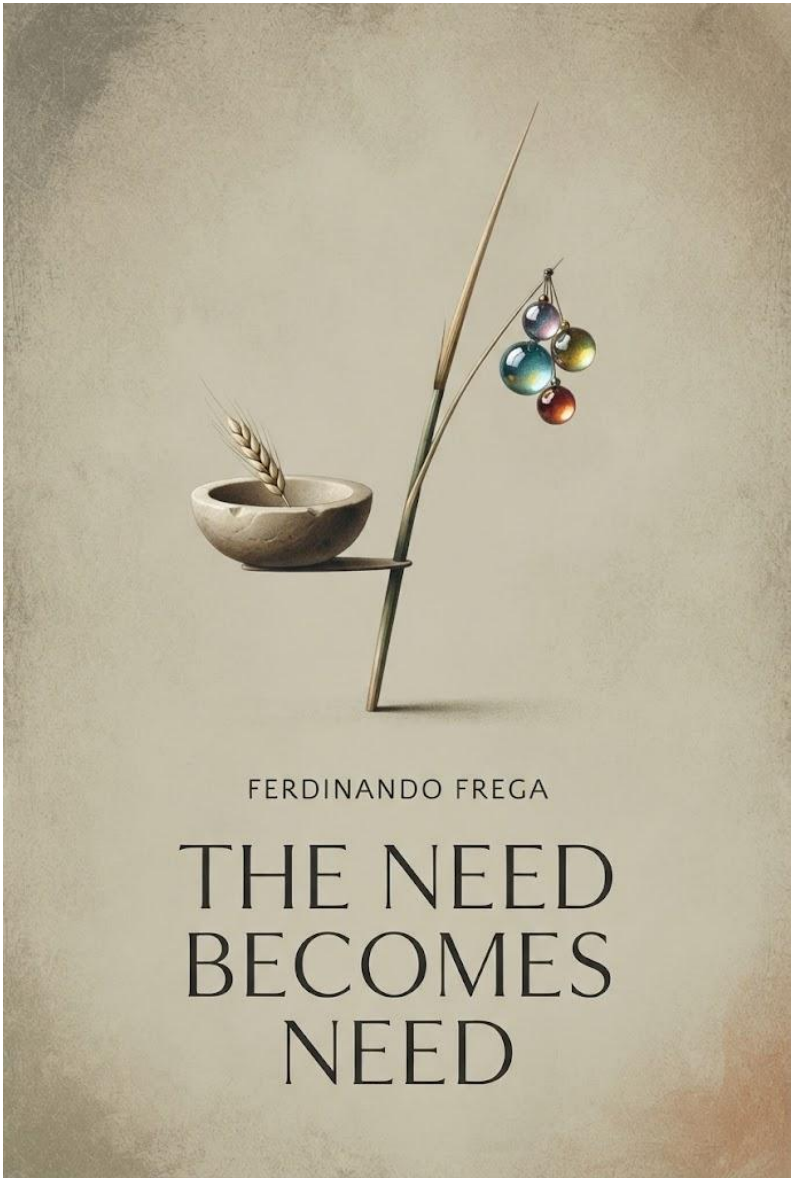
FERDINANDO FREGA
THE NEED BECOMES NEED

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**FERDINANDO FREGA**

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# PREMISE

When I was convinced, I knew everything about women, I finally had definitive proof that I was in total darkness. My sixty years did not certify experience, but rather an awareness of limitations. And that, yes, was a certainty.

On Christmas Eve 2025, I was in Cagliari, far from my family. I had been invited by a local television station to talk about my literary journey. I had to explain that I did not sell

on publishing platforms and that my sole mission was to recommend books, starting with my own series.

I arrived at the hotel at 4:30 PM. The lobby was buzzing. During check-in, they asked me about my profession. I jokingly replied, "Expert connoisseur of women."

Nobody smiled.

But next to me, a beautiful girl must have been thirty—looked at me and asked if I could follow her. Surprises, with women, have never scared me.

We entered a large room. Dozens of people were preparing an event. I was immediately drawn in.
The woman we were celebrating was turning 115. Everyone present was her relatives.

The girl introduced me to her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. All in great shape. Beautiful. With a noticeably clear genetic trait: *we stay young for life.*

There were exactly ninety-six guests.
I was the only outside guest. I was supposed to tell some stories about women. But the real story was happening right then.

To better understand who I was talking to, I started asking questions.
I got straight to the birthday girl:

1. How old is he?
2. Where is her husband?
3. How many years where you been married?

4. How long has she been a widow?

5. How many children does he have?

6. What do you think of this birthday?

7. Is she completely autonomous?

8. What is the memory that you most enjoy keeping? He looked at me and said:

—Dear boy, when women stop possessing what they have, they always seek something new. I fall into this category. I was married for eighty-two years. Until the last day of my husband's life, we made love. We always loved each other. Now he has gone to the father's house. The true memory he left me is his survivor's pension: it never abandons me and keeps his memory alive.

Then he added:

—Of all the people here, I do not see anyone I could get engaged to. But I might like her. I might even try.

I turned red.

I had never seen such initiative and courage combined. Then I remembered the last book I had written. And the answer was already there, in the title.

**When there is really a need… anything can happen.**

# INTRODUCTION

Reading this book does not require continuity, but presence.
Each section can be approached individually, but the meaning only emerges over time.

A quick read is not recommended.
Not because it is difficult, but because it does not really take you anywhere.

# THEMATIC PARTITION

The text is organized into thematic nuclei, not narrative chapters:

- The daily need
- The growing concern
- The mind that observes.
- The interior figures
- Silence as space
- Individual resistance

Each theme returns several times, from different angles.

# CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The chapters are short, self-contained, and often inconclusive.

They do not follow narrative progression, but rather a **progression of awareness.**

Repetition is not a flaw.
It is the method.

# PROLOGUE TO THE STORIES

The following stories should not be read as narratives. The characters do not represent individuals, but **states of mind.**

They do not have an evolution. They
have a function.

They serve to make visible what normally remains internal.

## My Day at the Supermarket

Saturday morning, 9:00 a.m.
I entered the supermarket with a simple plan: milk, bread, cheese. That is it.

Ten minutes later, I found myself in the cereal aisle. Then in the exotic sauces aisle. Finally, in front of a mysterious corner of spices whose existence I had never known existed.

That is where fate decided to collaborate.

I met two genuinely nice Japanese friends who needed advice. Not on what to buy, but on where to eat. Within half an hour, we had lunch together. In the afternoon, we strolled around the city like old friends.

Toward evening, I returned to the supermarket. Without any real need, but with the distinct feeling that *something* was missing.

I find myself faced with an endless row of cookies. I do not know how I got there.
The cart is full of things that did not even exist in my mental universe that morning but now seemed indispensable.

At the checkout, the cashier looks at me, smiles, and asks: "Is there anything you were looking for?"

I look at her too, with the same confused smile, and reply:
— I do not even know how I ended up with all this."

At that moment I understood one simple thing: the supermarket is not a place of purchase.

It is a place of transformation.
Needs become desires. Desires become beliefs. And beliefs become excuses.

I left with three full bags and an empty certainty.
I lacked nothing. I had only confused need with noise.

## My Attempt at Yoga

When I hear the word *yoga,* my brain makes an automatic, but incorrect, association: cheap German yogurt, like Lidl. Then someone starts talking about inner peace, balance, serenity. And I think: *why not?*

After ten minutes, I realized something fundamental: my body and yoga have never met before. And it shows.

I am used to bodyweight exercises, but not to hanging upside down like a dog who forgotten where he buried his bone.
Every time the video said *downward-facing dog,* my dog would look at me with a noticeably clear expression: this *is not for you.*

I am trying to relax.
I am trying to fold an iron into a box that is too small.

I laugh more than I breathe.
My body creaks. My mind comments. Balance remains a theoretical hypothesis.

After thirty minutes, the revelation comes: yoga is patience. Mine is finished.

I have not found inner peace.
I have not found balance. But I have found my limit.

And it is called *the cobra pose.*

## The Diet I Don't Like

It was one of those guru diets.
The ones that promise to change your life in fourteen days if you give up living it.

My wife insisted.
Even a cousin of hers—who until recently could not find his pants—had lost weight. And he was still alive. It seemed like scientific proof enough.

I read the program. Enthusiastic comments. *Before* - and-*after photos*.

I convince myself: *OK, let us get serious.*

The result of my dietary discipline?
Seven hundred and fifty grams of Nutella. A lack of affection. A lack of women. A breakfast that deserved therapeutic support.

The first day goes smoothly: vegetables, seeds, things that do not greet the stomach upon entry.
The stomach, in fact, protests.
It speaks.
It says: *Who cares... pasta, meat, bread...*

A ventriloquist's stomach.

Then I saw a box of cookies.
And that's when Plan B comes into play.

I took refuge with my widowed neighbor. A few weeks ago, she had started a new life. And the kitchen was her kingdom.

He hides me.
He makes me eat cookies. He makes me believe I am still an attractive woman.

*Just one,* I tell myself.
Then two. Then three.

Each biscuit is a kiss stolen from temptation.

I feel like a drug addict going through withdrawal, but under the guise of well-being.

The widow enters the scene with lingerie as her plan of attack. I am only there for two cookies. Three.

Dieting has become a declaration of war on myself.
Temptation is a superpower: it corrupts you, convinces you, absolve you. Until you realize you have eaten three portions of cake and two bags of chips.

I put off my diet until tomorrow. As
always.

I greet the widow every day.
*Tomorrow,* however, I will never seem to live here.

## Contrasting Emotions

Solitude, as a concept and as a lived experience, brings with it a series of conflicting emotions, a tension between desire and fear, between the need for detachment and the fear of abandonment. This duality dawns on me in moments of reflection and makes me aware of the complexity of this choice. Solitude is never an easy decision, especially when preceded by a period of social frenzy, of relationships that consume us and always leave us feeling inadequate. On the one hand, there is an unconscious desire to retreat into a private space, without the pressure to fit in with others, without having to justify every move or thought.

On the other hand, there is the fear of becoming invisible, of losing touch with the world, of being forgotten. When I reflect on these conflicting emotions, it is as if I am going through an emotional storm. The fear of losing connection with others mixes with the awareness that this connection has never been truly authentic. Initially, I perceive loneliness as

a void to be filled, but as time passes, I understand that it is precisely this void that is the key to my freedom. Solitude, in fact, is not absence, but possibility: it is the space in which I can finally rediscover who I am without the reflection of others, without having to be someone else to meet their expectations.

## Solitude as a Rediscovered Freedom

At first, solitude was a refuge I had chosen to protect myself. I was not ready to face the voices of the world, the expectations that seemed to loom over me every step. Relationships that once made sense were now merely fragile bonds, built on social conventions rather than true affection. The friends I had once known so well turned out to be distant, often searching for answers more in my actions than in my feelings. Every conversation felt like a mission to gather details about my life, as if I had become a news story and no longer a person. I was tired of having to justify myself, of having to explain every aspect of myself. And so, I decided to step back, close doors and windows, and let the solitude take hold.

At first, it was not easy. Solitude struck me like a forced confinement, a dark corner where the echoes of my thoughts resonated louder. I felt lost in a world that no longer felt like my own. It was difficult to separate myself from that longing for approval, which need to feel visible to others. Solitude, unfortunately, felt like an escape, a response to an inadequacy I did not know how to resolve. I took refuge in silence, but my heart was still restless, waiting for a sign, a voice that would tell me I was doing the right thing.

As time passed, however, something changed. That solitude that initially felt like a prison began to reveal itself as a place of possibility. I realized that without the interference of the outside world, without the burden of others' expectations, I could finally listen to myself. And the more I listened, the more I realized how much I needed this space to breathe. Every day, that silence that had seemed unbearable to me began to transform. From a painful separation, it became a precious refuge, where I could explore my thoughts, my dreams, and my fears without the fear of being judged.

At that moment, the thought of Schopenhauer came to mind. He had lived for thirty-one years in total solitude, far from society and its conventions. For him, solitude was not a punishment, but a necessity for growth and self-awareness. Solitude, he wrote, was the path to detachment from the "illusory" concerns of the world, which are the fruit of incessant "wanting," a force that continually pushes us to seek external gratification. I realized that, like Schopenhauer, I was learning to recognize that true freedom lies in being detached from this constant quest for approval and success. Solitude, in this perspective, was not an escape, but a conscious choice to connect with the deepest and most authentic part of myself.

I began to understand that solitude was not just an absence of companionship, but a powerful and regenerating presence. Far from distractions, I found the courage to face my most intimate truths. I was no longer afraid of what I was discovering about myself. Every thought, every reflection, every emotion was no longer a battle against the world, but a silent dance with my essence. In that solitary space, I could finally be true to myself, without the need to put up a facade

to please anyone. And this freedom, which at first seemed like a burden, became a gift.

Solitude taught me not to depend on what others thought of me. I no longer needed external validation or approval. I discovered that my validity lay not in the eyes of others, but in my own heart. I did not need to appear perfect or complete in the eyes of the world. My authenticity became the only measure that mattered. In that silence, I became stronger, more aware of who I was and what I wanted from life. I was no longer afraid of living without masks. Solitude, just as I had feared it, had become the key to my inner freedom.

Now, every moment spent in solitude was an opportunity for growth, for introspection. Every step I took, however solitary, brought me closer to the best version of myself. Solitude was no longer a refuge from the world, but a path to freedom. In that profound silence, my mind cleared, and my heartbeat faster, with a rhythm that finally felt like my own. There were no more distractions, no more chaos from other people's opinions. There was only my being, simple and true.

And now, looking back, I realize that solitude gave me the greatest gift: the ability to become free. Free to be myself, without fear, without the constant need to validate my existence in the eyes of others. In that solitude, I learned to live with myself, to love myself for who I am, without the need for any other reflection. And in this freedom, I found myself. There was no longer anything that tied me to the past, to pain, or to the expectations of others. There was only the present, and the awareness that, now, solitude was no longer a burden, but an opportunity. An opportunity to finally be free.

## Daily Experiences

Daily experiences in solitude are moments that have taught me to live more mindfully. When there are no other voices to distract me, my world becomes richer, deeper. Walking in the park, watching the leaves slowly fall, listening to the sound of the wind rustling the branches of the trees, these are all experiences I would have previously taken for granted. Now, however, every daily gesture is an act of awareness. In solitude, I discover that the world around me is full of beauty, even in its most imperfect forms. Solitude allows me to pause, to observe, to appreciate, to feel deeply.

Even the trivial things, which I would have previously ignored, now have meaning. A morning coffee, a walk without a destination, a book to read. Solitude has taught me to be present, to live in the moment. It is no longer an absence of companionship, but an opportunity for deep connection with myself and the world around me.

## The Strength Within You

As solitude becomes my companion, I begin to discover the strength it brings. It is no longer a burden, but a gift that allows me to remain true to myself. Solitude has taught me not to depend on others to find happiness. I have learned to build a life based on my inner freedom, without having to constantly adapt to others or their expectations. In this solitary space, I can finally listen to my heart and follow my most authentic desires.

I am no longer forced to satisfy others' needs, to conform to their visions of life. Now, I can be myself without fear. Solitude has given me the strength to rediscover my worth,

to understand that I am not defined by my relationships, but by my relationship with myself. Every day I spend solitude, my strength grows, and I realize that this solitude is my true freedom.

## The Border of Resistance

I remained trapped within the walls of my home, day after day. My life seemed to have been reduced to a series of sacrifices, ones I had never truly accepted. The sacrifices I made seemed to become increasingly burdensome and endless. Every item I sold was not just money for my family, but a symbol of what I had lost. My car, my phone, the gold chain I had inherited from my mother, the bracelet I had bought to celebrate a happy moment in my life... everything that reminded me of a serenity that now seemed like a distant dream. Each item I sold seemed to bring me a step closer to desperation, but at the same time it felt like it was the only thing I could do to try to keep my family afloat. As if I were paying some sort of debt, even if I had never asked to.

But my family, despite everything, did not understand. Every day I was bombarded with criticism, accusations, and contempt. I was not working. I did not have a "real" job, as if my dedication to what I was trying to build was worthless. "You should go back to doing something serious," they said. Their words pierced me like sharp blades. It was not just my inability to maintain my place in the world that made me feel empty, but the judgment of those who were supposed to support me. Normally they were demanding of me, however, they had nothing to do with who I had become. And yet, the more they insisted, the further I distanced myself from that reality.

The real difficulty did not just come from the impossibility of working "normally," but from the conflict that was growing within the home. Battling two women with incredible willpower was never easy. My wife, who had grown accustomed to managing everything, maintaining the appearance of a "normal" life, saw me only as a burden. And my daughter, young but determined, seemed to have allied herself with her mother in every criticism. Instead of trying to understand, they continued to bombard me with words that sought to diminish me. Not just words of contempt, but phrases that aimed to make me feel useless, to make me feel that my project was nothing more than a dream from which I had to awaken.

Every day was a battle, and I felt more like a soldier losing ground. But inside me was a strength they did not know. In a world that rejected me, where my worth was being questioned, I had decided not to give up. Their strategy was clear: send me into a depression, destroy my self-esteem until I fell into an abyss. But they failed. No matter how hard they tried to make me doubt myself, there was a part of me that remained steadfast. And this part of me did not want to give up. I could not give in.

Yet, despite my inner strength, the weight of loneliness and criticism was crushing me. The moments when I felt fragile became increasingly frequent. I had spent so many years trying to understand who I was, searching for meaning in everything that was happening to me, but at a certain point, the idea of running away seemed like the only way out. I no longer knew what to do, how to move forward, where to find the courage. I decided that the solution was to escape. Not physically, but deeply. I thought the only way to free myself

was to become a homeless person. To distance myself from everything: from them, from my life, from society. I would take the train and leave, aimlessly, without a clear direction. I needed nothing, just to get away from that reality that was suffocating me.

That evening, however, as I was preparing to leave, something made me pause. My mind, which was now leading me to the brink of surrender, received a glimpse of clarity. In that moment, I thought of my children. I had already lost so much, but they did not deserve to see the outcome of that struggle as a total defeat. They had always seen me fight, but I had never prepared them for such a devastating failure. I had raised them to fight, to resist, and now I would have to be their example of strength.

When my children, who work in northern Italy, came to visit me, their arrival was like a lifeline. They stopped me before I could make that irreversible move. They asked me to stay, they told me about their lives, their work, how they looked to me as a guide. Their voices, which until then had been only a distant memory, brought me back to reality. I could not do this to them. I could not let them see my abandonment. I returned home, knowing that the real battle was not against my wife or my daughter, but against that part of me that wanted to give up.

That evening, as I returned home, I understood something fundamental: my struggle was only just beginning. Resistance, true resistance, was not in escaping my reality, but in changing my perception of it. I did not need to escape, but to rebuild, to give new meaning to what I was experiencing. It was then that I understood that my path

would not be easy, but it would be mine. No one else could author my story, and my story would not end with surrender. It began right then, with the knowledge that, despite everything, the strength to start over was within me.

## The Symphony of Being

Music is one of those universal languages that transcends words. It is a force that goes beyond simple melody and harmony, a subtle thread that unites heart and mind, body, and soul. It is not only an accompaniment to daily life, but a soundtrack to our emotions, our most intimate reflections, moments of joy and even sorrow. Yet, music has a unique peculiarity: often, we do not need to fully understand its meaning. It can speak a language we do not fully understand, yet it touches us profoundly, sometimes more than the words themselves.

I am reminded of that feeling we all experience when listening to a foreign song. We do not always understand the lyrics, but the music resonates with us in a way that requires no translation. It is as if we have access to a world that, even if it does not speak our language, tells us something universal. And yet, we cannot help but reflect on how the profound meaning of the words can change our relationship with music. Because even if a melody uplifts us, we cannot ignore that its power could intensify if only we fully understood the message it carries. This paradox is when, unwittingly, we lose a translation and wonder what the experience would have been like if we had been able to grasp every nuance of those words.

Reflection on music is intertwined with an awareness that surprises me every time I think about it: its power lies not only in its ability to communicate, but also in its ability to remain silent when the volume is turned down. I have learned that the most powerful music is not that which invades every space, but that which adapts to our inner being, modulating and silencing itself to allow us to reflect. Music, in fact, becomes more effective when it respects our sensory balance. Too high a volume can disrupt perception, turning a source of pleasure into a form of disturbance. This is why modulating sound, regulating its intensity, becomes essential for true connection.

This awareness accompanied me one morning in May 2024, when, without any preconceptions, I decided to listen to a random selection on YouTube Music. I expected to hear the usual tunes, the ones that have become part of my daily repertoire. But that morning, an unexpected encounter surprised me. I clicked on a radio station and, by chance, found myself on Radio Maria. And not only the music, but also the lyrics accompanying that station struck me deeply. It was something I had not sought, but it surprised me with its depth. Religious content, which seems distant from many of my daily experiences, found a place in my reflection. I realized that, at that moment, I was experiencing an encounter between two dimensions: the material, every day one, and the spiritual one, which often intertwine in unexpected ways.

Radio Maria was not just a religious broadcast; it was a symphony of voices and sounds that spoke of values that, in some way, mirrored my own journey. I felt as if music and spirituality merged, creating a sort of harmony between my

inner being and the world around me. It was as if I had found confirmation amidst so much uncertainty, a sign that my search, however silent, was on a path that made sense.

At that moment, I was no longer alone. Not because the loneliness had disappeared, but because I had found companionship that helped me recognize a deeper aspect of myself. I remained silent, but I no longer felt isolated. Music, with its discreet yet powerful presence, had created a bridge that connected me to others, even though I was still physically alone. It unites but is not intrusive; it accompanies but does not direct. This silence, which becomes a space for reflection and listening, reminded me that, at times, music is the greatest traveling companion, not because it shouts, but because it can adapt to our pace, following our moments, our intuitions, our uncertainties.

Music is not just something we listen to. It is a silent language that helps us understand ourselves, connect with the world around us, and our deepest emotions. Like a symphony of being, it plays within us, every moment, if only we are willing to listen.

## The Distant Looks

My family stood there, watching. They had never believed I would embark on a path like that. Despite my academic achievements, their vision of me was still tied to that of a boy who would settle for whatever life offered him. They were partly right: I had never accomplished anything extraordinary. But this time was different. That dream I had decided to pursue, that path I had never taken, was not just a passing whim. Yet, they saw nothing but improbable folly.

They stood still, motionless, as if watching me from afar, as if they feared I was venturing down a path I could never walk. There, between them, there was nothing but indifference and a hint of skepticism. They observed me, like one observes a painting in a gallery: with curiosity but never considering that this could be my destiny. They did not support me, they did not believe in my dream.

Time passed, and with it came the criticism. It never stopped. Months passed, then years, and every time I reached a goal, every time I overcame an obstacle, the negative words were never far away. "You won't go far," they would say, "this is just a phase." Their every judgment struck a chord, but I learned to look beyond, to ignore, to focus only on what drove me forward. I realized I did not need their approval to grow, to be who I wanted to be.

And yet, those words remained. Like a burden that accompanied me, they never left me. But over time, I learned to bear them. Every criticism, every doubt expressed, only strengthened me. I did not hate them, I understood them. They could only express what they thought, what they saw.

My vision was different. My path was not their path, and it never would be. And so, when my family's words became heavy, I realized that they were not defining me, but their fears, their fear of failure.

Three years have passed, and today the sound of their voices no longer affects me. What they think of me no longer matters, because I know that every step I take is my own. If they call me a failure, if they think I am wasting my time, it does not matter. The real defeat would have stopped for fear

of listening to them. Instead, I am here, stronger than before, and I am making my own path, with or without their permission.

## The Difficulty of Toxic Relationships

Toxic relationships are not always easy to recognize. Sometimes they masquerade as friendships, as seemingly genuine bonds, but are based on dynamics of dependence, unrealistic expectations, and selfishness disguised as affection. There comes a moment when, looking in the mirror, I realize these relationships no longer serve me. The people I thought I knew, who I thought were part of my life, have become intrusions into my inner world. I have begun to feel their presence as a constraint, like a weight that prevents me from breathing. Every conversation, which once seemed like an act of companionship, now feels like a succession of empty words, questions that do not really seek answers, but only confirmation.

Deleting a friend's number, or simply not responding to a text, is an act of great courage. It is not just about physically distancing ourselves but about dealing with the guilt that pervades us. Every time I decline a call, a part of me wonders: "Am I doing the right thing? Am I being selfish? A little company would do me good?" But the truth is, every time I walk away from a relationship that does not nourish me, I feel like I am coming back to myself, recovering a part of myself that I had lost. The difficulty in making these decisions stems from the fact that we are social by nature, but not all relationships are beneficial. Learning to say "no" is an act of self-preservation, which often coincides with the rebirth of our inner self.

## Philosophical Reflection

Solitude, viewed philosophically, is a concept rooted in the history of human thought. Schopenhauer, one of the philosophers who most influenced me on this journey, saw solitude as a path to rediscovering the essence of life. According to him, man is destined to live in solitude, even in the closest relationships, because true self-knowledge can only be achieved through detachment from external influences. Far from the crowd, far from social compromises, the individual can finally see reality for what it is: a meaningless game, which only solitude can reveal in its rawness.

This concept has accompanied me throughout my journey. Solitude is not just a means of escaping the world, but a process of inner clarity. In it, all that is superfluous is swept away, leaving us with only what is essential. The illusions and lies we tell ourselves dissolve, leaving us face to face with the truth of our existence. Yet this truth is often uncomfortable, difficult to accept. It shows us our weaknesses, our mistakes, and forces us to confront them without the possibility of hiding them behind a facade. But in this painful process of revelation, there also lies the possibility of growth and change.

## Poverty

Looking at the world, the first and most obvious form of poverty manifests itself in hunger and thirst, often aggravated by uncontrolled disease, lack of medicine, and scarcity of care. This condition of material deprivation is experienced in contexts where housing is a distant idea, sanitation is

nonexistent or rudimentary, and daily life takes place outdoors, without adequate protection.

Yet material poverty is not the only dimension. There are human beings who do not know the comfort of hot water, the pleasure of sitting around a set table, or the warmth of a family. They do not have clothes to protect them, nor the ability to have fun or enjoy trivial things. And despite it all, many of them smile. A genuine smile, one that seems to say: *"God, we're still here, and we want to make it."*

In stark contrast, the consumerist society of advanced countries presents a more subtle, less visible, but equally dangerous poverty: poverty of image. Here, people strive to appear to be something they are not, hiding an inner fragility behind a facade of perfection. It is a latent poverty, made up of poor education, envy, and the inability to recognize one's own limitations.

This condition breeds hypocritical and opportunistic behavior. It is common for top managers at the top of large companies to be surrounded by mediocre collaborators. Why? The logic is simple: a capable deputy might aspire to the top job, but an untalented one will always remain subordinate. This system fuels a vicious cycle where mediocrity perpetuates itself, often to the detriment of merit.

Helping the poor is a moral duty, but it must be done wisely. Giving too much too quickly can be counterproductive. Like someone lost in the desert dreaming of water: if it is offered all at once, their body cannot manage it. Likewise, the poor must learn to appreciate the value of what they receive, through a gradual process that allows them to appreciate and

preserve what they have. Otherwise, they risk squandering it all at the first opportunity.

And then there are the poor in spirit. These are those people who, despite frequenting groups and gatherings, remain distant, incapable of truly connecting with others. They maintain an attitude of superiority, looking down on the world with a sense of contempt or indifference.

Totò reminds us of a universal truth in his famous poem *'A Livella* ': *"Death makes everyone equal."* Rich and poor, powerful, and humble, at the end of days they are united by an inevitable fate. It is a lesson that invites us to reflect on the meaning of life and the value of the things that truly matter humanity, sharing, and the ability to find joy in simplicity.

True wealth lies not in possessing, but in giving, in building authentic connections, and in finding a balance between what we have and what we can offer. This is the greatest challenge for a world that must learn to recognize not only material poverty, but also poverty of the heart and mind.

## The Life of a Manager

Wake up at 6:00 a.m. Thirty minutes of running, shower, newspaper reading, breakfast, 8:30 a.m. in the office.

Always arriving before the employees and always leaving last are two good signs for the entire company: coffee breaks at 10:30, snacks at 1:30, and at 6:30 he heads outside, where he makes some personal purchases and a business meeting, before heading home at 8:00, where dinner is finally ready.

At 9:30 pm he sits down at his desk with his laptop and desktop computer to exchange useful data and information of the day, where he begins to develop plans and innovative ideas with the aim of always making a profit.

He goes to sleep at 1 a.m. There is always someone to keep his bed warm, and he indulges in his mechanical side.

At 3:00 he falls asleep and wakes up at 6:00.

He therefore sleeps only three hours a night, in line with developed Eastern techniques which tell us that this is sufficient time to recover from tiredness.

Saturday and Sunday are two days dedicated to his entertainment, leisure, and family, and on this occasion, he does not like to be disturbed by anyone, especially not by his work colleagues or company.

A manager earns money, it is true, but he carries the weight of responsibilities that, if managed poorly, cause insurmountable damage and much pain to many people.

Often, or always, this role is not a badge to be placed on a jacket, but the ongoing recognition attested by all employees and the management, considering it a resource and not an investment.

## Not Everyone Likes You!

The first meeting is often a decisive moment. In an instant, a feeling creeps in and shapes our opinion: positive or negative, it leaves its mark. But in today's world, with social networks and technology permeating our daily lives, it has become easier to sense when others do not like us. Sometimes a single

detail is enough: an ignored friend request, a comment that does not arrive, an unanswered email, or a declined phone call.

Behind all this lies a deeper phenomenon: our innate need to maintain an intimate, protective space, which we do not want to share lightly. It is not just about privacy, but a kind of emotional barrier that the modern world has amplified.

For example, a recent study on the social media behavior of women in southern Italy found that 70% of them use fake profiles to protect their personal space. It is an understandable choice, born out of a desire for security, but it inevitably limits the development of authentic relationships. Protecting oneself becomes a habit, and behind this armor often lies the fear of vulnerability.

But the truth is, we do not have to please everyone. Constantly seeking approval is an unnecessary burden, which distances us from ourselves. Instead, what truly matters is recognizing the intrinsic value in each person, seeking to build relationships based on authenticity rather than image or superficial acceptance.

The freedom not to please everyone is an act of courage. It means living in harmony with who we truly are, without worrying about pleasing the entire world. We cannot be everything to everyone, but we can be authentic to ourselves. And in that authenticity lies our greatest strength.

## The First Step Was a Leap

When I was younger, I thought "free thinking" was something elusive, reserved for a select few. Those who dared to think freely seemed like loners, distant from reality and its conventions. But one day, while I was in a room crowded with people discussing topics that did not belong to me in monotonous tones, I realized I had to do something. I could no longer simply follow the others. I had to take the first step toward freedom of thought.

The decision was not easy. I began asking uncomfortable questions, challenging myself with what I was told was absolute truth. Every time I deviated from "normality," the eyes of others fixed on me, as if I were breaking an unwritten rule. But the call of freedom was stronger than any conformity. I discovered that free thinking is not an act of rebellion for its own sake, but a constant search for answers, a willingness to explore even the most uncomfortable truths. Every time I stopped to reflect, I felt closer to that part of myself I had never dared to listen to.

Looking back now, I see how that leap was the first of a long series of steps. It was not easy, and I often found myself doubting my own beliefs. But the path of freethinking led me to a level of awareness I would never have reached by remaining in the comfort zone of conventional wisdom. The first step was the most difficult, but also the most liberating.

## The Escape from Conformity

I remember the day I made the weightiest decision of my life: to stop following the flow. I had always conformed to others, to social expectations, to the rules imposed by family and culture. I knew there was nothing wrong with following the path I had set, but I began to feel like it no longer belonged to me. And it was then that I decided to embrace free thought, to no longer seek the approval of others. The knowledge that I was embarking on a journey into the unknown made me tremble, but something inside me whispered that it was the right path.

The next step was more complicated than I had imagined. The people around me did not understand. They looked at me as if I had gone crazy, as if I had abandoned security for uncertainty. Every choice I made seemed contrary to what others thought was "right." I realized that freedom of thought is not just a gift, but a responsibility. I began to make choices that reflected my true desires, not the expectations of others.

I often confronted solitude, but I never feared it. I discovered that solitude is a precious companion for a free thinker, because it allows one to clarify one's thoughts without external influence. Solitude is not just an absence of companionship, but an opportunity for deep reflection. Over time, I learned to live with my choices, even when they isolated me. Free thinking allowed me to discover who I truly was, and that inner freedom was priceless.

## Silence and Reflection

Many people fear silence. They see it as a threat, as a void to be filled with distractions, words, and noise. I, however, have learned to see silence as an opportunity. When I decided to become a freethinker, I understood that silence was not something to be avoided, but to be sought. It is only in silence that the mind can truly explore, reflect, and find clarity.

I remember one night when, after a long day filled with conversations and activities, I decided to turn off everything: the phone, the television, the lights. I sat in the dim light, the noise of the world outside seeming light years away. It was then that I began to reflect on what I had always taken for granted. The silence helped me see the world in a new light. Without distractions, I could finally come to terms with my deepest beliefs.

Silence is not just the absence of sound; it is a space where ideas can germinate. Every time I allow myself this space, my mind expanded, capable of embracing concepts that, in the noise of everyday life, would have been suppressed.

Being a free thinker means knowing when to listen to silence, when to pause to hear what truly matters. It is in silence that thought finds its freedom.

## The Power of Words

Words are one of the most powerful tools we possess. A free thinker knows that words are not just empty sounds, but vehicles of meaning, capable of both construction and

destruction. The choice of words is never random, and their power must be used consciously. Words have the power to create reality, to change minds, and to shape our thoughts.

I realized this power of words during a conversation with a colleague who was harshly criticizing me. I took his words as a challenge, but instead of responding angrily, I decided to respond calmly and rationally. My words were not aggressive, but rather reflected my conviction and respect for him, despite our differences. That calm and measured response changed the tone of the conversation and brought us to common ground.

Words can change the course of events. A free thinker does not simply react to the words of others but consciously uses them to shape their own reality. Knowing how to choose the right words is a fundamental skill. Words have the power to liberate, inspire, and change the world.

## Conditions

It is the classic story of a husband and wife in a car driving home, when at a certain point she asks her husband to take a shortcut to get there faster, she is indulged and the result is an accident with a tractor and two cows.

Everyone was wondering what the tractor was doing there at 9:00 PM, with two cows grazing, an unusual time, and the husband crying over the damage to the car and making rough estimates for the repairs the next day.

But even when we were young, we would go to the disco in groups and someone would immediately say, "Let's sit here

at this table, it's the best one," when in fact the girls would sit at other tables.

Not to mention all the times my mother forced me to stop at home for lunch on my way home from work, only then to have to endure a series of unexpected events that were never pleasant.

The best part will remain of the five of us friends who go fishing from the boat, and the most skeptical will say outright that it's not the best time for fishing; after an evening of fishing, the four of us caught a lot of fish, while the skeptic didn't catch a single one.

I ask myself: why are we conditioned? It happens because we try, even unconsciously, to be compliant to gain acceptance from other people at all costs.

About thirty years ago, I tried an optimal solution to the problem: always going around alone, never listening to others, always trusting my instincts and intuition, my only faithful allies.

The results were not long in coming, with no new developments or variations of any kind in keeping with the commitments.

I have never had any surprises, I have led my life without conditioning, away from all those who with their magnetism attract negative things.

## The Mediocre

They are easily identified, they have an attitude of suspicion and of things that cannot be done, the only certainty for them is represented by failure.

There is no real distinction between those who are educated and those who are not; character, education, training, family, a particular parent, ensure that this mole always emerges, in any circumstance.

They influence everyone, sometimes they are the passive object of losses, just by expressing a judgement or wanting to practice a conviction.

Today I met a young entrepreneur, proud to have changed jobs after eight years. I could see in his eyes the fear of failure, the same fear he had at losing contact with a new client, just for being a mediocre young man.

The limit of these people, who carry modest but never sufficient certainties, is the belief that what they have done is exactly right.

I believe that making the decision to stay away from this category is one of the best things a person can do, otherwise they would find themselves eating a tomato with six people and with a substantial part still available.

When they speak, they talk about a life they would like, saying they are what they are not, what they have always dreamed of and will never achieve.

Mediocre people are unreliable, do not keep their promises, and are always focused only on themselves; stay away. Their way of looking at things hides malice in their souls; envy and jealousy are their only two friends.

## The Coexistence

A universal judgment in everyday language, cohabitation is thought of when a couple or more people decide to live

together under the same roof, without entering any religious bonds.

But it is not just this: in the family, at work, with friends, with colleagues, every moment lived is linked to a coexistence expressed in terms.

A business trip, or a vacation, whatever the duration, gives you the opportunity to interact with more people, establishing relationships that are limited to that time, but express coexistence.

Your favorite pet, who always sits sadly at home waiting for you, where you exchange glances but no words, is an opportunity to reflect on what the ideal life partner is.

The crowded supermarket, surrounded by so many goods on sale and on sale, which gives you the visual appreciation of some provocatively dressed lady, and with whom you would not fail to strike up a friendship, only to discover later that she is a schoolmate of your wife.

Two longtime friends, whose opinions often get confused, are conservative, you are progressive and you argue about the submarine that sank 3,000 meters below the surface, whether it is right to save them or not, considering they paid a $250,000 ticket. In the end, you discover that you would never have agreed to live together because a poor man cannot die among the rich.

There is only one secret to share with readers: the best way to live is with us. We decide what we want, we know who we are, we feel autonomous and independent, free without constraints. Whoever comes along takes something from us, and we lose our spontaneity.

## Mental Rumination

I had just gotten out of bed, I could not stand comfortably, I was dizzy and I was immediately ready to ask for a drink of water, only to lie back down on the bed and feel the cold shivers.

My wife saw my face looking strange, I was pale white, with black lips, and two pronounced dark circles under my eyes.

He decided to call a private doctor; our GP was only good at multiplying eighty-five euros by the number of people on health insurance, because he did not know anything about medicine, and he also used to get prescriptions wrong.

He arrived almost immediately and, after initially assessing my condition, recommended that my wife immediately admit me to hospital, and took care of calling a private ambulance to take me to the hospital.

Access to the emergency room, red code, admission to intensive care, intubated and under close medical supervision, positioned on a special bed connected to five computers.

But the pathology? Mental rumination.

No one knew what the general causes of this type of pathology were, but the doctor updated us: stressful events, bereavement, the end of a relationship, negative self-image, tough decisions to make.

Everything was there, nothing was missing, just finding the people to blame for each single cause and why me?

Finally, with a flash of insight, I found the immediate solution: change everything, seek out the new that is advancing, the only path to take. Many years have passed now, but fortunately this pathology has never returned, yet people remain the most important things we have.

# POST-SCRIPTUM – PROVOCATION

This book does not close anything.
If anything, it opens a question that does not require an immediate answer.

If something bothers you, it is not a side effect.
It is a sign that a misaligned part has reacted.

Provocation is not what you say.
It is **what remains when you stop explaining.**

Those who reach this point need no guidance.
They have already experienced need, worry, and silence.

This section does not add any content.
It just **removes the last protection.**

Reading the following aphorisms is not mandatory. But those who read them already know why they are doing so.

## Aphorisms

1. Need does not demand solutions. It demands attention.

2. Worry arises when you stop listening and start controlling.
3. Those who think too much are not weak. They are just exposed.
4. Freedom is not doing what you want.
   It stops justifying yourself.
5. Silence does not heal.
   But it reveals.
6. Not everything that weighs on you needs to be resolved.
   Some things need to be carried.
7. Control is a polite form of fear.
8. Solitude is not absence.
   It is unshared space.
9. When you lose value to others, you often gain value to yourself.
10. Lucidity is a form of solitude that not everyone is willing to endure.

## Epilogue

This book ends where it could have begun at a
point of unstable equilibrium.

If something is left unfinished, that is right.
Life does not end conversations. It interrupts them.

Anyone who's read this far has accomplished anything.
They have just **stopped avoiding.**

# CLOSURE

This section is not intended to explain what has been read. It is intended to **stop the movement.**

Once the crossing is complete, no further meaning is needed. It is enough to recognize what has changed.

## Considerations

Writing did not solve anything.
It only made visible what already existed.

Clarity is not a permanent achievement. It is a temporary balance.

## Reflections

Every reader will take away a different part of this book. Not because the text changes, but because the perspective changes.

What matters is not what you have understood, but what **you can no longer ignore.**

## Thanks

No thanks are due.
This book was not born out of a concession, but out of necessity.

To those who read without seeking answers.
To those who crossed without asking permission.