Get Unstuck, Be Unstoppable

Valorie Burton
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Introduction

As I write these words, I am picturing you: eyes focused on these pages, your mind hoping to read words that will finally get you unstuck and moving directly toward the sincere desires of your heart. You are smart. Hopeful. Motivated. And one more thing I know about you: The word stuck resonates in your spirit—and you wish it didn’t. Some part of you, if not every part of you, is tired of being overwhelmed by the multitude of choices in your life, paralyzed by fears that lead you to play it safe, and dreaming big dreams that never seem to be fully realized. You are ready to move forward. Perhaps you just need a few tools to show you how. I am writing this book to help you do just that.

So just what does it mean to be stuck?

Stuck is a pattern of counterproductive thinking or behavior that results in your not moving toward that which you desire. It is typically a result of internalized fear, confusion, chaos, overwhelm, being lost, lack of clarity, or pessimism. By this definition, being stuck is not something that happens one time. If you stumble once, get back up, and move on, you are not stuck. That’s a mistake. That’s life. But if you find yourself repeatedly in similar situations, struggling with similar challenges, then stuck is an appropriate description. Perhaps some of these ring a bell:

- Your fear of failure, rejection, or disapproval keeps you from your dreams. Instead, you pursue other goals that feel more attainable or acceptable to others.
- Your procrastination habit creates a lot of anxiety. No matter how many times you try to stop procrastinating, you seem to always find something else to do when it comes
time to get down to business with that all-important project.

• You can’t seem to get control over your schedule, but you cannot figure out why. You find yourself regularly frustrated that you can’t get places on time, you can’t get all your projects completed, and you can’t say no to new requests!

• You repeatedly find yourself in relationships that are dysfunctional and unhealthy in some way. Even when you meet new people, the relationship may start off fine, but eventually you are disappointed because the same dynamic eventually emerges.

• You rarely, if ever, ask for what you want. You take what others offer and then resent that they are not giving you what you want.

• You have attempted to break that bad habit—overeating, smoking, running up debt—but your efforts only last so long and eventually you fall back into your old ways. You wonder if there is any point in trying to change anymore.

Maybe it is the setback you are still trying to overcome or the decision you now regret that sideswiped you into a ditch. Or maybe there isn’t any one event that seems to define your stuckness. Instead, stuck has become a way of life. You’ve gotten used to it. You may not even think of yourself as stuck anymore. You’ve rationalized that this is just how life is. But deep down, you know you are settling—and you’re really not okay with that, even when you try to convince yourself otherwise. You feel a constant uneasiness—a lack of peace—about where things stand in your life. You are somewhat in God’s will, but you want to be perfectly in His will—and that’s going to mean making some shifts and changes. Since you have taken the step of getting this book and reading these words, I believe you are ready to get unstuck and become absolutely unstoppable. What that looks like, I hope to help you define on the pages that follow.
Like you, I’ve been stuck many times.

I write this book to you not as someone who has always been “unstoppable,” but as someone who has been stuck—many times—and somehow managed to get unstuck. I also write as a coach who has personally helped hundreds of people get unstuck in their careers, relationships, finances, and even weight loss. (You’ll read some of their stories in the following pages.) Each and every time, there are principles that must be internalized and embraced. Throughout this book I will reference these principles and show you the way to navigate through them.

People who know me find it peculiar when I share my struggles with procrastination. That is because they see the end result and have no idea of the sticky, counterproductive, self-sabotaging habits I had to overcome to get there. So allow me to let you in on some of my journey—the self-sabotaging, undisciplined, frustrating but common situations I repeatedly found myself in.

I am a recovering procrastinator. I say “recovering” because I fall off the wagon—often—like when it was time to write this book. You’d think that by the time an author dives into her tenth book, she has her habits all perfectly in order. I don’t. I still have to wrangle that procrastination demon who whispers repeatedly, “You can write tomorrow. That deadline is not for a while. Besides, you have more outlining, organizing, and laundry to do.” If you’ve ever found yourself avoiding what needs to get done in favor of something—anything—else, even other stuff you’ve been procrastinating on that now seems easier by comparison, then I bet you can relate. I say yes to the voice of procrastination for a while, but then there is a pivotal moment when I have to turn in the right direction and say, “No. There is writing to be done. And I am a writer. I must write.” And using the many tools I’ll share with you, I do.

I felt stuck in a career that wasn’t the right fit. I didn’t just have a job, mind you. I owned a business. But I was doing work I wasn’t all that crazy about. And I did that work pretty well, which meant people kept asking me to do more of it! I didn’t want to admit I didn’t want to do it. Through prayer and meditation, I finally discovered what I really wanted to do—the work I am doing right now, inspiring women to live more fulfilling lives. The problem? I couldn’t figure out how to make
money at it. I mean, theoretically I knew how to make money—sell books and speak for a living. Simple, right? Easier said than done. But by God’s grace and a lot of tenacity, today that’s exactly what I happily do for a living. My pivotal moment came one day in the shower. I dragged myself out of bed to go to the office to do work I did not feel like doing, wishing I could write and speak instead. I got into the shower, and uncontrollably, the tears came. The cry of my spirit sounded like a first grader who didn’t feel like going to school that day. “But I don’t feel like going to work! I don’t want to.”

It wasn’t just my emotions, though. I could sense in my spirit that God was speaking.

“It is time to make the leap,” the Holy Spirit nudged.

“But how will I make it?” I protested.

“I’ll show you what to do,” He assured me. “You’ll be afraid. You’ll also be okay.” And so I turned in a new direction. I made the leap. That was 2001. The Holy Spirit was right. I was afraid, very afraid. I am also okay, better than okay.

I felt stuck financially. At one point in my life, I racked up so much credit card debt that I walked around with a heavy weight on my neck. Always in the back of my mind was the constant stress of feeling under pressure and underwater. Yet I managed to walk into department stores and plop down my credit card to dig further into a hole. I took vacations funded by mounting debt. I didn’t resist the urge to upgrade to a new convertible when my paid-for four-door would have been just fine with a few repairs. I was stuck in bad habits rooted in low self-esteem. “If I just look like I’m doing well,” I rationalized, “then I must be doing well.”

The rationalization was a lie. One night, on my knees in prayer—a plea for God to miraculously send me a lump sum that would erase the debt I had racked up—my heart was convicted. “You need to repent,” I heard in my spirit. Sure that I was doing the right thing by praying for help, I was at first shocked by the suggestion. What do I need to repent for? I wondered. That’s when the answer came. I believe it was God’s voice revealing my own blind shortcoming: “I didn’t tell you to get into all of that debt. You did that. I will help you undo it, but I’m not
sending you the money. You will work your way out of this one.” And I did. I redirected my money. Three years of no shopping and a lot of focus, and I was debt-free.

**But the biggest way I was stuck was in relationships.** I didn’t know what to call it at the time, but after being sideswiped into a cold, hard ditch called divorce at the age of 36, I learned—through much prayer, soul-searching, and counseling—that I was codependent.

I was vaguely familiar with the word. And it certainly wasn’t one I would ever have expected to apply to me. I thought that was just a phrase for the spouses and children of alcoholics. Indeed, those who have dealt with an alcoholic or drug-addicted loved one know the routine of adjusting one’s own behavior to deal with someone else’s irrational, dysfunctional behavior. But the same counterproductive pattern of behavior applies in multiple situations. Codependency is behaving as though abnormal behavior is normal—acquiescing and shifting to fit the needs and wants of others, usually to the detriment of one’s own wants and needs. Melody Beattie describes it this way in her book *Codependent No More*:

> They [codependents] have said yes when they meant no. They have tried to make other people see things their way. They have bent over backward to avoid hurting people’s feelings and, in so doing, have hurt themselves. They have been afraid to trust their feelings. They have believed lies and then felt betrayed…They have struggled for their rights while other people said they didn’t have any. They have worn sackcloth because they didn’t believe they deserved silk.*

*I was stuck in habits I didn’t even know were a problem.* I was just trying to be a good person, a good Christian, love others, and be willing to sacrifice for them. But I went about it in a way that was unhealthy and left me feeling devalued and unappreciated, sacrificing the very things I knew in my heart were God’s will for me. I knew something was wrong and I knew I was tired of it. Perhaps you’ve been there.

A turning point came one evening as I stood in the bathroom mirror staring at the reflection looking back at me. It was time to have a heart-to-heart conversation with that woman. It was short and to the point. I was tired of crying, tired of being disappointed, tired of success in other areas and failure in this one. I had enough faith to believe I did not have to remain stuck for the rest of my life. No. I could change. I could make a decision to change. I was the one who always said to others, “You’re only stuck if you choose to be stuck.” And I was no longer willing to be stuck. I said this out loud:

“You are healthy and whole, and you only engage in healthy, functional relationships.”

I made a decision that day to get unstuck. I took the most important step. I faced a new direction. Prior to that day, there was a little voice inside me that insisted that because I did not learn how to have a good relationship early in life (having been a child of divorce) I was doomed to a certain lane in life. It was a lie I chose to believe. That day, I chose to reverse the lie. I decided that the first half of the statement was correct: I didn’t learn the best habits early in life. But the second half of the statement was incorrect. I wasn’t doomed. I could learn new relationship skills, from how to choose well to how to love well.

Soon, a verse kept appearing in my path. I knew it was for me and I meditated on it often. I believe it is for you too:

Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

(Isaiah 43:18-19)

God wants to do a new thing in you. What has occurred in the past does not need to dictate your future. The fact that you picked up this book is an indication that you desire something new, something better than the cycles that have gotten you stuck. As we begin this journey together, you have a decision to make. It is a decision to get unstuck. It
is a decision to turn in a new direction. Reject the lie that change is not possible. Choose to believe the truth: With God all things are possible.

Whether getting unstuck to write this book, getting out of a career I didn’t love, getting out of debt, or finally getting and giving the love God always wanted for me, I have learned that change begins when you redirect your thoughts and your actions toward what you want—despite your track record. With God’s guidance and strength, you’ll build a new track record.

Whatever the case for you, this book is a tool to transform your life and rewrite the script of your life. I have four goals in these pages:

1. Make you aware of the emotions and triggers that are keeping you stuck right now.
2. Give you inspiration to conquer those emotions and triggers when they arise.
3. Help you rescript your story so it epitomizes the power of God in your life.
4. Empower you to step into the amazing life God imagined for you!

There are several components of your toolbox that will empower you to accomplish these four goals:

• *Declaration*. A large part of getting stuck is simply about the language you use—how you talk to yourself about your current circumstances and about your future. Each chapter begins with a declaration. Read it out loud. Say it with feeling. Your words hold the power of life and death, and throughout the pages of this book, you will speak an amazing life into existence.

• *Inspiration*. Getting unstuck happens in small moments of inspiration and determination. Sometimes, all we need are a few words that challenge us to shift our perspective in the moment—inspiration that propels us forward. So feel free to turn to the inspiration that speaks to what is going
on with you on a given day. Each chapter is brief and ends with me coaching you to get moving. I will give you an exercise to move you forward in a tangible way. Do not skip these exercises! If you actively do them, you will experience transformation. Remember, consistency is key.

- **Prayer.** At the end of each chapter is a powerful prayer. Talking to God, declaring the greatest spiritual truths of His Word, empowers your faith and calls on the supernatural. But too often as believers, we try harder to tap into our own power than we do to invite God’s power to be made manifest in our lives. I include prayers because I want to give you the opportunity to surrender any frustrations, obstacles, or overwhelm in your life to God. Invite Him in. Ask for guidance, help, miracles…and I promise you will be amazed at what happens.

**Move from Unstuck to Unstoppable**

The goal here is that you don’t just get unstuck, but you remain unstuck by becoming unstoppable. “Unstoppability” (yes, I made this word up, but you know what I mean!) is resilience. Resilience doesn’t mean you don’t stumble or fall. It doesn’t mean you don’t take breaks or have a need to recuperate from failures and mistakes. It means that along your path, regardless of what happens, you do what it takes to recover, heal, rebuild, and move forward. Life is unpredictable. Often, things happen that we wish didn’t. The question is, will you allow your life to completely cease when challenges or negative events happen? Will you seek God’s perfect will for your life? Will you have faith in the amazing things in store for you if you believe and act in accordance with that belief?

When you become unstoppable, you epitomize the power of God in your life. God is able to use you to draw people nearer to Him because they see Him when they see your testimony. They see His strength made perfect in your weakness, and they want that type of strength. They see amazing faith, grace, and miracles unfold in your life.
Something tells them it isn’t just you, but the power at work *in you*—
and they begin to thirst for that same power.

As you embrace these tools as your own, you will learn to use the
most powerful force you have to get unstuck from the patterns that
have sabotaged your potential. That force is your mind.

Let’s journey together to the heights of where God is calling you.
There is something more, something bigger, something better waiting
for you. It’s time to get unstuck so you can live the amazing life God
is calling you to.

Let’s get to work!

[Signature]
8 Irrefutable Rules of Getting Unstuck

When I was going through one of the most difficult challenges of my life and needed to make a life-altering choice, I came across a story that described exactly how I felt at the time—aware that I needed to move forward yet afraid of the pain that would ensue if I took action. Here’s the story:

After a long and particularly grueling week of work, a farmer walked into town on a Saturday night to relax at the local tavern with dinner and a drink. Problem was, he didn’t stop at one drink, or even two or three. He kept drinking until the bartender flat-out refused to sell him another round. So he gathered himself up and began to stumble back home. It was only a mile walk, but in his condition, the walk took forever. He decided to take a shortcut through his neighbor’s property and garden, which was filled with rosebushes. The roses hadn’t quite budded yet so the bushes were really more thorns than flowers. This was dangerous for a drunk man stumbling home. When the farmer tripped over his untied shoelaces, he landed backward in a bed of thorns. He tried to push himself up quickly, but his balance was so far gone, he just landed right back where he started. He lay there for a few minutes contemplating what to do, but the alcohol got the best of him and he dozed off to sleep.

The next morning, he awoke, startled at the sight of bushes all around him. When he tried to jump up, he felt the most excruciating, stinging pain he’d ever experienced! He attempted to gently extract himself from the thorns, but the slightest movement was so painful, he decided it wasn’t worth it to move at all. Instead he lay there as still as he could in the bed of thorns—hating where he was, yet paralyzed by fear at the thought of moving.
Being stuck is kind of like that. In between realizing you need to move and being completely free lies your own bed of thorns. You can get up and move forward, but sometimes it feels more comfortable to simply stay put than bear the pain of making a change—whether it is real pain or the mental anguish of procrastination, anxiety, and self-doubt.

Getting unstuck means a series of choices. When you’ve been stuck for a long time, that first choice to move can feel like the most agonizing. And the subsequent ones are sometimes scary, too. All are necessary if you are to break through to the amazing life God has in store for you—the life you’ll have when you squash your fears and operate in total and complete faith. But it will be worth it.

1. **You can’t move forward when you’re still looking backward.** Stop staring at the closed door. Let go of the past. Live fully right where you are.

2. **Meditating on the obstacle only makes it bigger.** Keep your eye on your goal rather than your problem and the problem becomes smaller.

3. **Emotions are teachers.** Pay attention to the messages your emotions send you. Stop reacting to fear and start responding.

4. **Inspiration won’t chase you down.** Seek it wholeheartedly and it will always appear.

5. **You can’t control which thoughts show up, but you can control which ones you entertain.** Choose your thoughts very intentionally.

6. **Your words are tools.** Your words can keep you stuck or propel you forward. Be careful what you say. Choose words that energize and strengthen you rather than victimize and weaken you.
7. **What is central in your life controls your life.** Rather than center your life on the achievement of your hopes and dreams, center your life on the One who never changes.

8. **To be unstoppable, you must master this moment.** The key to getting unstuck occurs in the heat of the moment, at the height of your fear, doubt, and hesitation, when you rally your mental, emotional, and spiritual energy to take the next step forward.
Tell Yourself the Truth

Declaration
Today, I choose to listen to the divine inner wisdom that whispers the truth to me. I will not ignore it. I will not hide from it. I have the courage to embrace it—regardless of the fallout—for it is God Himself speaking to me. When I follow His wisdom, I don’t stumble. I don’t get stuck. When I embrace the truth rather than fear it, I am unstoppable.

Key Points
• When you face the truth, you are free.
• Your reality won’t change until you do a reality check.
• Uncover the truth about where you are and you can begin to draw a map to where you desire to be.

Why is it that we ignore the truth? Or even hide from it? You had an inkling that person wasn’t who they appeared to be, but you got involved anyway…and now you feel stuck trying to get out of the relationship.

You knew instinctively it was not the right time to make that big purchase, but you wanted it, so you got it. Now you’re stuck with the bill and it’s causing problems.

You didn’t want to take on that project. In fact, your stomach turned when you were asked to do it, but your people-pleasing personality led you to say yes, and now you’re stuck, resentful, and completely overwhelmed!
You knew that wasn’t the right career path for you, but out of fear or insecurity or bowing to what others might think, you chose it anyway.

To be clear, I don’t say any of this to beat you up. I say it so we can start this journey in a place of honesty.

The first step to getting unstuck is a simple one: Tell yourself the truth and behave based on that truth. It is easier said than done. Telling the truth and acting on it ruffles people’s feathers. It may make you quite unpopular. It will make you uncomfortable at times. But nothing gets people stuck more than ignoring that still, small voice that persistently speaks if only we will listen. Consider the area(s) of your life in which you currently feel stuck and write them down here:

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Now, answer this question: If God Himself were speaking from this page, writing these words to you right now, what would He have to say to you about the area(s) in which you are stuck? Write down every nudge, inkling, and spiritual message you have sensed, no matter how small.

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Tell Yourself the Truth

Now, based on what you sense God might be telling you:

What is it time to do?

What is it time to say?

What is it time to change?

Telling yourself the truth is a simple act, but one of the most courageous. It will set you free and on a path to a life that is absolutely unstoppable. So as we start on this journey, I believe God is asking you first to be truthful. Answer some simple but bold questions:

- What are you afraid to admit?
- What are you really afraid will happen if you take action?
- Whose approval are you so afraid of not gaining that you forego your dreams, your vision, and your freedom?
- What do you avoid for fear of facing the consequences of change?
- And what would you have to let go of in order to move toward the life God imagined for you?
I realize these aren’t easy questions, but I believe the answers lie within you. They are so powerful that when you answer them truthfully, your next steps begin to unfold in a big way. You can run from them or ignore them, but they are not going away. That’s the power of having the courage to tell the truth.

Truth awakens you from the deep slumber of lies. In pretending we don’t hear the voice of the Holy Spirit or resisting the guidance of that voice, we live a lie. “God, did You say this man I’m dating is not ‘the one’? But we’ve been together too long. I’ve invested too much. If I don’t stay with him, then what? I’ll be alone again. I’ll never meet anyone else. God, that can’t be You. No, that wasn’t You. I’m going to stick with what I have.” And more years progress and the relationship doesn’t. You feel stuck.

Or maybe it’s not the relationship. Maybe it’s your money habits. You know God has nudged you to be a better steward, speak up, and negotiate what your contributions are worth, but the idea of doing so scares the dickens out of you. You imagine yourself groveling for a better salary and being thrown out of your boss’s office, or telling the dealership you want a better price and having them laugh in your face. “No!” they might yell in disgust. “Who does she think she is?” And so you are quiet. You don’t just want a better deal or higher pay, you need it. But feelings of insecurity may lead you to pretend all is well financially. But it is not.

If you embraced the truth of what you know deep down, you’d be free to walk onto the path God has for you—a life in which you are perfectly within His will. It is a life of faith. You step out with no guarantees except God’s promise that He will never leave you nor forsake you and His declaration that if you delight yourself in Him, He will give you the desires of your heart.

Get Moving!

1. **Go to a quiet place.** For two full minutes, close your eyes and breathe deeply—slow, cleansing breaths. Breathe in
slowly for five seconds. Hold for five seconds. Then exhale for eight seconds.

2. **Meditate** on the words of Jesus found in John 8:31-32: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The truth of God’s Word will always set you free, and so will the truth of your situation.

3. **Tell the truth.** After meditating on the scripture, do a reality check on your biggest challenge and answer these questions: What truth(s) have you avoided admitting to yourself? In what way(s) has this affected your ability to move forward?

**Prayer**

*Lord, give me the courage to face the truth and not ignore it. Give me the faith to trust Your nudges when the truth makes me afraid. Empower me with boldness and courage to take actions that matter. My power lies in Your presence within me. I want to honor that presence by acting on Your guidance in all things, especially when fear tries to paralyze me. Thank You, God, for speaking to me. Now help me act based upon what I hear. Amen.*