

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

Dreams Come True, And Mine Will Too: A Memoir of Renewed Hope

By Danielle Ndende

There are 28 chapters in *Dreams Come True, And Mine Will Too: A Memoir of Renewed Hope*.

They are preceded by a preface and followed by a postface.

CONTENT WARNING: This book contains material that may be distressing to some readers: depression, suicidal thoughts, panic attacks.

PREFACE

This section serves as an introduction to my memoir. It contains the very first words I wrote in this book, on the very first day I started writing it.

CHAPTER 1: OH, HEY!

In this chapter, I reflect on a specific character trait: determination. I share how I started defying societal expectations from a young age by carving my own academic path, which set the foundation for future personal and professional aspirations.

CHAPTER 2: WHY NOT ME?

While feeling fortunate for my relatively smooth life, I struggle with the idea that I haven't faced significant hardships yet. I yearn to be a greater support to those around me through personal experiences. I prepare for graduate school in the U.S., unaware of the events that will change the course of my life.

CHAPTER 3: NOT WHAT I EXPECTED

Arriving in Chicago in February 2017, I am initially hopeful for the future and the dream I've been carrying since high school, the one I believe is my purpose. However, I face a series of setbacks, including an unexpected rejection from my chosen master's program.

CHAPTER 4: DRAW CLOSE

This is the start of my journey of getting close to God. Academic and immigration challenges intensify, forcing me to navigate complex legal and financial systems while battling loneliness and declining mental health. What is a credit score? Why is a background check so expensive? The stress shows on my face.

CHAPTER 5: TURNING THE PAGE

After months of stress, anxiety, and experiences I know will now help me better relate to others, I am confident things are going to change for the better in 2018. I look forward to the new year, once more unaware of upcoming events that will severely impact my mental health.

CHAPTER 6: THERAPY, MAYBE?

My boyfriend and I recently broke up; I am experiencing my first real winter in Chicago, alone in an apartment I am supposed to share with three other girls. Despite having finally started my graduate program, financial and emotional challenges weigh me down, so I decide to seek professional mental health counseling for the first time.

CHAPTER 7: OOPS

My search for a job started a few months after arriving in Chicago, but a year later, I haven't found anything I am eligible for. I apply for an opportunity in New York City and move there for the summer.

CHAPTER 8: UH-OH

Confused and distraught by a succession of disappointments, I start questioning God. I start questioning life.

CHAPTER 9: THE PAIN

The accumulation of hardships and my ever-declining mental health state take me back to a time in my childhood when I no longer wanted to be alive. Pain begins to grow in my heart, and I quickly become used to carrying it constantly.

CHAPTER 10: EVEN CLOSER

Through the first of many times I have to move to a new place under immense stress and near-impossible circumstances, I experience God's presence and draw even closer to Him.

CHAPTER 11: BACK TO BASICS—PART I

I am once more taken back to my childhood; this time, to a period when I poured my feelings into a diary. In August 2018, I begin writing in a prayer journal to share what's going on in my life with God.

CHAPTER 12: CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

This chapter covers CPT, a way for international students to legally work in the U.S. I describe general rules and apply them to my personal situation as I walk you through my tedious approval process.

CHAPTER 13: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

OPT is how international students can work in the U.S. after they graduate. This chapter provides a detailed insight into the application process, illustrated by my experience. My MBA graduation is a beautiful contrast to the emotional toll that complying with immigration laws is having on me, as reflected in journal entries.

CHAPTER 14: BACK TO BASICS—PART II

As my frustration grows and the prospects of making my dream come true wither away, I shift from writing in a prayer journal to writing in a personal journal. The pain in my heart intensifies with each job rejection email; my self-esteem and sense of worth take a hit.

CHAPTER 15: NOT ENOUGH

Having a corporate job that matches my education is turning into a delusion, as I face more and more rejections and have no choice but to accept a temporary minimum-wage job at a hotel.

CHAPTER 16: A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Finally, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel when I am fast-forwarded through all stages of the interview process with a firm in downtown Chicago. I am slated to start as soon as I complete my third and last week at the hotel. This is perfect timing since I have almost reached the maximum unemployment period prescribed by immigration laws.

CHAPTER 17: BROKEN VESSEL

Once more, my hopes have been crushed. I can't take any more pain or disappointment, so I do something I never thought I would do in my entire life. My heart is broken and the light is gone.

CHAPTER 18: MENDED HEART

As God would have it, it wasn't the end. And He shows it to me in a beautiful and unexpected way. One I could have never imagined, not after all hope was lost.

CHAPTER 19: RENEWED HOPE

This is the start of my journey to having a hopeful heart again. As I do, remnants from past hurt try to hold me back, but there's reassurance along the way. I begin to repeat a mantra to myself.

CHAPTER 20: DCTMWT

The mantra has turned into the title of a book I think I want to write someday. At this stage, I am also preparing to move to Canada to continue to pursue the dream that didn't come true during my time in the U.S. The impending pandemic complicates matters, but I am excited to go back home after three years of hardships in Chicago.

CHAPTER 21: NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Family, friends, and good food are the rhythm to the sweet melody of being in Yaoundé. The pain is gone. However, I experience what I never thought would apply to me: culture shock. With my own people.

CHAPTER 22: NEW BEGINNINGS?

Landed in Toronto, I am confident this is the start of a new journey to making my dream come true in a more immigrant-friendly country. But as time goes on and I face other challenges besides those imposed by the pandemic, my hope falters, and my mental health with it. The pain is back.

CHAPTER 23: DO DREAMS REALLY COME TRUE?

More struggles challenge my self-worth and future plans. The race has been so long I wish I'd never had a dream in the first place. How is it so hard to pursue a dream? When do I get there? Does the race ever end? Is my mantra accurate—do dreams really come true?

CHAPTER 24: THE LESSON

All along, there was something to be learned. About dreams, about goals, about life. And I am glad I finally did. In 2022, I'll do things differently.

CHAPTER 25: NEVER QUITE THERE YET

More setbacks and inexplicable delays occur at the entryway of a new journey I am about to embark on. Shaky finances cause additional stress, especially as I am forced to move to what will be my third apartment since arriving in Canada in the past year and a half.

CHAPTER 26: ALMOST THERE, I PROMISE

The years between 2017 and 2023 taught me a lot—about me, about life, about God, about dreams. The reality at my corporate job is far from my expectations, but as I am once more emotionally challenged, I choose to trust God. A shift is happening, but I don't fully measure it yet.

CHAPTER 27: DREAMS COME TRUE, AND MINE WILL TOO

Things have changed: I have evolved, and so have my dream and my idea of purpose. What I didn't realize was that I needed to let go of the old so I could fully embrace the new. So, I do. My dream, the one I never knew I had, is going to come true. I quit my job, uncertain of the path ahead.

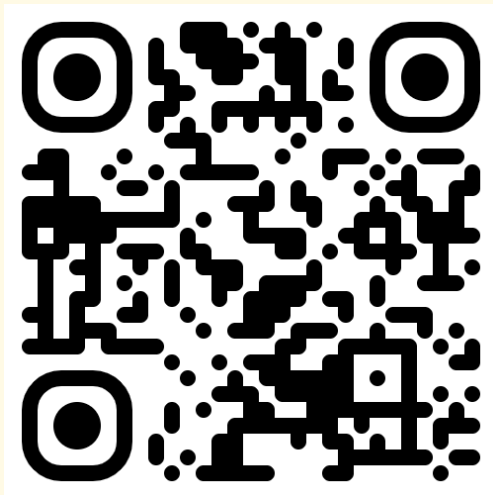
CHAPTER 28: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

I reflect on this one big journey that is life; how every challenge, setback and delay, every joy and milestone is a part of one big story. My journey has now brought me to yet another city, Montreal. I don't know what is next, but I know this isn't a new beginning; I am continuing the journey.

POSTFACE

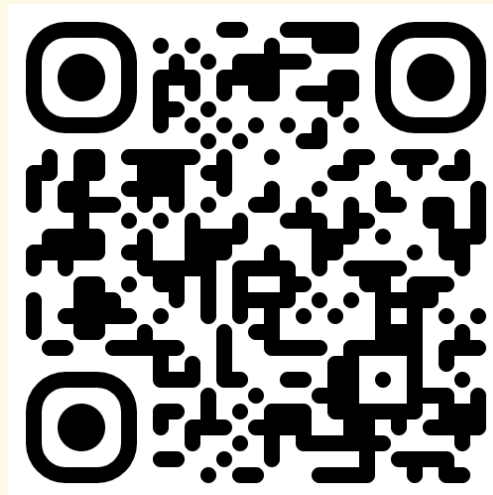
This section contains short, concluding thoughts.

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