

A NEW UNIVERSAL DREAM

My Journey from Silicon Valley
to a Life in Service to Humanity

Foreword by **Neale Donald Walsch**
NY Times bestselling author
of the *Conversations with God* series

STEVE FARRELL

Cofounder of Humanity's Team
The #1 Non-Profit Transformational Education Company in the World

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A New Universal Dream
My Journey from Silicon Valley to a Life in Service to Humanity

Steve Farrell

Print ISBN: 978-1-958921-25-8
EBook ISBN: 978-1-958921-26-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023934901

Published by Light on Light Press
An imprint of Sacred Stories Publishing, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Printed in the United States of America

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PART 1

An Auspicious Beginning

I

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

“**L**ive a life of integrity and continue to pursue your dreams, whatever those might be.” Those were the words my dad said to me on June 24, 1979, over lunch together in an airport terminal before I boarded a flight from Virginia to San Francisco.

While we ate and watched the planes take off through the tall airport windows, he wanted to share his parting thoughts on the transition ahead of me. As I stood up to board the plane, his final words to me were, “See you at the top.”

It felt like an auspicious moment, but little did I know at the time that years later, the very definition of the word “top” would completely change for me.

I was twenty-two, right out of college, and flying west to start my new job on the other side of the country. For the previous thirteen years, since I was nine and in the fourth grade, I had lived in northern Virginia, just outside Washington DC, and I had no idea how different the West Coast could be.

Growing up in Virginia had been a bit of a roller-coaster ride. My parents divorced in 1968 when I was eleven years old, and when my father moved out, even though he was not far away, he left my mother to raise me and my six brothers and sisters on her own. That was eight people—with seven of us ranging in age from between three and fifteen at the time—sharing the modest five-bedroom, three-bath, 1,388 square-foot home she got to keep in the divorce settlement as long as she kept up the mortgage payments.

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Even though my mom came from a distinguished family, she received no money from them and worked full-time as a legal secretary to pay the bills. Her job didn't remotely tap into all her capabilities, but she had eight mouths to feed and it was the best she could do at the time, so she did it without complaint.

Unfortunately, her weekly salary wasn't enough on its own for us to make ends meet, so my six siblings and I all took jobs at an early age to cover our personal expenses. If we wanted the newest fashion, or décor for our bedroom, or simply to go on outings with friends, we needed to work for it. I landed my first job delivering newspapers in the fourth grade, even before the divorce, and continued to work part- or full-time from then on, regardless of how full my school schedule was. I went from newspapers to a string of different jobs—gas station attendant, drugstore clerk, telephone solicitor, UPS irregular-package clerk, horseback guide, grocery store clerk, and janitor.

When I needed braces in the sixth grade, my mother found an orthodontist who was willing to accept an installment plan of \$10/month. So, at age eleven, I took care of that bill every month until I was able to pay it off with income I'd earned from my paper route and other jobs.

I knew how different my life was from that of my peers at the time, but I also knew I was gaining valuable work experience and responsibility at a much earlier age than they were. *Endurance* and *focus* became my friends as I demanded more of myself, which has, without question, helped me grow into the person I've become.

In 1970, I turned thirteen. The world around me was undergoing radical changes with the attitudes and behavior that had sparked in the late 1960s. In the neighborhood where we lived, many parents were divorced and there were more permissive attitudes about marijuana and other recreational drugs. Both teens and adults seemed more casual about sex.

Just after I turned fifteen, my father sat me down and asked me if I'd ever smoked pot. I hadn't yet, and I told him I didn't intend to. Quite unexpectedly, he suggested I should try it, so I did. I never became a "pot head" or anything close, but I enjoyed smoking at social functions on weekends or when my friends and I went to nearby music festivals.

I held the position of Treasurer at my high school throughout this time, and my reputation at school mattered a great deal to me, so I never went overboard with drugs or drinking. However, my parents didn't give much supervision or "parenting" to my siblings and me, so I began freely experimenting with both drugs and sex. I found the girls in my social group attractive, and I regularly attended functions where I hooked up with or dated them, and during my senior year, I met Cathy, my first love.

My father and I stayed fairly close after the divorce and I vividly recall two things about him that profoundly shaped the man I would eventually become.

Dad was a brilliant man and a loving father, but he was very "up and down" emotionally. He could be authoritative and commanding, especially when he was unhappy about something. I remember him barking orders at family members once when we were gathering for a picture. When I saw the photograph later, I realized almost nobody was actually smiling—except for me. I think I'd already learned by that time not to let my father's—or anyone's—inexplicable unhappiness color my own enjoyment of the moment.

The second thing about my dad that stuck with me was that he believed I could do better if I tried harder. During a conversation about my ninth-grade report card—which was mostly C's and B's—he said, "Well, someone needs to put the toothpaste in the tube. Looks like you may be a good candidate."

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I knew that his intention wasn't to demean me but to light a fire under me to do better, and it worked. In the months and years that followed, I tried much harder in school, and my work paid off in countless ways.

That same year, I asked my school guidance counselor, Mr. Jacoby, about an intelligence test I'd taken. He said, "I can't share the actual results, but I can tell you that you were average—just average."

At this time in my life, my parents weren't involved in my education at all. While my mother somehow managed to stay on top of her very active personal, professional, and family life, she had no time to keep track of the courses all seven of us were taking, much less supervise our homework or even notice what our grades were. And she certainly didn't have money for tutors of any kind, even when it came time to prepare for the SAT and ACT college-qualifying tests.

For all those reasons, Mr. Jacoby's assessment deeply concerned me. I wondered who I would grow up to be. The guy who put toothpaste in tubes? Would I be able to support my own family one day? Because of this, I began to apply myself single-mindedly to my studies, trying so hard—perhaps *too* hard—to not be a disappointment. I wanted to impress not just my mom and dad, but the family I felt certain I was destined to have in the future.

I now know that the process for testing intelligence is deeply flawed, and that no test can evaluate your true talents and abilities. We are each born with potential that is revealed to us as our life unfolds, but at the time, it took a while for me to shake off Mr. Jacoby's comments.

You have unlimited potential for unique accomplishment contained within you; I encourage you not to let anyone persuade you otherwise. And I promise that as you continue your journey into your future, if your unique gifts have not already been revealed to you, they absolutely will be. If you need to take an intelligence test for any reason, do not be swayed—

even in the most infinitesimal way—by any negative results. Continue to steadfastly pursue your ambitions, passions, and skills until you discover your destiny.

As I entered adulthood, my ambitions were still not very specific, other than wanting to do well and be successful. But my next adventure was pivotal in helping me clarify my dreams, and it set the path my life would follow for years to come.

2 GROWING UP FAST

Around the time I turned sixteen, my mother expressed concern that I was spending too much time smoking marijuana, so when I asked her permission to hitchhike around the United States that summer, she agreed, saying she “hoped it might somehow mature me.”

Much to my surprise, that’s exactly what happened.

I left home in July of 1973 with my friend Eric, and our thumbs were out for much of the thirty days we spent traveling. We took I-80 from Virginia to California, and then the interstate highways of the southern United States on the trip back home. Many of those who picked us up along the way had long hair, no money, a dog, and a VW bus or something similar. Seeing how they lived made me certain I didn’t want to live that kind of life.

When we reached California, I decided to cut my hair short as my first step in a different direction.

Eric and I lived frugally during our journey; I began the trip with \$85 in my pocket, and when I returned a month later, I still had \$35.

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The moment I returned, it became obvious to me and everyone around me that I had changed quite profoundly during my month on the road.

From that time forward, I kept my appearance much neater than before, and in the bedroom I shared with my older brother, I began to keep my side of the room immaculate compared to his side. I also decided to really focus on my grades and pulled my GPA up to a 3.2 by the time I graduated from high school.

Around this time, my mother told me she had a friend who was willing to sell me a used, 1964 Chevrolet Corvair for only \$55 on time payments—\$5 per month. But there was one condition: I could no longer smoke pot. Marijuana and other recreational drugs were no longer important to me, so I agreed without hesitation.

I entered my junior year in high school as a markedly more mature young adult, but soon discovered that my friends had not made the same choices. I felt isolated at times. We still hung around together, but I had different priorities than they did, which took me in a different direction. Eventually, this led me to college.

I started out at Northern Illinois University as a pre-veterinarian major, but quickly transferred to George Washington University because of the “C” I got in chemistry during my first semester. College was all business for me, and in truth it wasn’t much fun. I had to work full-time while I was also enrolled in school full-time, majoring in political science. My parents didn’t have enough savings to get me and my six brothers and sisters through college, so we each had to work, apply for scholarships and grants, and take on debt to earn our degrees.

I attended courses in the morning and early afternoon, and then worked the four-to-eleven PM shift as the evening manager at a local grocery store. After class each day, I’d dash into a vacant professor’s office on campus and change into my work clothes. Thank God nobody caught me! After

my shift, I'd sleepily drive home and churn through my homework before nodding off to sleep—and when the alarm went off the next morning, I'd get up and do it all again. I had no time for fraternities or a social life. In fact, I don't recall going to a single college party the whole time I was at George Washington U.

My highly focused and committed approach to life eventually led me onto that plane headed for California.

During a lunch with my father, we'd hatched the beginnings of a plan. He knew someone who could help me get a job at Lawrence Systems, a financial services firm in San Francisco. Even though all my family and friends were on the East Coast, I was excited about this new adventure. I looked forward to starting my first professional job and putting the initial part of my life behind me as I journeyed west. I figured that having a single, full-time job—without the added pressure of school—was going to be a piece of cake, compared to my college years.

I was in for a rude awakening.

My father had helped open the door to my job, so I'd skipped interviewing in person with a hiring manager. When I arrived, bright and eager, for my first day on the job, my boss asked me about the business and accounting classes I'd taken in college.

I hadn't taken *any* business or accounting classes.

Here I was, ready to fill his one open “source-document control clerk trainee” position, with a starting salary of \$13,200 a year, and I was completely unprepared.

I promised I'd enroll in accounting classes at a local college at once, and was lucky he didn't fire me before I'd even started the job.

This was a much different world than the one I'd grown up in on the East Coast, where I'd been surrounded by friends and family. My life there

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was civil and comfortable. In San Francisco, I was on my own, and it often seemed like the Wild West to me.

One evening during my trolley ride from work to school, a man boarded and loudly announced his intention to defecate. Then he yanked his pants down and did so, right in the aisle, before taking a seat. I ran into colorful characters and disturbing incidents often during these daily rides.

Fortunately, I quickly got up to speed in accounting. After two semesters of classes (and trolley rides), my superiors became confident enough in my abilities to release me from further academic study.

One day, a colleague named Greg pulled me aside at work and told me I was not dressing appropriately. He pointed to my polyester suit and “rooster tie” (I didn’t even know what a “rooster tie” was—a tie with a loud color or pattern that draws too much attention). Greg suggested I get a book called *Dress for Success*.

He also insisted I buy a wool suit and a few conservative neckties.

My father hadn’t been a particularly sharp dresser, and after my parents divorced when I was in the sixth grade, I only saw him once or twice a month, and he never gave me a single word of advice on how I should dress. I bought a copy of *Dress for Success* and read it to get a sense of how my clothes could help me fit in better at my job.

I needed to more closely resemble men who were as successful as I hoped one day to be, the book said. I didn’t like the idea that my clothes influenced how other people perceived me. The author contended that the right clothes might make the difference between success and failure, and that my appearance was more important than the person I was inside. While I knew in my heart and soul this wasn’t true, I tried to adjust my wardrobe to look a bit more professional.

Dressing “right” wasn’t the biggest challenge I faced during my early days in San Francisco. Finding housing topped that list. When I’d first

arrived, I stayed briefly with Gerry, a friend of my dad's who lived outside the city, but the commute from there took far too long and I needed to find something closer to my job.

My friend Greg offered to let me stay with him while I was looking for an apartment. I showed up at his place with all my things the next evening at the time he'd told me to come, but he wasn't there, leaving me nowhere to sleep that night.

The first few motels I went to were out of my price range, but I eventually found one I could afford in an area of San Francisco known as "The Tenderloin" that was more than a little treacherous after nightfall. I slept in a motel with dirty sheets and towels for one night and then quickly moved to the old YMCA in the Embarcadero area, where my room was tiny but clean, with a shared, community-style bathroom down the hall. Weeks later, I finally managed to find a decent apartment I could afford.

"This too shall pass" became my new mantra, and to this day, those words go through my mind when challenges loom in my life. I encourage you to adopt a similar perspective, so your own challenges don't bog you down. In order to navigate to the best possible resolution, you need to address things calmly and clearly, keeping your full faculties and focus at the ready. This approach continues to be a powerful and effective tool for me.

Unfortunately, more challenges lay ahead.

3

NAVIGATING THE RECESSION

In 1979, the global economic recession began to rock the financial services industry. Lawrence Systems, where I worked, was a collateral

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management company. We would hold the inventory, accounts receivable, and documents pledged by companies as collateral for bank loans. With bank loan rates skyrocketing, companies were doing everything they could to try to lower their loan rates and fees. Lawrence Systems was caught in the middle of this scramble, and we were forced to lay off many of our seasoned employees.

The high-salaried senior staff in our investment banking group were the first to get their notices, so the company needed less expensive employees to quickly fill those positions. I had only been on the internal audit desk for a few months, but I'd won the confidence of my superiors, and while advanced accounting was still beyond me, I had developed a nose for the collateral management business. Because of this, the company rapidly moved me up—first to an outside auditing position, and then to oversee region-wide assignments, including the entire West Coast and Hawaii.

During this period, I first met Rich Norum, who would later become my partner when we cofounded our first company, ENS. When Rich became a member of my team at Lawrence Systems, he quickly proved himself to be one of the brightest guys in the office, so I asked him to take charge of key audit functions. He was enormously helpful with the “problem” accounts. Rich had no problem taking a straight-forward approach and a firm stand with business owners when needed, and he became my trusted assistant.

The most challenging duty we had was called “locking up” an account. The stories that led to this action were often the same. The owner of a company would be splurging on a more extravagant lifestyle than he could afford, so he would start to fudge the business's collateral balances. He'd inflate inventory or other collateral so he could draw on a larger loan balance, which allowed him to continue his out-of-control personal spending...until the company got caught. Our audits were always unannounced, so it was only a matter of time before we noticed. In one

case, the owner collected polo horses. Others had private jets and several luxurious residences.

Once a year, I flew to the Hawaiian islands to audit our accounts there. I was born in Hawaii and always jumped at the chance to go back. During one of these Maui trips, as I was tooling around the west side of the island just before dusk, I noticed the sun was about to set behind the islands in the distance. I pulled over, turned up the radio, and marveled at the breathtaking spectacle before me. Everything was going so well in my life, and I felt like I was in heaven.

Since that day, I've made it a point to stop as often as I can and appreciate the sunset or other moments of striking beauty around me. I connect these sights to a deep sense of Divine presence in the natural world. They give me inspiration and grounding in my day-to-day life, regardless of what might be happening in my personal or business world.

I suggest you, too, keep your eyes open for marvels in the natural world that surrounds your own life. These sights can help you to feel a deeper connection and remind you there's a grander force at work in the universe, of which you are a part. This is the best way I've found to stay clear and grounded as the tectonic plates of my life shift and push me in new and unexpected directions.

One of those shifts was about to take place.

PART 2

A New Direction

4

A LESSON LEARNED THE HARD WAY

In late 1982, something happened that changed my life forever.

One Saturday morning, as I was getting my apartment organized, I got a call from my sister Maureen. I was near the middle of seven siblings, with two older and four younger, and Maureen had been born right after me.

“Steve! I’m getting married. Will you come to my wedding in June?”

“Maureen, wow! You’re getting married! You wouldn’t believe how busy I am and I’m not sure I can take that weekend off. Let me get back to you, okay?”

Maureen sounded disappointed but hopeful. I promised I’d call her within the next month to let her know.

That night, I had a shocking dream in which Maureen had died. It felt real and incredibly scary. I woke up so shaken that I wanted to call her immediately, but it was still the middle of the night. The next morning, my heart was racing as I dialed her number. It felt like a full minute passed between each ring.

When Maureen answered at last, I breathed a joyful sigh of relief and said, “Maureen, I’m so sorry I didn’t say this yesterday, but I wouldn’t miss your wedding for anything in the world!”

The months passed quickly, and before I knew it, I was flying back to Virginia and the home I grew up in, where Maureen’s wedding and reception would be held. On June 26, 1983, Maureen and her husband David joyfully took their vows. Everyone had a marvelous time. Someone took a picture of Maureen, my younger brother Dennis, and me, with Maureen in the middle. We all had ear-to-ear smiles.

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That was the last time I ever saw her.

A few short months later, my older brother Kevin called to tell me that Maureen and David had been in a terrible accident. While driving home late the night before, she had dozed off at the wheel. The car had spun out of control and flipped over, and because Maureen was not wearing a seat belt, the crash broke her neck, killing her instantly. Her husband, who was asleep and belted in the back seat, survived unscathed.

I flew back to Virginia, this time for the funeral. While I was heart-broken, I could also sense that something important in me had changed.

I spent the next few months trying to process my sister's death and the effect it had on me spiritually. At a deep level, I had felt close to God for a long time and had unconsciously been placing trust in God to guide me in everything I did. I grew up in a Catholic home and had served as an altar boy, but it was not the authoritarian God of the Catholic church I had gotten close to—it was the loving God I'd felt in my heart from the time I was a child.

Throughout my upbringing and into my adult life, I'd always sensed the presence of this unconditionally loving God. I believed God guided me in the big decisions I'd made in my life. I now knew something Divine had visited my sleep months earlier, on the night I dreamed of Maureen's death. God was making sure I went to the wedding so I could share the precious moments I had with her before she passed. I can't imagine how I would have felt if I'd missed the wedding and that time with her.

Up to that point in my life, I'd been pursuing my business success fervently, but, as I've mentioned, something had shifted following my sister's passing. I became more cautious from that time forward, never again losing track of what was truly important to me. I understood clearly now that I could win material success in life but still be a loser by missing out on something far more important—the time I spent with those I loved.

I encourage you to stay clear about what is most important to you, too, and to let that clarity be the filter through which you consider taking actions of any kind. It's so easy to become caught up in the momentum of our lives that we don't always realize how far we've gotten off track until we miss out on valuable experiences, and by then it can be hard to get back on our destiny path.

My sister's passing was a "wake up and smell the coffee" moment for me. It seemed to be more of a sign to slow down rather than to stop or change course.

Despite this, not too far ahead, my path was about to veer sharply in a new direction.

END OF EXCERPT

ABOUT STEVE FARRELL



In the 1990s, years before Steve Farrell became involved with Humanity's Team, he cofounded and led two high-growth technology companies based in Silicon Valley that were featured in the *INC* 500 list of the fastest growing companies and spanned the United States and Europe. During this period of his life, he was also an officer in the Young Entrepreneurs' Organization and the Young Presidents' Organization.

By all accounts, Steve was living the "good life" at this time, but when he felt a calling to play an active role in creating a consciousness movement that could help people across the globe awaken to their deeper self and the interconnectedness and Oneness of everything in the universe, Steve followed his heart and left the "American Dream" behind. What he found is the story of Humanity's Team and the New Universal Dream.

Steve is the cofounder of Humanity's Team along with Neale Donald Walsch. Both are members of the Evolutionary Leaders Circle. Steve contributed a chapter to the Gold Nautilus, COVR and Living Now Award-

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winning Evolutionary Leaders' book *Our Moment of Choice: Evolutionary Visions and Hope for the Future*. He lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Stephanie, their two young adults, and their dog Sadie.

www.humanitysteam.org and www.stevecfarrell.com

A New Universal Dream

betterment of the world. In a time that calls for a light in the darkness, this book provides a beacon in awakening us to the activism the world most needs.

We consider this to be a prototypical autobiography for our time, focusing not only on personal transformation, but also on collective transformation. It is a roadmap for making a difference in the world, an inspiration for making bold, caring, and clear choices in our lives, and a guidebook for changing the future of humanity. It offers many lessons learned in choosing a path in life that benefits the good of the whole. This book shows the way to a new universal dream calling to all of us.

Managing Editors—

Kurt Johnson Ph.D.

Robert Atkinson Ph.D.

Nomi Naeem, M.A.

Chamatkara (Sandra Simon)

In the 1990s, Steve Farrell co-founded and led two high-growth technology companies based in Silicon Valley that were featured in the *INC* 500 and spanned the United States and Europe.

A New Universal Dream is the inspiring story of Steve's journey from the pursuit of wealth and traditional ideas of success toward a more fulfilling life of caring and service to others and to humanity. It's also the story of the potential each of us has for profound change and the power we all hold to open ourselves ever deeper to the Oneness of all things and to evolve consciously toward the highest versions of ourselves.

This book will arm you with ideas, tools, a roadmap to greater awareness, and hope for the future as you become a more conscious leader in your family, workplace, and community while helping to create a better world.



Whether you're an artist or an engineer, a homemaker or policy maker, this book is about you... It is destined to become the go-to resource that reminds us we are only defined by life's circumstances when we allow ourselves to be.

—**Gregg Braden**, *NY Times* bestselling author of *Human by Design*

This book is an opportunity for big and meaningful change... it is a beautiful place to start... for guidance and inspiration to walk your own path.

—**Ken Honda**, author of *Happy Money*

Steve Farrell's uplifting, empowering, and transcendent journey from Silicon Valley titan to ultimately embracing a life of true success by answering his soul's call will inspire you to heed your own soul's calling, and to trust that the path ahead is one of personal expansion, transformation, and guaranteed success.

—**Michael Bernard Beckwith**, author of *Spiritual Liberation*

...A valuable contribution toward healing societal dysfunction and ensuring the healthy development of future generations, this book will inspire your spirit as you comprehend the enormous potential of applying this information in your life.

—**Bruce H. Lipton, PhD**, *NY Times* bestselling author of *The Biology of Belief*



Steve Farrell co-founded the Humanity's Team non-profit in 2003 with Neale Donald Walsch, author of the *Conversations with God* series, and is its executive director. He is a member of the Evolutionary Leaders Circle and contributed a chapter to their Nautilus Award-winning book, *Our Moment of Choice*. He lives in Boulder, CO, with his wife, Stephanie, their two young adults, and their dog Sadie.

