

1. **Chapter I: Listening to Life** Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent (p. 3).
2. **Chapter I: Listening to Life** True self, when violated, will always resist us, sometimes at great cost, holding our lives in check until we honor its truth (p. 4).
3. **Chapter I: Listening to Life** Vocation does not come from willfulness. It comes from listening. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about – quite apart from what I would like it to be about – or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions (p. 4).
4. **Chapter I: Listening to Life** Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live – but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life (pp. 4-5).
5. **Chapter I: Listening to Life** If I am to let my life speak things I want to hear, things I would gladly tell others, I must also let it speak things I do not want to hear and would never tell anyone else! My life is not only about my strengths and virtues; it is also about my liabilities and my limits, my trespasses and my shadows (p. 6).
6. **Chapter II: Now I Become Myself** Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice “out there” calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice “in here” calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God (p. 10).
7. **Chapter II: Now I Become Myself** Rabbi Zusya, when he was an old man, said, “In the coming world, they will not ask me: ‘Why were you not Moses?’ They will ask me: ‘Why were you not Zusya?’” (p. 11).
8. **Chapter II: Now I Become Myself** The human self . . . has a nature, limits as well as potentials. If you seek vocation without understanding the material you are working with, what you build with your life will be ungainly and may well put lives in peril, your own and some of those around you (p. 16).

9. **Chapter II: Now I Become Myself** Our deepest calling is to grow into our authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of what we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks – we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need” (p. 16).
10. **Chapter II: Now I Become Myself** Rosa Parks sat down because she had reached a point where it was essential to embrace her true vocation – not as someone who would reshape our society but as someone who would live out her full self in the world (p. 33).
11. **Chapter III: When Way Closes** There is as much guidance in what does not and cannot happen in my life as there is in what can and does – maybe more (p. 39).
12. **Chapter III: When Way Closes** Sometimes the “shoulds” do not work because the life one is living runs crosswise to the grain of one’s soul (p. 41).
13. **Chapter III: When Way Closes** If I try to be or do something noble that has nothing to do with who I am, I may look good to others and to myself for a while. But the fact that I am exceeding my limits will eventually have consequences. I will distort myself, the other, and our relationship – and may end up doing more damage than if I had never set out to do this particular “good.” When I try to do something that is not in my nature or the nature of the relationship, way will close behind me (p. 47).
14. **Chapter III: When Way Closes** One sign that I am violating my own nature in the name of nobility is a condition called burnout. Though usually regarded as the result of trying to give too much, burnout in my experience results from trying to give what I do not possess – the ultimate in giving too little (p. 49).
15. **Chapter III: When Way Closes** We will become better [leaders] not by trying to fill the potholes in our souls but by knowing them so well that we can avoid falling into them (p. 52).
16. **Chapter IV: All the Way Down** Depression was, indeed, the hand of a friend trying to press me down to ground on which it was safe to stand – the ground of my own truth, my own nature, with its complex mix of limits and gifts, liabilities and assets, darkness and light (p. 67)

17. **Chapter IV: All the Way Down** After hours of careful listening, my therapist offered an image that helped me eventually reclaim my life. “You seem to look upon depression as the hand of an enemy trying to crush you,” he said. “Do you think you could see it instead as the hand of a friend, pressing you down to ground on which it is safe to stand?” Amid the assaults I was suffering, the suggestion that depression was my friend seemed impossibly romantic, even insulting. But something in me knew that down, down to the ground, was the direction of wholeness, thus allowing that image to begin its slow work of healing in me (p. 66).
18. **Chapter IV: All the Way Down** Calling to me all those years was, I believe, what Thomas Merton calls “true self.” This is not the ego self that wants to inflate us (or deflate us, another form of self-distortion), not the intellectual self that wants to hover above the mess of life in clear but ungrounded ideas, not the ethical self that wants to live by some abstract moral code. It is the self planted in us by the God who made us in God’s own image – the self that wants nothing more, or less, than for us to be who we were created to be (pp. 68-69).
19. **Chapter IV: All the Way Down** Florida Scott Maxwell put it in terms more elegant than mine: “You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done . . . you are fierce with reality” (p. 70).
20. **Chapter IV: All the Way Down** When I ignored my own truth on behalf of a distorted ego and ethic, I led a false life that caused others pain – for which I can only ask forgiveness. When I started attending to my own truth, more of that truth became available in my work and my relationships. I now know that anything one can do on behalf of true self is done ultimately in the service of others (p. 71).
21. **Chapter V: Leading from Within** The power for authentic leadership . . . is found not in external arrangements but in the human heart. Authentic leaders in every setting – from families to nation-states – aim at liberating the heart, their own and others’, so that its powers can liberate the world (p. 76).
22. **Chapter V: Leading from Within** Any spiritual journey . . . will take us inward and downward, toward the hardest realities of our lives, rather than outward and upward toward abstraction, idealization, and exhortation. The spiritual journey runs counter to the power of positive thinking (p. 80).
23. **Chapter VI: There Is a Season** Community doesn’t just create abundance – community *is* abundance (p. 108).

24. **Chapter V: Leading from Within** Why must we go in and down? Because as we do so, we will meet the darkness that we carry within ourselves – the ultimate source of the shadows that we project onto other people. If we do not understand that the enemy is within, we will find a thousand ways of making someone “out there” into the enemy, becoming leaders who oppress rather than liberate others (p. 80).
25. **Chapter V: Leading from Within** Good leadership comes from people who have penetrated their own inner darkness and arrive at the place where we are at one with one another, people who can lead the rest of us to a place of “hidden wholeness” because they have been there and know the way (p. 81).
26. **Chapter V: Leading from Within** “Be not afraid” does not mean we cannot *have* fear. Everyone has fear, and people who embrace the call to leadership often find fear abounding. Instead, the words say we do not need to *be* the fear we have. We do not have to lead from a place of fear, thereby engendering a world in which fear is multiplied (p. 94).
27. **Chapter VI: There Is a Season** Animated by the imagination, one of the most vital powers we possess, our metaphors often *become* reality, transmuting themselves from language into the living of our lives (p. 96).
28. **Chapter VI: There Is a Season** In retrospect, I can see in my own life what I could not see at the time – how the job I lost helped me find work I needed to do, how the “road closed” sign turned me toward terrain I needed to travel, how losses that felt irredeemable forced me to discern meanings I needed to know. On the surface, it seemed that life was lessening, but silently and lavishly the seeds of new life were always being sown (p. 99).
29. **Chapter VI: There Is a Season** Our inward winters take many forms – failure, betrayal, depression, death. But everyone one of them, in my experience, yields to the same advice: “The winters will drive you crazy until you learn to get out into them” (p. 102).
30. **Chapter VI: There Is a Season** In the human world, abundance does not happen automatically. It is created when we have the sense to choose community, to come together to celebrate and share our common store. Whether the scarce resource is money or love or power or words, the true law of life is that we generate more of whatever seems scarce by trusting its supply and passing it around (pp. 107-108).