

Moving Forward

Seven Steps to Align
Yourself With Your Path

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To my fellow travelers,
may you be on *your* path.

This book is illustrated with pictures taken by the author as he hiked around the world between 2010 and 2016, carving his path anew each day.



FIRST I have to say that I am not a guru, peaceful and wise, wandering the world in a white robe. I am a regular man who struggles each day, falling and getting up again, learning, and hopefully getting a bit smarter along the way. Life is hard and complicated, but it's not a reason to quit. I have written this book to share my experiences on how to move forward. This, I hope, will help you live a more fulfilling and meaningful life. I do not claim to have all the answers: each person has different circumstances and path forward. I take a practical and realistic approach, showing the full complexity of life and staying away from simplistic solutions, quick fixes, and esoteric philosophies.

Before we start, I would like to share a bit of my personal story to help contextualize what I have written in this book. From the youngest age, I was very creative, I loved to explore new places, and I was highly independent. That was *me*, but I spent



most of my adult life going against these fundamental personality traits. Why did I do that? Because I wanted to fit in, be a “normal” person with a happy family in a nice house.

I should have charted a very different course aligned with my original personality traits. Instead, I buried that information about me and went on with a life that never felt like it was mine. I convinced myself that everything was alright. Thinking of it, I realize I had an incredible power of self-delusion.

From time to time I would face a crisis, becoming conscious of what was wrong, attempting to get back on track, but I was never able to. I felt I had no way out except maybe in a faraway future that seemed almost impossible to reach.

Once we make a commitment to a particular lifestyle – for example, with a family to support, a mortgage, car payments – it is difficult to change direction. I tried the best I could to be loyal to my choices and the people who depended on me but did so at the expense of my health. It was a painful journey with frustrations accumulating for 30 years.

For a long time, I had hopes that one day I would be able to live my life the way I initially intended. But as regrets and frustrations gathered like thick dark clouds, I just put my head down, did what I needed to do to survive, and lost all hopes. I was not living a fulfilling life. I was not even feeling alive: I barely existed and went along with what was expected of a

father, husband, and professional. I certainly was successful in playing the role. No one suspected anything. I excelled at work and was seen as an exemplary husband and father. Most people probably envied me and my apparent happiness. In reality, I was in constant mental pain.

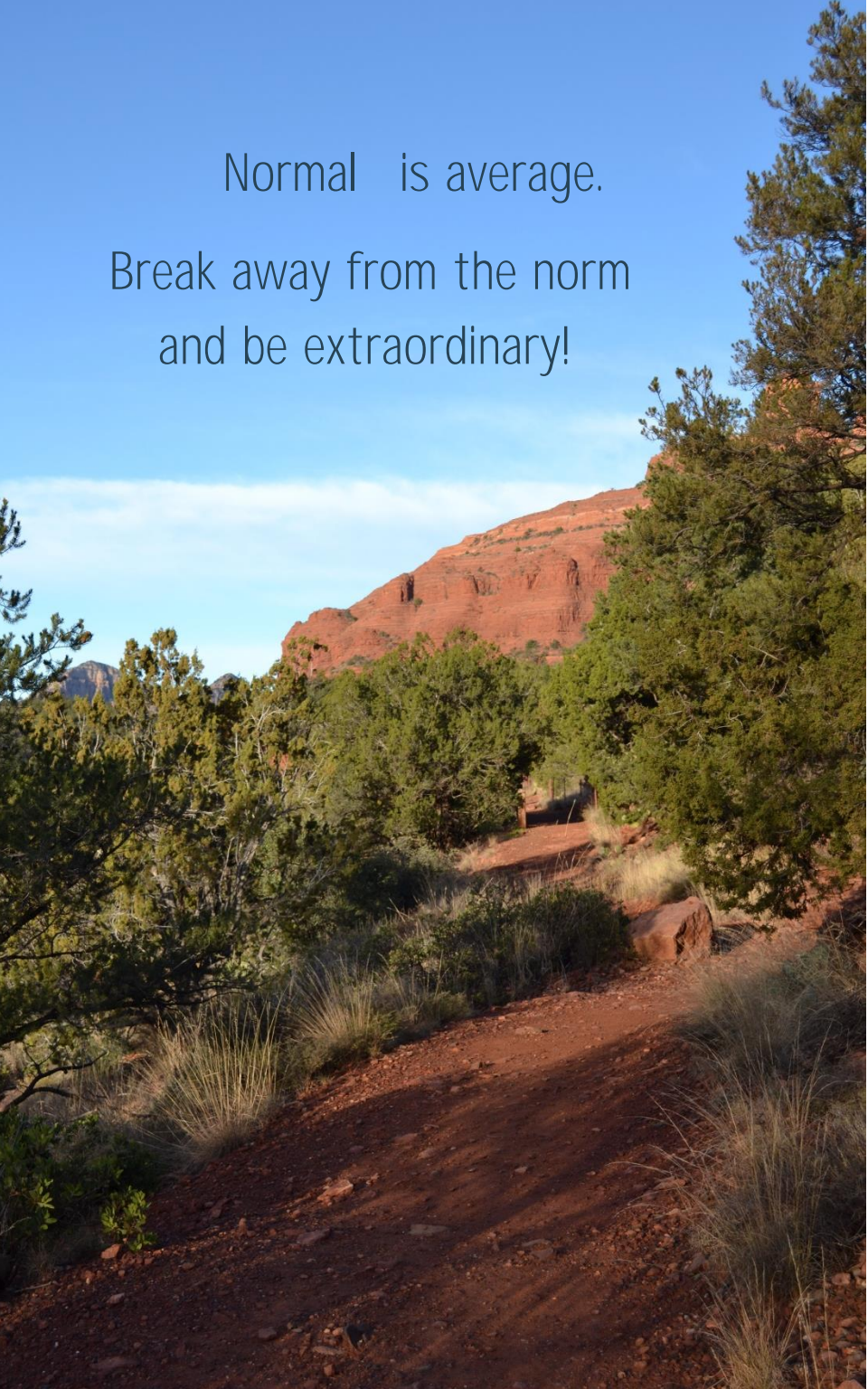
I wanted to die. I had planned everything and was ready to go. I am not too sure why I walked to the medical clinic on a bright spring morning instead of acting on my plan. Maybe a deep, unconscious survival instinct kicked in. One thing is certain; I am very lucky to be alive today.

If I had committed suicide, I could imagine people asking “how is this possible? He had everything!” Indeed, I had everything, except the possibility to fully live my life. What I was missing was *alignment with my path*. That is not about having but about *being*.

Since then I have had multiple depressions. I am consulting medical professionals and therapists regularly. I continue to struggle because I still feel stuck with no clear way out. It is a painstaking journey, but I believe each step I take brings me a bit closer to alignment with my life’s path. I have hope but I also often feel alone in the desert with no water and no map showing me the way forward. Despite this, I carry on with the journey, always forward.

Will you join me on this adventure?

Normal is average.
Break away from the norm
and be extraordinary!



WHAT do I mean by *path*? Our path is what we *ought to do* with our life. It is similar to destiny, except that it is *not* pre-determined.

Pre-determined destiny is an archaic concept: it is time to move away from it. Although there is predictability in many simple phenomena, science shows us that the Universe includes a hefty dose of randomness. I believe this non-deterministic view gives us the empowering responsibility to affect the course of our life. Otherwise, why bother? If it is all decided in advance, we might as well sit back and watch our life go by. I think it's time to take charge.



Here are some other characteristics of paths. First, a path is personal. It must never be compared with other people's paths in terms of worthiness, success, social status, etc. The only thing that matters is

to be aligned with *your own* path. Do not compare with or try to emulate others' paths.

A second characteristic of paths is that they are not obstacle-free. Let's be frank about it: life can be hard. Consequently, a path is like a mountain trail: painfully steep at times, full of detours, but also amazingly beautiful and rewarding. Finally, our path is rarely clear and is subject to changes. Our purpose in life is far from evident, and many situations can affect what happens to us and where we are heading. It is understandable that sometimes we may feel lost and uncertain of the direction to take.

Understanding and accepting these characteristics of paths is the first step towards alignment with your path.

