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Chapter 3: Crazy

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep,

If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.

I love that prayer. Lately, when I go to bed at night, I have been reciting that famous simple prayer. This is one of those little prayers that your mother taught you. It was meant to comfort you. I bet she said it so that she could rest easier knowing I'm protected. I have been saying it because it helps me sleep better at night knowing I'm in the Lords hands. Sleeping is good for the soul.

We all need peace of mind and sleep. We go out of our way to buy a nice bed. Bed, bath, and beyond will take you to were no man (or woman) has gone before. We all want the perfect pillow and perfect sheets. It's about sanity. A good sleep brings clarity. It brings health. They say you should make your bedroom a place of rest. Why is it that when were awake, life seems less than Steller some times? Things don't always go the way we planned. People don't treat us the way we thought they would. It's like a nightmare that keeps repeating itself. Then we go to bed and pray again.

Imagine drifting off to sleep after your good prayers. You drift and drift in and out of reality until deep sleep comes calling. Welcomed and unwarranted dreams arrive somewhere in the comforts of your 400 dollar sheets and king-size bed. The dream world breaks through the fog and your standing near a gravesite. The night is cold and you shiver at the thought of being in this place. I've seen this place in my dreams before. Another night, another nightmare. To the right of you is death standing there cold and silent. Great, I'm in the movie *Scrooge*. Couldn't my dreams have chosen a better movie to place me in? There stands death with his rather large sickle gleaming in the moonlight. He does what death always does. He stretches out his arm in that ominous black robe and points with is long boney finger at your destiny. You cast your eyes

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from the sickle to a rather dark and bleak headstone at the foot of a freshly dug grave. It's your final resting place. A place of destiny that has your name on it.

I want to scream as I look at my name etched on the stone. Stones should have the Ten Commandments or something on them. It should not be a memorial to me. I thought I still had plenty of time left. This is horror because of things left undone. Horror that I never quite found myself. Who am I and what have I done with this life? All these questions and realizations come raining down on me at the end of the boney finger of death. Is all that I've accomplished in my life been etched in stone with the simple words *it is finished?*

Suddenly, the scene changes and I am James Bond. How cool is that! Well it's cool but I'm still in a coffin. Somehow, I'm Bond in the Movie *Diamonds are forever*. Here I am trapped inside the crematorium in a burning casket. Great, the sign on the business says Slumber, but I'm not resting. The smoke and heat rise as my minutes are burning up fast. All I can think about is those diamonds. This is not the time to be counting my riches. My life is about to go up in smoke. I am reminded of Jesus saying we should not cast pearls to swine. Is that the same as saying don't count your chickens before they hatch? My mind is swirling. Chickens, pearls, and diamonds? What a weird dream.

I wake up as the fire bursts in. The fog recedes and smoke clears as I find myself lying in my king-sized bed with my 100-dollar pillow. There I lay looking down at my soaked shirt ruining my 400 dollar sheets. I vaguely remember what happened. Was I dreaming of baking something. Oh, yes, I remember, it was me in one of Slumbers fine coffins. The headstone, the coffin, and those dam diamonds. What does it mean? It means I'm alive. It means I still have time. The movie Scrooge states at the end that he was better than his word. He loved more and

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did more for humankind than he needed to. That sounds like revelation. A second chance. I'd have rather been visited by three spirits than hot boxing in a funeral home or looking at my destiny scratched on a headstone.

Dreams can be fun. Yet, every morning I realize I'm still here. There is still time to get it right. So often, I have met people throughout my day that have made me feel dirty. Some nights I have crawled home and felt undone saying *it is finished*. Yet, every morning like Groundhog Day, here I am at 6 am. Ok, it's 5 for me, but who's counting that early. I love my life but it's still a grind. I love people but it seems that they love to grind me. The peace I pray for at night is not always there in the morning. I don't ever dread the day. I want to live. Yet, at times, somewhere in my mind, I think I'm in a nightmare. People don't accept me for who I am. Why not? There are many terrible people in this world and I'm not one of them. Yet, I continue to meet people that disapprove of me and something seems to be wrong. Is it me, is it them, or am I crazy?

Gees, Patrick, I just read your opening to this chapter and yep, your certified crazy. I suppose only a crazy person reads their own stuff and calls themselves crazy. Every day I wake up with a pledge to do good. To be nice. To do what good boy scouts are supposed to do which is *do a good turn every day*. At night I pray that sleep goes well. Do crazy people hope things go well or go crazy? Is normal me or not me? Well get into normal in the next chapter but for now let's get into crazy.

To really understand crazy I needed to dig into why people think less of others. There are plenty of papers written on this subject. What it seems to come down to is avoiding people. Do we avoid people? Every day we find ourselves in a community. There are people like us all over

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the place. It seems ridiculous to avoid like-minded people. The research; however, says yes, we tend to avoid others. I thought we invented phones to reach people, but instead, were using them to avoid. Yes, we do. We hang up, look at the display of who's calling. We text instead of talking. Sometimes we just turn it off. Are we becoming cold by avoiding others?

Have you ever noticed that songs are written with adjectives of temperature? The is hot summer night; cold heart of stone, and burning for you. Scientist have been fascinated by how we interact in the world around us. They conducted some experiments to see how we react to events and people in relation to temperature. What they found is that we feel temperature in the relationships we have. This temperature will help us decide whether to draw closer to or avoid others altogether.

Chen-Bo Zhong and Geoffrey J. Leonardelli wrote a paper on the relationship between temperature and people. They discovered that being ignored made people feel cold. Those people wanted a hot coffee after the test. The people that were paid attention to were often very comfortable. Afterwards they chose to have something neutral like a cookie. They were not cold, hot, or stressed. Hot temperatures seem to cause more crime and personal interaction. Cold weather seems to invoke loneliness and less contact. You would think it would be the other way around. When it's cold I need people to hug me. But, then I thought about it. I could see me wrapped up in a blanket shivering by myself. I do think that temperature and situations are linked.

It's interesting because we interact with people every day. Can a hot or cold building distract you. Some people prefer it one way or the other. I know McDonalds changed its interior to reflect warmer colors. They built fire places. So, did Tim Hortons. There is no mistake that

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churches and many hotels have greeters. My son worked as a hotel greeter. It was not his job to greet or be friendly half as much as being there. His boss was obsessed with my son standing for hours at the door waiting for someone to need him. I bet the thought was that upon entering a hotel, the greeter is the first person you should see. A warm and friendly face. At church, studies have shown that the greeter experience makes all the difference. People have decided on the church well before they meet or hear the pastor. Is it warm, is it friendly, am I comfortable?

If we were given the cold shoulder, do we tend to avoid that person after that experience? If a person fires up our emotions do we get angry and avoid conflict? I even see it in relationships. People get hot and horny or cold and shy. We affect and are affected by the people around us. Sometimes we could attribute that to temperature. I think we accept and avoid people for many reasons beyond how warm or cold you feel. Yet, sometimes we get a shiver or hot flash around certain people. Does that make you or them crazy?

The Today Show on NBC did a segment in 2016 on *what is creepy*. They talked to experts and did polls to discover what made people uncomfortable. Even I was amazed. Here is a snapshot of what is creepy to many people:

Standing too close to someone, smiling peculiarly, bulging eyes, long fingers, pasty skin, greasy hair, wearing dirty or weird clothes, or Licking lips.

This is by no means an elusive list but you get the picture. As I looked over the list I'm looking at my fingers. I'm checking out my skin and hair. I realized that many of those traits are in all of us. Marty Feldman is an actor with large eyes. He is adorable and so funny. I've never considered him creepy. Boxing Manager Don King has crazy hair but he is one of the most

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famous sports personalities. I don't think that these traits make you creepy, but the results are entertaining.

They also discussed careers we have. What is creepy? How about a Clown, Taxidermist, Sex shop owner, Funeral director, Taxi driver? There are several things that stand out. A clown is a career? Ok, I get that the funeral director and taxidermist is creepy, but someone has to do it. Creepy people? I'll admit that in Hollywood those jobs are done by people with pale skin and disheveled hair. In real life, they might be normal looking people. It's still creepy though. I suppose I get the sex shop owner but the taxi guy? These questions kept bugging me for real answers. Who is creepy? Why do people bug us? Certainly, creepy people make us feel cold. Why do some unfortunate souls drive us crazy? Is it a feeling caused by temperature? Do we think creepy people are crazy people? Why?

I was on a mission after my divorce. She told me I was not relationship material. Wow, that stung. It took you high school and almost 12 years of marriage to figure that out? My Dad told me that maybe it was my fault. The cool thing is they both told me that on the same day. Nice wife, nice parents, and nice life to that point. Was I to blame for other people's unhappiness. Am I the crazy one? What I find sad but interesting is why did they feel the need to tell me I'm less than stellar. Didn't they know that it would make me feel dirty or crazy?

My mission took me to the distress center. When you are thrust out of your home and family you're in distress. When those you trust and love can't stand you your distressed. I met with a very cool councilor 7 times at that place. By the end, she kept repeating two things. One is that *there was nothing wrong with me*. The second was that *I needed to believe that*. When those closest to you always tell you you're to blame and you're the crazy one, you begin to own it. It's

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either them or you? When it's one person against a whole bunch it seems obvious: I'm crazy. I'm not relationship material.

I never spent so many hours in front of the mirror. I was holding the scale of justice. On one side was all the condemnation, and on the other was this little voice of a councilor saying there's nothing wrong with you. Who to believe. I certainly did not believe the person in the mirror. I had been trained by those I loved to hate me like they do. They believed I was crazy because I trusted them. How could I trust me? I guess I could believe the distress lady but who is she? Isn't it her job to make me feel better? Is it her job to crank them out or tell the truth? I did not realize that the man in the mirror knew the truth all along. I am not crazy.

This journey to the truth is depicted in my brain as crazy ramblings. A crazy person? It like you've got the runs bad. It's either hold it in or let it all go. If you gotta go then you gotta go. I feel the same way about expressing my heart. Why do some people think I'm crazy? I have met people I thought were half crazy but that's not me. I just need to express my brain to people. Why? To let them know who I am? I don't know why, but I am saying *why not*. People who love to express themselves are not normal. There is an innate desire inside them to bring the inside, outside. It's about the masks we wear in chapter two. Crazy people have no mask and that bothers so many people.

Expressing yourself could be considered creepy. Why does that guy need to spill his life before us? Yet, so many are popular because they are honest. Famous people can be a hot mess and the public adores them for it. There is that relationship to temperature again. Does being real give people a reason to be cool towards you? I have found myself to be a hot magnet and a cold intimidation to many. My life is crazy.

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There have been many times that I have tried to explain myself to confused looks. In my writing, I have to reverse words a lot. My brain thinks faster than my mouth and fingers. It never comes out correctly on paper or in speech. That does not make me crazy. Saying something that I believe does not make me crazy. Neither does being a hockey goalie or a writer, but some say that's nuts. It's taken me years to come to grips with all this crazy talk. Over time I have observed a few things about being crazy. Let's see if I can explain this right?

I know a woman who is a certain way with people. She is just odd, and no I don't think she is a sex store owner or a taxidermist. She dresses ok but fairly common. I guess nothing flashy. Her body is fine but nothing to die for. I suppose she might be considered weird but I really can't put my finger on why. When she prays, she has to put a cloth over her head. Honestly, it's biblical. It's actually correct. Yet, why is it weird? She always goes to the pastor for prayer, and I mean always. Is that weird too. I know people have tried to avoid her but she is a nice lady. However, she is weird, dirty, and maybe crazy by nobody's standards.

I don't think her fingers are long or her eyes bulge. In a way, she is just what she presents herself to be. I think she has no mask. She is honest, quirky, unorthodox, and one other thing: she sucks up time and energy. There are those who always need your time. For some reason, we are drained after they leave. I am an extrovert. I gain energy from being with people. My wife is an introvert and loses energy around people. For some reason, there are a few that suck energy from those around them. It does not bug me but it bugs those in short supply. Maybe that is creepy and crazy all rolled into one. For some reason, we prefer happy people who look nice and act proper. What is proper? Who knows, but my lady friend ain't it.

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I met a customer on my mail route recently that was trying to describe her delivery problem. I told her that I was not her mailman. I thought it was this other girl. The customer then piped up “ah, the disheveled looking lady.” I laughed. Yes, that is her in a nut shell. I thought nobody else noticed. I forgot we judge everything. Even I do it because I knew exactly who they were talking about. The mail girl has ratty hair and terrible teeth. Does that make her disheveled, dirty, or crazy? I’ve talked to her and she seems a little off. Does that make her disheveled, dirty, or crazy?

I’m a little bit off. Ask my dad or my ex-wife. I needed a mission to find the truth about myself too. I am just like my weird lady friend looking for affirmation in a pastor. I visited another councilor and more people. In each case one says I’m fine and another says I’m crazy. What is a poor postal worker to do? I love the description of crazy in the thesaurus. These words are fun in my way of thinking. Crazy is: **implausible, inconceivable, incredible, unbelievable, unimaginable, unthinkable; extravagant, grotesque; bizarro, curious, eccentric, far-out, funny, and kinky.** That about sums me up. I like the grotesque and funny: do they fit together? If people think that is crazy, then I’m it. I’m bizarro, kinky, and far-out man.

It’s too bad people need to feel all warm and fuzzy to be happy. Maybe they think some of us are crazy because we were happy all the time. I’m happy most of the time but when things go wrong I’m either a hot mess or laughing. I love being emotional because it means I’m not dead. People who never get emotional miss out on all the fun. A roller-coaster life is all we have. It’s full of up’s and down’s; high’s and low’s. I suppose you can either roll with it or rebel against it. I believe crazy people think life is fun. Oh, sure there are those who spell doom all the time. That seems crazy. Is it? Or, are they just realists and that seems to bug us too.

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There was a guy who decided that God wanted him to carry a large cross around town for five years. He quit his job and went on a journey of being Jesus with a cross. I will never forget as a non-Christian sitting on a bench in Victoria B.C. one sunny morning. All of a sudden I had this guy pass me dragging a cross. I did not know the Bible stuff but I knew what that was. It was Jesus dragging a cross by me in 1988 not 34 AD. That was nuts, insane, and crazy. Funny enough, after I became a Christian it wasn't quite that crazy. Five years later he felt God say it was time to hang up the cross. He went back to his normal life. Crazy in the moment or extrovertly driven?

I totally hate people who walk around with a stick up their donkey. Fine, hate is a strong word. They irritate me something fierce. The stick part is unrealistic too but it sure seems like that. If I had a stick up there I'd be stiff, look concerned all the freaking time, and way too serious. Why is the Joker in Batman saying "why so serious?" Why should crazy people care if others like being serious? I think it's because the stick up the butt people bug us. They think were crazy and we think they have a stick shoved where the sun doesn't shine. Sounds like mutual admiration but it ends up mutual irritation.

Those stick people need a life. They think us crazy people need a life. Who is right? It might come back to the beginning of this chapter. We are affected by certain things. People who don't like how someone looks decide to ignore them instead of embracing them. It makes conversation awkward and cold. This seems cyclical. I bug you and that bugs me. When that bugs me then it really bugs you. I think it's crazy living life so serious. It seems nuts missing all the fun. Disliking someone because they act weird is sad. In the last chapter I mentioned myself trying to gain knowledge from my opposite. There was a chance to learn and grow. He thought in ways I never could. I looked at life in ways he never conceived. Yet, he hated my life. He

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wanted nothing to do with me. It killed me, not that he rejected me, but that he felt I offered him nothing worth learning.

We crazy people need serious people. There might be a gap between us but we need the opposite. An artist needs to paint, but they need to eat too. You could make an argument that opposites need each other. Hold on there, horsey. We can learn from them but live with them? I believe divorce is high because quite often we desire our opposite. However, the way the other side thinks and acts is crazy. It's probably rare that a painter and a doctor can be in love. It's about putting opposites in their proper place in our lives.

Here's some crazy words: likeness, thinkness, and sameness. These are essential to a good relationship. Being likeminded in morals and life's goals is a good thing. Thinking the same way on many things is better than too many different opinions. I find the wife and I are the same in many things. It's ok to be a little different. Just don't live with your opposite. Divorce rates are around 60% and second marriages the divorce rate is much higher. That leads me to believe opposites are Acid and water most of the time. Have a bunch in common in a relationship. Otherwise, one might believe your crazy with too many things.

It's how we look at life that makes people think something is wrong with us. Needing to wear a cloth on your head in prayer is correct but strange. This modern generation does not think that way anymore. Eating bugs because it's interesting or fun is screwy. I think eating Tofu because it's healthy is crazy. Health nuts might be wise but their diet is no fun. Working 60 hours a week as a doctor, pastor, or business man might be noble, but if your married its nuts. Divorced people might even call that crazy. Yet I have had pastors call me crazy. I have had

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professional people look me off and avoid me. I'm too loose with life. I think out of the box too much. Yet, I think their crazy half the time. We need people in our lives that get us.

Here is a summation of crazy. We are not ostriches. We don't prefer to stick our heads in the sand and assume life is fine. We think it will leave our donkey exposed and that might end badly. If I wore a mask and hid my true self, that would be a tragedy. I think famous writers like Poe, Tolstoy, and Faulkner exposed their hearts. They thought about the "what if." Those writers wrote about tragedy and perspective. An ostrich just takes the most obvious route. The safest chance. Protect the head. Out of sight and out of mind. There are plenty of reports that wearing a helmet increases the chance of getting hurt. It makes no sense but we are more reckless with safety. Just ask the Titanic crew. Unsinkable bred confidence in the ocean. Most sea fearing men fear the ocean because they know the truth about the sea. I think the crazy are the exposed and the reckless.

Crazy people go around, over, and under things. They think of ways to win that nobody else would. There is a story of assassins in china during the Japanese/china wars. The Japanese underestimated ingenuity. They protected the tops of the bridges. The Chinese swung themselves on human chains to the other side underneath the bridge. Who would have thought. Crazy people blast off in a rocket full of fuel. At a certain height, it exploded. Of course, it did, it was a rocket with fuel and human error working together. The astronauts were willing to chance it because they saw beyond the danger. The Chinese could have fallen but they saw beyond the danger.

It's not that crazy half the time. It's just that there are safe and crazy people. There are those who stay inside the box and those who roam outside. It's crowded in the crazy world. There are a ton of us and were all different. That must drive the other side crazy. Who's safe like

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an ostrich with a bunch of crazy people roaming around? I think that it's too bad some eccentric people get caught up in fame and fortune. Many times, they end up in disaster. Even in fame people expect you to act normal. The problem is that what got you there was not normal. Being forced to act normal will drive you to feel dirty and believe your crazy.

I'm not allowed to call you an idiot, but you sure paint a good picture of it.

These days the eccentric and outcast are considered the normal. I'm certain that off the wall people hate that. Being different is fun to those who are. Being given a badge to wear that proudly exclaims were different is not what the so called crazy people desire. Those who fight in a war or a choose to be a cop are the ones who deserve badges. The people in the shadows that are different, dirty, and half-crazy love who they are. They need no attention. Yes, they need some love, a little acknowledgment, and respect but that's it. We prefer living in the shadows being our happy crazy selves.

I did say my feelings were hurt by being called crazy. It's more about being unaccepted and misunderstood that hurts. I am me. I am certainly not you, thank God. I think I love being a Christian because of God's view on me. He said he made me different and that was by design. Jesus said he is not accepted in his home town. He was called crazy by his own family. I want to run with those that think that way. Still, I have to pull up my socks. I hate it that I'm not in with the in crowd. I need to let that go. I have learned that being different is a gift. It means they broke the mold at me. I better take care of the one me.

There are those who fly at 10,000 feet. There are those that fly at 5,000. Neither one of us is better than the other. Both of these types of people are needed in this life. One can complement the other. These different types of people don't need to hinder each other. I think we hinder

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because were uncomfortable. Were uncomfortable because we refuse to understand, accept, and love unconditionally. There was a story of communism taking over in Cambodia. The leader Pol Pot killed off all the professional people in the name of making everyone equal. There would be no one smarter and no one richer. We all are one big happy community. Then famine hit and people got sick. There were no doctors and no structure to handle natural disasters. So many people died. We need people of all types to survive.

I'm not saying it's easy to accept crazy people. Some of us are dang weird. I have people I avoid. They don't think like me. It's sad to avoid anyone but I get it. You just don't have to reject them outright. They have worth. Different does not mean crazy. Just because people have different outlooks and answers does not mean they are nuts. I find the best answers need to be chewed on. I hate it when people say they will pray about it. That usually means no. It's got little to do with prayer. The answer sometimes needs reflection and other times it's obvious. I find odd people see the answer clearer and faster than many of us. We just hate that they know it before we do.

There are crazy people like Jeffery Dahmer who ate people. There is Hitler who thought he should rule the world. I read War and Peace. It was a fantastic book. Tolstoy lost sight of his story when he got bogged down in why Napoleon fought the war. So many died and nothing was gained. It made no sense to him. The outcome and aftermath was obvious to Tolstoy well before the war of 1812. Yet the battle happened and many died for no reason. In every one of these people was a crazy thing they should not have done, but in their mind, it made sense at the time. There is bad crazy.

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I read a piece on intolerance. There was a struggle between two opposing points in regards to the gay community. One side has tried to eradicate the other. There have been laws, programs, pills, and therapy to fix the gay problem. On the other side there have been outrage and condemnation of anything Christian. There is a movement to eradicate the Christian religion for what they tried to do in the past. Both sides think they are right. Both sides believe they have the blessing of God. Both sides think differently.

My thought is that both sides are the same. We are people. People who believe things. I believe my uniqueness is worth something. I know others that say I'm worthless to them. This is a human problem. One author asked the gay group how far will this go. Your hatred towards another group will be your undoing. They disagreed but the author reminded them that they were one step away from killing Jews. I'm shocked by that, but I can see it clearly now. It's something we would never do. Were human, but were so capable of hatred.

They were capable in Germany, Turkey, Cambodia, Russia, and even in regards to North American Indians. There are so many examples of disdain and hate in this world. In the future, unfortunately there will be more examples of hatred turning the wrong way. Hating another because you think their way is crazy is not far from killing Jews. It's my wish that when someone creeps you out, take a step back. What you might think is crazy might be a *round world* as opposed to a *flat one*.

I love Forrest Gump saying *stupid is what stupid does*. The Darwin awards are given to people who found stupid ways to die. We can make bad choices in thoughts, words, and intentions. Nothing ever goes as planned. There is always another way. In movies, I have heard this statement several times *that's so crazy it might work*. My daughter is slightly autistic. I love

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how she lives and thinks. No masks, no condemnation. Everything is possible with her. The autistic live trapped inside a box, but their brain thinks outside the box. There is a war in her brain between the safe and the insane. She is not normal, but she is normal. It depends on acceptance.

I think differently and some figure I'm crazy. I have changed my view on people in the last several years. Everyone is different. It might be less about crazy and more about misunderstood. If we gave people more avenues to express and explore themselves we might have a better world. Possibly the so called normal might embrace the abnormal. To me, it's all about a mindset. Maybe, it's time to make a new definition of normal beginning in the next chapter.