GILLETTE NARRATIVE

AS IF IT WERE ME

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COORDINATE: THE JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

This book is not intended to explain, but to place.
It is not a closed story, but an entry point.

Here you will not find a story to follow, but a trajectory to follow.

The *Gillette Universe* is not a series to be read in order: it is geography.
Each book is a coordinate. Each title is a gateway.

Some steps will seem familiar, others incomplete. This is not a mistake. It is the way a system works when it seeks depth rather than validation.

I write from genuine experience—years inside the structures, mechanisms, and decisions that rarely become public records. But this is not a memoir.

It is a narrative device.

It does not ask you to believe. It
asks you to orient yourself.

There are times when life does not wait for you to be ready. It enters, changes, overturns, corrects. And often it does so without making a sound.

PROLOGUE

Before stories, you need a look.
Not the clean, polished one, but the real one: the one that remains when you strip away judgments, excuses, morals, and good manners.

The stories that followed were not "selected."
They emerged. Sometimes they hurt, sometimes they make you laugh, sometimes they make you ashamed. They are scattered pieces of life, collected without order, without protection, and without the pretense of teaching anything.

There is no hero, no villain, no constructed plot.
There is a man who goes through life and who, every now and then, stops to look at what is left of him.

This Prologue does not introduce — it warns.
Whoever enters must do so knowing that things here are not correct, they are not polished, they are not finished. They are true. And that is it.

THE MEN

Over the years, reflecting on these "subjects," astute observers, such as theater actors, have created ironic definitions to summarize the variety and complexity of human behavior. Among the most famous statements, the subjects were divided into three categories, each with their own dialectal form.

Resolute

Serious, down-to-earth, loyal, trustworthy people. Their presence embodies a sense of stability and security. With them, there are no games, only truth and commitment.

The Little Men

Individuals who tried to appear human but never succeeded in rising above themselves. They pretended to represent the ideal, but remained trapped in small dimensions, improvising behaviors that seemed great, but were devoid of substance.

The Boastful

Those who had never understood the fundamental concepts of life, lacking a solid education and often expert in the art of chatter and gossip. Their world was made of appearances, empty words, and illusions.

But then time passed, and with progress came new definitions.

THE EVOLUTION

Our increasingly active participation in life has given us a new perspective on humanity. Today, we can place each of us in one of the following psychological profiles, depending on how we relate to the world and ourselves:

The Winner

He talks incessantly about himself, his greatness, his success. He struggles to listen to others, so caught up in his self-esteem. He believes he is the center of everything, but often loses sight of the people around him, living in a world of ego and pride.

The Fort

He is decisive, courageous, and is not afraid to make tough decisions quickly. He does not hesitate; he does not let doubts sway him. His determination is his strength, but sometimes his drive for action makes him insensitive to others.

The Measured

A practical and consistent person, always keeping his feet on the ground. He loves his family but has difficulty expressing his affection. He prefers silence and discreet action to words. He is not a man of grand gestures, but of small certainties.

The Submissive

Sociable and helpful, he is always ready to help others. But behind his helpfulness lies an incredible insecurity. He is afraid of asserting himself and often ends up indulging those around him, trying to please him at all costs.

The Mental

He loves to reflect, analyze, and think. He is the type who gets lost in his thoughts, often distracted and awkward in relationships. Sensitive and sweet, but sometimes excessively introverted, he struggles to connect directly with others, despite always striving to understand the profound reality of his surroundings.

The Employee

Outgoing and sociable, he never shuts up. He is always talking about himself, his emotions, his feelings. He needs others to validate his existence, constantly seeking attention and approval. His life is a constant flow of words, like a constant need to be seen and heard.

I hope everyone who reads these words can identify with them, as I have had the privilege of doing so. It is not enough to think you are the best. You must be the best, day after day, with your actions, words, and choices. The true measure of a man is not what he shows, but what he lives.

THE JOURNEY

My mother was an extraordinary woman, a warrior who faced life with uncommon determination. She was the heart of our family, a matriarch who seemed capable of bearing the weight of the world on her shoulders. Yet, beneath that indomitable strength lurked a fragility she rarely allowed others to see.

Her childhood, marked by poverty, had taught her that life does not give discounts. She fought every day: for me, for my father, for the home that represented the refuge of our existence. It was a constant battle, and she faced every obstacle with a rigor that made her almost impenetrable. Our relationship, made of

glances and silences, reflected this nature. There were few words between us, but those were full of meaning. It was as if the silence spoke for us, expressing what we could not say.

As I grew older, I began to understand my mother better. Her love, which seemed rigid and distant, hid a fragility she did not want to show to anyone. Her demeanor seemed to suggest that true love does not require dramatic gestures, but lives in silence, in everyday actions, in the battles we face together.

Speaking in Silence

When the disease struck her, time seemed to stand still. Watching her weakening was heartbreaking: her body buckled under the weight of suffering, but her mind remained strong and combative. Even in her final battles, she never asked for help, continuing to bear that burden alone, as she always had.

Over time, I realized how much I needed to tell her I loved her, that her strength had been my guide. But the greatest pain was realizing there was no longer time to do so. The illness had stolen her memories, her sense of who we were. And, as her hand slipped from mine, I felt a part of me disappear with her.

Today, reflecting on what she left me, I know she taught me a precious lesson: love needs no words. It is in gestures, in silence, in unreserved dedication. Even in distance, there's always room for the unbreakable bond that unites us.

As I write these words, I realize that my mother's journey is not over. It continues through me, in the strength she gave me, in the love that lives in every step I take. True courage, I have

learned, lies in living each day with the same determination she faces in life. Because the journey, the real one, never ends.

The Truth

The grief I felt after her death was not just a physical loss. It was an absence that was felt in every corner of my life. My mother was gone, but her imprint was everywhere. Yet, when everything seemed resolved, when I expected to begin healing, I found myself immersed in another kind of silence, deeper and more painful than the one I had known during her life.

The silence of her death forced me to confront an uncomfortable truth: I had never truly gotten to know her. And now, that she was gone, there was no one to fill that void. I had not had the time to listen to her as I should have, to fully understand her heart, what her daily struggle meant, what her unspoken love was.

Her death was not just a goodbye. It was a revelation of how often we neglect those closest to us, to navigate life and its demands. For years, I took it for granted that my mother was a solid presence, that she did not need to be understood, because everything about herself seemed perfect, strong, and immovable. But now, looking back, I see how much I wish I could have done more, how much I wish I could have been present in a unique way.

In those days that followed, I found myself talking to her photos, searching for answers in the memories I had accumulated over the course of my life. But the truth was, there were no answers. All I had now were the unanswered questions, the ones I should have asked my mother, the ones I had never asked her.

And yet, in that very silence, I realized that life does not need answers. It is just a journey of encounters, emotions, and losses, and that, despite everything, we can find immense beauty, even in pain. Because pain, like love, allows us to discover something deeper about ourselves.

Thus, in the silence that followed my mother's death, I finally found a voice: my own. And with it, the knowledge that, although I could never do enough for her, my journey was not over. Her love and strength had been a part of me, and now it was time to move on, to honor that invisible bond, striving, every day, to be a little closer to that truth I had always ignored.

Calabrian Women

Twenty years of working in Calabria have given me a unique privilege: that of deeply understanding the soul of this land and its extraordinary women. Traveling through cities, towns, districts, and hamlets, I have encountered stories and traditions that have shaped the character of a region distinguished by its cultural and human heritage. It is easy for those who live elsewhere to say, "All women in the world are the same." But those who have known Calabrian women know that this phrase does not do justice to the reality.

Calabria is a land shaped by conquests and influences, with the passage of eight people who, over the centuries, have left an indelible mark. From the Greeks to the Normans, each has contributed to creating a cultural mosaic that today lives on in the character of its people, and especially its women. Far from large urban centers and the ebb and flow of modernity, Calabrian women represent an unwavering ideal of resilience and dignity.

Family and Values

In Calabria, family is the center of everything. And women are its linchpin. They raise children, build homes, and protect traditions. Known for their tireless spirit and practicality, they live with what they have and do not chase what is missing. Their strength lies in simplicity: a well-laid table, a loving gesture toward their children, a smile that supports those around them. Their pragmatism is not rigidity, but wisdom rooted in an awareness of life's priorities.

An Indomitable Force

These women face life with determination and sacrifice. Even in financial hardship, they demonstrate reckless courage. I remember the story of a mother who hid bread to feed her children during hardship. Her strength lay not only in her act of protection, but in the dignity with which she faced each day, without ever complaining.

The Cultural Roots

Calabria may seem provincial to city dwellers. But this "provinciality" is a treasure. Calabrian women, with their deep-rooted sense of tradition, are guardians of stories passed down from generation to generation. They know how to listen and interpret the past to face the future with balance. There are marriages that have lasted seventy years, where the couple still walk hand in hand: a symbol of a life lived in mutual respect and sharing.

Respect and Love

Calabrian women know what it means to love unconditionally. They defend their husbands, support their families, and even when they make mistakes, they always find a way to rebuild. Their love is not made of grand gestures, but of silent dedication. Even in tough times, their affection is a promise that is never broken.

An Unparalleled Courage

Adapting is their art. No matter how difficult the situation is, they will always find a way out. I remember the courage of a woman who, faced with threats, protected her family with a hidden weapon. It is not rebellion, but an instinct that drives them to do whatever it takes to save what matters.

The Heart of the Community

Calabrian women are not only pillars of their families but also pillars of their communities. In the alleys of their villages, they earn respect with their authority, without ever imposing it. They are the guardians of secrets that bind people together, creating a social fabric that stands the test of time.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

The birth of a child is an event that fills a family's heart with joy and hope. It is a moment when we glimpse a bright future, shaped by the hands of little dreamers. But every child's journey, from the cradle to the world, is fraught with challenges that reflect the very nature of society.

As we celebrate the 34th anniversary of World Children's Day, we grasp a profound meaning: children are not only the future, but also the present. Every smile, every gesture of curiosity, holds the potential for change. And, in an increasingly complex world, their value can never be underestimated.

The importance of protecting children's rights goes beyond laws. It requires concrete actions that address their needs and ensure an environment where they can grow up healthy and happy. This is where community plays a crucial role. When we come together to support the most vulnerable, we create a bond that transcends the current generation and extends to all generations to come.

The beauty of this mission often lies in its simplicity. Children from the poorest families demonstrate their big hearts and pure souls. Not because of their possessions, but because of what they have learned through sacrifice and love. These children, with their resilient spirit and bold dreams, are the true heroes of our time.

Children teach us that love has no limits and that hope can transform any difficulty. Let us never forget that when we look into their eyes, we see the best of ourselves reflected. And this gives us the courage to build a more just, equitable, and humane world.

My Dad

You decided to follow Mom to the clinic, even though you still had a fair amount of independence. You stayed by her side for three months, watching her suffer, and even though you were helpless, you tried not to let your fragility show. Because you did not want to show weakness, I did not want her to see my

tears. For sixty years, you loved her unreservedly, and on that morning of October 17th, when she decided to leave us, I saw a profound change in you.

Your gaze was different, Dad. It was the first time I had seen you like this, as if a part of you had vanished with Her. There were no tears, just a silence that screamed your loneliness, your desperate need to understand "why." You, who had always thought you would be the first to leave, now found yourself here, with the biggest question: "What do I do now?"

You seemed like a child to me, lost, confused, as if you had lost your place in the world. The memory of being six years old came flooding back, when, on a morning like any other, you watched American planes bomb German anti-aircraft guns. You, who at the time had thought it was just an innocent game. But today that game was gone, Dad. There was only you, without any certainties.

You looked at me, speechless. You did not rely on anyone else; you wanted me close to you, me who in that moment would have given everything to make your life easier. And I, Dad, was there. That morning, I threw myself into your arms like when I was little, when you came home from work tired but always smiling. But this time it was different. The twelve years we spent together in the same company had created a connection that went beyond blood. We shared not only our work, but also our thoughts, those small insights that only those who truly know each other can grasp.

We have travelled so many times together, around the world, and you were always proud of me. Proud of me as a man, as a worker, as a son who spoke foreign languages and held you in a position of respect, facing colleagues who, by comparison, had only superficial knowledge. I always managed to make

you smile, even in moments of worry, and then, when the moment called for it, I would crack a joke, hoping to make you laugh. I did not expect you to completely understand, but your elegant, unforced smile told me you understood everything. Always with class, even in pain.

When I asked you what I could do to make these last twelve years of your life easier, there you were, at 88, and you could have made it to one hundred. The answer came like a dramatic turn of events, from the mouth of an experienced salesman who never lost his wit. "What do you propose?" he said, but behind that question lurked all his fear of losing control.

"You go back home, hire two 40-year-old Romanian caregivers, invest your mother's survivor's pension, pay the caregivers, and get treatment, but only after you've secured a few brief visits as per the contract," he told me, laughing. He could not stop. Then he added that, if she had known, mom would have emerged from the coffin to come home and sort everything out. He laughed like a child, Dad. He laughed and laughed... as if he were still a young man, with the world in his hands.

Then, with his usual humor, he suggested: "Alternatively, we can find a nursing home, with 40-year-old Romanian nurses, and spend Mom's money like that..." He was still laughing, and at that moment I began to wonder if he might be feeling ill. But that was him, your way of facing life, even in the face of death, with that smile that hid a fear he did not want to show.

"You need your space, your home, your comforts, your indulgences. Otherwise, I would have taken you home, even without the money." He looked at me and took some money from his pocket. He told me to give it to the boys and try to make up for the time we had wasted.

He asked me a question that struck me deeply: "Nando, what job do you do, that I didn't quite understand?"

I replied: "You know, two years ago I went to a blessing at the Padre Pio Shrine, and then, on my way back, I went to my psychiatrist. I don't know which of the two of us was wrong, but I entered with a psychiatric disorder and since then I've become an author of books."

He looked at me, for a moment without speaking, then asked, smiling: "Are you crazy?"

"In a certain sense," I replied, "I took all of Mom's gifts, I didn't miss anything, but with one difference: culture, intelligence, and controlled innocence."

He looked me in the eyes, with a sweetness I had never seen before, and said, "We look alike, Nando. You have the same controller I had, the one that allowed me to stay with my mother for sixty years."

Then, calmly, he added: "I'll stay here for a few days. You come whenever you want. Then I'll decide what to do."

"Okay, Dad."

We hugged, but before we parted, he said to me, in a faint voice: "Treat your wife well. If one day she were to leave you first, you would realize the immense void she would leave. The pain you would feel would be unbearable."

I did not reply. I simply said goodbye, "After almost thirty years, I love you."

A Father's Love

A father's love is a force beyond words, a bond so powerful it cannot be captured in sentences. When we try to describe it,

words can never fully express that profound feeling that thrives on silence, glances, and embraces. A father's love is in the shadow he casts over us, in his silent breath as he watches us grow. It is in the invisible things he does for us, in the sacrifices he never talks about, in his strong hands that lift us up in times of difficulty, never asking for anything in return.

From childhood, we see our dad as our hero, the one who can overcome any difficulty and face life with a strength that seems invincible. No man is like him, and he is always our point of reference, the figure who guides us silently, but with a love that is felt in every gesture, in every word. It is a love that needs no expression because it is in our daily actions, in his constant presence, in his silent courage.

As children, we do not completely understand how much he protects us. We think of mothers as the beating heart of the family, but fathers, even if they are out of the spotlight, are the heartbeat behind every decision, every step we take. He is the one who guides us, who encourages us, who shows us the way, often without words. Yet, when we reach that point in our lives where we begin to utterly understand his sacrifice, to realize his dedication, our hearts tell him without words: "When I grow up, I want to be like you." A child knows that their father is the best friend they can ever have, the man who does not care about growing old, because his love will remain young and infinite.

Simple Father's Day is not enough to do justice to all he represents. Our father is our rock, our anchor, the person we turn to for every doubt, every confusion. Yet, as we grow older and watch the man, we have always loved and respected grow old, we realize that that time when everything seemed eternal is slipping away. The truth is, no matter how much we try to thank him, words can never be enough.

The bond between a father and a daughter is unique and intangible. Words are not needed because a look, a gesture, is enough to understand each other. In every small gesture, he is her hero, her point of reference. Every daughter knows that there will always be a place for her in her father's heart, and that, in the most difficult moments, he will be the one to gather her tears, the one to be her safe haven when the world seems to be falling apart. And when her father finally reveals his weaknesses, he does not need words: the daughter looks at him, supports him, and without saying a word, shows him that she is always with him, that his strength is never alone.

Then comes the day our father leaves us, and the resulting pain is so sharp, so deep, it tears us in two. But in that pain, there is also a love that will never die, a love that will live on in our hearts, in our actions, in our memories, in the gestures a father taught us to perform. His presence never fades, because every time we are happy, every time we face a challenge, we feel his strength, his love, which guides us even when he is no longer there.

A father does not need to say, "I love you," because he shows it every day. His love is in the small gestures, in the silences that speak louder than a thousand words. It is in the infinite sacrifice he made for us, in the love he gave without asking for anything in return. A father's love is eternal; it does not need to be said, because it is felt. And when a father is no longer with us, our hearts remain full of everything he gave us, a love that will never die.

Dad, I miss you. My heart is yours, always will be.

We Are No Longer the Best

We had arrived just hours earlier, full of curiosity and anticipation, to discover a new phase of our lives in a seaside villa. It was finally ours, and the sense of joy permeated every corner. The complex housed twenty-eight villas, each with its own secrets and stories. But soon, the initial fascination blended with new dynamics of coexistence.

A community always begins with implicit rules: mutual respect, cordiality, and cooperation. But for my mother and sister, accustomed to living without constraints, this reality was difficult to accept. They argued often, creating tensions that resonated like discordant notes in the silence of a village. My father and I, on the other hand, observed everything calmly and detachedly, as if we were mere spectators.

The turning point came on the day of the collective dinner: a community celebration. We, however, found ourselves excluded. No invitation, no explanation. It was a hard blow. Our reputation as a contentious and argumentative family had preceded us. It was a subtle but clear warning that something in us was not appreciated.

The reaction was immediate. My mother hosted a sumptuous lunch at our villa, generously inviting everyone. The table was laden with every imaginable delicacy, a display of our style and our worth. She wanted to demonstrate that, despite everything, we were people of substance and quality. And slowly, with effort and openness, our relationship with our neighbors improved.

Time teaches us that respect is earned, and once lost, it is difficult to regain. Stopping being the best does not happen instantly, but the moment we distance ourselves from the values that define us. Actions, words, and gestures become the true measure of who we are. And only awareness can guide us toward authentic transformation.

My Longest Day

I am not referring to the summer solstice that falls on June 21st every year, but to that inner predisposition that sees the dimension of a day lengthen, in the presence of events... my Longest Day.

It was 6.00 am in the morning, I was in the hospital, admitted to the Oncology Department, I had just woken up, and I started looking out the window.

I noticed the street cleaning machines in the distance sweeping the dust off the road surface and I felt relieved, happy that something in my city was working well.

The nurse arrived for the ritual blood test, everyone was convinced that they would discharge me and I would go home, I had already left seven malignant tumors behind, after a five-hour operation and I had nothing else to worry about.

I looked back at my window, and I let myself drift into memories of those who were no longer there, friends, relatives, acquaintances. What a life we had, we were all embraced by uncertainty, the only true thing we all wanted to experience.

The doctors' appointment arrived at 11:00 a.m. My tests were good and they had cleared me to go home. The nurse told me she would call my wife, but I relieved her of the thought: I needed to walk.

I gave my tracksuit to a bedmate, my pajamas to another, I left everything in the hospital, I was already dressed and I left the main door: I looked up at the sky, He was looking at me and I thanked Him.

On the street, all my cortical neurons were activated, my memories were dusted off, I wanted to write; it was the exercise I did best and I loved doing it.

I stopped at a café for a coffee at a table. Sitting next to me was an elderly lady who had visibly lost her wig, and I noticed her hair was gone. She was very embarrassed, but she regained her composure after picking it up, and I took the opportunity to ask if I could sit with her.

She was extremely helpful, but like any woman, she was curious to know what I wanted, and to reassure her, I shared our ailments. Surprised to say the least, she wanted to exchange cell phone numbers, and she joked: "I don't know if the phone works in the afterlife?"

I paid the bill, my day still had to be filled with facts and events, I was not going to go home without spending my time……but I knew that this would be…….

My Longest Day.

The Future

Many people talk about it, and write about it, with pertinent reflections, some logical and rational, others imaginative and dreamy.

In this reflection we will not go about recounting what is obvious, but what is represented.

From the moment we are born, every minute after our first cry represents the future — uncertain, unpredictable.

We grow up and often we ourselves become the cause of our future, a bad marriage, the purchase of a good, excessive spending, poor education towards children, breaking relationships with people, all of this represents us to the extent that we pay for a choice... this is the future.

There is a component not common to everyone but exclusive to a few: luck. It manifests itself in the most diverse ways and always brings with it positive events, but in some circumstances, if one does not know how to manage it, it becomes ruinous.

We also have people who turn to Magic, to receive the secrets of the future as gifts, this has created a big business in the world, just think that in the United States of America alone 52% of the population is conditioned by Magic.

To reach people's homes in the immediate future, fortune telling used television and telephones to create uncontrolled paid services, resulting in incredible debt situations that ruined individuals and entire families.

Behind the choice of the individual, as a law of compensation, there is the sacrifice of many and this is often not considered or appreciated, because man is born and dies selfish.

In the Author's opinion, the best hope for the Future can be found in a better quality of life, without chasing anyone.

THE TIME TO GET OLD

I had reached the tender age of ninety-five, an age that brought with it not only the weight of years, but also the burden of a full life, lived with passion, hard work, and satisfaction. I had lacked nothing, I had built a family that was now independent, a wife who was no longer with us, and a home that spoke of memories. Now, as a widower, I find myself searching for new meaning in my future. My vision of tomorrow no longer had the same urgency as before, but there was still the desire to live, to experience something that would keep me alive.

At home was Carmela Filippina, a 50-year-old woman who helped me with everything, and her husband, Manuel Cambogiano, 52, both my eyes and hands when my strength was no longer sufficient. I had given them a portion of my financial resources, to make this old age as peaceful as possible, just as my life had been, always my way, as Frank Sinatra sang, "My Way."

Spring was arriving, and with it the scent of flowers and the chirping of birds. I was in a reflective mood, observing the world from that window, trying to figure out what to do. I no longer wanted to get involved in anything, yet something told me that, even without physical strength, I could not give up the vision of a future that continued to unfold around me, even though my time was running out.

I look outside and see a young couple walking hand in hand, a simple gesture that takes me back in time. Many years ago, when I still had the vigor of youth, I had invented a fashion that the Calabrian's had adopted: greeting every woman in the world with an affectionate slap on the butt. Strangely, none of them had ever asked why we did it, but they all thought it was funny. A small gesture that had left a mark, a memory that would never fade.

I get out of bed, shave, wash, have breakfast, put on a new suit, and then immediately go out to watch the young people. They are my future. I would not have had much time to spend with them, but dreaming of them, watching them, made me still feel part of the world.

The square near my house was bustling with life. A mime artist, a boy playing the guitar, another with the violin, a crowded ice cream shop. And I, sitting on a concrete platform, felt like I was the guardian of those moments. The mime artist approached me and drew people's attention, as if it were a signal that my moment to tell my story was approaching.

"What story to tell?" I thought to myself. Then, greeting everyone, I said, "Good morning, everyone, thank you for listening. My name is Nando, I am 95 years old, a widower, and I have accomplished so much in my life. Today, I'm going to tell you a story you won't forget."

I smiled. Then I began to tell my story.
Many years ago, I was in a village in Africa, ready to move to the city of Nairobi, Kenya. We were traveling in a Jeep, crossing dusty, busy roads, but when we reached a small river, we had to slow down and stop. Suddenly, a huge lion, about 880 pounds, approached and leaned on the hood of the car, looking at us with calm, authoritative eyes. The guide honked,

but the lion did not move. Meanwhile, the river was rising, and we had to find a way out. The guide looked at me and said, 'We can't do anything but wait; this is the lion's time.' I stopped, and people were looking at me, enraptured.

"The lion watched us; he could have eaten us all, but he decided to walk away. His time was over, ours had begun. Sometimes in life, we just must wait for our time to come. Each of our times is different, but always perfect."

I closed the story with a smile and looked at the young people around me. I did not have much left to say, but my heart was pounding. At that age, every word counted, every silence had weight. "I hope I've made you smile," I said, "and thank you for sharing my time. Because, in the end, it's the time we have that counts."

How Much Longer?

Life drags us into a frenetic dance: work, family, social media, hobbies. Often, we do not realize how quickly we waste time, believing we are optimizing it. Then comes a moment of pause—a flu that confines us to bed—and our minds finally stop. We reflect, and questions pile up like sand in an hourglass: *where are we? Where do we want to go?*
Sometimes, the answer does not come. We live in the narrow space between two certain extremes: birth and death. And the latter, though feared, brings an unexpected gift: the ability to remind us that our time is finite, and it takes us away without warning, with surprising discretion.

But there is hope. It is no longer the calendar that measures our aging, but our health. By staying fit, we can defy the years, conserving energy and capacity. Yet death comes when we least

expect it, leaving us with only one regret: everything we wanted to do but did not dare.

So, how can we make the most of the time we have? The answer is simple, yet profoundly challenging: we live each day as an opportunity. There is no other way to secure a meaningful legacy than by choosing to always do the best we can, at every moment.

Many Solutions

Speaking of Italy, its strengths, and major areas of weakness, today I want to talk about Italian hospitals and their relationships with people.

Ours is a three-speed Italy on many things: a North close to the Austro-Hungarian cultures, a Center still adopted by the will of the Papacy and their Lobbies, a South tied to the traditions of the Bourbon Kingdom.

And the people who live in these realities are truly integrated into the cultures, ways of life, respect for rules, behaviors, vices, and unhealthy habits.

Accessing a hospital in the North means following a process defined by rules, reservations, reasons, timing, and severity, all in compliance with the open-access desks or online services. Everything works, the roles are performed regularly, everything is paid for, and the results are clear and unquestionable.

But the Milan hospital, among the largest in Italy, comparable in structure and bed capacity to the one in Reggio

Calabria, has an operating cost equal to a third of that of Reggio Calabria.

Do we have better doctors? Do we have more patients? Our catchment area is 500,000 people, while Milan only has five million. No, none of that.

We are just cleaner: we spend a lot on hospital linen, an amount that is considered by the world's major detergent manufacturers, because technically the linen should have holes after ten washes.

But we have Saint George, our Patron Saint, who protects us and ensures that our hospital linen is washed a thousand times and is still intact.

Accessing hospitals in central Italy is a medium-level challenge. Despite the rules and regulations, the cleaning lady or security guard at the entrance is asked to take a reservation from the day before, simply as a courtesy, for timely access the next day. Choosing the best doctor is easy because it is the result of careful evaluation by a few people, usually nurses and the local pharmacies, who influence and advise.

Visiting a hospital in Southern Italy evokes a typical phrase: where should we go? Which department? I have a friend. Here, the person in charge of the stretcher bearer has more power than the Medical Director and often turns to him for advice and protection.

It will be the same friend who will have another friend and then another friend, to be able to reach the doctor, without an appointment, without a ticket, who will certify the outcome of

the pathology and who will be asked to provide more or less serious certification, and ask for directions on where to go for treatment and a preferred corridor.

These same people will be the ones who, in the majority of cases, will visit hospitals in the North or private clinics for a fee, and in the worst-case scenario, will undertake journeys of hope to qualified facilities abroad, if necessary, disappointed by the treatment they received at home.

In all of this, man's life companion is always there... Innocence... because when faced with despair, it becomes more acute, and the medicine to cure it has not yet been found, and often there is no room for that rationale that is called logic.

A few days ago, a sick little girl in the United Kingdom encountered difficulties in English hospitals' ability to treat her, and some Italian hospitals offered to help her, using more advanced medical technologies, but the English NHS did not accept the invitation and its willingness, returning the offer to the sender.

Better to keep our hospitals with all their facilities, at least we have one more chance to be able to treat ourselves and live.

The Right, Depth and Measure

"Just right" is a word that, unfortunately, seems to be less used these days. It is a concept from a bygone era, a unit of measurement our parents and grandparents knew well, often to indicate the amount sufficient to satisfy a given need.

In the context of food, the expression "just enough" was used as a reinforcement of "just right," meaning that the necessary

amount had been reached, neither too much nor too little, but just enough to satisfy a need.

Today, in everyday language, "Right" is used with such force that it has become an uncompromising concept, a statement that leaves no room for doubt. It is a definitive declaration, as if saying "Right" were the end of every discussion, an irrefutable truth, to be accepted without the possibility of cross-examination.

In the professional world, credibility depends not only on sympathy or empathy, but on the conviction that what one says is right, because it is based on a truth that cannot be questioned. When a person speaks with such certainty, their opinion gains strength, becoming incontrovertible. Their credibility is built on the foundation of the truth perceived as correct.

I remember a conversation with a business manager in my city. He presented me with several real estate projects, each described as perfect, without a hint of weakness. Finally, with a satisfied smile, he looked at me and asked, "Right?" His confidence was such that I could not help but nod, as if the statement were indisputable. This episode made me reflect on how pervasive the concept of "Right" can be, sometimes leaving no room for discussion or debate.

But the concept of "Right" is not limited to business. We also encounter it in more family situations, where it is often used to end conversations that might otherwise spark conflict. An episode with my wife comes to mind. She is not particularly good at cooking, but one day she decided to make me the dish my mother used to cook for me. While she was cooking, she asked, "Did I use garlic, right?" Even though I knew full well that garlic was not in the original recipe, I did not have the

courage to contradict her. "Right," I replied, as if to avoid fueling a pointless argument. Because, in the end, as in many other family situations, "Right" becomes the end of a conversation, the word that defuses any potential controversy.

Even in my final exam, "Just" played a significant role. A professor on the exam panel questioned me with an approach that seemed too forceful. I felt nervous, but my religion teacher took me aside and, in a serious tone, said, "Nando, leave her alone, she's not Just." His advice, though ambiguous, made me reflect on the fragility of what we consider "just" and the difficulty of defining an absolute truth in many situations.

Finally, a reflection that concerns us all: are we truly paid what we are worth? Is the salary we receive truly "fair"? We often wonder whether what we receive for our commitment and skills corresponds to what we deserve, or whether, instead, we are victims of a system that does not accurately measure our value.

I hope this reflection has given you something to consider, reminding you that, beyond "Right," there is also "Perfect." And that "Perfect" represents a goal that goes beyond the measure of "right," an ideal state that, unfortunately, we can only hope to achieve.

Life and Success

The teachings are universal. They know no age, social status, or culture. They are essential for everyone, regardless of who we are or where we come from. If we want to live a quality life, it is essential to embrace the teachings, at every stage of our existence.

One of the first obstacles we encounter on our journey is people. Many of them are close to us, support us, and make us

feel grateful. But inevitably, there are also those who hate us, who envy us, who are disturbed by our presence, our personality, our abilities. People who would have liked to be in our shoes but are trapped in their own dissatisfaction. These people, rather than accept us, try to belittle us, to hinder our path.

Psychiatry, when discussing loneliness, tends to view it as a pathology. In many cases, in fact, it is interpreted as a symptom of mental dysfunction. Yet, when loneliness is a conscious choice, when it is the result of internal reflection, it should not be viewed as an illness. If a person finds themselves alone due to a personal decision, if they are clear about the "reason" for their loneliness, they should not be judged. Loneliness, in these cases, becomes an act of self-determination. Only when we lose the ability to reflect on ourselves, when we are no longer able to elaborate simple concepts, do we enter a dangerous territory where depression and pathology can arise.

To improve, to achieve real success, we must first improve ourselves. Our foundations must be solid. Family, friends, and professional support are the foundation on which we must rely. And, at the same time, the environment that surrounds us makes it a home, an office, or any other space—becomes a haven. If our "ship" loses its course, it is essential to have a point of reference, a place where we can regain confidence and stability.

I am reminded of the words of the Reggio Calabria poet Nicola Giunta, who ironically recounted his friends' visits to his workplace. He would jokingly comment: "See those guys? They're coming to steal my job." This thought reminds us that, despite the people who try to block us, our path is unique and unrepeatable. Life itself is the greatest gift we have. If we can

enjoy good health, we should consider ourselves fortunate. Our intellectual and reflective abilities make us even more privileged, but that is not enough. To achieve success, we need an unobstructed vision, planning, and decisive action.

Finally, we must learn to recognize those who seek only to take advantage of us. People who want to use us for their own purposes are nothing more than obstacles in our path. They slow down our progress and prevent us from realizing our full potential. Success is built on insights, conscious decisions, and often, moments of solitude. Only in solitude can we truly hear our inner voice, the one that guides us toward our goals.

Embracing these teachings, learning to know ourselves and following them, is the key to building a life that truly reflects our value. Only in this way can we realize what we are destined to become.

Renounce

Has anyone ever stopped to reflect on the number of things we do, and the number of things we wish we had done? It is amazing how, eventually, we reach a point where there is no accounting anymore, only Totals. Those sums that, starkly, reveal who we are and who we have been.

There are moments when we find ourselves up against a wall, with no way out. In that precise moment, you realize the only option is to enter through the door in front of you. And you know there will be no turning back, no turning back. It is the moment when fate takes over, and all that remains is surrender.

Medicine, which gives us so much hope and certainty, remains the only science capable of accurately telling us our state of health, our conditions, our pathologies, our solutions... or our decision to give up the fight. Yet, there is something deeper

and more mysterious, which defies every attempt at understanding. The most fragile part of us, the one that gives way, is the mind. Science can do little or nothing compared to the fine line between awareness and oblivion.

In those moments, you are immersed in a kind of fog, unaware of what is happening. Day and night have the same dimension, the same color. Black and white, two indistinct hues, familiar yet foreign. Unfamiliar people, faces blurred by pain, everything loses meaning. We are preparing, without quite knowing what to do, for a new path, one we cannot predict, but which has already been marked.

A new day, and your clinical condition changes. The coma, that antechambers to the inevitable, arrives silently. No one knows the timing; no one truly knows what factors can change the outcome. Everything is in God's hands. And, at that moment, even the doctors, despite all their training, feel helpless. The bitterness of knowing that this battle is long, arduous, and without winners is palpable. We are the victims; there are no heroes on this journey.

Then, in an instant, their eyes close. The machines stop beeping, silence envelops everything. Relatives, overcome by grief, can only resign themselves to the truth that arrives, inexorably. The appointment is finally confirmed. The destination has been reached.

I would have gladly given up, I would have given everything for just one more moment, to feel that my effort, my very being, had contributed to saving other lives. But the appointment has arrived, and there is no choice. Only acceptance. The awareness that it is in giving up that we find the true meaning of what we have given.

Times of Reflection

Every life begins with a deep bond, the one with its mother. A mother who we hope is in good health, who lives in a stable environment, who comes from a family that taught her love and care. I, like so many, am the fruit of that bond, of that love, hoping that no unexpected event has disrupted my destiny. A mother who gives me time, love, and good things, because I am her child and her hope.

However, not all mothers are the same. There are mothers who make enormous sacrifices, who fight with all their might to ensure their children's future. Yet not all children are born into the same circumstances. In Naples, for example, there is a wheel where newborns who cannot be raised for economic reasons are left. And often, behind those little bodies arriving into this world, there is a name that speaks to a harsh reality: "Antonio Esposito, son of NN."

Middle-class families sometimes live a life that appears more prosperous than it is. They are accustomed to showing off, hiding the sacrifices and debts they accumulate, but appearances become their refuge. Wealth, in fact, is a difficult concept to measure. You can build a sandcastle on the seashore, but all it takes is a small wave to see it fall apart in an instant. So, it is with life. Behind the appearance of success often hides insecurities that no one wants to reveal.

In Italy, it is said that the poor do not exist. The economic system, the opportunities offered, and the kindness of people make it difficult to imagine a condition of need. However, the reality is that need, poverty, exists in an invisible form, often unrecognized by those who have the power to see.

For those who tend to pass gratuitous judgments on everything, there is only one best remedy: the awareness that cruelty is

always a cold dish, ready to be served at any moment. Nothing is achieved without effort, and every act of cruelty leaves scars, not only those who suffer it, but also on those who inflict it. We must always remember that true wealth lies not in appearance, but in the hearts of those who care about what is enormously important: love, family, and authenticity.

Do not Lose the Habit

There are things we do automatically, without being aware of them, as if we were rigidly following a mental pattern, and no one points anything out to us because it is convenient for others.

Habit is an old disease that had its Christmases long ago, and the processes for reversing the trend lie in the new needs that flourish and allow us to change.

Often, in a couple, the two older people do the exercise of saying: do you remember how you were when you were young?

And to avoid arguing, he never responds, but only makes a gesture of agreement.

Character is the true foundation of an individual, who, as he or she grows, acquires a wealth of information, and develops, sometimes finding the right fit, other times taking a path of no return, with fixed-term life contracts.

Mother's food, those flavors, those colors, the cooking, the secret ingredient, which was always the result of a cooking mistake, but which had yielded positive results, and we hoping to find a wife with the same qualities, we are just boring to think about it, she is another man's daughter.

Our children, our daughters-in-law, our grandchildren, and us who are navigating this new game that is our life expanded to new experiences and emotions, but when we see a beautiful woman on the street, we don't betray our habit and our eyes alone know where to go.

Saturday morning with friends playing bets, having coffee and croissants, and talking about Mrs. Maria who was found in bed with three black men and only by an unfortunate coincidence her husband was not involved.

Evening comes, dinner is eaten, a small glass of the new bottle of Amaro they brought me, and sitting in my armchair I listen to my classical music which means nothing to most, but at 90 I have understood that you cannot fight innocence, because the mother of a fool is always pregnant.

Carla has already gone to sleep, I arrive late and I do not miss the pleasure of approaching her and saying: what beautiful perfume my love!!!

Do you turn around quickly but still want to get busy at your age?

I would say so: it is a question of habit.

Two Like Us

The constant search for meeting people who were as close as possible to my characteristics had seemed like easy exercise but soon proved impossible.

I thought that by looking at my city, its culture, its history, its customs, I would have an easy time finding people like me, but instead the reality exceeded my wildest expectations.

In a role-playing game, I tried to analyze myself, question myself, and noticed that peculiarities never belong to the collective but are only for the exclusive use of the individual.

And then I asked myself what I looked for in people? Simple intelligence.

Yes, because everything started from there, there was no doubt, and then each person personalized the principles and values they were inspired by, according to their own intentions, as well as the emotional involvement, passion, and romance required to be defined as a pleasant and well-liked person.

But there would have been many things to add, I was a simple salesman, but further analysis fell within the competence of doctors to whom responsibilities could be delegated, the only ones qualified to do so.

I always wanted someone who looked like me by my side. Having three children had given me the joy of physical resemblance, only to fall back into the abyss when I discovered that all three of them resembled my wife.

After much wandering, I finally succeeded in my intent. I found someone exactly like me, someone I could talk to and who was willing to listen to me. It was my reflection in the mirror. It was just a momentary exercise, and it ended right there.

In everything we do, we are subject to judgment. If a person is a victim of psychiatric illness, every behavior, everything that happens, everything said, every impression, has a clinical implication that indicates a new pathology.

When you are in front of your psychiatrist, speak as little as possible, this leads you to do less harm to yourself, by not seeing yourself accused of greater pathologies than those you have and the simultaneous growth of the Therapeutic Plan.

We are unique, we must never make the mistake of trying to change people, each of them has a story and an ending, it would be boring to change the course of destiny.

The Sweet and the Bitter

Fruit is one of life's simplest pleasures, but also a symbolic reflection of our experiences, where sweet and bitter coexist. As a young man, I worked at the general market, exchanging my labor for fruit to eat without limits. Those days taught me the generosity of food, but also the temptations of excess.

I still remember one night: after a party, I bought a 16-kilo watermelon and, driven by greed, ate it all. The consequence? Immediate hospitalization. The incident taught me a lasting lesson: even the most genuine pleasures, if not moderated, can become a burden.

Fruit, in its infinite varieties, continues to be a central theme in my life. Cherries, medlars, and bread with jam are part of my daily routine. Each fruit, with its unique flavor, reminds me that sweetness does not exist without bitterness. It is a lesson that extends to life itself: the richest experiences are often those balanced between joy and hardship.

Today, I carefully choose what I consume, not just at the table but in life. It is a dance between indulgence and control, a balance between what we desire and what we truly need. It is the balance between sweet and bitter that makes life fulfilling and meaningful.

A Message

The lessons never end, when you think you have achieved a good ability to understand things and comprehend them, it happens that you are no longer able to complete your Puzzle in the moment.

Having had the fortune of being able to practice the science of sales for thirty-five years, and having applied it to multiple nations, to multiple peoples, has truly taught me that everything has a time that must be respected.

We happened to be stuck in the Savannah, locked in a Jeep Land Rover, many years ago, stopped on a small river and the surprise of a 400 kg lion, who decided to rest on the hood of the car and did not want to leave, I urged the guide to do something to get it removed, but he replied that this was the time of the Lion and no one could do anything.

Then running and doing frequent work accelerations with colleagues in the sector, managing to interact using up to four cell phones at a time, was truly incredible, but respecting deadlines.

But this reflection was born exclusively to motivate some of my irrational but motivational behaviors.

You must do the shopping at home and always the last message is the one that completes the purchases even if you are on the stairs coming home.

Punctuality is no longer a talent, a peculiarity, but becomes a gift that few people can afford.

Then there is me who posts my messages on social media and then deletes them after 24 hours: why?

The motivation should be only one: to read, memorize, experience pleasure, without forgetting, waiting for the next message.

The logic of an Author, but what can you do about it, imperfection lives in man as his unique way of being.

CLOSED PAGE

I did not write to be accepted. I
wrote to be whole.

This book is what remains when you strip away everything that is unnecessary:
the ego, fear, the need to please.

I do not seek approval.
I seek consistency. And that is enough.

To the reader: if you have found a part of yourself, it means this book had a specific audience. And that audience was you.

— **FF**