

Excerpt from Chapter 2 of “You Can Always; Begin Again”:

“When Your Light Goes Out”

“Fear is an illusion. It is the shadow we cast when we forget who we really are.” — from It Is Up To You, Meditation 33

I remember the exact moment my light went out.

Not metaphorically. Literally.

I was sitting in my truck in the driveway after a long day, engine still running, staring at the garage door like it was a million miles away. My hands were on the wheel, but I couldn't make myself turn the key off. I couldn't make myself go inside. I couldn't make myself do anything.

The man who once stormed beaches in training, who led Marines through life and service, who preached “Cast Your Light” to anyone who would listen... was completely dark inside.

The light was gone.

And for the first time in my life, I didn't know how to get it back.

That is what this chapter is about — the moment when the light you've always counted on simply disappears. Not because you're weak. Not because you failed. But because life, trauma, depression, anxiety, loss, or the slow grind of carrying invisible weight finally caught up and flipped the switch.

I know you've been there too.

Maybe you're there right now.

You go through the motions. You show up for work. You smile for your family. You post the motivational quote. But inside? Nothing. Just a heavy, gray fog where your fire used to be.

Meditation 33 in *It Is Up To You* calls it straight: Fear Is An Illusion.

But when you're in it, it doesn't feel like an illusion. It feels like the only real thing left.

Fear tells you the light is gone forever. Fear tells you this is who you are now. Fear tells you the semicolon has finally become a period.

Fear lies.

Here is what I learned in my own darkness — the lesson that saved my life and the one I want branded on your heart right now:

The light never actually left you.



Excerpt from Chapter 14 of “You Can Always; Begin Again”:

“Humility As Second Sight”

“Humility is second sight — the clear, calm vision that only appears when the ego finally steps aside and you see yourself, and the world, exactly as they are.” — from *It Is Up To You*, Meditation 5:

“Humility As A Second Sight”

I used to believe humility was weakness.

I am a Marine. I had earned my rank through sweat, blood, long nights on post, and hard lessons learned the hard way. I had led Marines in military service and on the parade deck. I believed real strength meant never showing a crack in the armor, never admitting I didn't have all the answers, and never asking for help.

Humility felt like lowering my head. It felt like admitting defeat. It felt like something soft men did — not Gunnery Sergeants.

I was wrong.

Humility is not weakness. It is second sight.

It is the clear, calm vision that only comes when the ego finally gets out of the way and you see yourself — and the world — exactly as they truly are.

When I finally embraced Meditation 5 and made humility my second sight, everything in my life began to change.

I stopped pretending I had to be unbreakable every single second. I stopped pretending I had it all figured out. I stopped pretending the valley hadn't humbled me to my core.

And in that honest surrender, I gained something far more valuable than my old pride ever gave me: I gained clarity.

Humility let me see the weight I was carrying without shame. It let me see my own thoughts without defensiveness. It let me see other people's pain without judgment. It let me see the next 30-inch step without needing it to look impressive to anyone else.

This is the daily practice that keeps The Practice alive.

Excerpt from Chapter 23 of “You Can Always; Begin Again”:

“Begin Again – Every Single Day”

“The most sacred practice is not the one you do once in a moment of inspiration. It is the one you return to every single day — choosing, again and again, to begin. This is how the light becomes eternal.” — from *It Is Up To You*, Meditation 365 (final meditation)

I have taken the 30-inch step more times than I can count.

Some days it felt like victory — chest out, shoulders back, the kind of step that makes you feel like a Marine again. Some days it felt like pure survival — legs heavy, mind loud, just putting one foot in front of the other while the weight tried to drag me back into the valley. Some days it felt like nothing at all — quiet, ordinary, almost invisible — yet still the most important thing I did that day.

But I kept taking it.

Because this is what I have learned after walking through the Valley, making the Decision, living The Practice, and stepping fully into The Light:

The real power is not in the dramatic breakthrough. The real power is in the daily return.

Begin again — every single day.

Not perfectly. Not without struggle. Not without days when the old voices try to crawl back on post and tell you the sentence really is over this time.

Just honestly. Consistently. Relentlessly.

This is the final and most important chapter of the book because it is the only one that never ends.

You have done the work. You have faced the weight. You have claimed the semicolon. You have embraced the enemy within. You have left the safe shore. You have made the Decision. You have armed yourself with willpower, turned want into ironclad intention, surrendered what you cannot control, guarded your mind, practiced daily forgiveness, chosen humility as second sight, built resilience in uncertainty, lived as a thank you, listened to the quiet law within, become a lighthouse, learned to shine bright even

when it burns, begun building an uncontained legacy, and started walking with light in the world.

Now you do it all again tomorrow. And the day after that. And the day after that.

This is Stoic Spirituality in its purest form — not a destination you reach, but a path you walk every single day for the rest of your life.

I still begin again every morning.

