

The sun was going down behind the Rocky Mountains. I was at the lake for a walk which had become my routine. The night was coming in fast and that was fine with me. I kept my eyes down as the few remaining people passed me by. I hoped they didn't notice me as they made their way home. I wanted to be alone. The voices in my head were working overtime today "Pat you're a loser." "You know what they all said about you" those words stung: you can't, you don't, and you should not be who you are. Negative, negative, negative, is all I heard and all I knew.

The sun is gone now. Good, I wanted to be alone anyways. It's always been that way so why change things now. What a nice quiet night out here by the lake. I can see a muskrat making his way across the water to his home. A few Canadian Geese were getting nestled in for the night. Alone in the dark is safe. Nobody can call you worthless in the dark. They don't know you or see you: you're invisible.

That was me for a year after my divorce. Who wants to show their face to those who are happy? I was ashamed and needed to hide. I had failed; where those around me had succeeded. I could see them in their homes by the light of the kitchen as they spent family time. In the pews were family after family that didn't make the mistakes I had made. Yet, deep inside, there was a growing voice from someone unfamiliar. It was not negative and that was foreign and weird to my heart. Two voices competing for air time in my head and heart. This positive voice pleaded for attention. "You're good Pat, a nice man who just wants to be loved." The voice says "I will love you, spend time with you, and be there with you in the dark."

Night after night, I walked the lake listening to the birds, crickets, and these two voices clamoring to be heard. I knew the negative but I wanted the positive. For once in my life I decided by the lake I wanted to live. It was really a list that did it. My counsellor had asked me to

write down good things I liked to do. She asked me what made me a man. Those characteristics burned on my heart. It was me, but so many people had told me I was junk. Those were interesting and challenging days.

In the last chapter I asked you to write down ten things you love to do. Within those things I asked you to describe the person you thought would do those things. I did that many years ago. That list was horrible because it was the self I cared for and the self that others hated. Who was right and who was wrong? Around and round I went reading the list along the lake. Someone must have saw this man talking to himself with paper in his hand. I needed to go through this process. Abuse of the mind or heart is an ugly thing. When the people you trust hate your character, it's not a funny thing. Why should I believe them? Why should I believe the positive voice in my head?

I hoped to illustrate what you might be going through. If you wrote out a list then you now have a pretty good picture before you of who you are. Then the war comes. Questions will come at you fast and furious. Why are you focusing on you? People come first before you do. They are right you are not a good person. God really blew it with you. They all can't be wrong can they? On and on the questions will come. Self-doubt is like luscious candy. Once we've tasted it our hunger is insatiable. It becomes our favorite past time. Gorging ourselves on the negative till it makes us sick.

I am sick of the negative. Those closest to me have felt the wrath of my disdain for the negative. Nobody will ever talk down to me ever again. For a time there needs to be anger. I have had enough. We can only take character bashing for so long. It might be normal to them, but normal has to go. I desperately needed a reset in life. It's about being rescued by the positive.

The negative has to go. Yes of course the negative is part of our lives. Yet, limiting the bad is always a positive thing.

So there we have our list. It's our list, and not their list. How do we know which list of traits about you are the real ones? Well I'm glad you asked. We have to come back to the mirror. Look into the eyes of the one in the mirror and what do you see. I saw hurt, pain, shame, and their truth about me. I also knew in my heart that they were wrong about me. Somehow I always knew. My list in my hands is me in so many ways. I am unique and weird. Nobody is like me.

How do we begin a reset when were stuck battling the voices in the mirror. For me it was about getting away for a time. I hiked in the mountains by myself. I walked and walked around the lake near my home. It's weird but I don't smoke, but for that first year I did. It relaxed me, and became my best friend. Lucky for me I did not find solace in a bottle. I just needed to smoke. In the end that was the best thing I could have done. I am not saying you should smoke but you need some sort of relaxer. Just for a year I smoked.

You could run, workout, ride a bike, or join a debate club. I don't care what it is as long as it's a way to relax you in a positive way. For me it was long walks and smoking. I needed time to think. Well now there is that word I touched on in the last chapter (Thinking). Thinking about what we have become when things go well or badly. We judge the situation by what we think of it. How do you rationalize the words people say to you? You think about them. When I sort mail at work I used to go numb a bit in my face. The doctor said nothing was wrong it's just that I'm thinking too much. Basically I'm stressing myself out.

That's why I think we need to relax while when we think. A long walk or mountain climb in the wilderness can be relaxing. Talking to a friend is fine but they ask questions and give answers. Think about the Book of Job. God and Satan had a contest over who owns Job. This

book could have been two or three chapters long if it wasn't for "Thinking." Job and his friends spent hours and days rehashing what went wrong. Who is to blame? Where is God in the entire calamity? In the end God told them all they think too much.

For you, at this point, there are no answers and way too many questions. You don't need more people adding to your stress like in the Job story. You need down time with you. This time is well spent looking and pondering the list you have made. In your hands is your character in a nut shell. There is a song "He's got the whole world in his hands." You have your whole life, to this point, in your hands.

Everything you like to do is on that list. The traits of that type of person are scribbled down between each one of them. You are literally in your hand as you relax on a walk or riding a bike. You need to read the list over and over for weeks and even possibly months. I have told you that it takes 10 positive things to wash away 1 negative comment. Imagine years of negativity crushing your soul. How many positive things would you need to wash them away?

Before you is a list of ten positive things about you. You need to repeat them to your mind and heart until they feel comfortable. Notice I didn't say accept them. In my mind I know the truth. I know I am a good person. Yet, my heart has feelings beyond the practical mind. My heart has the scars left behind from negative bashing. I have been, at times, uncomfortable with myself. Give yourself plenty of time to be comfortable with the real you.

The cool thing about God is the heart. Without an ear we can live but without a heart its lights out for us. We need a healthy heart. Stress and the negative compounds stress in our lives. That puts undue pressure on our little ticker. There have been many studies that say religion makes one healthy. The calming effect of belief and faith soothe our soul. I really wonder if Christians get sick less often than atheists.

This book has two parts. One is the people in our lives and how we are affected by them good or bad. The other is the spiritual. We are flesh but we need the spiritual. You know taking a spiritual journey with your list might do you some good. I have stood at the top of Mt Sinai (The mountain of God) in Egypt. It was a hard climb but at the top was an amazing view and stillness in the air. I loved it up there. To have peace in your heart you need a spiritual journey.

Listen to these verses talk about the heart:

Proverbs 3:5 **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”**

Proverbs 51:10 **“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”**

Philippians 4:7 **“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

There are so many more but I bet you get the gist of it. God plus the heart equals peace. Our hearts take a beating in life. A reset is really a heart cleaning: all the junk, dirt, and filth in this world piles up in the heart. Only God can truly change the heart or better yet save the heart. Religion is healthy because we are relaxed in our thinking. Look again at the verses above. There are the words understanding, pure, and guards. God is in the heart business.

I had it bad when I first began the reset. I lost my wife and my reason to live. I also lost me. In the mirror I had no clue who that person was. I became a Christian at the same time that I went through the split-up. That is not the best way to go. Try juggling understanding divorce and religion all at the same time. God told me the world I knew was not as it seems. In a divorce you find out a great many things that are not as they seem. Losing everything in the mirror is a tough reset.

I know what it's like to be completely lost. Like I told you before I entertained the thought of killing myself. I had nothing to hold on to. Everything became confusing and unfamiliar. I needed to relax. There was no doubt that I was stressed. Reading the Bible gave me peace. Walking at the lake with a smoke calmed me down. In reality all I had at that time was my list. So this is who I am eh? For months I walked hundreds of miles going over and over the list. Little by little I began to believe the list. It takes time.

The word of God is positive. Verses that say God loves you are good for the heart. God sacrificing his Son spoke volumes on what type of God we have. Over and over I read about a God that cares and loves me. I have always thought this process was soul surgery. Out with the bad stuff and in with the good stuff. It takes time.

Part of this process is spiritual breathing. As we walk, of course, we breathe. Sometimes when we panic our breathing quickens. A relaxing time calms our breathing. I began to breathe in spiritual goodness from the Bible, Christian music, and church. I would breathe out the disappointment I had with those I loved. Why did they hate me? Over time I grew stronger in the list. I began to agree with who I am. I began to love me like God said he loved me. He appreciated what he made. I began to appreciate what he made too. Then all those who disliked me became smaller than God and smaller than me.

This brings me to the next part of this journey: doing something about it. Famous saying: "You got it so get at it." Your list is nice but it's more than just pen to paper. You are everything on that list and more. Like I said over and over a reset is really an understanding of you. Who are you? Why are you not doing the things you like to do? I firmly believe that your childhood dreams are a reflection of who you are. Did you dream of being an astronaut or a writer? Did you love reading books or playing sports? These things are who you are and were meant to be.

Yes, of course, becoming an astronaut is astronomical, but is it? Are you best suited to be in the space program or teaching at Yale? Far too often we become what life dictates and not who we are. I heard the other day that 72% of adults feel they are in the wrong career. That is insane talk. Imagine Einstein working at McDonalds. Now don't be silly, smart people certainly can work at successful Micky Dee's, yet some of us are destined to do something different. A smart guy figured out fast food at McDonalds and became famous. Another smart Girl builds a space shuttle. Both are smart and both were effective. The secret is that both found the right place to be. They became more than most because they were in the right career.

A teacher is really good at math but is terrible with kids. I know I had one of those. A Pastor is really good at public speaking but is horrible with people. I have had one of those too. They had great gifts and talents but were using them in the wrong place. Within all that there are family and life commitments that swallow us up. Ten years later we discover that were standing alone in a life we never wanted.

Have you ever wondered why the divorce rate is so high? For second marriages it's even higher. Why? I found the answer outside of a book. It's found within the lives we lead. People change all the time. I discovered coffee at 33 and then I became a coffee drinker. I decided at 30 I liked country music. At 41 I decided I liked being a Pastor. I was none of those things in my first marriage. Not only do people change but they need to change to be alive. Life, living, and alive are all positive progressive words. Here are crazy thoughts. Try living as who we are. Try living life to the fullest. These statements could make us feel like living an alive life. A play on words but do you get the point?

We need to act out the living part. Life seems to want two things. First it wants to swallow us. Secondly it wants to challenge us. Within all that are you and I trying to navigate

between those two things. Our list gives us power to do that. Doesn't God give us that power? Yes in the way he made us. We are made for a purpose. That purpose is to be who he made us to be. Far too often we accept being swallowed by life rather than accepting the challenge to thrive. Successful people are not special except for one thing: they refuse to be swallowed: they thrive on the challenge.

Here is the thing. A young Pastor Joshua Harris wrote that he understood that the best Joshua made the best mate for someone. I get that so much. If I'd have listened to my dreams and followed my talents I would have had a better life most likely. I always tell people that finding the perfect mate does not come in a chat room or in a singles group most of the time. Why do we tend to find the best mate within our friendship circles? It's because they are a reflection of you. You like them and they like you because in many ways they are similar to you.

Within similar groups you will find a similar mate. You all like coffee or God. You will hate rap or love it. Attraction comes when you like that person. The best spouse is one whom you really like because it's not just about liking their face or body. Maybe we can be attracted to what they actually live for. Half the time we like an ass but don't put much stock into what they love to do and or they are. It does not mean that book readers have to be together but maybe traveling and coffee is. What I'm saying is your list is very important to who you live with. They have got to love and accept your list. In many ways they have to be similar to your list. A bungee jumper and a missionary might not be a good fit. If you don't express who you are then you're never going to be a good fit. There will always be wanting, disappointment, and a hole in your heart.

My list said I liked to try things new. My list said I loved adventure and cared deeply about music. My wife is conservative but she does those things I like. In fact she lets me do the



things I need to thrive like hiking the Grand Canyon. Ok, she didn't come with me, but she did hike Diamond Head in Oahu Hawaii. Deanna wants me to flourish as me. I want the same for her. I push her and she pushes me. How cool is that. What is it about you that you are not doing? Look long at your list and you will see what I mean. It's time to do the things you like.

These are the hard facts. If you're single or divorced this is easy. If your married or in a relationship it gets somewhat harder. Imagine trying to go on a spiritual pilgrimage with a spouse and kids while they want Disneyland. Who can discover coffee if the wife hates it. I could write a book about people finding God and getting a divorce. A reset has its problems because a set life within a relationship and family is defined. That life has you swallowed up in daily routine. People get divorced because they blame the spouse for this. I will turn the tables on you and say "Blame yourself." Change "You" into a thriving person through your list. You don't need a new spouse you need a new you.

So don't rock the boat? Oh no, you have to knock the boat over. You must be who you really are. An unhappy and unfulfilled "You" is personally killing your marriage. You don't have to leave to find you. Welcoming change in a spouse does not mean they have to leave you. What if change was fun? What if discovery is just that: discovery? What if you embrace your spouse's desire to know them better? You just might get a happier spunkier mate. Maybe you will bring joy into a stale marriage by seeing what could be more than what is.

If you're single then now is the time. You will never have a better chance to discover you than right now. But I hate being single Pat! Like I said does your future partner get the best you or what? In many ways we have excuses. People might not like me. It's weird doing this. I like who I currently am. Yep but your reading this because something needs to change. A reset takes time and effort. A single person has far greater ability to accomplish this than a family man does.

If it ain't working then it ain't working. You are reading this because it ain't working. Who you are right now might not be who you were meant to be. That is terrible grammar I suppose, but it's plain language "If you got it then get at it." You have your list. The best part is in the discovery. You just might find out more about you than you knew. Does that scare you?

Take each trait on your list and re-evaluate your life. Ask these questions:

1. Am I currently doing this type of thing
2. Have I created an atmosphere to let my traits excel
3. Are there people in my life that hate my traits
4. How will I plan for the future to nurture my traits

It's all in the thinking and planning. I changed the day I wrote my list. I began evaluating and planning. You might say I schemed, coveted, and treasured my life in the future. What can I do with this new you? I decided to do something crazy and special every year. It was my way of remembering the year. I like adventure so I planned adventures every year. The fun was in the planning probably more than the trip itself.

I bought a computer because I love being social on the net. I purchased programs to make videos, websites, and to write books. I decided to go places I always dreamed of. I am living a very full life. People have said it's creepy to like Taylor Swift at my age. I planned a trip to see her in concert and had a blast with my wife tagging along. If you like things then do those things now!

Here is a little bit more of what I did. One night I went out to a movie alone. It was very awkward to say the least. What I discovered is that I love my company, but I desire a mate to share my life. I found I can survive alone and that was huge. I went out to dinner alone. I found

talking to yourself at dinner is not as much fun as with someone you love. I did however find out that I should be comfortable with sharing myself with others. What I liked and thought did matter. I rate everything I do now. It's my way of saying how I feel. I must express me which is a far cry from where I was before my list.

I joined and lead groups. I did things I was scared of, yet they landed within my list. I learned to speak in public better. I found that I really love to do that. I write like I used to as a kid. Some people say I still write like one too. I travel because I want to. I challenge myself to do impossible things. All of this makes my day. It thrills me to death. It might be my death too. I jumped once over a cliff to save myself. That was so fun. In Hawaii I jumped into the ocean in a dangerous spot. I survived and it fueled me. I'm glad there were no sharks in that spot so I think.

Within all this is a new nature to believe in me. It's just like believing in God. Psalm 34:8 says **"Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."** I dared to excel. Four years in University at 41 yrs. old. I have run groups, preached in church, written books, and created and managed websites. There is much more that I can do because I believe in God and I believe in me.

The reset is rash, bold, frivolous, inspiring, insightful, daring, crazy, and anything else you can think of. God did not come in and say change. No, he came in and I began to see for the first time. I see me and I see him. If you have never painted a room then do it. If you have never hiked that mountain then do it. If you wanted to run and get into shape then do it. Whatever is on your list: do it, live it, and be it. A person gets on a plane and they die. A friend is in a car accident and they die. Were these people exceling in there last days, are you? When is it time to become the person you were made to be? I say in your grave is the wrong time. Your alive so do it now before the grave comes calling.

I could give you a detailed plan on how to reset. I could make it a step by step year long process but I won't. The answer is really easy. Ten things about you are all you need. What are you passionate about? Ten things that describe that type of person are who you really are. Take that kind of person and become who you were meant to be. The mirror is the best start. Read that list to yourself over and over until you believe.

It's not about changing who you are. No, it's about making who you are a reality. The list is already inside you. It's a snap shot of the person in the mirror. All you have to do is feed the bear. What I mean is feed the passion to be those things on your list. If you're outgoing then go out. If you're adventurous then plan an adventure. If you love music then buy some new stuff today. A happy invigorated you is good, not only for you, but for everyone else.

The last chapter is the best one. It's time to believe again. It's time to reset the rules. You were meant to believe in God. You were meant to believe in yourself. Yes we were meant to believe in people. All the garbage has been expertly used by God to open your eyes. All the anger and disappointment is fuel to get life right. Is it more about what others have done to you or what you have not done for yourself? It's time to fight for you: do you believe that?