

## **A Born Identity**

### **My Story of Birth, Early Childhood, and the Adult Identity It Created**

#### **Chapter One The Character I Built**

The first thing I usually noticed when I drove into a yard was the silence.

People would often be standing along the fence line or near the stable doors, watching the horse they had called me to see. The animal might be pacing the field, pulling back on the rope, or standing with its head high and its body tight with tension. Sometimes it had already injured someone. Sometimes it had simply become impossible for its owner to handle.

When I stepped out of the vehicle the atmosphere was often heavy with expectation.

People had usually tried many things before calling me. Different trainers, different techniques, sometimes force, sometimes patience. By the time I arrived they were often standing there hoping that somehow I would see something they had missed.

I would spend a few minutes watching the horse.

Horses respond to what they feel in the bodies of the humans around them. They notice tension, hesitation, calmness and confidence long before a person says a word.

If someone approached a horse carrying anxiety, the animal reacted immediately. If someone arrived with steadiness and clarity, the horse often settled without a struggle.

My work was never about controlling the horse. It was about changing the atmosphere around it. An ability that did not seem to extend into my own life.

Most of the time the solution was simple. Slow the moment down. Let the horse feel that nothing was about to overwhelm it, and lead the situation calmly rather than forcing it.

When that happened something in the animal softened. The tension in its body eased and the situation that had once seemed impossible suddenly became manageable.

Over the years this ability became the centre of my work.

For most of my adult life I believed I was a man who had built his life carefully and well. I was strong, capable, confident and independent. I worked with horses, and in that world my name carried respect. People described me as a horse whisperer and I specialised in equine podiatry. I travelled, taught, trained horses and helped owners understand animals that others struggled with.

From the outside it appeared that I had found exactly where I belonged.

It was work I loved. Being around horses felt natural to me. In their presence the constant movement of the human world seemed to quieten. Time slowed, conversations softened and the body found a different rhythm.

Through compassionate leadership and understanding, guiding an anxious horse towards becoming a calm and trusted partner was always a heartfelt thing to do.

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Before that life with horses had fully taken shape I spent time working as a royal gamekeeper at Sandringham Estate.

That environment carried its own discipline. The land demanded attention, the animals demanded awareness and the work required a steady presence. You learned to notice small changes, the shift of movement in the distance, the sound of something unusual in the hedgerow, the wind suddenly changing direction.

The habits formed there stayed with me long after I moved on.

As the years passed my life became increasingly centred around horses and the people who cared for them. I travelled often, moving between places, working with different animals and teaching owners how to understand what their horses were trying to communicate. One place led to another, another yard, another field, another set of stables somewhere else.

I rarely stayed anywhere for very long.

At the time it never seemed unusual. Movement felt natural to me. If a place no longer felt right I packed up and left. If another opportunity appeared somewhere else I drove there. The road was always available and the decision to move was always mine.

Financially my life followed a similar pattern. There was always just enough to continue, to keep the work going. Yet it rarely grew beyond that. The balance seemed to settle into a strange equilibrium where things continued without ever becoming firmly secure.

Again, at the time it felt normal. Many people who work with animals live that way, moving where the work takes them and following the rhythm of seasons, clients and opportunities.

From the outside the identity I carried appeared solid. I knew what I did. I understood the world I worked in. People came to me because they trusted my experience. I stood comfortably in that role.

Yet there were small habits in the way I moved through the world that I rarely questioned.

In conversations I often listened more than I spoke, taking a moment to read the atmosphere before deciding what to say. Around unfamiliar people I noticed small changes others seemed to miss, shifts in tone, posture or mood that hinted when a conversation might turn uncomfortable.

Around authority figures my attention sharpened further. I tended to notice their arrival before others did, sensing the subtle change in a yard or workplace when someone important entered the space.

At the time I simply thought of it as awareness.

Relationships carried their own careful balance. When things were calm and steady I could be warm, supportive and present. If someone close to me became anxious or upset my instinct was to calm the situation quickly, to bring the conversation back to something manageable.

If that emotion turned toward me something different happened.

Unaware of a fear of conflict with women, a simple irritated projection of not doing something 'right', would be enough. My body would grow quiet. Words became harder to find. A coldness appeared that made it difficult to remain fully present. Eventually I would withdraw, sometimes leaving the situation entirely, sometimes staying but closing down inside.

Intimacy followed similar patterns. When closeness unfolded gradually and under my control it felt safe. If emotional intensity rose suddenly, a subtle alarm appeared in my body before I had time to think about it.

The easiest place for my body to settle was often when I was alone.

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Trimming a horse's foot quietly in a field, walking across land in the early morning, driving between places with the road stretching ahead, these moments carried a calmness that rarely appeared in crowded rooms or complicated conversations.

None of this seemed unusual at the time.

Everyone develops habits for navigating the world. The life I had built appeared successful enough and the work I loved continued to grow. Horses responded to me, people trusted my experience and the years moved forward in a steady rhythm of travel, training and teaching.

Looking back now I can see that my life was organised more carefully than I realised then.

At the time I simply called it freedom.

It would take many more years before I began to see the pattern that had been quietly shaping my life all along.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Boy Beneath the Man**

Before the life I later built with horses and the identity people eventually came to recognise, there was simply a boy beginning to discover the world outside the small structure of home.

Primary school had only just begun. Classrooms were busy places, full of movement and noise. Children were learning how to exist together in the same space, voices rising and falling as teachers tried to guide the constant energy of young minds.

At that age life still felt simple. Home, school and country walks with my dad on a Sunday with our dog called Sheba. The things that surrounded me seemed permanent in the way childhood quietly assumes they are. Parents existed in the background of everything like fixed points in the landscape. They were there when you woke in the morning, there when you returned home, part of the world without needing to be questioned.

I had only been at school for about a year when that sense of permanence changed.

I was six years old.

It was my first foreign holiday. We had travelled to France with friends and were staying on a campsite near the sea. I remember the excitement of being somewhere unfamiliar. The language sounded different, the surroundings felt new, and everything carried the sense that we had stepped briefly outside our ordinary life.

One day we were on the beach.

Some memories from childhood fade with time, but certain moments remain fixed with unusual clarity. I remember the wide stretch of sand, the open sky above the water, and the way the day suddenly shifted when my father collapsed on the sand holding his chest.

At first there was confusion among the adults around us. No one seemed to understand immediately what had happened. This was before the time of mobile phones, so when my mother realised something was seriously wrong she ran toward the cafés and restaurants along the beachfront to find a telephone.

My sister and I ran after her.

I remember the urgency in her movement as she flicked off her flip flops. As children we followed, sensing that something important was happening without fully understanding it.

Eventually an ambulance arrived.

1.

The paramedics worked quickly. I stood nearby watching as they lifted my father onto a stretcher and carried him toward the back of the vehicle. My mother climbed inside the ambulance with him.

Just before the doors closed she leaned toward me and my sister and told us not to worry. She said everything would be alright and that she and my dad would be back later.

Then the doors shut.

The ambulance drove away down the road and disappeared from view.

Later that night my mother returned to the campsite in a taxi.

By that time I had fallen asleep in the tent. I remember being woken gently in the dark and seeing her face as she told me that my dad was not coming home and that he had died.

For a child there is no clear way to process a moment like that. Something that had always been there has simply disappeared.

In the days that followed arrangements were made for us to return home.

The company my father worked for organised a private plane to bring us back to England. I remember boarding the aircraft with my mother and sister, aware that something unusual was happening but not fully understanding the details.

Later I learned that my father's body was travelling home beneath us in the small hold of the plane.

It was the first time I had ever been in an airplane.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **The Aftermath**

When we returned home, life did not stop.

The same classrooms were waiting and the playground was filled with children running across it during break times. Teachers continued their lessons as though the rhythm of the school had never changed.

From the outside everything looked exactly the same.

But something inside me had shifted.

Other boys still had fathers who collected them from school or stood watching from the side of sports fields. Fathers remained part of the ordinary structure of their lives.

Mine had disappeared from that structure overnight.

Without really thinking about it, the way I moved through the world began to change.

In the playground I often found myself sitting slightly apart from the other children, watching them before deciding whether to join in. Their games seemed unpredictable. Groups formed and dissolved quickly. One moment they were laughing together, the next arguing loudly.

From the edge it was easier to understand what was happening.

Not long after my father died another change arrived. The large house we had lived in could no longer be kept. Without him my mother could not afford to maintain it.

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Eventually we had to leave.

We moved to another village and, with that move, something else shifted quietly in the background of our lives. The financial stability that had once existed was gone. My mother worked hard to keep everything going, but money became something that had to be managed carefully.

As children we did not discuss these realities openly, yet they were present in the atmosphere of the house.

School continued. Life moved forward.

But the boy who walked back through the school gates after my father died was not quite the same boy who had left for that holiday in France.

By the time I reached high school the social world around me had become far more complicated. Friendships shifted constantly. Attention moved between boys and girls. Emotions filled classrooms and corridors with an intensity that seemed easy for some people to navigate.

For me it often felt uncertain.

Interactions with other boys carried a tension I could not easily explain. Attention from girls made me nervous rather than confident. Situations that seemed simple for others required careful navigation.

At the time I never questioned why any of this was happening. I simply continued growing up.

But more and more often I found myself doing the same thing in the playground.

Standing slightly apart, watching the other children.

## **Chapter Four Growing Into the Character**

The habit of watching people before stepping into a situation stayed with me as I grew older.

Through my teenage years and into early adulthood I often found myself doing the same thing I had done in the playground as a child, observing first, understanding the atmosphere of a room before deciding how to move within it.

At the time I never questioned it.

By the time I left school that way of moving through the world had become natural.

Situations were easier to manage when I could read them first. People revealed themselves in small ways if you paid attention. Tone of voice, posture, the way someone moved when they entered a room. All of it carried information.

I did not think of it as a skill at the time. It simply felt like awareness.

My early working life moved toward the countryside and the world of land and animals. Eventually I found myself working as a gamekeeper at Sandringham. The estate carried a long tradition, and the work demanded discipline, attention, and a steady presence. Days began early and often ended long after the light had faded.

It suited me.

Out there, surrounded by open land rather than crowded classrooms or noisy social spaces, the tension that often lived quietly inside my body seemed to settle. Walking through fields in the early morning or standing still long enough for wildlife to move naturally around you created a different pace of life.

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Small changes in the landscape told you what was happening and paying attention kept you connected to the natural world around you.

Looking back now, I can see how easily that work blended with the way my mind already moved through life.

My days at Sandringham came to an end and I moved on to another estate, continuing my role as a gamekeeper. For one reason or another I did not stay there long and eventually left the position. For a while I moved between temporary jobs before finally finding some footing when a friend and I started a fencing and construction business. It was the beginning of a period where I turned my attention toward the material world. The business was very successful, yet it never quite satisfied the restless curiosity that continued moving quietly inside me.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Voice**

My life followed a path that felt ordinary enough. I worked, spent time with friends, and moved through the routines that most people accept as the natural direction of adulthood. On the surface nothing about my life suggested that anything unusual was about to happen.

Yet somewhere in the background of my mind a quiet curiosity had begun to grow.

I found myself questioning things that most people seemed to take for granted. Why did everyone appear to be chasing the same goals? Money, success, relationships, happiness. The details differed from person to person, yet the direction always seemed the same.

One evening those questions surfaced with unusual clarity.

I had gone to a pub with a small group of friends. It was a normal night, the kind of gathering people have countless times without ever remembering much about it afterwards. Music played softly in the background. Conversations rose and fell across the room. Glasses clinked against wooden tables while people laughed and talked about their lives.

At some point the others drifted away from the table for a few minutes, leaving me sitting alone with my drink.

As I looked around the room something began to capture my attention.

A man standing alone at the bar stared into his pint with a heavy expression, as though he carried the weight of something no one else in the room could see. At another table a woman laughed briefly while reading something on her phone, only for the smile to fade almost immediately when the moment passed. Across the room a group of young men were laughing loudly while trying to impress a group of girls nearby.

The contrast between those moments struck me.

Some people looked happy.

Others clearly were not.

What actually creates happiness?

The thought stayed with me as I sat there.

Then a memory surfaced unexpectedly from my childhood. I saw myself running through woodland with my first dog, Sheba. Sunlight moved through the trees as I chased her through the forest, laughing without any reason other than the simple joy of the moment.

And suddenly something became clear.

1.

The laughter I remembered from that moment had not been something I had learned. No one had taught me how to laugh. It had simply been there naturally.

The realisation arrived with surprising force.

Happiness is already present within us. External events merely trigger what is already there.

As that understanding formed, something extraordinary began happening inside my body.

At first it was only a faint sensation rising through my feet, a warmth that slowly moved upward through my legs. Within seconds the feeling grew stronger, moving through my torso and rising toward my head with a powerful intensity that I could not explain.

A deep ringing sound began to fill my awareness, like the distant rattle of a big bell building inside my mind.

The sensation intensified rapidly.

Then suddenly the physical world seemed to fall away.

In the next instant I found myself looking down at my own body sitting in the chair below me.

For a brief moment confusion and shock filled my mind. The familiar sense of being located inside my body had disappeared completely. Instead there was a strange stillness, as though I existed somewhere outside the physical form I had always believed to be myself.

Then a voice appeared.

It did not come from anywhere in the room. It was not a sound heard through the ears. The voice seemed to arise directly within my own awareness, calm, steady, and unmistakably clear.

You are not dead.

The words arrived with complete certainty.

You are immortal.

The moment lasted only seconds.

Gradually the familiar sense of being inside my body returned and the ordinary sounds of the pub came back into focus around me. The same conversations continued. The same people sat at the same tables.

Nothing in the room had changed.

Yet something inside me had.

The words echoed in my mind long after the moment ended.

You are immortal.

At the time I had no idea what the experience meant or how deeply it would eventually reshape the direction of my life. But something had begun that night that could not be reversed.

The identity I had been living from no longer felt as solid as it once had.

And in the years that followed, that single moment would quietly guide me toward a path I had never imagined, a path that would eventually lead me into the world of horses.

1.  
**Chapter Six**  
**Horses**

Not long after the experience, the direction of my life changed in a way I could not have predicted. It did not arrive through planning or careful decision. It arrived via a few unorthodox experiences and in many ways it felt as though life itself had quietly redirected me.

The path led me to horses.

I had always been drawn to animals, but the kind of work I was about to embark on was very different by traditional standards. Looking back now, the connection carried a significance I did not yet understand.

So horses became the centre of my life.

Working with them required patience and attention in ways that were very different from most environments in the human world. Horses respond immediately to the state of the person standing beside them. They do not respond to explanations, reputation, or personality. They respond to the nervous system.

If someone approaches a horse with calmness, the animal settles. If tension or hesitation is present in the body, the horse notices instantly. The exchange happens without the layers of interpretation that exist between people.

At the time I simply experienced this as the natural honesty of animals.

Most often I saw horses that had become difficult to manage. Horses that refused to cooperate. Horses that reacted unpredictably. Horses that seemed nervous or aggressive for reasons no one could quite explain.

Often the assumption was that the horse itself was the problem.

Standing quietly beside those animals, I would watch before doing anything. Horses reveal a great deal if you give them time. The way they hold their body, the movement of their ears, the rhythm of their breathing, the small shifts in posture that appear before behaviour changes.

Very often the horse was responding to something that had not yet been noticed.

Sometimes the tension came from the person handling the horse. Sometimes it came from the environment around them. More often than not, the horse had simply learned to protect itself from confusion or inconsistency.

When those patterns changed, the horse often changed with them.

Over time word spread about the way I worked. People began bringing horses that others had struggled with. Owners arrived frustrated and exhausted from trying to control animals that seemed impossible to manage.

The work never began with force or complicated techniques.

Instead it began with observation.

Slowing everything down. Allowing the horse to settle. Paying attention to what was actually happening rather than immediately trying to correct it.

Often the shift happened quietly.

The horse relaxed.

The tension disappeared.

Connection returned.

1.

People began describing what I did in different ways. Some called it experience. Others called it instinct. A few used the phrase horse whispering, a description that eventually followed me wherever I worked.

But in truth what I was doing was much simpler than that.

I was paying attention.

The ability to read subtle changes in behaviour, posture, and atmosphere had been with me for as long as I could remember. It had first appeared when I was a boy sitting at the edge of the playground after my father died, watching other children before deciding how to move among them.

Later it appeared in my work as a gamekeeper, where paying attention to the smallest movements in the landscape could mean the difference between success and failure.

Around horses that same awareness became something else entirely.

Animals live in complete sensitivity to the nervous systems of the creatures around them. Their survival depends on reading tension, calmness, hesitation, and intention in a fraction of a second.

Working beside them day after day sharpened that awareness even further.

I began to notice how quickly a horse responded to the smallest change in the person beside it. A tightening in someone's body. A moment of uncertainty. A subtle shift in breathing.

The horse noticed everything.

What fascinated me most was how often people themselves were unaware of what they were communicating.

The animal responded not to what the person believed, but to what their nervous system was actually doing.

At the time I simply experienced this as part of the work I loved.

Horses offered a kind of honesty that rarely existed in human environments. They responded directly to presence. They did not pretend. They did not perform. They simply reflected what was there.

For many years I believed that was the entire story.

It would take much longer before I began to understand that something else had been happening all along.

Without realising it, I had spent decades learning to read the language of the nervous system.

And the deeper I looked into that language, the closer it began to lead me back toward the beginning of my own life.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The Hidden Beginning**

For most of my life I believed the story of who I was began in childhood.

The events I could remember seemed like the obvious starting points. School, my father's death, the changes that followed, and the habits that gradually shaped the way I moved through the world.

It took many years before I understood that the story had begun much earlier than that.

Long before I attended school. Long before any memory. Long before the identity I recognised as myself had formed.

1.

It began at birth.

Like many people, I had grown up without ever asking questions about the details of my arrival into the world. Birth was simply something that had happened in the past, an event recorded in photographs and family stories but rarely explored in any depth.

Only much later did the story of my birth begin to emerge.

What I learned revealed a sequence that looked very different when placed beside the life that followed.

During labour my mother began haemorrhaging.

The situation became dangerous very quickly. I was trapped inside her and could not be delivered naturally. The medical team had to act urgently and I was delivered by emergency caesarean.

From the very first moment of life the conditions surrounding my arrival into the world were marked by pressure, danger and urgency.

Immediately after birth I was separated from my mother while the doctors worked to stop the bleeding and stabilise her condition.

The body that had regulated my existence only moments earlier was suddenly gone.

For nine months life had unfolded within a complete biological system. Oxygen, nutrients, warmth and regulation had arrived through the umbilical cord connecting my body to hers. Every system of the developing organism existed within constant support.

Birth changes that arrangement instantly.

The umbilical cord is cut and the body that once existed within internal regulation must now survive in a world where regulation comes from outside.

For most newborns that transition is supported through immediate contact with the mother. The warmth, rhythm and presence that the body has known for months continues in a new form. Breathing stabilises. The heart rate settles. The nervous system begins adapting to the external world.

In my case that connection was interrupted.

While the doctors worked to save my mother's life I was removed from the environment that had regulated my body only moments earlier.

Later, when a nurse brought me to her, my mother reportedly said she did not want to see me.

It is impossible to know the full circumstances of that moment. She had just survived a life threatening haemorrhage. Shock, exhaustion and fear may have overwhelmed her completely.

But for a newborn there is no interpretation of circumstance. The body does not understand context or explanation.

It only experiences the sequence itself. Pressure. Emergency. Separation. Rejection.

Those sensations occur before language exists. Before memory forms. Before any conscious understanding of life appears.

They register directly in the nervous system.

1.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **The Guard**

For most of my life I believed the identity I carried was simply who I was.

The person others saw, the man who worked with horses, who moved through the world with confidence and independence, appeared solid and self contained. My thoughts, my reactions and my habits all seemed to belong naturally to that identity.

Yet as the years passed and the deeper patterns of my life began to reveal themselves, that certainty slowly began to change.

At first the shift was subtle. It appeared in small moments when I noticed my own reactions before I had time to explain them. The way my body would tighten when emotions became unpredictable. The instinct to step back from conflict or intensity. The quiet alertness that seemed to read people and situations before I fully entered them.

For many years I simply called that awareness.

But gradually another possibility began to emerge.

What if that awareness had been performing a function?

When I looked back across my life with that question in mind, a pattern began to appear.

I recognised it in childhood, in the playground after my father died, when it often felt easier to stand slightly apart and watch before joining in. I recognised it again in my work as a gamekeeper, where noticing small changes in the landscape was essential. Later it appeared in my work with horses, where the smallest shift in tension or calmness could determine the behaviour of the animal beside me.

In many ways that sensitivity had served me well.

It allowed me to navigate situations carefully. It helped me understand animals in ways that many people struggled to do. It shaped the life I built and the work I became known for.

But when I looked more closely another layer became visible.

The same sensitivity that helped me read situations also seemed to limit certain experiences.

Moments of emotional intensity often led to withdrawal. Situations that felt unpredictable created tension before I even understood why. Relationships sometimes carried an invisible boundary that I rarely crossed.

At first I assumed these reactions were simply part of human nature.

But the more carefully I observed them, the more they appeared to follow a clear direction.

They moved consistently away from situations that carried the possibility of emotional overwhelm or loss of control.

Gradually a strange possibility began to form.

What if the identity I had lived through for decades was not only a personality?

What if it had also been performing a role?

The idea did not arrive suddenly. It appeared slowly through observation, the way a pattern becomes visible when you watch something long enough.

My reactions were not random.

1.

They were organised.

They seemed to guide my life in ways that avoided a particular kind of vulnerability.

And once that possibility appeared, another thought followed naturally.

What if the identity I had always called “myself” was standing at the edge of something older?

Something that existed long before the life I remembered.

When I looked back through the story of my life the idea began to make sense in a way that surprised me.

The independence I valued so strongly.

The careful distance I maintained in emotional situations.

The instinct to read environments before stepping fully into them.

All of those behaviours had once appeared to be simple traits of character.

Now they began to look more like strategies.

Strategies designed to prevent something deeper from being revisited.

Something that had existed long before I understood what life was.

The closer I looked, the clearer it became.

The identity I had carried for most of my life had not only been organising my behaviour.

It had been protecting the nervous system from returning to the original vulnerability it encountered at the beginning of life.

In other words, the identity itself had been standing guard.

And the moment that possibility became visible another realisation quietly followed.

If the identity was the guard, then somewhere behind it something else must also exist.

Something the guard had been protecting for decades.

Something that had been present long before the character I believed myself to be had formed.

For the first time I began to understand that the person I had spent my life believing I was might only be the outer layer of a much deeper story.

And that story was still unfolding.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **The Surrender**

The discovery that the identity might be functioning as a guard did not arrive suddenly. It appeared slowly through observation, the same way many of the patterns in my life had revealed themselves. Yet there came a moment when observation alone was no longer enough.

Something deeper was required.

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By that point I had already experienced several moments in my life that could not easily be explained through ordinary understanding. The voice that had once spoken the words “You are immortal” had remained present in subtle ways, guiding and questioning, sometimes gently, sometimes with a quiet authority that felt impossible to ignore.

Over time I had come to recognise it not as a voice belonging to a person or personality, but as something else entirely. It seemed to arise from a place beyond the thinking mind, yet it spoke with a clarity that cut through thought completely.

One morning, as I sat outside drinking coffee and looking out across the fields, that voice returned.

The morning itself was quiet and ordinary. The sky was clear, the sun already warming the ground, and for a moment my mind rested in a calm that had become familiar in recent years.

Then the voice appeared again.

It did not shout or demand attention. It simply spoke.

The Son is about to rise in the East.

The words carried a sense of quiet certainty, though I did not yet understand their meaning. A moment later another instruction followed.

Start packing. You are leaving.

At the time there was no obvious reason to go anywhere. My life was settled. I had work, responsibilities, and the ordinary routines that filled most days. Yet something in the tone of the voice left no room for hesitation.

I began preparing to leave.

The instructions that followed were strangely precise. I was told to leave certain things exactly as they were, to pack only a small bag, and to step away from the ordinary patterns that normally accompanied any journey. Each action felt slightly unusual, yet I followed the guidance without fully understanding why.

Soon I found myself driving toward the coast.

The journey itself was short, only a few minutes, yet the quiet atmosphere inside the car carried a strange intensity.

When I arrived near the cliffs overlooking the sea, the voice guided me toward a small cove I had visited before.

The ocean stretched out wide and calm beneath the open sky.

Standing there on the edge of the water, I suddenly understood what was being asked of me.

It is time. Go into the sea.

The meaning arrived instantly.

I was not simply being asked to swim.

The moment carried a deeper implication, one that struck with overwhelming clarity.

For a brief moment fear appeared. Thoughts rushed through my mind about the people in my life, my family, the things I cared about, the future I had been building.

Then something inside me changed.

The fear softened and gave way to a strange and unexpected peace.

1.

If the voice was asking for everything, then everything would have to be surrendered.

Not only possessions or plans, but the identity itself.

The life I had built.

The person I believed myself to be.

Standing there at the edge of the sea, I realised that this moment required a complete letting go.

Slowly I walked into the water.

The waves moved gently against my body as the sea rose higher around me. The air was warm and the surface of the water reflected the wide open sky above.

I swam out for a while and then the final instruction arrived.

Lay back, close your eyes, and let go.

For a moment I paused, aware that the next action would represent something far greater than the physical act itself.

I closed my eyes, turned in the sea and relaxed back into the water.

Floating on the surface of the sea, I allowed everything to fall away.

All the things that had once seemed important. My work, my possessions, my relationships, my thoughts, my memories, even the identity I had carried for decades.

Everything was surrendered.

For a brief moment there was only stillness.

Then the natural reflex of the body returned and I found myself rising again, standing in the water and breathing the air of the ordinary world.

I was still alive.

The ocean moved quietly around me as the realisation settled.

The voice spoke again.

You were willing to surrender everything.

The meaning of the moment slowly became clear.

The surrender had not been about death.

It had been about the complete relinquishing of control.

The identity that had organised my life for so long had finally been placed down.

As I walked back toward the shore and sat quietly looking out across the water, a deep sense of peace settled through my body.

Nothing dramatic had changed in the external world.

From that moment onward, the life I had been living would begin to unfold in a very different way.

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What followed over the next nine years was not a sudden awakening or instant transformation.

It was a long and gradual dismantling.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **The Unravelling**

The surrender in the ocean felt like a single moment, yet what followed revealed that surrender rarely finishes in an instant.

At first very little appeared to change. I continued living my life, working, travelling, and interacting with people much as I had before.

The identity I had carried for most of my life did not collapse overnight. Instead it began to reveal itself piece by piece. Thoughts that were not really relevant to the moment would filter through my mind in quick concession. Situations appeared that exposed reactions I had never fully noticed before. Emotional responses surfaced with a clarity that made them difficult to ignore.

Gradually it became clear that life itself was guiding me backwards through the layers that had once formed my character.

It felt as though my life was being lived in reverse.

The identity I had spent more than forty years constructing did not disappear all at once. It slowly dismantled in the same sequence in which it had originally formed.

Experiences appeared that reflected earlier periods of my life. Situations repeated emotional patterns that had once seemed completely normal but now revealed themselves as responses the body had been organising for decades.

For years I believed my personality was simply the natural expression of who I was. I saw myself as strong, capable, confident and independent. From the outside that image appeared convincing enough.

Yet as the dismantling continued in reverse chronological order, another truth became visible beneath that surface.

Inside that confident character was a nervous system that rarely felt fully at ease.

There was a tightness, a protective anxiety in my body I had never fully acknowledged. A subtle pressure to remain prepared for what might happen next. A tendency to keep situations organised before they became unpredictable.

Deep-rooted fear had been present in ways I had not previously recognised.

Fear of life influenced my relationship with it.

Fear of people influenced my relationship with them.

Fear of both men and women.

These fears rarely appeared openly because the personality I had built was skilled at hiding and managing them. Situations were organised carefully. Vulnerability was avoided wherever possible. Control was maintained whenever it could be.

As that structure slowly loosened, the attachments and reactions surfaced one by one.

One of the clearest places this appeared was in relationships.

1.

For many years I struggled to understand why my intimate relationships eventually broke down. On the surface things often began well. I could be warm, supportive and attentive. When life felt calm and predictable I was capable of deep care and connection.

But eventually the same pattern would appear.

If the woman I was with became emotionally overwhelmed or dysregulated, something inside my body reacted immediately. The moment emotional intensity was directed toward me, a pressure appeared that was difficult to stay inside.

One evening that pattern became impossible to ignore.

We were driving together after a long day. She was upset about something that had happened earlier and the emotion was building quickly. Her voice grew louder as the frustration spilled out in sharp bursts of words.

The road was narrow and she was at the wheel.

As the tension rose my body began to tighten. My thoughts slowed. I could feel a familiar sensation building in my chest and stomach, a pressure that seemed to warn me that something dangerous was happening even though the situation itself was nothing out of the ordinary.

I tried to calm the moment. I spoke gently, hoping the atmosphere would soften.

Instead the emotion turned directly toward me.

The moment it did, my body shut down.

Words disappeared. My stomach churned. I stared ahead through the windscreen, aware that something inside me was trying to escape the situation entirely.

Later, looking back, I could see what had been happening.

A dysregulated woman directing strong emotion toward me had unconsciously always been one of my greatest threats. If at that moment I was also dependent on her in some way, even something as simple as her driving the car, the reaction in my body intensified dramatically.

The situation did not feel like an argument between two adults.

It felt threatening.

When moments like that happened repeatedly another one of my patterns appeared.

If the emotional intensity continued and I could not calm the situation, I would leave. Sometimes unexpectedly. I would escape to the woods to be alone, just as I had done as a child.

Sometimes it happened suddenly and I would return later. It has been known on the rare occasions, I would pack my things and disappear from the relationship entirely.

From the outside it could appear that I had simply walked away.

But internally something very different had taken place.

The pressure inside my body had reached a point where the only way to restore balance was to remove myself from the environment completely.

This pattern became especially painful when the woman I was with already carried wounds around abandonment. My withdrawal would trigger her fear of being left. That fear intensified her emotional reaction, which intensified the pressure in my body.

1.

The cycle fed itself.

Neither of us understood the deeper structure that was driving it at the time.

I began to notice that life itself became the guide and I was participating in the process.

My current experience would be reflecting earlier chapters of my life with surprising precision.

At one stage of my experience, I found myself living in a tent. At the time I didn't have much choice and it did actually feel like the right thing to do.

The vulnerability of sleeping outside, being alone in the temporary shelter, the uncertainty of the environment and not knowing what is happening with my life all echoed a strange familiarity.

It wasn't too many nights later that I was staring at the canvas of the tent when it all came rushing to the surface. Life had placed me here to mirror the night I had been told my father had died. The tears came as the realisation fully landed, along with the grief that I had never fully grieved.

As those protective layers crumbled, they created space for the past emotions and experiences they had been holding back to surface. These are just a few examples of the fortress my identity had built around itself.

Every realisation brought with it the quiet recognition that something I had believed myself to be was slowly coming to an end. The identity that had organised my life for decades had not only protected me, it had also given me a sense of who I was.

Old thoughts and reactions would dissolve and with them, the familiar sense of self that had once accompanied them. The confident man I believed myself to be, the independence I had relied on, the control I maintained in emotional situations, each of these parts and many more slowly revealed themselves as responses rather than foundations.

Seeing that clearly was not only liberating.

It was also painful.

At times the process felt so intense, it was like grieving the loss of a person I had lived with my entire life.

That person was me. Or at least the version of me I had believed myself to be.

The grief did not arrive all at once. It appeared in waves across those years, often following moments of recognition or emotional release. Something would dissolve and, in the quiet that followed, a deep sadness would surface as though the body itself was acknowledging the ending of an old structure that had once been necessary for survival.

Somewhere along the line, I understood that grief was a natural part of the dismantling.

The identity was not simply disappearing. It was being mourned.

Moments like that appeared again and again during those years.

Each one revealing another layer of the structure that had quietly organised my life for decades.

Life itself became the guide, and I was participating in the process.

My current experience would be reflecting earlier chapters of my life with surprising precision.

What would look like a new chapter of my life, was actually an old chapter to revisit.

1.

Without any effort on my part, shortly after I had pitched my tent I had an offer of a job and I found myself working under a male authority figure while living on site. My workplace and my home existed in the same environment. His movements, his arrival and departure, the subtle shifts in his mood stirred a tension inside my body that was difficult to ignore.

It reflected something from long ago. The atmosphere of my childhood home, my family dynamics and my relationship with my father before we went on the holiday in France.

Through the intensity of this process, and simply to maintain some sense of orientation, I often reminded myself that internally my life was moving backwards. By that stage I could sometimes sense what period of my past might be approaching next.

When the chapter with the male authority figure was coming to an end, another stage was already being woven.

This time I found myself working under the authority of a woman. First in the UK, then abroad.

The emotional intensity of that period revealed another layer of my nervous system reactions, particularly around female emotional states. By then I already sensed that this chapter was reflecting something connected to my relationship with my mother.

That phase was deeply challenging and rightly so, considering our relationship with our first caregiver is potentially the most important one.

Situations that appeared ordinary on the surface triggered powerful internal reactions that demanded attention. The body responded before the mind could explain what was happening.

Eventually, when abroad the pressure of that period became too much to continue. I felt close to collapse and realised I could not remain in that environment any longer.

So I ended that chapter of my life.

When it finished I retreated to a place that felt quiet and safe. A place that I have had connections with for nearly twenty years. Of anywhere on this planet, it is the one place that feels closest to home for me and for the first time in a long while the external intensity eased.

Eight and a half years had passed since the morning I surrendered my life to the ocean.

What appeared next would not arrive through thought or reflection.

It would arrive through the body itself.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **The Body Remembers**

During the years of dismantling, other patterns became visible. They showed me that the mind was not the only place where memories were stored. The body was remembering as well.

Throughout those years the process often followed a repeating cycle. Thoughts from the past would suddenly appear in my mind. Sometimes they arrived as brief flashes of memory. Other times entire scenes replayed themselves with surprising clarity.

If a particular thought carried emotional weight, the emotion surfaced immediately.

And when the emotion appeared, the body responded.

1.

Grief would rise through the inside of the chest. Fear would tighten the stomach. At times the reactions were so physical that it felt as though the body itself was remembering something long before the mind had developed words for it.

This process did not happen occasionally.

It was my life, with something happening almost every day.

For nearly nine years thoughts, emotions and physical reactions moved through my system in cycles like this.

Thoughts surfaced constantly, many of which were not necessarily connected with the present moment. They just continued to pass through my mind, as though they were being filtered.

Memories would surface, emotions were felt and the body would respond.

Once the particular emotion had moved fully through the system, the reaction settled and another layer appeared.

Over time I began to notice that these cycles often followed rhythms that existed beyond my own life.

The moon was the first pattern that became obvious.

Around the time of the new moon something would surface. A new layer of memory or emotion would rise into awareness. During the days that followed the experience would deepen.

By the time the full moon arrived whatever had surfaced often felt completely illuminated. The emotional charge connected to it would release and the layer would dissolve.

During the waning moon the intensity softened. Those days felt quieter, more restful, as though the system was integrating what had just moved through it.

Then the cycle would begin again.

The larger seasons of nature would mirror the process as well.

The Autumn leaf shedding was a great indication, and the process seemed to intensify during these months.

Even down to the heavier the rain fall the heavier the tears of release were.

The precision was incredible.

Winter drew everything inward. Life slowed down, distraction limited. The dismantling continued in a more contained space.

As Spring began to stir, it brought outer movement. Slowly to begin with, increasing as the earth thawed out. A new season and with it bringing new layers.

The Summer was always more manageable as it carried more energy. Emotional releases continued and the responses within the body were just as noticeable. However, I seemed to cope better. My body being more vibrant helped me cope better. In a similar way that other mammals respond to the seasons.

Alongside these cycles the body itself began revealing specific memories.

When the grief surrounding my father's death surfaced fully for the first time, triggered by a chance meeting with a male friend on a beach in France, I felt a powerful sensation deep in my chest, directly between my shoulder blades.

It was as though sharp thorns were lodged behind the heart.

1.

Each time the grief moved through me it felt as though those thorns were being slowly pulled out one by one.

The pain was sharp, but afterwards my breathing seemed a lot more relaxed.

When I saw my friend from my six year old self he had a remarkable likeness to my father. Not only in his looks but also his mannerisms.

During the stage of the process, while I was working under the male authority figure and living where I worked, a different physical sensation appeared.

This time the pain settled deep in the base of my body around the pelvic and perineum area.

The discomfort could be intense at times. Sitting or standing would trigger waves of sensation that seemed to radiate through the foundation of the body.

Looking back, it too reflected something older.

Family, authority and dependence.

The body was releasing memories connected to the earliest structures of life.

The deeper I went into this process, the deeper regions of my physical anatomy it seemed to affect.

There were two sayings I repeated numerous times to myself, one was 'Whatever it takes' the other was 'I can't take anymore of this'.

Yet, as I continued on this path, something still remained hidden beneath everything that had already been revealed.

## **Chapter Twelve**

### **The Illness**

It was the end of the summer 2025.

Over the previous three years I had worked under a male authority figure and faced many patterns connected to my early childhood home life. That was followed directly by working under a female authority figure. It was an incredibly challenging stage of the transformative process.

The long warm days were beginning to shorten and the air carried the first quiet hint that autumn was approaching.

This process, as hard as it can be, was familiar now, for years my life had revolved around it.

However, what appeared at the end of that summer was unlike anything that had come before.

Exactly a day after I had arrived alone in my safe and quiet space a strange irritation across the centre of my torso appeared.

At first it was subtle, only a mild sensitivity in the skin. Within a few days the sensation intensified. The nerves beneath the surface of the skin began to burn and ache.

Soon afterwards a rash appeared. Doctors later confirmed what it was. Shingles.

Of all the physical experiences that had appeared during the dismantling, this was by far the most intense. The illness lasted nearly two months, the nerve pain six months and the discomfort was stronger than anything I had previously experienced.

1.

The nerves across my torso felt constantly inflamed. Even the light pressure of clothing against the skin could trigger waves of discomfort.

At the same time another set of symptoms appeared inside the body.

My digestive system became unsettled. The abdomen bloated and digestion slowed in ways that felt deeply uncomfortable.

Everything seemed to centre around the same place.

The middle of the torso.

As the weeks passed it became impossible not to notice the location of the illness.

The rash had formed in a band around the exact region where, at the beginning of life, the umbilical cord had once connected me to my mother.

Now the body itself seemed to be directing my attention toward the beginning of the story.

By that point I already understood the circumstances surrounding my birth. The emergency delivery. The separation from my mother immediately afterwards. The sudden loss of the system that had regulated my body during pregnancy.

For most of my life those events had existed only as intellectual information.

But as the illness moved through my body the connection became impossible to ignore.

The centre of the body where the shingles appeared was the same place where that first separation had occurred.

The body seemed to be returning to the beginning.

Old thoughts, memories and sensations continued to surface with extraordinary clarity during the illness and over the following months.. They were all connected somehow with the way I was born and everything seemed to trace itself back toward the same origin.

The separation.

The vulnerability.

The sudden loss of regulation.

As always, life created the experience to support what was going on at the exact moment necessary.

By now my defences were very weak, which allowed something into my awareness that had remained hidden for years.

I had learned to suppress my emotions rather than express them. Holding them inside felt safer than allowing them to surface.

One afternoon a family friend directed anger and frustration toward me during a conversation. We had once been in an intimate relationship and at that particular moment I was reliant on her. The tone of her voice, the tension in her body and the emotional charge triggered something familiar inside me.

Except this time something else came to the surface.

For a moment I felt a surge of tears and sadness rising unexpectedly in my chest and throat.

The sensation surprised me.

1.

My initial reaction was to hold the tears back. The conversation ended and I held it together until she dropped me off at the airport.

When I arrived back home later that day and finally felt safe, the pressure returned.

This time there was nothing holding it in place.

I sat quietly and the tears came suddenly, far stronger than I expected. They arrived with a depth of grief that I had by now become accustomed to as I mourned the end of yet another part of my identity. There was also a strong recognition that something in my body was finally releasing the tears I had never allowed myself to cry as a child, perfectly timed and linked with when my mother's emotions had overwhelmed me.

The grief moved through my body for a long time that evening.

The puzzle wasn't solved or finished, but this moment felt really significant and gradually I began to see one understanding that became undeniable.

The identity I had believed myself to be for most of my life was not simply psychological.

It had formed as a survival response within the nervous system.

The personality that organised my life had been protecting the body from ever returning to the vulnerability it experienced at the beginning.

Seeing that did not feel like the end of the journey. It felt like seeing, for the first time, the foundation from which the journey had begun.

The identity I had lived from was not who I was.

It was a physiological reaction of the nervous system that had begun at birth.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **The Realisation**

For most of my life I believed the person I experienced myself to be was simply who I was.

My thoughts, reactions and preferences all appeared natural and unquestionable. Identity felt solid and personal, the centre from which life unfolded.

Only after the long dismantling of the previous years did something different become visible.

The identity I had spent decades living through had not formed randomly. It had grown from the earliest conditions of my life.

Before thought or memory existed, the body had already encountered its first experiences of life. Those conditions were not interpreted through language or belief. They were registered directly within the nervous system.

From that moment onward the organism adapted.

Over time the mind developed around that adaptation. Thoughts, behaviours and beliefs organised themselves in ways that helped the body navigate the world it had entered.

For most of my life I experienced those patterns as personality.

Yet during the years of this dismantling something else gradually appeared.

1.

Certain situations consistently triggered the same responses in my body. Emotional unpredictability created tension. Intimacy stirred unease. Dependence felt threatening. Environments filled with strong emotion often caused me to withdraw before I had even understood why.

I interpreted these reactions as personal characteristics, yet it was now clear that something deeper was organising them.

Now I could feel it more clearly. The nervous system was responding before thought, because thought itself had been part of the protection that was now dismantled enough to see.

The patterns shaping my behaviour were not simply ideas or beliefs. They were responses formed long before conscious memory.

Seeing that changed the way I understood my life.

What I had believed to be my identity had not appeared as a free creation of the mind. It had grown from the way the nervous system first adapted to life.

The behaviours I once described as strengths or weaknesses were expressions of that adaptation. Independence. Caution around emotional environments. The instinct to stabilise situations before they became unpredictable.

During the dismantling those patterns revealed themselves as responses rooted in the body.

This realisation did not arrive as a theory.

It emerged slowly through experience. Through years of watching reactions surface in the body before thought could interpret them. Through noticing how emotional environments affected my nervous system immediately. Through recognising how the same patterns repeated across relationships, work and daily life.

Eventually the pattern became impossible to dismiss.

The identity I believed myself to be had been organised around the earliest conditions of my life.

Seeing this did not bring anger or blame. If anything, it brought sadness and grief along with the realisation.

The nervous system had simply been doing what it was designed to do. It adapted to the conditions it encountered and organised behaviour in ways that helped the organism navigate the world.

For most of my life I believed I was simply living it.

Now I could see that much of that life had been shaped by a beginning I had never consciously remembered.

That understanding opened a wider question.

If identity can form in this way, how many other lives might also be organised around the same unseen beginning?

Every human life enters the world through birth.

Yet we rarely pause to consider how those earliest conditions might influence the way the body later experiences the world. Instead we grow up believing identity begins with personality, memory and conscious choice.

My own life had revealed something different.

The foundation had been laid much earlier.

A Born Identity is the name I have given to that discovery.

The person I believed myself to be had never been the starting point. It had been the response.

1.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

### **A Born Identity**

The winter was coming to an end and the first signs of spring had started to move.

With it, a very important detail came to light.

The same alertness that had once watched the world so carefully was also the instrument that observed the process itself. It watched thoughts as they surfaced, noticed the reactions of the body, and followed the emotional movements that appeared and released over time.

The guard that had once organised my life externally had quietly turned inward.

For years it tracked every stage of the unraveling. Until eventually the deeper structure behind those patterns was exposed.

Behind the personality was the nervous system.

And the nervous system had been organised around something far older than the character I had built through adulthood.

It had been originally organised around my birth.

When the details of that beginning finally came into view, the structure of my life began to make sense. The emergency surrounding my arrival into the world, the separation from my mother immediately after delivery, and the sudden loss of the biological regulation that had supported my body during pregnancy shaped the way my nervous system first encountered life.

From that beginning the body adapted.

Over time the mind organised itself around that adaptation, forming the identity I had believed to be myself.

When the illness later brought my attention directly to the centre of my body, the place where the umbilical cord had once connected me to my mother, the final piece of the story became visible.

The foundation of my identity was not psychological.

It was physiological.

The character I had built throughout my life had been organising itself around a reaction recorded within the nervous system at birth.

When that realisation became clear enough something else happened naturally.

The guard stepped down.

The alertness that had watched every movement of the process for nine years simply had nothing left to observe. Once the structure it had been protecting became visible, the work it had been performing for decades quietly ended.

Seeing that did not feel as dramatic as some of my earlier experiences.

It felt quite simple. Yet another wave of grief and mourning followed.

The long journey of dismantling had revealed the beginning.

1.

The identity I believed was myself had been the response to the beginning of my life.

A Born Identity is the recognition that the identity many of us believe to be our true self may begin with the way the nervous system first adapts to life.

For most of my life I did not know that my story began there.

Now I can see that everything which followed grew from that beginning.

The next morning I stand watching the horses in a quiet field.

The grass is still damp from the night. A faint breeze moves through the hedgerow at the edge of the pasture. The horse lowers its head for a moment, then lifts it again and turns slightly toward me.

For most of my life my body would have noticed every movement immediately. The shift of weight. The direction of the ears. The smallest change in the animal or the environment around us.

Without thinking, something inside me would have begun scanning.

But this time nothing moves inside me.

The horse stands quietly a few feet away. Its breathing is slow and steady. A bird crosses the field behind us and disappears into the trees.

The field is the same. The horse is the same. The world around me has not changed.

Yet the body standing here is different.

The watchfulness that once organised my life is simply not there.

There is no sense of needing to read the moment or prepare for what might happen next. The quiet that fills the field is the same quiet that now fills my body.

For the first time I am simply standing here.

And that is enough.