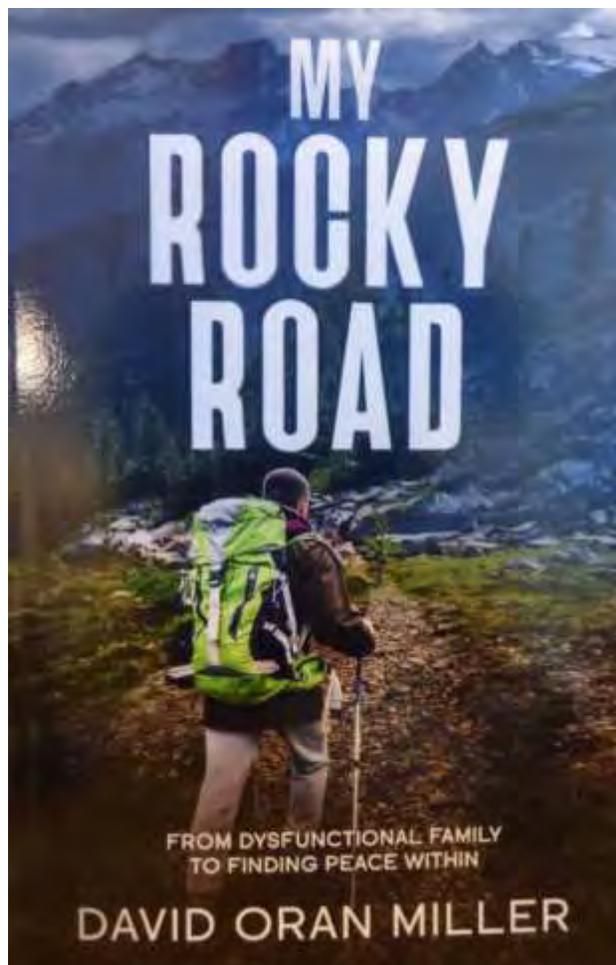


Here is the Introduction to my book: My Rocky Road

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Here is the "Introduction" to my book, "My Rocky Road" I hope you enjoy it. Available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle.

The year was 1975. I had just turned twenty, was barely out of high school, and honestly didn't have a clue about how my life might unfold. I'd seen abuse and addiction in my family that left me emotionally hurt and confused. On top of this, I was shy and socially awkward around people. But I did have confidence that I could survive on my own in almost any situation out in nature. This confidence in myself came from my survival training as a Boy Scout and being physically fit.

Knowing I didn't want my life to end up like my parents, I felt a strong need to get away. Soon after high school in June of 1974, I had taken off from my hometown of Oakland to experience more of what life had to offer. After a short visit with relatives in Minnesota and some hippies in Wisconsin, I took a few weeks to hitchhike back home, taking in the whole experience and wanting more of something. Maybe I was searching for happiness, or maybe it was longing for a connection with a higher purpose or calling. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I thought I just might find what I was looking for in Berkeley.

This was around the time that the Vietnam War was winding down, along with the Watergate Scandal and President Nixon's resignation. It was a time of cultural unrest, and I was desperately searching for meaning and happiness in my life. As I walked the streets of Berkeley after arriving back in California, I saw hippie couples embracing, and the smell of incense and pot were everywhere. People there seemed happy and at peace, which was what I wanted.

I joined a spiritual community only a few blocks from the UC Berkeley campus, hoping I'd find answers to the many questions I had about life. Questions like, why does war exist? Why can't people just love each other? Does God exist, and if he does, why does he allow people to suffer? I did learn a lot there, especially about myself and the possibility of gaining a higher consciousness, but I wasn't really sure if that lifestyle was right for me.

I would often take walks around campus, to think and to see the many young people walking here and there. They were mostly students getting to their classes or sitting on the grass while reading a book. The counterculture that I saw taking place in Berkeley gave me hope. People wanted peace and love. It was a different and changing world, and I felt drawn to it. The lyrics of Bob Dylan's song often came to mind: "For the times, they are a-changin'," and for me, these were good and hopeful changes. But I still couldn't see how I fit into this new and changing world.

Then one day, after enjoying the vegetarian lunch at the spiritual community, I leisurely walked through the busy campus to Sproul Plaza. There were some student groups with card tables set up trying to recruit new members, and a hippie couple who were often playing their guitars next to the fountain. I loved sitting around the fountain listening to their music, often wondering to myself what life was all about. Little did I know that something was about to happen that would change the direction of my life for many years to come. Two young ladies were walking right toward me and . . . well, I'm getting way ahead of myself. Let me start from the beginning. This, my friend, is the story of my life.