

I dream of being

This book is essential to anyone that has a quest for success. It could be considered a motivational bible of sort.

Dennis White, Actor/Acting Coach/Producer
The Closer/Notorious/The Brave One



**AGAINST
ALL ODDS**
I Can Be

10 Steps To Revolutionize Your Destiny

MO STEGALL

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL STEVENS, SR.

Step 1



Discover Your Worth

☞POWER PILL☞

Your life is built upon your choices, experiences, adversity, and triumphs...even the wrong choices have helped push you to where you are today. Don't be ashamed of your past, yet be empowered to embrace your future...God has fuel left in the tank for you...keep completing chapters in the book entitled YOUR LIFE!



∞STARTING POINT∞

When fulfilling your life purpose, the quest begins with an initial point of reference used to navigate you to your final destination. Along the path of your predestined life you must discover where your preliminary assignment is and allow construction to commence. The things you desire to accomplish in life will often frustrate you with dismal results without a solid foundation being established. Discovering who you are, while defining your worth is your essential starting point.



CHAPTER 1

WHO AM I?

When you are asked the question “Who Are You?” what is your usual response? For many it’s their name which is used from the time they were born to identify them, while others may name their ethnicity or profession. Many of us realize we haven’t found the answer yet. So how does one go about finding out the answer?

I spent a great deal of my life being represented by Shimoura Antwione Stegall while searching for Mo Stegall. Shimoura was my birth name. Just like our names, we don’t get to choose anything about our birth—the time, the place, our parents—yet it’s where we begin our journey. It’s strange because although we don’t have much say in where we start, we are solely responsible for our lives. The good news is your ending will not be the same as your beginning. As a newborn you have no control, no voice, or reference. As you grow, you will uncover the gem you were created to become.

It’s ironic how I got the name Shimoura. I was named after the doctor that delivered me, it means mighty and powerful in Japanese. Shimoura is a person who is shy and reserved. It took me years to find Mo Stegall. Mo is the guy you see on the red carpet at various awards shows like the BET awards and loves to speak his mind. He loves attention; in fact, he craves it. It’s two different personalities but they coexist. Shimoura is about educating and empowering people but often gets overshadowed by Mo who is determined to make a statement. Both personalities have helped my success. Shimoura continues to work to serve God while Mo makes people listen. One almost has to find that inner person within themselves. I had a lot of insecurities and still have a few but Mo helped me deal with them. The combination of my insecurities and massive ego are a great balance because they help me understand that what God has chosen me to do and what I have accomplished have nothing to do with me personally. The two working together helps me to stay where I need to be. As I continue to discover various things about myself, I am learning day to day that I was created one man with various layers; as you continue to find the answer to who you are, I’m sure you will uncover a similar discovery. Your life is a journey and the process that you are about to embark upon is one that will generate an enormous breakthrough. Launch out into the depths of the ocean and find what’s missing.

FANTASY ISLAND

The 1978 hit television series Fantasy Island is where a vast majority of people in society today would like to reside. Fantasy Island was a resort where there is very little that the host Mr. Roarke could not provide. Visitors experience adventures and fantasies everyday that

should have been impossible but Fantasy Island could accommodate anything. We spend countless moments on Fantasy Island wishing for a simple life yet while on Fantasy Island, we wonder why our lives haven't evolved.

I spent a great portion of my life wishing for stuff that I didn't have the know-how to get. I also didn't take any action to get what I wanted. I quit my job six months after buying a car and moving into a new apartment. I spent the next few months at home hoping God was going to do something for me. I didn't want to bother my mom or relatives for money; God was going to take care of me. My bills were piling high and I wasn't sending out my resume or doing anything to find a new job but I religiously told myself God was going to do something for me. At the time, almost every Sunday church service my friend and pastor John P. Kee would bless someone with a large amount of money. Every Sunday I just knew he was going to call my name and give me \$10,000. It sounds insane but I really thought God was just going to make money appear for me without me having to do anything. I had heard stories of people who went to pay a bill but it was already paid. I didn't know how but I just knew money would appear. Someone was going to rescue me. However, that person never came and when the money didn't magically appear either, I left Fantasy Island for good, never to return again.

In 1999, I started a program called The Fly High Poetic Language Enrichment Program. One of the first schools we took the program to was one that served kids with behavioral problems. After working with them for a couple of weeks, I realized the kids were caged by the system and themselves. They didn't believe in themselves or understand who they were so they turned to violence. A lot of them had suffered trauma like molestation, rape, and abuse. The Fly High program ended up changing many of their lives. I was the keynote speaker at their graduation and saw a big difference from the first day of class and graduation day.

You may not get to choose where you begin but you have a say in where you will end.

One of my favorite students was Dante. He was one of the biggest leaders and troublemakers but very smart. I noticed that he had great potential but kept all of it locked up inside of him because he didn't know how to express it. His frustrations would lead to violence but as time passed he began writing poetry and was able to unleash his anger in a new way. Initially he would say poetry was for girls and didn't want to do it. By graduation, he was one of the leading students in the school. He found himself through therapeutic writing and healed himself of some of the experiences he had as a young boy. Poetry allowed him to see life differently. Our program would visit the school once a week but Dante put together a petition for us to come more because he felt it would make a difference in the other student's lives as well. He got it signed by hundreds of students and people in the community and took the petition down to the school superintendent himself. His life could have gone in another direction but he managed to get free.

CLAY & POTTERY

Clay and Pottery are synonymous to our lives because they are both elements of a cause and effect. One element is the matter in which many things can be created from while the other is a result of the creation. Pottery is one of the oldest and most widespread of the decorative arts used to create ware like pots, bowls, and plates. Pottery is shaped from moist clay and hardened by heat. The clay is modeled, dried, and fired with a glaze or finish to create a piece of art. Clay, the natural resource used in creating pottery, is dug from earth that has decomposed from rock within the earth's crust for millions of years. Decomposition occurs when water erodes the rock and breaks it down. Like clay, some of us have been decomposing, allowing our identity and dreams to erode.

When we are as soft as clay, people become our potters. We allow people to shape us into what they want us to be. These self-imposed potters can be our parents, bosses, spouses, or friends who wish to re-style our destiny according to their preferences. Those individuals may want to reshape us because in some form or fashion they wish to live their lives through us. It is easy to be as weak as clay when your dreams are idle and stagnant. When you know what you want and who you are, no one can shape you.

NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK

I have never actually seen a needle submerged in a haystack but I have seen people so engulfed with pleasing others that they lose themselves. They become so consumed with other people; it would be like trying to find a needle in the haystack to locate their original identity.

When a needle is swallowed up in the hay, its shine and sparkle are lost. It's so consumed by the hay; no one would ever believe the needle existed. In relationships we find ourselves catering to people like our parents, bosses or spouses that we neglect our own needs. Once you neglect your needs, you begin to forget about yourself and so do others.

Early in my marriage, I grew so engulfed with my wife's needs that I wasn't being the husband I wanted to be. When we fall in love, we are so happy to finally click with someone; we put our friends and family aside and spend all our time with our new love. My wife and I were like lock and key, we couldn't function separately. I got to the point where I told her we need to keep being our own person, we were individuals when we met and should remain so. In other words, I told her to get some friends. I wasn't able to properly be the man I was supposed to be in the relationship because I couldn't see myself anymore. We became a mirage of one human being. She was accustomed to doing things by herself so when we got married she didn't know how to be a wife and work together. She always felt she had to be both the wife and the husband. So when I wasn't making as much money as her, she felt like she had to make up for my lack. I became timid and felt inadequate so I let her lead. But when I took the back seat and she made all the decisions, things got out of order. Sometimes she would tell me about her plans for our household and other times she wouldn't. That system wasn't good for our family. I became so frustrated with feeling like a puppet that I

finally snapped. I informed my wife of my unhappiness and to my surprise although a bit reluctant to release the reins she revealed that the strain of the dual roles had an enormous affect on her and she needed me to be the strong decisive man she fell in love with. When I became an individual again, I found my strengths as a husband and was able to better serve her while feeling good about myself. When I didn't know my worth in the relationship, I was like a needle in the haystack.

We also happen to lose our identity when in a room with unfamiliar people or those we admire more than ourselves. There were times when I would be in a room with a group of people I considered "important" and I would clam up. My spirit would go into a shell and become soft spoken or I would dummy down my intelligence so they would feel comfortable with me.

I realized when I acted like that; I wasn't allowing people to get to know me. It was obvious they were interested in me if they requested my presence at the meeting. Instead of giving them the opportunity to know me, I would act like the person I thought they wanted me to be. I was fighting to feel accepted so I would disappear. Mo Stegall was missing from those meetings and there was an imposter sitting in his place. Here's how to identify a missing person just in case you have lost yourself:

Identify Missing Person: When we are abducted and become aliens to ourselves, we are oftentimes unaware that we are missing. Our environment doesn't change, our daily routines remain intact, and life seems to be merry but then one day we begin to feel like we are simply going through the motions of someone else's life.

You begin to notice that you don't have any time for yourself; an inner alarm goes off that you are fatigued, frustrated, stressed, or consistently unhappy about what you're doing with your life. People that are in charge of their life are happy most of the time; they do what they love which puts a smile on their face every day. If you're not feeling the need to smile then you may be missing. So the first step is to recognize that you're a missing person, and second, begin the process of being rescued, and finally taking precautionary measures to assure that you're not abducted again.

Investigate the Crime Scene: The major crimes division of the police department utilizes extreme, strategic, and meticulous methods when investigating a crime. You must thoroughly investigate the theory of who, what, when, where, and how you were abducted in order to concisely create a report.

Ask yourself questions like, who is missing? Meaning, what part of you was abducted. What caused the abduction to go undetected for so long? When were you abducted? Season, time of day, and point of contact? How did the perpetrator remove you from yourself? Once you have determined these scenarios you can begin the next step which is to negotiate a release.

Negotiate A Release: In a hostage or kidnapping situation it is the negotiator who is usually sent in to rescue the victim or victims. In the 1998 movie, *The Negotiator* starring,

Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey, Jackson plays police hostage negotiator Danny Roman who is being framed for the murder of his long time partner and embezzlement of the departments' retirement fund. Roman, convinced that he is being set up by his comrades, calls in one of the top negotiators from another precinct "Chris Sabian played by Spacey" to prove his innocence. Danny Roman called the negotiator Sabian because of his affluent resume and the fact that he knew he could trust him. You must be able to trust yourself to negotiate your own release from the hostage situation. Your goal must be to offer yourself whatever you need to be released from bondage and live a more fulfilling life.

Devise A Rescue Plan: After negotiating a release you must devise a plan of rescue. It is extremely critical that the plan is thoroughly executed because you could easily lose yourself forever if not careful. Life can become a routine. I often would get up daily and do the exact same thing, such as: checking my email, searching the web and cleaning dishes very robotically. It is easy to get caught up in your children's school activities; your boyfriend's sporting outing, cooking, work, or community activities that you have no interest in. Rescue yourself today.

Once you have successfully negotiated a plan, you must find the will and strength to execute it and that is how you will be rescued alive. When hostages are rescued from adverse situations the negotiator often bargains to give something to get something. Examine yourself and your position and ask yourself what you can give up to receive something else that you desire that will allow you to progress towards complete freedom.

ORIGINAL CONTENT OR CARBON COPY

We often marvel over Picasso's paintings and designs because of their distinctive conception and artistic innovative perspective. The unknown artist at the midst of discovering himself and his gifts sought to strengthen the emotional impact of his work and in that discovery became preoccupied with the delineation of agony. Picasso became a frontrunner who carved a legacy for himself because of his unusual eye and disturbing yet brilliant variations of works. He continued to explore new aspects of his personal vision until his death and today is an example of how being original allows you to set the trends versus copying them and because of this his success had greater meaning.

My friend Algebra Blessett was a football trainer and aspiring singer when we were in school together. Today she's one of the premiere soul singers in the country. She's not as big as singers Beyonce or Alicia Keys in public recognition but she has toured with Eric Roberson and has sung with Chrissette Michele, Anthony Hamilton, and many more. A lot of times we look at our achievements as minimal because we are not on the same level as celebrities or millionaires. Algebra has not won a Grammy yet but she is already successful because she made a difference in her life than what was expected of her as a girl from the housing projects.

Isaac Hayes III., son of the late great musician Isaac Hayes, was also a friend of mine in high school. He dropped out of school during his senior year to pursue music. Who does that? At the time, I thought he was one of the stupidest people I knew but his success is due to the fact that he didn't follow a narrow path. He did things a little differently. Many people would have put off their goals for another year to finish high school but he didn't. He knew it was time to do music and seriously pursued it when God called him to.

You know you're living your dreams if you're doing what you love. It isn't about what people tell you to love. A lot of times we define success as celebrity but there are a lot of billionaires that no one has heard of. Everyone wants to be a carbon copy when it's more fun and fulfilling to be the original content. You should be the trend.

WHAT IS YOUR NEW NAME?

Once you have discovered who you are and what your worth is you must vow never to return to the old you of yesterday. At this moment you have discovered the elements of yourself that were missing, that you have unique qualities and occupy the ability to blueprint your success. As you continue to build you must forsake your old habits that enslaved you, adopt fresh ideas, concepts, and most importantly a new identity. What is your new name?