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By Oprah Winfrey

Oprah.com | From the June 2012 issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*



I know that even the worst of times are always preparing me for the best.

"I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now" is an old spiritual I sang in church as a girl, long before I understood its true meaning.

These days I relish singing that old hymn. Why? Because I know that even the worst of times are always preparing me for the best.

In March I had to lay off 30 people at OWN. It was part of a restructuring that needed to be done to get the business to its proper size; too many people had been hired for a company that was just getting started. As CEO it was my job to make the call. It was heartbreaking for me and devastating for some of the people we let go.

It felt like a setback. A defeat. And everywhere I turned, I saw another headline about me and my "struggling" network.

I tried to journal about it, but I was too down to even write. So I got still. Completely silent, for about an hour. Then I asked God: What do you want me to do now?

The answer came in the form of a new assignment for *Next Chapter*: a trip to Brazil to interview John of God, the healer who's been known to perform miracles.

I had read many stories about this man, including editor in chief Susan Casey's December 2010 profile in *O*. But I wanted to see for myself. So I went to the Brazilian town where people from all over the world journey for solace, healing, and help with everything from addictions to malignant tumors.

About 200 of us, all dressed in white, sat in a room in silent meditation. Others were forming a line to see John of God—some in wheelchairs, some carrying children, others on canes and crutches. Just being in the presence of so much hope was humbling.

I went to Brazil prepared not to believe my eyes. But the body does not lie. When John of God walked into the room and performed his first surgery, on a woman whose arm was paralyzed, he asked me to come closer to see. As he made an inch-long incision above the woman's breast, I thought, *Yes, that is a real knife, and yes, that is real blood dripping down her white pants. How is that happening without anesthesia, without her even flinching?*

As I watched, my fingers got hot. Heat rose through my arms and chest until I felt like I might implode. *Is my body bursting? Am I passing out?* I told myself to think calm thoughts. But I felt like I might actually throw up—on camera. *I've got to get to my chair. If I can make it there, I can steady myself.*

"Are you okay?" Heather Cumming, John of God's translator, whispered.

"I need to sit," I mumbled. *Only two more steps.* As I collapsed onto the chair, Heather handed me a bottle of water.

I don't know quite what's happening to me," I said. Sipping slowly from a cup, I tried to gather myself back into my body.

I closed my eyes and sat quietly, feeling the rhythm of my breath. Tears of gratitude started to flow. Gratitude for the whole journey of my life—not just everything that had gone right, but the things that had not.

I felt an overwhelming sense of peace. Just a week before, I'd been almost at the point of giving up. Now I smiled inside myself at the twists and turns this journey of building a network had taken. And how it had brought me right to the place I most needed to be to get perspective.

And that was just the first hour of a day filled with prayers, blessings, and hugs from strangers—all of us seeking the light of something greater than ourselves.

What I know for sure: No matter where you are on your journey, that's exactly where you need to be. The next road is always ahead. No, I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now.

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Printed from Oprah.com on Tuesday, March 4, 2014

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