

# WALK SLOWLY WITH PURPOSE

## GRATITUDE

By Dominic Fortuna

The crunch of gravel beneath his boots, the scent of pine and damp earth filling his lungs – Alex had always found solace in the north woods. Growing up in Northern Michigan, he'd spent countless hours exploring the vast forests, fishing the crystal-clear lakes, and chasing the thrill of a fresh snowfall. But lately, the beauty of it all had felt a bit... muted.

Alex lived in a small cabin on the outskirts of Kalkaska, surrounded by the sounds of the forest and the occasional rumble of a logging truck on the highway. He worked as a mechanic in Traverse City, fixing up old trucks and snowmobiles for the locals. It was a good life, but something had been missing.

One crisp autumn morning, Alex decided to take a drive up to Torch Lake, the water's striking blue color a siren's call. He parked his truck and walked down to the shore, the sand crunching beneath his feet. The wind rustled the leaves, and the sun sparkled on the water like a thousand tiny diamonds. He sat down on a rock, feeling the familiar ache in his chest.

As he gazed out at the lake, Alex's mind began to wander. He thought about his grandfather, a Finnish immigrant who'd settled in this very spot, drawn by the promise of the north woods. He'd taught Alex how to fish, how to split wood, and how to appreciate the quiet beauty of the seasons.

Alex remembered the countless hours they'd spent together, building a cedar canoe, fixing fences, and sharing stories of the old country. His grandfather had always said, "A man should be grateful for what he's got, not bitter about what he ain't."

As the sun began to set, casting the lake in a golden glow, Alex felt something shift inside. He remembered the countless blessings he'd taken for granted: the beauty of the north, the love of his family, the simple pleasures of a life lived close to the land.

He thought about the people who'd shaped his life: his grandfather, his parents, his friends in Rapid City, who'd always been there to lend a hand or share a laugh. He remembered small everyday moments, the sound of loons calling on a summer evening on Manistee Lake, the feel of a warm fire on a cold winter night.

As the stars began to twinkle, Alex felt a sense of gratitude wash over him, like the gentle lapping of the lake's waves on the shore. He realized that it wasn't about the big, grand gestures or the dramatic moments; it was about the small, quiet acts of love, kindness, and appreciation that added up to make a life.

From that day on, Alex approached life with a new found sense of wonder. He started a gratitude journal, writing down the things he was thankful

for each day. He spent more time with his family, sharing stories and making memories. He volunteered at the local food bank, helping those in need.

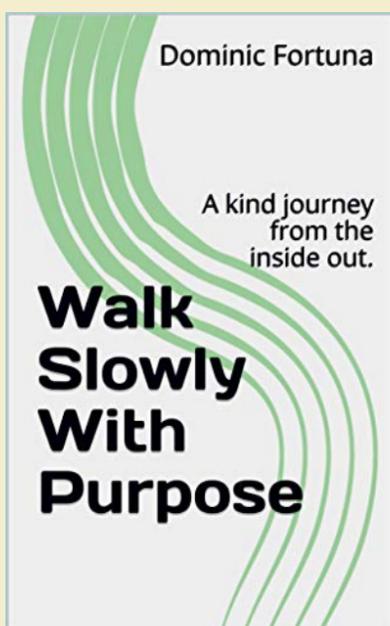
As he navigated the ups and downs of life, Alex found that gratitude was like the north woods themselves – resilient, strong, and always there, waiting to be tapped into. And whenever he felt lost or uncertain, he'd drive up to Torch Lake, sit on the shore, and remember the beauty, the love, and the gratitude that had been there all along.

A beautiful short story, of my friend Alex... He chose to remain anonymous, but there are still angels among us. Literally, my friends, walk slow slowly with purpose.



***Now Available from Amazon on Kindle  
and in Paperback***

**Dominic Fortuna's book,  
"Walk Slowly With Purpose"**



**Be immersed in a magical journey from tragedy to triumph. Wise and fun characters jump off the page and keep you reading. A great and inspiring read you won't be able to put down. Let your mind take a journey along with Gary and all of his new friends to a better life with understanding, kindness, and a grateful heart. [www.amazon.com/Walk-Slowly-Purpose-journey-inside/dp/1796373141](http://www.amazon.com/Walk-Slowly-Purpose-journey-inside/dp/1796373141)**