



## MARTIN STORK

*"Discover your roots. Come home to yourself.*

*Live your purpose."*

**I am on a mission to inspire men to push past their emotions, push the limits of their comfort zones, and find out who they truly are. For those who persist, the unique experience of 'coming-back home' awaits. My story is meant to support men like you to reconnect with your father, ancestors and ultimately yourself. Discover your roots. Cut invisible anchor lines from emotions that are holding you back, and allow the man inside of you to propel forward into a life fueled by purpose.**

### COMING BACK HOME

I dial the number. My heart races. A man picks up, "Hello." Do I know this voice? I am not sure. I was hoping the man would say his name, but he didn't. I am starving for certainty, "Who is this?" I ask. A determined voice barks back at me, "You're calling me, you better tell me who you are!"

I don't know why this tone feels familiar, but it does. I go for it, words trembling out of my mouth, "Maybe it's your son." Silence. Decades of silence, decades during which I have been unknowingly disconnected from my source of masculine energy. A less determined voice tentatively utters my name, "Martin?!". Now my heart does not know what to do: jump for joy or run away. My mouth responds unconsciously, "Yes!".

I arrived in Edmonton, Canada, the city of my birth. I was equipped

with only his name, date of birth, and a deep desire to find my father. At two years old, I lost him when my parents split, destined to grow up in Germany without him. My mother feared my father would 'hijack' little Martin and take him back to Canada. Today I am conscious that my younger self made this fear his own. Hence, there was no intention from the little boy to reconnect with his father. Teenage and adult Martin did not have much of that desire either. I was unaware that my father tried for years to connect but gave up after his unsuccessful efforts rewarded him only with pain and he was unable to be the father he desired to be.

"Where are you?" his voice pulls me back. "In Edmonton."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am looking for you, Dad." Emotional silence. I can hear the man on the other side struggling for words.

The previous weeks had been an emotional roller coaster ride. I had contacted all possible governmental institutions to find my father: car registry, property records, and pension institutions. No luck. The only information I was allowed to receive was the fact that no death record existed. Great news, I thought. If he is not dead, I will find him. A missing person report was my final resort. One final check with the google oracle yielded a number. "So where are you? Don't you have my address?" he asked.

"No Dad, I only have the old address where we used to live together when I was still a baby. I went to the house which I recognized from old pictures, but none of the neighbors could point me in your direction." Feelings of fear overwhelmed me as he tells me to come to his new address.

I recognize the anxiety in me, creeping up my chest. I felt it as a little boy in Germany, while my father was talking to me on the phone. "Sorry Dad, I can't make it today. Let's meet in a couple of days."

His voice flips back to barking mode. "In a couple of days?"

"Yes, I need to arrange some things first." His barking continues. I simply hang up. The little boy in the body of the 38-year-old man is about to book a ticket back to Europe, to run away from his father, giving in to 36 years of fear which is not even his own.

No way! I have come so far and you are planning to run away? adult Martin silently argues with young Martin. I have to go beyond my fear to find inner peace and freedom. Otherwise, the hurt little boy will continue to rule my life. I put on my running shoes and head to my father's house. I need to see what feelings arise when I am near. I won't knock on his door yet. After jogging a couple of miles, I turn onto his street. I spot his new house. Closer. A man appears. My heart jumps out of my chest. It is him. Old fear floods

my veins.

I want to turn and run away, but that is not going to happen! The man with the white hair walks towards me, stops, talks to his neighbor. I am about to pass them. My father is standing with his back towards me. Our auras intersect. He turns. He looks at me. I can feel his mind trying to connect the dots but it is not able to do it. I am looking different than what his mind remembers. I continue to run. He turns back to his neighbor. I can feel my joy from seeing him, overruling my little boy fear and hesitation. I'll come back tomorrow, I tell myself. For good.

The next day I ring the bell. The white eagle appears. He opens the door and looks at me. I look at him. Our eyes meet. Silence. The connection is present. We embrace each other. Minutes pass. I hear the words I will never forget, "I'm glad you have made your way son, I have been waiting for 36 years." I am at a loss for words.

"I have something for you Dad," handing him the letter I wrote to speak my truth regardless of what might happen.

#### **Letter to my father**

*More than 38 years ago, I was born in this city. I have been roaming the streets these days and I felt no connection. I was visiting the old house in which I spent the first two years of my life. All of a sudden, old memories started to appear. My subconscious mind started to share some of its wisdom with me. It was a beautiful feeling, a feeling of connection to the place I was born, grounding me. Thirty-eight years is a long time. Becoming older opens up new perspectives. One starts reflecting on one's life in different ways. I always wondered who my father was, what it is that I carry within me from him. The man who got out of Hungary to live in freedom, away from communism. The man who smuggled my mother across the iron curtain into a free world. Over the last few years, I have spent a lot of time on personal development, reflecting on myself. To grow as a human being. To serve my purpose. On this challenging journey, I came across my limitations; I wanted to know why I acted or behaved in specific ways. Throughout the process, questions came up which only one man could answer: my father. Over the years, the only feelings I had for my father were rejection, anger, and disgust for what he allegedly did to my mother...to me. I could feel anger, even rage, coming up. At the same time, whilst looking at old baby pictures where he is playing with me, I could feel tears coming to my eyes. Feeling the love for him that is inside me. Experiencing these completely opposite emotions made me curious—aware that each story has at least two sides. I sought information to better understand my father. Then I saw different angles, acts*

*of love and desperation. A father denied. A man, not able to accompany his son on the journey to manhood. A man also with pain and anger. A man waiting for his son to reach out, to reconnect. Everything in life happens when it is meant to happen. I always thought if I want to break free, I have to forgive my father for everything he did. Today I know that forgiveness is not the right word. Instead, understanding replaces forgiveness. To understand why my father did the things he did. To acknowledge his pain and hardship unfolding along with our joint story in life. To recognize why he lived his life the way he did. Understanding is way more insightful than simply forgiving, as the latter does not entail learning. Forgiving can be a one-way street. Understanding goes both ways. Today, I know you cannot solve a problem with the same energy that created it. Anger will not dissolve anger. Instead of becoming unconscious when old 'wounds' are getting triggered within me, I have chosen to drop into love and understanding. I am curious to hear first hand how my father experienced his life. What made him the man he is today. All these years, I lived with my mother's fears and have made them my own... the fear that my father could take me away from her. Only very recently I fully comprehended that fear. When I let go of it, I felt tremendous relief. I felt freedom in its purest form. Pure Energy. It was like cutting the anchor line, propelling myself forward. Before this "freedom" moment, I had the underlying feeling that I have to return to the place where I was born, like a salmon making its way up the river, to start looking for my father, whose contact details I had lost because I thought I was done with him, once and for all. I have come a long way on my own. Growing up without a father is an experience I do not wish others to have. Looking for a father figure in difficult times meant I had to find other ways, and I did. Today, I have achieved a lot. The key is in the inner work one does, the journey within ourselves. I am where I am today because of the qualities I inherited from my father; his leadership skills, his persistence, his love of freedom, being able to spend time alone, not depending on anybody, enjoying the simple things in life, watching the sunrise and savoring ultimate silence while being alone in the wild, beautiful nature. I am grateful for all of the adventure. These qualities allow me to push my limits in business and in life, like running ultra marathons for days or spending time in the mountains, an experience I genuinely love. In these moments, on my own, my heart is wide open, experiencing pure love and freedom. I am curious to find out if my father had to give up any of his dreams, his visions, or career for the choices he made. I wonder, if what he has experienced as a child, teenager or young man still plays a role today in how he acts, makes choices, or behaves? We are all*

*run by our own "autopilots". The moment we start questioning and looking underneath these programs, we can break free. Today, my father and I do not owe each other anything. At the same time, we both are holding the keys to release each other from the pain of the past. The question is, are we ready to see beyond all these emotions and experiences, and look further than where our autopilots have misled us, pouring concrete in the locks guarding our hearts. Instead of failing to fulfill the expectations of each other, isn't it time to reach an agreement, an agreement that prevents further disappointments and allows us to use the keys to our hearts to allow each of us to be who we are. It is time to break free, once and for all. In love, Your son, Martin*

My father takes the letter and smiles, "Oh, thank you. I hope you don't mind that I won't read it now. I don't want you to think I am behaving differently because I read it." Wow, I didn't expect that kind of self-reflection from the man my mother had painted in my mind. I was glad he made this effort to be himself. He wanted me to experience him the way he was without being influenced by any remnants of the past.

"I have something for you too son." My father disappears, coming back with a large box. "All the letters between your mother and myself since 1982. Ink does not lie. It is all yours. I have kept them for you, should you return one day. You can burn them, read them, or keep them. The choice is yours."

Sitting in my father's house for a week, I was reading and gaining insight. My suspicion was right. Here is a man, prevented from fatherhood, who fought a battle he was meant to lose. He knew it, yet kept going. A man true to himself and his values, he had tackled the demons of loss, only to be surprised by life, with the opportunity to be the father he always wanted to be, sharing his skills and wisdom with the next generation, his son.

Reading all the letters, my anger shifted from my father towards my mother. My father answered my questions. He noticed my anger towards my mother building up. "Son, there are some things you probably do not know about your mother. After the end of the Second World War, during her younger years, she went through a tough experience with a man. That was before my time. With all I know today, I can understand why things turned out between us the way they did. I realized that we were not meant to be together for the long run. I do not take that personally anymore. Your mother acted with best intentions, controlled by her own beliefs and experiences. For both of us, all we did, together and individually, were acts out of love for you, our son. I can only invite you to see your mother in the same light of understanding."

My father's words sent a chill down my spine. A deep feeling of inner peace expanded in my body. I will never forget when my father provided me

with this final piece of the puzzle, called my life.

Since arriving at my father's house, it has not been all sugar and honey. We have had plenty of fights. Then it clicks! I realize I have found a man, on the other side of the world from where I grew up, who is exactly like me! When my mother was mad at me in my younger years, she used to shout my last name, "You are such a STORK! Exactly like your father!" 'Being a Stork' became a bad thing and a part of me I rejected to make my mother happy. Now, here with my father, two Storks, I begin to see how like my father I am – the reason why we are fighting. The same magnetic poles are pushing each other apart. I share my insight with him. We laugh and embrace.

"Are you curious what your roots are? Where your name 'Stork' comes from?" My father offers, "What If I told you that our male ancestors were German and left in the 18th century to create a new life in Hungary?" I am stunned. I grew up in a small town, north of Frankfurt am Main. There were many Storcks around, only their last name was misspelled, as the real "STORK" is without a "c". That was my line of thought at the time. Our lineage of male ancestors reached back to 1610, to a small village south of Frankfurt, called Groß-Bieberau. So I grew up near where my ancestors came from over 400 years ago. Their last name was spelled with "c", Storck. So my last name was the one misspelled. I am still at a loss for words.

"You are the last man standing from our lineage." my father states. Thoughts are rushing through my mind. I am the last one? I cannot be the last one! I decided to go back to Germany and start searching.

I step onto the land my ancestors owned 400 years ago. I found traces of them in old archives. It took me nine months to get here, to find out if I am the only one left from my ancient tribe of Stor(c)ks. I am filling in the gaps. The sun is shining on my face and I can feel the grass under my feet. The old mill shines in its full beauty. I can feel my ancestors waiting here for me. I am the first one to close the circle, being the first Hungarian Stork to "return home". I have learned that my family was one of only four in the village that survived the "Thirty Years' War" (1618-1648). I am proud. I have the same blood running through my veins. Not only have I found my ancestors' land, but I also found traces of descendants in Germany. I managed to connect with them. I am not the last one.

Being called a "Stork" by my mother used to be a cuss word for me. Today it fills me with pride and energy. Having found not only my father and my ancestors, but I have also found myself, my mission, and my purpose.

My father and I plan to follow our ancestor's path. From Groß-Bieberau, heading to the city of Ulm, we will take a boat along the Danube to Hungary

where my father was born. From there, we will head to Canada where I was born. Connecting. Bonding. Making up time. My meditations have shown me the place—a log house at the beach on a lake, surrounded by mountains. We will travel around and let this place find us. Then we will build a house together, father and son. We will create a place for men to reconnect with themselves, their fore-fathers, and ancestors. It will activate a never-ending source of energy to fuel their journey and live a life of purpose. These men will be supported by two Storks to reconnect...we welcome you. Come home.

## IGNITE ACTION STEPS

**\*Get ready: mentally and physically** – Strengthen your body and mind to sustain your emotional journey. Fuel your body through endurance and strength exercises. Find an exercise you love and stick with it. Feeling at your best improves and prepares you.

**\*Discover your roots** – How well do you know your father? What do you know or remember about him—the beautiful, and the not so beautiful experiences? What about your grandfather, or your great-grandfather? Do you know your 'tribe' origins? Can you trace your family history back 50 years, 100 years, 200 years? What themes reflect your family history? Which qualities did you inherit from your forefathers? What conscious, or unconscious, roles have they played in your life so far?

**\*Discover your purpose** – What is your mission, bringing light into your life? What is your shadow mission, making your life a mess? Which one of these has been the driving force in you so far? What's next to direct you into the light?

**\*Find your source of energy** – Who do you serve and why? Have you drafted the manifesto for your life? Connect its intention with powerful emotions that allow you to push past all obstacles. Visualize how it feels to live your mission relentlessly, connecting with your true self. To live a life of purpose. To come back home to yourself.

**\*Decide** – To live your purpose is only one conscious decision away. It is a "Hell, yes!" decision, not a "maybe". Bliss, inner peace and freedom await those who are ready to conquer their shadows. Are you ready? Hell, yes! Well done! I salute you!

Martin Stork

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