

A First Word

There is a deep longing in the bones of the human community. It is a longing not merely to survive—but to thrive.

That longing is not a call to pretend life is lighter than it is, but an invitation to live within it more deeply and honestly.

Thriv'era is not a program for becoming a better person. It is a way to return to the life you already have before it slips by unnoticed. The seven rhythms are simple practices that restore what hurry and fear erode. Over time, they restore breath in our lungs, creativity in our hands, belonging between us, presence in our days, gratitude in our noticing, generosity in our posture, and mission in our direction. Practiced over time, they do not merely help us cope; they deepen us from the inside out—steadyng our inner life, strengthening our relationships, and turning our days outward toward hope.

These rhythms matter because life is not lived in the abstract. We practice them in the middle of real sorrow, real uncertainty, and real fracture. The need for such a way of life does not arrive as an idea. It arrives in the lives of real people—in neighborhood ache, family strain, public fracture, and the daily grief of a world still asking to be mended. They do not lift us out of that ache; they help us remain present to it with steadier hearts, open hands, and enough hope to keep mending what we can.

As I write these words, the streets of Minneapolis are reeling. The names Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti have been added to the heavy ledger of loss, reminders of a world that feels perpetually under repair. Even if we turn our eyes from the glare of the news cycle, the unrest is impossible to ignore. We feel the tremors of armed conflict, the heat of climate instability, and the fractures of political polarization. We watch long-trusted institutions lose their footing and see despair claim ground in the hearts of those we love.

For many, the weight of it all feels exhausting, disorienting, and deeply troubling. And yet, through this heartbreak, the longing to thrive only grows stronger.

It is bone-deep. Heart-strong. Soul-wide.

The human spirit insists that life was never meant to be a mere exercise in endurance. Each of us carries a quiet but insistent conviction that life is meant to be lived with meaning, purpose, connection, and hope. This conviction is why we keep bringing some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to one another, even as we struggle to imagine a world where everyone truly flourishes.

To thrive is to grow and develop not apart from life's challenges, but within them. Thriving is not a strategy for escape or a demand for perfection. It is about vitality, movement, and wholeness—living fully awake to life's joy and struggle, and discovering that even here, life can be rich with meaning.

This longing is ancient, echoing through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures that give voice to humanity's desire for life in fullness. The psalmist speaks of lives that flourish like palm trees and grow strong like cedars. Wisdom literature imagines people who thrive like green leaves. Jesus names the heart of God's desire with unmistakable clarity: life—abundant, overflowing, full.

Thriv'era—a blending of thrive and era—emerges from this sacred soil. It articulates a way of living that joins humanity's deep desire to flourish with God's enduring promise of life. It is an invitation to live attentively, faithfully, and intentionally in every season of life.

This book is for those who feel the weight of the world and still dare to hope. It is for those who sense that beneath the noise and urgency of the present moment, a deeper rhythm is calling us back—to breath when we are weary, imagination when we feel stuck, belonging when we are lonely, presence when we are scattered, gratitude when we forget, generosity when fear closes us down, and purposeful love when the world needs us to show up.

The pages that follow are not meant to rush you toward a finish line. They are meant to help you slow down long enough to notice what is true, to listen to your life, and to rediscover what it means to live fully alive to God, to yourself, to others, and to the world entrusted to our care.

How to Walk with This Book

The pages that follow are not meant to rush you toward a finish line. Thriv'era is not a novel to hurry through or a set of ideas to consume and set aside. It is a book to walk with,

to return to, to question, to pray through, and to practice.

Some sentences may ask you to slow down. Some stories may reach into your own. Some questions may stay with you longer than you expected. Let them. The goal is not simply to understand thriving, but to let these rhythms do their quiet work in you.

Each chapter begins with an opening story or image meant to stir your imagination and invite you into the rhythm before you try to define it. These openings are not just illustrations. They are thresholds. They are meant to help you feel the shape of the rhythm and notice where it may already be alive, resisted, or needed in your own life.

From there, each chapter moves through a familiar pattern. The Invitation names the kind of life the rhythm opens before us. The Guiding Narrative gathers the rhythm into shared language and identity. The Scripture Connection roots the rhythm in the larger story of God's life with the world. The Heart of the Rhythm explores what is really at stake. The practice gives you a way to begin embodying the rhythm in ordinary life. The Manifesto gives voice to conviction. The Reflection questions invite honesty. The Prayer and Blessing help move the rhythm from page to presence. And the Refrain gives you words to carry with you when the chapter is done.

You do not need to master all of this at once. In fact, you cannot. Rhythms are not mastered; they are received, practiced, forgotten, and returned to again.

So read with a pen nearby if that helps. Underline what catches you. Pause where something unsettles you. Sit with a sentence longer than you normally would. Try one practice before moving on. Read alone, or read with others who are willing to be honest about their lives.

Most of all, read with availability.

Let this book become less like a hallway you hurry through and more like a trail you learn to walk. Notice what rises in you. Notice what resists. Notice what feels possible.

And as you do, may you begin to anticipate thriving—not as a distant ideal, but as a life already stirring here and now.

A Threshold

Most of us don't begin with the question, *How do I thrive?*

We begin with something simpler—and more urgent: *Can I make it?*

Survival is often the first priority. It is the cry that rises in us when life collides with grief, fear, or sudden disruption—when our minds can't settle, when our nervous systems are stretched thin by uncertainty.

Survival is real. Survival is necessary. Survival is not shameful.

But survival is not the only story.

Thriving, as I mean it here, is not the absence of trouble. It is the presence of a deeper life within trouble. It is the slow, steady practice of becoming whole—of bringing your life—spirit, body, relationships, attention, and purpose—back into alignment with the love of God, neighbor, self, and the world entrusted to our care.

That may sound like a lot to ask when survival itself has taken so much.

But it doesn't begin with a complete plan.

It begins with availability.

Here.

Now.

Available.

That posture is a doorway. It opens into breath, into presence, into belonging, into gratitude and generosity, into a life aimed toward blessing. Not as a checklist, but as rhythms—simple practices you return to again and again until they begin to form you.

This is the invitation beneath everything that follows.

As we begin, let this be our prayer:

Gracious God, you breathe into us the oxygen of your Spirit, creating us in your image and calling us into deeper connection. Awaken us to the life filling this present moment. Teach us to receive your gifts with gratitude, to live with open and generous hearts, and to move with purpose toward the world you love. Shape us into people who reflect your hope in all we are and all we do.

Welcome to *Thriv'era*.