***Don’t Stop Dancing, Just Change Partners***

by Sandra J. Jackson

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**Chapter #1: Finding Your Purpose**

**First main point** : **God has created us all with purpose**.

**Support A:** Purpose is defined asthe reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists:

**Example: Ehesians 2:**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Example**: Eph 4:10-12 10 He who descended is the very One who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things. 11 And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ

1. **Example :** I was drawn to the arts as a child.

2. **Example** : I wanted to play the piano, dance, sing and write songs and draw.

**Support B** : It is God that works his purpose in us.

1. **Example** : God gave me the interest and ability to dance
2. **Example**: 1 Samuel 16:8 One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a finelooking man. And the LORD is with him.”
3. **Example** : Phil 2:13 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

**Support C**: We may have many abilities that can be tied to one purpose.

**Example**: With my interest in dance, singing and writing songs as a child, God was preparing for a life of praise and worship through dancing and singing

**Example**: Isaish 25:1 - Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago.

**Second main point** : Our purpose is driven by passion

**Support A**: Passion is defined by strong and barely controllable emotion.

**Example**: I danced as a child because I found great pleasure in it.

**Example:** When I received Christ in my life, I desired to please God in how I danced.

**Example**: The question that I have posed to new dance members is, "why do you want to dance? You want to know what the motivating factor is. I have had some people say that they want to join the dance ministry to lose weight, or it seems like fun. This is a question you can consider yourself or new ministry members.

**Support B**: We minister because we love people.

**Example** : 1 Corinthians 13:1 - If I speak in the tongues[ a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. -2-

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Example: We want to encourage the body of Christ.

**Support C**: We minister because we love God and want to glorify him

**Example**: Ministering does involve giving your heart, mind and soul to God.

**Example**: Ministering requires a heart of worship.

**Support D** : Our passion for a ministry inspires us to seek understanding.

**Example** : I wanted to learn as much as I could about the ministry of dance.

**Proverbs 4:7** - The beginning of wisdom is this: Get[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+4%3A7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16498a)] wisdom. Though it cost all you have,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+4%3A7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16498b)] get understanding.

**Example:** We should absorb knowledge and understanding about our ministry from God’s word

**Third main point : Our purpose is rooted in a gift given to us by God**

**Support A** : God has given us a skill to do something

**Example :** The ability to encourage someone can be a gift..

**Example**: We all have at least one gift

**Example** : It has been others who have identified dance as my gift

**Support B**: Your gift will make room for you

**Example**: Proverbs 18:16 A man’s gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men

**Example**: I was able to start a dance ministry at Rock Church

**Support C** : There are different levels of anointing on gifts

**Example:** Some dancers can flow prophetically. There are other dancers that God uses to bring deliverance.

**Example**: 1 Cor 12:11 “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

**Example**: Ephesians 3:20 “**20**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

**Chapter 1 : Conclusion** : We need to find our purpose because that is why God created us. Jeremiah 29:11 says For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

**A. Restate topic** : Finding your purpose

**B. Summarize three main points** : God created us with a purpose. Our purpose is connected to what we enjoy doing and are skilled in doing. The depth of our purpose is the depth of our giftedness in that purpose.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together** : God will fulfill His purpose in us when we have found our place in ministry.

**Chapter #2: New Partnership: Bringing Your Purpose Into Fruition**

**First Main Point: What God Does to bring your purpose into Fruition**

**Support A: God gives us visions and dreams**.

**Example**: We need to hear from the Lord because He is the one that will give us the vision for the ministry. At the beginning of my ministry in dance, God begin to give me a vision of how to minister in dance before him.

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**Example**: The first song that God placed on heart to minister to was “What a Mighty God we Serve”.

**Example**: God placed it on my heart to train up others. First, I worked with children, then adults, and eventually teenagers.

**Support B: God brings people into our lives**

**Example:** I did not know of anyone that was ministering in dance for the Lord. God allowed me to meet someone who let me know that I was not alone and encouraged me to keep going.

**Example:** My voice teacher at Dorolyn Academy School of Music introduced me to Rosalyn Acevedo who took me under her wing. I joined Rosalyn’s dance ministry, called Divine Expression Dance Ministry.

**Support C: God provides resources**

**Example**: My Pastor was very supportive of the dance ministry. He included dance ministry in the church budget.

**Example**: My first dance garment was given to me by someone I didn’t know.

**Second Main Point**: **What you need to do to bring your purpose into fruition**

**Support A: Press into His presence**

**Example:** When I first started dancing for the Lord, I did not that was dancing for the Lord. It was through spending time in prayer that God begin to give me the creativity for dances and the songs to minister to

**Example**: It was through dancing before him that I begin to learn how to move in a way that would glorify Him.

**Support B: Study His Word**

**Example:** When I first started dancing for the Lord, I didn’t know of many passages in the Bible that talked about dance. I basically stood on Psalms 149:3 which says, “Let them praise his name with dancing. and make music to him with timbrel and harp” and Psalms 150:4which says praise him with timbrel and dancing,  
    praise him with the strings and pipe.

**Example**: Being under the leadership of Rosalyn was my first exposure to a more in depth biblical understanding of the dance.

**Example**: It wasn’t until 2008 that I was taken to even a deeper level of biblical understanding of dance ministry through the Eagles International Training Institute.

**Support C: You need to submit to Leadership**

**Example:** Ultimately God is the head of your ministry. You need to submit to how he is leading you or how he is leading the ministry leader.

**Example:** You need to submit to the decisions of your leader and the way he or she chooses to lead the ministry.

**Support D: Glean From Others**

**Example:** I learned a lot about the ministry of dance with my involvement with Divine Expressions

**Example:** I learned a lot about leading the dance ministry from those who were part of the dance ministry.

**Third Main Point:** What Ministry Leaders should to bring their purpose into Fruition

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**Support A: Leaders teach about the ministry.**

**Example:** If you are the leader of the ministry. It is important to pour into those who are part of the ministry. My ministry time always started with a devotion on the ministry of dance. The word of God was always the basis for my teaching.

**Example:** Developing others as dancers also entailed teaching technique. If your ministry is singing, you may need to teach them about praise from the bible and how to breathe when you sing. If it is ushering, you may need to teach them about being gatekeepers.

**Support B: Leaders guide others through their ministry**

**Example:** You have to establish policies and expectations for your ministry**.**

**Example:** You have to allow room for error and growth

**Support C: Leaders model their ministry**

**Example:** Members of your ministry are watching you so you must be mindful of exemplifying the love of Christ

Example: Leaders are servants. You are there to first serve your team. You are always giving examples or showing examples of what you expect from your team.

**Support D: Leaders Support others through their ministry**

**Example:** You support your team by building their confidence.

Example: You support your team by making everyone feel inclusive.

**Chapter 2 : Conclusion** : We bring our purpose into fruition when we step into the ministry that God has called us to.

**A. Restate topic** : New Partnership: Bringing Your Purpose Into Fruition

**B. Summarize three main points** : When we get started in ministry, whether we are leading or participating, God will lead so that we know what to do and how to do it.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: God will begin the work in us when we find our place in ministry.

**Chapter #3: Growing in Your Partnership**

**Support A: Learning About who God is**

**Example:** I learned of God’s faithfulness. In my years of ministry, I choreographed anywhere from 50 to 100 pieces. God was faithful in giving me the choreography for each piece. Sometimes, I received the choreography in one sitting or in a dream.

**Example:** Through ministry, I learned of God’s love for people.

**Example:** Many of the songs that I used for choreography was a testimony of who God is and praising Him for what He does.

**Support B:** Finding your self-identity

**Example**: I started out on a faith walk and being reminded of Psalms 139:1-18. I was shy in some ways and did not expect God to use me to minister in front of the congregation.

**Example**: It is God who gave me the strength, wisdom and discernment to lead the ministry.

**Example**: God had to equip me for his purpose.

**Support C:** Growing from glory to glory

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**Example:** God grew me in my biblical understanding of dance where I was involved in ministries outside of the church. First it was Divine Expressions and then Eagles Internationally Training Institute. The seed was planted when I started the ministry of dance at my church but God used the outside ministries to water the seed.

**Example**: God continue to expand and grow the ministry of dance in my 34 years of service. I was able to minister to children, then adults and eventually teenagers. I was able to train someone else up to lead the children’s dance ministry.

**Chapter 3 : Conclusion** : God will grow us up in the ministry where we are planted.

**A. Restate topic** : Growing in Your Partnership

**B. Summarize three main points**: As we grow in our ministry, we learn more about who God is, who we are and we grow from glory to glory.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: Our involvement in ministry is to serve others but God uses the ministry to minister to us first. We learn more about God, ourselves and others and we grow from glory to glory.

**Chapter #4: Persevere in Your Partnership**

**2 Tim 4:7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

**Support A:** Persevere through the hurts.

**Example**: Dance ministry was cut from the church budget

**Example:** One of the members of the dance ministry tried to take over the ministry

**Support B:** Persevere through insecurities.

**Example**: Dancers are typically 5’6 or shorter and I am 5’10.

**Example:** I tried to seek perfection when God wanted excellence.

**Support C:** Persevere through health issues and other challenges.

**Example**: When I had to have knee surgery in 2001 and a bump on my gum was diagnosed with adenoid cystic carcinoma, I thought I was done with dance ministry. God healed me and I was able to dance again.

**Example**: When my church had a change in pastoral leadership, many people left the church, including the dancers. I continued to minister in dance with just myself and one other person.

**Support D:** Persevere through spiritual attacks

**Example**: The enemy works through people to cause dissension. There was conflict in the ministry where individuals were jealous, competitive and prideful.

**Example:** There was always the unexpected happening which included problems with the sound system when we got ready to minister, or a dancer getting sick before we minister or transportation issues before we ministered.

**Chapter 4 : Conclusion** : No matter what obstacles arise in your ministry, you must stay in the race and not quit.

**A. Restate topic** : Persevere in your partnership

**B. Summarize three main points**: We must persevere through the challenges, feelings and attacks that would entice us to quit the ministry.

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**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: God wants to fulfill his purpose in and through us and we cannot allow circumstances to be the reason that we stop ministering.

**Chapter #5: Reproducing from your Partnership**

**Support A: Develop Relationships**

**Example:** Having one on one time with other members in the ministry or with your leader is a good way to develop relationships

**Example:** Follow your leader or if you are leader of a ministry be aware of those who are excited and passionate about the ministry and want to follow you

**Support B: Knowing who to mentor**

**Example: God will direct you as to who to mentor in your ministry. As a member, you can also ask to be mentored by your leader if you feel God is leading you in that direction.**

**Support C: Knowing how to relinquish roles**

**Example:** Allow someone other than yourself to choreograph

**Example:** Allow someone to come along side you as you lead

**Chapter 5 : Conclusion**: God wants us to reproduce if the ministry is to thrive.

**A. Restate topic**: Reproducing from your partnership

**B. Summarize three main points**: If we want to reproduce in our ministry, we must develop relations. Mentor and relinquish roles.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together:** If the ministry is to thrive, we must reproduce.

**Chapter #6: Transitioning in Ministry**

**Support A: Knowing when it is time to relinquish the ministry.**

**Example:** The Holy Spirit will confirm in your spirit that it is time

**Example:** You will have a peaceabout stepping down

**Support B: Knowing how to transition.**

**Example:** You want to make sure there is someone equipped and trained to lead the ministry

**Example:** You want to make sure you have the blessings of your pastoral leaders as you transition

**Support C: Being reassigned in ministry.**

**Example:** God will have another role for you even if it is to assist the ministry leader.

**Example:** You are moving into a new level so it should be rewarding

**Chapter 6: Conclusion**: Transitioning is a part of ministry.

**A. Restate topic**: Transitioning in ministry.

**B. Summarize three main points**: Transitioning in ministry involves having someone in place that is equipped and trained to take over the ministry, having the blessings of your pastoral leadership and knowing your new assignment.

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**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together:** If God is leading you to transition in ministry, you will know when it is time to relinquish the ministry and how to relinquish the ministry.

**Introduction**

***“I wanted to be like Debbie Allen because dance was my passion.”***

Who would have ever thought that God would or could use me as a dance minister. As a child, I had no clue that I would one day be dancing for the Lord. All I knew was that I wanted to dance. Dancing for me was a joy. In addition to secular dancing, I wanted to pursue all genres of dancing. I wanted to be like Debbie Allen because dance was my passion.

Growing up in a single-family home with my mom and my two brothers and my two sisters, I knew that my mom could not afford to spend money to fulfill my dreams or interests. If I was going to pursue any of my dreams or interests, I would need to make it happen. I wanted to play the piano. I wanted to attend modeling school. I wanted to sing and write songs. Most of all, I wanted to dance. I loved secular dancing, and I was very good at it. However, I wanted more than that. I also wanted to pursue dance in the performing arts.

At the age of 16, I was able to pay for my first dance class after working a summer job. I took a ballet class at Malcom X College with an African American male instructor. That male instructor was so challenging and intimidating that I quit the class. I then began to question my abilities. Do I really know how to dance? Why couldn’t I keep up in doing the movements in class? Raised on the west side of Chicago, and with limited exposure, I had no experience with the performing arts, other than what I saw on tv. I thought I could be like Debbie Allen, but I came to realize that dance in the performing arts was not easy. There was a lot more that was demanded of me than I knew about or could grasp. I did not know or understand the ballet terminology including how to do jetes or ton dues. I didn’t know that a dance rehearsal or class could be so intense I was not prepared to get down like that. In my discouragement, I walked away from the performing arts dancing.

However, I did continue to dance the way I knew how and that is secular dancing with secular music. Sometimes I found myself dancing all night long when I attended house parties. I also participated in summer youth programs where I was able to participate in a talent show and choreograph a dance for me and other youth to display in the talent show. Along with that, I also joined O’ Quinn Royal Gladiators Drum and Bugle Corps. Through this organization, I was able to participate in parades where I either twirled a rifle or carried a flag.

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***“I did not know why I was drawn to dance, music, singing, or***

***writing songs but I did know that I had to do it.”***

During my childhood, I did not know why I was drawn to dance, music, singing or writing songs but I did know that I had to do it. This is what I gravitated to when I wanted to be happy, or to escape life’s situations. This felt like my destiny.

After graduating from high school, I attended the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. I decided to pursue the performing arts again taking dance classes which included ballet, jazz, and modern dance every semester. Even though I was not a dance major, I felt a need to continue to pursue my interest in dancing. I also joined a dance company called the Omnimov Dance company, an African dance company as well as continue with secular dancing at college parties. My dean couldn’t tell from my college transcript if I was an engineering major or a dance major. All he knew was that I really enjoyed dancing, and he encouraged me to continue to do it as an outlet because majoring in Mechanical engineering at UIC was very challenging.

***“I receive Jesus Christ into my life and my life began to change.”***

At some point in college, I receive Jesus Christ into my life and my life began to change. I found that I was no longer investing time in attending parties or trying to pledge a sorority, instead, my focus was on graduating from college and learning about God. However, I did continue to take dance classes and to keep up with the secular dances.

When I graduated from college I return to Chicago and through a friend I learned about a church called Rock of Our Salvation Evangelical Free church. I became highly involved in that church and in seeking God. As my faith grew, I began to question the dance. I was no longer sure if dancing was pleasing to God. I became convinced that dancing was wrong. I decided that I needed to give up dancing if I was going to live for God. I approached my worship leader with my concern about the dance. My worship leader said to me, “My sister, you don’t have to stop dancing, you just need to change partners”.

***“God did not want me to give up the dance but to begin to dance for Him”***

I was in awe of what my worship leader had expressed to me. It really resonated in my spirit. I continue to reflect on the idea that I needed to change partners and continue to dance. At some point, I was convinced that God did not want me to give up the dance but to begin to dance for Him. I had no idea of how it would look or what it meant for me, but I felt a calling to dance for God.

That experience catapulted my journey in dancing for the Lord and using what God had given me for my pleasure to do for His purpose. This journey has not just given me purpose in God’s kingdom, but it has helped me to learn who God is and how God sees me. It has been a time of developing a relationship with God where I learn to seek him,

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to trust him, to walk in faith and to surrender to Him as I ministered through the platform of dance. God used the ministry of dance to draw me to Himself and this has been a spiritual experience with Him that goes beyond what I could ever imagine. As God has worked through me through the ministry of dance, I was able to pour into others and to be used by him to impact the kingdom with messages and expressions of His love, His power, His hope and His salvation. As I was finding my place in ministry, I also found my identity as a person.

***“God has taken me from glory to glory using the platform of dance ministry.”***

Even through God’s provisions and how He has continued to guide and bless me through the many years of ministering through the dance, there has been times where I have taken a sabbatical and even felt like quitting. During those times, I was reminded that God was with me. I also remember the covenant that I establish with God after I was once told by my worship leader, ‘Don’t stop dancing, just change partners. So, through the years, through the hurts, through the insecurities, through the aging, through the spiritual attacks, through the loneliness, and through health issues and other challenges, I stayed in the race. As a result, God has taken me from glory to glory through the platform of dance ministry.

Do you know that what God has done in my life through serving in the ministry of dance, He also wants to do the same for you? You may not be a dance minister, but God has a ministry for you. God wants to work in and through you in ways you cannot imagine but only experience when you serve Him in ministry. It was once said by a guest speaker on Moody Bible Institute radio station that “Christianity works best when it is an action”. God has not just called us to just be known as a Christian but to serve in the kingdom. **James 2:14-26** says, **“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

***“Are you sure that you are on the path that God wants you to be on?”***

In my book, I take you through the process of serving in ministry using my experience of serving in dance ministry for many years. In my book, I share aspects of my journey of serving in ministry as I highlight areas of ministry that are most relevant. May God allow this book to be a blessing to you and to inspire you to find your purpose and get started in ministry or inspire you to continue to thrive in the ministry God has called you to. Please know that every ministry experience is not the same, but it is important to get an understanding of the process of ministry as you learn what you should be doing and how you should be doing it. There is always more to do, more to learn and more to experience in God’s kingdom. Are you sure that you are on the path that God wants you to be on? May my book help you to find God’s will in ministry for you.

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**Chapter 1**

**Finding Your Purpose**

**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,**

**which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10 NIV**

What desires and interest has God placed in you? What brings you pleasure? What do you enjoy doing? What did you do for fun as a child, and it kept you so engaged that you found yourself doing it frequently? What is it that you have found great enjoyment in doing and you have become skillful at it, or you are interested in becoming skillful at it? What is it that you do because you feel the need to do it? Whatever that thing is, it is connected to your purpose. God has created us all with purpose.

When I started dancing for the Lord, I had no idea that God was going to use me to lead a dance ministry. I never knew that I would one day lead the dance ministry at my church with children, then lead the dance ministry with adults and eventually lead the ministry with teenagers. I never knew that I would be teaching dance and spiritually pouring into the lives of others. I never knew but God knew**.** In fact, all my interest that I had as a child, was now being used for God’s purpose. I was not only leading the dance ministry, but I was also singing praise and worship with an ensemble and writing praise and worship songs during my spare time. **Jeremiah 29: 11** says**, For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (NIV)**

God is not partial, when it comes to people. He wants to use everyone, but we must find our purpose. If we don’t see our purpose, then we must be alert as to how God is moving in our lives. We must be in tuned for when God brings our purpose into full fruition. Nothing that happens in our lives is coincidental. Everything happens for a reason. **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Rom 8:28 NIV**

I was called to the ministry of dance. Some of you may be called to ushering or operating the sound system in your church or doing the church announcements or preaching or even writing a book. Some of you may even be called to ministries outside the church like the prison ministry, or providing home care for the sick or ministry through your job or serving as a missionary in another country. What is it that God has prepared or is preparing you to do? **Matt 7:7-8 says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (NIV)**