

“Dirty”

Chapter 12: Searching

*Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before- Star trek*

Feeling uneasy around others is not odd. Feeling dirty because someone put you down is not crazy. I have heard people say they have this crazy feeling. How do we control how we feel about things? A friend of mine just spit up with their wife. I listened to him proclaim that he will be inspired by quotes and books to find peace. He will laugh and sing to drive misery away. Then he asks the question *am I crazy for feeling this way?* Of course, the answer is no. We all strive for happiness. It's not crazy, odd, or neurotic to search for happiness and peace. We will trudge forward like star trek going where many have never gone before. Searching for meaning and our place in the universe.

If happiness is in the abyss then why go there at all. That's the dark and scary place. It's the unknown. It's also the right way. I have often wondered why we search for meaning at the bottom of the ocean. Why search space if we can't live there. It seems we put ourselves at risk to find answers. We dig up bones and research. There are experiments that could go wrong. Yet, humans will continue to search and ponder about their place in the scheme of things. We will put ourselves in harm's way to find happiness, meaning, and understanding.

I inspired a group of ladies once to challenge their husbands in marriage. Their eyes became as big as walnuts. One lady said “that's not right.” Another replied “it's no use.” Finally, they all agreed that men need to be pushed. They also agreed that it might be putting themselves in harm's way by challenging men. The problem might arise that if you don't challenge people then they might just go stale. In the book, War and Peace Prince Andrei was challenge not to go to war. They said the danger was far too great. He replied *why not, if I die then I die, but we must*

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*win*. Challenging people to be more than they think is the only way we win. It also takes beach ball sized lady nuts to go there. Let's go there together.

We need to search for a better life. It's time to feel better, think better, and be better people. So much work and so little time. I didn't need to ramble on for eleven chapters to make my point. In a way, all I needed was one paragraph. I could have said some people are nasty and some are nice. How we feel about their words will affect us. How we picture them and ourselves makes all the difference. Were all in this together so why don't we just get along? See, all summed up in one paragraph.

The reason I expanded beyond one paragraph is perception. It's easy to say nice things. It's easy to believe that people are ok because they look ok. It's easy to say I feel fine when people ask. There is perception and there is reality. I wanted to take you on a journey into reality. You know people wear masks. You know that people are sad inside. It's so normal to say were ok even when were not. I asked a friend if he was ok today. Four days since the spilt up. He says he is creating the new normal. That was the nail on the head. Is a new normal that we are all fine? No, the new normal is finding a way home. It's finding peace from harsh words and tragedy. It's surviving this life by thriving in this life. It's not all bad. There is a way home from feeling dirty.

*Wherever fortune clears a way, thither our ready steps stray - Jules Vern*

What a terrible way to end this book. Searching? Are you kidding me? Where are the answers? Sorry, but searching fits. We will always be searching for ourselves. It's because there are always new things to learn. There is always tragedy and harsh words to overcome. I am not searching for an answer but a way through each thing that happens. Jules Vern knew that when

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we see a path, more often than not we will head straight in. If it looks good then here we go without a thought about straying steps. Were always searching for good footing in perillas situations.

I find this story interesting. I knew a guy that found himself sleeping on a cot because he had to get out of a bad relationship. On the cot, he found nothing. All of a sudden, he was worse off than before. Yet, he wanted out. His wanting out was because he wanted answers. There were dreams of a better life. Fast forward several years, he is searching for a way though divorce. Throughout his life there has been searching for a way through university papers, parent’s harsh directions, and meaning after high school. There will always be searching. Sometimes we create scenarios to make answers that are not there. In the end, we are flat on our backs wondering what went wrong on a cot.

The danger in searching is making a mess. Sometimes the answers don’t exist. At other times, we try and create answers. Our dirty lives are usually our own mess. The danger comes when people begin to analyze you. When you analyze yourself. Jules Vern’s statement comes down to over thinking our situations. That is where masks are forged. That is where opinions are made. Everything becomes false because we created no way out. Instead we build masks to mask the danger, real answers, and pain. There is danger in masks. There is also a danger in not searching.

If you decide to not search for answers then maybe your trying to keep things normal. To create a normal life will abandon growth and change. To believe your dirty or crazy means you need to re-evaluate yourself, friends, and life in general. Maybe it’s you inside, yet maybe it’s the bad people you let into your life. It’s time to search for those answers. The picture I’m painting is

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you. Who are you? What do you love about yourself? Who do you have as friends because they are a snapshot of you. Just for a brief period of time you need to search and find these answers.

I fear the masks. To put on a persona just to fit in is no good. To avoid chaos just to be normal like others is no good. I'd swear we were created to build masks. Adam and Eve had questions. It appears they never asked God. Instead they hid from him. Why hide? I know I'm treating searching both ways. On one side I say search, but on the other I say don't. It comes back to honesty. Being honest about your situation is hard to cope with. Maybe you have bad company that you love. Maybe you need to change. Sometimes we look at the long road ahead and retreat. It's too harsh, it's too long. So we build masks to compensate for our fears.

Again, the answers we're searching for are not finality. Yet, in a small way they are. Yes, you will always grow and change. Much of our searching is for a way through and around life's challenges. However, there is one side aspect we must create as a solid foundation of who we are: it's called core beliefs. Friends come and go but what are your core beliefs on friendship. What are your core beliefs on morals, honesty, and other things like those. There is a need to change and grow. There is also a need for something to hold on to. That is your core beliefs.

Searching is so much more than looking for answers. It's paramount that you know yourself deeply. That means you know what you stand for. What are those things you would die for to defend? Those are your core beliefs. If you're not sure then maybe it's time for some soul searching. What are your character pillars like honesty and working hard? Is your faith found in your abilities or possibly God? For the last 18 years I have been on a journey searching and creating pillars that make up my core beliefs. You must do this. If you don't then the problem of

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masks arise. Creating core beliefs bust masks. Believing in a core means you will defend that core at all costs. In a way it means you will defend you.

What masks do you wear to hide yourself from shame, embarrassment, or guilt? Those have to come off. Recognizing where you came from and what has happened to you is very good. Yet, if they dominate your heart and mind then you need to search for a way past them. Sometimes within all these things is learning to live with trauma. I live with past guilt. I live with insecurities. I live with mistakes. I'd like to think I have moved on, but they still haunt me from time to time. I don't hide my insecurities. I've searched for a way through to cast off any masks I might wear. A lady said the other day I am an odd duck. It's because I'm so real and transparent. That is core to me. In a way, it's my core speaking.

It's funny but someone said to me the other day that God makes junk. I said in the first chapter that God does not make junk. I have repeated it all through this book. Why am I so sure? To me it's like this. Does an ant think it's purpose is junk? Does a wolf see itself in the water and think it looks like junk? Does a beautiful rose bloom and believe it's less than an orchid? There is no other creature on this planet but humans that believe they are less than they were meant to be. Our hearts and brains believe a great many things. Yet, one thing remains: you are here for a reason. That's why Darwin's thoughts are so crazy. Survival of the fittest? Who cares, you are here. Isn't that worth something? It's another core pillar.

The person who gave the last order to win a war was meant for that win. The hockey player that practiced and won with a Stanley cup winning Goal was meant to win. The person who picks up a child when they fell down was meant to say it's all right. I am inspired by a picture painted 300 years ago. The painter was gifted to inspire me. I believe it. In the movie

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Contact they repeat that the universe would be a great waste of space if it's just empty. Search for this answer: is your personal universe just a great waste of space. I think not? We all have a role and place on this earth and in your time. I will emphasize and repeat it: “*we*” *all do!*

I have been reading a book called *Atlas Shrugged*. It is an insane book. I like it and don't like it. Ayan Rand's point of view is that we were meant to win at what were good at. She also points out that people hold us back. There are expectations in society, religion, and within ourselves. I certainly don't agree with some of her thoughts, yet I see some truth. God says he made us. If so, then we are formed to work together with everything on this earth. We see that all the time in relationships between birds, bugs, and flowers. Certainly beyond God it looks like things work together on this planet even with Darwin's survival of the fittest. Either way we have purpose.

Sometimes I just believe that a writer is lying down at night in the grass under the stars above. They are thinking. Thinking about life, their purpose, and so much more. They begin to dream, invent, and ponder. Isn't that searching. They are searching for meaning of life around them and within them. Ayan Rand wrote that *maybe the dark ages were the absence of thinking*. They have been calling this current age *the age of no truth*. Are we finding ourselves back in an age of no thinking, or are we thinking too much? Is this world still searching for meaning and truths?

What could this search look like? We could read books. I read two book chapters every day. I read the internet. There are so many good stories, insights, and views in this world. I know a man who only talks God stuff. He relates his life and the things around him to God. It's ok but I fear it's not ok. He has been divorced twice. He lives in recluse. Do you really think God made

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all this stuff just to leave and enter heaven? Was it all created just to tempt us to do evil? So, eternity is spending our time strumming a harp on a cloud forever. Do the Muslims just have ten virgins forever? Is that all we were created for here and there? I severely doubt it. Otherwise it seems like a waste of space and time.

Ok, let's say that we are to spend eternity somewhere. You do realize that eternity is a long time. What if we needed eternity to search the depths of God. What if we needed eternity to search the depths of creation. How about discovering ourselves. Do you really think that there are 2 or three things about you? What if there were 30, 50, 1000. Would you need more time to search? Searching for meaning is about inspiring, empowering, and investing in you. In the end, you bring the best “you” to the table.

Let's begin with an understanding. I said earlier in this book that people will look at you as dirty, crazy, and possibly abnormal. They are judging you by their own standard. I can't stress it enough that we need to see that it's their opinion. They think you're crazy. They believe that normal looks their way. That does not mean their right. I have repeated that there were many people who said I need help in one form or another. Yet, time after time I went to professionals for help. Every single one of them said I was ok. They all equally said I needed to know I was ok.

*You must never think that their existence is a reflection of yours – Ayan Rand*

The understanding we search for begins with two truths. One is that other people can be wrong. They think normal is their normal. What you say is your thoughts. It's not theirs. Your way is not their way. That does not make it wrong. You don't look or think like them. You do

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not do what others do. Do you need to? Is there a law saying you have to? People are unique.

That includes you. So, the first understanding is that they don't represent you: you do.

The second understanding is that you must learn to love yourself. The very first thing you need to accomplish is climbing your own mountain of doubt. Fighting off the haters and doubters only happens when your satisfied in the mirror. You need to love you. Is it easy? Oh, no it's horribly tough. This is a life's journey. Yet, (I hate this) it's one step at a time. For me it was treating myself. I felt guilty about not thinking of others first every time. I desired to serve. To serve me was really hard. Yet, one chocolate bar at a time helped. One movie that was my choice helped. Rejecting negative people and embracing positive people helped. One person at a time.

They say that it takes 10 good thoughts to replace a negative one. That is a ton of negative thoughts to be replace with a million positive ones. It takes time. Clearing the negative floor is the first step. In the mirror, you need to visit yourself every day. I know this can be hard. However, look in the mirror. Study your face. Tell yourself that you love you. Blushing is cool when you blush at saying you love yourself. Self-talk looks crazy and neurotic. Be crazy and neurotic then. This is you were talking about. Giving yourself a pep talk is great therapy.

There is a theme in the Christian world called scorched earth. What it is, is that you take all the things in your life that represent the world and burn them. I have read about axing music, friends, family, and anything else apart from God. I did that to music and some other stuff. What remained was me. What I learned was this. I still like much of what I was before I became a Christian. I like some secular music. I like a beer. I like movies, sport events, and books. Yet, there were clearly things I needed to get rid of.

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My searching for a new life did not begin with burning all my worldly possessions. It began with looking at all I was and owned in a new light. I probably needed to toss a few cd's. I needed to disassociate myself from a few bad friends. Scorched earth? It may have been needed but it was not necessary. I tossed a lot of good stuff. Yet, I needed to see my life differently. To find my core beliefs. To defend who I am. Clearing the board is one way to do that.

I cautiously believe in scorched earth. When you have all your stuff before you. What to keep and what to toss. It's easier to toss it all and begin again. I knew a girl who owned very little. She decided to get out of her relationship. On the way out, she began to grab and take in desperation. Even taking things, she did not care for. Clearing the board is a way of just leaving you at the table. That is a scary place, yet a necessary place.

I knew a hoarder that died. Sitting in their place was a horror movie. What to keep and what to toss? Their life was piled up before me. What I discovered is that there is very little that has meaning. We keep things because we don't want to leave them behind. They remind us that time passes. Who wants to let time slip away. So, we keep stuff. Too much stuff. Some of those things need to go. Maybe it's about pretending we have passed on. What was truly worth keeping. The hard truth is not much.

I was always told I'm a great self-talker. The problem is I rarely listen to myself. Through the years, it has been a struggle to listen, even to me. Yet, here I am. The other day I post a thought of respecting the spot your standing on. So often we wish we were somewhere else. Do you realize that the spot your standing on goes where ever you are? I guess the crazy thing is searching for you. You're already found standing there in front of you on a spot. Dispelling the things people say about you comes from gaining confidence. Confidence in who you are and

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what you should be. To dispel your own feelings against yourself is the same way. Sometimes our worst enemy is our own inner thoughts. We need to respect the spot were standing on.

I realize there are always exceptions. Now listen, rare things are exceptions. To know you is not to go find you. What you like and are passionate about already exist in you. It's like at work. They give you tools to make the company better. They hired you because you brought something to the table. It's all there. Rarely do companies rewire themselves or re-invent themselves. That's what I know. I spent several years trying new things. It's all good, but I always came back to what I liked in the first place. Half the time it's me who rejects me.

Searching for answers is fun. The reality part is sad. Many times, there just is no answer. Why were they mean? Sometimes well never know. Sometimes the answer is horrible too. Finding out you hate archery but love bowling is good. Maybe someone told you that bowling was stupid and you wondered if it was. What if archery was not your bag. Your heart kept coming back to bowling. I think going on a pilgrimage is awesome. It's a really good way to slow down. To see what? People always say stop and smell the roses. Maybe a pilgrimage is stopping long enough to see yourself clearly.

Far too often people think that you'll find yourself in things. So, you ski and find happiness. If you break your leg then maybe you can't ski anymore. Are you still happy? The most gut wrenching story I know is of diver named Joi Erikson Tata. She miscalculated the depth of the bay she dove into and became paralyzed. Amazingly enough she struggled with life for several years until she discovered something: herself. She loved to write and paint. She did before the accident too, yet it was just a hobby. Now it became a passion. She is well known now

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not as a diver but as Joni the painter, writer, and tragedy overcomer. It’s the same soul. Yet, in a strange way, she never knew herself until all she had was herself. Scorched earth.

I am so saddened by people who leave a spouse to find themselves. So often they remarry someone just like they had before. Why do these people get passionate about doing so many things to be happy? Happy was inside all along standing on their spot. Yet, they decided to burn it all down and ruin lives to search for themselves in another spot. I doubt many think about the chaos. I think second marriage divorce rates are so high is because reality bites. Dorothy realized in the Wizard of Oz that if she didn’t find her heart’s desire beyond her own back yard, she never really lost it to begin with. We can find our happiness where were standing, but we rarely think happiness is right beside us. Stopping and looking is paramount.

I keep thinking of the Titanic. It hits an iceberg and begins to perish. Yet, many of the crew and passengers didn’t know for some time. I heard that some of the discussion was about the unsinkable. If it says it’s unsinkable then why is it sinking? The men who ran the boat knew it was sinkable, but they believed the lie. The men who built the boat knew it was sinkable but they believed the lie. Some people set themselves up. They tell themselves that they will find themselves in other places and people. Sometime later, they are wondering why they are sitting at the bottom of the Atlantic. They believed the lie.

You can believe that your dirty. You can believe that your normal. In all honesty, you can believe whatever you want. In the end, all you have is what you’ve been given. They say that you can’t take it with you when you die. Yet, they always say you can take your soul. You take you wherever you are. I just wanted you to think about searching. Tossing people just to find yourself is not the answer. Pilgrimages are enlightening but you remain once it’s over. Self-help

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books are fine but they do have a back cover. What happens when the book closes. You go and look in the mirror. What do you see? It’s you. Part of not feeling dirty is accepting you.

Fortunately, you are not someone else. Otherwise your name would be different. You’d like other things. You would look at life differently. There is nothing wrong with you. Stop trying to search for someone else when you is good enough.

Still, some self-revelation is found in searching. There are several convents in my city. You can go there for a fee and reflect all week. I have hiked mountains alone. There are long walks, drives, and adventures. My lawyer says his marriage was strengthened when they got lost in the amazon jungle during their honeymoon. Disclaimer: don’t try this in a jungle, they were lucky. They found their strength in being lost. I suppose I found myself in being lost inside. There is a creepy good answer in being lost. I say creepy because it’s a tough way to learn.

Luke 15 of the Bible tells the story of two spoiled sons. One went away to find himself. The other stayed home because the thought he was good enough. Read this excerpt.

*“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”*

Both boys were lost. One knew it, but the other did not. The boy who searched found himself. The boy who did nothing became resentful, bitter and quite possibly lost. This story is usually told from the boy who left point of view. The son who stayed home is the key. We need to search. We need to be found. The key is “we” need. The boy at home lived a fake life of bitterness. Ironically, he became the victim of his passive life. The brother thought he was a victim but realized so much about himself through searching.

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I know two people who have lost relationships. Both of them believe they are the victim. Both of them have good reason to believe that. The problem is the enemy. It's easy to say others are the enemy. It's easy to claim victim status. It's terribly hard to look in the mirror. I know. I had a mentor who pushed me to see myself in my life and actions. That really sucked. There were a lot of heated battles. All those councilors said there was nothing wrong with me, but they said I had to believe myself. I became Dorothy finding my heart's desire within my back yard.

The other day I was watching Talking with Chris Hardwick. He had James Corden on as a guest. Chris asked James for one life thought. James said *the difference between doing something and not doing something is: doing something*. That's how to end this book. People make us feel dirty. We convince ourselves that we are dirty. In the end, it is a choice. A choice in how we think. A choice in what we accept. A choice of who our friends are, what we believe, and everything else.

I have offered you a way through crazy feelings. Unfortunately, you have had the answer in you all along. You are responsible for your actions. You are responsible for accepting other people's thoughts about you. The action is yours. Search for your core beliefs. What hills will you die on? There has to be hills to die on. Only you can choose those. How do you get rid of bad influences? Have hills to die on. Once you will fight for “you”, then the gloves are on. You will not stand to be told your dirty, crazy, or anything else. Why? Because you will have begun a relationship with yourself. That is a hill worth fighting for.

Finally, search for happiness. It's not a right but it is something everyone deserves. We are still children inside. Don't we want children to smile and be happy? Search for new ways. Search for new ideas. Yet, hold firm to core beliefs. I said to a friend once. To gain a superman,

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you must see and challenge them to be a superman. I still have days I feel dirty. I always will.

Yet, my search found me in all this mess called life. That is a pretty cool thing.