

How we interpret our experiences is more about the state of our hearts

An excerpt from [“Stop Waiting for Permission: Harness Your Gifts, Find Your Purpose, and Unleash Your Personal Genius.”](#)

The founder of Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford, is thought to have said, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you’re right.” He may have been inspired by Proverbs 23:7: *As he thinks in his heart, so is he* (NKJV). The state of our hearts, how we interpret our experiences, is by far the biggest factor in how we respond to our disadvantages, limitations and adversity.



The harsh truth is, none of us gets to adulthood without some heart damage. No matter how healthy or ideal your family of origin was, your heart sustained wounds that shape your present thoughts, feelings and desires.

Maybe your childhood home was caring but short on quality time and affection. Your parents worked hard and long to provide sufficient financial resources and so weren't as present as you needed them to be. Today the eyes of your heart may see a desire for greatness as neglect of close family relationships, so you push away success or advancement because you want your family to thrive.

Maybe your childhood was characterized by a constant lack of resources. Today the eyes of your heart see struggle for survival as your ultimate destiny. You have a deep-seated belief that barely surviving is just your lot in life, so you don't even bother dreaming of something more.

Whatever the shape and depth of your heart's wound, God's Spirit can heal you. He can enlighten the eyes of your heart so you can experience the hope and greatness to which he has called you.

Heal, celebrate and overcome

I know without a shadow of a doubt that there is greatness in you—yes, *you*—entrusted to you by our Creator. The treasure he has deposited in your keeping has the potential to multiply everything you invest in.

If you're parenting small children, God's deposit in you can turn everyday frustrations into moments of connection and wisdom.

If you're starting a new job, God's deposit in you can bless not only your boss but also your co-workers and customers.

If you're serving your church, God's deposit in you can unlock his plans for your whole community.

If you're nearer to the end of your life than to the start, God's deposit in you can leave a legacy of humble confidence to a new generation of leaders.

But in order to see a return, you must accept your limitations, stop making excuses and invest the greatness deposited in you. How?

First, ***allow God to heal your heart***. Whether you were the kid with not enough parental affection or insufficient financial resources—or a thousand other possibilities, because nobody's past is perfect—God can heal the hurts and disappointments that cloud the eyes of your heart. If you see career ambition or professional success as distractions from what really matters, ask God to heal your distorted vision so you can see the hope to which he has called you.

If you see unmet financial need as your destiny, ask him to enlighten your eyes so you can see the riches of his glorious inheritance. If you see others as threats to your security, ask him to heal the eyes of your heart so you can bless and value his holy people.

Second, ***celebrate every win***, even the small ones. When my wife, Zai, and I were expecting our first child, we thought twins were a great idea. We wanted to skip the step of being a one-child household. We prayed for twins. We believed for twins. And we got one baby girl, Zoe. After three weeks of sleepless nights, dirty diapers and crying fits that no amount of rocking could soothe, it was easy to give praise that God hadn't entrusted us with two. In hindsight, we learned there was much to celebrate in a smaller start than we prayed for. Today we could probably rise to the challenge (though we're not praying for twins!), because we've found a parenting groove with our three young children. Likewise, I suspect the two-talent and five-talent managers probably started with just one talent. As they managed their boss's resources responsibly, they were given greater sums to invest.

I see this pattern in the journey of Union Church. We started small. We did our best to be faithful and responsible, and we celebrated each small win along the way. In his grace, God brought first a few dozen, then a few hundred, then a few thousand people (and counting) to our multiple locations all over Maryland. We take losses and setbacks seriously, but we focus our greatest efforts on small win after small win after small win.

Finally, ***overcome your fear of failure***. I had a conversation not too long ago with someone who expressed concern about setting five-talent goals when they might be a two-or even one-talent manager. Wouldn't that just set them up for disappointment?

Man, I'm more concerned about the opposite! What if God has entrusted five talents to me and I'm setting one-or two-talent goals? Can you imagine trying to explain that? So awkward and painful!

When I stand before my Lord to account for what I've done with his resources, I want more than anything to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Come and share your Master's happiness!" (see Matthew 25:21, 23).

You don't have to determine your exact amount of potential before you start investing it. Just get to work, and do something with whatever you've got. Shake what your mama gave you. And if you discover more along the way, shake that too!

Bring all your limitations, and leave the rest up to God.

Excerpted from ["Stop Waiting for Permission: Harness Your Gifts, Find Your Purpose, and Unleash Your Personal Genius."](#) Copyright © 2022 by Stephen Chandler. Published by WaterBrook, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, on September 27, 2022.

Do Good:

- Read ["Stop Waiting for Permission: Harness Your Gifts, Find Your Purpose, and Unleash Your Personal Genius"](#) (WaterBrook, 2022) by Stephen Chandler.
- [Get on the list for Good Words from the Good Word](#) and get a boost of inspiration in 1 minute a day with a daily affirmation from Scripture list this sent straight to your inbox. It's an email to help you start your day with *goodness*.
- You've probably seen the red kettles and thrift stores, and while we're rightfully well known for both...The Salvation Army is *so much more* than red kettles and thrift stores. So who are we? What do we do? Where? [Right this way](#) for Salvation Army 101.