract us from the Truth that we are ultimately avoiding—we *are already enough*.

We might not at first recognize how difficult we are making things when we carry our shields of judgment and operate from a belief system that who we are is not enough. We might not recognize it because it seems so normal. Yet if we get quiet, even for a moment, and look around us, we begin to realize that it is not the natural way of things. There is no judgment in nature. Judgment is a human-made dis-ease. Nature simply observes. The sun doesn't discriminate which seed or tree it shines upon. Natural disasters don't seek out revenge, they simply are. Seeds sprout or they don't. The wind blows or it doesn't. It simply is. It is our human-ness that judges it as good or bad, right or wrong.

When I read the words of Eckhart Tolle and Michael Singer, they spoke directly to this knowing. They reflected back to me what it means to simply observe what is and how common it is to create our own suffering when in judgment. It was exactly what I needed in that exact moment. I learned something that I had not been ready to learn before. I was reminded of a whole other dimension, a whole other way of being. The very thing I had been looking for was reflected back to me in these books. I was ready to remember my true nature—that part of me which is non-discriminatory and simply observes what is.

I knew I was ready and had had enough when the wisdom I was receiving finally made sense. It was like a lightbulb went on. It felt as though I was reading something that was written specifically for me or that I myself could have written. If this isn't the case, it just means we are not quite ready to receive the teaching being shared (or it isn't Truth). Be patient. It will arrive and resonate when you are ready. It's a process of peeling away layer after layer of illusion that we have been wearing as armor for most of our lives.

I knew I was ready when I kept seeing patterns reemerge in my life. The same stuff kept happening to me. I felt limited in the same ways again and again. I felt confused and stuck. This is not how we are naturally designed to feel. These are indicators that we need to awaken to our Call, to our already perfect self.

Life doesn't have to get so bad before this awakening can occur. Do not fool yourself into thinking, like I did, that my life isn't *that* bad. Notice if you have a belief deep down that you have not yet suffered *enough* or you are somehow addicted to your suffering. Until we are willing to observe that, we will continue to resist our soul's longing. If you are curious that there is possibly another way, listen to that voice. Let that pinprick of light be the portal for you to reveal your perfect self within. Allow yourself to be ready and willing.

When the student is ready, the teacher arrives.

Teachers come in all shapes and sizes. I have been blessed with numerous mentors who have shaped and guided me along this journey preparing me to be ready to receive my assignment. It would be dishonest or even ignorant of me to suggest that it was only one person or moment that changed the course of my life. Yet when I attempt to boil it down to "that moment" when things shifted for me, I point to these two books. We can often look at different points in our lives as "the moment before" and "the moment after."

Michael Singer and Eckhart Tolle served as the delineation between my life before—living under the illusion of judgment—and my life after—living in the reality of observing what is.

These books served as a pivotal point in my life. I do not suggest that these books will do the same for you. It is less about the teacher or the specific content and more about the readiness and willingness of the student. When we are ready, the teacher (in whatever form with whatever content) will arrive. If I had read these books at a different point in my life, they may not have had the same impact. It is not so much about *which* mentors we meet as much as *when* they come into our lives and *how* they serve us that makes the greatest impact.

These two books appeared as a validation for me. They encouraged me to keep going by energizing me. While listening to a podcast one day, I heard how “aha” moments are not intended to be *the answer*, but rather serve as the energy needed to keep moving forward. That is what these books offered me—a slew of “aha” moments. Our mentors are not teaching us anything new; they are simply reflecting back to us what we already know as fuel to keep going. As Eckhart Tolle reminds us, the teacher and the student create the teaching.

At first it might not feel like that, but that is what is happening. Even you reading this book is not teaching you anything you do not already know within. If something resonates with you, it means you already have some recognition of the Truth. I am simply reflecting it back to you. The more you seek out mentors or the more times these gems of wisdom are reflected back to you, the more aware you will become of the Knowing that resides within. We can only receive what we already have.

As I continued to be reminded of what my soul already knows through my mentors’ reflections, the pinprick got bigger and bigger, offering me more and more courage to accept the perfect self already within. I would need this courage, because it was going to be one hell of a ride. The acceptance was not the answer; it was the invitation. It was the energy I needed to continue on my journey. I still had a long road to travel and would need all the energy I could get, which was found in having these gems reflected back to me time and time again.

This is how mentors continue to support us on our journey. They serve as our reminders, our cheerleaders, our challengers. They offer us truth in whatever form we are ready and willing to accept. They reflect back to us where we are still blocking the light and refusing to accept our innate brilliance. They challenge us to go to deeper levels of awareness. They offer us a chance to observe how we perceive ourselves based on how we perceive them. When we are in judgment of another, it is because we are in judgment of ourselves. This means we still have more layers to peel back before we can fully reveal the unblemished soul within. Our mentors offer us this opportunity.

After Michael Singer and Eckhart Tolle, it was Byron Katie, Marianne Williamson, Wayne Dyer, Gay Hendricks, Thich Nhat Hanh, and numerous others who served as reflections. It was other spiritual texts that I read and explored. It was my soul sisters and mentors who I journeyed with in-person and across space and time through the gift of technology. It was my family and friends who all serve as mirrors for me. Soon, I would discover that every person in my life is my teacher, serving as a reflection, offering me the energy and courage to keep moving forward on this journey today and the next day and the day after that.

At first, listening to the whisper is not always a conscious choice. Sometimes our soul quietly guides us there. You might notice that you get this “strange feeling” that you ought do something or go somewhere or talk to someone. These are clues to pay attention to as you awaken to your soul’s longing. For me, I paid attention to books my friends would recommend or hearing about the same thing multiple times in a row. Hearing the voice within is like a scavenger hunt of sorts, following a trail of breadcrumbs being laid out in front of you.

It wasn’t as if I sat down one day and said, “Okay, I am ready to accept my Call.” There was nothing profound or prophetic about it. It was an acknowledgement, a quiet pact I made with my soul while sitting on my couch in my studio apartment in San Francisco. It was furiously underlining and highlighting words that were jumping out at me in the books I was reading. It was paying attention to the synchronicities of my life and taking one step at a time. It was an ongoing practice to hear a murmuring deep within and sometimes have the courage to listen to it. I began to observe things instead of getting carried away by them. I started to get curious as opposed to critical. I started to redefine perfectionism, demystify doubt, and clarify comparison.

I practiced saying “yes” when something felt in alignment and “no” when it didn’t. I learned how to tell the two apart. I was gentle with myself. I continued to read books and listen to teachers who pointed to the same Truth over and over again. I started to experience what they kept pointing to in my own life. This encouraged me to keep going.

Once I finally accepted what I was being asked to do, there would be layers upon layers of armor to remove. The armor doesn’t magically disappear with a wave of a wand after becoming reacquainted with my soul. The reunion merely grants permission to explore and remove the pieces one by one. Finally, I am ready to accept the murmurings deep within.

It wasn’t until I met mentors who reflected back to me what it truly means to observe what *is* that I was brave enough to let it be just that. By *being* more and *doing* less, I began to notice how I am already enough without “figuring it out” or trying harder. I still had friends, a job, a boyfriend, an apartment, and countless things to be grateful for without judging or *doing* more. I was still okay. This was a critical lesson for me to learn. If I can simply observe what *is* without trying to change it or improve it and still be at peace, then what else is possible?

Looking back, I now see how each moment of my life led me to meeting the mentors and listening to the murmurs the exact moment I did. The only reason it didn’t happen sooner was because I wasn’t yet ready. Each of us has our own unique timeline on our own unique journey. For some, your awakening may happen like a flash of lightning. For others, it may be a slower unraveling as you continue to receive the invitation over and over again. There is no one way to listen to the quiet whisper, no ideal time frame, no mistakes. Each step you take, each book you read, each person you meet, each relationship you have is exactly as it is meant to be, leading you to your mentors, your “aha” moments, your willing acceptance.

The way you allow the pinprick of light to expand and let light in is by observing yourself, paying attention, looking for the clues, finding the patterns, discovering the lessons, receiving the messages, and being comfortable being uncomfortable. While it is certain you will awaken, the path itself is ripe with uncertainty. It does not come with instructions. There is no map.

The Call invites you to embark on a journey with no preestablished paths, no prearranged rules, and certainly no certainty.

Once the quest has begun and the treasures discovered, the certainty you have been looking for is revealed—it has been with your perfect self the whole time. But not certainty as in, “I know the job I have will last forever,” or “the relationship I am in will last forever,” or “the experience I am having will last forever.” That is a certainty based on permanence which does not exist. The type of certainty that is awaiting you on your journey is a deeper certainty. A Knowing, with a capital “K,” that you are already perfect and there is nothing you can or cannot do to change that. A certainty that you are tended and always will be.

Your soul’s calling will start to make itself known in the recurring messages you receive. There are different ways to get curious about your mission. It might be asking: What behaviors or circumstances continue to upset me? What is the thing I most look for outside of myself? What is the thing I most fear being without? Who am I being introduced to? Do they represent something I wish I had? What is that thing?

Are you being asked to reveal and accept the goodness you already have within? The love, value, beauty, wisdom, support, freedom, strength, or peace that already exists deep within you? This question is a great doorway to *being* more and *doing* less. What would happen if instead of *doing* something to create peace, you simply observe it deep inside and notice how you are still okay when things are chaotic? Or instead of *doing* something to receive love, you simply observe it deep inside and notice how you are still okay when someone rejects you?

There is a reason we hear the same truths over and over again. It’s not because we’re deaf or dumb or immune to growth; it’s because we’re being pointed to our life lesson. Even as we heed it, we will continue to learn the same lesson time and time again. It’s like a corkscrew, each new turn being on the same path, just a new depth to explore, a new opportunity to recommit to accepting what is in each and every moment.

What I have come to terms with on my journey is there is no wrong answer. All of it is part of my evolution. All of it is for my highest good. I heeded the voice within when I was ready for another way—that simple. When I was ready to end my suffering, reveal the perfection within, and see things as they are and not how I want them or think they should be. This is when I took all that I had learned and opened the door to the next stage of my journey. This is when I crossed over into a new way of being—a special world—where I chose to perceive things differently, observe as opposed to judge, and lay down my shields so I could remember I already possess that which I am fighting for.

Accepting the Call doesn’t happen only once. It happens every day. I recommit to my assignment moment by moment, for it is only in this moment that acceptance can occur. Acceptance is the beginning, not the end. It opens the door to a whole new world.