

I WISH I COULD SAY MY LIFE was as simple and profound as Forrest Gump's words of wisdom, "Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you're gonna get." But, it just can't be summed up in such uncomplicated terms. Uncertainty is a daily experience with me. At least with a box of chocolates, you may not know about the flavor inside, but you're still aware that you're eating chocolate.

One thing is for certain, I'm a writer. It's my passion; my heart. It's what drives me, motivates me, teaches me and most often keeps me company. While I have many relationships with a lot of flesh and blood people, I have an awesome love for the vibrant characters created in the pages of a book. I'm just as proud of the accomplishments and feats of my fictional characters, as I am of my twenty-year-old son. Just as I'd like to see Johnathan excel in life and seek after his own passions, those are the very same dreams I have for my fictional children. My greatest desire is to see them come alive into the mind of a reader and touch their heart the way they've touched mine. That doesn't happen on its own. It requires a lot of patience, perseverance and paranormal faith. It takes stepping out of the boat.

Regardless of your religious faith, I'm sure many of you have heard the story of Peter stepping out of the boat and walking on water. Well, as magnificent and wonderful that supernatural feat may have been, Peter just didn't find himself for no reason conquering the law of gravity. He first saw an opportunity, and a desire formed in his heart. He sought out the possibility, and then he lifted his leg over the side. THEN, against all natural sense, he stepped out into the unknown.

This isn't easy to do. We all think we could do it, no problem. But when we really face the choice, consider the possibilities, and then start listening to the many voices around us cite the pro's and con's – we most often end up standing still; frustrated because we're not experiencing what we dared to dream. I found myself playing the If Only Game. If only this would happen... If only this agency would sign me... If only this editor loved it... If only this publisher believed in me... If only I had the money... If only my ship would come in.

The funny thing is...I've discovered that I'm already on my ship. I may not yet be rolling in the wealth, I may not yet have the multi-book contract, I may not yet have landed on the Best Seller's list, but I get up every day and in some small way participate in the thing I love most in this world; I get to write. I get to use my imagination and create worlds, characters, and find victory in overwhelming situations. It doesn't matter where my boat finally docks, what matters is where it journeyed.

Maybe it's because I'm soon turning forty that life just seems to be getting better for me. I'm not richer, I'm not more successful, and by the world's standard I don't have anything to be envious about, except that I'm happy. In my middle class existence of high taxes, sky-rocketed insurance

rates, and market instability, I found the strength and faith to get up every day, step out of my comfort zone and walk onto the unknown waters. A few years ago, I would have called this behavior irresponsibility. Today, I call it freedom. I don't worry about what tomorrow holds. I'm enjoying the moment – even when all I see are dark clouds and rough waves churning all around me.



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