

LIVING IN YOUR FORTE

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We were made for big stuff. Eternal stuff. Each of us were built with a place in our hearts where there is a quiet stirring wrestling within; something that twists and turns and squirms inside the chambers of our hearts that groans to be acknowledged and let loose. There is a discontent within us we all contend with which points towards something that is not right with our world. **And you were hard-wired to be part of addressing it with your life.**

I think that's why I love the movie 300. I'm talking, I get a little breathless when I attempt to discuss it. Don't get me wrong, I also own The Notebook. I'm still a woman. But I am deeply in awe of the display of unwavering strength, clarity of character and the clear profits of intentional living that depict the Spartan people.

When the Spartans fought – they were the BEST. Watching the Spartans engage in battle is like watching a ballet. They were dangerously graceful. They carried swords and shields and performed as warriors with tremendous agility and intention. When they erupted onto a battle scene their movements were distinct and smooth; they were not street brawlers, they did not take a happy-go-lucky approach when

engaging with their enemies; they were *magnificently* intentional and *brutally* accurate. As I observed their lives on and off the battlefield **I noticed concentrated and bold efforts, I witnessed passion, purpose, a people on mission, I saw intentional living.** It all led up to something, and it was an *art* when they fought. And they didn't just fight because they were good at it - they fought with purpose. They fought for freedom, for their countrymen, for "a beautiful death." They had something worth blood, sweat, and battle. *And it was a cohesive effort.* The community of Spartan men and women they were surrounded by from birth fully supported, applauded and developed this warrior ability with a ferocity clearly not captured by foreigners. But the apparent lack of parallel values did not stop them, or even slow them down – **they knew who they were, what they stood for, and they used every ounce of energy within to live it out.** Beautiful. Powerful. Seductive. It's getting my heart beating faster just thinking about it. Watching this movie is *the complete opposite of being bored.*

Let's talk real life.

My sweet friend, Ashley Sunderman, is a RN manager at Mercy children's hospital in Des Moines, IA. She's one of those people MADE to do what she's doing. Exposure to and leadership within pediatric emergencies is an emotional and mental challenge, as you can imagine. People whose lives were rudely interrupted by the threat of health for their children respond with understandable angst - and no two cases are the same. And in these tense moments marked with grief and anxiety, Ashley handles them with grace and empathy - she makes them feel like a priority and it's not just an impression, she follows through with a tremendous sense of urgency over their experience while in her care. Those whose life circumstances drew them into her circle of influence have confirmed, "thank you, you were made for this." When things go decidedly well or take a desperate turn people feel cared for, prioritized, and more than a "job." Her obvious gifting led her into the position of managing other nurses who offer their lives for the same purpose. She found her sweet spot, she is living in her forte.

People living in their forte are purposefully impactful people. How are you impacting the people around you?

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." - 1 Peter 4:10

Here's the next layer of the cake: **Like anything BIG, it will likely take time to peak.** Spartans don't wake up warriors, Ashley didn't graduate and immediately acquire a position of authority and team management. Fully recognizing your "I was meant to do this" *usually* takes experience and development. There are certainly "God moments" where under his sovereignty stuff happens quickly and dramatically, but typically that's not the case. Like a choreographed dance, there is a slow build, a crescendo into the climax. Likewise, **our forte develops as we are developed - God does this lovingly because otherwise we'd be desperately overwhelmed; and nothing prepares us better than an intentional journey.** Additionally, we have to choose whether we use our forte for the eternal or the temporary. We absolutely can impact eternity within our forte when done with a bigger purpose in mind. The next two posts will be on the topic of the crescendo (or forte development), and then we'll hear from someone with tested wisdom on the topic of living with an eternal perspective. Super. Pumped.