

Mantra #3

Zoom Out for the Best View

**You have to participate relentlessly
in the manifestation of your own blessings.**

—ELIZABETH GILBERT

author and 2015 Sun Valley Wellness Festival keynote speaker

When we moved to Sun Valley, I hadn't even heard of backcountry skiing, but I soon learned how different it was from resort skiing. Backcountry skiers tackle runs that can't be reached by ski lifts. Some take helicopters to the top of a peak, while others "earn their turns" by climbing the mountain themselves. In addition to avoiding lift lines, these skiers are rewarded with untouched powder and a pristine landscape. I gained an appreciation for those folks who had already had their workout by the time they reached the top of the mountain, as opposed to people like me, who relax on the way up by taking the chairlift. No matter which route you choose, once you get to the mountaintop, the change in perspective is undeniable. Skiing offers ongoing opportunities for zooming in and zooming out, for seeing the forest and seeing the trees. It provides countless chances to cultivate vision, see the big picture, and work on visualization, manifesting reality through mental exercise.

I Am a Great Monkey

While I enjoyed nearly every moment of my time with the DIVAS grandmas, by Year 2 of the program, in the 2012-13 winter season, I was ready to move up. I fit in with a much more aggressive group and first experienced the challenge and excitement of running gates, skiing as fast as you can around flags in a predefined S-line, as they do in the giant slalom in the Olympics. While learning to run gates with the DIVAS, I also first experienced the power of visualization in sports.

“We are going to first just slowly slip through the course so you know where you are going,” said Nicky, the amazing red-coated ski instructor. “Then, we go back up, muster up your courage and go again. Only faster.” Nicky gave us one of her famous smiles that said, “*Come on*, I know you can do it!”

We took turns going down through the course, which was getting icy, making it hard to stay in control. Not what I would call *hero snow* conditions. We were doing terribly, and Tanya, one of my group members, bashed into a set of gates. She limply waved goodbye at the bottom of the course, yelling up before she left, “I think I need to go get this X-rayed. See you next week, I hope”.

Gloom and doom fell over the group. Nicky picked up on it right away, perhaps because no one volunteered to ski next.

“Okay. New approach!” she yelled with encouragement. “Have you ever heard about visualization practices that Olympians use?”

A few, but not all, of our helmeted heads nodded.

“You simply visualize your successful run through the course, completing it all in your head before you actually do it physically.”

We all looked at her quizzically, not sure how this was going to prevent trips to the hospital for our own sets of X-rays.

Nicky knew she had to keep it simple for us. “Okay. Never mind the entire process of visualization. Have you all heard of Muhammad Ali, the famous boxer?”

All of our helmets went up and down in unison.

“He would say to himself, over and over before he entered the ring, ‘I am the greatest.’ I want you all to do that now and then try the course again.” Nicky smiled at us with encouragement. We followed her down the course again, this time much faster. My gut was twisting with fear, so I tried to keep those words of encouragement from the famous boxer in my heart and my mind.

I am the greatest. I am the greatest. I am the greatest.

Over the next hour, we did short loops through the course to get as much practice as possible. Going through the gates again and again, while still frightening, was becoming almost tedious. To change it up, every once in a while, I would replace the Muhammad Ali chant with “monkey visualize, monkey do!” It was a spin on the “monkey see, monkey do” phrase that had always made me smile. These tactics, with Nicky’s encouragement, helped me get past my fear and start having some fun.

Even now, whenever I see gates, a chorus starts in my head: *I am the greatest. Monkey visualize, monkey do. I am the greatest.*

Later that week, while on a dinner date with Jeff, I asked him if he had any experience with visualization at work.

“You mean before a big presentation for a client?” he asked.

“Yes. For example, do you and your colleagues first visualize that the meeting will go well to give yourselves a boost in that positive direction?”

“No way. It’s usually a kick in the pants about something or other, or nothing at all, before we go into a meeting.”

Hmm. I guess that positive visualization still might be a little too woo-woo (my affectionate term for anything that might be considered alternative or complementary science and medicine) for the Wall Street types, but Jeff did like the greatest monkey story.

MANIFEST FROM HEART AND MIND.
BE THE GREATEST MONKEY OF YOUR KIND.

Free Throws, Olympians, and Dry iPhones

It turns out that visualization is not woo-woo at all. It is actually an important mental rehearsal that most professional athletes use regularly. The effectiveness of visualization has been studied rigorously and goes well beyond anecdotal references. In one study from the 1960s, Professor L.V. Clark of Wayne State University showed that high school basketball players were able to improve their free-throw shooting with *mental exercise* alone. One can only imagine the amazing things that can result from a combination of visualization and quality physical practice.

Most of us agree that being an Olympian is a pretty amazing feat. When I had the opportunity to interview cross-country skier Liz Stephen, a two-time U.S. Olympian, I asked about her mental exercise routines. “Visualization is actually *really* hard,” Liz said. “It is an art to get it just right. You can’t stop with simply seeing the course and how you will successfully navigate it. You have to actually *feel* it. It is a visceral thing. Feeling that success, for me, is key.”

Liz helped me understand that visualization is not simply imagining you are watching yourself from the third-person perspective in a movie. While it should involve mental imagery, visualization also relies on seeing the actions from your first-person viewpoint, as though you are actually doing them. It involves sound and, most importantly, feeling. Unlike watching a movie, visualization becomes a vivid experience in which you have complete control over a successful performance and finish with a firm belief. These techniques can be used to create mental awareness, a sense of well-being, and confidence. The time I spent talking with Liz left me feeling light, buoyant, and infused with the possibility of what great things we all can achieve with a little vision and visualization.

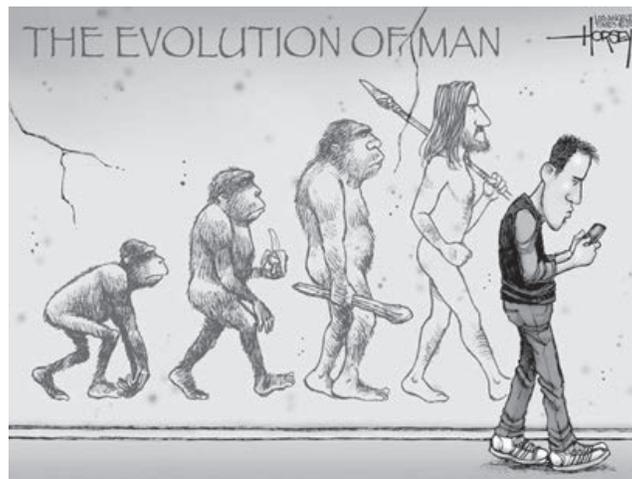
That light feeling of possibility lasted until I attended the Dent conference a few days later. The event focused on the high-tech industry but targeted all individuals interested in “making a dent in the universe.” The conference itself and the speakers were great, but the scene in the lobby and the folks walking around during the breaks had me worried. They were all hunched over their phones, oblivious to who and what was around them. These were high-powered individuals capable of manifesting great things in this world, and they had paid great sums to come to Sun Valley and network with others. How could they have vision when they were hunched over their smartphones and tablets, tap-tap-tapping like squirrels frantically trying to open a nut?

The scene reminded me of a video my son had recently shown me of a man walking through a pool area. The man was so engrossed in an animated conversation on his iPhone that he walked right into the water. My son thought it was hilarious, but I thought

it was representative and scary. People can become so engaged in multi-tasking that they can lose sight of the bigger picture.

I went back inside to the conference room to learn that one of the afternoon speakers was one of my favorite political cartoonists, David Horsey of the *Los Angeles Times*. In his session, he talked about some of his favorite drawings. The highlight for me was his cartoon “The Evolution of Man,” which depicts a man walking along a mural of life-sized figures illustrating the various stages of human evolution, from ape to homo erectus to homo sapiens. The man happens to be lined up with these other figures as if he would be the next stage of mankind. The scary part is that he is shown as a step back in evolution, hunched over his phone. I thought to myself:

Yes, we have got to look up and have some vision, or we are headed for trouble indeed.



**MANIFEST FROM HEART AND MIND.
DON'T GO BACKWARDS AS MANKIND.**

Mindfulness As a Tool for Vision and Visualization

“What would you recommend to someone who is thinking about trying out meditation as a starting point?” I was interviewing Ryan Redman, co-founder of the Flourish Foundation and an expert on mindfulness practices, during an episode of “Healthy Kids Corner,” my radio show on KDPI FM Ketchum Community Radio. I was expecting him to answer with one of the action steps that get someone to sit his or her butt down on a meditation cushion and just get to it.

Instead, his response surprised me.

“Step one is not so much clearing the mind but, instead, really taking the time to consider and reflect upon the benefits of developing these qualities of the mind.”

You mean you don't want me to go out and buy a meditation cushion right away?

“If we don't seriously consider the impact the mind is having on us on a daily basis, then all the other priorities will take over,” Ryan said. “So, for most people, a good place to start is to envision what it would be like to act from a place of mindfulness.”

Okay folks, don't run out to buy a meditation chime alarm yet.

Ryan suggested we first ask questions like:

- What if I had the ability to make a conscious choice about what type of thoughts I'm going to enact through my behavior and speech?
- What would it be like if I weren't running from one thing to the next, always feeling overwhelmed?
- How would it feel to show up knowing that I have the inner resources to work skillfully with whatever is presented?

- What would it be like to act from a place that is grounded, contained, present, and aware?
- How would this vision affect me personally?
- What would be the ripple effect in other areas of my life and for other people?

“If we can reflect on these questions clearly, then, naturally, we will be motivated to put aside the time to create a mindfulness practice,” Ryan continued wisely.

No wonder I have always considered Ryan to be our local mindfulness Jedi.

We then talked about the alternative to this vision of mindfulness, which is when your thoughts start to take over like a jail riot. One rumination arises after another, and then another appears with a vengeance. Do you have the capacity to choose whether this series of thoughts is truly beneficial or not? Unlikely!

There is a benefit to having spontaneous thoughts, but there are also many thoughts that are not relevant or are destructive to well-being. Controlling the jail riot in your mind means creating some space in between thoughts. To do that, you must recognize and *observe* your thoughts. We must create a gap between the stimulus and response to make room for choice in between.

After the interview with Ryan, I went home to spend an afternoon with my kids. I was thinking about the jail riot analogy as I sat in Elena’s room while she moved around to attend to her various pets. From her desk came an incessant squeak creak, squeak creak. It was her hamster, Bobo, as she spun relentlessly on her wheel. While I was glad that Bobo was getting some

exercise, I started to feel bad for her as she spun around and around, going nowhere. It was almost as if she was possessed as she put one little pink paw in front of the other. She was on a mission, with a vengeance.

Did she have any idea where she was going? Why she was running with such agitation? Was she even making a choice?

I thought to myself: As we go through life, considering our thoughts about our overall health, we don't want to be hamsters on a wheel.

VISUALIZE WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.
DON'T SPIN ON A WHEEL LIKE BOBO.

Your Vision Is What Leads the Way

"Chin up!" reminded Claudia, the day's inspiring ski instructor. We were on the slopes on a beautiful blue-sky day.

"Your body goes where you're looking. Why are you looking down at your ski tips?" she asked me.

She was right. I realized that I had been looking at my skis to check the distance between them. I had been guilty of crossing my skis, a much-hated move that never ends well, and I definitely didn't want to do it again.

"Focus ahead. Eyes up!" she encouraged me.

I thought about the concept of *drishti* in my yoga practice. Drishti is the ability to control and direct the focus, first of the eyes and then of the attention. Drishti assists concentration, aids movement, and allows us to orient our bodies. I realized that if I applied drishti to skiing, I would become more aware of

the placement of my limbs and equipment automatically, without actually having to look at them. On the way down, I fell once, landing right on my butt, but I picked myself up and focused for the rest of my descent.

When I reached the bottom of the hill, I stopped to look around me. Oh, the beauty of the day! The wind blew on my cheeks, and I admired the view of infinity as I looked out to the mountain peaks in the far distance. Why had I limited myself to staring at my skis? How could I possibly miss the majesty of nature all around me?

“Take in the bigger picture and enjoy the scenery at the mountaintop,” said Claudia. “Savor the great views while you’re on the lift. But when you’re coming down, keep your attention focused ahead of you and lead with your head and upper body pointing in the direction that you want to go.”

“Your gaze also helps with your balance,” she said to me with a smile and a wink. I guess she had seen me take that huge wipeout a few minutes earlier.

HAVE VISION AND DON'T BE BLIND.
KEEP FROM FALLING ON YOUR BEHIND.

Start by Asking Why

As we got on the next lift, one of my ski buddies turned to me and said, “You know, it’s important to remember why we come up here week after week, trying to improve our skills. I come to get my workout in. What motivates you?”

I took a deep breath and thought this question through. I wasn't really skiing for the workout, because you spend a lot of time sitting on lifts and learning technique through drills, instruction, and discussion. If I wanted a workout, lacing up my running shoes and hitting the trails for 45 minutes would be a lot more efficient. Then, I thought about the scene I encountered when I first arrived at the lodge at the base of the mountain. In one area, families cooperated to get their ski gear in order as they eagerly anticipated a day of play together. In another section, groups of local retirees took their last sips of coffee by a warm fire as they caught up with their ski buddies and planned another fun day in the fresh air. I thought about the smiles on their faces and turned to my friend to reply. "I'm in this for the long haul. I want an activity that I can enjoy with my family as I grow older. I love the community and the way it brings people together. I love the connected feeling that I get when I ski."

MANIFEST DEEP FROM THE HEART.
DO WHAT YOU LOVE AS AN OLD FART.

Have a Vision for Health and Wellness

It was helpful to keep the endgame in mind as I continuously navigated the time pressure of getting to the mountain as often as necessary to improve. There were days when balancing my work at Nurture, managing the kids' schedules, and running the household felt as complex as overseeing a NASA mission. It was helpful to me at these times to remember the lovely 80- and

90-year-olds who sat in the lodge in the mornings, catching up over breakfast, ready to enjoy a few runs on the hill together. Watching these *masters*, I wanted to feel that same sense of ease and happiness in my elder years, that sense of connection with my body and others. I wanted to participate in this sport with my family and the broader community. When I imagined how this would feel to my 80- or 90-year-old self, it felt *good*. That is where your vision of wellness should take you.

Like Ryan, the Jedi of mindfulness, I'd also like to start you on your path to optimal wellness by first asking questions that help you to create a vision:

- What do you look like at your ideal weight and level of fitness?
- What is your ideal level of stress? Don't say none, because some level of stress is good! A stress-free life is unrealistic. We grow by challenging ourselves, and feeling a little stress can help us to be at our best. Imagine the feeling of being able to handle stress without getting overwhelmed. How does it *feel* to be in control?
- Do you have more energy and vibrancy? Where are you spending that extra energy and productivity?
- How does your physical appearance reflect your health? Are you muscular? Flexible? Able to keep up with your kids or grandkids without running out of breath?
- What does good health mean for you spiritually? Do you feel connected to something bigger than yourself?
- How are your emotions? Are you more balanced? Are you honest with yourself?

- What is the ripple effect of this vision? How are your relationships with your family, at work, and in your community affected by your good health?

Only you can answer these questions as you make your own vision of wellness. Remember to use all of your senses as you answer these questions.

The next set of questions relates to your home, and the more you can answer in the affirmative, the better.

- Is your environment clean and inspiring?
- Are you comfortable in your bed, and do you get the rest you need there?
- Do you have a place in the house where you can set up a yoga mat for a workout or a quiet retreat?
- Is your kitchen set up to inspire you to cook in a way that fits with your budget, your desires, and your time constraints?
- Do you have what you need to cook whole foods into easy dishes that you and your family love?
- Are there fresh fruits and veggies ready at hand?

THE MORE YES'S THE BETTER.
WITH A FEW NO'S, DON'T BE A FRETTER.

Resources for the No Responses

As you address your *no* responses, here are some excellent resources to consult:

- **Overall environment:** If your environment is not clean and inspiring, get Karen Kingston's book, *Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui*. Also subscribe to the blog "Inspired Everyday Living" by sisters Alison Forbes and Laura Forbes Carlin (www.inspireeverydayliving.com). You will feel peace and serenity in your home in no time.
- **Bedroom:** If you are not comfortable in your bed, you are not getting the sleep you need. Kingston's book and "Inspired Everyday Living" can also assist you in setting up a bedroom that is peaceful and restful. Make your bedroom setup a priority.
- **Yoga space:** If you think you do not have a place in the house where you can set up a yoga mat, I challenge you to think differently. You need a space that is only slightly larger than your mat, around 7 feet by 3 feet. For ideas on how to set up a space for home practice, read Rodney Yee's *Moving Toward Balance*.
- **Healthy eating:** The fresh-fruit-and-veggie dilemma is easy to overcome if you use your vision to plan ahead. Just remember that you are so much more likely to reach for something that is prepared rather than something that takes more work. My suggestion is that you store veggies in a grab bag when you get home from the grocery store. Wash and chop veggies and display them in containers* in your fridge within easy reach. You won't need those chips and crackers if you have something else to satisfy your oral-feedback cravings (i.e., the need to crunch on something).

* I always recommend BPA-free containers, especially for food storage. For BPA-free product ideas, visit www.healthysolutionsofsv.com and click on "Recommended Products" on the green navigation bar.

- **Cooking:** How can you solve the challenge of cooking whole foods into easy dishes that you and your family love? Read on. The slow cooker is coming to the rescue!

We might have solved some of your health challenges with the foundation of breakfast, but what about lunch and, especially, dinner? I've learned from many Nurture participants that the rice cooker is not the ultimate answer to the dinner dilemma because it still requires effort at the end of a long and tiring day. Daily exhaustion and dreading the preparation of dinner are exactly what send many people to the local fast food joint or down the frozen dinner route instead of making a home-cooked meal.

Nurture has a solution for those folks looking for immediate gratification as they walk through the door in the evening: a slow cooker*. This clever device allows you the flexibility to spend less than 15 minutes in the morning so that, when you get home at the end of the day, the house will smell of something delicious and inviting. The anticipation of something more nutritious and less expensive provides the willpower many of our Nurture participants need to pass up fast food restaurants on the way home from work.

As we learned from our discussion of breakfast in Mantra #2 (Get Some Good Boots On), Recipe Frameworks provide ideas for the basic components you need to prepare a meal. You can customize your choices to make a quick and easy meal

* For recommendations on what type of slow cooker to purchase, visit the same "Recommended Products" section; review the various slow cooker options.

based on your personal preferences and what you can find in your kitchen. You can do the same thing to prepare a dinner in your slow cooker.

Slow Cooker Recipe Framework

Meat/Protein	+	Vegetable(s)	+	Seasoning(s)	+	Liquid
turkey		carrots		garlic		water
chicken		parsnips		salt		broth
beef		leeks		pepper		olive oil
beans		onions		ginger		etc.
etc.		tomatoes		cumin		
		green onions		curry		
		frozen peas		etc.		
		etc.				

Here are some general guidelines for getting to know your slow cooker:

STEP 1: Add ingredients according to the Recipe Framework.

Always be sure there is enough liquid in the recipe so as not to burn the meal in the slow cooker.

STEP 2: Plug in the slow cooker to a safe outlet.

STEP 3: Cover and turn on the slow cooker.

Guidelines are:

- Low setting for 8-10 hours (or overnight)
or high setting for 4-6 hours.

- For animal proteins, use a meat thermometer to be sure it's done.
- Turn to *keep warm* if waiting to serve.

You always can make larger quantities to freeze for the future or use leftovers for lunches or the next day's meals.

If you really like recipes, I don't want to disappoint you. For new ideas for slow cooker recipes (breakfasts, lunches, or dinners), visit the Nurture website (www.nurtureyourfamily.org) and hover over "Healthy Recipes" on the blue navigation bar. Click on "RECIPES-ADULTS" and scroll down to the section on slow cookers. You can also visit www.healthykidsideas.com and click on "Slow Cooker" under the "Search Recipes by Cooking" area on the right-hand sidebar. I doubt you will need to go further for recipe inspiration!

A SLOW COOKER IS YOUR BEST FRIEND
FOR A HOME-COOKED MEAL AT DAY'S END.

Begin with the End in Mind

When I was in management consulting in my mid and late twenties, I was more in a mode of surviving than thriving. I was climbing up the ladder of promotions, moving from consultant to senior consultant to unit manager to senior manager.

I was in no mood for relaxation, but Jeff made me take a short vacation. I threw a book into my suitcase, not realizing that it would soon change my life and my career. It was Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. I found myself

nodding in agreement through “Be Proactive” (Habit 1). Then I got to Habit 2, “Begin with the End in Mind.” Covey asks the reader to picture his or her own funeral. Three people stand up to say a few words about the deceased, the type of person you were, what you stood for, how you lived, and so on. One family member, one community member, and one work colleague would speak.

“Kathryn was great with numbers and planning. She kept our family vacations on time and on budget,” I heard my sister say.

“Who was Kathryn? I’ve only ever seen a black Audi that pulls in around midnight and leaves before dawn? Nice car,” added the community member.

“Hard worker. I regularly got emails with complex attachments at 3 a.m. She sure did not need much sleep!” said a former client of mine.

Was that it? What about good daughter, sister, wife, mom? Jeff and I hadn’t had any kids yet, but I always pictured myself as a mom someday. Hadn’t I contributed enough to be well known—beyond a black car moving through the darkness—in my community?

Okay, I thought. I work hard, but so what?

**DO WHAT YOU MUST DO.
KNOW THAT YOU CAN’T TAKE IT WITH YOU.**

The Beginning of a New Ending

Over the next few years, a dramatic shift occurred in my career. We had our first child, Elena, and I continued to plug away

at work, even while knowing something was off with my life balance. Then, as I was pregnant with our second child, Alexander, I was assigned to a tight-deadline project while my big belly bumped up against the desk. I had to pull two all-nighters within a week's span of time. As I was sitting at my desk wearing the same ugly maternity clothes from the previous day, I made the decision to leave the world of consulting.

“Great idea,” said my mentor when I told him my news. He rubbed his hand across his smooth head. “Now that *all* of my hair is gone, I think it's time for me to leave this firm, too.”

I cleaned out my office and happened to pick up my Stephen Covey book, which, by then, was sacred. What did I want my funeral to look like? What were my next steps? Needing a new mentor, I went up to South Milwaukee, Wisconsin to visit my 92-year-old grandma, who was in a retirement home. She was a beautiful, sage creature and a devout Polish Catholic. She fingered her rosary as I explained that I was at a crossroads professionally. She asked me the simplest, most profound three questions.

1. “What are your God-given gifts?”
2. “What are you passionate about?”
3. “What is a critical need in the world that is waiting to be met?”

That conversation birthed Nurture, which would grow into an important player in the national movement around nutrition and wellness education. Since I was a kid, growing up in the house of my biochemist dad, I was fascinated by the role that nutrition plays in our overall health. When my dad would take

my sister and me to work, we would dive into the bookshelf to dig out the best picture books on pathology. We flipped through the pages of these medical tomes with the same engrossed attention that you see in people leafing through the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

“I can’t believe this. This woman is covered with black scales and has a black tongue!”

“Eeeww! Look at this man with sores all over his body and lips!”

“Freaky. This baby has a bow-legged stance worse than an old-fashioned cowboy.”

Thus I learned about pellagra, scurvy, and rickets, or, more importantly, the critical importance of such nutrients as the B, C, and D vitamins.

Thinking through my grandma’s prescription, I thought:

- *God-given gifts*: Work ethic and organizational skills.
- *Passion*: Nutrition and wellness.
- *Critical need in the world*: This answer would soon be uncovered through discussions with my dad, another sage family member and mentor.

LISTEN TO WORDS OF THE WISE.
FIND YOUR PASSION, THEY ADVISE.

The Secret: Write It Down

Visualization became a big deal in the years following the 2006 release of the book and film *The Secret*, which proposes that

you can be, do, have, and feel any way that you desire. Also potentially seen as woo-woo by the Wall Street types, *The Secret* is based on the law of attraction, that like attracts like. By creating our own concrete visions of how we want to live, what we want to do, what we want to have, and how we want to feel, we can actually create and influence our lives. We have the power of choice because we choose our own thoughts and our overall visions. What we think, we can attract into our lives. We can each create our own reality and our own circumstances.

When I met intuitive healer Marie Manuchehri at the 2012 Wellness Festival in Sun Valley, she talked about human beings emitting their own frequency, like a radio station. Some people tend to operate more on lower frequencies, as she described, which attract negative people, thoughts, and outcomes. With inner work, especially positive thinking and visualization, we can raise our frequency to attract more positive people, thoughts, and outcomes. In this way, we choose our future with the thoughts that we have today. What we focus on expands and affects how we feel and exerts influence on our actions. By focusing our attention on what we want to achieve, we actually transform those thought patterns into reality.

By writing down our thoughts, or representing them as images on a vision board, we give them much greater power to attract. I cannot deny that I have found this to be true in my own life.

This process transformed Nuture from an idea into a bonafide thriving organization.

On our weekly *walk and talks*, pushing the double stroller along, my dad and I took the time to catch up on life. I had just

told him about an idea that had formed during my studies for my certification in nutritional counseling and my inspirational conversation with my grandmother. It was in the mid 2000s, and our walk-and-talk topics covered everything from politics to gardening to world peace. We also spent a lot of time on nutrition. My dad had been chairman of the biochemistry and anatomy departments at the Chicago Medical School. One of the courses he taught to medical students was nutrition, and he still kept up-to-date with many of the medical journals. Our conversation led from journal studies directly to the critical need in the world concept that my Grandma had mentioned.

“Have you read any of the latest statistics about Type 2 diabetes?” my dad asked.

“Yes. It is amazing how much the incidence of diabetes is increasing,” I answered.

“The estimate is that one out of three children will develop diabetes if we continue to eat the standard American diet. One out of three!”

We had just stopped at a park to let my antsy kids get out and play. They were in the sandbox with a third child. I looked at them and thought: *Standard American Diet—SAD. One of those children in the sandbox would likely get diabetes!?* That is sad.

“Dad, why do you think this is happening in our country?”

“Time, money, and know-how, I suppose. People don’t think they have enough money to afford good food, don’t know how to prepare it, and don’t feel like they have the time to help themselves. That is why fast food and processed foods are taking over.”

“But, Dad, when I was in graduate school, I didn’t have time or money. With my rice cooker and slow cooker, I lived off whole grains, lentils, beans, and fruits and veggies. I stayed healthy.”

I recalled the parties I used to have on Wednesday nights in my 450 square foot apartment in Austin. I’d make rice and beans, and we’d gather around to watch *Melrose Place* on TV. I didn’t want to admit to my dad how much fun I’d had in graduate school. His stories of living above the Bone Closet at Yale University and walking to work at his postdoc program uphill both ways through the driving snow were legends in our family. I also recall he never missed a single day of work, despite colds, high fevers, or shingles.

“Maybe I could put together a program that teaches people how to use those tools to start cooking healthy meals again,” I suggested to my dad. “We could give them rice cookers and slow cookers to help them save time and make it easy to prepare healthy meals. We could focus first on low-income families; they are the ones that studies show are disproportionately affected by nutritional disease.”

“Write it down,” my dad said.

And that vision—of a program to improve the nutrition and health of families through education—was what I wrote down. Putting the idea on paper was the best advice I could have received. Once I wrote those thoughts down, the universe started to do its part by placing people and opportunities in my path. Within a month, I had met a registered dietitian and a director of a clinical studies organization with a doctorate in nutrition, who both wanted to make the idea a reality. We called it Nurture, an acronym for Nutritional Upgrading Realized Through

Underwriting, Resources and Education. Within three months, I had a larger group of people dedicated to making it work. Within six months, I had start-up funds and our first program in place with the local food pantry. I had found my calling. My new job as the executive director of Nurture would get me out of bed with a spring in my step for the next decade.

MANIFEST FROM HEART AND MIND.
YOUR HIGHEST CALLING YOU WILL FIND.

What Happens without Vision and Planning

There are a few very predictable phases in life. Around your late 20s and early 30s, it is common to feel that you've gone into full *wedding mode*. Attending dozens of weddings a year seems normal. It was 1998 when this phase of life hit Jeff and me, and we needed to plan for a particular wedding in Minneapolis. The groom and dear friend of mine, John, and I met when we had commuted from our respective parents' homes in the suburbs for summer internships in between our sophomore and junior years of college. John was hilarious and smart, attending Colgate as an English major, so I always tried to use my best SAT words as we rode the train to work with *alacrity*. I didn't know much about John's fiancée, Jen, except that she was very pretty and seemed to have a great sense of humor.

I wouldn't have missed John's wedding for the world, but Jeff and I were working on tough projects with looming deadlines, so we were delayed at our offices. We finally got on the

road just six hours before the wedding—with a six-hour drive ahead of us.

We arrived just in time, having driven the entire way with the top of the convertible down in the blazing sun. In our haste (and youth), we had forgotten to put on sunscreen, so when I pulled off my tank top to change into my formal strapless dress, there was a very obvious white seat belt mark in the middle of my sunburn. Our hair was standing on end, and we hadn't eaten anything since morning.

"It's a wedding," Jeff assured me. "There will be tons of food." So we sat patiently through the ceremony with our tummies grumbling as we patted down our hair. When we arrived at the reception hall, we strategically waited—like tigers perched high on the savannah—outside the door where the waiters were coming out with finger foods.

"There goes a plate of food!" I yelled as Jeff went off for an interception. He came back with a puzzled look on his face.

"Mushrooms stuffed with Spam. I didn't think you'd want one."

"Weird. Here's another waiter!" And I went in for the kill.

Spam on a stick?

This Spam surprise happened again and again as the oddest concoctions of Spam made their way by our salivating mouths. But we just couldn't get into the idea of Spam.

At dinner, we learned that Jen was somehow related to the Spam empire. On the dinner menu? Spam. And Spam.

I ate my side of carrots (with Spam) along with my champagne toast. Wow, that stuff really goes to your head when you

don't have much in your system. The band started playing, and Jeff and I decided to ditch the Spam for the dance floor. Having had champagne and no food, we were less than coordinated. In fact, we were a mess. Jeff started telling me Spam jokes, and we both laughed uncontrollably and eventually fell into a room divider that was also a raised bed for plants. The entire thing crashed to the floor, dirt and flowers flying everywhere.

We were horrified. We ran.

We snuck out the back and went to the nearest place to get food at midnight in Minneapolis: Subway.

"Next time, we should really plan ahead," I said to Jeff, as we reflected on the evening.

PLAN AHEAD FOR YOUR DAY.
DON'T END UP SUNBURNED, STRIPED, SOILED,
SPAMMED, AND STARVED AT SUBWAY.

Mantra #3: Zoom out for the best view is a reminder to use vision and visualization to create the life that you want. We laymen can learn much from Olympic athletes, who spend significant time cultivating vivid, multisensory visualizations to assist them as they take on superhuman feats. When we are on the mountain skiing, we are reminded that our bodies go where we look, so it is important to know not only where to look, but also *where you want to go*. As we learned from Ryan about mindfulness, creating a vision for where our efforts will take us is a critical first step when embarking on a mind and body wellness plan. Creating a vision for wellness includes making plans ahead

for meals and not waiting until the last minute. Often, our best intentions are squandered when we are faced with a hungry family at the end of a long day and there seem to be limited options. You can use the Nurture Recipe Frameworks for lunches and dinners in the slow cooker to be prepared to satisfy your family with healthy and nutritious meals. *Zoom out for the best view* is about beginning with the end in mind to avoid pushing ahead in endless activity toward an end goal that we might not understand—or want!

ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS CHAPTER

FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE:

- Pick your head up and take in the world around you. Put down your phone. Enjoy the scenery.
- Begin your projects, and life in general, with the end in mind. Determine your vision and frequently revisit it: See it, feel it, taste it—know it viscerally through your mind and your heart.
- Write your vision down to give it even more clarity and power. Let the universe help you out along the way.

FOR SUCCESS ON THE SLOPES:

- Keep your chin up. Your body goes where you are looking.
- Rely on a steady gaze to help you balance.
- Always keep in mind why you're skiing or doing any activity. Envision aging while staying active, spending time with your spouse and family, or whatever long-term benefits you associate with the outdoors and exercise.

FOR SUCCESS IN WELLNESS:

- Create a vision of what it feels like to be healthy. Understand how this vision would affect you personally as well as others around you. Reflect daily on that impact, especially in the morning and as you go to bed, and the motivation to make change will arise naturally.
- Create a gap between a stimulus and your response to enable you to make a choice that helps you reach your goals.
- Plan your meals ahead and involve your inner artist in cooking by using the Recipe Frameworks for the slow cooker.