

giving up normal.  
suburban girl meets the streets

by alene snodgrass

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my story.

What if the One who created you  
asked you to serve others who  
were less fortunate than you?

Would you dare?



What if you weren't supposed to  
serve the blessed any longer,  
instead reach out to those who  
were abused, abandoned, or  
addicted?

Would you be afraid?

What if you were called to leave  
your normal routine and  
predictable way of life  
to go a way unknown?

Would you?



There is a huge world out there  
full of people longing for help.

Their heart screams for someone  
to stop and recognize that they  
are there...that they matter...  
that they have a story to share.

Because I live in a world that is  
consumed with consuming, and a  
society that runs a fast pace climb  
up the ladder of success,  
I didn't see them.



Maybe sometimes I did, but felt so  
uncomfortable that  
I looked away.

Perhaps it was easier to rush by,  
consumed with my own thoughts  
while enjoying my safe routine.

Living a safe predictable “normal” life  
was working well for me: the perfect  
American family with 2.5 children,  
suburban home, and mid-sized car.

Not to mention my perfect  
schedule, daily routine and ministry.



What I didn't realize in the daily rush  
of my normal-all-about-me routine  
was that they saw me.

They longed for me to stop.  
They wanted to be noticed.

I didn't see them because I knew  
that hearing their hearts would  
break mine.

So I rushed by avoiding eye  
contact hoping they  
wouldn't see me.



If my heart began to break for them,  
I'd be forced out of my  
normal-all-about-me  
suburban way of life.

So I chose not to see or hear.



There came a day when  
I could not deafen  
what was stirring  
in my heart any longer.

I had to look at myself and ask:



What would happen if I stopped  
to noticed them?

What if I were to ask them  
how they were?

What if my voice could  
make a difference?

After I asked, and argued, and then  
assessed, I knew I had to go.

I had to do something.



With an aching heart  
I continually asked myself:

Where was I to go?  
What was I to do?  
How could I help?

It was apparent a first step of  
some sort was in order.

It wasn't necessarily a pretty step,  
but I took a step.



I surely did take a step.  
The awkward story is told here.

*your story.*



I wonder if you are here  
because you are feeling  
a stirring in your heart to  
step out of your comfortable,  
normal routine and bless others?

If your heart wants to cry at certain  
things you see, chances are  
that is where your heart is leading you.



If an unexplainable anger rises within  
you, and you want to pound your  
fists, chances are your heart is  
speaking to you.

If that's you, then it's time  
to take a step and  
show up.



But I know, you are not done  
questioning and arguing  
with your heart.

You wonder how  
I know these things -

I know because my story  
is your story.



I loved where I was in my all-about-me  
journey called "life."

I didn't want to be  
interrupted with another  
agenda or plan.

I was sold out to the American dream.

Looking for the next biggest thing.

Perfectly happy in my life's routine.

Serving at an awesome church.

Focused on myself, my own family, and  
the next blessing we could receive.



When my heart called,  
I pleaded my case diligently.

Yes, I know your story.

I, too, argued all the important questions:

What am I supposed to do?  
How can I make a difference?  
What if it isn't safe?  
What will others think?



And the biggest question of all:  
what if those on the streets or  
those on my own neighborhood street  
think I've gone crazy?

Normal suburban girls don't do this.

As your heart is stirring  
and your mind is asking those  
seemingly important questions,  
I totally understand.



the challenge.

Although you question,  
I'm here to challenge you  
to move beyond those questions  
and follow your heart's leading.



For if your heart is leading,  
you are called.

And if *you* are called,  
others are waiting on *you*!



If others are waiting,  
it's your moment to go to them.

Where do *you* go?



In just about any downtown urban area,  
you will see a man sitting on a corner  
with a sign asking for money.

Instead of judging him,  
what can you do?

Acknowledge him.  
Look him in the eye.  
Hand him some cash.

Not comfortable with that?  
Carry a few \$5 McDonald's gift cards  
with you for such a time as this.



If you are not comfortable  
going alone,  
join forces with others  
wanting to bless the less fortunate.

Gather a group of your friends and  
make a basket full of sandwiches.  
Head to the corner where those in need  
might be and serve them.

Look them in the eye. Ask how they are.  
You will be surprised  
at how easily the conversation flows.



Partner with your local Food Bank,  
The Salvation Army,  
Women's Shelters,  
Men's Shelters or  
find local missions or churches  
that are already reaching  
out to those in need.

Once you conquer your  
questioning heart, you will see  
endless opportunities  
to serve those who have been  
given up on.



You will soon want to step out of  
your “all-about-me” routine to  
let others know you see and hear them,  
you care, and that  
they are somebody.

If your heart cries for those in need,  
opportunities to bless them are there.

It's all about seizing the moment and  
taking that first uncomfortable step.



give up normal.

Giving up normal is not bad.

It means you take your eyes off  
yourself so you can see others needs.

This is a blessing in disguise.



To know the streets and  
to have the people there know  
you by name? Priceless!

Not normal for sure,  
but certainly incredible.

As you decide to take that awesome  
first step, know I'm here  
cheering you on.



From one person called to the streets  
to another --

you are on a journey ...

not a normal one, but an incredible one!

Claim today as the beginning  
of your journey  
to give up normal  
and go bless others!



the end.

connect with others giving up normal.

go to [www.positivelyalene.com](http://www.positivelyalene.com) and  
leave a comment

tweet about this challenge with the  
hashtag #givingupnormal

leave a message on facebook  
to talk to others giving up normal



share this challenge.

You are welcome to share this challenge with anyone and everyone.

Here are some ways you can share  
twitter. facebook. comments.

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# about the author.

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Alene loves Starbucks and a great conversation. You can connect with her through [email](#), [blog](#), [resources](#), [twitter](#), and [facebook](#).

