

JANELLE KLANDER

# COURAGE TO FIND

*purpose*

STORIES OF  
FEELING  
LOST,  
OVERCOMING  
ANXIETY  
AND  
DISCOVERING  
INNER  
WISDOM



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Thank you to my homies...

Josh, Jen, & Kat for always having my back.

Thank you to my family for all of your love and support, especially after I've set my mind to something you may not have understood. I've never questioned your love for me.

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This book may be for you if. . .

You're a seeker.

You feel like there's more to life.

You're ready to spread your wings.

You're anxious.

You're depressed.

You're feeling stuck.

You know you have gifts that aren't realized.

You know you have feelings that aren't being expressed.

You're ready to embrace your purpose.

You feel too much.

You're intuitive.

You want to be intuitive.

You're curious about your superpowers.

You're ready to go down the rabbit hole.

You're ready for transformation.

You're ready to step outside your comfort zone.

You're overwhelmed.

You're tapped out.

You know you have a unique purpose.

You're ready to live life with purpose.

You're craving freedom.

You're ready to step into your power like a total badass.

# *Introduction*

At twenty-three, a strange feeling ignited inside me, a feeling that I was living someone else's life and an inclination to do something drastic. I had to escape everything I was doing and being. I had to do it now. Can you relate?

So I broke up with my boyfriend, quit my job, and moved to a country where I didn't speak the language and didn't know anyone to start a new chapter.

After spending almost two years traveling the world and living in Spain, I was unexpectedly brought back to Minnesota, back to the place I thought I'd escaped for good. This time, though, I lacked the certainty that filled me when I left. I was severely anxious and depressed. I questioned everything about who I was and what I was meant to be doing, and for the first time, I had an inkling that, maybe, I was meant for something great. Maybe, I had a greater purpose on this planet. Can you relate?

This questioning led me to discover that traditional methods

of treating anxiety just didn't work for me. I knew there had to be a way to actually connect and heal and not just cope and mask my anxiety. Over the years, I've become obsessed with humans and how they evolve, how they can get stuck, and—most importantly—how they thrive. Now, I guide anxious, stuck professionals (just like I was) to live life with purpose and have fulfilling relationships, because if we don't have these things, are we truly living?

If you are like me, you get distracted easily and don't like too many rules. If so, you will be relieved to know this memoir isn't written chronologically, so you can jump around to whatever topic suits you. You'll be able to follow the story better if you read it from beginning to end, but each chapter stands on its own. In each chapter, I cover a different topic by sharing stories and insights from my journey, mostly from the last ten years. I felt called to write this book as a letter of sorts to that version of myself who needed to hear these stories from these perspectives at the perfect time.

I want you to feel two things while reading this book:

1. I want you to feel like you're not alone.
2. I want you to feel fucking inspired to live your life on purpose with purpose.



Take this book to the beach and read along with a friend. Read it when you need a recharge while you're at a festival. Cozy up on a cold winter's night and take it in. Share a relevant story with a friend who's going through something similar so they know they aren't alone and that there is hope.

If you align with what you've read so far, this book may have been written just for you.

XO *Janelle Klander*



## CHAPTER 1

# *Who Do You Share Your Dreams With?*

**W**hen I was twenty-two, I bought a book called *Delaying the Real World* by Colleen Kinder. In between applying to over 100 jobs (yes, seriously), I would comb through this book, running my fingers across its super smooth pages with excitement and guilt. (Guilt because I was supposed to get a “real job,” not feel giddy about delaying it.)

Thinking it was a numbers game, I applied to more jobs than any of my friends. The more applications I submitted, I logically thought, the more chances I had. I didn’t ever think to sit quietly and ask myself what I wanted, and what my heart desired. I didn’t know that I could live a life that was in alignment with my soul’s calling—I didn’t even know that my soul had a plan (regardless of the number of applications I submitted, trying to

do what I was supposed to do).

I loved my *Delaying the Real World* book and took it everywhere. I dreamed of adventures like teaching at a sports camp in Africa, teaching English in Korea, or biking through Central America. I felt alive as I read through these options, and I wanted to do them all. At first, I was excited to show people my adventure book.

“Look what I bought at the bookstore,” I said with a huge smile on my face.

“Delaying the real world?” my friend said, reading the title like she was asking a question.

“Yeah, it has all sorts of jobs and adventures to take instead of getting a real job,” I said proudly, but I started to feel kind of stupid showing friends my book as I was finally graduating with a Bachelor of Science.

This was the moment I’d waited for, the moment I’d been working toward for four years. It was also the moment my friends had worked hard for, so not surprisingly, they didn’t get my fascination with “delaying” our hard-won goal.

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I felt immense pressure from my father to get a corporate job that paid well. Because he worked at a clinic, he started making connections for me with pharmaceutical representatives, befriending them and asking if they'd talk to me about what they did and if they'd give me tips for getting into the industry.

I liked the idea of making a lot of money since, at that point, I was still a poor student. But I didn't like the idea of the job itself. After having coffee with some of these reps, though, I learned that they put in very few hours each week and some of them had side projects. Regardless, at the time I was looking for a job, most pharmaceutical companies had implemented a hiring freeze, so I wasn't getting that job post-graduation.

Still deep in job-search mode my senior year, I found information about a job in Duck, North Carolina in my adventure book that looked like it could be domestic enough to be okay with my parents (even though what I really wanted to do was backpack around Europe and explore places I hadn't had the chance to see during a recent spring-break trip to Germany and England). Something drew me to this position.

The job in Duck, North Carolina, was for a position working at a parasailing/pool-cleaning business for the summer. It offered housing for the workers and sounded similar to my time working at America's largest waterpark, Noah's Ark in Wisconsin Dells,

where I spent the summer between my sophomore and junior year as a lifeguard with hundreds of people from all over the world. The job in North Carolina didn't sound fabulous, but I'd be working with other open-minded people for the summer and exploring another part of the country.

"It's not uncommon for the people working here to travel together afterwards with the money they saved," the owner told me, while having a very casual interview chat one day— that excited me. I felt my body open up to this possibility; I thought about where this could lead me. This could be the gateway to seeing the world and meeting other adventure seekers. None of those other boring, corporate jobs I was applying for excited me, but THIS did.

"I'm thinking about doing this summer job in North Carolina. It sounds similar to the setup I had working in Wisconsin Dells. I think it'll be fun and I don't have anything else lined up," I said one day to one of my closest friends from high school. She'd graduated college two years before me and was working for a big company in London. I'd visited her during my spring-break trip.

"I think it's silly to take a job making less than \$15 an hour when you have a degree," she said, obviously not supporting my grand idea either, which filled me with shame. She was the one friend who I thought would get it; after all, she was adventurously

living abroad and someone I looked up to.

“I heard you’re moving to North Carolina this summer,” a friend of a friend said to me. (I can’t call this person a friend. She didn’t seem to like me, yet we shared a mutual close friend.)

“I’m not sure I’m going yet, but I want to,” I responded.

“I think it sounds cool, I’d do that,” she said as she leaned in for more information on it.

As much I would have loved a friend to go with me, I didn’t want her to go. We were merely acquaintances. She was the grumpiest person I knew at school, and yet, she was the **ONLY** one with a positive reaction to my idea.

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My adventure book rarely left my side, and neither did my on-again, off-again boyfriend. We’d been together for over a year, and he had another semester to go. After that, he wanted to move in with me and, soon after, start a family. On one hand, the idea of that seemed nice, but on the other, I felt like vomiting with the thought of settling down with him, which seemed like a good indicator that it wasn’t what I wanted.

I’d never experienced a connection like ours before. We were already practically living together since we spent every night

together, worked out together, made meals together, and even had a couple classes together as we both were studying business administration. Being with him was the most fun I had ever had, but there was also a dark side to our relationship.

Every night out to the bar ended with him being angry at me no matter how hard I tried to make it better. This game exhausted me, and I broke up with him after a therapist told him he didn't have an anger problem. With only three months left of my senior year, though, we ended up getting right back together, remaining in relationship purgatory—acting like we were together, but knowing that it was long done.

When he caught me reading my book, I felt guilty, though I did share some things from my book with him because what if ... what if he got over his anger issues and was just as much a freedom seeker as I was and we traveled the world together, getting along perfectly?

“I don't have the money to travel. I need to work after I graduate. That's what I came to school for,” he said with an eye roll.

Silence was my only response as my “what-if” scenario of us being a romantic, adventurous couple died. He wasn't interested. He thought it was silly. My obsession with that book reminded him that we weren't going to be together in the future.



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My father loves me deeply and cares more about my physical needs than anybody else in this world, but his attachment to how I'm supposed to be living this life has always left me feeling suffocated. Our interactions consist of him making sure my physical needs are met, while my emotional needs are starving for attention from him.

At the end of my senior year, I talked to my dad about my plans to work in North Carolina for the summer. Even as a college graduate, I still wanted my dad's approval, which seemed impossible if I wanted to start living a life that excited me.

"I'm thinking of going to work at this parasailing business for the summer. I don't have any other job lined up yet, and since it's just for the summer, I can keep looking for jobs," I said.

"That doesn't sound like a good option. You still have plenty of time to get a good job," my dad said, as guilt overtook my body. I knew I could eventually get this "good" job that was his dream for me, but I hated the idea of it.

"But, Dad, it'll be a fun summer job," I countered.

"You just went to college so that you could have a degree. You should use it," he responded.

The more I pondered the idea of moving away, the more I wanted to do it. I could almost taste the freedom I'd feel driving across the country into the unknown—away from my dad, away from my ex, away from the people who thought I needed a “good job.”

“I'm going to do it, Dad,” I told him.

“You can't! You won't have insurance. Your insurance ends in May. What if you get another hernia?” he asked.

The sound of screeching brakes echoed in my head. I hadn't thought of that.

I'd just had hernia surgery. Yes, in the midst of wrapping up classes, engaging in a relationship that was long over, applying for jobs, and reading my adventure book, I was also healing from hernia surgery. (Good thing my adventure book was small; I couldn't even carry a textbook to class.)

“Do you know how much it would cost if you had to pay for that surgery out of pocket?” he asked.

Had he finally found the one thing that could stop me from following through with this?

I had no idea how health insurance worked. I just knew mine ended the month I got my diploma and it was “good” insurance. I also knew I could get more “good” insurance if I got a “good” job like my dad suggested.

I had no idea if my hernia surgery would stick since it was the second time I'd had the surgery. I also had no idea it was actually an elective surgery—I would have been fine if something were to happen and I didn't have the surgery. I'd had the surgery because my dad said it was better to do it while I was on his insurance. I also didn't know that I could just buy my own insurance and pay for it out of pocket.

Talking to my dad filled me with fear of the worst-case scenario. His fear ignited my own. I decided I had to talk to the owner of the pool-cleaning/parasailing business.

“I can't take the job because I need to have health insurance. I just had surgery and I could easily damage it again,” I told him, not even believing it myself.

There was a short pause.

“Ookaay,” he said slowly.

I sensed that he knew that wasn't the actual reason I wasn't taking the job. It was as if he knew I was giving away my power to my father, that I wasn't ready to take control of my own life.

Hanging up the phone with the owner, I felt like my dreams were crushed, not because I really wanted to clean pools and help people parasail, but because my dream to explore and experience life felt like it was taken away. My soul was crushed because my body was saying YES to going to North Carolina.

What was wrong with me? Why didn't I want to get a good job like everybody else? A wave of shame washed over me for not doing it right. I felt lazy, wrong, and bad as my dad's voice saying "good job" rang in my head.

I wished that I could be like everyone else and just go along with what I was supposed to do. Why was I so obsessed with this book? I felt juvenile, stupid, and embarrassed for dreaming. I watched my other graduating friends apply for jobs and get hired right away, leaving me as the only one from my circle with no job.

So after graduation, filled with frustration, growing resentment, and now, depression, I moved in with my parents and continued my forceful mission to find this "good job."

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Finally, I did it. After two months of applying for jobs, I was hired as a sales representative at a fuel card management branch for a third-party logistics company. Yes, it was just as fucking lame and boring as it sounds. Although I'd completed my mission and found a "good job," I didn't care to celebrate. The only thing about it that excited me was moving out of my parents' house. During the two months I lived there, I fell into

a deep depression; I'm sure I wasn't great company for them.

Three months into my new job, I was already searching for my next adventure and lined up an interview to work at a Mexican resort. It didn't sound like I'd spend much time out of the resort. It sounded like I'd work hard and get paid less than I was making at my "good job," yet I yearned to break free from what I was currently doing.

So again, I was ready to do the damn thing. Still needing my dad's approval, though, I told him about my idea, and he quickly told me what he thought: it was ridiculous. Again, I felt stupid, shameful, and wrong for having the desires I had.

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Five months later, I was at a new job, which happened to be next door to my old job. I was a representative for ITT Technical Institute, which, thankfully, no longer exists. After one conversation with a dad and his autistic son, I realized I could not morally work at this questionable private college. The kid ultimately wanted to be a chef and had no interest in our technology based programs. His dad wanted to give him the full experience of checking out his options. In the end, it was clear to me and his dad that this was not the right fit.

My manager thought otherwise. He was stressed out with the sales goals he was not making and was on my case for a week about it.

“You could have placed him in our IT program,” he said.

“But he had zero interest in that program,” I responded as my body contracted from frustration.

I was excited about guiding people to their dreams, but not manipulating them into a \$90K degree that they will likely never finish and then be overwhelmed in the high interest rates. And after some time, I also learned that any credit earned there would probably not transfer to any respectable public university even though students were told otherwise.

Helping people work toward their dreams was exciting to me. It was one of the reasons why I took the job in the first place. It may have been a step-up from selling fuel card management systems, but it was not my dream job.

And the thing is, I was good at sales. In only a few months, I was a mere half point away from a promotion that none of my co-workers had achieved yet. But I wanted to sell to help people, not to force them into something that wasn't on their path.

This was the first time that I really understood the phrase “micromanagement,” thanks to my boss. He should have been singing my praises for that work I accomplished, not criticizing

every move I made.

I took a look at my co-workers surrounding me and I knew they were feeling just as suffocated and frustrated as I was, but they still showed up every day. I was there for a month and already I was desperate to leave.

I couldn't help but wonder. . . Would I ever be happy? Was I just hard to please? The idea of looking for a third job within nine months of graduation seemed ridiculous. I didn't even know what to apply for since I saw every job description as a prison sentence.

The hiring freeze at one of the pharmaceutical companies was finally lifted, but by this point I'd come to the conclusion that I couldn't morally work as a drug representative, so I turned down an interview for a coveted position and was soon dreaming of adventures again.

This time I took it seriously. I was intentional about every move I made. I went to the library on my lunch breaks and read books on living and working abroad. I combed through my adventure book once again and filled a notebook with research and possible plans. I began to feel grateful for my shitty job, because it was giving me the motivation to take the leap.

Soon, I felt confident about the idea of teaching English abroad. I knew I liked to work with people, and it was a job I

could do anywhere. I picked out a TESOL certification program in Seville, Spain, and I felt excitement in my body just imagining it. I'd never been to Spain, but learning Spanish was on my bucket list. I thought I'd give it a go there, and if I didn't like it, I could move anywhere and teach English.

So there I was with another adventure plan and no one else knew about it. My plan was gaining momentum and I was gaining confidence around it by not sharing it with people who had opposed my dreams in the past.

Finally, I decided to share my idea with some co-workers. Thanks to our toxic work environment, they unequivocally supported my idea of getting the heck out of there. Most of them were older than me, so they encouraged my dreams like they were looking back on their own lives, wishing they'd lived with more adventure. They didn't know me well enough to have expectations about how I should live my life, and they didn't have emotional attachments to me that would require me to stay near them. They were my perfect cheerleading squad.

I soon picked out a flight, applied for a certification program to teach English, and started planning what I'd do with my stuff. I couldn't assume that my parents would store any of it as I had a pretty good idea that my dad would not be supportive of the idea.

I decided to tell my family in November that I was leaving at



the New Year, giving them less than two months' notice, which I felt was fair. I told my dad right before he went deer hunting, figuring that he would take some time to process it in the quiet forest before reacting to something he couldn't change. I hated knowing that me living my life the way I wanted to live it was disappointing him, yet so much of the life I'd built was to please him. I'd only gotten my degree because he told me to do it. I don't remember ever asking myself if I even wanted to go to college. In the end, my father didn't take the news well, but my family decided to support me and to store my stuff, including my car.

The seven weeks leading up to my trip were exhilarating and terrifying. I had moments of doubt, sure, but those moments never lasted more than a few seconds. I'd held on to my vision for too long to let it go. Even though there was so much uncertainty about what it would be like, it felt real to me.

My mom, dad, and brother brought me to the airport the day I left for Europe. When I turned the corner after security and couldn't see my family anymore, it felt exhilarating, like I was separating myself from how they thought I should be living my life. I was creating space to understand who I was without their influence. I had two suitcases and no plans after my month of training in the south of Spain.

I finally had broken free from the "shoulds." As I waited for

my flight, I experienced excitement and freedom on a completely new level as I was finally taking a step to live on my terms.

I still wonder what was there for me in Duck, North Carolina. Was there someone special there to meet? A lover? A best friend? Some opportunity? Some specific experience? I don't believe there is "one path." I didn't choose that path, yet I knew I was being called to it for some reason. I can say that with certainty because, looking back, my body was telling me my path, and when I didn't go, I felt a weird turning in my gut.

Boarding the red-eye flight from Minneapolis that night was the first big step in working my courage muscle, yet I still had a long way to go with building true bravery.