

# *The* Garden



A SPIRITUAL FABLE ABOUT  
WAYS TO OVERCOME FEAR,  
ANXIETY, AND STRESS

JON GORDON

Bestselling Author of *The Carpenter* and *The Seed*



*The*  
Garden



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**WAYS TO OVERCOME FEAR,**  
**ANXIETY, AND STRESS**

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WILEY

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*To Erwin McManus. I am eternally grateful to you.*



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# ***Introduction***

## **Warning!**

I felt I should put a warning label on this book because I'm known as a writer of business fables, and this is not a business fable. This is very different than my other books. This is a spiritual fable rooted in my faith and it addresses the growing epidemic of fear, anxiety, and stress that are affecting millions of people around the world. Having worked with countless leaders, companies, sports teams, and professional athletes I've had intimate conversations and advised many who struggle with fear, stress, and anxiety. I've also spoken at numerous events for college and high school students and have talked with and encouraged many who have reached out

the last few years. I've shared the principles and concepts in this book with them and have seen how it has helped them understand and win the battle of their mind.

With that said, even though a lot of mental health experts, counselors, and sports psychologists read and share my books I want you to know that I don't consider myself a mental health expert. And even though people who read my books say it helps their mental health I want to make it clear that this book should not be a substitute for seeing a counselor or getting professional help in dealing with fear, stress, and anxiety. I appreciate the role that mental health experts and counselors play in working with their clients to overcome their mental health challenges.

My goal in writing this is to help people understand the mental battle they are facing from a spiritual perspective. "Psyche" means soul and in many cases, our minds don't need fixing. Rather our soul needs healing. I personally struggled with depression and anxiety in my life and as I nourished

## **X**

### ***Introduction***

my soul and fed my mind with meditation, prayer, and spiritual truths I found more peace, joy, and healing. A big part of this healing was sermons from Erwin McManus who brought Jesus to life for me when I was 35 years old. Erwin helped me realize that you can't win a spiritual battle with man-made strategies. You win it with a greater source of power, truth, and strength. It's the same with 12 step programs and why they all include a higher power.

A few years ago, while walking the streets of downtown Chicago before a talk to a group of business leaders, the 5 D's that I share in this book came to me, like a software download, and I began typing them into my phone. I clearly saw the battle we face and the plan to win the battle and knew I had to write and share this book to help more people overcome their fear, stress, and anxiety.

Is this book the only answer to solve the mental health epidemic? Of course not. The more we learn about the microbiome, (bacteria in our intestines) the more we learn how nutrition and gut health

influence mental health. For years studies have shown that exercise and sleep are big factors in one's mood and mindset and new research is helping us understand how loneliness, isolation, and technology all play a role in our mental health. There are many contributing factors that influence how we think and feel on a daily basis and we need a holistic comprehensive approach that involves the mind, body, and spirit to help those who are struggling.

My hope with this book is to share a powerful perspective and paradigm that can be a part of the solution. You may not agree with the faith tradition from which these ideas originate but I believe you will find the 5 D's and practical strategies I share helpful. Whether you are dealing with fear, stress, and anxiety yourself; have a family member that struggles; or are a mental health expert that works with clients, if any of the ideas in this book can be useful to you or the people you love and care about, then I believe it's worthwhile to take a look.

In this spirit let's take a walk through *The Garden* and learn a spiritual paradigm combined with practical strategies to overcome fear, stress, and anxiety. I hope this story fills you with more faith, love, and hope so you can live with more peace and joy.

God bless you,  
*Jon*

