
I'M ACCEPTED

*WALKing the Journey
from Rejection to Freedom*

Holland B. Nance

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	4
Foreword	6
Dedication	9

Section 1—Before the WALK Began • 11

Part 1—My Story	13
Part 2—Where’s My Triple A?	23
Part 3—Filling the Void to Avoid Feeling the Void	28

Section 2—Let’s Take the WALK Together • 33

Part 1—Be WILLFUL	35
Part 2—ABANDON It	43
Part 3—The Biggest LIE	49
Part 4—KNOW the Truth	57

Section 3—WALK or BEND • 71

Part 1—So Much is at Stake	73
Part 2—Be Aware of the Devices	76
Part 3—Open Book Test	82
Part 4—WALK into Freedom	85

Section 4—WALKing in Wisdom • 89

Part 1—How Long Will You Mourn?	91
Part 2—Moving from Void to Victory	95
Part 3—TRAIN Yourself to WALK	98

Section 5—An Open Letter to Fathers • 103

Resources	107
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DEDICATION

I wrote this book for you who have been impacted by the pain of disappointment, heartbreak, and rejection; to the ones who have been mistreated by those who should have cared the most, and to those whose value has been questioned and under-appreciated.

This book is for you - you are not alone. Whether it was a rejection from other children during childhood, or rejection from an employer during adulthood, rejection can have debilitating effects on you emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Depending on the events of life, that rejection may have been brushed off easily, or it may have crippled the potential to move further beyond the initial point of pain.

One of the definitions of rejection is a “throwing back”. Those who reject you refuse to believe you, accept you, or consider you; they decide not to be seen with you in public because you are not deemed good enough; they refuse to hear, receive, or admit you. All of these words and actions pale in comparison to the deep, long-standing results that will be experienced if the rejection is not managed and eradicated properly.

THE GOOD NEWS

Rejection is horrible and over time, the ways it displays itself in your life is horrific. I assure you, *there is hope!* These terrible effects of rejection can be overcome and you can move forward

Dedication

to experience the fullness and richness that life really has available to you.

In this book, I will share my personal experiences with rejection, heartbreak and disappointment. More importantly, I will share a few points that may be helpful in your journey to freedom from rejection. I will guide you through the process to WALK the truth (Willfully Abandon Lies and Know the truth). This four-step process helped me during my own journey from rejection to freedom. This guide—along with prayer, faith, a strong determination to live at a higher level, and the power of God's grace—will assist you as you begin and progress through your own journey. There will be questions for you to consider as you read. I encourage you to journal your way through this process and review what you discover and uncover.

May this book envelop you. May its words embrace you with love, warmth, and empowerment. May each chapter wrap its arms around you and squeeze you until your heart is filled with wholeness and health. May it grab you by the shoulders, lift you up, and look you deep in the eyes of your soul to connect you to all of the power, beauty, and well-being that already exists within you.

May this book help you to know how valuable you are to God, and how much He loves you and wants you to believe in the *truth* of everything He knows and has said about you.

A journey is a continual process. Even now, I have to remind myself, consistently, to WALK the truth!

Now, let's WALK the truth together!



Section 1

Before the WALK Began

Part 2

WHERE'S MY TRIPLE A?


Have you ever been in your vehicle and all of a sudden, it gives you trouble? Maybe it makes an unusual noise or it starts shaking in an unfamiliar way. Many years ago, I purchased a car from an ad in a local newspaper. It worked fine for several months, but before long the problems started. On my way to work one day, the car started to smoke and was losing power. I pulled over onto the shoulder of the highway. The first thing that came to mind was “Oh no! I need to call AAA”.

Most of us know AAA, the travel and insurance service, because it represents rescue, safety, and protection. No matter the time of day or night, just give AAA a call and they will come to help you. I didn't have a cell phone or AAA. Like me, those who don't have AAA have to pull over to the side of the road and depend on the kindness of strangers or convince a friend to stop what they are doing to come and help. Sometimes when we don't have AAA and no friends are available, we just have to WALK.


In life, I found myself in need of another Triple A... Affirmation, Approval, and Acceptance. The need for Affirmation, Approval, and Acceptance can be one of the most motivating forces in our lives. It can display itself in various ways. For some, it may lead to attention-seeking behavior

(positive or negative); for others, it can display itself in abusive ways where the emotions of others are manipulated to achieve a desired result through rants and tirades. For me, I was always available to help in my roles as “Helpful Holland.” By being helpful, I knew people were going to appreciate what I could offer them.

If there was a project team at work or church, I was one of the first ones to volunteer to take on critical tasks. I wanted to



The need for Affirmation, Approval, and Acceptance can be one of the most motivating forces in our lives.



be known as the most reliable and resourceful member of the team. I invested countless hours and skills, sacrificing sleep and personal finances, to support the project goals, just to get the verbal and non-verbal recognition for being a valued team member. The “thank you” sentiments, invitations to project meetings, and small gifts of gratitude provided the dosages to fill the cravings for Triple A.

These hits of Triple A were potent and toxic. Not that it is wrong to desire to help others. The issue is when it is done with the sole desire of receiving the pat on the back and letting that be my source of self-worth. It was just as toxic as a shot of a lethal drug.

Going after Affirmation, Approval, and Acceptance led me to walk into friendships and relationships willingly offering everything and anything I had, just as long as there was even a small potential of getting the Triple A. For others, I have foolishly paid rent, bought groceries, driven miles to other cities, and committed countless other misuses of my time and money, for the purpose of winning affection and

the interest of others — only to find out that the efforts would not be reciprocated or provide the lasting Triple A I desired. I yielded my time, intellect, money, and body, for a few pats on the back, moments of time, “thank you” sentiments, and late night return phone calls.

While I walked away with my head held high and a pep in my step, it was only temporary. As soon as that last dosage wore off or I encountered another challenge to my self-esteem, I was right back at it, looking for the next opportunity to “help,” all the while needing so much from those who had no real ability to give me anything close to what I truly needed.

I was in a continual cycle. In need of Triple A, I gave all that I could to people just to get a tinge of the feeling of being a meaningful part of someone’s life, only to be disappointed that the feeling didn’t last. Then I had to find either a new way to give of myself, or just find someone new to get the level of Triple A I wanted. The cycle was ongoing to the point that I no longer had any clue about what was left or who I was. I felt rejected, depleted, betrayed, not good enough, and even hopeless at times — all of it in a futile attempt to get enough Triple A to make up for all of my believed insufficiencies. I had no idea how to get out.


This is a dangerous position to experience, especially if your only sources of Affirmation, Approval, and Acceptance are external. Every bit of self-worth is quantified and determined by how people respond to you and perceive you. Yet people can be fickle. What they love about you today can be the same thing they despise and dismiss you for tomorrow.

From childhood, I learned about God and attended church over the years. I was taught to fear God and to obey Him or be

ready for the awaiting punishment. Even during this period of time of seeking Triple A, there was church attendance and religious activities, but no real relationship with my Creator. I simply had “fire insurance” to keep me out of Hell and failed to allow my relationship with God to become substantial enough to replace the external messaging. I refused to trust God to fill my heart with the internal knowing of the real source of Triple A.

So I continued. I continued to seek my Affirmation, Approval and Acceptance from external sources, resulting in years of a depleted self-image, self-hating behavior, dysfunctional relationships, and misused time. Rejection sends us on a mission to seek and destroy our self-esteem. One of the worse aspects of rejection is that, at times, we become the enemy of our own self-worth. Rejection attacks how much we value ourselves.

The efforts and activities in pursuit of Acceptance, Love, and Belonging, especially when we are combating rejection in unhealthy ways, will cause us to devalue ourselves and experience situations, relationships, and interactions that



rejection sends us on a mission to seek and destroy our self-esteem.



further reduce our self-esteem. When we devalue ourselves, there is a willingness to accept situations that align with how we see ourselves. If you have the choice of the best options but believe that you are not eligible for the best, then you will tend to choose options that are perceived to be more accepting and that you are equipped to support.

We endure these substandard events just to get a little,

temporary boost. We find ourselves looking for opportunities to be available for this punishment. The smallest communication or acknowledgment becomes the elixir we seek, hoping this time will last and be more fulfilling. We allow our standards, our self-respect, and our feelings to be trampled and disregarded. Oftentimes, we are simply ignored until the person has a need, then we are more than ready to make ourselves available. In the end, we find ourselves right back where began. Sometimes even lower.

Part 3

FILLING THE VOID TO AVOID FEELING THE VOID

Many of us have heard the saying that we all have a “God-sized” void that only God can fill. Well, I was painfully aware of that void and I did my absolute best to fill that void and my time with almost anything that made the presence of that void less noticeable—well, less noticeable to me at least. Again, I was walking in a fog, believing lies and creating a reality that by no means was aligned with the truth.

Yet the more I tried to occupy and silence the void, the more present it became. The delusional efforts of trying to placate and pacify the longing that now refused to be quieted became useless. The unfilled areas of my life refused to be satisfied with temporary fixes. What I wished to stifle and sweep under the proverbial “rug” was now hollering and acting out in the most inappropriate and uncomfortable ways. This was painful and exhausting. I was angry and didn’t know how to quiet the echoes of the void. To address that longing called for more strength, honesty, and faith than I thought I was able to muster up—so I continued to fill, rather than feel.

I filled the void with what I call the Three Fs—Fun, Fellas, and Food. The Three Fs were my go to. Whenever there was a time or space where I needed a self-esteem boost, especially

during the times when I was missing my Triple A, I knew exactly where to go. If the fun wasn't available, then surely there was a fella to call on. If no fella was at the ready, not to worry — there was always food. The Three Fs represented everything that brought pleasure and euphoria to me. I'd rather feel this ignorant bliss than feel the void that constantly called out for something real. Ravi Zacharias, renowned Christian



The void was vast and it was loud; constantly sending echoes throughout my life of how it needed to be filled.



author and apologist, is noted for saying, "Pleasure without God, without the sacred boundaries, will actually leave you emptier than before."

This could not be any truer than in my life. These were the sedatives that made the feelings of unworthiness, lack of true relationship, connectivity with others, and rejection easier to bear. At times, it even seemed that they did not exist at all. From the outside, most people assumed that I was just a confident person, moving through young adulthood with every hope and advantage that life brings. Little did they know that during the moments when my Triple A was lowest and the Three Fs were hard to acquire, there was depression and thoughts (and attempts) of suicide constantly occupying my life.

The void was wide and deep. The void was vast and it was loud; constantly sending echoes throughout my life of how it needed to be filled. All of my attempts to fill it left me feeling fatigued, but I was afraid to try another approach. So I continued with the superficial relationships and friendships, allowing people to hang out and use my resources, intellect


and money, but never allowing them access to who I was on an authentic level.

At time, rejection creates surges of anger and aggression. Rather than show hurt or depression when encountering or expecting rejection, we can display anger and aggression as a defense mechanism. This can produce a perpetual cycle of dysfunction. Typically, people do not want to develop friendships and relationships with people who are angry and aggressive (unless they, too, are angry and aggressive). In most cases, the person who responds with anger and aggression is avoided and, therefore, experiences further rejection. Over time, this anger and aggression can develop into bitterness, mean-spiritedness, and relational dysfunction—and it all stems from an attempt to build a “thick skin” and lessen the impact of rejection.


I also continued pursuing romantic relationships that provided time and attention but devalued everything I was and everything I was made to be. I continued abusing myself by displaying self-hating, dysfunctional behavior, and allowing myself food addictions to placate emotional issues. I allowed my health to be put at risk and was heading down a road to an early death.

Rejection piggybacks on physical pain pathways in the brain. Unresolved rejection that remains over time begins to impact our bodies in physical ways. The emotions, thoughts, and internal messages that travel through our brains have the ability to produce physiological outcomes, meaning that the way we think about ourselves can create results in our bodies. Consider the all of the illnesses caused or worsened by stress, such as migraines, high blood pressure, insomnia, and many more. Often, rejection lies at the root.

I was doing all of this just to avoid dealing with the hole in my heart from a rejection that happened so many years earlier. My life was in limbo. I was empty and unfulfilled. My schedule was full with lots of activity, but I was still living in the void. I was doing a lot and doing nothing at the same time. My purpose was in jeopardy. Surely, there had to be more for me.



Unresolved rejection that remains over time begins to impact our bodies in physical ways.



I had to make a decision. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired for being sick and tired! I wanted more and I knew more was available. I saw it happening in the lives of other people who were living real, authentically joyful lives of true freedom. I knew God loved me just as much as He loved them! I had to find a way to get to it. I had to find a way to get better. I had to WALK out of the void. I had to WALK away from the rejection.

Section 1—Points to Ponder

1. Take a moment and reflect on your experiences with rejection (no matter how great or small). List them here.
2. When did the first one of these experiences with rejection happen?
3. How has this rejection impacted your life?
4. Do you believe this rejection is still impacting your life in any way? How?

Section 1—Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to think about the experiences I have had in

my life. I am grateful that you are present with me as I reflect and are constantly protecting my mind. Thank you for the guidance of your Holy Spirit to help me sift through the memories and provide clarity. Please help me uncover any hidden places that are necessary for me to experience the true peace and freedom that you have prepared for me. Thank you for healing my broken places and bandaging my wounds. Thank you for embracing me through this process, knowing that there is nothing that I have done or will do that will cause you to stop loving me. I trust you.
In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Inform * Inspire * Ignite



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