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BE USEFUL
SEVEN TOOLS FOR LIFE
ARNOLD
SCHWARZENEGGER

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**ARNOLD
SCHWARZENEGGER**

BE USEFUL

SEVEN TOOLS FOR LIFE

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A FINAL THANK-YOU

INTRODUCTION

A few months after I left the governor's office in 2011, my world came crashing down around me.

It's not like things had been going so great in the years before that. After winning a landslide reelection with 57 percent of the vote in 2006, then passing environmental policies that inspired the world and making the biggest infrastructure investment in California history—one that will serve California's drivers, students, and farmers long after I'm gone—my final two and a half years in the Capitol, which I spent in the thick of the global financial crisis, felt like being stuck in a clothes dryer with a load of bricks. It was nothing but beating after beating from every direction.

In 2008, when the crash hit, it was as if one day people were starting to lose their homes, and the next day we were in the biggest recession since the Great Depression, all because a bunch of greedy bankers brought the world's financial system to its knees. One day California was celebrating a record budget windfall that allowed me to set up rainy-day funds. The next day the fact that California's budget was too tied to Wall Street left us with a \$20 billion shortfall and dragged us nearly into insolvency. I spent so many late nights locked in a room with the leaders of both parties in the legislature, trying to pull us back from the brink, that it felt like the state might legally recognize us as domestic partners.

But the people didn't want to hear any of that. They just knew that we'd cut their services while we raised their taxes. You can explain that governors don't have control over a global financial disaster—but the truth is, you get credit when the economy's on the way up even though you have

very little to do with it, so it's only fair that you get the blame on the way down. It just doesn't feel good.

Don't get me wrong. We had some wins. We blew up the system that had given political parties virtual veto power over the best interests of the people and turned our politicians into do-nothing losers. We beat the oil companies trying to undo our environmental progress and moved forward even more aggressively—we blanketed the state in solar power and other renewables and made historic investments to lead the world in clean technology.

But I learned in those last years of the 2000s that you can pass some of the most groundbreaking, cutting-edge policies that state government has ever seen and you'll still feel like a total failure when a voter asks why you can't keep them in their home, or a parent asks why you cut their kid's school budget, or workers ask why they've been laid off.

This wasn't my only experience with public failure, obviously. I had dramatic losses in my bodybuilding career, I had movies that went in the toilet, and this wasn't the first time I'd watched my approval ratings fall like the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

But I wasn't even close to rock bottom.

And it wasn't the recession that brought my world crashing down.

I did that to myself.

I blew up my family. No failure has ever felt worse than that.

I won't be rehashing that story here. I've told it before in other places, and other places have told it multiple times. All of you know the story. If you don't, you've heard of Google, and you know how to find it. I've hurt my family enough, and it's been a long road to repair those relationships; I will not turn them into fodder for the gossip machine.

What I will say is that by the end of that year, I had found myself in a place that was both familiar and foreign. I was at the bottom. I'd been here before. But this time, I was face down in the mud, in a dark hole, and I had to decide whether it was worth it to clean myself up and start the slow climb out, or to just give up.

The movie projects I'd been working on since I left the Capitol went up in smoke. The cartoon loosely based on my life I was so excited about? Bye-bye. The media wrote me off—my story would be over after three acts: Bodybuilder, Actor, Governor. Everybody loves a story that ends in tragedy, especially when it is the mighty who have fallen.

If you've ever read anything about me, though, you probably already know that I didn't give up. In fact, I relish the challenge of having to climb back up. It's the struggle that makes success, when you achieve it, taste so sweet.

My fourth act has been an amalgamation of all three previous acts, combined to make me as useful as I can, with a little something else added in that I didn't expect. I continue my bodybuilding and fitness crusade with a daily fitness email to hundreds of thousands of hungry people and my Arnold Sports Festivals all over the world. My policy work goes on at After-School All-Stars, where we serve one hundred thousand kids in forty cities across the nation; at the USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy, where we advocate for our political reforms all over the United States; and at the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, where we sell our environmental policies all over the world. And my entertainment career? That pays for it all. This time, after climbing out of the Hollywood wilderness doing movie after movie, I returned with a television series, which is a new creative medium for me that I've enjoyed enormously trying to master.

I knew I'd continue all those careers. Like I always tell you, I'll be back. But what I never expected was that, as a by-product of all this failure and redemption and reinvention, I'd become a self-help guy.

Suddenly, people were paying me as much as former presidents to show up and give motivational speeches to their clients and their workforces. Other people were taking the videos of those speeches, putting them on YouTube and on social media, and they were going viral. Then my own social media channels started to grow, because anytime I used them to share my wisdom about urgent matters of the day or to offer a calm voice amid the chaos, those videos went even more viral.

People really seemed to benefit from learning from me, the same way I benefited early in my career from reading about and meeting my idols, many of whom you will hear about in this book. So I leaned into that. I started spreading more and more positivity out in the world. And the more I spoke, the more people came up to me in the gym to tell me that I'd gotten them through a dark time. Cancer survivors, people who had lost their jobs, people transitioning into the next phase of their career. I heard from men and women, boys and girls, high school kids and retirees, rich people, poor people, every color, creed, and orientation in the rainbow of humanity.

It was fantastic. It was also surprising. I wasn't sure why this was happening. So I did what I always do when I want to understand something. I stopped and analyzed the situation. What I noticed when I took a step back was that there was so much negativity and pessimism and self-pity out in the world. I also noticed that a lot of people were really miserable, despite the fact that experts keep telling us that things have never been better in the history of human civilization. There has never been less war, less disease, less poverty, less oppression than right now. This is what the data shows. It's objectively true.

But there is another set of data. A more subjective set that is harder to measure but that we can all see and hear when we watch the news, or listen to talk radio, or scroll on social media. So many people talk about feeling irrelevant or invisible or hopeless. Young girls and women talk about not being good enough or pretty enough. Young men talk about being worthless or powerless. Incidents of suicide and rates of addiction are on the rise.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, we are experiencing an epidemic of these emotions across virtually every segment of our society. Depression and anxiety have increased 25 percent worldwide since 2020. In a study by the Boston University School of Public Health published in September 2020, researchers discovered that the prevalence of depression among US adults had *tripled* between 2018 and the spring of 2020, just a few months into the lockdowns. Whereas before, 75 percent of American adults reported feeling no symptoms of depression, by April 2020 that number had dropped to under 50 percent. That's a huge swing!

But the problem goes beyond COVID-19, because there are groups out there—entire institutions and industries, if we're being honest about it—that are taking advantage of people's misery and selling them nonsense, making them angrier, feeding them lies, and inflaming their grievances. All for profit and political gain. These forces are incentivized to keep people miserable and helpless, and to obscure how simple it should be for them to engage with the tools of usefulness and self-sufficiency that are the primary weapons in the fight against unhappiness and apathy.

That, I think, is why so many millions of people all over the world have flocked to podcasts and Substacks and newsletters like mine in search of answers that make sense to them. Things have gotten so bad out there in the culture that they are seeking out someone they can trust, someone who refuses to play the bullshit games, someone who tries to be ruthlessly positive when everyone else is being relentlessly negative.

Those are the people I was bumping into at the gym every single day. And I felt a kinship with them because they were expressing a lot of the same emotions I felt after I left office in 2011 and things fell apart. I also noticed that when I offered them advice and encouragement, when I tried to inspire and reassure them and pump them up, I was pulling from a very familiar tool kit.

It was the tool kit that I'd developed over the course of sixty years and followed successfully on my journey through the previous three acts of my life. It was the very same one I reached for more than a decade ago now, when I hit bottom and decided to dig myself out of the hole. This tool kit is not revolutionary. If anything, it's timeless. These tools have always worked. They always will work. I think of them like elements of a blueprint or a road map to a happy, successful, useful life—whatever that means for you.

They involve knowing where you want to go and how you're going to get there, as well as having the willingness to do the work and the ability to communicate to the people you care about that the journey you want to bring them on is worth the effort. They include the capacity to shift gears when the journey hits a roadblock, and the ability to keep an open mind and

learn from your surroundings to find new ways through. And most important of all, once you get where you're trying to go, they demand that you acknowledge all the help you had along the way and that you give back accordingly.

This book is called *Be Useful* because that is the best piece of advice my father ever gave me. It has stuck in my brain and never left, and my hope is that the advice I am offering you in the pages to follow will do the same thing. Being useful was also the motivating force behind all my decisions, and the organizing force around the tools I used to make them. Being a bodybuilding champion, being a millionaire leading man, being a public servant—those were my goals, but they were not what motivated me.

For a number of years, my father didn't agree with my version of what it means to be useful, and I might not agree with your version, when it comes down to it. But that is not the purpose of good advice. It's not to tell you what to build, it's to show you how to build and why it matters. My father passed away at the same age I was when I brought my world crashing down on me. I never had the chance to ask him what I should do, but I have a good idea what he would tell me: "Be useful, Arnold."

I wrote this book to honor those words and pay forward his advice. I wrote it in appreciation for the years I've had that he didn't, which I've used to make amends, to climb back from the bottom, and to build the fourth act of my life. I wrote this book because I believe that anyone can benefit from the tools I've used through every phase of my life, and that all of us need a reliable road map for the kind of life we've always wanted to live.

But most of all, I wrote it because everybody needs to be useful.

CHAPTER 1

HAVE A CLEAR VISION

So many of our best people are lost.

So many of the good ones don't know what they're doing with their lives. They're unhealthy. They're unhappy. Seventy percent of them hate their jobs. Their relationships are unrewarding. They don't smile. They don't laugh. They have no energy. They feel useless. They feel helpless, as if life were pushing them down a road to nowhere.

If you know what to look for, you will see these people everywhere. Maybe even when you look in the mirror. It's OK. You're not broken. Neither are they. This is just what happens when you don't have a clear vision for your life, and you've taken either whatever you can get or whatever you thought you deserved.

We can fix that. Because everything good, all great change, starts with a clear vision.

Vision is the most important thing. Vision is purpose and meaning. To have a clear vision is to have a picture of what you want your life to look like and a plan for how to get there. The people who feel most lost have neither of those. They don't have the picture or the plan. They look in the mirror and they wonder, "How the hell did I get here?" but they don't know. They've made so many decisions and taken so many actions that have landed them in this place, and yet they have no idea what any of them were. They'll even argue with you: "I hate this, why would I have *chosen* it?" Except no one forced that ring on their finger or put that second cheeseburger in their hands. No one made them take that dead-end job. No one made them skip class, or miss workouts, or stop going to church. No one made them stay up late every night playing video games instead of getting eight hours of sleep. No one made them drink that last beer or spend their last dollar.

Yet they fully believe what they're saying. And I believe they believe it. They feel as if life just sort of happened to them. They really think they had no choice in what became of their lives.

And you know what? They're partly right.

None of us has a choice about where we come from. I grew up in a small village in Austria at the beginning of the Cold War. My mother was very loving. My father was strict, and he could be physically abusive, but I loved him very much. It was complicated. I'm sure your story is complicated too. I bet growing up was more difficult than the people around you think it was. We can't change those stories, but we can choose where we go from there.

There are reasons and explanations for all the things that have happened to us up to this point, good and bad. But for the most part, it wasn't because we didn't have a choice. We always have a choice. What we don't always have, unless we create it, is something to measure our choices against.

That is what a clear vision gives you: a way to decipher whether a decision is good or bad for you, based on whether it gets you closer or further away from where you want your life to go. Does the picture you have in your mind of your ideal future get blurrier or sharper because of this thing you're about to do?

The happiest and most successful people in the world do everything in their power to avoid bad decisions that confuse matters and drag them away from their goals. Instead, they focus on making choices that bring clarity to their vision and bring them closer to achieving it. It doesn't matter if they're considering a small thing or a huge thing, the decision-making process is always the same.

The only difference between them and us, between me and you, between any two people, is the clarity of the picture we have for our future, the strength of our plan to get there, and whether or not we have accepted that the choice to make that vision a reality is ours and ours alone.

So how do we do that? How do we create a clear vision from scratch? I think there are two ways to do it. You can start small and build out until a big, clear picture reveals itself to you. Or you can start very broad and then,

like the lens on a camera, zoom in until a clear picture snaps into focus. That's how it was for me.

START BROAD AND ZOOM IN

The earliest vision I had for my life was very broad. It was of America. Nothing more specific than that. I was ten years old. I'd just started school in Graz, the big city just east of where I grew up. It seemed like everywhere I turned in those days I was seeing the most amazing things about America. In my school lessons, on magazine covers, in newsreels that played before shows at the movie house.

There were pictures of the Golden Gate Bridge and those Cadillacs with the big tail fins driving down massive six-lane highways. I watched movies made in Hollywood and rock 'n' roll stars on talk shows filmed in New York. I saw the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building, which made the tallest building in Austria look like a toolshed. I saw streets lined with palm trees and beautiful girls on Muscle Beach.

It was America in surround sound. Everything was big and bright. For an impressionable kid like me, those images were like Viagra for dreams. They should have come with a warning, too, because the visions of life in America they aroused did *not* go away after four hours.

I knew: this is where I belong.

Doing what? I had no clue. Like I said, it was a broad vision. The picture was very fuzzy. I was young. What did I know? What I would learn, though, is that some of the strongest visions emerge like this. From our obsessions when we're young, before our opinions about them have been affected by other people's judgments of them. Talking about what to do when you're dissatisfied with your life, the famous big wave surfer Garrett McNamara once said that you should "go back to when you were three, figure out what you loved doing, figure out how to make that your life, then make the road map and follow it." He was describing the process for

creating a vision, and I think he's absolutely correct. It's obviously not that easy, but it is that simple, and it can begin by looking back in time and thinking very broadly about the things you used to love. Your obsessions are a clue to your earliest vision for yourself, if only you had paid attention to them in the beginning.

Look at someone like Tiger Woods showing off his putting skills on *The Mike Douglas Show* when he was only two years old. Or the Williams sisters. A lot of people don't know this, but their father, Richard, exposed all five of his kids to tennis when they were young, and they all had talent. But it was only Venus and Serena who showed passion for the sport. *Obsession*. And so tennis became the framework for how they grew up and how they saw themselves.

It was the same for Steven Spielberg. He wasn't a big movie fan when he was a boy. He loved TV. Then one year his dad got a little 8mm home movie camera for Father's Day to record their family road trips, and Steven started to mess around with it. Around the same age I was when I was first learning about America, Steven discovered moviemaking. He made his first movie when he was twelve years old. He made one to earn a merit badge for photography in the Boy Scouts when he was thirteen. He even took the camera with him on Boy Scout trips. For Steven, who had just moved with his family all the way across the country from New Jersey to Arizona, moviemaking gave him his first bit of direction.

It wasn't moving to Hollywood. It wasn't winning an Oscar for Best Picture or Best Director. It wasn't being rich and famous or working with glamorous movie stars. Those more specific ambitions would all come later. In the beginning his vision was simply to make movies. It was big and broad, like it was for Tiger (golf), Venus and Serena (tennis), and me (America).

This is perfectly normal. For most of us, it's necessary. Anything more detailed gets too complicated too quickly, and you get ahead of yourself. You start missing important steps on the road map. Having a broad vision gives you an easy, more accessible place to start from when it comes to figuring out where and how to zoom in.

That doesn't mean you get narrower with your vision, just more specific. The picture gets sharper. It's like zooming in on a map of the world when you're trying to build an itinerary for a trip. The world is made up of continents. Inside continents are countries, inside countries are states or provinces, inside those are counties, and inside those are cities and towns. And the thing is, you can keep going like this. Inside towns are neighborhoods, inside neighborhoods are blocks. Blocks are stitched together by streets. If you're a tourist and you just want to see the world, you can hop from country to country or city to city and it doesn't matter. You don't have to pay close attention. But if you really want to know a place and get the absolute most out of your experience, if you might even want to call that place home someday, well then, you better hit the streets, talk to locals, explore every back alley, learn the customs, and try new things. That is when the itinerary you're trying to create—or the plan you're trying to build to achieve your vision—really starts to take shape.

My plan took shape around bodybuilding, after the first clear picture of my future snapped into focus. I was a teenager and I saw the current Mr. Universe, the great Reg Park, on the cover of one of Joe Weider's muscle magazines. I'd just watched him play Hercules in *Hercules and the Captive Women* that summer. The article described how, as a poor kid from a working-class town in England, Reg discovered bodybuilding, then made the transition into acting after winning the Mr. Universe competition. I immediately saw it: that was my path to America.

For you, the path will be different; so will the destination. Maybe it involves a career choice and a change in scenery. Maybe it involves a hobby that you want to turn into a lifestyle or a cause that you want to make your life's mission. There really isn't a wrong answer as long as it sharpens the focus of your vision and makes the steps you need to take to achieve it more clear-cut.

Still, this part can be very difficult for people, even those with the broadest of visions. When I go to the gym these days, for example, I will sometimes see a person wandering around, bouncing randomly from machine to machine like a Ping-Pong ball, and it's clear they have no plan

at all for their workout. I'll go up to this person, and we'll have a conversation. I've done this many times, and it always goes the same way.

"What's your goal coming into the gym?" I'll ask them.

"To get in shape," is what they'll usually say.

"Yes, great, fantastic, but get in shape for what?" I will say. It's an important question, because not all forms of "in shape" are created equal. Being in bodybuilder shape isn't going to help you if you're a rock climber. If anything, it's going to hurt you having to carry around all that extra mass. In the same way, being in shape like a long-distance runner is useless if you're a wrestler, where you need both raw strength and explosive quickness.

They'll pause, then they'll stammer, searching for an answer that they think I want to hear. But I stay silent, I don't let them off the hook. Eventually, most of them give me an honest answer.

"My doctor said I need to lose twenty pounds and get my blood pressure under control."

"I just want to look good at the beach."

"I have young kids and want to be able to chase them around and wrestle with them."

These are all great answers. I can work with each of them. Zooming in like that gives their vision some specific direction, which will help them focus on the exercises that are best for achieving that goal.

Bodybuilding is all about zooming in. Not just on the specifics of what you want to achieve as a bodybuilder, but also on the steps you need to take in the gym to get there. When I got to America as a twenty-one-year-old in the fall of 1968 and I landed in Venice Beach to train at Gold's Gym under the great Joe Weider, I'd already won a number of titles, including Mr. Universe earlier that year, in my professional debut. Those titles were steps on the path that brought me to Joe's attention, which ultimately brought me to America. But they were not the final steps. Joe didn't pay for me to come to America because I'd already become a champion. He was investing in me because he thought I could be *more* than a champion. I was still very young by bodybuilding standards. I also had an incredible hunger to work

hard and an insane desire to be great. Joe saw all these things in me and thought I had a real shot to be the greatest bodybuilder in the world, maybe even of all time. And he was going to help me zoom in even closer to really figure out what it takes to become the greatest ever.

I was in America, I was Mr. Universe, and the work was just beginning.

CREATE SPACE AND TIME

Of course, not everyone starts to develop an idea of what they want to do with their life by the time they're fifteen years old, like I did. I was fortunate. I grew up in a small village with dirt roads, in a house with no running water or indoor plumbing. I had nothing but time and space to daydream and let my imagination run wild. I was a blank slate. Anything and everything could make an impression on me. And it did.

Pictures of America. Playing gladiators in the park with my friends. Reading a news article for school about a record-breaking powerlifter. Finding out that one of my friends knew Mr. Austria, Kurt Marnul, and that he trained right there in Graz. Watching *Hercules and the Captive Women* and learning that Hercules was played by Mr. Universe, and that the actor who played Hercules before him, Steve Reeves, was also Mr. Universe. Then stumbling upon one of Joe Weider's muscle magazines and seeing Reg on the cover, and learning that he was from a small working-class town just like me.

All of these things were moments of inspiration that imprinted on me. They combined not just to create the earliest vision that I had, but then to clarify and sharpen it, which would give me something specific to work toward for the next twenty years.

For a lot of people, finding that kind of vision is a long-term discovery process that takes years, if not decades. Some never get there. They live with no vision. Not even memories of an early obsession when they were young that could become a vision now as an adult. Those memories and the

possibilities they carry have been squeezed out by the distraction of all our devices. They've been erased by all the things that make people feel helpless, like life has happened to them.

This is tragic, but it is also completely unacceptable to sit there and do nothing about it. To play the victim. Only you can create the life you want for yourself—no one is going to do it for you. If you don't know what that life looks like yet, for whatever reason, that's fine. We're here now. The choices you make from here on out are what matters. And right now, there are two things you should do.

First, create little goals for yourself. Don't worry about the big, broad stuff for now. Focus on making improvements and banking achievements one day at a time. They can be exercise goals, nutrition goals. They can be about networking or reading or getting your house organized. Start doing things you like to do or that make you proud of yourself for having completed them. Do those things every day with a little goal attached to them, and then notice how doing that changes what you pay attention to. All of a sudden you will find yourself looking at things differently.

Once you've developed a rhythm with those little daily goals, create weekly and then monthly goals. Instead of zooming in from a broad place, build out your life from this small beginning and let your vision open up in front of you from there. As it does, and the sense of uselessness starts to loosen its grip, that's when you take the second step: put the machines away and create space and time in your life, however small or short in the beginning, for inspiration to find its way in and for the discovery process to happen.

I know this isn't as easy as it sounds. Life gets crowded and complicated as you get older. It can be hard to find space and time and not feel like you're trading off some bigger set of responsibilities, especially now that you've got these little daily, weekly, and monthly goals that you're crushing. And guess what, it is hard at first. But do you know what's harder? Living a life you hate. That's hard. This, by comparison, is a walk in the park.

Which it literally could be. Many of history's greatest thinkers, leaders, scientists, artists, and entrepreneurs found some of their greatest inspiration going for walks.

Beethoven used to take walks carrying blank pages of sheet music and a pencil. The Romantic poet William Wordsworth used to write as he took walks around a lake where he lived. Ancient Greek philosophers like Aristotle would lecture their students while taking long walks with them, often working out their ideas at the same time. Two thousand years later, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche would say, "It is only ideas gained from walking that have any worth." Einstein refined many of his theories about the universe while walking around the Princeton University campus. The writer Henry David Thoreau would say, "The moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow."

Those are some pretty impressive people who saw the power of creating time and space in their everyday lives to take a walk. But you don't need to be a genius or a prodigy for walking to be useful or transformative. There is a lot of evidence for the power of taking a walk to increase creativity, inspire new ideas, and change people's lives, whoever they are. A 2014 study by researchers at Stanford University showed that walking increased the creative thinking of 100 percent of the study participants who were asked to walk while completing a series of creative tasks. There is a ton of anecdotal evidence as well. Do a quick Google search for the words "walk" and "change," and you will see an avalanche of articles with titles like "How Taking a Walk Changed My Life." They're written by all sorts of people: men and women, young and old, fit and out of shape, students and professionals, American, Indian, African, European, Asian, you name it.

Going for a walk helped them change their routines and their habits; it helped them shake loose solutions to tricky problems; it helped them to process trauma and make big life decisions. For an Australian man named Jono Lineen, it did all those things. When he was thirty, he decided to walk the entire length of the western Himalayas—nearly seventeen hundred miles—solo. The first to ever do it alone. It was a test for himself.

For months he walked, up to twenty-five miles a day, with nothing but his thoughts and the massively beautiful Himalayas all around him. He couldn't escape either of them. Eventually, he had a breakthrough. He wasn't there to test himself, he was there to fix himself. "I came to realise that what I was actually doing there in the mountains was coming to terms with the death of my younger brother," he wrote in an article in 2021 about his experience. He'd suffered in the years after his brother's death. He found himself stuck down a rabbit hole of sadness, and this simple yet difficult experience walking the Himalayas provided some clarity that pulled him out of it.

Years later Jono had another transformative experience, this time walking the five-hundred-mile Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the famous Catholic pilgrimage across northern Spain. "I was trapped in a very stressful job in London and I needed a break," he said. By the end of the Camino, after nearly three weeks of walking across fields, through small towns, up and over mountains and valleys, he'd made the decision to quit his job. "The change threw my life in a new and wonderful direction, and I'm thankful to walking for helping me achieve that."

Jono's experience isn't unique. More than three hundred thousand people from all over the world walk the Camino every year, less than a third of them for purely religious reasons. The vast majority have other reasons. Reasons like Jono's. Reasons like yours, probably. They're searching for inspiration, they're looking to make some kind of change, and what better way to find it than by taking a walk.

Over the years, I've used the gym as a place to think. When I go skiing, I use the ten or fifteen minutes in the chairlift as a kind of sacred space to let my mind wander. It's that way with bicycling too. No one can bother you on a bike, so you're free to let your thoughts go wherever they go. These days, I create space for inspiration by taking a Jacuzzi every night. There's something about the hot water and the steam, about the hum of the jets and the rush of the bubbles. The feeling of floating, of *not* being able to feel the weight of my own body, sharpens all my other senses and opens me up to everything around me. The Jacuzzi gives me twenty to thirty minutes

of mental clarity. It's where I do some of my best thinking. Sitting in the Jacuzzi is where I got the idea for my speech to the American people after the events of January 6, 2021.

Like most people, I watched the riots unfold at the US Capitol on television and then in great depth on social media. And like most people, I went through a range of emotions. Disbelief. Frustration. Confusion. Anger. Then, finally, sadness. I was sad for our country, because this was a dark day. But I also felt bad for all the men and women, young and old, whom the cameras found, as television networks covered the historic moment and broadcast their angry, desperate, alienated faces across the planet. Whether they liked it or not, this was going to be the mark those people left on the world. This would be their legacy.

I thought about them a lot that night as I sat in the Jacuzzi letting the jets loosen up my neck and shoulder muscles, which were tense from the stress of the day. I slowly came to the conclusion that what we all watched that day wasn't the exercise of political speech, it wasn't an attempt to refresh the tree of liberty with the blood of patriots and tyrants, as Thomas Jefferson might say . . . it was a cry for help. And I wanted to help them.

Since 2003, that has been my life's focus. Helping people. Public service. Using the power that comes with fame and with political office to make a difference in the lives of as many people as possible. That was the direction my vision took for the third act in the movie of my life.

But this was something different. Something more. I was watching all these videos and reading real-time updates on Twitter and Instagram from people who were there. Protesters. Police. Bystanders. Reporters. If they could reach me through social media, I thought, then I could reach them.

Very quickly an image crystallized in my mind. I could see myself sitting behind my desk, with the sword from *Conan the Barbarian* in my hands, delivering a speech that cut through all the divisive nonsense between us, using my platform in a way I never had before. That Sunday, I gave a speech on my Instagram feed in the hope that, by talking directly to the people who were hurting the most, I could help them and maybe they could heal. I told my story. I talked about the promise of America. Then I

held up the Conan sword, just as I had visualized a few days before. I described how that sword could be a metaphor for our democracy if we let it. I explained that the more harsh conditions you put a sword through during its creation—heating, pounding, cooling, grinding, over and over and over again—the stronger, sharper, and more resilient it becomes.

I called the speech “A Servant’s Heart,” not just because that’s what we all needed to display to get us through such a dark moment in our history but also because I felt like I owed it to the country. Since I was ten or eleven years old, I’d viewed America as the number one country in the world, as the world’s greatest democracy. Everything I had, everything I’d done, the person I had become—America made all those things possible. America is the only place on the planet where I could have turned my vision into reality. Now it was under threat, and with a servant’s heart I wanted to protect it. A “servant’s heart” also described the vision I was starting to develop for how to utilize my social media presence as a way to help as many people as possible, all over the world, and to do it much more directly than ever before. It was the evolution of a twenty-year vision of public service into a new fourth act that maybe would never have happened had I not made a habit of creating space every day to think and to let inspiration and new ideas flow in.

Going for a walk, going to the gym, reading, riding your bike, taking a Jacuzzi, I don’t care what you do. If you are stuck, if you are struggling to figure out a clear vision for the life you want, then all I care about is that you make little goals for yourself to start building momentum and that you create time and space every day to think, to daydream, to look around, to be present in the world, to let inspiration and ideas in. If you can’t find what you’re looking for, at least give it a chance to find you.

REALLY SEE IT

When I say that I could see myself sitting behind the desk in my office at home giving my January 6 speech, I really mean that. I could see it very vividly, like a movie playing in my mind. It has been that way my whole life, with every major vision I've had for myself.

When I was a boy I could *see* myself in America. I had no idea what I was doing there, but I was there. I could feel the tropical sun on my skin and the sand between my toes. I could smell the ocean and hear the waves—even though I'd never experienced either of those things in my life. The closest we ever got to waves was throwing big rocks into the deep water of the Thaler See, a man-made lake just outside of Graz, and watching the ripples flow outward. When I finally got to California, all my impressions turned out to be wrong, some for the better and some for the worse (sand sucks), but the fact that I had such vivid impressions at all was a big reason I got to California in the first place.

When I fell in love with bodybuilding, I didn't have vague hopes of becoming a champion. I had a very specific vision of it, borrowed from the pictures inside muscle magazines of guys like Reg Park celebrating their victories. I could see myself on the top step of the podium holding the winner's trophy. I could see the other competitors on the lower steps looking up at me enviously, but also in awe. I could see their tight smiles, I could even see the colors of their posing briefs. I could see the judges standing and applauding. I could see the crowd going wild and chanting my name. "Arnold! Arnold! Arnold!" This wasn't a fantasy. This was a memory that just hadn't happened yet. That's what it felt like to me.

As an actor, before I ever got my first starring role, I could see my name above the title on movie posters and theater marquees, just like I'd seen Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, Sean Connery, and Charles Bronson with their names above the titles of their movies, which I loved. From very early on, producers and casting directors were always trying to get me to shorten my name to Arnold Strong or some other such name, because they said Schwarzenegger is too much of a mouthful. It's too long, they said. What they didn't know, but that I could see plain as day, was that Schwarzenegger looks fucking great all by itself in BIG letters above the title of a movie.