

# Wrapped In Stillness

A Personal Retreat Guide

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## Finding Closure

Is anyone good with good-byes? In 2006, my parents made the decision to sell the family farm and retire. It wasn't a decision that came overnight. My great-grandfather had purchased the land in 1913 and raised seven children there. My father was the last child born at the farm, and the only son. I was raised on the same land and spent my entire childhood in the house my grandfather had built when my dad was nine. I loved my home, and although I never planned on moving back there as an adult, it never dawned on me that I might not have the option. I was shocked when my folks shared their intention to quit farming and sell the homestead. My selfish side yearned to convince them to wait. Instead, I chose to support their choice unconditionally, as did every other member of our close-knit family.

In preparation for the estate sale, we purged the cobwebbed attic and the faded old barn. For us it was a trip down memory lane, but Mom was simply looking to get the job done, and her mantra became, "Pitch it. Burn it." I was surprised by my reluctance to trash certain possessions. For instance, my mother's 1936 first-edition Monopoly set, which had been used to teach me the game. The board is now yellowed with age and the bills are rice-paper thin from years of exchanging hands. The wooden houses and hotels are barely recognizable. Mom told me she and I used to argue over who was going to get the iron as a playing piece. She thought I only wanted it because I knew it was her favorite piece. I have no memory of that, but I do know that today I wouldn't fight over the iron in any situation. Now, when I remove the box lid, the musty smell sends me back home to the attic of the farmhouse I loved.

Another item I rescued from the farm was an old wingback chair my parents purchased as newlyweds. The large floral pattern of brown, orange, and yellow was proof of its 1950's origin. Dad tells the story of how he wrote a check for it, but because they were shopping out of the area, the clerk was hesitant to take it. A neighbor happened to be in the store at the same time, and she also knew the clerk. She said, "I can vouch for him. That check is good." My dad was proud when he told that story because he is known as a man of his word and has always been someone a neighbor would vouch for. I hauled that chair home and had it reupholstered to match my office. I look at it every day as a reminder of his integrity and to aspire to be a person others will vouch for.

The sale of the farm could not have gone better. A wonderful family with two small children bought the place. I've never met them, but I hear the kids are discovering the little hiding places I had as a child, like the hideaway fort under the stairs leading to the second floor. It has a tiny door, and inside there are three shelves, two hooks and pencil marks measuring the height of my favorite doll, Puddins. There is just enough room in the nook to host a tea party for two, with room for each to bring an imaginary friend. Even though I knew a great family was taking ownership, it didn't make my final trip down the eighth of a mile lane any easier. I've never been good with final moments or goodbyes. I'm embarrassed to say I tear up at the end of almost every movie and occasionally even a commercial. I expected my folks to be broken up during the final days of their homestead's ownership. But I was wrong. They were calm, methodical, focused. I commented to Dad about this, and he said, "Hey, you gotta keep looking forward. You can't look behind you." I thought, *I hope I can be that strong and focused when I reach my parents' stage of life.* Then, I realized that possessing strength and focus applies during all stages of our lives. It's the awareness you have when a new era begins and you are at peace with the era that has passed. This quality, in itself, is an accomplishment.

*Moving forward means you're living.*

*That alone is a celebration.*

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## ask yourself...

What goodbyes do I need to prepare for?

What closure do I need in order to prepare for something new?

Has a door been closed that I wasn't ready to close? What do I want to do about that?

If I want it reopened, am I the one to make the first move?

## Author Bio



**AUTHOR LAURIE GUEST** is a gifted facilitator, helping thousands of people through her speeches and retreats for individuals, entrepreneurs, and corporations. Clients say she has the rare ability to ask just the right questions to create breakthrough insights. She's learned how to do this because she grapples with similar challenges to her retreat participants: how to live an aware and honest life amid the intrusions and demands life tosses at us.

Laurie honed her communication style during her 24 years in healthcare and two decades as a business owner. For 20 years she's been a highly rated facilitator and speaker. She specializes in sharing the lessons she's learned to help others in their professional and personal lives, overcoming obstacles and increasing positive outlooks and productivity.

She wrote this book to provide guidance to anyone wanting to lead a more fulfilling life. She's used the activities in it for her own personal growth as well as in her in-person retreats.

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