

This is mere sneak peek of ***9/11/01 A Long Road Toward Recovery***

I began formulating the concepts in this book at the end of 2007. At the time I wondered where would I be mentally, spiritually and emotionally on September 11, 2011—ten years after the tragic disaster of 9-11. I couldn't help but wonder about the long-term effects of this tragedy that not only affected the entire world, but also had a permanent, devastating impact on my family and I.

It's been nearly ten years since that ill-fated day and I, along with millions of other people, am still feeling the after effects. Although some days and years are more challenging than others, I still experience erratic mood swings, fear, uneasiness and depression. Never truly certain of my emotional steadiness, I ebb and flow between moments of happiness and joy to severe bouts of anger, bitterness and hopelessness. My greatest wonder is, *Will my life ever be the same?*

Before 9-11, I enjoyed a successful career in the securities industry. I was a certified financial planner in the major securities arm of a growing partnership. I was young, full of life and on the heels of branching out on my own. Without question, I was truly ready to soar; but in my heart I feel that opportunity was interrupted by 9-11.

Life after has been extremely trying for me, to say the least. The aftershocks continued through the following years until it came to a head in 2007, when I found myself in complete and utter upheaval. I was struggling on my job and trying to find balance between ministry and business which I never thought would be an issue. At that point, I'd transferred firms two times and was facing the possibility of a third transfer. Around every corner there seemed to be some adversity or test I had to overcome; and the challenges intensified with each passing day.

It seemed as though just when I thought I was settled and finally ready to rebuild, there was always another mountain to climb. That's when I realized that I was dealing with more than the everyday struggles of life. I was dealing with trauma. Then I wondered how many other 9-11 survivors were facing the same struggles as I was? Had they recovered from them? Had they been successful in picking up the pieces of their lives and finding a sense of normalcy? I know I hadn't!

As a writer, I found some solace in writing. Still, I couldn't rest, knowing that there were other people out there facing the same struggles I was. I wanted to know how many other people were tattered, hurt, and struggling to rebuild. That's when I decided that I would no longer wonder, but instead search for other individuals who were directly affected by the tragedy of 9-11. I wanted to know what journey they'd traveled to find peace; or if peace was found at all.

As a survivor of this calamity, I have noticed that very little attention has been given to the actual living survivors. So much rightly placed honor has been given to the lost heroes; but what about us who remain?

What about the people who relive the memories of those events daily. Those of us who, almost a decade later, are living our everyday lives reaching for a sense of normalcy we may never obtain?

In my pain, I reached out for the familiar support of others who could relate. I'd hoped to find people who would be honest enough to share their true feelings about that earth-shattering event. At first, I wasn't even sure if any other survivors would be candid enough to share the fact that they, like me, were secretly angry that no one seemed to care about their lives being forever altered. But deep inside, I knew I wasn't the only survivor who felt discarded, forgotten, thrown away, and at times resentful because of the pain I'd endured. There had to be others who, marred with feelings of hopelessness, carried the guilt of actually surviving. Did they, like me, have moments where they wished they'd died because life after was more like a cruel imprisonment than a real life?

Did they feel like committing suicide? Were they still haunted by nightmares of people jumping off buildings? Was anxiety and stress dictating their lives? And finally, were they mad at God about what happened, or did they grow closer to the Lord as result of what they suffered? I wondered!

The answers to these burning questions and more lay ahead. Nestled in the pages of this book is our story; one I am sure will resonate with people from all walks of life, but especially to the survivors. I know your pain. I too have tried to erase the memories of that day. I've tried to block it out like it never even happened. But with each passing day the memories seem to replay with such force that I can almost feel myself right back at Ground Zero inhaling the smog and fumes while being tormented by sounds too heinous to ever forget.

Why me? Why us? And where do we go from here?

Only God knows where we will go, but as we focus on the day-to-day task of rebuilding, we must strive for a level of transparency that generates and demands healing. I am grateful to be alive; and although I didn't always feel that sense of gratitude, as I travel toward my healing, I realize that my emotions are valid at every stage in the process; and so are other people's feelings.

As we reflect on the past, I've attempted to bring together different perspectives of one experience that changed the lives of millions. Sit back and allow me to take you through this journey. I caution you that this journey has a lot of information and stories that are both hard to share and bear, but if you'll remain with me, you'll see why this project is long overdue.

Here's to the survivors!