

# **HAMMER DOWN**

*Discovering Your Best*

KP HALEY



Par 3, Inc.  
Oklahoma City, OK

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Visit the author's website at [kphaleyauthor.com](http://kphaleyauthor.com).

*To all first responders and defenders of our freedom ~  
Thank you.*

*For my son, Dalton ~  
Follow your dreams and live Hammer Down!*

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*The trouble is, we think we have time.*

*—Jack Kornfield*



## Chapter 2

# Face the Fear

*You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. . . . You must do the thing you think you cannot do.*

—Eleanor Roosevelt

As a child, I was afraid of heights. I would tell people that I was afraid of heights, thinking that my announcement would somehow eliminate any chance of my having to climb anything ever again. The only problem was, I kept finding myself in situations involving the very thing I feared: heights. Yikes!

There were two things I failed to recognize. First, no one really gives a damn if you are scared or not. In my world, you were expected to either find the courage to do it or get the hell out of the way for those who would. Second, we attract what we think of and dwell on. Life has a way of forcing you to face your fears—if you want to reach the good stuff, that is. While it seemed about as far from good as you can get at the time, the stories that follow forced me to face my fear.

When we first began wrestling for the wild drill-sergeant coach, all of the kids who signed up were scared shitless, and for good reason. As brand new nine and ten year-old little league wrestlers, we were expected to climb all the way to the top of the thirty-foot rope in the gymnasium—which seemed nuts, since most of the high school athletes couldn't even do it. There were no landing mats either; you'd just better hang on tight.

I remember my first time trying to climb the rope. I made it up maybe halfway and was done. My arms were on fire, and I thought I might fall. All of a sudden, I felt the rope shaking and getting stiff. I looked down and saw the crazed coach with a wooden board clenched between his teeth, climbing like a monkey up the rope toward me. While hanging on with one hand, he then proceeded to beat my legs and ass with the board in his free hand. We were dangling about fifteen feet above the ground, and I was looking down, trying to kick him off of me. I could see the other kids staring up from their seated positions on the gym floor, their eyes wide open in disbelief, taking in the craziness transpiring above their heads, waiting and dreading their turn to make the excruciating climb.

Instead of spurring me to climb higher, the clubbing had just the opposite effect. In a split second, I decided if this nut wanted to hit my scrawny ass with a board, we were going to do it on the ground. At that instant, I let go and all seventy-eight pounds of me collapsed down the rope, using the coach's head and upper body to break my

fall, which caused the whole shit show to fall to the ground from about seven feet up. On the way down, that crazed coach was still trying to hit me with that damn board—that is, until we crashed in a pile on the hard gym floor. What an ordeal, I had a few tears and bruises, but, surprisingly, I was okay, since I'd landed on top of the coach. I think he may have been stunned by that fall because I don't remember him saying much or ever doing that again. Thankfully the bell rang, indicating class was over, and everyone disappeared like the wind.

My next battle with heights occurred around this same age when a buddy and I decided it would be a great idea to sneak down to the local grain elevator, located along the train tracks that ran through our town, and gather up a few pigeons while they were napping up top. Of course, this was after the facility had closed for the evening, which, since it was the middle of winter, meant it was also dark. Not a problem; we had a plan.

The plan was to ride to the top of this enormous high-rise wheat storage building in the tiny, chain-driven, two-man lift that was built into the center of the structure. We would do this in a cloud of wheat dust and darkness, all so we could snatch some pigeons off of their roost while they dreamed of sunflower seeds.

Well, the plan was working out fine. We had our flashlight and pillowcase, and after a few nerve-racking minutes, the rickety old lift carried us to the top. I know what you're thinking: Why in the world? I ask myself that same

question now; however, it seemed like a brilliant idea at the time. We finally got to the top of the giant grain elevator and—surprise!—we found no pigeons. *I'm sure they heard the junky old lift and flew off*, I thought to myself. *Oh well, probably for the best*, said the voice of reason in my head.

We moved our attention down to the streetlights scattered across our dimly lit town. Our chests filled with pride thinking we were standing on top of the world. Then, in a split second, everything changed. Our proud moment was interrupted by the sudden and stinging impact of sleet that began to fall. We were instantly overwhelmed with the realization that it was way too damn wet, cold, and dark, and we needed to get the hell off the top of that gigantic structure—and fast.

At this point, we discovered that the little elevator that had carried us to the top was no longer working. With only a shared look of total disbelief and grave concern, we both knew what this meant: someone was going to have to climb down the flimsy wrought iron ladder that was attached to the concrete exterior. This so-called ladder looked more like a human death trap than an escape route. While it did extend all the way down to the cold, dark ground, of course, we couldn't actually see it at that point. One of us needed to have a sudden burst of courage, and fast, because the sleet was starting to cover everything in a layer of ice. The situation was growing more critical with every passing second.



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## About the Author

K.P. HALEY resides in Oklahoma, where he enjoys sports, spending time at his ranch, playing his guitar, and having fun with family and friends. Raised on a working cattle ranch, K.P. went on to a successful thirty-year career in sales, marketing, and investing before partnering in his own insurance agency, which he eventually sold to pursue other interests (the creation of this book among them!).

K.P. dives into the techniques and methods he has acquired over his life and working career. Lessons learned on the farm, at wrestling practice and from his thirty years of sales experience.



*K.P. (right) and his son, Dalton*