

FOREWORD BY JEREMY CAMP

Daniel Fusco

with D. R. Jacobsen

YOU'RE

GONNA

MAKE

IT

UNLOCKING RESILIENCE
WHEN LIFE IS A MESS

SNEAK
PEEK



SAMPLE
ONLY

UNCORRECTED
PROOF

Praise for
You're Gonna Make It

“A good plan almost never survives the blow of the enemy. We need more than a plan; we need a strategy—and the resilience—to keep going when our plan capsizes. Strategy is exactly what you will find in the pages of this book. Daniel will hand you the tools to persevere when life hits so hard you want to quit. *You're Gonna Make It* will give you the kind of resilience that doesn't just help you survive hardship but also helps you bounce back even stronger.”

—LEVI LUSKO, lead pastor of Fresh Life Church and
bestselling author

“Sometimes life seems so unfair, so hard. Maybe you're terrified of the future or find it hard to believe that you will ever really be happy again. If that's you, then *You're Gonna Make It* is a must-read. Daniel Fusco lays out a thoughtful, practical guide to finding true hope in the suffering, fear, worry, and everyday pressures of life. In a time when hope seems to be in relatively short supply, Daniel encourages us to lean into the hope we have in Jesus, despite our circumstances, and reminds us that God is still in control. Jesus will get us through whatever we are facing today.”

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“Daniel Fusco has written another timely and practical book that can lift a person from the deepest low to a thrilling triumph. He teaches us a hope that puts the grit in perseverance!”

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“Overthinking is one of the biggest causes of unhappiness. My beloved friend Daniel Fusco expertly guides us, in a thoroughly biblical way, in what it looks like to break free from our “what-if” mental prisons. *You’re Gonna Make It* is a compelling read, spilling over with gospel truths. This book gives so much hope for true, God-honoring change.”

—RASHAWN COPELAND, founder of Blessed Media and author of *No Turning Back*

“This incredible book leads us on a journey of trusting God in chaotic seasons. Daniel’s insights and experiences are perfectly woven through the threads of this book. If you desire to unlock the resilience inside you and learn about God’s path for your life, *You’re Gonna Make It* will not disappoint!

—TIM TIMBERLAKE, bestselling author of *The Power of 1440* and senior pastor of Celebration Church

“*You’re Gonna Make It* is a ray of light. Daniel unveils the secret to finding hope in the midst of life’s uncertainties. If you’re wondering what it takes to become resilient for times like these, read this book!”

—CAREY AND TONI NIEUWHOF, podcasters, speakers,
bestselling author (Carey) of *At Your Best*,
author (Toni) of *Before You Split*

“Daniel Fusco, as only he can, brings a timely message in *You’re Gonna Make It*. It will encourage and challenge you in the most life-giving way. All of us have experienced the mess of life. The gift of resilience is the key to not just surviving but also thriving through it all. Daniel is one of the most brilliant pastors and Bible teachers I know, but what I love most about him is his heart to encourage people. This book will unlock resilience and release hope in your life.”

—BANNING LIEBSCHER, Jesus Culture founder and pastor

“I wish I could tell you that once you become a Christian, life is easy. But that’s not true. Life is still hard, but God is still good. In *You’re Gonna Make It*, Daniel Fusco teaches us to be resilient like Jesus. This book is chock-full of powerful life principles that will transform your hard seasons into miracles.”

—MATT BROWN, evangelist, author of *Truth Plus Love*,
host of *Think Eternity with Matt Brown* podcast, and
founder of Think Eternity

“In a world embroiled in chaos, consternation, pain, and uncertainty, Daniel Fusco serves up gospel-driven joy for life and hope for the future. At a time in our culture when many are suffering and grappling with so much, Fusco offers a powerful reminder that God can do extraordinary things with our lives when we trust Him to navigate us through the storms. *You’re Gonna Make It* is a must-read for the times in which we’re living.”

—BILLY HALLOWELL, author and digital host, CBN News

“*You’re Gonna Make It* is a how-to guide not just for surviving hard times but also for *thriving* in the midst of them. Daniel Fusco offers practical wisdom that will keep you anchored to unconditional hope no matter what you’re facing. Whether it’s a financial mess, health crisis, or difficult relationship, this book will offer you hope and joy for your journey.”

—ROMA DOWNEY, Emmy-nominated actress, producer,
and *New York Times* bestselling author

“*You’re Going to Make It* by Daniel Fusco is the book everyone needs right now—a perfect antidote for those who feel stuck in the middle of life and don’t know which way to seek help. Daniel’s own story, along with his biblical perspective, is sure to bring you to a place beyond what you could have imagined: Ephesians 3:20. While reading, I thought about past times I could have used this book and applied it to my own life, to gain the wisdom that comes from this kind of perseverance. Thank you, Daniel, for writing this book. Everyone needs to read it!”

—SHAWN BOLZ, author, pastor, TV host, podcaster,
[@shawnbolz](https://www.instagram.com/shawnbolz), www.bolzministries.com

YOU'RE
GONNA
MAKE IT

Unlocking Resilience
When Life Is a Mess

DANIEL FUSCO

with D. R. Jacobsen



WATERBROOK

YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT

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To Pastor Bill and Betty Ritchie and the entire Crossroads Community Church family—past, present, and future—for being extraordinary.

FOREWORD

I need a little hope . . .

I remember thinking this more than a few times in 2020.

My world was turned upside down because, like so many others, I had important things I needed to do that just evaporated overnight. I had tours canceled. And my feature film, *I Still Believe*, which tells part of my life story, opened in theaters right before everything *everywhere* shut down. Talk about a gut punch.

As weeks turned into months that year, I started feeling as though I was losing my grip on what I was even called to do. Or at least what I thought I was called to do. What was I supposed to be doing? Did any of this matter? I felt like I didn't even know anymore. I was losing hope.

Now, I had felt this way many years prior because I had lived through some of the hardest stuff anyone faces. I lost my first wife to cancer, and through that experience, I learned how to dig down deep and find the dedication to say, "I trust You, God."

I wrote a song called "I Still Believe" during that season of my life (which is what the movie is all about, by the way), and a big part of that writing process was trying to find a way to unlock resilience in the middle of the struggles—trying to find hope when everything inside me was shouting, *I just can't do this anymore!*

My friend Daniel Fusco brings so much hope and joy to me—and to the world through his ministry. This book you’re holding right now drills down on this key ingredient to thriving: *hope*. It’s the missing piece in many of our stories. *You’re Gonna Make It* is not just a catchphrase; it’s *practical*. Real talk. It’s something we can explore and apply. Take it from someone who’s been there: This is street-level wisdom. And I’m thankful for a tool like this to comfort others around me.

The more I read this book, the more I discover the deep spiritual gold. After everything I’ve been through in my life, I’ve come to realize that hustling or trying harder isn’t gonna bring us hope—at least not *lasting* hope. And I don’t know about you, but I want to experience real hope. I want to be resilient in the face of pressure, stress, and pain. And I want my life to point people to a real solution, a solution that changes individuals, families, and communities from the inside out.

I’ve always tried to use my experiences to help people learn to say, “I trust You, God,” even in the middle of the hardest trials. And trusting God is something we can do better—when we learn what it looks and feels like to rise above.

With this book, I hope you enjoy discovering the depth of Jesus’s love for you and the many powerful ways you can find deep, lasting hope for today and tomorrow.

Because at the end of it all, Jesus is still on the throne and all His promises are true. No matter what we’re walking through.

Jeremy Camp

Christian artist, songwriter, and author

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1

UNLOCKING RESILIENCE

RingRingRing!

I groaned, rolled over, and stuffed my head under the pillow. My machine would pick up the call. The sun wasn't even up yet, so that meant it was way too early for *me* to be up. I needed every minute of sleep I could get.

Silly East Coasters, I thought. *It's been three years!*

After completing college in my native state of New Jersey, I picked up and moved west. I spent a few years living in beautiful Southern Oregon before transplanting to the San Francisco Bay Area, living in Marin County. But I understood the deal: right now, three time zones east of me, my friends and family would be having their morning coffee, thinking they had a nice chunk of time to call a buddy. Problem was that if the buddy was me, they'd wake me up because of the time difference. This was pretty common on the weekends,¹ but today was a weekday! I hoped if my machine picked up enough calls that maybe everyone would figure it out and start calling me after work. Either that

¹ Which was bad enough for a young lad such as myself.

or I'd have to go straight Jersey on them, throwing down the gauntlet and saying, "No one is allowed to call before lunch!"²

After five rings, my machine clicked on. Remember, this was when phones still had a cable attached to the wall and there was another mysterious box that recorded your messages for you.³ I had the volume down, but I knew the person on the other end was hearing the smooth sound of a certain Daniel Fusco breaking down for them the exact info I wanted them to leave me so that I could call them back. *Finally, back to sleep.*

Except the phone rang again. My machine picked it up again. *Why is someone bugging me so much? What's so important?*

I was in my early twenties, working my first real job (in an office building with a watercooler and copier room and everything), so getting out of bed on a Tuesday before my alarm went off at seven-thirty was a definite no-go.⁴

When the phone rang for the fourth time, I reached over and turned up the volume on the answering machine. "Pick up the phone, Daniel! Pick up the phone! C'mon, pick up, pick *up!*"

Yikes. That did *not* sound good. I reached past the ma-

² I kid. If you know me at all, you know I would never yell at someone over the phone. I'm just letting you in here and sharing my inside voice with you.

³ If memory serves me correctly, I think mine still had a little cassette tape in it. No age jokes, please!

⁴ If you've seen me in person, you know beauty sleep is one of the only things keeping other people from reporting a Sasquatch sighting when I go hiking.

chine and grabbed the handset. “What?” I grunted, rolling back onto my pillows.

“Where’s Chris?” asked the voice. It was my buddy Rob from Jersey. Chris was a mutual friend.

“Chris?” I repeated.

“Yes, where’s Chris?” Now Rob was yelling. “Chris works in the Towers, right?”

What in the world is he talking about? “Bro, it’s like six in the morning!” I protested. “How the heck am I supposed to know where Chris is? I don’t even know who he’s working for these days. What’s going on?”

“Wait, you don’t—oh man, you’re three hours behind. You’re not gonna believe this. Go turn on a television *right now*. Any channel. There’s a huge thing going on with the Twin Towers, and I think Chris works there.”

Click.

I sat up, stunned. Nothing was making sense. And to make matters worse, I didn’t have a TV.⁵

So I found the next best thing and cranked up the radio on my alarm clock. The news anchors were talking about some sort of accident at the Twin Towers and an explosion. I didn’t catch the whole story, but just the tone of their voices was chilling. I jumped into sweats, pulled on a hoodie and some flip-flops, and raced out the door to my car. I had to get to a television and find out more. Who did I know who worked in the Towers? I still had tons of friends and family back East, including a bunch who worked in or around Manhattan, but how many were at the Towers?

⁵ Pretty common now, but back then “cutting the cord” wasn’t a thing. I wasn’t trying to be cool—I was just a guy without a television!

I left my street and turned onto the main road. *Does my buddy Chris work there? I don't know.*

There was a strip mall up ahead. *I think my brother-in-law might work at a law firm with an office in the Twin Towers.*

I drove around and around. Nothing was open.

Finally, I found a chain diner, open for breakfast. *I seriously don't know where anyone I know works!*⁶

My stomach was clenching and unclenching as I parked and ran inside the diner.

And I watched in horror as I saw the Twin Towers coming down.

How are we going to make it through this? I wondered.

* * *

If you are one of the majority of Americans today who can remember 9/11, I'm sure you could tell me *exactly* where you were that day.

As I watched the news on TV and talked with family and friends that day, I learned my brother-in-law did work in the Towers. But he wasn't there that morning. His was one of the many miraculous stories we heard later. Because he'd worked late the night before, his boss told him to come in a bit later the next day. But his firm lost dozens of people. My buddy Chris *wasn't* there that morning,⁷ thank God.

⁶ This all happened before social media, and I didn't have a clue where anyone worked.

⁷ It turns out he didn't even work there. My buddy Rob had been mistaken.

Still, even without knowing anyone who lost their life there, I knew in my gut that I'd never forget those attacks. And the same way we remember 9/11, others remember exactly when they heard about the space shuttle *Challenger* exploding or the assassination of John F. Kennedy or the day that will live in infamy, the attack on Pearl Harbor. There's just something about certain catastrophic events that sticks in our minds and refuses to leave.

And it's in the face of these events that we wonder how people are going to make it through it all.

Fast-forward almost twenty years to March 2020, when I was traveling to Arizona to teach at a conference and then preach in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I know: 2020. *That* year.

By March, all of us had heard of the novel coronavirus, but most felt safe enough, insulated enough, to spend more time joking about it being named after the classic Cinco de Mayo beer (Corona) than worrying about what it might do to our communities, economy, and loved ones. I was at the airport in Albuquerque, ready to fly home, when my assistant, Diana, called me and asked, "Hey, do you want me to change your flight? You guys have to lay over in Seattle."

I made my puzzled face, which of course my assistant couldn't sense, so I elaborated. "Ummm . . . huh?"

Diana, in her usual patient way, explained that Seattle, at that moment, was at the center of the quickly growing Covid-19 outbreak, and the SeaTac airport was a busy lay-over spot for world travelers.

"Listen," I told her, "we'll be okay. Thanks for thinking of us, but don't worry about it."

My confidence wasn't based on anything, by the way! I

had no idea what the risk was, but I *did* know that I didn't want to change my flight. Meanwhile, the guy I was traveling with was using his phone to shop for masks and hand sanitizer on eBay and telling me everything was sold out. When we boarded our flight, I noticed people were pulling their shirts up over their mouths and noses, so I did the same. The reality was setting in. Something frightening was happening that I didn't have any control over. Something big.

Less than twenty-four hours later, the president recommended that everyone stay home for the next few weeks. At Crossroads Community Church, where I'm the pastor, we sent our staff home and closed in-person services for what we hoped would be a few weeks.⁸

Gosh, what in the world is going on? How are we ever going to make it through this madness?

* * *

Meanwhile, back at home, some folks who were dear to my heart were in trouble.

Pastor Bill Ritchie and his wife, Betty, are two heroes of our family. Bill became my friend when I was a young pastor. He was leading a megachurch just north of Portland, Oregon, while I pastored only a hundred people in a rented building, and he was always available to take the time to talk with me and advise me. Bill's actually the one who invited me to Crossroads more than a decade ago to be his successor.

In early February 2020, Betty got very sick. She was rushed to the emergency room, then transferred to another hospital,

⁸ Our math wasn't great on that!

but she kept getting worse. No matter what tests they ran or what they treated her with, the doctors couldn't help her. Soon she was admitted to the intensive care unit and put on a ventilator and given a feeding tube.

I know most of you are reading this and thinking, *He's gonna tell us she had Covid-19!*

You're right. She did.⁹

But nobody knew it then. The doctors were at a total loss. A couple of times, things got so bad for Betty that she flat-lined and a team had to rush in and resuscitate her. More than once, a doctor reached out to Bill to talk about his wife's options for end-of-life care.

I love how Bill responded. Each time, he said something like, "There ain't no way. I believe in God. I'm hoping in God. My entire life I have been talking to people about Jesus Christ. My life is a life that is nothing if not optimistic. There's got to be more that we can do. We don't quit. End of story."

And together with his son-in-law (who's a doctor), his daughter-in-law (who's a lawyer), and his other kids (who are all very gifted), they advocated for a care plan that would eventually help bring Betty back to health. It took thirty-five days in ICU, but Betty did come home.

I was in tears watching the video online as Betty's friends and family lined her street with their cars, waving and honking their horns. Balloons were tied to almost every tree. As Betty and Bill drove slowly down the road, their smiles got wider and wider and wider.

Listen, I know many people who have tried everything

⁹ But keep in mind that this was happening before they even had tests for Covid-19 where we lived.

possible and still were not able to survive a tough disease, including my own mother, who passed away at forty-nine years young. I've attended those funerals. I've led those funerals. So I want to be really clear about why I'm bringing up Bill and Betty's story. In this book, we are talking about resilience. We are talking about how to make it through the messiest things. Resilience is fueled by hope and grit. And I see the way Bill handled his wife's illness as a model for any of us trying to persevere through suffering, fight the battle against fear and worry, and even begin to thrive in the midst of constant stress.

Bill put his hope in what God could do. He married that hope to the grit he had. And, ultimately, something beautiful happened: Resilience flowed. See, grit isn't about mindlessly toughing it out. Instead, it's about persevering toward a good goal and not giving up until you get there, because you know it'll be worth it.

Bill's hope drove him into action, and that hope sustained him as he battled. His resilience and passion to keep Betty alive—his commitment to never quit, never stop—is what gave her a chance to survive. And by God's grace, she made it through.

* * *

So as Bill and Betty were fighting Covid-19, we all were battling the fallout from this crazy, unexpected lockdown. Across the country, many people were getting furloughed or, worse yet, losing their jobs. People were catching the coronavirus and dealing with the symptoms, as well as the lingering effects. And politics began to rage like never before.

I bring all this up because my church family, Crossroads Community Church,¹⁰ all of a sudden couldn't hold in-person services. Like many other states, ours was pretty much shut down. Many of you experienced it too. It was so frustrating. And what we hoped would be a few weeks became a few months . . . and then a few more months.

After I talked with people about what was going on and what we were feeling, I asked God for a fresh outlook. I prayed for clarity on how we could deal with this unprecedented season. I realized we needed God to speak. We needed a word of hope that was real and that we could act on. We felt so out of control—what could we even do? Most of us have never lived through anything like this.¹¹ But the Lord wanted to work on us and help us grow through that season.

What I knew I needed to tell the Crossroads family is that we were gonna make it through this. And I want you to hear that as well. You are gonna make it!

So I started looking through my Bible and grabbing hold of verses that spoke about how to hang on and hope, verses about perseverance and grit. And I know I wasn't the only one searching for answers! As the months went by and we weren't meeting in person as a church family, we doubled down on reaching out to people on the phone¹² and caring

¹⁰ We're at 7708 NE 78th Street, in Vancouver, Washington. We'd love to have you stop by! Or join us for weekend services online at <https://crossroadchurch.net>.

¹¹ And even now, the pandemic is still with us and we have to figure it out as we go.

¹² I told our staff that we were "going analog"—old-school ministry still works!

for them digitally. And I spent many hours meeting with pastors who were trying to help their church families navigate extraordinary circumstances.

We heard more and more stories of how people were trying to live through this unprecedented time, and we realized two things: One, plenty of folks were trying to make it through without Jesus and needed to meet Him or come back to Him. Two, plenty of people who already knew Jesus still seemed to be missing something. They were surviving—sometimes barely—but definitely not thriving. It was like the wheels were falling off, one by one, and there wasn't a plan to get things repaired and functioning again, let alone back to full speed.

Basically, hope was in short supply. It still is.

And for those who had hope, many still were struggling as they tried to translate that hope into victory.

We all realized as the pandemic went on that the grit and determination to seek out hope—and then to live it out—is a rare commodity. That's why I decided to write this book, as life is so messy and I want to help people hope again.

Things rarely work out the way we want them to, so we need more than a hope mindset; we need to combine that mindset of hope in Jesus with character and choices that are gritty. I've heard it said that grit is passion and perseverance toward long-term goals. The way author Angela Duckworth has described it is this: Grit means following a consistent compass, not a bunch of random, fleeting fireworks.¹³ Passion for Christ is our start and our finish—loving our Savior

¹³ This is a loose synopsis from Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, Scribner, loc. 919, Kindle.

and being loved by Him. We want to live out and experience 1 John 4:19, loving Him because He first loved us, over and over and over. *And*—not *but*—along with that passion and love, we want to develop a perseverance, a steadfastness, a stick-to-it-iveness, a git-er-done-and-then-some work ethic.

When that happens, all inspired by the Holy Spirit?

We make it. We struggle. We learn. We grow. We make it.

And as we journey, we learn how to unlock resilience.

I like to use a little equation: *Hope + Grit = Unstoppable Resilience*.

And the outcome of that? Well, no matter the details of what happens, in God we can know that *we are gonna make it*. What I want you to hear as we close is this: In suffering, in worry, in fear, and in stress, if you hope in Jesus and live with grit, you *will* come out better on the other side.

You won't just overcome an obstacle or three—you'll *be* an overcomer.

Remember, the apostle Paul empowers us when he confirms that we are *more* than conquerors through Christ who loves us (see Romans 8:37). We are *overwhelmingly victorious*.

Now we must dig in and talk about it. I need to explore this and to trust in this good news as much as anyone. So let's begin our journey together.

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