

flame, I am drawn to joy. I simply want to experience as much joy as I can, and there is no greater high I get than when I am sharing joy with others.

There are some people (maybe you are fortunate to be one of them) for which the emotion of joy comes naturally, one they can call forth and wear as easily as a warm, cozy mitten on a cold winter's day. But for much of my life, I was not such a person. For me, joy was a rather obscure concept, a word that sounded wonderful, if not a little extravagant. Joy existed somewhere on the other side of a dense wall, composed of the stress and anxiety of my own relentless daily expectations and pressures. I could hear joy beckon to me from time to time but always distant and muffled.

For many years, joy rarely crept through, and on the occasion it did, I was ill-equipped to hold onto its richness for very long. Eventually, I decided it was time to tear that barrier down and actively quest for this precious and illusive bounty. I have sought joy in many ways—through humor, music, writing, parenting, and spirituality. My hunt for it has become native. My desire for it now fuels my daily routine.

This entire project has taken me the better part of the last five years, and all of it has been one continuous act of joy. Acquiring each item in this treasure, investigating the histories surrounding these pieces, designing the treasure boxes, creating the clues, deciding on the secret spots, hiding the treasure boxes, writing this book: every aspect has been one wildly fun and wholly fulfilling, joyous adventure. It's made me feel alive. And though it may appear that I am giving very expensive things away, I have already received a far greater value in the form of happiness, in exchange.

—Still, I did not do all of these things only for myself. Certainly not. I did them in much greater part for you. My hope is that this book can in some way bring a little joy to your life. Perhaps its pages will simply entertain, make you laugh, or inspire you. Or maybe you will feel enlivened to go find the treasures I have hidden. I will be ecstatic if you locate them, and I will share in that celebration with you. However, even if you have no interest in searching for any of the five treasure boxes that I have secreted away, I believe there are things of value for you in this book. Permit me just a moment to explain.

The genesis of this project arrived in a flash, and it landed somewhat jarringly—an idea riding like a wild cowboy upon a lightning bolt of inspiration. My initial realization was fairly basic. I should go hide a treasure. But if something can be simple and incredibly complex at the same time, this was that thing. This endeavor, one that has seemed so oddly fascinating to many of my loved ones looking on, demanded me to peer deeply within myself and look closely at those around me. It has required me to spend countless hours considering the meaning of the word treasure. And in the end, it's brought me to one undeniable conclusion—you and I and everyone we know—we are all treasure hunters.

Our lives are one perpetual treasure hunt. You and I seek. We pour our heart and spirit, tears and sweat, energy and fiery will into acquiring those things we covet, whatever that may be. This is true of everyone. As our blue and green planet revolves around its molten sun, life on earth sketches out