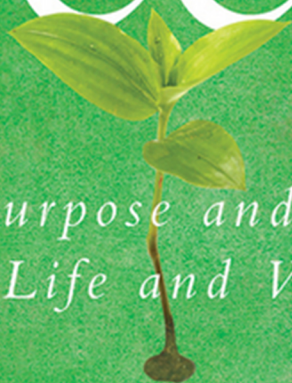


THE Seed

*Finding Purpose and Happiness
in Life and Work*



JON GORDON

International bestselling author of *The Energy Bus*

The Seed

*Finding Purpose and Happiness in
Life and Work*



JON GORDON



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Gordon, Jon, 1971-

The seed : finding purpose and happiness in life and work / Jon Gordon.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-470-88856-8 (hardback); ISBN 978-1-118-09024-4 (ebk);

ISBN 978-1-118-09025-1 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-09026-8 (ebk)

1. Work—Psychological aspects. 2. Conduct of life. 3. Inspiration. I. Title.

HF5548.8.G665 2011

650.1—dc22

2011012871

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Jade and Cole,

Be the Seed, do your best, and let God do the rest!

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Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank my wife, Kathryn, for helping me find and live my purpose. I wouldn't be the man I am today if it weren't for you.

To my children Jade and Cole, thank you for your patience during the holidays as I wrote this book. Always remember to follow your passion and plant yourself where you are.

Thank you to my publisher, Matt Holt, and my editor, Shannon Vargo, and to Kim Dayman, Larry Olson, and the rest of the team at Wiley for helping me plant my seed and grow to my full potential. You are the best.

Thank you to my agent and marketing genius, Daniel Decker, for all your hard work, talent, and support. We are a great team.

Thank you to my brother, David Gordon, for your insights and encouragement as I wrote this book. Our creative brainstorming session while walking and talking made a huge difference in the writing of this book.

Thank you to Todd Gothberg, Dan Britton, Melissa Johnson, and Ben Newman for reading the manuscript, providing feedback, and challenging me to make it better.

Thank you to Paul and Alison Frase, for your faith and inspiration during the most painful time of your life. Joshua's legacy lives on, and he will be the catalyst for the cure of myotubular myopathy. You taught me the definition of *overcome* and Joshua taught me that we are not just another brick in the wall.

Thank you to all the seed planters out there who produce a harvest and make the world a better place. I hope you enjoy this book.

Most of all, I thank God for the inspiration to write this book. You have carried me through the biggest challenges of my life and taken me through the four stages of purpose. Thank you for using me for your purpose and for guiding me toward my purpose.

Chapter 1

Two Weeks



Josh cruised down the country road with his foot pressed firmly on the gas pedal. He loved driving with the radio up and the windows down. He wasn't sure who enjoyed it more—him or his dog, Dharma. With her head out the window and ears flapping, she seemed to relish the smell of the fresh country air even as the strong winds battered her face. Not a care in the world, Josh thought, as he looked over at her and shook his head. She doesn't have to worry about jobs and bosses and paychecks. She doesn't have to care about things like “engagement” or “focus” or “employment.” Oh, to be so lucky.

They were miles from the city where Josh lived and worked—and far away from the challenges and concerns he faced. He wished he could just stick his head out the window and forget yesterday ever happened. He wished he could go back in time and take his father's advice. He wished he felt differently.

“I want to be you,” Josh yelled to Dharma. Her ears perked up after hearing his voice. She turned toward him,

letting her master know his words were more important than sunshine and fresh country air. Josh smiled at her. He was convinced she understood everything he said—whether they were taking a walk, going for a ride in the car, or sitting at home. She understood the creative ideas he shared while brainstorming in his “idea” room. She listened as he read books in bed and discussed life’s biggest questions with her. She put her head in his lap when he shared his innermost and greatest fears. She not only knew his thoughts, she knew what was in his heart. As Josh approached his destination, he wished she could tell him what his heart was saying.

A sign on the side of the road let him know the farm where he was headed was only a few miles away. He was looking forward to seeing his friends. They had invited him to join them for a fun day. He had never been to a corn maze before and didn’t know what to expect, but figured it had to be better than sitting at home feeling sorry for himself.

His friends knew what others did not. His life was not as perfect as it seemed. Sure, he had a great place to live, a great job with a well-respected company, and a bright future. Yet something was missing. He was no longer excited to go to work. It wasn’t that Josh hated his job. It was just that he didn’t love it anymore. And everyone knew it, including his boss, who had called Josh into his office yesterday, on a Friday of all days, to break the news.

“You’re not the same guy I hired five years ago,” his boss, Mark, had said. “You had the fire in your belly. You

were passionate and full of ideas and energy. Now it seems you don't even want to be here anymore. What's up?"

Josh looked down at the ground, not wanting to look his boss in the eye. He knew Mark was right, but hearing him say the truth made everything more real. He felt exposed and ashamed. "I don't know," Josh said as he looked up and shook his head. "I wish I had an answer, but I don't. I'm just not feeling it lately. I don't know why. I'm just not." He wasn't sure whether he should have told the truth, but his upbringing and his own experience told him an honest answer was always the best answer. Besides, he wore the truth on his face every day, and his body language over the past year spoke volumes.

"Well, you know that passion is a big part of what we do," his boss said. If we don't have passion, then we are like everyone else—mediocre—and that's not good enough for me, our company, or our clients.

"Am I being fired?" Josh asked. He always remembered when he was twelve years old and had broken his arm; the doctor had walked in, looked at the X-ray, then immediately grabbed his arm and made small talk. Next, without any warning—*crack*—the doctor had set his broken bone back in place. Ever since, Josh believed in getting painful or uncomfortable moments over with as quickly as possible.

"No," Mark replied, shaking his head, "I'm not ready to give up on you yet. We've invested way too much in you to just let you go, and I believe you've invested too much in us to give up now. I've seen this before, and I think you

need a break. So here's the deal: I'm giving you two weeks. Think of it as a reverse two weeks' notice. Instead of being fired after two weeks, my hope is that you'll be rehired. Sort of like a fresh start. You have two paid weeks off to decide whether you really, truly, and passionately want to be here. If, after two weeks, you decide this is not right for you, I'll be disappointed, but at least we'll both know it's time to move on and not go through the motions any longer. It's simple. You either want to be here and give 110 percent, or you find something else you want to do that, hopefully, will light the spark you once had here."

"Deal?" Mark asked as he reached out to shake Josh's hand. "Deal," Josh replied, as he shook his boss's hand and walked out the door, wondering whether he should be cheering or crying. While most people would love a paid two-week vacation to decide their future, for Josh there was nothing more frightening.

Chapter 2

Lost



Josh recalled the previous day's conversation with his boss as he drove through the entrance to the farm and felt the same knot in his stomach. It would have been easier being fired, he thought. At least the decision would have been made for him. It occurred to him that today, Saturday, was the first day of his two-week vacation before he would have to give an answer to his boss. He would have to make a decision by then, but not today. Today he didn't want to make any decisions. Today he just wanted to put everything out of his mind and have some fun.

The farm was larger than he'd expected. Giant stalks of corn seemed to grow everywhere along the long, winding road Josh navigated to get to the farmhouse and entrance to the corn maze. He arrived at the farmhouse, parked his car, laid out a blanket for Dharma to lie on for a nap, and cracked the car window for her so she could enjoy the cool October country air. Then he paid for his ticket and ran to greet his friends, who were waiting for him at the entrance to the maze. On his way, he passed a line of people waiting

their turn to board a propeller plane to see the maze and the countryside from the air. Not on your life, Josh thought. The only planes I fly are jets with pilots and flight attendants who serve peanuts, pretzels, and drinks.

Josh found his friends, and they exchanged hugs, high fives, and handshakes. After making bets about who would get through the maze first, they lined up to begin the race. It didn't take long for Josh and his friends to lose each other, since the maze offered many dead ends, forks, paths, and choices. When faced with a choice of two paths, some chose one path while others chose another. This continued until, eventually, the group was completely divided and Josh was alone and lost in the maze.

Ever since he'd been a kid, Josh had had a fear of getting lost, and, as he stood facing a wall of cornstalks, he became increasingly anxious. Should he take the path to the left or to the right? Should he go backward and take a different path? Should he shout to his friends? He closed his eyes to pray for direction, and when he opened them, he saw a tall, lanky, old farmer with long gray hair and a gray mustache standing in front of him. Startled, Josh nervously asked where he had come from.

"Oh, I came from the maze," the farmer said with a raspy voice. "This is my farm, and I like to walk the maze and help people who are lost find their way."

"That's great," Josh said, feeling more at ease, "I'm definitely lost. Can you help me?"

"That remains to be seen," the farmer replied. "First, can you tell me where you are going?"

“Well, I’m trying to get to the end of the maze,” Josh said, thinking the farmer’s question was weird and the answer obvious: “If I knew where I were going, I’d be there by now.”

The farmer took a deep breath and smiled, “Josh, I’m not talking about the maze. I’m talking about life. Do you know where you are going with your life?”

Josh looked around nervously and thought, “How does he know my name?” He looked for his friends and the hidden camera. Surely his friends were playing a trick on him. They knew he was going through a crisis, and perhaps they were doing something radical to slap him out of his funk. What better way than a practical joke? He called to his friends, and when no one came out from the cornstalks he felt strange.

“You didn’t answer the question,” the farmer said, as he stared at Josh with a slight grin on his face, “Do you know where you are going with your life?”

Josh took a small step backwards.

“How do you know my name, and why are you asking me this?” Josh asked forcefully, becoming more uncomfortable.

“I know everyone who comes through this maze,” the farmer said reassuringly. “I’ve found enough lost people to know when they are lost, and you, my friend, are as lost as they come. But don’t worry about it. Millions of people are lost like you. Many come to the maze in search of something. They come from all professions, all backgrounds, and all ages. Some are in search of their dream job. Some just want to find a little fun and happiness in their life. Some are looking