

JKM

JUST KEEP MOVING

Fuel your journey, one step at a time

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*“JKM – JUST KEEP MOVING” isn’t advice – it’s survival,
strength and self- belief bound in words.*

Dedication

To anyone standing at the edge of doubt, fear or failure –

May these pages whisper the only truth that matters:

JUST. KEEP. MOVING.

Acknowledgements

How does one begin to thank the pillars who shaped not just this book but the person behind it?

First and foremost, to my father-my ride or die, my first teacher in resilience and the wind beneath my wings. Every word I write carries the echo of your strength and sacrifices.

To my mother, whose quiet prayers and unwavering love have been my anchor and to

my brother, my confidant and companion through storms and sunshine-you are my home no matter where I go.

This book is as much yours as it is mine.

I was 21, broke and living out of a half-packed suitcase in a city where I didn't know a soul. Every instinct told me to quit. But there was one voice, small but stubborn, that whispered: 'Just keep moving.' This book is the sum of every storm, stumble and voice carried me through. And now, it's yours!

There's something deeply poetic about a journey that doesn't start in palaces but in pain. Not in spotlights but in silence. Not with applause but with absolute uncertainty.

From riding a green scooter to cruising in sunroof cars of my choice, from **not even belonging to the top 40 schools** to now being invited as a **chief guest and keynote speaker** in the very auditoriums that once felt out of reach,

From shifting houses as a child to hopping continents, From being scared and stripped of basic amenities to now holding permanent residencies in different countries, from being lost and weary to now guiding people through their own storms— I didn't just walk a long road... I built it.

But if there's one truth this book, this life, this relentless rerouting has taught me— It's that happiness isn't something to chase halfway across the world. It's something you plant, water and bloom within.

The Moment Everything Changed

Have you ever felt stuck, as if no matter how hard you try, life refuses to move forward? Maybe you're trapped in self-doubt, struggling with confidence or simply waiting for the *right moment* to take charge of your life. What if I told you that **transformation doesn't come from waiting—it comes from action?**

I remember a time when I felt lost. I wanted to grow, to achieve more, to **become the best version of myself** but I didn't know where to start. I devoured self-help books, listened to motivational talks and searched for answers but nothing changed—until I **took the first step**. That's when I realized:

◆ Transformation isn't about making drastic changes overnight. It's about tiny, intentional steps.

◆ Your mind is your biggest asset—or your biggest enemy. Learning to control your thoughts is the key to success.

◆ **Confidence isn't something you're born with; it's something you build.**

This book is for those who feel like they're capable of more but don't know how to break free from their limitations. It's not just about motivation—it's about **real, practical strategies that work.**

In the pages ahead, I'll show you how to rewire your mindset, build unstoppable confidence and take action towards the life you've always wanted. With real-life stories, proven tactics and powerful insights, this book will guide you through your transformation—one step at a time.

The only question is: Are you ready to begin?

The Crossroads of Life

There comes a time in life when you pause and ask, *Why haven't I reached where I want to be yet?*

I'm at an age where most of my friends are successful, settled, happily married, settling into their dream lives. And yet, here I am—**smart, capable, ambitious and yes, even good-looking**—but still searching. Searching for **my breakthrough moment and the life I know I deserve.**

It's not that I haven't worked hard—I have. But life has a way of testing you. **There are responsibilities to shoulder and dreams that still seem just out of reach.** I often find myself wondering: *When will it be my time? When will everything finally fall into place?*

Then, one day, I had a realization. **Success isn't a singular moment—it's a process.** Transformation isn't about waiting for fate to deliver what you deserve; it's about **taking charge and making it happen.**

In this book, I will share everything I've learned about self-transformation—the mindset shifts, the small but powerful habits, the strategies that can turn self-doubt into confidence, and struggles into breakthroughs. I'll also take you through real-life stories—mine included—so that you can see that **even when life feels uncertain, you are still in control.**

If you've ever felt like you're capable of more but just haven't found your moment yet, this book is for you.

Because your breakthrough isn't a matter of "if" but "when."

Life's Unfair Lessons—But They Shape You

Life doesn't always play fair. One moment, everything seems fine and the next, you're dealing with an ailment in the family you never saw coming. A relative you trusted wholeheartedly stabs you in the back. A financial setback shakes your stability. A toxic partner drains your self-worth. A so-called friend turns out to be nothing more than a narcissist in disguise.

It's unfair. It's painful. And in those moments, it's easy to wonder—*why me?*

But what if we shifted our perspective?

What if every betrayal, every hardship and every challenge wasn't meant to break us but to **teach us**? Teach us to trust wisely. To build financial resilience. To recognize red flags before they turn into disasters. To walk away from those who don't value us.

I've had my fair share of these moments—the ones that make you question everything. But looking back, I see that each one carried a lesson I needed to learn. And that's what this book is about: **learning, evolving and transforming even when life feels unfair.**

Because at the end of the day, pain is inevitable but **growth is a choice.**

The Green Scooter and the Lessons of Love (A QUICK RECAP)

Some childhood memories are etched in the heart like an old photograph—faded at the edges but never forgotten. For me, one of those memories is a **green scooter**—a simple two-wheeler that carried not just my family, but also the weight of our dreams, struggles and endless love.

My parents had a love marriage, one that came with its share of struggles. **Zero support. No safety net. Just the two of them against the world.** My mother was barely 19 when she conceived me, too young by many standards but she never flinched. She didn't wait to figure out life before living it—she embraced every challenge with open arms.

Despite their hardships, **they never let me feel what they lacked.** My father, my hero, made sure life felt full, even when our pockets weren't. I was always a daddy's girl and our scooter was our chariot. **It carried the three of us everywhere—wind in my hair, my arms wrapped around my father and my mother holding on from behind.**

Then came another little passenger—my brother. And somehow, that scooter still managed to accommodate all four of us. But as I grew taller, there was no space left for me to sit. That's when my father did something simple yet profound—he installed a tiny seat **right between the handles**, just for me.

It wasn't luxurious. It wasn't what people would call “ideal.” But we never cared about what people thought. **My father always taught us to make the most of what we had.** That green scooter wasn't just a mode of transport—it was a testament to resilience, to love and to the quiet sacrifices parents make so their children never feel less than anyone else.

Today, we've come far from those days. But if I close my eyes, I can still feel the vibration of that scooter, hear my father's laughter and feel the warmth of my mother's embrace behind me. It's a

reminder that happiness is never about what you have—it's about how you make the most of it.

Reflective Journal Prompts

1. **"Why me?" moments**

Write about a time when life felt brutally unfair.

What happened? How did it shake you? Looking back, can you see even *one* lesson it taught you?

2. **Betrayal and Trust**

Think of someone who hurt you despite your loyalty.

What signs did you ignore? What boundaries will you now set going forward?

3. **Your Personal Green Scooter**

Describe something from your childhood that symbolized love, simplicity or sacrifice.

What values did it silently pass on to you?

4. **Red Flags You Now Recognize**

What is one behaviour you used to ignore in people that you no longer tolerate?

How did experience teach you that?

5. **Reframing Pain into Power**

Complete this sentence:

"Because of that unfair moment, I now know how to..."

◆ 1. Pattern Breaker Chart

PAST PAINFUL EVENT	WHAT IT TAUGHT ME	HOW WILL I ACT DIFFERENTLY NOW
EXAMPLE: A TOXIC FRIEND	I IGNORED THE RED FLAGS	I VALUE CONSISTENCY OVER CHARM

(Fill this chart with 3 of your own events)

🧘 Affirmations to Rewire Your Mindset

- ✿ My scars are signs that I survived and evolved.
- ✿ I will no longer apologize for outgrowing what broke me.
- ✿ What I lacked in luxury, I gained in grit.
- ✿ I don't resent life's lessons—I respect them.
- ✿ Even on broken roads, I kept moving forward.

The Silent Promises of a Father

Rainy days were always tricky. **The roads turned into slippery traps and our scooter often lost balance on the greasy pavement.** But we had no car to shield us from the downpour, no cozy backseat to sink into—just our **trusty green scooter** and a silent understanding that this was our reality.

I still remember the day I saw a **Barbie doll set** in a shop window. I was just five, my friends had an entire army of them and I wanted one too. Standing in the middle of the market, I tugged at my father's hand and told him I wanted it. He softly clenched my little fingers in his and nodded, but in that one glance, **we both understood the truth**. It wasn't something we could afford back then.

But my father had his own way of making me feel special. **Every birthday, no matter how tight things were, he made sure there was a celebration**. It wasn't grand—just a small cake, two or three of my friends and a few snacks. To this day, I don't know how he managed it. But what I do know is that **he never let me feel less than anyone else**.

I was a child, innocent and unaware of life's brutalities but one thing I was sure of—I **couldn't imagine a world without him**. I used to say, with all the conviction in my little heart, that **if my father ever passed away, I would go to the funeral pyre and die along with him**.

Looking back now, I realize that love isn't about grand gestures or expensive gifts. It's about silent sacrifices, unspoken promises and the small moments that shape our hearts forever.

My mother's youth was anything but easy. **She had her fair share of struggles, of days where life tested her patience and resilience. She faced it all—without hesitation, without complaint.**

My parents had chosen love over everything, but love alone couldn't pay the bills or put food on the table. **With no family support, they stood alone against the world, fighting to build a life from scratch**. There were days when money was scarce and survival felt like a battle. **Raising two children in a financial crunch often led to conflicts—harsh words, nasty altercations and moments where anger overshadowed affection**. But at the end of the day, no matter how difficult things got, they always found their way back to each other.

Because in the end, **they were all they had.** They had burned their bridges, cut off all ties and built a world where only the four of us existed. **Their love wasn't perfect but it was real.** It was raw, unbreakable and resilient—weathering every storm life threw their way.

Looking back now, I realize that **love is also not about constant harmony. It is about choosing each other, every single day, despite the chaos.** It's about fighting for the family you built, even when life makes it unbearably difficult.

My parents weren't just partners; they were warriors—**two souls who held on to each other when they had nothing else left.** And perhaps, that's the kind of love that truly lasts.

STRUGGLE INTO BADGE OF HONOR

For the longest time, I believed my childhood wasn't normal. I saw my friends with their neatly packed lunches in aluminium foils while my food came wrapped in a reusable cloth. They wore the latest trendy jeans while I wore frocks stitched from my mother's old fabrics scarves and stoles. Their homes echoed with laughter over birthday parties lavishly planned by their parents, while mine were humble—a small cake, few patties and a couple of close friends. But looking back now, I realize something profound—my childhood wasn't meant to be normal. It was meant to be extraordinary.

Growing up in a household where financial struggles were an everyday reality, I learned resilience before I even knew the word for it. While other children were carefree, I knew I had a responsibility—to be my parents' support system, not a burden. I understood early on that in a world where we lacked what most people had, I needed to develop what most people didn't—skills that could outshine material shortcomings.

So, I became unstoppable in academics. While my friends flaunted their possessions, I took pride in my report cards. I was an academic scholar,

always securing the top position in my class. I was an orator, standing tall on stages, winning debate competitions and commanding attention with my words. I turned every opportunity into a stepping stone, knowing that success was the only way I could rise above my circumstances.

My circumstances could have defined me but I refused. Instead, they refined me. Every setback became fuel, every obstacle a lesson. I didn't need the latest clothes or extravagant celebrations to feel significant—I built my own significance with my intellect, determination and skills.

Now, I wear my journey like my armour. It wasn't just about hardship; it was about transformation. Responsibility became my strength, resilience became my foundation and my perspective on self-worth evolved. I was never just another child navigating life—I was sculpting my own future, one skill, one achievement, one triumph at a time.

And in doing so, I proved that success isn't about where you start; it's about how you rise.

And that is what I am here for. That is what I want to do for everyone—to impart inspiration, motivation and passion through my lens. I want to equip people with the mindset, the strategies and the fire to transform their lives, just like I did. Because if I could rise above my circumstances, so can you. And I'll show you exactly how.

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Chapter 1

Adversity Never Comes Alone

“Adversity introduces a man to himself.”

I still get goosebumps thinking about the time when we had to shift from one house to another, constantly moving from the first floor to the second, then to the third. These houses were never furnished. My father, trying to find his feet in the construction business, started from scratch and whatever building he worked on, we lived there until it got sold.

We had no electricity so we used manual hand fans. The kitchen was never ready, so we laid a table in one of the rooms, placed a stove there and lived that way for months. My brother and I had unconventional childhood hobbies—observing carpenters, plumbers and electricians as they worked, studying their patterns and silently thanking God that we were still better off.

Every night, my father reminded us that education was our only way out. My mother, determined to see us succeed, was incredibly pedantic about our academics—so much so that if I scored 19.5 out of 20, she would round it off to 20, but not without a full fledge earful and lecture. No grudges, no complaints—I owe it all to her.

Yet, the irony remains: when we got better off financially, new hardships emerged—ailments, backstabbing relatives and betrayals. That’s when I realized suffering is never-ending, but it brings us closer to God.

From a time when I couldn't participate in fancy dress competitions because we couldn't afford rented costumes to now gifting people branded presents, from a time when I didn't own a single pair of jeans until I turned fourteen to now casually buying gazillions without checking the price tag, we've come a long way. But the real treasure? My mother chose my father when he had nothing, they built an empire together and they instilled golden values in us. Adversity, if nothing else, unites families. Wealth may put people under one roof but only love and resilience keeps them together.

If you're in a tough spot right now, feeling like life is testing you at every turn, remember this—hardships aren't here to destroy you; they are here to shape you. Tough times don't last, tough people do. The most resilient people you admire today have all walked through storms that tried to break them. But instead of surrendering, they learned to dance in the rain. When adversity knocks on your door, don't just endure it—embrace it. It's life's way of handing you a chisel so you can carve out the strongest, wisest and most unstoppable version of yourself. You might not see it now, but these moments of struggle are crafting a future where you'll stand tall, look back and realize it all made sense.

The beauty of resilience is that it doesn't require you to have all the answers. It simply asks you to *keep moving*. Whether you take giant leaps or baby steps, just don't stop. The darkest nights produce the brightest stars and the same applies to you. Let every setback become a setup for a greater comeback. Let every betrayal be a lesson in discernment. Let every financial struggle fuel your hunger for success. One day, you'll tell your story, and it will be someone else's survival guide. Until then, chin up, shoulders back and step forward—you're stronger than you think.

Here are some real-life examples of people who overcame immense adversities and turned their struggles into triumphs:

- 1. **Colonel Sanders** – At 65, after facing multiple business failures, he went door to door trying to sell his fried chicken recipe. Today, KFC is a global brand. His story is a proof that it’s never too late to start over.
- 2. **Nick Vujicic** – Born without limbs, he once struggled with severe depression. Today, he is a world-renowned motivational speaker, proving that no physical limitation can hold you back if you have the right mindset.
- 3. **Nelson Mandela** – Spent 27 years in prison fighting against apartheid, only to emerge stronger and become South Africa’s first Black president. His resilience changed the course of history.

Each of these stories echoes one powerful truth: *Adversity is not the end—it’s the beginning of something greater.* The choice is yours—will you let hardships defeat you, or will you rise above them and *just keep moving*?

 3. Adversity Mapping Table

Adversity Faced	Initial Emotion	Survival Response	Strength Gained
Frequent house shifting	Uncertainty, instability	Adjusted, made the most	Adaptability, gratitude
Financial limitations	Shame, longing	Focused on studies	Drive, discipline
Backstabbing by relatives	Pain, disbelief	Became discerning	Emotional maturity

IT’S YOUR TURN NOW

5. Power Reminders

- This storm will pass. But the strength I’m building will stay.
 - Hardships don’t define me—they refine me.
 - The pain I felt then created the person I respect today.
 - Even when I had little, I never lacked potential.
 - I am the result of everything I thought would break me.
-

Chapter 2

The Label Trap – Breaking Free from Society's Shackles

Labels—whether given by society, family, or so-called friends—have a way of infiltrating our self-perception, even when we think we're immune to them. No matter what you do, how you behave, or what choices you make, there will always be someone ready to slap a label on you. The real question is: **Will you let those labels define you?**

The Unsolicited Labels Society Gives Us

We live in a world where people feel entitled to judge others:

- ✓ If you're quiet, you're "arrogant." If you're outspoken, you're "too much."
- ✓ If you focus on your career, you're "selfish." If you prioritize family, you're "too dependent."
- ✓ If you party, you're "reckless." If you don't, you're a "boring party pooper."
- ✓ If you're a man with multiple partners, you're a "stud." If you're a woman, your character is questioned.

I've come across countless people who succumb to peer pressure—taking up habits like drinking or smoking—not because they enjoy it, but because they fear being labelled “uncool.” The need for validation can push even the strongest individuals into choices that don't align with their values.

◆ **JKM Moment:** What people think of you is their business, not yours.
Stay true to yourself and Just Keep Moving.

The School Days of Stubbornness & Strength

I remember when I was in school, up until 10th grade, my mother would braid (countless braids) my hair beautifully and oil it (slick hair) generously, believing it was best for me. My classmates, however, mocked me for it, calling me “old school” and “primitive” because I didn't style my hair the way they did.

Did I give in? **No.**

Some of them tried to bully me, tried to make me feel like I was “less than” because I didn't conform. But deep down, I knew why they did it—because I was different and that difference made them uncomfortable. It wasn't about my hair; it was about the fact that I refused to follow the herd.

Years later, the parody unfolded. The very people who once ridiculed me for being “too traditional” were now the ones whispering behind my back, calling me “too bold” and “too forward” when I got a tattoo, experimented with piercings and explored different fashion choices. When I began discovering my own style—raw, expressive and uniquely mine—they labelled it “attention-seeking” or “too much.” It was almost poetic how the same voices that once pushed me to “fit in” were now startled when I stepped fully into my individuality. But I realized then—it was never about who I was, it was about their discomfort with someone who chose to evolve unapologetically. Whether I oiled my hair or inked

my skin, I was always too much for people who hadn't found themselves yet.

◆ **JKM Moment:** When people try to pull you down, it's often because they can't handle how high you stand. **Hold your ground and Just Keep Moving.**

The Hypocrisy of Judgment

Society is a paradox. The same people who call you "too traditional" will shame you if you dress boldly. The same relatives who complain that you're "too modern" will mock you for being "too old-fashioned." You will never be **enough** for people who thrive on gossip and judgment.

I saw this firsthand. When I dressed modestly, I was labelled an "aunty." When I wore something stylish, I was called "too much." **The real problem was never my clothes—it was their obsession with controlling narratives.**

◆ **JKM Moment:** No matter what you do, people will talk. **Live for yourself and Just Keep Moving.**

Breaking Free From the 'Coolness' Myth

Nowadays, you're considered "cool" based on absurd metrics:

- ✓ If you have a certain body count, you're winning.
- ✓ If you engage in reckless behaviour, you're "living your best life."
- ✓ If you prioritize your family and goals, you're "boring."

I've been trolled for choosing a different path. Some of my friends would say, "You have the looks—why aren't you putting them to use?"

But tell me—**is self-destruction the definition of living?**

◆ **JKM Moment:** Don't measure your life by society's false standards.
Define your own success and Just Keep Moving.

Real-Life Examples of Those Who Defied Labels

- **Oprah Winfrey:** Once labelled as “too emotional” for TV, she built an empire based on authenticity.
- **Albert Einstein:** Thought to be a slow learner, he rewrote the laws of physics.
- **J.K. Rowling:** Rejected by 12 publishers, she became one of the most successful authors in history and blessed us with Harry Potter.

Their success came not from avoiding labels, but from **refusing to let them stick.**

Signs You're Still Seeking Approval

Tick ☒ the ones you still catch yourself doing:

- Changing outfits because of what “*they might say*”. _____
- Dumbing yourself down to seem “cooler” _____
- Avoiding posting something real online due to fear of trolling _____
- Agreeing with people to stay in their good books _____
- Saying yes just to be liked _____

If you checked 2 or more — it's time to start the reclamation.

🔍 **1. Label Ledger: What They Called You vs. Who You Really Are**

List the names, tags, or judgments you've been given—and then counter them with the truth.

Label They Gave Me	What I Know I Am Instead
Too emotional	Deeply empathetic & emotionally intelligent
Attention seeker	Fearlessly expressive & unapologetically bold

The Takeaway: Own Your Identity, Not Their Labels

- 1. **People will talk, no matter what.** Live your life on your own terms.
- 2. **Peer pressure is a trap.** Make choices based on what aligns with your values.
- 3. **Your worth isn't up for debate.** Stop seeking approval from those who don't even value themselves.

◆ **JKM Moment:** You are more than society's definitions. **Break free and Just Keep Moving.**

🎓 *“Top 40 Schools, Bottomless Ego”*
(Because sometimes a fancy tag is all they've got.)

Narrative:

There's a strange kind of flex some people carry—their school. Not their marks, not their skills, not the values instilled, but the sheer brand value of the institution they attended. Schools have become status symbols today. Parents spend lakhs to get their children into “top-tier” campuses, often greasing palms in the process, not just for education, but for the badge—*My kid goes to XYZ High.*

Sure, good infrastructure and qualified faculty matters. But beyond a point, a whiteboard is a whiteboard. And a bully is still a bully, no matter how ivy-covered the walls are.

When I entered college, I thought I had arrived with everything that mattered—I was a school topper, vice head girl and an orator. I expected to connect with people who admired knowledge and ambition. But to my surprise, the social fabric was already stitched together—stitched not by interests or intellect but by past school labels.

I remember a classmate who came up to me, intrigued by my personality. “You seem smart—what school are you from?”

I told him.

And I still remember his raised brow and dismissive chuckle: “Oh, never heard of it. It's not even in the top 40 schools of India.”

I wanted to laugh—not out of nervousness, but because his confidence was so ironically misdirected. He barely contributed anything substantial to conversations, but constantly reminded everyone how rich and well-networked he was. Like a broken record with a gold-plated surface. And the irony? His talent was limited to dressing like a Zara mannequin and name-dropping parties and parents' positions.

Over time, I noticed many more like him—people who didn't value potential, just prestige. And somehow, these “school snobs” had the loudest opinions but the least to offer.

It was then I realized—tags can only take you so far. They might open a door but they can't keep you inside if you've got no character to carry the conversation.

Years down the line, many of those “top school” flagbearers are lost in lives of excess and confusion—jobless, directionless or numbed by privilege. No declamations won, no passion pursued. Just expensive clothes, hung on empty confidence.

*They wore crests on their sleeves,
but no courage in their chest.
Graduates of grandeur,
but pupils of pretense at best.*

That's when it hit me—**my JKM moment**—*Just Keep Moving*, regardless of how others tried to classify me. Because their shallow perceptions were a reflection of their own limitations, not mine. I wasn't going to be boxed in by a label that meant nothing beyond the gates of teenage privilege.

Real-life Examples – When School Didn't Matter:

 **Steve Jobs** – Dropped out of Reed College and built Apple in a garage.

 **Richard Branson** – Struggled in school due to dyslexia, never went to college, now owns the Virgin Group.

 **Ritesh Agarwal (OYO)** – Didn't attend an elite Indian school; dropped out of college to build his company.

 **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw** – Started Biocon with zero background in business, studied in regular institutions.

Kapil Dev – Legendary cricketer, no fancy alma mater, but changed the face of Indian cricket forever.

 **Dhirubhai Ambani** – Never went to a college, yet built Reliance from scratch.

These people are proof—greatness is not a campus you graduate from; it's a fire you nurture within.

Global Perspective – Where Labels Matter Less:

In countries like Finland, Germany, Canada and even parts of the U.S., education is treated as a *right*, not a *badge*. Students are not sorted based on schools but on skills. Schooling is often free, uniform and value-centric.

Teachers are paid well, bribery is unheard of and students aren't shackled by social status at age 10.

Instead of obsessing over “top schools,” parents there invest in hobbies, social development, mental health and learning curiosity—not just curriculum.

The Wake-up Call for Us:

We in India admire the *work-life balance*, *fair wages* and *progressive policies* of these countries—yet when it comes to schooling, we still chase prestige over purpose.

It's time we change that.

Instead of building “top-tier schools” with glass buildings and gold fee structures, let's focus on making every school- public or private- *equally equipped* to educate, empower and elevate.

Let's teach our children that *values matter more than vanity*.

"Don't ask which school they went to. Ask what they learned, how they lived and how they make others feel today."

Takeaway:

True worth isn’t stitched into your uniform—it’s cultivated by who you become after you take it off. Prestige is not about where you studied. It’s about what you studied, how deeply you absorbed it, and how you walk the talk when nobody’s looking.

 Redefine “Top School” — Your Way

Let’s flip the script. According to YOU, a *Top School* should be one that:

 Teaches...	 Doesn’t Promote...
Emotional intelligence	Superiority complex
Communication & expression	Memorization without meaning
Financial literacy	Competition without compassion
Inclusivity & empathy	Label culture
Purpose-driven goals	Prestige-driven pressure
What else would <i>your</i> dream school teach?	

 4. JKM Learnings — Beyond The Badge

- 1. **A fancy school name isn’t a personality trait.**
Confidence backed only by a crest is hollow.
- 2. **Labels create hierarchy; learning creates humanity.**
Don’t be the person who flexes a name but forgets the nuance.
- 3. **Being from a regular school doesn’t make you ‘less’.**
Some of the greatest minds were born in backbenches, not boardrooms.

4. **Stop trying to fit into elite circles. Create your own orbit.**
Let substance be your standard—not someone else's surname.
5. **Learn to outgrow the need to impress and grow the desire to impact.**

Chapter 3

Plot Twist: When Life Edits Your Blueprint

Life has an ironic sense of humour. The moment you think you've got it all figured out, it throws in an unexpected plot twist—like a director who changes the movie script mid-shoot and forgets to inform the lead actor (that's you, by the way).

Ever since I was a child, I knew I wanted to be someone *jo koi na bana ho* (something that nobody has ever become so far). Peculiar, right? Every time teachers asked that inevitable “Bade hoke kya banoge?” question, I had a staple answer. But when they poked further—“Aisa kya hai *jo koi nahi bana ab tak?*”—I conveniently skipped the details. Why? Because I had no clue myself. The truth is, even my *jo koi na bana ho* was a mystery to me. Then clarity struck—kind of. My father had an ardent dream of seeing me as an IAS officer. And like a dutiful child, I borrowed his dream and made it my own. I envisioned myself in the prestigious chair, signing important documents, making policies and maybe even featuring in a success story about “inspiring youth who cracked the civil services against all odds.” The people around me knew this was my ‘*jo koi na bana ho*’ pursuit. Yet, deep down, I had a lingering feeling that I was meant for something else.

Life, however, had different plans.

Right after my graduation from Delhi University, I packed my bags (and my father's IAS dream) and flew to Sydney for my master's degree. But instead of political science or public administration, I found myself knee-deep in finance and accounting—because, well, good scope and stability sounded responsible.

Turns out, crunching numbers didn't quite spark joy, so I pivoted (a fancy word for I ran away) to marketing and international business—a field that felt more like home. And let's be honest, I was always meant for the stage, not the ledger.

From being the vice head girl in school to mentoring people in soft skills, oration and communication have been my second nature, speaking off the cuff has been my jam.

But here's the thing—we often chase things, subjects and even people that seem like the "right fit" rather than what truly calls to us. We prioritize practicality over passion, only to wake up one day thinking, "Oh, I should've done that instead." But you know what? Life and God have a script for you. No matter how much you resist, you will eventually end up where you're meant to be. The key, however, is to take that first daunting step—even if you don't have all the answers yet. Take the leap and the lights will guide you home (yes, I just Coldplay-ed you).

Of course, the IAS ka kya hua (what happened to your IAS dream)? question still occasionally plucks a nerve—especially when I hear about someone's daughter clearing the UPSC exams with flying colours. But I had to accept that it was never my true calling. And if you chase goals out of obligation or desperation, rather than inspiration, you won't be able to sustain the role. Imagine a dancer who hates dancing, a painter who despises colours or a writer who loathes words. Passion keeps the fire alive—paychecks, recognition and stability follow. So, follow what excites you. Walk the road that feels right for you. Even then, life will still not

turn out how you expect. But this time, it'll be in a way that makes perfect sense. And maybe, just maybe, that's the *jo koi na bana ho* moment you were meant for all along.

 Reflective Journal Prompts: The Dream Audit

1. **What Was Your Original Dream?**

 As a child, what did you want to become? Who planted that idea in your mind?
2. **Have You Ever Borrowed Someone Else's Dream?**

 Be honest—did you chase a goal because it was expected, convenient, or admired by others?
3. **What Was Your ‘Scope & Stability’ Moment?**

 Write about a time you chose practicality over passion. How did it make you feel in the long run?
4. **What Was Your First Pivot?**

 Describe a decision where you changed direction. What pushed you? What did you learn?
5. **What Feels More “You” Now Than Ever Before?**

 Forget titles and prestige. What kind of *work* feels like *home* to your spirit?

JKM LEARNINGS: Own Your Plot Twist

1 Detours are Divine

Life's re-routing isn't rejection. It's redirection.

2. Purpose > Prestige

Chasing applause will drain you. Chasing passion will sustain you.

3. Pivoting Isn't Quitting

Changing your path doesn't mean you failed. It means you listened.

4. Your Soul Already Knows

If something excites you deeply, it's not random. It's calling you.

5. You Are the Dream

You don't need to explain your "jo koi na bana ho."

You are already becoming him/her.

Chapter 4

The Fear of Firsts—A Stepping Stone to Greatness

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear." –

George Addair

First times are always scary. They shake you, push you out of your comfort zone and demand a version of yourself that you've never met before. But here's the thing—there always has to be a first time. That's the beauty of life. Every master was once a beginner, every expert was once a novice and every fearless leader once trembled at their first challenge.

I still remember the first time I stood on stage to face an audience. It was for a debate competition and my hands were ice-cold, my heart pounded as if it would burst through my ribs and my throat felt like it would betray me at any moment. But I spoke. One sentence after another, I found my rhythm. And the rest was history. That first terrifying step was the gateway to becoming the confident orator I am today.

Then came another defining "first"—the moment I boarded a flight to Sydney at the age of 21, all by myself. Until then, I had lived a sheltered life in India, surrounded by the comfort of familiarity. Suddenly, I was thrust into an entirely new world, where I had no safety net, no backup plan and no choice but to figure things out. It was nerve-wrecking but looking back, it was the moment that shaped me.

Life doesn't hand out success like a free sample at a store. It makes you work for it, tests your patience and stretches your limits. My learning trajectory was steep—filled with peaks of small victories and troughs of crushing disappointments. There were sleepless nights, moments of failure that made me question everything and a constant pressure to stand out in life.

Unlike many others who came from cushy backgrounds, I had to fight for every inch of progress. I had taken an education loan against our property that was kept as collateral, which meant I had no choice but to find a part-time job—not just to make ends meet but also to foreclose the loan and add to my work experience. There was no room for second thoughts or taking it easy. The stakes were too high.

This is the reality of success—things never come easy. Diamonds don't shine until they endure the hottest fire. A blade isn't sharp until it's ground against a stone. The tallest trees grow from the deepest roots and those roots take years to grow in silence before they see the light of day. The Chinese Bamboo tree for instance where you plant the seed, water it and nurture it every single day for the first four years yet there is no sprout or growth. No visible signs of growth as if your efforts are going in vain. But, what we don't see is that beneath the surface, the bamboo is developing an incredibly strong root system and preparing for massive growth. Suddenly, in the fifth year the tree grows up to 90 feet tall in just six weeks.

Yes, after years of perseverance and consistency it skyrockets. All boils down to constantly showing up and watering your dreams because when your time comes- growth will be exponential.

Many around me had privileges I didn't. They didn't have to worry about financial burdens or survival struggles. But I never complained. I never whined. Why? Because I was conditioned and wired differently.

I was raised to understand that struggle is not a punishment; it's the training ground for greatness. It's what builds unshakable resilience. I wasn't given the luxury of shortcuts but I was gifted something even better—the ability to adapt, to learn and to transform under pressure.

Practical Truths About First Times:

✓ **The first time will always be terrifying**—whether it's public speaking, moving to a new country or stepping into a leadership role. But fear is just excitement without breathing. Learn to control it.

✓ **Growth is never comfortable.** If you're too comfortable, you're not growing. Your firsts are designed to be uncomfortable because that's where learning happens.

✓ **Every expert started from zero.** The only difference between you and someone great is that they dared to start.

"Ships are safest in the harbor, but that's not what ships are built for." – John A. Shedd

Your first time doing anything new might feel like the hardest moment of your life. But remember—fear only means you're about to grow. Don't let it stop you. Take that first step. That's where transformation begins.

Think of something you've been scared to try—public speaking, a new career move, a fitness goal or even traveling alone. Face it. Do it anyway. And once you do, come back and tell yourself: *"That was just the beginning."*

This is your journey. And every great journey begins with a first step. 

Reflective Journaling Prompts

1. **Name your “first fear.”**

What is something you’ve been afraid to do because it’s new?
Why does it scare you? Is it the fear of failure? Judgment? Being alone?

2. **Recall a first you *did* conquer.**

Write about a time when you tried something new and were terrified, but you did it anyway.
What surprised you about the outcome?

3. **Privileges vs Pressure:**

Reflect on whether you’ve had privileges or pressure.
How has this shaped your mindset about success and hard work?

4. **Define your “Sydney moment.”**

What’s the one decision you made that felt risky, life-altering, and lonely—but in hindsight, made you grow?

5. **Reframe “fear” as a gift.**

What lesson might fear be trying to teach you right now?

Chapter Challenge: The First Step Dare

Choose **one action** this week that you’ve been scared to take.

✓ It must be something new.

✓ It must stretch you.

✓ It must move you forward.

Write it here: _____

1 Do it within the next **72 hours**. Then write:

How I felt before: _____

What I discovered after: _____

Chapter 5

The Price of Every Penny

Money—an entity that either cushions life’s harsh realities or exposes one to its merciless trials. Those who have always had it may never truly understand its weight, but for someone who has known scarcity, money is not just currency; it is security, dignity and a passage to choices.

It is often believed that financial struggles are limited to a particular phase in life but reality suggests otherwise. Hardships do not knock with a schedule; they arrive unannounced. The real impact of financial constraints dawned on me when I landed in a foreign land with very little in my pocket. The conversion of dollars to rupees was a bolt from the blue. Bananas and a glass of milk became my staple meal for days—not out of preference but out of necessity.

I walked miles and miles instead of taking the train because a one-way fare costed \$3.5, making it \$7 for a round trip—an amount that was equivalent to my daily budget. I went too far to save every penny, to the extent that my feet were sore, my heels cracked and big corns formed underneath. But I kept going because there was no other option.

But this scarcity also teaches us a lot—if we haven’t seen the night, we wouldn’t cherish the day. That’s the fundamental of life: until you’ve struggled, you don’t truly enjoy success.

I recall my first visit to the supermarket, where a small piece of ginger—a common household staple in India—was priced twenty times higher than what it was in India. In Australia, it was considered exotic. That day, black tea replaced my beloved chai because affording ginger was a luxury I could not afford and chai became a rare indulgence. Cutting corners was no longer a strategy; it was survival. Coming from an economics background, where I had studied the principle, "money saved is money earned." I initially believed that frugality was my best ally. But soon, reality hit hard—I could only stretch my savings so far. The theory of saving did not serve me for long and I knew that the only way forward was to earn.

I wasn't new to financial independence; I had been giving tuition classes since my school days. But this time, it wasn't about pocket money or extra earnings—it was about survival. At an age where I should have been supporting my family, I did not want to burden them with funding me. The bitter truth about money is that it is often the root cause of broken friendships, family altercations and lost relationships. As the saying goes, "When the pocket is full, friends are plenty; when it is empty, none out of twenty."

Many doors remain locked unless you have the key—money. And while this is a non-negotiable truth, the one way to ensure financial stability is to be indispensable in your field. No matter where you go, what you do or who you become, money will only flow towards you if you master a skill that is so exceptional that it demands value. Earning money is not just an activity; it is a skill, an art and a necessity.

I have trained more than 10000 students in these last few years and that's what I keep hounding—the only way to elope financial crunch is to upskill yourself and not put all eggs in one basket. I had an economics degree but it didn't fetch me a job in Australia. However, before going to Sydney, I took a few computer courses and my soft skills were the icing on the cake. Well, that landed me a job. I was open to administrative roles,

teaching roles, marketing roles and database collection because my skill set and repertoire was stupendous.

The job market is ruthless and qualifications alone don't guarantee survival. Adaptability does. When one door refuses to open, you build a key for another. My ability to wear multiple hats was my lifeboat in uncharted waters.

Take **Oprah Winfrey**, for example—born into poverty, she faced unimaginable hardships but refused to be defined by them. She leveraged her storytelling skills and turned them into a billion-dollar media empire.

J.K. Rowling, once a struggling single mother on welfare, refused to give up on her manuscript, which later became the iconic Harry Potter series.

Dhirubhai Ambani, who started as a small-time worker in Yemen, returned to India and built Reliance, proving that financial constraints are not permanent for those who dare to dream big and work relentlessly.

Howard Schultz, growing up in a poor household, saw his father struggle to make ends meet—this fueled his ambition, leading him to transform Starbucks into a global brand.

How many rejections would it take for you to give up? 10? 50? What about 242?!

Before Starbucks became a global empire, Howard Schultz had a vision—to bring premium coffee culture to America. But when he pitched his idea to investors?

242 rejections!

Most people would've quit. But Schultz? He kept going. He believed in his idea so much that he pushed through every 'no' until he finally got a YES. And today? Starbucks is in over 80 countries!

JKM MOMENT- Don't give up on your dreams and just keep moving. Rejections don't define you—your perseverance does. Keep knocking, keep pitching, keep believing. Because one YES can change your life.

Just keep moving—the answer lies not in lamenting over scarcity but in mastering your craft so well that financial constraints bow before you. Let money be the by-product of your excellence. Don't chase it; chase mastery. The world pays for uniqueness, for solutions, for something it cannot easily find or replace. The moment you bring something exquisite to the table, money will follow like a loyal shadow.

Financial independence is more than just earning; it is about sustaining, growing and learning that your skills are your greatest investment. The world values those who can add value to it—so let your craft be your wealth and let your excellence be your currency.

*“Let your excellence be your currency.
The world pays for what it cannot replace.”*

—JKM

Reflective Journaling Prompts

1. **When Did Money Make You Feel Powerless?**

Recall a time when you *couldn't afford* something simple or necessary.

👉 What emotion did you feel—shame, frustration, motivation?

👉 How did it shift your relationship with money?

2. **Bare-Minimum Moments**

👉 What was your own version of bananas and milk?

👉 How did it redefine your priorities?

3. **What Does Financial Freedom Mean to You?**

Is it the ability to spend without guilt?

To support your family?

To never be dependent again?

4. **What Skill Do You Have That's Undervalued Right Now?**

Write about a talent or ability you haven't fully monetized yet.

👉 Why haven't you?

👉 What would it take to master it?

5. **Your Personal Rejection Threshold**

👉 Think of something you've wanted—how many rejections would it take before you *gave up*?

👉 How can you raise that threshold?

Chapter Challenge: The \$7 Shift

Simulate scarcity for 24 hours.

- Set a limit: ₹100 (or \$2) for the entire day
- Choose food, travel or entertainment based on this budget
- Journal:
 - What did you crave?
 - What did you appreciate?
 - What did you learn about consumption and value?

This isn't to glorify poverty—it's to appreciate **resourcefulness**.

Affirmations for Financial Resilience

✱ I'm not poor. I'm in practice.

✱ Money may open doors—but mastery builds the keys.

✱ My dreams aren't for sale. My skills are.

✱ Rejection isn't personal—it's redirection.

✱ I build value before I demand it.

Chapter 6

Cockroaches In Paradise - The Shimmering Mirage

To the world, it looked like I had made it.

“Sydney! Wow, you’re living the dream!”

“Must be so peaceful there.”

“You’re lucky... not everyone gets out.”

They saw the postcards; I lived the postage.

What people don’t tell you about starting life in a foreign land is that the grass isn’t just greener—it’s often fake turf. Trimmed, glistening, camera-ready. But the soil underneath? Messy. Heavy. Unforgiving.

My first rented house in Sydney—a land of beaches, blue skies and supposed perfection—was infested. Yes, infested. With cockroaches.

Not the odd ones you see in an Indian summer. This was an army. I remember kneading dough for flatbread one night. I rolled it out, tossed it and noticed odd specks. On closer look... parts of cockroaches. I threw up. Not once. For hours. I swore off flatbreads/chapatis for weeks and survived on lentils, only to discover *maggots* crawling inside the food box one morning.

That kitchen broke me.

It broke the illusion of ‘arriving’. And with that, my appetite, immunity and confidence collapsed.

Vitamin B12? Low.

Vitamin D? Rock bottom.

Mental state? Not traceable.

I missed my mother every single night but never said a word. She's a faint-hearted woman and I couldn't burden her fragile heart. I just swallowed the loneliness like a bitter pill with no water to gulp it down.

All people saw was the bright blue of my new postcode. They didn't see the nights I cried into dollar-store pillows. The damp floors. The silence. The confusion.

Being an *immigrant* means being your own cook, cleaner, support system, therapist, student, employee, citizen, survivor... all at once. And for what?

A shot at a better life.

But "better" doesn't mean easier. It means earned.

It means being stretched so thin that you don't recognize your own reflection but still show up.

Missing out on birthdays, family weddings, hospital runs.

Not being there when your father gets his medical reports Or when your friend ties the knot.

Your absence becomes your presence.

And still, you keep going. Why?

Because deep down, you know elevation demands separation. And those early days of isolation are like the deep inhale before a giant leap.

JKM Learnings (Just Keep Moving)

1. Don't let Instagram fool you. Behind every "sunset by the beach" is someone doing dishes in a cramped kitchen praying the landlord fixes the heater.
2. Strength isn't the absence of struggle; it's dancing with it barefoot.
3. If your journey feels lonely, it's probably because you're walking a path meant for your growth—not others' applause.
4. Missing family is the tax you pay on dreams. But it also makes your returns—your moments of pride—deeply valuable.
5. Reset. Reboot. Regrow. Like a phoenix, the first burn hurts the most. But what comes after will be all yours.

To anyone out there who looks like they've figured it all out—maybe they have. But maybe, just maybe, they're still waking up to cockroaches. Still healing. Still folding laundry after 16-hour shifts. Still crying between grocery runs. And still, they show up.

So next time you admire someone's highlight reel, remember to honour their untelevised, unseen backstage. Because *that*—not the filtered photos—is where the real success lives.

And if that person is you... take a bow.
You've already come so far.

Just Keep Moving.

Chapter 7

The Power of Resilience—Thriving in the Face of Adversity

Life doesn't reward the hesitant. It rewards those who persist when the odds are stacked against them. It's not about how many times you get knocked down but how many times you rise—stronger, smarter and more resilient.

A New Battlefield: The Job Market

Stepping into the job market was nothing short of a reality check. The cushioned life of academics couldn't prepare me for what was to come—the gruelling hiring processes, the ruthless competition and the overwhelming realization that talent alone wasn't enough.

What followed was an excruciating phase of scouting for a job that tested me to my very core. I would sit in front of my computer for hours, lost in a rabbit hole of applications, company portals and endless job boards—so consumed that I often forgot to sip water for days. When the digital world offered no breakthrough, I resorted to the old-school way of dropping my resume in person. I remember walking under the scorching Australian sun, handing it out to organizations door-to-door, hoping someone—anyone—would give me a chance. Day after day, I went from pillar to post, covering kilometers on foot, even venturing into the remotest corners of the city in search of livelihood.

There were days when the weight of it all crushed me. I remember sitting on a crowded public bus in Sydney, tears silently rolling down my cheeks. At that moment, I didn't care if the world was watching; the storm inside me was far too heavy to conceal. The university itself felt overwhelming—so massive and infested with people, yet not a single soul I could truly pour my heart out to. Time zone differences only made it harder to connect with old friends, leaving me feeling even more isolated. Financial struggles piled up: rent, food, water, bills, commute and the looming university fees. Some nights, it felt like there was no light at the end of the tunnel. But deep down, I knew I had no option but to keep moving. I had already come too far to turn back—it was a do-or-die situation and my family's hopes rested on my shoulders.

I still remember my morning ritual with piercing clarity: waking up at 4 a.m., having a plain glass of milk, picking up my resume, tucking a banana in my bag and leaving the house on foot—ready to try one more time. Each morning felt like a fresh battle but also a small act of defiance against despair. Yet, what hurt most was the cold reality of community dynamics. Many Indians abroad, instead of helping, treated you with disdain. They envied that you had “made it here,” and rather than extending a hand, they often pulled the ladder away because let's face it; most of them suffer from ‘close the door behind me’ syndrome. It was disheartening but with time, I did find my tribe—a handful of people who stood by me through sickness and struggle and for that, I remain eternally grateful.

Abroad, there are no shortcuts or clout to fall back on. You start from scratch, slogging day and night, until you finally carve out a life you can call your own. And while I thought securing a job would solve everything—easing the pressure, resolving financial stress and finally enabling me to help my father back home—I realized the journey itself was shaping me more than the destination. I changed two trains daily, stood waiting for buses under the merciless sun and learned that abroad, the simplest things we took for granted back home—food, shelter, survival—required relentless effort. My story here isn't meant to glorify

my struggle, but to underline a truth: every small victory is earned with sweat, sacrifice and an unyielding spirit.

People often celebrate the medal but rarely acknowledge the marathon. They see the degree framed on your wall, not the relentless nights you drowned yourself in books, coffee and self-doubt just to make it through. They admire the trips you take or the car you buy abroad but seldom pause to consider the overtime hours you worked, the corners you cut or the luxuries you denied yourself in order to afford them—without any safety net of support.

They notice the residency card tucked neatly in your wallet but not the countless criterions you had to fulfil - the tests, the interviews, the paperwork, the rejections and the patience it demanded. They might envy the solo trip you took or the one where you joined 18 strangers but they overlook the sheer courage it took to step into the unknown, to embrace discomfort, to trust yourself fully when no familiar face was around.

They see the strong build or the hourglass figure and dismiss it as “good genes” but never acknowledge the countless hours you’ve poured into the gym, the discipline it takes to be watchful with every bite, the restraint to not treat your body like trash while the world indulges without a thought. To them it looks effortless—but only you know the rigor behind it.

They see the titles, the promotions, the milestones you’ve achieved but never the countless social gatherings you quietly declined, the get-togethers with friends you missed, the weddings you couldn’t attend or the late-night laughter you had to trade away so you could stay committed to that dream, excel at that job or put pen to paper and write that book.

What they see is the highlight reel; what they miss is the unyielding spirit behind it. Every visible milestone is built on invisible grit. The truth is, behind every achievement lies a private battlefield of sweat, sacrifice and indomitable courage—one that only you truly know.

But what worked in my favour? **Not my degrees, not my grades, not my connections.** It was **fluency, articulation and the right skill set** that ultimately made all the difference. The corporate world wasn't hierarchical in the way many imagined—it didn't care about your background. It cared about **what you could bring to the table.**

I cracked my first interview and landed a gig at a marketing firm as a **sales representative.** The job? Selling opera tickets—something I had never done in my life. The pressure? Immense. The **sword of performance** hung over my head—**"Either crack your first sale or you're out."**

I knew one thing: **I had the gift of persuasion.** But persuasion isn't about manipulation—it's about understanding people, their needs and guiding them towards a solution.

Confidence—but never overconfidence.

Persistence—but never desperation.

Strategy—but never deception.

I kept my nerves in check, believed in my skills, and made that first sale. And just like that, I proved my worth.

But the hunger for **financial independence** had now become an addiction. **Money was my drug, not in greed, but in the realization that financial stability was power.**

Juggling Work, Hustle & Education

One job wasn't enough. **I took up a second part-time job, working tirelessly day and night.** There were no weekends, no "me-time," no luxury of rest. I attended my **university lectures in the evenings,** thanks to the flexibility granted by the **University of Sydney.**

People often say, "Work smart, not hard." But **smart work is born out of hard work.** There are no shortcuts, no secret formulas—only **relentless effort, adaptability and unwavering resilience.**

Lessons to Take Away:

1. **Resilience is the bridge between failure and success.** No matter how many rejections or setbacks you face, if you persist, you win.
2. **The job market values skills, not just degrees.** Your ability to communicate, think critically and adapt will set you apart.
3. **Pressure builds diamonds.** Challenges don't break you; they forge you into someone unstoppable.
4. **Work smart, but never fear hard work.** There is no substitute for effort.

Powerful Quotes to Live By:

*"A river cuts through rock not because of its power,
but because of its persistence."*

– Jim Watkins

*"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an
extraordinary destiny."*

– C.S. Lewis

"Tough times don't last. Tough people do."

– Robert H. Schuller

Final Thought:

Adversity is the greatest teacher. The struggles you face today are shaping the **unstoppable version of you** that the world will one day admire.

So, when life tests you, will you break? Or will you **bend, adapt and rise stronger than before?**

Reflective Journaling Prompts

1. **Your "Opera Tickets" Moment**

What was a situation where you were completely out of your comfort zone, yet you had no choice but to perform?
How did you handle the pressure?

2. **Skills vs Degrees**

What's one skill you have that no certificate can prove?
How has it helped you so far—or how could it?

3. **What Does Financial Freedom Mean to You?**

Is your relationship with money based on fear, survival, or freedom?
What would financial stability change for you—not just materially but emotionally?

4. **Resilience Tracker**

Describe a time you failed but bounced back.
What mindset helped you recover?

5. **Work Ethic Check-In**

Are you working hard, smart or somewhere in between?
Is there an area of your life where you’ve been taking shortcuts?

 1. Skills Over Status Grid

List the top 5 *skills* you currently have. Then list 5 *skills* you know you need to build to grow in your career or personal journey.

I ALREADY HAVE	I NEED TO BUILD
e.g. Communication	e.g. Time Management
e.g. Listening	e.g. Financial Literacy

☒ Commit to developing *one* new skill in the next 30 days.

 Affirmations for Resilience & Strength

-  My hustle is louder than my excuses.
-  I don’t fear the pressure—I perform under it.
-  I may bend, but I do not break.
-  No one can outwork me for what’s mine.
-  Adversity builds the version of me that success requires.

Chapter 8

From Cold Calls to Customer Clashes— Lessons from the Real World

"Experience is the teacher of all things."

– Julius Caesar

We often believe that success comes from grand opportunities—big job titles, prestigious universities or high-paying roles. But reality is far from it. True skills are built in the trenches, where challenges are real, pressure is high and every move matters.

When I took my first cold-calling sales job, I thought I was stepping into a world of persuasion and communication finesse. It seemed like the perfect fit for my strengths—verbal fluency, confidence and persuasion. But what I didn't realize was that this job wouldn't be the one to truly shape me. **The real learning came from a place I least expected—a supermarket.**

Where the Real Training Began

My second part-time job was as a **retail supervisor at a supermarket**. It wasn't glamorous, and it wasn't what people glorify as a "career-making" role. But to this day, it remains one of the most **transformative** experiences of my life.

Unlike a cold-calling sales role where I was hidden behind a phone, here, I had to face customers **eye to eye**. Every interaction was unpredictable—some were polite, some indifferent and some downright **rude, insouciant and ruthless**. But no matter what, my job was to serve, convince and manage.

I learned the **art of staying composed in the most atrocious situations**. Some customers were brutal, spewing harsh words without hesitation. Others enjoyed making a scene over trivial things. But losing my calm was never an option. **Grace under pressure became my superpower even though the role required me to stand for 10-12 hours straight with only a brief coffee break.**

And then there was my **manager—the ultimate Karen**. If you've worked in retail, you know the type. Impossible to please, critical of everything and always ready to make you question your worth. But instead of being crushed under her tyranny, I used it as a learning experience. I studied her reactions, understood what triggered her and learned how to **handle difficult personalities**.

Most importantly, I mastered the **supreme power of words**—what to say, how to say it and when to say it. Unlike cold calling, where I only had my voice, here, my **body language, expressions and tone** all played a role in shaping interactions.

Lessons That Changed My Perspective

This experience taught me two invaluable lessons that I carry to this day:

- 1. To find your niche, grab every opportunity that comes your way.**
 - I never imagined that a supermarket job would teach me more than a corporate sales job, but it did. **Being open and agile** led me to experiences that shaped my core skills. The worst mistake is

rejecting opportunities just because they don't seem prestigious enough.

2. Never belittle any job or profession.

- A title does not define your potential—**your ability to extract wisdom from any experience does**. Every single job, no matter how small, has something to teach. The **most powerful leaders in the world started small**, whether flipping burgers, waiting tables or working retail.

Your Hardest Jobs Teach You the Most

"Diamonds are nothing but pieces of coal stuck to their jobs."

Growth doesn't come from **comfortable places**. It comes from situations where you are forced to **adapt, push boundaries and sharpen your skills**. If I had only stayed in the cold-calling job, I would have missed out on learning:

- ✓ How to handle real-life conflicts
- ✓ How to deal with difficult personalities
- ✓ How to use words as weapons and shields
- ✓ How to stay calm in pressure situations
- ✓ How to navigate toxic work environments and still thrive

To this day, I credit my ability to handle tough situations, communicate effectively and lead with confidence to the lessons learned in that supermarket.

The Real Takeaway?

Success isn't about landing the perfect job on the first try. It's about evolving through experiences, embracing discomfort and turning every challenge into a stepping stone.

So if you ever find yourself in a job that seems "beneath you" or feels like it isn't adding value, ask yourself:

- 🔗 What can I extract from this?
- 🔗 What skills am I developing here?
- 🔗 How can I use this experience to become a better version of myself?

Because in the end, your journey is never about the job—it's about what the job teaches you.

- ◆ Every challenge is a hidden lesson.
- ◆ Every struggle is a silent teacher.
- ◆ Every setback is setting you up for something bigger.

The key is to pay attention.

Reflective Journaling Prompts

1. **What's Your "Supermarket" Story?**

Recall a job, task, or responsibility that felt "below your potential."

👉 What surprising skill or strength did you gain from it?

2. **Grace Under Fire**

Think of a time when you were insulted, undervalued, or faced hostility at work or school.

👉 How did you respond?

👉 What did that moment teach you about yourself?

3. **The Manager You'll Never Forget**

Who was the most difficult person you've had to deal with in a professional setting?

👉 What triggered them?

👉 How did you learn to navigate them?

4. **Voice vs. Presence**

Cold calls demand verbal fluency. Supermarkets demand face-to-face presence.

👉 Which space challenges you more—verbal persuasion or physical composure? Why?

5. **Title ≠ Talent**

Have you ever judged a job (yours or someone else's) as “too small” or “not important”?

👉 What changed your perspective?

◆ **1. From Job to Jewel – Reframing Table**

Job / Task That Felt Below Me	Hidden Skills It Taught Me	How I Use That Today
e.g. Data Entry Internship	Accuracy, patience	Managing client databases with focus

👉 List **3 jobs** or roles from your past that shaped your current strengths.

Affirmations for Humble Hustlers

- ✳ My value isn’t defined by a job title—but by my impact.
- ✳ I can turn even the smallest role into a masterclass in growth.
- ✳ No job is beneath me if it builds me.
- ✳ I choose resilience over reaction, every time.
- ✳ Every rude person/ customer is just another chance to master my calm.

Chapter 9

The 4 A.M. Symphony—When the World Sleeps, You Rise

Most revolutions don't start with drums and banners. They start quietly. At 4 a.m. With a buzzing alarm, aching muscles, full time MBA degree, two part-time jobs alongside and the decision to be *different*—again.

Australia was fast asleep. But I wasn't.

Sydney—tucked beneath its glittering skyline and lullaby waves. The city didn't know it yet, but a revolution was about to rise. Not the kind that makes headlines or hashtags. The quieter kind. The one that begins with a kettle boiling in a silent kitchen and a girl staring into the dark with purpose in her veins.

I was too busy choosing the **road not taken**—not because it looked cool on Pinterest, but because that road had something the others didn't: **me**.

While everyone else was hitting snooze at 9 a.m., I'd already finished my first job shift, devoured a protein smoothie, soaked in sunrise solitude and—most importantly—won my own damn day.

Was I a morning person? **Absolutely not.**

But I was a purpose person.

There was something *exhilarating* about it. Not in a “toxic hustle culture” kind of way. No, this wasn’t burnout. This was alignment. Quiet, grounded alignment. My days weren’t about doing *more* but doing *differently*.

I knew I wasn’t here to chase comfort. I was here to chase *clarity*. **I wasn’t ahead of anyone. I was just ahead of who I used to be.**

People talk a lot about “**never missing a Monday**” at the gym like it’s the holy grail of discipline. Me?

I *intentionally* skipped Mondays.

Not because I was lazy—but because **I hated the crowd and the noise and the unnecessary flex** of Monday motivation.

I preferred my peace.

I went to the gym on weekends, when others were busy partying their stress (and liver cells) away.

That’s when I lifted. When I reset. When I felt like I owned the room, not just occupied it.

They called me “bizarre.”

“What kind of gym rat skips Mondays?”

The kind who doesn’t follow fads. The kind who listens to her body. The kind who lifts alone and walks out like a warrior.

The mainstream has its own magic—but I’ve always believed in choosing the path less posted on Instagram.

When you chase things that are *yours*, not things that are *rending*, you stop performing for the world and start dancing with your own rhythm. You become a private concert in a world full of loud parties.

I’ve always known I wasn’t built for the herd.

Why else would a right-handed girl like me casually **shake hands with her left**, just because it felt more *her*?

Not rebellious. Just instinctive.

Same logic applied when I picked roommates in Sydney. Instead of choosing the easy route—people like me, who'd laugh at the same memes and speak the same mother tongue—I picked people from different nationalities. Different cultures. Different souls.

Even while choosing people of the same nationality as mine, I chose to stay with people from the southern states. Not for aesthetics, but for anthropology.

I wasn't building comfort—I was building character.

“Great minds don't just seek reflection. They seek perspective too.”

— Someone who probably skipped Mondays too

The irony? I *earned* foreign residency. The kind of status people post about with pride and hashtags.

But I didn't stay.

I chose to return to my home country—not to settle down, but to *rise up*. I wanted to **build a business, write a book** and pay tribute to a land that made me fierce before it made me free.

While the world around me tied the knot, I untied expectations. While they curated their wedding hashtags, I curated my purpose. And here I am—penning these pages, **not from regret but from rebellion.**

Let them say what they want. Let them laugh.

What they call **weird**, I call **wired differently**.

And that difference? It's my edge.

JKM LEARNINGS: Shift the Paradigm, Own the Paradox

1. **Don't chase what's trending—chase what's true.**
Your soul doesn't care about crowd logic.
2. **Monday is not holy. Progress is.**
Move when it makes sense. Lift when the space is yours.
3. **Comfort never built legends.**
Choose the roommate who teaches you something. The routine that molds you. The life that *tests* you.
4. **Reputation is rented. Reality is earned.**
I could've stayed abroad. I chose to *build* back home. That's patriotism in practice—not poetry.
5. **Marry yourself to purpose before marrying anyone else.**
At 25, 28, 30 or 38—your timeline is valid. Own it.
6. **Your weirdness is your wisdom in disguise.**
Whether it's shaking hands lefty-style or lifting weights when everyone else is lifting tequila shots—*you're not late, you're just rare.*
7. **Mainstream is comfortable—but it rarely leads to magic.**
Go where the crowd *isn't*. That's where authenticity breathes.
8. **Wake up for yourself, not the world.**
Whether it's 4 a.m. or 4 p.m., find your sacred hour—the time that belongs only to *you*.
9. **Don't just work hard. Work *differently*.**
Find your edge. Your pace. Your reason. And build from there.
10. **Success is not a chorus—it's a solo.**
The more you align with your own rhythm, the less you need validation.

11. **Be selective. With your energy, your people, your concerts.**

You are the curator of your experience. Be picky. Be pedantic. It pays off.

You don't need applause to be aligned.

You don't need a Monday ritual to prove discipline.

And you certainly don't need to follow anyone else's version of "right."

Because at the end of the day—or in my case, **at the start of it at 4 a.m.**—you realize something truly liberating:

You don't need to fit the mold.

You are the damn mold.

If I've learned one thing from those Sydney mornings and those offbeat choices, it's this:

Extraordinary is just ordinary done differently—on purpose.

And while the world was sleeping, I was becoming.

Reflective Journaling Prompts

1. **What's your "4 a.m." moment?**

Not just a time—but a choice you made when the world wasn't watching.

👉 What did you do differently? Why did it matter?

2. **Offbeat by Choice**

Write about a time when you *intentionally* went against the trend, the group, or the expectation.

👉 How did it feel at the time? What wisdom did it give you?

3. **Your Sacred Hour**

Whether it’s dawn, dusk, or midnight—what time of the day feels most like *you*?

👉 Why? What’s your ritual during that time?

4. **“Not rebellious. Just instinctive.”**

Reflect on one decision you made that others questioned—but you *knew* was right for you.

👉 What did you learn from trusting your instinct?

5. **Your Mold, Your Magic**

How are you different from your peers in your choices, habits, or values?

👉 Instead of hiding it, how can you **hone** it?

◆ **1. Design Your Own Edge Map**

What Makes Me Different	How I Used to Feel About It	What I Now Call It
Gym on weekends instead of Mondays	Awkward, misfit	My rhythm, my power
Waking early to write/study	Lonely	Sacred solitude

➡ Write at least **3 edge traits** of your own. Then flip the label—from *weird* to *wired*.

Affirmations for the Differently Wired

- ✱ I'm not off-track. I'm off-grid—and that's my power.
- ✱ What they call strange, I call sacred.
- ✱ Trends fade. Truth lasts.
- ✱ Ordinary becomes extraordinary when done with intention.

Chapter 10

The Appetite for Risk

"You'll never be ready, but that's the point."

There's a reason why life's greatest experiences don't come with a manual. No amount of preparation can fully equip you for the moments that truly change you. The only way forward is through.

I remember a night before our skydiving experience, a girl sharing space with us decided she wanted to try it too. But instead of just booking the jump and letting it unfold, she went into an overthinking spiral. She spent hours watching YouTube videos, analyzing reviews, reading horror stories and then—this is where it got hilarious—she sat on a low-level sofa, closed her eyes, and tried to simulate the experience of jumping from a plane. She positioned herself as if she were free-falling, flailing her arms slightly as if she were floating in mid air. We couldn't contain our laughter.

But here's the thing—her excessive analysis became paralysis. The next morning, when it was time to go, she backed out. Overthinking had stolen her chance at an experience she initially craved. In contrast, all of us were equally terrified but I told my friends one thing: we won't think about it until we are in the plane and by then, there's no turning back.

And then life, in its characteristic way, decided to humble me. Out of 50 professional divers, there was just one female instructor. I made an insouciant remark (still guilty of it), questioning why there was only one

woman in the group and whether she truly knew how to dive. As fate would have it, I was assigned to her. The moment we boarded the plane, my bravado faded. I leaned in and whispered, "I'm not ready for this."

She turned to me and said something that hit me like a thunderbolt:

"No one ever is. I have done this 5000 times, and not even once was I 'ready.' You don't wait to feel ready. You push yourself. You show up. You trust yourself. And you live."

In that instant, my fear transformed into trust. I wasn't just trusting her—I was trusting myself, my ability to rise to the occasion. That hit differently. Suddenly, I wasn't scared. I was ready. And when I jumped, those ten seconds of free fall, where I was swaying between life and death were the most alive, the most relevant and the most free I had ever felt. Economics didn't leave my side either- higher the risk, higher the return indeed!

And after our safe landing, she reminded me of something even more powerful:

This wasn't the first time I had taken a leap of faith. The first time was when I stepped out of my house in India and moved to Australia. I lived alone for five years, built a life from scratch, worked two jobs alongside a full-time degree, moved 15 times because landlords were evicting tenants during COVID-19. Every one of those moments was a skydive of its own.

Courage is not about the moment you take the leap; it's about every step that led you there.

Risk Is the Price of Growth

Most people want to change their lives, but they don't want to embrace risk. They read about it, talk about it, plan for it—but they don't act on it. It reminds me of when I called my brother to Australia, financed his trip and took him to the Great Barrier Reef for scuba diving.

I was seasick the entire ride—violently throwing up, dizzy, nearly unconscious. But when I gained conscious, I saw my brother gearing up for his dive. He had a medical condition at that point in time that made it risky for him and the instructor had warned him against it. Yet, he refused to sit it out. He looked at me and said, "If I don't do it now, I never will."

And just like that, he took the plunge.

At that moment, I saw a warrior. Someone who refused to let fear dictate his choices. I was spellbound. **This is what it means to bet on yourself.**

The Entrepreneurial Plunge

Years later, I took another life-altering risk—entrepreneurship. Leaving behind financial stability, I bootstrapped my business. No investors, no safety nets. I wore all the hats—from designing my own flyers to marketing in every possible way, from researching and curating programs to managing finances. It was an extremely bumpy road.

There were countless moments when I thought, *Can I really do this?* But then I reminded myself: **I didn't come this far to only come this far.**

Two things I've learned along the way:

1. **Don't look for instant gratification.** Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is success.
2. **Don't underestimate the power of networking and negotiation.**

Speaking of which, let's talk about Kyle MacDonald. A man who took a single red paperclip and, through a series of trades, turned it into a house. He didn't have millions. He had creativity, strategy and the willingness to put himself out there. His story isn't just about bartering—it's about understanding that every risk, no matter how small, can snowball into something life-changing.

The JKM Takeaway: Take the Plunge

If you're waiting for the perfect moment, it will never come. There's no "right time" to start your dream, take the job, leave the toxic relationship, or skydive (literally or metaphorically). There is only **now**. When in doubt, remember:

- If you want to fly, you must be willing to jump.
- You don't learn to swim by reading a book. You jump into the water.
- Risk isn't recklessness; it's the price you pay for a life worth living.

The question isn't "Are you ready?" The real question is—**Do you have the appetite?**

Chapter 11

Self-Worth $\neq$ Net Worth – The Fallacy of Material Validation

In a world obsessed with luxury cars, designer handbags and sprawling mansions, people often measure their worth by their possessions. But here's the truth: **people make things; things don't make people.**

The Illusion of Wealth

I've encountered individuals who flaunt their wealth, belittling others who lack material opulence. Flashy houses, expensive cars and branded accessories become their identity. However, the truly wealthy—those with “old money” or individuals like Late **Mr. Ratan Tata**—exude humility and grace, never needing to prove their status.

A Humbling Experience in Sydney

As a student in Sydney, I once decided to explore a luxury store out of curiosity. Little did I know that you had to “dress the part” and flaunt branded attire to be taken seriously. Upon joining the queue, I noticed two guards scrutinizing me. When my turn arrived, the guard bombarded me with questions: “What particular type of bag are you after? What's your budget?”

I was startled. With a calm demeanor, I asked him one question, “Do you know who I am?”

His reply? “No, who are you?”

The economist in me was in full swing. I replied, “I am human capital, playing an immense and stellar role in economic development and growth. You can’t assess my purchasing power based on how I carry myself. Just like you, I am capable of making a significant difference. We made these bags; these bags didn’t create us.”

Embarrassed, he let me in. But my self-esteem was already bruised. I refused to enter, realizing that true worth isn’t defined by material possessions. Be a brand; don’t chase one. Your brain is your real asset. Upskill yourself, learn a new craft every **few days, and you can conquer the world.**

◆ **JKM Moment:** Your identity is not defined by your wardrobe or wallet. **Walk with confidence and Just Keep Moving.**

True wealth is measured in kindness, wisdom and legacy. **Value character over cash and Just Keep Moving.**

Real-Life Examples That Redefine Success

- **Ratan Tata:** Despite his immense fortune, he leads a simple life and focuses on philanthropy.
- **Warren Buffett:** Lives in the same modest house he bought in 1958, prioritizing investments and knowledge over luxury.
- **Mother Teresa:** Had no material possessions yet impacted millions of lives.

Here’s another galvanising instance from my life

Trimax & Trauma: When a Pen Wrote My Worth

In the era of my undergraduate journey, I was once sitting quietly in my tuition class, trying to keep up with differential equations and life in general. I reached into my bag and pulled out a pen without realising what brand it was—yes, the infamous Trimax. To be brutally honest I didn’t realise where it came from? Little did I know that a humble

stationery item would cause an existential audit of my financial background.

Across the table, a classmate-turned-interrogator glanced at it and said with a smirk, “Oh Trimax pen, rich people.”

I blinked.

I didn’t know whether to laugh, cry, or throw the pen at him like a javelin of justice. But instead, I chose the most non-confrontational Indian thing—I grinned sarcastically. *Big mistake*. That one smirk gave him a lifetime subscription to assume my socioeconomic status.

This, my friends, was the calm before the storm.

Because what followed was an unsolicited series of interviews.

The very next day, Mr. Gold-Digger-in-Disguise casually asked, “Where do you live? Flat or villa?”

Villa ?!” I chuckled internally. “Man, this isn’t a Netflix inheritance drama.”

I replied honestly, “Flat.”

His face dropped. “I thought your father’s into construction... I assumed you had a Villa at least.”

Ah, the heartbreak of unmet imaginary expectations.

That statement stayed with me like unpaid rent—nagging, uncomfortable and strangely motivational.

I didn’t realize it then but I was feeding the toxicity, allowing his snide remarks to push me.

There was a time I thought: “Fine, let him poke. I’ll change this situation. One day, it *will* be a Villa. Let his passive-aggressive comments be the fuel.”

And to an extent, it worked.

Because your critics, as much as you'd like to block them, often light a fire in your belly that cheerleaders never could.

But here's the kicker—what also burned was my mental peace.

Living life just to prove someone wrong is like running a marathon in stilettos (heels). You may get there, but you'll be bleeding by the end of it.

I used to think being ambitious meant grabbing every opportunity to “level up” in the eyes of those who doubted me.

But ambition fed by resentment is not drive; it's disguised self-punishment. And the sad part? The people you're trying to impress probably don't even remember what they said.

Your self worth ≠ Your Net worth. Period.

Takeaway:

Don't let someone's shallow assumptions push you into a deep emotional hole. Your worth isn't determined by your pen brand, postal code or number of piercings.

Let your progress be peaceful, not performative.

Because you're not here to upgrade for someone else's satisfaction—you're here to evolve for your own liberation.

Why Self-Worth Is an Inside Job

Material possessions are fleeting. Cars depreciate, designer bags wear out and houses age. But **your skills, kindness and resilience are eternal.**

- ✓ Develop your intellect.
- ✓ Nurture your relationships.
- ✓ Build a legacy that outlives materialism.

◆ **JKM Moment:** Your value isn't in what you own but in what you contribute. **Elevate your soul and Just Keep Moving.**

Practical Steps to Boost Self-Worth

1. **Practice Gratitude:** Focus on what you have, not what you lack.
2. **Detach from Social Validation:** Unfollow accounts that glorify materialism.
3. **Invest in Personal Growth:** Read, learn new skills, and build meaningful connections.

Final Takeaway: Be Rich in What Truly Matters

In the grand scheme of life, it's not the branded bag or luxury car that defines you—it's the impact you leave on others and the growth you achieve within.

◆ **JKM Moment:** Own your worth. Not your wallet. **Keep hustling and Just Keep Moving.**

Chapter 12

The Guest List—And We're All on It

There's a strange ache in the heart that no doctor can diagnose.

Not heartbreak. Not grief.

Something gentler, more persistent.

A low, humming ache of **not belonging**.

It started for me somewhere between changing **11 addresses in six years**, switching **countries like playlists** and finding myself **vulnerable in kitchens that weren't mine**, pouring my heart out to people I didn't know two weeks prior.

Somehow, **strangers became confidants**.

They didn't know my middle name, but they knew when I ran out of hope.

No history. No expectations.

Just *souls passing through the same storm*, occasionally holding umbrellas for each other.

And among them were a few angels who didn't just share space, they shared strength.

In moments when I felt like I was unravelling, they stitched me back quietly—with kindness, patience and the sort of presence that doesn't ask, just *is*.

If this life is a guesthouse, they were the warmest hosts I ever met along the way.

You'd think coming back *home* would feel like a warm hug from the universe.

Spoiler: It didn't.

It felt like I landed on a planet I used to live on but didn't recognise anymore.

COVID-19, in all its tyrannical timing, had kept me away from my family for nearly 3 years at a time when the world felt apocalyptic. I was forced to survive—not in luxury but in longing.

I stayed in foreign homes, worked foreign jobs, found comfort in **foreign arms that weren't family**, but felt safe, nonetheless.

And when I returned, **everything was familiar, but nothing felt like mine.**

Not the walls, not the conversations, not even the food I once craved from thousands of miles away.

“Sometimes, coming home isn't a return. It's a reconstruction.”

Here's the thing no one warns you about:

The longer you live as a guest, the harder it is to feel like you belong anywhere.

But then it hit me—maybe we *don't*.

Maybe we're not *supposed* to.

Maybe that gnawing sense of not-belonging is a spiritual breadcrumb, reminding us that we're all just guests in each other's lives. Some stay for a moment. Some for a chapter. Some for a reason, some season and some

for a lesson.

Very few—if any—till the epilogue.

I remembered how elevation always demanded separation.

If you want to grow, you have to leave comfort.

If you want clarity, you have to distance from noise.

So instead of sulking in my solitude, I tried something wild:

I embraced it.

Like a guest who's overstayed and finally decides to sip tea with silence.

I've laughed till I cried with flatmates I may never see again.

I've sobbed quietly in public transport while my "loved ones" sent delayed text replies.

I've celebrated birthdays with colleagues-turned-family and mourned alone in rooms filled with people.

This is the guest life.

Nothing is fixed. Everything is borrowed.

But doesn't that make it more beautiful?

We're not born to belong everywhere.

We're born to **fulfill**, not *fit*.

We're born to **learn, love, hurt, elevate** and ultimately, **exit**.

"This Earth is not our home. It's a hostel for the soul."

— JKM's Inner Voice at 2 A.M.

So if you're reading this and feel fragmented, disconnected or like you just don't *click* with your surroundings—*good*.

It means your soul remembers it's just passing through.
It's not dysfunction. It's design.

JKM LEARNINGS: The Guest Wisdom

1. **Home isn't always a place. Sometimes it's a phase.**
And it's okay if you're between homes—emotionally or physically.
 2. **Strangers can be sanctuaries.**
Vulnerability isn't a transaction. Sometimes it's therapy with no bill.
 3. **Belonging is overrated. Purpose isn't.**
We weren't meant to "belong" everywhere. We were meant to *become* somewhere.
 4. **Elevation requires isolation.**
Growth is often lonely. That doesn't make it wrong. That makes it *real*.
 5. **We're all guests. In countries, homes, hearts.**
The sooner you stop trying to "own" spaces, the freer you become.
 6. **Fragmentation isn't failure—it's a reminder.**
A reminder that you're a soul with a mission, not a character in someone else's comfort sitcom.
-

So no, I don't feel completely at home even now.

But that's okay. I've met too many beautiful souls and passed through too many sacred spaces to expect permanence.

And maybe that's the magic—

We're all just guests here. But what a divine visit it is.

Soul-Deep Journaling Prompts

1. **What Is Home to You?**

Is it a person? A smell? A version of yourself?

✍ Write freely about where you *felt most you*—even if it was temporary.

2. **A Stranger Who Became Family**

Think of a soul you met by chance who impacted you deeply.

✍ What did they offer you—support, space, stillness?

✍ Do you think they know the difference they made?

3. **When Did You Feel Most Misplaced or Disconnected?**

Describe the discomfort without censoring it.

✍ Was it a city, a house, a group of people—or even your own family?

✍ What did that moment teach you about self-worth or purpose?

4. **What's One Guest Phase You're Grateful For Now—In Retrospect?**

A moment or period that felt like a detour but turned out to be divine in hindsight.

5. **Have You Ever Outgrown a Place or a Person?**

- 👉 What gave it away?
 - 👉 Did you stay longer than you should have?
-

◆ **1. Home Without a House**

List all the “places” that made you feel at home, even without owning anything.

Place or Moment	What Made It Home	How It Changed You
Shared space with some of my marvellous flatmates.	Safety without explanation	Relearned the power of presence

➡ This affirms: home is an experience, not a location.

💬 **Affirmations for the Wandering Soul**

- 🌀 I don’t have to belong everywhere. I just have to belong to myself.
 - 🌀 The ones meant for me don’t need a résumé of my past.
 - 🌀 I honour every temporary home I’ve ever had—they made me eternal.
 - 🌀 I’m a guest with a mission—and the journey is sacred.
 - 🌀 Even if I exit, I leave echoes of love.
-

Chapter 13

Faith, It till You Make It: When Life Throws Curveballs, Trust the Umpire

There comes a point in life when you've done everything in your power—planned, worked hard and checked all the boxes—yet things still refuse to go your way. That's when frustration creeps in, whispering, *"Just give up. It's out of your control now."*

But here's the thing—when control slips from your hands, that's not your cue to quit. It's your signal to **submit to a higher power**—the one that keeps the planets aligned, feeds insects that survive on sand by bringing storms and performs miracles when doctors raise their hands in surrender. Some may argue, but like it or not, **this power—call it God, the universe, fate—will be your saviour at the end.** So don't fake it till you make it. **Faith it till you make it.**

When Disappointments Turn Into Detours

I still remember the sting of not getting into my first-choice undergrad college. It was a blow but I had no option but to **accept and move forward.** And that's when I decided to submit myself to this higher force, trusting that something better was in store. And guess what? Life pulled an unexpected U-turn and landed me in **North Campus, Delhi University**—a place that meant the world to me back then.

Coincidence? Maybe. But I call it divine intervention.

Then came another defining moment. I had my heart set on pursuing a **master's degree at the University of Sydney**. But the problem? **I didn't even have an offer letter until the orientation day**. That's right—I was staring at a future that felt completely out of my hands. But instead of panicking, I held on to faith.

And just like that, things fell into place.

The moment I got my offer letter, I rushed to apply for my visa. The normal processing time? At least **two weeks**. But in a twist that left even the visa agents stunned, my visa got approved **in the blink of an eye**—right there, on the spot, as soon as I swiped the card for payment. The agents literally yelled in disbelief.

A miracle? Maybe. A result of unshakable faith? Definitely.

When Delays Are Just Divine Timing

When I applied for **Canadian permanent residency from Australia**, I got my invite **within a month**—and mine was the **last slot** before Canada shut its borders for 2.5 years. That meant thousands of applicants had to wait for years but my invite came just in time.

Again, pure luck? Maybe. But when faith is that strong, luck becomes a mere accessory.

At one point, I thought I'd migrate to Canada right away. But my documents faced unexpected delays, keeping me in Australia longer than I had planned. At first, it felt like an obstacle, but in hindsight, **it was the best thing that could have happened to me**.

Those **2.5 years in Sydney** shaped me in ways I never imagined. I experienced a steep **trajectory of growth**—working hard, seizing golden opportunities and even getting promoted to a **payroll and compliance officer**. That phase became one of the most **valuable learning curves** of

my life. It **built me, refined me and prepared me** for the next chapter of my journey.

Faith is Not Just Hope—It's Action

Faith doesn't mean sitting back and waiting for magic to happen. **It means doing everything in your power and then trusting that the rest will fall into place.** It means believing—beyond logic, beyond evidence, beyond what others tell you—that you are being guided toward something bigger.

Your **conviction** will take you places. It will open doors you never knew existed. It will land you in jobs, countries and opportunities that no amount of strategy alone can guarantee.

Because at the end of the day, **faith is not a backup plan. It's the plan.**

So don't just fake it. **Faith it till you make it.**

Chapter 14

Love Without Losing Yourself

*"When you love someone, love them deeply—
but never lose yourself in the process."*

We often hear stories of love conquering all—how it fuels ambition, inspires change and pushes people to become the best versions of themselves. But what they don't tell you is this: **Love, if not balanced, can also blur your identity, make you question your worth, and turn your sense of self into a performance for someone else.**

This is the story of someone who entered my life for a brief period yet had a **monumental impact** on how I thought, how I hustled, and how I shaped my life. Let's call him "**The Phantom Influence.**" Not because he was a ghost, but because his presence—though temporary—left behind traces that changed me in ways I never expected.

The Silent Power of Influence

There was a time when I found myself constantly **proving my worth** to this person. Every goal I set, every milestone I achieved, every ounce of success—I wanted them to see it, acknowledge it, **validate it.**

And let's be honest, proving people wrong is addictive. The thrill of achieving something just to make your doubters eat their words? Oh, it's a different kind of high. But here's the problem: **It's short-lived.**

At first, it felt like fuel—like a turbo engine pushing me towards greatness. But soon, I realized something disturbing: **I wasn't doing things for myself anymore.** I was running a race where I wasn't even the one setting the track.

I was trying to **win someone's approval** instead of **winning at life.**

When Love Starts Dictating Your Choices

Looking back, I see how deeply I let that influence seep into my decisions.

So much so that when it was time to choose my **postgraduate subjects**, I didn't check if they aligned with my passion or long-term career goals. Instead, I asked myself:

*"Is this prestigious enough to impress them?"
"Would they respect me more if I took this course?"*

Imagine shaping your future based on someone else's admiration rather than your own ambitions.

And it didn't stop there. Even when I started earning, my choices weren't mine for a very short period. I wasn't saving prudently, investing strategically or spending on things that truly mattered to me. **I was earning to impress.**

I bought things not because I liked them but because **they excited that person.** Ostentatious watches, expensive brands, fancy gadgets—things that meant nothing to me but everything to them.

I had unknowingly placed **their desires above my own priorities.**

► **I was no longer living for myself—I was curating a version of me they would approve of.**

When Love Becomes a Mirror of Self-Doubt

They say **love knows no boundaries**—that if you truly love someone, nothing else matters. **I still believe this.** But I also know that love can make you blind. You start seeing yourself through their lens. And if that lens is critical, you begin nit-picking your flaws, doubting your choices, **shrinking** in your own skin.

There were moments when I felt like I wasn't enough. That I needed to do more, be more, achieve more—not because I wanted to but because I had to **prove something.**

▶ I began overstepping my own boundaries.

▶ I started self-sabotaging—questioning my dreams, my potential, my direction.

▶ I let their perception of me dictate my perception of myself.

I'd complain about my shortcomings, compare my progress with others, and constantly feel like I was in a race where the finish line kept moving.

It was exhausting.

And one day, it hit me:

Why was I letting someone else hold the remote control to my life?

Snapping Out of the Illusion

Love should never feel like a never-ending audition. If someone truly cares about you, they won't make you feel like you have to earn their admiration **by becoming someone else.**

I wish I could say that I had one big dramatic “aha” moment—like in movies where the protagonist storms out of a toxic relationship in slow motion while an empowering song plays in the background. But reality doesn't work that way.

It was a slow realization. A series of small moments and many breakdowns.

Like when I achieved something big and the first thought that crossed my mind wasn't happiness—but wondering if they would be impressed.

Like when I caught myself talking about my dreams in a way that sounded more like a **sales pitch** than genuine excitement.

Like when I looked in the mirror and didn't recognize the person trying so hard to fit into an idea that wasn't even her own.

So, I decided to take back control.

I still loved fiercely—but **I started loving myself ferociously**.

I stopped chasing approval and started **seeking fulfillment**.

I stopped proving and started **being**.

And the irony? The moment I let go of the need to prove anything, I became more powerful than ever.

The Takeaway: Love, But Never Lose Yourself

1 Love should inspire you, not consume you.

- If you ever feel like you're **shrinking instead of expanding** in love, take a step back.

2 Proving people wrong is fine—but proving yourself right is what really matters.

- Don't chase goals just to show someone you're capable. Chase them because **you believe in them**.

3 Keep your inner child alive.

- If love makes you feel **less like yourself**, it's not love—it's a performance.

4 Never hand over the remote control of your happiness.

- People will come and go. Your dreams, your potential and your self-worth? Those stay.

So here's my advice: Love them deeply, but love yourself first.

If they're the right person, they'll love you for who you are, not for who they want you to be.

And if they're not?

Well, they just made space for the person who will.

And as for "The Phantom Influence"?

Ariana Grande said it best: "Thank you, next."

Because the person who deserves your best version **is you**.

The People Who Subtly Diminish You—Spot Them, Love Them, But Rise Above

*"Some people build themselves up by tearing others down.
Don't be their bricks."*

There are people in life who will **never** openly tell you that you're not good enough. Instead, they'll plant seeds of doubt, poke at your insecurities and make you feel **just a little less** than you are—without ever saying it outright.

These people aren't necessarily villains. **They are just deeply insecure themselves.** The irony? **The very things they mock you for are the things they secretly envy.**

► How to Identify These People

1 They are experts at 'harmless' digs.

- "Oh, you're doing that? That's... different."

- “That’s nice, but are you sure it’s a good idea?”
- “I mean, it’s cool, but people usually prefer XYZ instead.”

It’s never direct criticism—it’s **death by a thousand tiny cuts**.

👉 **What to do?** Recognize the pattern. If someone’s words consistently leave you doubting yourself, **it’s not ‘concern’—it’s manipulation**.

2 They make success feel like a competition.

- When you achieve something, they respond with **one-upmanship, not encouragement**.
- They downplay your wins while **hyping up their own**.
- If they don’t have an advantage over you, **they’ll find a way to make you feel small**.

👉 **What to do?** Celebrate their wins, but don’t let them shrink yours. **You are not in a race. I firmly believe in the concept of “OWN LANE, OWN PACE, OWN RACE”**. The only person you should be competing with is yesterday’s you.

3 They magnify your weaknesses but hide their own.

- They’ll constantly remind you of what you lack.
- They’ll make offhand comments about how “you still need to work on” something.
- Meanwhile, they’ll **never** talk about their own struggles.

👉 **What to do?** Confidence doesn't come from **having no weaknesses—it comes from owning them.** If someone can't admit their own flaws, their judgment of yours is worthless.

4 They only support you when you're beneath them.

- As long as you're struggling, they'll offer "support."
- The moment you start levelling up, they get distant or dismissive.
- They are comfortable when you're behind them but uneasy when you're beside them.

👉 **What to do?** Notice who claps when you win. That will tell you everything you need to know.

How to Rise Above Without Becoming Bitter

💡 1. Identify Them, But Don't Become Them.

Hurt people hurt people. **Break the cycle.** Instead of tearing them down in return, simply step away.

💡 2. Love Them, But From a Distance.

Not every battle is worth fighting. Some people don't need confrontation—they just need **less access to your life.**

💡 3. Focus on Your Worth, Not Their Words.

Their opinions? **Temporary.**

Your self-respect? **Permanent.**

💡 4. Outgrow the Need to Prove Anything.

Once you realize that their judgment holds no weight, **their words lose all power.**

Final Thought: Keep Moving, Keep Growing

The people who tried to make you feel less? They were just part of your story—not the whole book.

✧ Keep loving. Keep rising. Keep proving—only to yourself. ✧

🕯 And as Ariana Grande says... "Thank you, next."

Emotional Excavation Journal Prompts

1. When Did You Start Shrinking for Love?

👉 Describe a moment you began *filtering yourself* to be more likable, agreeable, or desirable.

What parts of you went into hiding?

2. Whose Approval Were You Secretly Craving?

👉 Is there someone whose admiration you worked relentlessly for—only to realize it was exhausting and unreciprocated?

3. Have You Ever Chosen a Path Based on Someone Else's Vision?

👉 Whether it was education, a job, or even the way you dressed—list decisions you made to “impress,” not *express*.

4. Do You Recognize a Phantom Influence in Your Life?

👉 Someone who no longer plays an active role in your life but still lingers in your thoughts and choices.

5. **What Would You Do Differently Today If You Didn't Feel the Need to Prove Anything?**

👉 Who would you be if you were building for *you*, not for applause?

 Empowerment Toolkit: How to Protect Your Energy Post-Phantom

Boundary You're Setting	Why You Need It	How You'll Reinforce It
I will no longer explain my dreams to people who doubt them	It drains me emotionally	I'll walk in silence, let my success speak

LET'S SET SOME BOUNDARIES TODAY!

 Healing Mantras to Rewire Your Inner Talk

💡 I am not too much. I was just in a space that asked me to be less.

💡 Their absence gave me back my presence.

- 💡 I do not need to be chosen by anyone I must shrink for.
- 💡 The right person will not need a filtered version of me.
- 💡 I am no longer performing—I am returning.
- 💡 I am not their mirror. I am my own masterpiece.

Chapter 15

Name Droppers, the takers, the emotional freeloaders

You know those people who can't complete a sentence without adding, "Oh, I *know* him/her, we're so close, he/she once liked my story on Instagram..."

Congratulations—you've just met a **name-dropper**.

These are the folks who believe that basking in someone else's limelight who is successful will somehow make their own shadows more interesting.

They don't walk into rooms with authenticity—they slide in with someone else's résumé in their back pocket and call it personality.

And honestly?

It's a little funny... until it's not.

Because it's one thing to **associate with greatness**. It's another to **leech off it**.

There was an acquaintance I knew who could spot success like a shark smells blood.

You win an award, crack an opportunity, post a milestone—and boom, there they are, tagging you in throwback selfies like you went to war together.

If narcissism had a LinkedIn page, this person would've endorsed themselves.

And let's not even start on the **takers**—those emotional vampires disguised as “just checking in” texters.

They will:

- Drink from your emotional reservoir like it's a public fountain.
- Sit in your passenger seat during their breakdowns but disappear when it's your turn to drive into a storm.
- And if you ever dare to ask for something in return?

“Relax yaa, it was just a favour, not like you signed your house deed over.”

The audacity.

No, seriously. Can someone please give out medals for this?

I still remember my father's golden rule:

“Test your relationships. Ask for a little favour now and then. It's not about needing help—it's about revealing character.”

Wise. Sharp. Necessary.

But did I listen? No. Because I was young, naive and hell-bent on believing people are as generous as we are. Or maybe I had an inkling but I didn't want to put those equations in jeopardy.

There was this one friend I held sacred—

You know the kind who laughs at all your jokes, calls you when bored,

makes you feel indispensable...

Until *you* need them.

Not once, not twice, but *thrice*—I reached out. Swallowed my pride like cough syrup and asked for help.

Every time: *"oh I didn't stumble upon your text earlier, saw it now"*

Well, guess what? I saw this coming but my only gaffe was to not test them earlier in life.

I realised I was lovingly **watering a dead plant**, waiting for it to bloom.

But all it gave me was silence and emotional root rot.

Here's what hurts: I didn't want riches or rescue.

I just wanted a listener, a soundboard because that's what you need sometimes.

A presence.

Someone to say, "I hear you." I'm all ears.

But no—this was the same person I stayed up late for, cracked jokes for, endless favours, limitless love and affection, filled their drives with laughter and playlists, became their personal therapist without the paycheck.

And when I hit rock bottom?

Their calendar was suddenly booked for eternity.

"I would've, but you know how things are..."

Yeah. I know exactly how things are now.

Don't get me wrong—I don't blame them.

People are people. They come in different packaging: some wrapped in empathy, others in entitlement.

You can't control that.

But you *can* control how many chances you give them before you realise **self-worth is not a charity.**

“Don't be a lighthouse for ships that never plan to dock. You'll only burn yourself out.”

—JKM Internal Broadcast, during emotional bankruptcy

So to anyone reading this with a bleeding heart and a bent spine from carrying the weight of unreciprocated loyalty—here's your cue:

Have some self-pity. And a whole lot more self-love.

Because if you keep crossing oceans for people who won't even step over a puddle for you,

You'll spend the first half of your life **serving them**,

And the rest half **healing from the damage** they left behind.

JKM LEARNINGS (a.k.a. The Reality Check Digest):

1. **Don't confuse proximity with loyalty.**

Just because they're around doesn't mean they're *with* you.

2. **Test your circle.**

Not with drama, but with tiny asks. Favour reveals fabric.

3. **Water people who show signs of blooming.**

Not those who leave you parched while drinking from your well.

4. **Being a giver doesn't mean being a doormat.**

Choose boundaries over burnout.

5. **The real flex isn't having 50 contacts.**

It's having 2 that show up at 2 AM.

JKM MOMENT (JUST KEEP MOVING):

If you've been let down, left unread or left behind—don't get bitter.

Get better.

Take your tears, your lessons, and your growth and move. Move forward.

Like the ocean—don't chase ships that left the shore.

You're the tide. Let them sail.



REFLECTIVE JOURNAL: Audit Your Circle

1. **Who drains your energy but never refills it?**

✍ Write names. Be raw. Be honest. No one's watching but your future self.

2. **Who do you show up for the most?**

✍ What do you offer them—time, support, resources?

3. **Who shows up for you—unasked, unprompted?**

✍ List moments when someone *really* had your back.

4. **Who talks the loudest in groups, but disappears in crisis?**

✍ Look for emotional absenteeism. Spot the pattern.

Now,

LET'S REFRAME THE PAIN

Replace this

I gave them everything and they still didn't show up.

With this

I gave out of love. But now, I love myself enough to stop.

JKM LEARNINGS: THE REALITY CHECK DIGEST

5. Presence ≠ Partnership

Someone being around doesn't make them loyal.

6. Test People Before Trusting Fully

A tiny ask can reveal titanic truths.

7. Don't Romanticize Loyalty When It's Not Mutual

Loyalty that's one-sided isn't noble—it's naive.

8. Your Energy Is Currency

Spend it wisely. Budget it fiercely.

9. Stop Fixing People Who Don't Want To Be Whole

You're not rehab. You're not God. You're not their missing piece.

Chapter 16

The Company You Keep – Friends, Filters and Finding Your Tribe

"Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future."—You've probably heard this before, but let me tell you, it's not just a catchy phrase. It's a **fact**.

We are the sum of the **top five people we surround ourselves with**. Your energy, mindset, and vision are constantly shaped by those in your close circle. The right company can be a **guiding light**, pushing you towards growth, success and self-improvement. The wrong one? It can drag you down so fast that you won't even realize when your **future has gone down the toilet**.

The Trap of "Fitting In"

When I moved to Australia, I unknowingly stepped into a social experiment—one that revealed exactly **how powerful our social circles are**. My friends back in India and some who were abroad had a **preset idea** of what my life should look like.

"Where are your party pictures?"

"You're in Sydney and you're not drinking? Not clubbing?"

"Why are you hanging out with working professionals? Live a little!"

It was as if **my growth was measured by how many clubs I'd been to** rather than how much knowledge I had gained or how well I was building my future.

But here's the thing—I **didn't want to share space with university kids who lacked vision**. Instead, I chose to live with **working professionals—people I could learn from, look up to and draw inspiration from**. I wanted to absorb their discipline, their drive and their mindset. But instead of being applauded for my foresight, I was labeled "**uncool**."

And that's when I learned a crucial lesson:

Hold Your Ground—Even When the World Calls You "Uncool"

Not everyone will understand your decisions. Not everyone will root for your growth. Some will try to **belittle your choices**, make you feel like an outsider.

The people you surround yourself with have an **undeniable influence** on your mindset, decisions and ultimately, your destiny. Your entourage can either be a **guiding light**—pushing you towards excellence, growth and opportunities—or a deadweight, dragging you into mediocrity, toxicity, and distraction. The choice is always yours but so are the consequences.

You Are the Sum of the Five People You Spend the Most Time With

Imagine spending every day with a **marketer, a doctor, a researcher, a businessman and a tech expert**. Over time, you'll start absorbing their

knowledge, their way of thinking, their approach to life. You'll become an amalgamation of brilliance.

Now, imagine spending every day with **a gossipmonger, a complainer, a procrastinator, a pessimist and a drama magnet**. You'll **inherit their negativity, their excuses and their limitations**.

Your circle defines your trajectory—it's simple math.

The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing – Drop Them Before They Drain You

Some friendships aren't friendships at all—they're **disguised rivalries**. These so-called friends will:

- Seek your help and assistance but never clap for your success.
- Badmouth you behind your back while smiling in your face.
- Stay in silent competition with you, never truly celebrating your wins.

And yet, we often **fail to let go**. Why? Because we fear loneliness more than stagnation.

But keeping toxic friendships for the sake of companionship is like drinking poison to quench thirst—it'll only destroy you in the long run.

The Venomous Friendships – When Friends Become Your Biggest Critics

Some betrayals don't come from enemies but from the ones you trusted.

I once had a so-called *friend* who body-shamed me after I gained a few pounds, to the point that I was left teary-eyed. When I gathered the

courage to tell her how hurtful her words were, she callously replied with something that left me stunned:

“You should be depressed now. We were also feeling bad when you went abroad and did good for yourself.”

That’s when I realized that **some friendships are built on jealousy, not love**. They don’t hate you for who you are; they hate you for who they *are not*.

INSTANCE 2.0

There was a woman once—sweet on the surface, syrupy even. She hosted me at a reputed boarding school for a seminar. Kind, curious and quite chatty. The seminar was a great success.

But while I was in the restroom, I overheard her venom—back bitching me.

The voice hit me like a dart dipped in duplicity and hypocrisy.

When I walked out and our eyes met, she froze. I said nothing.

My silence wasn’t weakness. It was a mirror.

She followed me like a guilt-ridden shadow, but I didn’t pay heed.

In that moment, I understood: **Jealousy is the purest form of flattery**.

People aren’t always evil.

Sometimes, they’re just *exhausted versions of who they hoped they’d be*.

All That Glitters Isn’t Gold – The Facade of Morality

Appearances can be deceiving. The people who *seem* perfect—the ones who are charming, intelligent, academically brilliant and well-mannered—can turn out to be the most **immoral, unethical and vile** people behind closed doors.

I once knew someone who checked all the boxes—decent-looking, affable, visionary. But when I moved to Canada and got to know him beyond the surface, the mask fell off.

He was **everything he pretended not to be**. A womanizer, a cheat, someone who saw women through an obscene, salacious and objectifying lens.

He once (twice, thrice) made me **deeply uncomfortable**, did something I can't even put into words, and yet—

His best *friend* (our common friend) defended him (betrayed me).

The saddest part?

A friend of mine, someone who claimed to be more than just that, was always protective—or perhaps overly critical—of the people who approached me. He cared, or so I thought. When he got to know about this man's actions, he was furious, vociferous, echoing my outrage. He righteously told me to hold my ground, to take a stand, to ensure that this man never got away with what he had done. And yet, sometime later, I found out he attended that very man's engagement party.

Betrayal doesn't always come from the expected sources. Sometimes, it comes from the ones who once stood beside you, claiming to protect you.

It shook me to my core. I was stoked and Certainly!

I wanted to confront him, to demand an explanation, to understand who he really was. How could someone who had encouraged me to stand against injustice now stand beside the very man who caused it? It felt like the foundation of everything I believed about our bond had collapsed. Years of trust, companionship and belief in his integrity felt like a cruel joke. How do you undo years of friendship, of memories, of shared moments?

But here's the truth: Real ones don't make you question their loyalty. I was overlooking the ones who stood beside and rooted for me.

His actions weren't just about what he did; they were a reflection of his values, of what he represented. And when I walked away from him once before, when I had sensed something was amiss, it was the right call. I just hadn't trusted my instincts back then. Now, there was no ignoring it.

I went through a phase of denial, of disbelief. It made me question humanity itself—if people can switch sides so effortlessly, then what do relationships even mean? But in the end, it always comes down to one thing: identifying the real ones.

And that's how you know the **true nature of toxic friendships**—when people defend the indefensible. It was an eye-opener for me, and if life gives you one, **don't ignore it.**

History is filled with stories of deception and betrayal. Take Julius Caesar, betrayed by his closest ally, Brutus. "Et tu, Brute?" he had said, not just in shock but in heartbreak. Or think of Oprah Winfrey, who once trusted people deeply, only to be deceived by those she considered family. Yet, what did she do? She built her empire, stronger and unshaken.

Betrayal stings because it comes from those we least expect. But it is also the greatest teacher. It forces us to refine our judgment, to sharpen our instincts and to never be fooled by empty words again.

JKM Moment: Sometimes, people reveal their true colours not through words but through actions. Pay attention. When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

The Unseen Gems – Acknowledge the Right People

While we're busy **chasing validation from toxic people**, we often overlook the ones who genuinely care.

I had a **friend in Sydney from Gujarat** who also happened to be my neighbour. For the longest time, I never realized what a hidden gem he was—**caring, compassionate and incredibly supportive**.

The type of friend one *needs* but often *doesn't want*—because that's how humans work, right? We chase people who devalue us while ignoring the ones who wish us well. By the time I realized how **special he was**, it was too late.

Lesson learned? **Trust your gut. Call a spade a spade. Recognize who truly stands by you.**

 1. Self-Reflection: Who's in Your Front Row?

“You don’t just attract what you are—you accept what you tolerate.”

Write down the names of the top 5 people you spend most of your time with (emotionally or physically)

Name	Do they inspire, support, or drain me?	My gut feeling after interactions?

✓ List 3 things you've **started doing** because of your friends:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

✗ Now list 3 things you've **stopped doing** (even if you regret it):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now answer: Is your tribe helping you rise—or quietly making you shrink?

Moral of the Story: Choose Wisely, Drop Early

✓ **Friendships should inspire, not drain.** If they make you feel less, they aren't your friends. ✓ **Your tribe = your vibe.** Surround yourself with people whose vision and values align with yours. ✓ **Toxic friendships have an expiry date.** The sooner you drop them, the better. ✓ **Your future depends on your circle.** Choose the right company, and watch your life transform.

So, don't just let people occupy space in your life. **Audit your circle, filter the noise, and choose wisely.**

Because at the end of the day, **you don't just become who you are. You become who you're with.**

Chapter 17

The Quiet Ones Who Love the Loudest

In a world obsessed with spotlight and noise, some people walk into your life like a whisper—unassuming, gentle but oh-so unforgettable.

They don't *demand* your attention.

They *earn* it—slowly, silently, like rain soaking into the earth.

But here's the tragedy:

We often overlook the soft ones.

The ones who show up without showing off.

The ones who give without announcing.

The ones who love... without expecting.

And while we chase mirages, we forget the oasis that sat beside us all along.

I once had a friendtor. (FRIEND+ TUTOR+ MENTOR)

A tall, dark, handsome man with the soul of a sage and the humility of a monk.

He was barely a few years older than me, preparing for the Indian Administrative Services—diligent, composed and disciplined to the bone. But beyond his sharp mind, it was his heart that made you pause.

He wasn't just my mentor.
He became my mirror, my safe space, my motivator.
We connected over a shared dream—**IAS**—and perhaps over something deeper that didn't need words.

There was this one afternoon.

I was unwell, barely managing to sit upright in class. And then, it happened—

I threw up, right there.

Mortified, embarrassed, tears stinging my eyes.

Before I could dissolve into shame, he stepped up—

Wiped the floor, comforted me and informed my family.

No cringe. No comments. Just compassion.

As days passed, our bond deepened.

He'd look at me while teaching—not inappropriately, but with the tenderness of someone who *saw* me.

Really saw me.

Not for what I looked like, or what I had—but for who I was becoming.

I now know... he had feelings.

Not loud. Not confessed.

But written all over his silences, his gaze, his gentleness, his fondness, his generosity, his compassion.

He got along famously with my family—cordial with my brother, respectful towards my parents.

His cues of exclusivity were subtle—protective glances, lingering pauses, a softness that couldn't be taught in books.

And me?

I chickened out.

I was young, burning with ambition, carrying a checklist of dreams.
I didn't know how to reciprocate. Didn't know how to step back gently.
So, I ran. Retreated into silence.
Avoided him.

And that broke him in ways I didn't see... until much later.

Years passed.

One fine day, I bumped into him.
I teared up—no words, no explanation.
Just a soft, trembling apology.

He smiled. That same kind, graceful smile.

“What's done is done. Don't be sorry.” He said.

And that—*that*—is when I understood what **real affection** feels like.
Not the kind you post about.
Not the one you text at 2 AM.
But the kind that survives storms... quietly.

This chapter isn't about love lost.

It's about kindness forgotten.

Affection overlooked.

Angels we never thanked.

While we cry over people who ghost us,
We forget to honour those who stood by quietly,
Never asking for credit,
Never making us feel small,
Always holding a part of us with reverence.

So, to the ones reading this—look around.

That teacher who saw your spark before you did.

That parent who always put you first without making it a headline.

That friend who never left, no matter how inconsistent you were.

Say the *thank you*.

Say the *sorry*.

Say the *I remember you*. Say the *I miss you*.

Don't wait for a reunion soaked in regret.

Say it while they can still hear you.

JKM LEARNINGS (a.k.a. The Real MVPs):

1. **The quietest people sometimes love the loudest.**
Don't mistake silence for absence.
 2. **Cherish those who walk in without knocking but never barge.**
Their presence is gold in a world of glitter.
 3. **Say what needs to be said.**
Before life switches chapters on you.
 4. **Regret is a heavy suitcase.**
Don't carry it when a single conversation could've emptied it.
 5. **Don't glorify the ones who left.**
Honour the ones who stayed.
-

JKM MOMENT (JUST KEEP MOVING):

You may have missed the chance to say something.

You may have fumbled with feelings, ghosted out of fear, ignored love in

its purest form.

But guess what?

You're still here.

You've still got time to call, to write, to show up.

So do it.

Let people know they mattered—even if it's years too late.

Because some hearts never forget...

And some affections never fade.

The Emotional Radar: Look Around Today

- Who checks on you *without a reason*?

- Who listens, even when you don't make sense?

- Who sends a yearly birthday wish—even after years of silence?

👁️ **Circle back. Rebuild that bridge. Life gives you hints—don't ignore them.**

Chapter 18

Because You Can't Heal in Half-Love

Somewhere between Bollywood romance and Instagram proposals, we lost the plot.

We were told to find “our better half,” as if we were born incomplete. As if our happiness, identity, even our future, must orbit around someone else’s presence.

I’m no love guru, no dating coach and certainly not an expert in matters of the heart. But what I *am* is a woman who has lived, loved, lost, learned—and come out the other side with the unapologetic truth that you and only you, must be your first life partner. That is your original vow and the most sacred one.

Before we talk about marriage, let’s pause and ask: why are you getting married?

Because your friends are? Because your relatives won’t stop bringing up “rishtas”? Because you’re 28 and your biological clock is apparently ticking louder than Big Ben?

Then let me serve you a bitter pill sweetened with truth: **marriage is not a checkbox—it’s a choice.** A lifelong merger of emotions, ambitions, flaws and routines. It’s not a five-day destination wedding, it’s a 50-year destination of shared life.

So before you say yes to *anyone else*, ask yourself:

- Are you emotionally and financially independent?
- Have you defined your own purpose beyond being someone's spouse?
- Do you respect this person deeply—or just fear being alone?
- Can you handle boredom with them, not just butterflies?

Hookups fade, Depth remains.

Hook-up culture? Let me be blunt: it's a hollow hobby for the emotionally bankrupt. Swipe-rights and blurry lines won't fill the void. It's for the ones who settle for instant noodles because they don't have the patience to cook a slow, soulful meal.

And let's not romanticize uncertainty. If they're unclear, confused, non-committal—**that *is* your answer.**

You deserve someone who makes it **crystal clear** that you're not a backup plan or time-pass between options. People *know* how they see you. If they're treating you like a question mark, walk away like an exclamation point.

Now, if you're healing from heartbreak, here's my old-school advice: Relive it.

Yes, you read that right. Rewind. Remember.

Play that song—the one that was *your* song.

Recall the time they made you laugh till your ribs hurt.

Think of when they made you feel seen. Special. Safe. Remember that shirt they wore, the perfume they liked on you, the way they pulled your cheeks, squished you in a tight meaningful hug, the crack in their voice when they disappointed you, when they got misty eyed

because you were appalled, how vulnerable and fearful they were at the mere thought of losing you, the time they flew across continents just to hold you.

Now, after this walk down memory lane—pause.

And ask yourself: why did it end?

Was it because they chose silence over answers? Ego over effort? Comfort over commitment?

Did they want someone richer? Simpler? More available?

Relive the love—but remember the *reason* you had to let go.

Heartbreak hurts, yes. But holding onto false hope? That's a slow suicide.

So take your time. Cry. Write. Spray that perfume one last time. Save those texts if you must. But then? **Move. JUST KEEP MOVING, BABY STEPS FOR NOW BUT JUST KEEP MOVING. MOVE ON, MOVE FORWARD, JUST KEEP MOVING.**

Because, if you don't make room for what's meant for you, you'll keep recycling pain that was never yours to bear forever. EACH ENDING BRINGS A NEW BEGINNING.

JKM MOMENTS: Just Keep Moving

- Don't chase closure where confusion was your only conversation.
- A life partner isn't a life purpose. **You are your purpose.**
- If it costs you your peace, it's too expensive—even if it once felt priceless.
- Choose someone who adds silence to your chaos, not chaos to your silence.

- You're not "too much." You were just asking the wrong person to match your magnitude.

Now dust off the past, wear your self-worth like your favourite perfume and walk forward like the main character you were born to be. Because, darling—*you are*.

Chapter 19

Love Is Not a Lottery — Stop Betting on the Wrong Numbers

“Don’t give up on love yet,” they say.

And no, you shouldn’t.

But let’s get something straight: while **you can’t always choose whom you fall for**, you can **definitely know whom not to**. That difference? That’s where your peace lives.

Eye Candy or Soul Food?

At some point, we’ve all been hypnotized by the wrong kind of charm — the ones who know how to talk sweet but can’t hold space for your silence. The ones who are good to you... selectively. The ones who sparkle in public, but don’t know how to sit with your pain in private.

The world is full of:

- Showpieces or soulmates
- Status seekers or castle builders
- Apologizers or changers
- Gold chains or wind beneath your wings

And the older I get, the more I believe — **fetters, even of gold, are still fetters.**

🍄 **Marrying Success ≠ Becoming Successful**

Here's the truth no fairytale will tell you: **marrying a successful person doesn't make you successful.**

Success isn't sexually transmitted.

That person is not your shortcut, not your saviour and definitely not your syllabus for success.

Be your own damn hero.

The one who walks beside you? Let them be your **catalyst**, not your competition. Someone who pushes you forward, not dims your shine to preserve theirs.

Know What You *Won't* Tolerate

People always say — make a checklist of the traits you want in your life partner.

I say — flip it.

Make a checklist of everything you *don't* want.

Because we don't always know what to chase... but we *always* know what we can't stand.

Do I want a chain-smoker?

No.

So why marry one and waste life hoping they'll quit?

We invite problems like VIP guests and then complain about being exhausted serving them.

Choose the elimination method. Just like I did with universities while planning post-graduation — I was never confused because I had already eliminated what was not for me.

The Elimination Method: Your Heart's Compass

You don't need perfect. You just need peace.

Everyone's flawed — so don't look for an idol sculpted in your fantasy. But also... **don't settle for the exact qualities you always swore you'd never live with.**

Example? If you're a strict vegetarian who gets nauseated at the sight of meat, don't convince yourself love will change your comfort zone. You'll either:

- Start eating what you despise
- Or live in silent resentment, choking on compromise daily.

And that's not love. That's endurance therapy.

But What If He/She Ticks All the “Good” Boxes?

Let's talk about the classic trap:

“He/ She ticks everything I *want*... but also brings things I can't tolerate.”

Let me stop you right there: **don't go for him/her in the first place.**

Your **non-negotiables are not optional.** They are the fence around your peace. When the honeymoon phase is over and the glitter fades, what you're left with are those very things that gnaw at your soul.

Life Isn't a Romance Movie, It's a Series of Contracts

Before you sign one with someone else, **read the fine print of your own soul.**

Are you willing to:

- Be silenced?
- Tolerate cheating, coldness, or ego?
- Endure someone who doesn't clap for your growth?

No?

Then **don't sign up** for it, no matter how shiny the proposal looks.

Love is not a crime. But falling in love with the wrong person *repeatedly* without learning from it... is emotional embezzlement.

So don't give up on love.

Just give up on the illusion that pain = passion.

Choose wisely. Choose peace. Choose again.

And always — **Just Keep Moving.**

✕ 1. The Elimination Method: Your Non-Negotiables

List 3 things you absolutely cannot live with in a partner:

RED FLAGS/ NON NEGOTIABLES	WHY IT MATTERS
E.g. DISRESPECTING MY PARENTS	SHOWS CORE VALUES & EMPATHY

Now promise yourself this: “I will not emotionally invest in anyone who carries these.”

JKM LEARNINGS — Just Keep Loving Smart

1. You can't always control *who* you fall for but you *can always* walk away from who isn't right for you.
2. Don't marry a potential version of someone hoping they'll change. Marry their truth.
3. Red flags are not carnival decorations. Stop romanticizing them.
4. Stop praying for someone who checks your “wants” list. Start eliminating based on your “non-negotiables” list.
5. If someone feels like a weight, even gold-plated, they are not your wings.

Love is not a lottery. It's a choice. Make it wisely and bravely. And once you find it don't leave it unattended ever and later whine why it became cold, nurture it constantly and keep reviving it with conscious efforts even when it loses it's spark and feels mundane.

Chapter 20

The Noise Within – Finding Peace in Chaos

We live in a world filled with constant noise—external voices that dictate what we should do, who we should be and how we should react. But the loudest chaos isn't always outside; sometimes, it's the storm raging within us. The ability to silence this noise, to tune out unnecessary distractions and to focus on what truly matters is one of the greatest strengths a person can develop.

Fights, Ego and the Bigger Picture

How often do we get tangled in petty fights, holding grudges over meaningless disagreements? We waste energy arguing over trivial things, feeding our egos instead of nurturing our peace. But what happens when life hits us with a real crisis? Suddenly, those small fights seem insignificant.

I'll never forget the day my father underwent a surgery. As he lay there under the influence of anesthesia, his frail body unmoving, I held his hand and burst into tears. The nurse, puzzled, asked why I was crying now when the surgery had been successful. How could I explain the surge of emotions flooding my mind? In that moment, I realized how foolish we humans are—**fighting over temporary issues, letting our egos drive us apart and forgetting the fleeting nature of life.**

◆ JKM Moment: Life is too short to hold onto bitterness. Let go, rise above and Just Keep Moving.

The Transience of Everything

Everything in life—material possessions, relationships and even struggles—is temporary. And yet, we cling to things as if they define us forever. We hold onto anger, to losses, to regrets, never realizing that stagnant emotions are like stagnant water—**they only lead to decay.**

- ✓ The watch you obsess over today will be outdated in a few years.
- ✓ The car you dream of owning will depreciate the moment you drive it off the lot.
- ✓ The grudge you hold today will mean nothing when faced with real adversity.
- ◆ JKM Moment: Like flowing water, keep moving forward and refuse to let negativity stagnate your soul.

Journaling: A Tool to Reframe Reality

Whenever you find yourself caught in the chaos of an argument or drowning in negative emotions, try this: **Grab a journal and write down a happy memory.**

Revisiting moments of joy helps reframe your current perspective. It reminds you that no matter what is happening now, there were—and will be—better days ahead. Writing down things you're grateful for shifts your focus from what's wrong to what's right.

- ✓ Got into a fight? Write about a time that person made you smile.
- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed? List five things that went right today.
- ✓ Struggling with setbacks? Recall a time you overcame adversity.

◆ JKM Moment: A grateful heart is a peaceful heart. Redirect your focus and Just Keep Moving.

2. JKM PEACE CHECK-IN

Tick all that apply for today:

- I chose peace over ego in a tough conversation _____
- I journaled or vented instead of exploding _____
- I reminded myself: “This won’t matter in a year” _____
- I forgave someone silently, for my peace _____
- I sat with myself and just breathed _____

If you didn’t tick any—**no guilt.**

Just awareness. Awareness is step one of healing.

1. Recognize Your Inner Noise

Think about your last emotional conflict. Was it truly about the issue—or something deeper?

Use this space to *deconstruct your noise*.

The Surface Conflict:

(e.g., “They didn’t reply to my message”)

The Real Trigger Beneath It:

(e.g., “I felt abandoned, unimportant, not prioritized”)

◆ *Realization:* When we identify the source/trigger, we regain the power to heal it.

The Ultimate Perspective Shift

Next time you’re tempted to hold onto resentment, ask yourself: ✓ Will this matter a year from now?

✓ If I lost this person tomorrow, would this fight still be important?

✓ Am I choosing my ego over my peace?

Because at the end of the day, **happiness is a choice**. And the happiest people aren't the ones who never experience conflict but the ones who learn to rise above it.

◆ **JKM Moment:** Life is too unpredictable to waste on negativity.
Forgive, grow and Just Keep Moving

Chapter 21

The Door That Always Closes Without a Sound- DEATH

They say death doesn't send invitations. It doesn't knock. It enters like a breeze and leaves like a hurricane—calm on arrival, catastrophic in its aftermath.

We always think there'll be a next time.

But there's a haunting finality in the words: *They're no more.*

Grief is a strange guest. It arrives when you least expect it, overstays its welcome and refuses to leave quietly. But sometimes life doesn't even let you grieve properly. Just when you're trying to process the pain, life barges in with more chaos, dragging you forward while you're still trying to look back.

You see, death teaches you the biggest irony of life: the people we think we'll have forever are the ones we should call *today*.

We spend our lives chasing promotions, applause and aesthetics, forgetting that the real richness lies in *presence*—being truly *present* for those who may not have tomorrow.

Don't just photograph your dinners—*sit down for them.*

Don't just gift your parents things—*gift them your time*.
Don't just click selfies at reunions—*hold eye contact and say you missed them*.

Don't just snapchat your friends bragging about a friend.

Because death is inevitable and worse—unpredictable. That “one day” you keep waiting for? It might just be the “never.”

And here's something important: *Don't treat your parents like an old version of an app that you've outgrown*.

They upgraded you. They kept you alive. They gave up dreams to sponsor yours. Don't make them feel obsolete.

And still, as cruel as it sounds—life goes on.

The clock won't stop ticking. The sun will rise, regardless of who it shines for.

That's why you must feel every emotion—deeply—but learn to detach from it with grace. Love, grief, joy, heartbreak—they're all passing clouds. Let them rain. Let them drench you. But remember, *don't drown*.

Because in the end, grief doesn't shrink. *You grow around it*.

JKM MOMENTS (Just Keep Moving):

- Revisit the roots, before they become relics.
- Tell people what they mean to you—now, not later.
- Don't just exist around people you love. Be present. Be involved.
- Accept the impermanence. But don't let it numb you—let it *ignite* you.
- Feel fully. Grieve deeply. But always—*Just Keep Moving*.

Chapter 22

The Art of Living – Finding Joy in the Slow Moments

In the rush to chase dreams, meet deadlines and conquer fears, we often forget that life isn't just about the big leaps—it's about the small pauses too. While ambition drives us, balance sustains us. The key to longevity in this marathon isn't just moving forward relentlessly; it's knowing when to slow down, breathe and simply be.

We often think we need grand victories to feel accomplished but sometimes, the simplest moments hold the deepest joys. Like savouring a hot cup of coffee, feeling its warmth in your hands as you let the aroma take over your senses. Watching the sunset from your balcony, letting the golden hues remind you that no matter how chaotic the day was, beauty still exists. Listening to slow music, letting it wrap around you like a familiar embrace. Supporting your parents financially and fulfilling all their wishes.

Suffering has a way of bringing us closer to God. It humbles us, refines us and makes us realize what truly matters. A deep conversation with an old friend, reminiscing about times that seemed ordinary back then but now feel irreplaceable. Cracking jokes just to see someone laugh. Doing something for your parents—not out of obligation, but out of love. Taking up a hobby not because it benefits your career but because it feeds your soul.

Learn to appreciate the minuscule, random things in people—the way someone crinkles their nose when they laugh, the way your best friend always texts you after a long day, the way a stranger holds the door open for someone behind them, the way someone unexpectedly wishes you luck before an important day. Life's real magic is hidden in these everyday moments.

Protect Your Energy, Amplify It

Your energy is sacred. Guard it fiercely. Go to places that amplify it—whether it's the gym where you push your limits, a temple where you find solace or a park where you simply exist. Surround yourself with people who uplift you, not those who drain you. Celebrate your friends' wins as if they were your own. Be the person who claps for others even when your own hands are empty.

Balance: The Hardest Yet Most Rewarding Skill

No matter how indispensable you think you are at work, they will always find a replacement. Burnout isn't a badge of honor. Work hard, yes. But also take time to rest, to laugh, to live. Die young as late as possible—meaning, keep your spirit youthful, your heart open and your curiosity alive for as long as you breathe.

Don't rush into things. Let life unfold at its own pace. The world glorifies speed, but there is beauty in slowness. In walking instead of running. In sitting quietly instead of always speaking. In letting things happen instead of forcing them to.

Get a pet if you can—a pup or a cat who will love you unconditionally. Experience the purity of snuggles that doesn't come with terms and conditions.

Love, Laugh and Look Them in the Eyes

We assume people know we love them. But do they? Tell them. Look them in the eye and say the simplest, most mundane affirmations—how much you love them, how much you miss them, how much they mean to you. These words may seem small but they hold the power to heal, to strengthen, to connect.

Relive your favourite memories. Inspire those around you. Help without expecting anything in return. And most importantly, never let material possessions dictate your happiness. Because at the end of the day, it's not what you owned that will matter—it's what you experienced, whom you loved and how deeply you lived.

Life is fleeting and we are all just passing through. Make sure that while you are here, you truly live.

JKM MOMENT- THESE LITTLE THINGS ARE NOT LITTLE. JUST KEEP MOVING BUT KEEP THESE INTACT.

Chapter 23

The Art of Laughing Through Life

JKM Moment: Just Keep Moving—but don't forget to throw a banana peel at life's seriousness!

I inherited one of life's most underrated superpowers from my mother: the ability to laugh through a crisis and prank your way through pressure. She didn't just pass down her genes—she passed down her jester's hat.

Let me take you back to the time she called my friend—while I sat right next to her—and grilled him about my whereabouts. The poor guy was mumbling, covering up like a character in a crime thriller. After fifteen minutes of roasting, she dropped the bomb: “SHE IS HERE WITH ME, YOU PASSED AS A FRIEND”. He froze. I cried laughing.

But I didn't just inherit the humour; I honed it. I remember in undergrad, giving my friend a ride on my scooter. He insisted on driving. I forgot to mention the brakes were on strike. As we sped towards a traffic signal, he pressed the brakes. Nothing happened. I panicked, dragged my feet Flintstone-style but we zoomed past the red light and got flagged by the traffic police. His face was priceless. I laughed so hard I nearly got arrested for joy.

Or take the infamous banana peel incident. I lobbed it towards the bin. Missed. Teacher enters. Nearly Slipped. Chaos. My friends knew it was me, but no one ratted me out. Later, I picked up the peel and threw it in

and the teacher praised me for being thoughtful. I was the head girl—the serious one—but I had a mischievous streak that could trip you (literally).

And who could forget the keyboard episode? I was a child, enamoured with technology. I removed all the keys from a computer keyboard, stuffed them into my pouch when the bell rang and then... was tasked with investigating the mystery. My solution? Hide the keys in plant pots and send the class on a treasure hunt. Sherlock Holmes, but make it slapstick.

I've learned one thing through and through: laughter keeps you young, light and grounded—even when life feels like a steep hill with loose brakes. It is the chosen vehicle of all ambiguities.

If resilience had a laughter track, my life would be a sitcom—partly scripted by fate, mostly improvised by my genes.

Lesson:

Laughter doesn't make your problems disappear but it surely makes them dance. Stay young at heart. Pull harmless pranks. Be the person who, even in chaos, finds the joy in banana peels and midnight prank phone calls.

Because when life slips, let it fall—but make sure it falls laughing.

6. JKM Takeaways

- **Humour is the CPR for a stressed soul.** It revives your spirit even when nothing else can.
- **Being “the serious one” doesn’t mean you can’t be silly.** In fact, the best leaders are often the best laughers.
- **Laughter is not escapism—it’s alchemy.** It transforms weight into light.

- **A prank played right is not a crime; it's a memory in the making.**
- **When things fall apart, throw glitter. Or banana peels. Or a punchline.**

JKM Moment (Just Keep Moving):

Laugh. Often. Loudly. Especially when things go wrong. It's your soul's way of healing before the bandage even arrives.

Chapter 24

The Universe Always Has a Plan

Sometimes, when we desperately want something but it feels impossible to attain, the universe conspires to bring it to us—just not in the way we imagined. And when it does, it arrives with a bang, unfolding like a grand spectacle, full of unexpected twists and turns.

Growing up, not even in my wildest dreams did I think I would ever board a plane. Financial constraints made it seem like an unattainable luxury. Yet, life had other plans. When I finally stepped onto my first solo flight, it was nothing short of a rollercoaster—partly because of my overwhelming excitement and partly because it was an utter disaster.

I was flying from Delhi to Sydney with a layover in Thailand. Navigating the massive airport was a nightmare—I got lost, sulked, cursed my luck and after an hour of struggle, finally found my connecting gate. That was just the beginning.

On another trip, I booked a flight with China Southern Airlines, only to experience the true test of patience. The layover in China was just 1.5 hours, but as expected, my flight from India took off late. By the time I reached China, my connecting flight had already left. I pleaded with the airline staff, but all I got were taunts before they finally directed me to a Singapore Airlines counter. The next available flight was in five hours. Starving, exhausted and stuck in an airport lounge with nothing

appetizing (unless you count octopus and bats), I felt stranded. To make matters worse, my WhatsApp stopped working due to border restrictions, making it impossible to contact home.

Finally, I boarded the Singapore flight, but the nightmare continued. My final leg to Sydney was delayed by nine hours. By this point, I had been inside airports for nearly two days, and my birthday was just hours away. My friends in Sydney and family back home were terrified because they had no idea where I was. When I finally arrived, my luggage was missing, but honestly, at that point, I had accepted my fate. I had manifested air travel and boy, did the universe deliver—just with its own set of dramatic embellishments.

Then there was my infamous Delhi-to-Canada flight. The departure got delayed six times over three days due to technical issues. When we finally took off, halfway into the journey, an announcement was made: an emergency landing was required due to a system failure. Since we were flying over Pakistan, an immediate landing wasn't possible. The pilot made a U-turn, released excess fuel from the wings and began scouting for a safe landing spot. I whispered my final prayers, scrambled for WiFi to text my family one last time and braced myself for impact. By some miracle, we landed safely back in Delhi.

Two days later, we received a message that the airline was ready to fly again. The aircraft had supposedly been swapped but as soon as we boarded, we noticed the same broken screens and stained seats. With fingers crossed, we flew again, finally reaching Canada—our compensation? A goodwill voucher for putting up with them.

And just when I thought I had seen it all, life threw in another plot twist. Last year, I travelled to Hemkund Sahib and booked a helicopter ride well in advance. When our turn came, my family and I got in, expecting a smooth two-minute flight. But just as we were about to land, the pilot signalled that visibility was zero and turned back. We were left at square

one, confused and clueless. We had to arrange horses at the last minute and embark on an exhausting eight-hour trek. My parents shot me an eye-roll, as if questioning whether I was some kind of bad omen.

Yet, despite all these experiences, I wouldn't change a thing. The universe answered my prayers—it just did so in a way that made sure I never took anything for granted. That's the beauty of life: you ask for something, and when it finally arrives, it does so in abundance, often wrapped in chaos. But that's what makes the journey worthwhile.

JKM MOMENT- Learn to embrace the unpredictability. To never stop asking but also to understand that no dream is too big or too far-fetched. The universe listens—it just has its own sense of humour.

Chapter 25

Rerouting is Not Retreating — It's Realignment

They say, “When life doesn’t go as planned, maybe it’s planning something better.”

But when you’ve poured your sweat, soul and sanity into something, this consolation doesn’t land too well—at least, not immediately.

There comes a time in every fighter’s life when even after giving your blood, brain and breath to a goal—be it a career, a place or a person—it still crumbles like dry sand slipping through clenched fists. And you’re left numb, questioning: *Was it even worth it?*

I’ve been there.

“Failure is not the opposite of success. It is the seasoning.

Without it, your story is bland.”

Let me take you back to my time in Australia. My goal was to build a solid foundation: earn the residencies of 2 countries, complete my degree, hit the golden number of working hours and later, escort my family there.

Every step was a battle I chose. And won.

But here’s what no one talks about—what happens after you “win”?

The Mirage of "Making It"

When I moved to Canada as a permanent resident, I thought: *Finally. I've made it.*

But what I landed into was a terrain that looked nothing like the brochures.

What was supposed to be my "dream leap" turned into a claustrophobic descent.

The weather? Brutal.

The economy? Tanking.

The job market? A warzone.

And the flatmate? A psychological thriller come to life—wicked, manipulative and surrounded by weed-smoking brothers. It was not a household, it was a house-of-horrors.

Still, I stayed. Still, I tried.

Because when you've invested so much, the guilt of quitting screams louder than the discomfort of staying.

But one fine afternoon—amidst a snowstorm of emotions—I heard a voice.

Book the goddamn tickets. Enough is enough. You didn't slog your soul out to feel caged again.

 **JKM Learning: When your gut speaks, listen like it's gospel.**

I didn't wait for a breakdown. I decided to break free.

People might label it as "giving up," but I didn't flinch. Because to me, a reroute is not a retreat.

It's realignment.

It's self-respect.

 **JKM Learning: Nothing is a failure—it's learning, followed by more learning, followed by success.**

I came to India, lighter in pocket but heavier in insight.

This return was not regression—it was resurrection.

I used every ounce of foreign experience, all my bruises and every misstep as bricks to lay the foundation for my own empire. I dived into real estate. I drew up business plans. I hustled on my soil, among my people, with a heart that had been through fire but still beat for purpose. And in the midst of it all, I found **JKM LEARNOVATION**—my baby. What started as a side hustle, a creative outlet during a season of uncertainty, slowly blossomed into a mission-driven brand and kickstarted my entrepreneurial journey. It became a platform to empower others with the very lessons I learned the hard way—lessons not found in textbooks, but in trials. It gave my voice a direction, my vision a structure and my scars a purpose.

And no, this wasn't what I planned.

But damn, it's better than anything I imagined.

*“Sometimes the U-turn you're forced to take
is just the shortcut you needed.”*

To anyone reading this: don't let the sunk cost hold you captive. Don't let effort trap you in an environment that doesn't serve you anymore.

And please—don't wear failure as shame. Wear it like your armour. It's the proof that you dared.

Your instincts? They're wiser than you think.

Give your plans a fair shot—but also, give yourself permission to walk away.

JKM Moments: Just Keep Moving

- Rejections are redirections.
- Your comfort zone can cost you your calling.
- Rerouting is not cowardice; it's courage in disguise.
- If you're scared of failing, remember: failure teaches you what nothing else ever will.
- The most successful people aren't the ones who never fell—they're the ones who didn't let failure become their full stop.

You are not lost.

You are just being re-routed.

And sometimes, that's where the magic lives.

So no matter how many paths collapse—

JUST KEEP MOVING.

4. Realignment Inventory – Know When It's Time to Reroute

Tick the ones that resonate with you:

_____ I feel drained, not driven, by what once excited me

_____ I've achieved the goal but feel no joy

_____ My values no longer align with my environment

_____ I'm staying out of guilt, not growth

_____ My intuition keeps nudging me to choose differently

If you ticked 2 or more — your reroute is not rebellion. It's revelation.

5. JKM Takeaways

- Your worth is not measured by how long you stayed—it's measured by how bravely you walked away.
- Quitting what no longer fits is not failure; it's freedom.
- Realignment isn't about erasing the past—it's about evolving because of it.
- The comeback is always stronger than the crash.
- Trust the detour. Sometimes, that's the route with the view.
- I give myself permission to pivot.
- I am allowed to change my mind when my soul evolves.
- I reroute not because I failed but because I'm ready for better.

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Chapter 26

Speak Like You Mean It. Walk Like You Own It.

The first rule of self-presentation? Announce yourself. No one else is going to do it for you. You walk into a room, into an interview or even a new group — your name, voice and energy should precede you. That's your brand. That's your first handshake with the world.

Most people think confidence is about talking more. But confidence is not volume, it's clarity. It's not noise, it's *poise*.

1. Start with an Assertive Introduction

“Hi, I’m [Your Name], I’m quite diligent and self-driven.”

Say that out loud. Again. Loudly and clearly. It instantly builds credibility. It signals self-awareness.

Now here's a communication hack not everyone will tell you — **don't just introduce yourself, introduce your essence**. Add a dash of personality, a couple of adjectives — “Hi, I’m X. I’m extremely diligent, self-driven and unapologetically passionate about what I do.” Doesn't that just land better than the plain old “Hi, I’m X”?

1. Master the Psychology of Presence

Because here is the truth bomb, an excellent presentation is

- 7% what you say
- 38% how you say it (your voice)
- 55% your non-verbal cues (gestures, posture, facial expressions)
- IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY BUT HOW YOU SAY IS WHAT MATTERS.

It's not about fancy words — it's about *how* you deliver even the simplest ones.

THE BABA GANOUSH MOVE — MY FAVOURITE TRICK EVER

Once upon a job hunt in Australia, I applied for a service sector role in a reputed firm. Fast forward: I was selected not for that position but for a Payroll and Compliance Officer post (a.k.a. HR). Why? Because the panel was so blown away by my articulation and oratory, they decided I didn't belong on the floor — I belonged where voices mattered.

Here's the trick I used — reverse question engineering. They asked me about my favourite dish. Most people answer safe — pizza, pasta, noodles. I said *Baba Ganoush*.

Naturally, their next question was: “*What's Baba Ganoush?*”

Boom. I controlled the narrative.

“It's a Lebanese dip made using aubergines.”

“What are aubergines?”

“Well, it's basically eggplant. You may also know it as brinjal.”

FYI Baba Ganoush is just a fancy word for a brinjal-based dip.

The point isn't to sound exotic or quirky. It's to subtly steer the conversation towards what you know best. Play smart — don't always

answer what they're asking; answer in a way that makes them ask what you want to say.

Bring Your Own Lemon to the Table

Be different. Unapologetically. They ask: "What's your favourite fruit?" Sure, you like mangoes and apples. But say Buddha's Hand if you've tried it. They'll pause. They'll think. They'll ask. And that's your door. Own it.

What's your hobby? Everyone says cricket, football. You say solving Tarzia puzzles. And watch the magic unfold.

We all bring something unique to the table. Just don't forget to serve it.

Frameworks That Sell Your Story Like a Pro

STAR Method

- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result

This is your go-to during interviews when you're narrating past experiences. Structure kills confusion. And structure sells.

OREO Framework (Perfect for Group Discussions)

- Opinion- I LOVE MY HUSBAND
- Reason- HE CARES FOR ME
- Example- HE COOKS DINNER FOR ME EVERY NIGHT AND ALSO TAKES CARE OF THE DISHES
- Opinion Again (but firmer)- I LOVEEE MY HUSBANDDDD

GD tip: Speak only when you add value, but when you do — own that space like it's your runway.

The ABC of a Magnetic Persona

- A – Attitude: A positive attitude can turn a cracked teacup into a collector's item. A negative person finds the hole even in a donut.
- B – Be Yourself: Don't clone your idols. Respect them but compete only with your yesterday.
- C – Confidence: Speak like the mic was made for you. Either believe there's no one in the room or believe you're the one everyone's here for. Be excellent at speaking off the cuff.

Coffin Theory

When Friend A dies and Friend B fears giving the funeral speech more than the death itself — that's real. According to *The Book of Lists* (1977), public speaking ranks above death, heights and spiders. The stage? That's where your mettle is forged.

Sell Yourself — You're the Product

Here's what they don't teach in college:

1. Tell, don't just sell. We're all products. But what's your story? Your packaging? Your WHY?
2. FOMO Marketing: Highlight your USP — what do you bring that others don't? Make people feel *they'll lose something irreplaceable if they don't pick you*.

3. Upskill Before You De-skill:
Learn before you remove the “L”.
-

JKM LEARNINGS

- Be your loudest cheerleader. Own your name. Your story. Your scars.
 - Make people ask what *you* want to answer. Flip the script.
 - Frameworks = Power. Structure gives wings to your substance.
 - Confidence isn't inborn — it's engineered. With every mic, room and interview you dare to own.
 - Your uniqueness is your gold. Unleash it.
-

You're not just applying for a job or speaking on a stage. You're creating an aura, building a legacy, etching your name in minds and hearts.

Because remember — companies don't last forever. People do. You'll forget the logos. But you'll never forget the legends.

Now go. Speak like you mean it. Walk like you own it. And always — Just Keep Moving.

1. Reflection Questions

- When was the last time you truly owned a room with your presence? What helped you do that?
-

- What adjective-laced version of your introduction feels most authentic to you?

- What's one unconventional thing about you that people always remember?

- Which area do you most need to work on: voice, body language, or storytelling structure?

2. Journal Prompts

- **Write your power-packed intro** — not just your name, but your **essence**. Add 3 adjectives, 1 passion and 1 quirk that make you unforgettable.

- **Recall a time you felt nervous before speaking. What were you afraid of?** What did you learn?

- **Craft your “Baba Ganoush” moment.** Pick a question you might get (e.g., “What’s your favourite dish/book/hobby?”) and reverse-engineer a quirky, smart answer that leads to your strengths.

3. Your Personal Presence Scorecard

Rate yourself from 1 (Needs Work) to 5 (Killing It):

Element	Score (1–5)
Eye contact	
Voice clarity and modulation	
Confident body language	
Ability to structure answers (STAR)	
Quirky conversational hooks	
Courage to stand out	

Bonus Prompt: What will you do to level up the lowest-rated area?

4. Power Persona Blueprint

Fill in the blanks to build your unapologetic, magnetic persona:

- **I am:**

- **People remember me for:**

- **My communication superpower is:**

- **When I enter a room, I want people to feel:**

- **I shine brightest when:**

Now practice saying this aloud. Own it. Repeat until it becomes your walk-in anthem.

JKM Moments & Learnings (to Tattoo on Your Soul)

- Confidence is clarity. Not volume.
- Flip the question. Control the narrative. Make them curious.
- Your weird is your weapon. Your quirk is your crown.
- Speak like it's your stage—even when it's a Zoom call.
- The world remembers legends, not just logos.
- Practice your presence. You're already powerful.

Bonus Mirror Challenge

Stand in front of a mirror. Look into your eyes.

Say:

“I don't need to be louder. I just need to be clearer, sharper and fully, unapologetically me.”

Now smile. That's your real mic check.

The Core Truths I Now Live By

- Never announce your goals too soon. The applause you seek can become a distraction. Protect your process. Let your success be the noise.
- Don't chase titles. Chase impact. Corporate cubicles in foreign lands can feel emptier than quiet evenings with your family in your hometown.
- Faith it till you make it. Doubts will scream louder than dreams—until your actions silence them.
- Build roots before wings. Anchor yourself in values, purpose, and self-awareness. The world is yours only if you know who you are first.

- Learn to laugh. Be notorious. Stay young at heart. Pranks, playfulness, and joy aren't distractions—they're weapons of resilience.
 - Choose love over lust. Reject hookup culture. Your body, soul and future deserve sacred companionship, not chaotic entanglements.
 - Use your voice wisely. Master the art of communication—not just to impress others, but to express your truth, ask boldly and stand tall in boardrooms, interviews, or life.
 - And most importantly: push yourself for that one extra degree.
At 99°C, water is just hot.
At 100°C, it becomes steam, powerful enough to move locomotives.
That 1 degree makes the difference between “almost” and “unstoppable.”
-

JKM Learnings: Final Reflections

- Elevation requires separation. You'll lose people, places, even pieces of yourself. But it's all part of the resurrection.
- Life is not a straight line. It loops, reroutes, collapses and rebuilds. Trust the detours. They're often divine.
- You don't only live once. That's a lie. You live every single day. You only die once. So, make every single day count.
- Own your scars. Use them as bricks to build your empire, not burdens to carry.
- Choose people who choose you, every single day. Family, friends, faith—these are your real wealth.

- Bloom where you are planted and bloom even in the gloom
-

This isn't just my journey. It's yours too—because if I could just keep moving through storms, slumps, solitude and self-doubt, so can you.

Remember:

You are one brave decision away from a radically different life.

Take it.

Live it.

And Just Keep Moving.

Halfway to Nowhere Is Still on the Way

“You don’t fear the storm when you carry the ocean within.”

There’s a strange silence when you find yourself halfway to nowhere.

It’s not failure, not yet.

Not success either.

It’s the grey, gruelling space in between—the murky, maddening middle.

The place where most people quit.

But this chapter?

This chapter is your rebellion against that temptation.

Because dreams don’t belong in cages of convenience.

They belong in the wilderness of obsession, grit and grace.

Dream not just big, but *wild*. Wild enough to scare you, stretch you, strip you—and then *shape you*.



The Psychology of Wild Dreams

Dr. Angela Duckworth, an American academic, psychologist and popular science author, in her legendary study on **“Grit”**, found that perseverance and passion for long-term goals outweigh intelligence, talent or privilege in determining success.

It’s not about being the smartest.

It’s about being the one who refuses to give up when the path gets foggy.

This is what most people don’t understand:

Wanting a positive experience is a negative experience.

It means you’re chasing comfort.

But embracing a negative experience becomes a positive experience because now you’re evolving.

You don't become the ocean by avoiding storms.

You become the ocean *by swallowing them*.

Let me take you back. I've always been the "academic achiever", "vice head girl"—the kind of student whose report card didn't need parents signatures because teachers knew I was always on top of my game.

So when I had to appear for IELTS (for Canada's PR), I scoffed. Easy, right?

Wrong.

The **reading section became my nemesis**. Three attempts in a month. **Three times the same score**.

It felt like a cruel joke.

The cherry on top?

My father saying, "If you miss this draw, it's gone."

It was more than a missed opportunity—it was an *existential punch* to everything I believed about myself.

So I disappeared.

No calls. No updates. Just burnt the midnight oil, rewired my brain and in the **fourth attempt**—exhausted, trembling and running on grit—I nailed it.

I didn't just crack a test.

I cracked the myth of infallibility.

Even the best stumble. But the great rise.



What Life as an HR Taught Me

Working in HR in Australia, I met hundreds of individuals. Different lives. Different flaws. Different brilliance.

And here's what I saw: **Everyone has something to teach you.**

Yes, even the annoying ones. Even the egoistic ones.

Even the ones who trigger your deepest insecurities.

You know you're evolving when instead of comparing, you **start collecting**—their constructive ideas, good habits and healthy patterns. Turning envy into education. Turning observation into mastery.

The world becomes your classroom. *Life* becomes your curriculum.

The Final Formula: Character > Credentials

Here's the harsh truth:

- Your start-up will stall if your ego drives it.
- Your degree won't shield you from despair if you lack direction.
- Your vocabulary won't matter if your *values* aren't intact.

Prioritise:

- God, because storms come.
- Family, because fame fades.
- Health, because you carry your dream in your body.

Don't despise struggle—it's your silent strength training.

Don't resent others—they're not your competition, your complacency is.

Don't belittle others—you never know what test they're sitting for while you're judging their handwriting.

JKM TAKEAWAYS

- **Be a volcano, not a firecracker.** Let your silence gather power until your eruption is unstoppable.

- **Show up on days when the universe gives you nothing.** Because *showing up is sacred*.
- **Get a vision board.** Glue your madness to paper. Light a fire under it.
- **Train your mind like a soldier.** Words are your arsenal. Self-doubt is the enemy.
- **When you're mocked for dreaming big, remember: Most people fear what they don't understand.**

JKM Final Takeaways: The Ocean Within

- *You are not the storm. You are the ocean it crashes into.*
- *Passion is useless without process. Burn smart, not just bright.*
- *Don't crumble because it's hard. Build because it's worth it.*
- *Be bold enough to start. Be brave enough to stay. Be wise enough to finish.*
- *Dream wild. Work humble. Show up relentless.*

Final JKM Mantra

“You’re one passionate decision away from launching your legacy. The world isn’t waiting — it’s watching. So go. Break the damn ceiling. Blaze the trail. And remember always...

“Just Keep Moving.”

Chapter 27

Life's Cheat Codes: Rational Philosophies to Live By

Life doesn't come with a manual, but it leaves behind patterns. Patterns so precise, they can be studied as laws. Just as gravity pulls us down, these laws pull at our decisions, shaping success or failure. The difference lies in whether we're aware of them—or blindly falling into their traps.

Take **Parkinson's Law**, for instance: "Work expands to fill the time given." Ever notice how you can finish an assignment in two days if the deadline demands it—but the same task can drag for two weeks if you allow it? Time isn't the enemy; loose boundaries are. The cheat code? Compress your deadlines and you will automatically compress your procrastination.

The **Pareto Principle**, or the 80/20 rule, tells us that not all efforts are equal. Just 20% of what you do creates 80% of your results. Yet most people waste their energy on the trivial 80% that barely moves the needle. Imagine if you identified your vital 20%—the cheat code here is ruthless prioritization.

Some laws are humbling. The economist in me raves about this one.

The **Law of Diminishing Returns** reminds us that more isn't always better. Overwork, overtraining, overthinking—they all hit a point where extra input produces weaker output. Balance, then, becomes wisdom.

The **Law of Inertia** is a secret weapon. Start small—just five minutes at the gym, a page a day of writing. The hardest part is starting. Once in motion, you’ll stay in motion.

Philosophies like **Hanlon’s Razor** save relationships: “Never attribute to malice what can be explained by ignorance.” Not everyone is out to get you; sometimes, people just don’t know better. This cheat code softens anger into empathy.

The **Law of Compounding** is perhaps the most magical. Save ₹100 daily, and you’ll barely notice. But with time, the growth snowballs into something massive. Habits work the same way—small, repeated actions transform identities.

And when life feels unfair, the **Sunk Cost Fallacy** teaches us the courage to quit. Just because you’ve spent time, energy, or love on something doesn’t mean you must keep burning more into it. The cheat code? Walking away is not failure; it’s wisdom.

Finally, the **Law of Serendipity**: the harder you work, the luckier you appear. “Chance favours the prepared mind,” said Louis Pasteur. Luck isn’t accidental—it’s attracted to sweat and persistence.

These laws aren’t mystical—they’re rational. They’re cheat codes because they strip away illusions and show life as it is. And when you understand life as it is, you no longer just survive it—you *master* it.

Chapter 28

Just Keep Moving

Life, as I've discovered, is a mosaic—some pieces messy, some gleaming, all essential. I never knew how much of my soul belonged in the laughter of children until I found myself surrounded by their unfiltered joy and unexpected quirks. Yes, some can be mean, but if you crack their code with warmth and patience, you don't just teach—you're transformed. Their innocent glances, spontaneous hugs and brutally honest remarks—they fill the voids we never knew existed. They remind you who you are, why you matter and that no matter how tired life gets, there's a giggle waiting to heal it. It also reminded me to never let the child within me fade, for deep down, we all carry the laughter, wonder and curiosity of our younger selves.

Slowing down was never part of the plan. But when the universe forces your hand, you realise the fire inside doesn't dim; it simply burns more mindfully. I no longer run—I wander, explore, linger. I bask in the glory of mundane victories, in the silence of a home slowly built, not with bricks but with love, resilience and earned laughter.

Owning your reality is the ultimate flex.

Stop eloping from your essence. Unlearn the noise. Relearn your worth. Rewind every compliment someone ever threw at you like confetti. Each one is a clue to your spark. Don't shush your shine for society's noise.

There was a day I laughed so hard in a classroom that tears welled up—not because the joke was hilarious but because the children I was teaching reminded me of the kind of joy money can't buy. Follow your passion, no matter how 'menial' others call it. You won't just find success—you'll become its synonym.

Scars tell stories. Mine sits on my nose, a reminder of a day in college when someone's comment convinced me to remove my nose pin. I wish I hadn't. But scars are punctuation marks, not full stops. Today, I wear myself like a poem, unedited and loud.

My father always says, “Chadhte suraj ko hi salaam milta hai.” I didn't understand it then. Now I see it unfurl every day—those who once sneered now stalk quietly, craving the secret sauce. But here's the thing: you don't need a sauce; you need presence.

I once saw Ayushmann Khurrana at an awareness event. Unfazed, I didn't even glance his way. Years later, I admire every fibre of his artistry. What changed? Visibility. The moment he put his work out in the open, the world took notice. Your talent won't echo in the dark—flip the switch. Show up. Dress like your dreams deserve it. Because they do.

Power dressing isn't vanity—it's a form of self-respect. Be known as the trailblazer in blazers, not the one with the “shoddy bun.” College won't last but the stories, selfies and soul connections from those years will be your forever playlist.

People assume success arrives with suitcases of plans and deadlines. Often, it walks in silently, disguised as a human who sees your soul. A manager named Rhonda Lewis once told me, “I love how your brain works.” No appraisal, no bonus—just recognition. It wasn't a compliment; it was a mirror.

Success, dear reader, isn't loud. It's how you stir your tea during chaos, how creatively you tackle the most irksome tasks. It's in watering dreams

with small, consistent actions—sometimes barefoot, sometimes in high heels but always walking, always moving forward.

When You Know, You Know

There comes a time in life when you experience a **gut-level certainty**—a clarity so sharp it slices through the fog of doubt. It doesn't demand over-analysis or second-guessing. You just *know*.

Sometimes it shows up in your work. You might start something—a project, a business, a book—without seeing instant results. It won't be burgeoning right away. The doubts will creep in: *Is this the right job? The right move? The right opportunity?* But occasionally, there will come a moment when the answer feels instant, when your heart whispers before your mind interferes. That's the magic of "*when you know, you know*."

The same applies to people. When you meet the right person, you won't have to run endless mental checklists. You won't have to overthink or weigh pros and cons. It will simply feel right. They will bring you the calm your soul has been longing for—without you asking, without you waiting.

They won't abscond when things get hard. Even when you push them away, they'll show up, again and again, reminding you that some bonds aren't fragile, they are worth giving a chance. They may not erase your miseries but they'll sit with you in the storm, helping you laugh through the pain. With them, you'll be *loved, not lusted. Healed, without even realizing it*.

The right person will want to know you—not out of convenience but out of genuine curiosity. They'll study you like a book worth reading, exploring every chapter with interest, from the footnotes to the epilogue.

The right one will sing your favourite songs, even if off-key. Conversations will flow like a river—effortless, deep, intellectually

stimulating. They won't talk to you when they get time; they'll *make* time.

This is why I say: don't settle for anything less. Don't mistake temporary attention for timeless connection. When you know, you know. And until that knowing arrives—in work, in love, in life—just keep moving.

JUST KEEP MOVING

The Final Word – Keep Moving

This isn't a full stop; it's a comma. JKM Learnovation was never just about me—it was always about *you*.

Your story. Your bruises. Your breakdowns. And most importantly—your bounce-backs.

Because I know there will be days when life feels like a bad joke with no punchline. When you're broke, burdened, resentful or staring at the ceiling wondering how it all became so *abominable*. When even brushing your teeth feels like running a marathon and hope hides behind the curtain like a shy child.

But hear me out —this book exists for those exact days. It exists to whisper in your ear: *Don't give up. Not soon. Not ever.*

Life is a bed of struggles. For some, it's a king-sized mattress with memory foam; for others, it's a creaky folding cot that hurts your back. But either way—we all have to sleep on it, we all have to rise from it and we all have to fight our battles before sunrise.

So keep moving. Every ray of sun that sneaks through your curtains in the morning isn't just light- it's a fresh ounce of hope, a cosmic reminder that you're worthy. That you deserve nothing less than the best. That the same power spinning the galaxies is the one rooting for you.

Don't stall. Don't drown in the swamp of *could haves* and *should haves*. Remember this—if it should have, it would have. If it's truly meant for you, it won't walk past you. But you've got to keep walking in that direction, step after weary step.

Yes, life will feel unbearably heavy at times. Bills will pile up faster than laundry. People you trusted may betray you. You'll scroll through social

media and wonder if everyone else got the cheat code while you're stuck at level one. But pause—this is all noise from the material world. It won't matter in the long run because your soul has a different syllabus altogether. This life is just one semester. Until we straighten our deeds, we'll be re-enrolled, again and again, in this self-centered school called Earth.

Recently, in a conversation with an acquaintance — I stumbled upon a theory so profound, it stayed with me long after.

Akula, kotorya Ne plavayet, Ne tonet.- “*The shark that does not swim, drowns.*”

Literally, sharks must keep moving to survive; if they stop swimming, they cannot breathe and will perish. Figuratively, it is a reminder that we, too, must keep moving through the currents of life — working, striving, learning and growing - for the moment we stop, we risk sinking into stagnation. Life will not always offer calm waters; at times the tide will rise against us, storms will rage and the waves will threaten to pull us under. Yet, as long as we keep moving - no matter how small the strokes - we remain afloat. Progress, however modest, is survival; persistence is strength. The secret is not in never pausing but in never surrendering to stillness. Keep moving forward, onward, upward — and life will carry you to shores you never imagined.

So laugh, even if the joke is terrible. Dance, even if you've got two left feet. Wear that nose pin, buy those neon shoes, sing karaoke like you're on tour. Be the metaphor people quote when they tell their success stories.

And here's the truth the world often gets wrong: there is no pressure of “you only live once.” That's a lie. You live every single day. You only die once. So make it count. Seize every day like it's the only page left in your story because one day, it actually will be.

And remember—this isn't the end, it's only Part One.

Just like life, no single book can carry all the battles, breakdowns and breakthroughs. Some stories need more time before they ripen into lessons. Some struggles need more pages before they turn into strength. That's why there will be a Part Two—because your journey, my journey, our journey is still unfolding.

Every setback, every triumph, every untold moment belongs to the bigger story we are all writing together. And as long as we keep moving, the next chapter will always be waiting.

Because at the end of the day—the One who sent you here, who gave you breath, form and fire—will handle what's beyond your control. Your job is simple- Just Keep Moving.

In my darkest hours, when the weight of life feels unbearable, I often find myself returning to the wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. There is one (shabad) hymn by Guru Nanak Dev Ji that I always resort to, a reminder that no matter how stormy the seas get, there is a hand guiding us through.

As Guru Nanak Dev Ji says:

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੨ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਿਸਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਰੋਜੀ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਓਥੈ ਹਟੁ ਨ ਚਲਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਿਰਸ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

ਸਉਦਾ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਲਏ ਨ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਜੀਅ ਖਾਣਾ ਏਹੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

ਵਿਚਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਸਾਇਰਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਸਾਰ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਿਸਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥੧॥

*O Nanak, don't be anxious; the Lord will take care of you.
He created the creatures in water and He gives them their nourishment...
O Nanak, don't be anxious; the Lord will take care of you*

This is a beautiful **shabad (hymn) from Guru Nanak Dev Ji**—a reminder of divine providence, trust and surrender.

Even in the deep oceans, where no shops, farms or trades exist, God sustains life. Fish and creatures survive because their sustenance is divinely arranged. The message is clear: if the Creator can provide for them in such impossible circumstances, surely he will take care of us too.

Key takeaway

Trust in divine order: Worry is natural but anxiety is unnecessary when you remember that the same force keeping galaxies in motion watches over you.

- **Sustenance without effort:** Just as fish survive in oceans without farming or trade, sometimes we are provided for in ways beyond logic or planning.
- **Let go of control:** Life feels uncertain but much is already written and arranged—we just need to keep moving with faith.
- **Universality:** Whether human, fish or bird—every being is cared for by the same power.

Because when life seems beyond control you have to surrender to the higher power- for in that surrender lies the shield of divine protection.

Also, whenever you feel like collapsing, whenever your spirit feels wrung out—remember, you know where to find me. If even one word of mine keeps you from quitting, I'll consider this book a success. And I'll consider *myself* successful.

The world doesn't need another voice—it needs yours.

-JASMINE KAUR MAJITHIA

ALL THAT MATTERS

If you've made it here, you're already proof of one thing: persistence. You've walked through these pages, lived these stories with me and I hope at least one of them planted a seed — a seed of courage, a whisper of hope or a nudge to take that next step.

Here's what I want you to remember:

- Your journey will not look like anyone else's and that's the point.
- Storms will come but they are not here to bury you — they are here to shape you.
- The world belongs to those who keep showing up, even on days they'd rather disappear.

Now go — chase the wild dreams, stand tall in the storms and when in doubt, just keep moving.

JASMINE KAUR MAJITHIA

Thank You

Thank you for letting me share my journey with you. If even one line of this book made you laugh, pause, cry or believe again — it has served its purpose.

Your own *JKM* story is waiting to be written. Share it with me:

You Tube: JKM LEARNOVATION

Email: jkmlearnovation10@gmail.com

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Let's keep building a tribe that moves forward — together.

About the Author

Jasmine Kaur Majithia is a personality and communication coach, speaker and entrepreneur who has spent over a decade helping people build confidence, articulate their ideas and transform their lives. From juggling multiple jobs while earning her Master's in Australia and holding opportunities abroad, including permanent residency in Canada, she channelled her global exposure and experience into founding her own venture JKM LEARNOVATION with a vision of giving back to people around her. Having faced her own share of challenges, she deeply understands the obstacles, hurdles and roadblocks that often holds individuals back. Her journey marked by grit, perseverance and vision has made her a sought- after speaker for schools, colleges and corporates across the country and fuels her mission to help others overcome limitations and create lasting impact.

Through her brand, **JKM LEARNOVATION**, she has coached thousands of individuals — from nervous speakers to budding leaders - teaching them to communicate with impact and navigate life with resilience. Her experiences both personal and professional, form the heart of JUST KEEP MOVING, a reflection of life's highs, lows and the lessons that come from embracing every twist and turn. When she's not conducting seminars or designing programs, you'll find her penning thoughts for her next project, exploring new ideas or laughing her way through life's absurdities- always moving forward and inviting her readers to do the same.