

Praise for
INSTINCT

“T.D. Jakes has taken his trademark teaching from the pulpit and delivered it straight to readers in the pages of this inspiring book. He’s a spiritual leader, humanitarian and educator who has a special talent for bringing out the best in others. INSTINCT provides practical advice that will inspire many to embrace a new path on their way to leading extraordinary lives.”

—Debra L. Lee, Chairman &
CEO, BET Networks

“With today’s pressure to conform, whether to protect ourselves or fit in, finding our individuality and purpose falls on our priority lists. But to stand out and succeed, we have to know who we are and where our strengths lie. Bishop T.D. Jakes’ newest book gives real world advice on how to look within yourself and pull out that inner voice, those instincts, and direct them to a facet of life that is best for you. Bishop Jakes has done it again.”

—Dr. Phil McGraw, Nationally syndicated
television host and #1 *New York Times*
bestselling author

“Again Bishop T.D. Jakes releases potential within us that enables us to excel and succeed. In this book he shares the awesome strategies by which his spectacular accomplishments have come to past. Read and succeed!”

—Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.,
Senior Pastor of West Angeles Church

“We can always count on a word from God through Bishop Jakes that will not only inspire us but that will speak growth to our souls.”
—Tyler Perry

“One of the nation’s most popular evangelists—and quite possibly the smartest.”
—*USA Today*

“Bishop Jakes is a spiritual warrior who is a master of meeting mankind eye to eye. He is a global teacher whose insights and leadership serve the progressiveness of all people.”

—Steadman Graham, bestselling author,
speaker, and entrepreneur

“Bishop T.D. Jakes is an anointed leader whose leadership, integrity, passion, and devotion transforms.”

—Ron Kirk, former mayor of Dallas

“Bishop T.D. Jakes was called to ministry. He was also born to a legacy of entrepreneurship. That he has followed his instincts in uniquely expressing his combination of calling and talent says everything you need to know about T.D. as both an inspirational faith leader and exceptional business leader. His example continues to influence and impact the Black Enterprise audience, and me personally. T.D. has ample reason to trust his instincts and we are equally and as confidently motivated to read his so-titled new book. If you are serious about fulfilling your own calling, this is a must-read.”

—Earl G. Graves Jr., President and
CEO of Black Enterprise

INSTINCT

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Woman, Thou Art Loosed!

He-Motions

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Can You Stand to Be Blessed?

Let It Go: Forgive So You Can Be Forgiven

INSTINCT

The Power
to Unleash
Your Inborn Drive



T.D. Jakes



New York Boston Nashville

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I would like to dedicate INSTINCT to the TDJ Enterprise staff and team who allowed me to learn to lead while leading them. To the Potter's House family—your hunger to know drove me to dig deeper in life. To my many friends who challenged me, inspired me, prayed for me, and encouraged me along the way. I always tried to make sure you knew who you were and your value to me.

To my loving wife, Serita, and my five gifted children, Jamar, Jermaine, Cora, Sarah, and Dexter. To my siblings, Ernest and Jacqueline. You are all my family, I love you dearly! I've learned so much from you all about life and love and what matters most. I'm sure I couldn't have survived without you giving me a reason to grow on! Thank you for giving me the gift of having you in my life!



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INSTINCT



CHAPTER 1



Instinct Has a Rhythm

Our instincts are the treasure map for our soul's satisfaction. Following our instincts can make the crucial distinction between what we are good *at*—our vocation or skill set—and what we are good *for*—the fulfillment of our purposeful potential. When you're truly engaged with your life's calling, whether in the boutique, the banquet hall, or the boardroom, you rely on something that cannot be taught.

I'm convinced that our instincts can provide the combination we need to align our unique variables with our callings and release the treasure within us. When harnessed, refined, and heeded, our instincts can provide the key to unlocking our most productive, most satisfying, most joyful lives.

We often recognize people who seem to thrive by instinct. Fashion designers who do what they do beyond

the training they received, with a flair for the latest trends that's inherent and instinctive. Interior decorators and others in the graphic arts may wield this gift as well, but they are not the only ones. Athletes in the "zone," or investors with a keen sense of timing, performers with the courage to audition for a role outside their fans' expectations. They all know what it means to function by their own unique internal compass.

If you have ever had the privilege of working with someone like this, then you know they can take the mundane and make it magical. They can take the most simplistic equipment and produce the most superlative results. Often they maximize their training with their unique flair. No matter what you call it, the truly gifted simply have that extra something that seemingly others don't have or don't tap into the way they should.

Unfortunately, much of what I see today isn't about fulfilling one's true potential as much as it is about appearing to fulfill what other people expect. Too many people want the appearance of winning rather than the practices and hard work that create a true champion. They mistake the prize for the art of winning and will ultimately buy a trophy without ever running a race. They didn't take the class; they bought the diploma. They aren't successful; they just have the props. They aren't driven to achieve something; they just bust their gut to appear busy to everyone around them.



The irony is what these people fail to realize. When you're living by instinct, then you will naturally enhance everything and everyone around you. In other words, success will come naturally! When both your intellect and instincts are aligned, then producing the fruits of your labors brings satisfaction beyond measure.

Now, it will still require hard work and dedication on your part, but the internal satisfaction will fuel your desire to achieve even larger dreams. Based on the fact that we are all inherently creative people, if we are in touch with our instincts, then we will naturally increase our endeavors. When you don't become fixated on winning the prize or appearing successful, and instead pursue your passions, then you will discover the fulfillment that comes from living by instinct.

Feel the Rhythm

Consider this: scientists tell us that even our cells have instincts. Imagine my amazement when I spoke with physicians who revealed the way our physical cells operate. They say even our cells function based on what has been genetically programmed within them. Instinct is interwoven into the very fiber of our DNA.

We all begin as a single cell, a product of an egg and a sperm. They unite to form a zygote, the result of the fertilized egg, the single cell that will evolve from a



human *forming* to become a human *being*. This new cell undergoes a series of rapid divisions that produce a blastocyst, the initial ball of new cells. The blastocyst then multiplies into many daughter cells. One expert describes these cells as being “pluri-potential.” In other words, each of these cells has the potential to differentiate into new cells of many different varieties. Some “daughter cells” instinctively become skin cells, bone cells, spleen cells, and cardiac cells or brain cells. The inherent imprint of these cells activates them to become what they were predestined to be.

This inherent sense of identity based on function is truly astounding. Doctors explain that the cardiac cells are “auto-rhythmic” cells. They actually vibrate and beat together instinctively at the same tempo—*before* they ever unite with each other and function as the heart! Even drummers in an orchestra need a conductor to set a rhythm, but these cells instinctively catch the same beat and have the same rhythm. They draw together and beat together to the same rhythm.

Learning about these “cell instincts” made me think of the old camp song taken from the Old Testament book of Ezekiel—you know, the foot bone connected to the leg bone and the leg bone connected to the hip bone and so forth. Now, I’m not a doctor, and I’m sure not here to sing around a campfire. But what I want you to see is that the body develops by cells that find their rightful place because they know what they were made to do! These cells vibrate to the tempo of their

purpose even before they're operating and performing their function.

So how about you—are you in sync with your inner wisdom about your strengths, abilities, talents, and unique contribution to the world? Or is your life somehow offbeat to your inner melody? Have you lost your rhythm because you have not found your place to define and activate your unique contribution? One of the great tragedies of life is not discovering the people, culture, and careers that are part of your tribe and moving to the same beat.

You may have experienced the discord that comes when those around you move to the beat of a drummer different than your own. Successful businesses, healthy relationships, and most collaborative endeavors require a syncopated alignment of roles, responsibilities, and rhythms. Entrepreneurs often need employees with a work ethic and flexibility similar to their own. It's frustrating when you have an urgent idea that requires execution at midnight and a team member who cannot be reached until the following day. It's not wrong to set boundaries and limits on work, but people need to be on the same page of music so the orchestra can play together. Similarly, romantic partners often discover they're out of step because one desires a waltz while the other's leading a tango.

Contentment comes when you find the people, places, and events in life you were created to impact. Most individuals who lead rich, productive lives do

so because they allow their instincts to guide them to the intersection of the head and heart, the place where their deepest passions and sharpest skills align with destiny. They succeed instinctively because they each know their own tempo and recognize it in the individuals and institutions with whom they collaborate.

Connect to Your Calling

If you have ever felt misaligned, this book is for you. If you have lost the rhythm, the passion, or the thrill of living in alignment that you once glimpsed, then keep reading. As he did with the very cells that comprise our bodies and the dry bones that were joined together for new life, God has given us deeper instincts to be attracted to those things that fit a higher and better purpose.

Never settle for less than God's best for your life.

Some people have the courage to move beyond the ordinary, from the methodical mediocre into the revolutionary realization of where they belong. You can have this sense of belonging only when you connect to your core calling. If you believe in calling, as I do, you understand it's more than the motivation to minister that clergy experience. The calling to creativity, the calling to teach, to give, to build, are all part of allowing your instinct to guide you to the "something more" that you suspect is out there.

Who can deny that some people move into their life's purpose with the skill of a child prodigy when he first touches a violin? They're aware of a compelling sense of attraction and engagement that cannot merely be taught but can only be caught. I've known musicians who played the piano from childhood, many without lessons. They just sat down at the keyboard and felt connected to it.

It's a sad thing to live your life without this deep-rooted sense of connection to your purpose. Like a lightbulb without a lamp, this kind of disconnect fosters dark and foreboding feelings in the soul. Whether you are the manager or the employee, the homemaker or the home builder, what matters most is that you have been awakened to your purpose and enlightened to the inner fulfillment that it affords.

Early in my life I myself was haunted by feelings that I was created for more than I could access in my environment. The only reason I moved beyond the many potholes and pit stops I encountered is because of an instinctive allure pulling me toward something up ahead on the road that I had to find! I refused to stop and settle for less than the explosive exploration of what God had placed within me.

There is no secret formula for learning to listen to your instincts. These pages before you merely offer my sparks toward kindling the blaze of your own incandescent, instinctive alignment, the deeper and fuller life you were created to attain. So as we journey

together, let's remove the smoke and mirrors and ask the questions at the heart of our truest self. If we seek meaning in our motives, perhaps the answer will not be the voice of God shouting at us from the heavens but in the whisper of our God-given instincts deep within.

You see, Scripture tells us, Out of the heart flow the issues of life (Prov. 4:23). The heart can't read. It can't draw and it surely can't drive. But if we will listen to its drumbeat, if we have the courage to be wooed by its wisdom, then we will find our answer. We could spend the rest of our lives in a rhythm so in sync that the melodious sounds we make transform all areas of our lives into an integrated, harmonic symphony of satisfaction.

As we grow and go forward, our master Creator may be wooing you instinctively into a place where your intellect can flourish and your heart can rest. If cells move until they connect and form the highly complicated and efficient beings we call humans, then maybe we need to put our ears to the heart of the matter and catch the beat. Maybe we need to stop choosing people purely by résumés and rationales that have led us headfirst into disappointment. We need instead to find people who are in sync with our beat and form a more perfect union with those who hear the same rhythm! It is time for us to find the thing we were created to do, the people we were meant to affect, and the power that comes from alignment with purpose.

Having had unique opportunities to sit at the table with champions in almost every imaginable field today, I've found that people who accomplish massive feats don't play by man-made rules. They are trend-setters and game changers. They lead the world into paradigm shifts that we can only study after they've done what they set out to do. They negotiate unprecedented deals, build beyond borders, and innovate virtually every area with amazing accomplishments.

They do it because they don't play out their lives by prewritten scripts. They aren't afraid to leave the cages of comfort and head to the jungles of judicious risk and discovery. These people of whom the world takes notice dare not to fit in but aren't afraid to stand out. They don't run in a pack or stay with the herd. They know where they're going and where they belong.

I'm not suggesting that we take our script from others. The low-grade plagiarism of popularity will never lead you to true contentment. But I am saying perhaps it is possible to learn from the risk-takers committed to living instinctively, listening beyond information and example, for the inspiration of igniting your purpose. If you are already doing what you were created to do, then I want to help you enhance your success. And if you are not, I hope your days of following other drummers will diminish as you listen for the unique, syncopated beat within yourself.

If you listen, it will guide you like a magnet to steel. All else is misguided. Most people are manipulated

by the approval of others, the paycheck that supports them, and the lifestyle that has handcuffed them to the brass ring of perceived success. On this path we eventually live like slaves to a man-made system. We chase the goals of others instead of pursuing our own dreams. We anesthetize our despair with the next purchase, pill, or plunder. We do what we think we should instead of living beyond what logic alone can dictate.

If these words resonate with you and reverberate with what you know to be true, then it's time to decode your own instincts, increase your areas of advancement, and illuminate the dark corners of disappointment at the edges of your life. I truly believe that following your instincts will transform your workplace, liberate your career, and enhance your relationships.

Make no mistake, these pages can only offer you clues to stimulate your own process of discovery. The answers you seek are already inside you. So if you're ready to unlock the confines of where you are to discover the freedom of where you were meant to be, then let's get started. *Your instinct is the key!*

CHAPTER 2



Basic Instincts

It's the way mother birds build nests, and build them high enough to elude predators. It's the way bees know to extract pollen and return with it to their hive. Or the way that sheep, cattle, and other animals often travel in herds so that they will not be as vulnerable. It's the surge a mother bear experiences to protect her cubs when confronted by a startled hiker in the forest. Biological instinct is the fierce determination of the majestic lion to guard his territory.

These creatures don't have to be taught how to do these things; they are born with the natural instinct to behave in these ways. In fact, most scholars define an instinct as a genetically hardwired tendency, a behavior that's built in and automatic, not learned or conditioned. The survival instinct is generally regarded as the strongest in most every species. Instincts to



nurture, to gather, to procreate, to secure food and water, to protect and to defend—these sustain life in practical, very tangible ways.

On a basic level, we share many of the same instincts. We see instinct in action when a baby tries to suckle in order to receive nourishment, or a toddler recoils from a hot skillet. It's the sense you have about the stranger lingering behind you on your walk home that causes you to run into a store and call a taxi. Similarly, no one has to teach you to dodge the oncoming bus careening toward you while you're crossing the street.

We are wired to stay alive. Our bodies naturally seek out nourishment (food and water) and protection (such as shelter, clothing, and weapons) to survive. You've probably heard of the "fight or flight" response, which is an instinctive reaction to any perceived danger. Many scientists also believe that language is instinctive, or at least the desire to express our responses to both internal and external stimuli. Some researchers believe that we are instinctively spiritual beings as well, which of course I would confirm.

Our Instincts Evolve

As we grow and mature into men and women, our various instincts also evolve and become more sophisticated and personalized—but so does our reliance on intellect, evidence, and technology. We are assaulted



by so much information each day that it's easy to lose touch with the voice inside us, the compelling sense of knowledge, the awareness we have in our gut.

In addition, we're often conditioned to dismiss our instincts as primal and animalistic, subjective and unscientific. We're taught to rely on facts and figures, data and digits, not hunches and gut feelings. Some people may even consider relying on instinct in the same way they regard superstitions and mental telepathy: fodder for science fiction and superhero movies.

Sometimes we rely on our instincts without even realizing it. We notice details about how a job applicant has dressed and groomed himself and form an accurate opinion about his qualifications. Perhaps we sense the timing is right to have a difficult but necessary conversation with someone in our family and find them receptive when approached. It could be an inexplicable attraction toward one particular field of study or area of business. For instance, you can't help but notice the lines of other people's clothing, wondering about the fabric: how it drapes; its shape, color, and fit. Maybe you've always been fascinated by the way numbers work and enjoy creating order by making the columns balance. Whether you recognize those glimpses of instinct or not, it's there.

On the other hand, our instincts are not necessarily accurate all the time. That hunch about someone else's business deal wasn't true. Your sense of timing for the big date wasn't on target after all. The sense of



dread about a client's reaction to your work proved to have no basis in reality. Your intuition about getting the promotion wasn't accurate.

So how do you become more aware of your unique, naturally developed instincts? And perhaps more important, how do you discern when to trust your instincts and when to rely on logic, fact, and objectivity?

Obviously, this is where our relationship with instinct gets tricky.

And that's what this book is all about.

You Just Know

Not one of us is born without instincts. A person is more likely to be born without sight than to be born without insight. In fact, many of my blind friends rely upon insight. All of us have internal senses beyond the physical with which we can better determine what's next, what's safe, or even what's right. Our instincts speak to us daily, prompting us to pay attention, to listen more carefully, to sidestep danger, and to seize an opportunity.

Some may be more in tune with their instincts. And some may be less inclined to listen to them. But we, like all of God's creatures, come complete with them on the inside. From this inner sanctum springs wisdom we don't even know we possess. But in a fast-paced, busy



world, we tend not to give ourselves the quiet moments of reflection that are needed to unleash them.

Think about it: there are some things you just *know*. You don't even know how or why you know, you just do. This inner knowing is instinctive. It is as natural as the ability to sense when you've found the thing you were born to do. Unfortunately, many of us often spend our lives doing what we were trained to do. Some do what they were asked to do. And most of us do what others need us to do. And all the while, we wonder why the feeling of fulfillment eludes us.

Our Creator designed everything he made to have a purpose. Yet most of us live our lives wondering what our purpose is. Worse still, there's an aching in our hearts as we sense that there has to be more in life, something beyond the monotonous compliance with convenient opportunities to which most of us have lived our lives. I encounter so many people who dread going to work, not because they are lazy but because they are unfulfilled.

Without understanding the guidance that our innate God-given instincts provide us, we simply adjust to the urgency of circumstances, all the while sensing deep within that we were created for so much more. Yet the uncertainty or fear of pursuing this inner sense keeps us contained in the contrived cage of the ordinary. Simply put, we've never learned to rely on our instincts.

But regardless of where we are in life, it's not too

late to align our lives with the inner wisdom of who we really are and what we were made to do. God, the master designer, has equipped us with a fundamental instinct that draws us to our divine purpose. This sense of potential being realized is more fulfilling than any paycheck. It is the feeling of fitting in, like a piece in a puzzle, to form a greater picture than what we may be doing right now. It is the innate satisfaction that comes from giving the gifts that you and you alone can contribute to the world.

Once we embrace this instinct of identity, we understand why we are so shaped and designed. We realize why we were rejected in other places, why we grew bored by other roles, and why over and over we're haunted by the possibility that there's some place, some plan, some design to which we should be aligned. Deeply spiritual people pray for it to be revealed. Other people wander for the lack of it.

But the most fulfilled, confident people live their lives in the very midst of it. These individuals have answered the question, moved into the sweet spot, and been guided by a God whose design is revealed in them. When we have the courage to leave the familiar and step into the destiny to which our instincts keep drawing us, we can live the same way.

I am not writing a book to show you how to get rich, because I know that many rich people have not identified their purpose. I am not writing to share how to be famous. Too many famous people are miserable.

I write to share with you the importance of being led into your fulfilled purpose by leaving the confines of your conventional cave and entering the space where your heart longs to reside.

The place you will discover when instinct is your guide.