

JORDAN LEE DOOLEY

**SNEAK
PEEK**



**SAMPLE
ONLY**

OWN YOUR EVERYDAY

**OVERCOME THE PRESSURE TO PROVE AND
SHOW UP FOR WHAT YOU WERE MADE TO DO**

Praise for
Own Your Everyday

“Through engaging storytelling and heartfelt wisdom, Jordan invites us to step fully into the present moment. In a world where we often feel pressured to move forward as quickly as possible, the words that fill these pages shine light on this beautiful truth: there is a fulfilling life to be lived right here, where we are. This book is a conversation over coffee for the soul, and you will be sure to walk away encouraged to ‘own your everyday.’”

—MORGAN HARPER NICHOLS, artist and poet

“Authentic, intuitive, and compassionate, Jordan clears the clutter from our minds and hearts while enthusiastically guiding us to discover our own authentic purpose. Along the way, we learn that our purpose is accessible because it’s less about us and more about becoming a safe place for others, so we can leave a lasting impact on those around us.”

—JESSICA HONEGGER, author, founder and co-CEO
of Noonday Collection

“There are those rare books you come across from time to time that make you feel like you are drinking from a fire hydrant. This is one of those books. Jordan brilliantly teaches, encourages, and convicts you all at the same time! Alyssa and I are so

thankful for her willingness to lay it all out there in these pages and to lead us to a more firm and promising purpose!”

—JEFFERSON BETHKE, best-selling author of *Jesus > Religion and It's Not What You Think*

“Jordan offers a refreshing, relatable, and inspiring perspective on figuring out what God has purposed you to do and who He is purposing you to be. Each chapter is full of empowering stories and truths that will help you overcome whatever fears are holding you back and whatever lies are robbing you of joy, so that you can discover and fulfill your purpose. This book will meet you right where you are with a giant hug, while also give you a little kick in the pants.”

—AUDREY ROLOFF, coauthor of *A Love Letter Life*, founder of Always More, cofounder of Beating50Percent

“Jordan is bursting with contagious joy, and this book is just an overflow. Prepare to be challenged and loved all at the same time.”

—JENNIE ALLEN, author of *Nothing to Prove*, founder and visionary of IF:Gathering

“I love that Jordan addresses how the immense focus on finding our purpose often distracts us from enjoying the present and living out our purpose. As a struggling perfectionist myself, I

related so much to the idea of the internal pressure we put on ourselves to perform and achieve. *Own Your Everyday* gave me the greatest encouragement to be myself.”

—LAUREN SCRUGGS KENNEDY, influencer, author,
entrepreneur

“Jordan truly has wisdom beyond her years, and this book is packed with both practical and beautiful ways to live out our God-given purpose! Right from the beginning, Jordan’s heart bleeds through, and her honesty is so refreshing and relatable. This book will be such a gift to women!”

—CHRISTY NOCKELS, singer, songwriter, and creator
of *The Glorious in the Mundane* podcast

“Jordan is wonderfully candid and vulnerable about how she found her ultimate redemptive purpose despite worldly obstacles of rejection, comparison, and expectation. She dives into our hearts by sharing both tear-jerking and laughable stories of her faith from childhood to current day. Each page is relatable and profound, yet beautifully simple.”

—SARAH ROSE SUMMERS, Miss USA 2018

“I love how Jordan makes the topic of finding your purpose a sweet conversation as opposed to something ominous, impossible, and scary. Her whimsical stories remind you that we’re all on the same journey—days filled with seemingly random

moments that are really nudges from heaven. Each reminder about who you are, whose you are, and why you're really here is like an on-time hug mixed with a little kick in the pants too! If you're a fellow recovering perfectionist who tends to overcomplicate and overanalyze, *Own Your Everyday* invites you to pause. Jordan reminds us that even in the midst of mess and imperfection, we're already enough. This book is a call to stop striving and searching for answers externally and to start looking within. When we do, we're in for the adventure of a lifetime!"

—MARSHAWN EVANS DANIELS, reinvention strategist
for women, TV personality, and founder of
SheProfits.com

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*For Nana. Thank you for teaching me
to never stop taking big steps.*

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Introduction

Your Brokenness Is Welcome Here

Hey, friend. My name is Jordan, and I'm a recovering perfectionist with a chronic need to achieve. I figure it's always best to start with honesty.

Now, I know you're probably trying to decide if this book is worth your time. So I'm going to tell you right out of the gate why I wrote it and why I believe it's important for you to read.

The number one question I get asked by blog readers, podcast listeners, social media followers, and even clients is something along the lines of "How do I find my purpose?" or "How do I figure out what I'm supposed to do with my life?" All of these women are different—some are making the transition into or out of college, navigating marriage or motherhood, or finding their place in the workforce. These women are taking

steps to establish themselves in this big world but are feeling pressure to figure out exactly where they ought to land as soon as humanly possible.

Sometimes when I get these questions, I want to reach through the screen, hug a stranger's neck, and say, "Girl, chill. You don't have to have it all mapped out today, okay? And even if you did, you'd probably find that something would shake up those plans tomorrow anyway. Take a breath!"

Unfortunately, the reach-through-the-screen feature hasn't been created yet, so this book is my best attempt. We all want to make our mark, find meaning in the mayhem, and discover what makes our lives special, unique, and even notable. At least I do . . . and the girls who reach out to me with these questions do. I'd be willing to bet that you do too.

Now I want to take it a step further and ask you a question: Do you ever feel pressure to find your purpose—to find the reason you're on this earth and what it is that makes your life count?

Of course you do.

It seems everywhere I look, everybody is telling us to "go after our dreams" or "find our purpose." That's great and inspirational, but what about those of us who don't quite have our dreams, aspirations, and plans perfectly figured out? You know what I'm talking about, don't you?

In today's culture there is so much pressure to figure out

our future or get started on our dream. Even stepping into a Sunday sermon, you'll hear about how you need to find your calling. Yet those of us who haven't quite nailed these things begin to feel like a failure. It seems we should have figured this out by the time we finished school, if not before.

I've honestly found this pressure and entire perspective on purpose to be a bit dangerous because it implies that our purpose is something we have to search for, find, and grab hold of, whether it's a job, a title, a degree, or business. I'm afraid we've shrunk purpose down to what we do on the outside rather than who we are on the inside. Does it include what we do? Definitely. However, I often wonder whether we've boiled it down to *just* that and, as a result, get stuck in our own heads when we don't know what to do next. I mean, what about those of us with multiple passions, various ideas, or unfigured-out dreams?

Quite honestly, half my dreams change from Sunday to Tuesday in a given week. Sure, I have some big ideas, but sometimes it's difficult to determine if they're just ideas I *could* do or things I actually *should* do. Perhaps you relate to this feeling. Or maybe the things you've been chasing are other people's dreams for you—or expectations of you—and the weight of that is heavy. Perhaps the reason you've been feeling a little stuck is because you've put too much pressure on yourself to figure it all out.

You know that feeling that comes when you scroll Instagram and it seems everyone else has her life figured out? Or how you start to sweat as graduation or marriage or another big milestone approaches and you think, *I have GOT to figure out my life?* Or the way your stomach drops when your dad calls during those awkward postgrad years and asks about your plans for the future? Or when your pastor talks about callings and you just sit there and wish you could call God and say, *Hey, so, do You think You can just get to the point and tell me what to do with my life? All this waiting around feels pretty ineffective.*

Yeah, those are the feelings I'm tackling in this book because I know the search can seem endless and the pressure is real.

While I don't know what you're facing today, I do know that the pressure to prove ourselves can cause us to expend a lot of time and energy looking for but perhaps not actually fulfilling our purpose.

In fact, when I began to examine the pressure I felt to find my purpose, I discovered something: Maybe my purpose isn't actually something I need to *find*. Maybe I've been sitting on it all along but I've been so distracted by the pressure to prove that I've been looking at it all wrong.

When we're always under pressure to find something that *isn't actually lost*—believing we must find it outside ourselves—or when we're distracted with running around trying

to prove we are enough, we cannot accomplish what we're meant to do. Know why? Because *the pressure to prove* and *true purpose* cannot coexist.

As I looked more closely at my own life, I found a toxic trio made up of insecurities, expectations, and the pressure to prove. When I gave too much power to the toxic trio, I allowed these three things to create mental roadblocks or barriers that held me back and got me off track from what really matters. Some of these mind-sets I get stuck in include impostor syndrome, disappointment, shame, comparison, perfectionism, and distraction. When I operate from these places, I don't love like I should. I don't notice the divine moments God invites me into. I don't work well but rather just work hard. The list goes on.

I hold myself back. I'm the culprit here. Yes, I—not someone else's expectations of me and not a lack of knowledge, resources, or qualifications—hold myself back from living a purposeful life. In other words, it's usually my mind-set, not my skill set, that holds me back.

However, when I relentlessly fight to realign with my true purpose, prepare for the challenges of life, and equip myself with the perspective it takes to break through the pressure (rather than simply avoiding or ignoring it), everything changes.

I still don't have it all figured out, but I have discovered some practical steps to overcome these barriers and live my purpose right where I'm at. And I want to pass them on to you.

I believe it's important to discuss this for a number of reasons. Namely, we often view barriers such as comparison and perfectionism as things that hold us back from purpose, but I'm here to argue that *purpose is the very way out of the traps we get stuck in.*

So here's my plan: In these pages I'll share simple steps to overcome the pressure to prove by channeling the purpose *we already have right where we are*, regardless of our circumstances, struggles, and shortcomings. By the time you finish this book, you will have had some eye-opening moments as you identify blind spots and unproductive habits you may not even realize you've been living with. You will have practical tools to take with you—tools that will help you move from living under the pressure to prove to living out a life of purpose.

My goal is that this resource will not only give you a swift kick in the pants but also feel like a warm hug or chat with your best friend (and that you'll want to share it with all your gals too).

Together we're going to get unstuck. We're going to stop blaming everyone and everything else for what hasn't gone right and start taking responsibility for our lives right where we are (without the pressure to control or figure everything out). And above all else, we're going to take practical steps to break through the pressure and walk in line with this purpose we're looking for. I don't care where you come from, what you be-

lieve, or how frustrated you might be. You are welcome here, just as you are. You don't have to be fancy. You don't have to have an impressive résumé, income level, or any other kind of status symbol. You just need to take small steps with me.

Are you ready to do what it takes to live an intentional life? To push past insecurities, expectations, and the pressure to prove so you can simply start showing up for what you were made to do? Let's do this.

Part 1

Where Do I Start?

You Can't Walk Through Walls

Here are a few things you should know about me: I don't have a master's degree in anything. I haven't saved someone from a burning building recently (or ever). I had a chicken named Pickle (I say *had* because she was recently escorted to chicken heaven, thanks to the not-so-friendly neighborhood owl). My favorite talent is that I can clap with one hand (which makes me look a little ridiculous flapping my hand around). Quite honestly, I'm a pretty average human being.

I just want to make sure we're on the same page, because there have been far too many times I've opened a book thinking the author puts her pants on differently than I do—as if she's a fancy-pants lady instead of an ordinary, imperfect human like

me. Why do we do that? Why do we see people's names on book covers or their faces on TV or become followers of their social media and then get some weird idea in our heads that they're better than we are?

I've done it, and I'm sure you have too. So let me just set your expectations here. I'm not trying to be your pastor or your professor or your counselor. I'm your pal. We put our pants on the same way. And I hope you feel as though you're sitting on the floor eating pizza with me in our pajamas and not as though I'm talking at you from a pulpit.

Just to paint the scene, I'm currently sitting at my kitchen table wearing mismatched socks and an oversize T-shirt, and I could really use a shower. (Sometimes when you get on a writing roll, you just accept the troll look for the day and go into your cave.) It's not exactly glamorous over here.

That's my whole point, though. Who says we have to be glamorous to show up and do what we're made to do? Who says we've got to have a cool story to step into something bigger than ourselves? That narrative stops right here. Maybe if we quit assuming our talents are lame or our stories are boring or we have to be impressive to be impactful and instead just look a little deeper, we'll find something more powerful than what meets the eye.

That said, even if you are cooler than I am and you *have* saved somebody from a burning building or won a Nobel

Peace Prize, I still think we'll be friends. I believe we can have different experiences and still ultimately struggle with the same core issues: insecurities, unmet expectations, and the pressure to prove ourselves. I've been so wrapped up in labels and perceived expectations that I nearly lost myself. If any of this resonates with you, get comfortable and let's have a nice long chat.

Now that we've found some common ground in our mutual humanness, I want to start at the beginning of my story, with some of my earliest and most treasured memories.

Big Step

One particular memory is so vivid that I can almost smell the corn tortillas searing on the stove and hear Nana's thick Hispanic accent. Though decades have passed, I still remember the games I'd play with my grandma in her tiny one-bedroom apartment. I loved those times when it was just the two of us, when she'd make my favorite food and we'd giggle and play games until all hours of the night. (Bedtime never existed during sleepovers at Nana's house.)

As I played with my dolls on the floor one evening, Nana reached for a roll of masking tape, ripped off a long piece, and stuck it to the fuzzy brown carpet next to me. She placed another and another, until several long pieces formed a lopsided

square around my six-year-old self. Then she tossed the remainder of the roll to the side.

“Ta-da!” she said. “*Es una casa, mi Jordan preciosa!*” (“It’s a house, my precious Jordan!”) A gap, an empty space on one side, marked the doorway to get in and out of our imaginary house. Stepping over the cockeyed lines of tape that marked pretend walls wouldn’t do. Why? Because you can’t walk through walls.

I’m always amazed when I realize these simple, seemingly insignificant childhood games we played had powerful lessons tucked inside. Doors are essential in life. Doors are the only way we allow others in and the only way we step out. They’re also the only way we move beyond the little walls we tend to build around ourselves in an effort to avoid vulnerability or possible betrayal. Perhaps in our most simple and unobserved experiences, such as mine with Nana, we learn more about the purpose tucked deep inside us than in the milestones and moments we publicize on social media.

This was just one of many make-believe games Nana and I played together. In our enchanted world, such as that imaginary house made of tape, I had a sanctuary in which to dream. I had a safe place to be anything I could imagine, and I loved it.

This is also where my childhood nickname, Sparkles, originated. I admit that’s a horrendously embarrassing nickname. But it was oddly accurate. I wanted to sparkle, to shine, to be beautiful, and to be seen. Don’t we all?

Nana and I often switched roles when we played make-believe. Sometimes she pretended to be the child so I could be the grandma. Other times she was the customer so I could be the chef. This time, though, she was the patient and I was the nurse.

“Knock, knock,” she said. I reached out my arm and acted as if I were opening a door, welcoming her into my clinic. She extended her leg dramatically as she moved through the doorway—the gap in the tape. I knew what was coming.

“Big step!” we said together.

“Big step” was our thing, our own little tradition. Nana encouraged me when I was a toddler simply by coming alongside me, taking my hand, and showing me how to take a big step. The big step became part of nearly every game we played together. We didn’t do anything without taking big, fearless steps. Together we’d each peel our toes off the floor, simultaneously stretch out our right legs, and say, “Big step!”

As our toes hit a new place on the floor ahead of us, we celebrated, often dancing to a silly tune Nana made up on the spot. Other times we’d give each other a high five, and sometimes, when Mom wasn’t looking, Nana would sneak me some of my favorite candy, gummy bears, as if to say, *Well done, little one.*

Big step.

Even into my adolescent years, sweet Nana whispered that phrase whenever I felt afraid, unsure, or insecure. When I was

nervous about playing the part of an Oompa Loompa in the middle school play *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, she slipped her weathered hand into mine, which had been painted orange, and gave me a wink as if to remind me: big step.

Before I ever really understood the depth of what she was teaching me, Nana dared me to dream, to be bold in pursuing the path God lays right before me, and to take fearless steps with purpose *before* I figured anything else out.

One big step. That's all it took to give me the courage and boldness to step out a little farther and walk a little taller as a young girl. I still believe that's all it takes for you and me—one big step. At first glance this idea might seem cliché—silly, even. But I think we often forget that every big step in life is really just a series of tiny movements and small decisions that add up, becoming the very thing that allows us to move from living in insecurity to living out our destiny.

One Last Big Step

Several years later, Nana got really sick. She'd been ill for a while when I found her one Tuesday afternoon banging her hands violently on a wall, lost and confused and trying to escape her nursing home—the place that kept her safe. Turns out you really can't walk through walls, even if you want to. I wrapped my arms around her to calm her, but she didn't recog-

nize me. A nurse came to the rescue. I gulped, and with a lump in my throat, I fought back tears. Nana had always been a safe place for me when I felt afraid as a little girl. But now, when I tried to be a safe place for her, when I tried to wrap her in a protective embrace and be her refuge when she felt afraid, she didn't know me.

As Nana would say, *Oh my stars*.

We finally calmed Nana and got her seated. Alzheimer's was winning the battle for her mind, and somehow it was managing to break my spirit too. Then the nurse handed me a plastic cup of peaches and asked whether I'd like to help feed my grandmother.

Seriously? No, I don't want to feed her. She's supposed to feed me! I wanted to respond.

But I didn't say anything. I kindly accepted the plastic cup of preserved fruit and asked Nana to open her mouth, just as she had asked me to do many years before. My mind was swirling. *Is this real life? What is happening?* What do you do when one of your very best friends, one of your childhood heroes, the one who pretended to be sick and broken so you could pretend to nurse her back to health, becomes truly sick and broken? How do you handle it when the roles you played in that imaginary house of tape become reality? How do you cope with the disappointment when you hope she'll recognize your face but she doesn't?

I didn't know. My seventeen-year-old heart didn't have a clue. I searched every square inch of myself and came up without an answer worth more than that old roll of tape. Maybe you know how it is with brokenness like this. The kind we can't seem to control—the downward spiral of shame, sickness, or pain.

We stare into cups of peaches, searching for answers, hoping for a break from the breaking, wishing that somehow the damage will be reversed, and wondering where on God's green earth that light at the end of the tunnel is.

About a year later, I had just settled in for my first year at Indiana University when Mom called to tell me Nana had taken a turn for the worse. She didn't have much time left, and it was time to say goodbye.

Goodbye—a send-off, a word used when parting ways. How is it that the word we use when ending a phone call is the same one we whisper when we're about to be separated from someone who's slipping into eternity—a separation marked by the reality that we won't be able to just call each other back? When we're about to be divided by walls we can't leave a gap in, as we could with tape on the floor? Nana was about to take a big step into eternity, but this time I couldn't hold her hand the whole way.

I packed a bag, locked my college dorm room, hopped into the car Nana had passed down to me, and cried mascara-filled

tears onto the steering wheel as I raced home. Somehow I managed to drive despite my blurred vision.

When I arrived at the nursing home, I found my mom sitting by Nana's side. I plopped down next to her and leaned over to kiss the pale skin on Nana's forehead, knowing this would be the last time. Within a few hours Nana took that big step into eternity, leaving the rest of us behind. The heart that had given so much light and love to my own young heart had no beats left. Mom's eyes filled with tears as I hugged her tight.

She squeezed back as if to wring the sadness out of both of us. Bearing burdens is just like that—leaning in, letting someone else's pain seep from her heart into ours. It means becoming a shelter for someone, often when our own heart is barely beating. But there's comfort in that. A purpose in it.

Purpose. There's profound purpose in simply meeting other people right where they are, in stepping into, not away from, their struggles and sharing them. Sometimes we can be so quick to offer consoling words and dry someone else's tears, when really the best thing we can do is let the tears flow and even absorb them. Bearing burdens doesn't mean fixing them. It means not allowing the other person to bear the load alone.

We sat there, Mom and I, waterworks and all. I wanted nothing more than to find a roll of masking tape and wrap it around my heart to keep it from falling apart. And maybe that's what I began to do. Maybe that's what we all do sometimes.

The Walls Were Only Make-Believe

When all the visiting, sharing, laughter, and tears surrounding Nana's funeral ended, I traveled back to campus and attempted to make the transition to college life and learn all that comes with adulting for the first time. That's a challenge in and of itself.

In the middle of an awkward transitional season, losing Nana added a curveball I wasn't prepared for. So I spent the subsequent months trying to wrap my life in the things I thought would hold me together, in what I thought would keep me strong and secure when I felt as though I were falling apart. Academic accomplishments. A boyfriend. Leadership positions and résumé boosters. The whole nine yards.

It was like a strategy to distract myself from mourning. I thought if I filled my life with enough good things, covering up the internal feelings of insecurity with external Band-Aids, perhaps the sadness would somehow go away. I reasoned that the image I built up on the outside would somehow make me all better inside.

Over time I became the girl who kept up with the crowd on Friday night and still aced a test at eight o'clock on Monday morning, all while juggling eight billion extracurricular activities, clocking in at a part-time job, and training for a half marathon. I mean, why not?

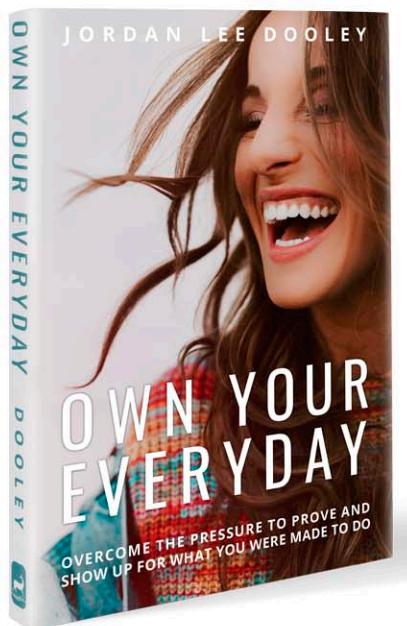
You know, I used to hear the word *labels* and immediately think of negative things. Except when I look back at that season, it's obvious that reputation management and image maintenance are nothing more than sticking a bunch of labels and titles on ourselves that we assume others will perceive as positive. Seemingly good labels such as "the smart girl" or "the put-together girl" or "the grad student" can give a sense of confidence because of how others perceive us. However, they also create pressure to live up to the perceived expectations that come with those labels. If you're "the smart girl," you'd better not get a B on that test. If you're "the fit girl," you'd better not eat that cake. Whatever the word or label is, trying to live up to what we believe that ought to look like creates a lot of pressure. Of course, I didn't know that at that time. I thought looking strong meant being strong (spoiler alert: that's not always true).

Those labels I lived behind were like those lines of tape I played inside as a little girl. Behind them I could hide from the world and keep my insecurities a secret.

But those tape walls had never really kept me safe. They were just tape. They were only make-believe, after all. And perhaps the same is true for labels we live behind and boxes we get stuck inside. Maybe they're just made up in our own minds.

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