

## Hope...for the uprooted woman

### Standing On My Own Leash by Ann Kelley



Recently, my husband, Doug, and I walked to the nearby Starbucks with our dog, Billy. Seated on the patio, we tethered Billy to the leg of a chair and sat back to enjoy coffee, scones, sunshine and people-watching. Billy caught sight of another dog tethered only a few feet away. Billy's leash was long enough for him to approach this new canine friend, but there was one problem – he was standing on his leash. Billy's plight was out of Doug's field of vision, so, with a chuckle, I said, "Billy wants to meet that dog, but he's standing on his leash!"

*My words hit me between the eyes. How many times in my life had I stood on my own leash by not pursuing what I really wanted?*

The pattern has shown up in big and small ways. In high school (and continuing into my 40's!) I wanted to sing solos in school and church, but fear kept me silent. In college I majored in French and planned to go on to get a Master's degree in international business, but Doug and I moved to a new city and pursuing this dream seemed out of my reach. When I searched for a new job I didn't have enough confidence in myself to pursue job openings that were creative, interesting, and challenging.

Looking back, I can see now that, in many ways, I was sleepwalking through life: I avoided opportunities that demanded too much from me, I went along with what others wanted, I avoided risk, and I found my worth in what others thought of me.

Though I still struggle at times with lack of confidence or fear of failure, over the years God has mercifully used life, therapy, good books, opportunities, and the Holy Spirit to make it possible for me to choose to drop my passivity – to wake up to life. He's opened my eyes to how He made me and what I can bring to my family, friendships, work place, and community. The more I've experienced God's love (often through difficult times in my life), the more I've been able to love myself and stop standing on my own leash.

If you'd like to stop standing on your own leash, the ideas and insights here will give you a kick start. Inside, we look at why we stand on our leash, steps to live more closely aligned with our values, encouragement from Scripture, and why Just Moved Ministry almost didn't get off the ground.

### Try This 2-Step Experiment

*A few years ago a professor of psychology named Gabriele Oettingen set out to perform what might rank as the most basic psychological experiment of all time. In fact, you can do it right now. It goes like this:*

**Step 1:** *Think about a realistic goal that you'd like to achieve. It could be anything: Become skilled at a sport, rededicate yourself to a relationship, lose a few pounds, get a new job. Spend a few seconds reflecting on that goal and imagining that it's come true. Picture a future where you've achieved it. Got it?*

**Step 2:** *Take a few seconds and picture the obstacles between you and that goal as vividly as possible. Don't gloss over the negatives, but try to see them as they truly are. For example, if you were trying to lose weight, you might picture those moments of weakness when you smell warm cookies, and you decide to eat one (or three). That's it. It's called mental contrasting...: Envision a reachable goal and envision the obstacles. This method works, triggering significant changes in behavior and motivation. In one study, adolescents preparing for the PSAT who used this method chose to complete 60 percent more practice questions than the control group. In another, dieters consumed significantly fewer calories, were more physically active, and lost more weight.*

Coyle, Daniel. The Culture Code. 2018, Bantam Books, New York

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We are asking God to provide 25 new monthly donors. Will you be one?



*Bloom provides inspiration as you seek to grow and thrive during times of life change.*

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## Leash Laws Get off your own leash with these insights from a Christian psychotherapist

Common reasons for standing on our own leash can be boiled down to \*four factors. If you feel stuck standing on your own leash, see if one or more of these issues applies to you.

Fear	Discomfort	Impatience	Negative Mindset
You say “NO” to opportunities because you’re afraid of failing and looking foolish in front of others.	You value comfort so much that taking on a challenge sounds too hard and would be too disruptive.	You want quick results, so real or imagined setbacks lead to discouragement and giving up.	You tell yourself discouraging messages like, “I’ll probably fail,” “I’m not strong enough,” or “There’s something wrong with me.”

\*Mental illness is a fifth factor to be considered. If you suspect it is a possibility, seek professional medical help.

## Embrace these practical steps to ensure that you’ll live out of your values and be more likely to realize your goals

### Set goals that are consistent with who you are

- Set aside time to discover who you are and what you want. Do your goals truly reflect your values and the yearning of your heart, or have you taken on the values and goals of others?
- Ask God to reveal the truth of who He made you to be. Spend time in silence listening for his direction and exploring the gifts of who you are.
- Examine your core values, beliefs, interests, talents, and aptitudes. Be honest with yourself about what you’re good at and what you’re not good at. Is there an activity or a cause that lights you up? Pay attention to a sense of discomfort that may indicate you’re pursuing a goal or activity that doesn’t fit you. Goals that don’t align with who you are will keep you on your own leash.
- Get feedback from someone you trust and who knows you well.
- Don’t rush this process. This will take time and requires honesty. As you learn about and accept yourself, you’ll experience a deeper sense of God’s love (you are His beautiful creation) and come to love yourself more. Oh, and be sure to bring the true self you discover into your relationships.

### Set realistic goals and a realistic timeline

To reach a goal or to be good at a new skill takes a lot of time and effort. You may be unhappy with your initial efforts and be tempted to give up. Set up a system that ensures that you’ll stick with it: hire a teacher or mentor or enroll in a class. Schedule time to pursue the goal or work on a skill as if it was an appointment. Be patient with yourself.

### Break down your goals into small, reasonable, and highly achievable steps

This important process allows you to focus on a plan and brings with it a feeling of hope and confidence. Small steps allay fear. Failure to do this invites discouragement and abandonment of the goal. Include steps that can have an impact on your thinking, like mindfulness exercises.

### Enlist the support and accountability of others

Don’t go it alone. My dog Billy needed help to see he was on his leash. Of course, you’re much more aware than a dog, but when you keep your goals and desires to yourself, you’re more likely to abandon them somewhere along the way. Take a look at why you resist getting help. Are you afraid that the person you’ve asked to encourage you will question your goal or think less of you if you falter? Don’t allow someone else’s views to deter you from what you feel called to do.

## Get Out of Your Boat

In his book, *If You Want to Walk On Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, John Ortberg draws from Matthew 14:25-32. In this well-known passage, Jesus was walking on the water, approaching the disciples who were in a boat. Peter called to him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus."

Ortberg gives us fresh insight into this story:

Let Peter's walk stand as an invitation to everyone who, like him, wants to step out in faith, who wants to experience something more of the power and presence of God. Let water-walking be a picture of doing with God's help what you could never do on your own.

Your boat is whatever represents safety and security to you apart from God himself. Your boat is whatever you are tempted to put your trust in, especially when life gets a little stormy. Your boat is whatever keeps you so comfortable that you don't want to give it up even if it's keeping you from joining Jesus on the waves.

Want to know what your boat is? Your fear will tell you. Just ask yourself this: *What is it that most produces fear in me – especially when I think of leaving it behind and stepping out in faith?*

There is a consistent pattern in Scripture of what happens in a life that God wants to use and improve:

**There is always a call.** God asks an ordinary person to engage in an act of extraordinary trust, that of getting out of the boat.

**There is always fear.** God has an inextinguishable habit of asking people to do things that are scary to them. It may be a fear of inadequacy ("I am slow of speech and slow of tongue," Moses said.) It may be a fear of failure ("The land we explored devours those who live in it," cried the spies sent out to the Promised Land).

**There is always reassurance.** God promises his presence ("The Lord is with you, Mighty Warrior!" an angel assures Gideon who had certainly never been addressed by that title before). God also promises to give whatever gifts are needed to fulfill his assignment ("I will help you to speak, and teach you what to say" he tells a stuttering Moses).

**There is always a decision.** Sometimes, as with Moses and Gideon, people say yes to God's call. Sometimes, as with the ten frightened spies or the rich young ruler who spoke with Jesus, they say no. But always people must decide.

**There is always a changed life.** Those who say yes to God's call don't walk the walk perfectly – not by a long shot. But because they say yes to God, they learn and grow even from their failures.

Those who say no are changed too. They become a little harder, a little more resistant to his calling, a little



What is it that most produces fear in me— especially when I think of leaving it behind and stepping out in faith?

Ortberg, John. *If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. 2001, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Frederick Buechner



## The Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion by Susan Miller



Just Moved Ministry almost didn't happen 25 years ago. Oh yes, I *talked* about the need for starting a ministry for uprooted women. I only had to look into the eyes of an uprooted woman to see the difficult emotions and to feel her pain. I knew how she felt. I had been in her shoes 14 times.

Yet, I had no idea *how* to start a ministry. I was paralyzed with fear of failing and a lack of confidence. I felt like the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz* who believed he had no brain. That was me. I didn't feel smart enough to undertake something of this magnitude.

The Tin Man believed he lacked a heart, but there was no doubt I had a heart for uprooted women. The Lion believed he lacked courage. Okay, I'll be honest, I also lacked the courage to move forward. I didn't feel smart enough *and* I lacked the courage it would take to do it. I grappled back and forth with God and grumbled, "I can't!" more often than I'd like to admit.

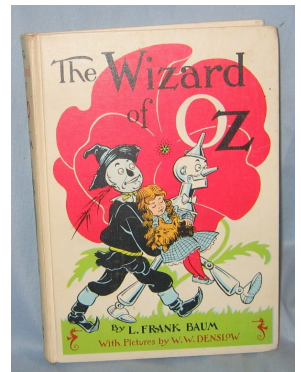
The one thing I did that my *Wizard of Oz* friends didn't do was pray like crazy. I prayed for clarity, wisdom, direction and guidance. I prayed that God would make my decision, one way or another, clear. I prayed that He would give me wisdom (in spite of not being smart enough), direct me on the right path, and guide me the whole way. I just needed to trust Him. Oh . . . but that was easier said than done.

Slowly, I began to rely on God and not myself. I began to rely on His promises and the encouragement of His word in Scripture. Over time, I began to believe in myself, and my confidence and courage grew. My passion to reach uprooted women only grew stronger. I wanted to go beyond the pages of my book, *After the Boxes are Unpacked*, and offer other resources. I wanted to offer them more tangible ways to adjust and more biblical foundation in the midst of a major life change.

God brought knowledgeable people to accompany me on the journey, He opened doors, closed a few, and began to unfold a clear direction to take. I decided that even if I failed, I would have done my best, and learned a lot along the way. I took my first step into the unknown world of starting a ministry in 1995 with a flashlight of faith to lead the way.

25 years later, Just Moved Ministry has brought hope and encouragement to thousands of uprooted women all over the world. Our *After the Boxes are Unpacked* studies are offered in churches, neighborhoods, seminaries, military chapels, and with corporate and government expats. I continue to stay on my knees in humble gratitude and awe for all God has done through our ministry over the years.

Are you holding yourself back from moving forward in some area of your life as I did? Perhaps there's a little bit of the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, or the Lion in you. I encourage you to examine your heart and identify what's holding you back. Start praying. Gather a "think tank" of people who can help form a plan. Trust God. Don't expect quick results. Rely on God's perfect timing. Cling to biblical principles. Never lose faith.



### Just Moved Ministry is celebrating 25 years!

We are asking God to provide 25 new monthly donors—one donor for every year since Susan Miller followed God's call to start the ministry in 1995.

Will you be one of the 25? Set up your monthly donation online at [justmoved.org/donate](http://justmoved.org/donate), complete the enclosed reply card, or call Just Moved Mon-Thur, 480.991.5268. Thank you!