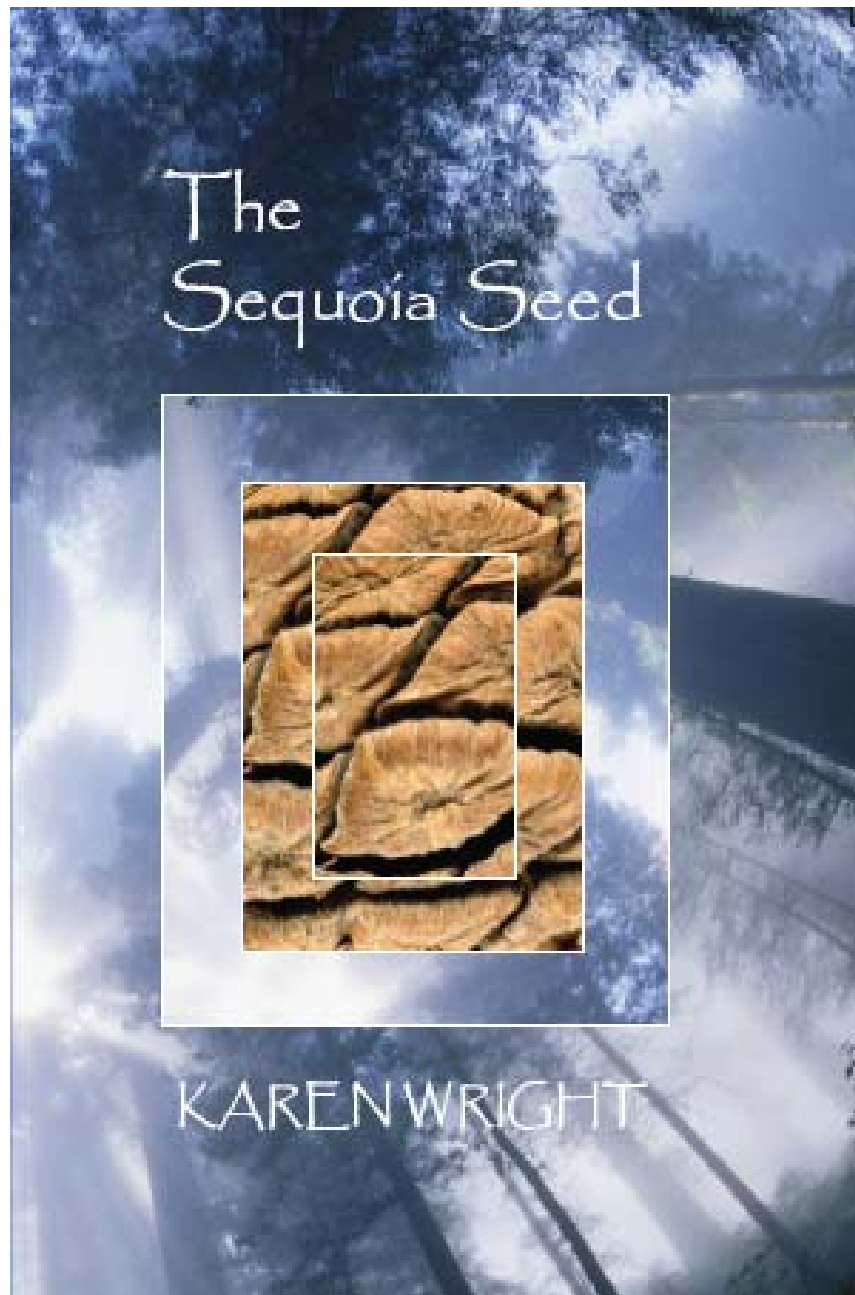


Sample Chapter

... excerpt from her hot-selling new book



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Advanced Praise for *The Sequoia Seed*

“Strap yourself in for a deep, provocative, mind-altering, life-enhancing read from the mind and heart of a woman who lives her own life in alignment with the perennial truths she writes about.” – John Scherer, Author, *Work and the Human Spirit*, Washington

“When you’re feeling lost and confused . . . when life stops making sense . . . when you know you can do, be and have more, and you need the practical answers that’ll help you make it happen . . . that’s when you need *The Sequoia Seed*.” –Pat Lynch, Author, *The Five Secrets*, Arizona

“This is FANTASTIC! You sure do have a way with words! I LOVE what you write, the truth and integrity it carries and the provocative, emotive prose you use! You are just MAGIC, Ms. Wright!” – June Hope, Director, Training Consultancy, Australia

“Your writing is like a literary river that slowly, but persistently, wore away my doubts, blame and anger.” - Al Olsen, Financial Planner, Washington

“Your writing is refreshingly frank and you cut through the fluff with laser precision. It feels like I’m sitting across from a good friend at my kitchen table. I use your insight like a close friend’s advice.” – Sonja Meline, Teacher, Minnesota

“Obstacles and frozen moments and frantic overwhelm. You have the antidote to all of those.” – Sandy Kay, Writer, California

“It amazes me that one person can be blessed with such wisdom. You always seem to grab me by the scruff of the coat and give me a little shake.” –Teresa Merryfield, Life Coach, Alberta, Canada

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Foreword by Jim Warda

Karen Wright understands us, because she has looked deeply into herself, even the darkest places, and wasn't afraid to tell us what she found.

In *The Sequoia Seed*, like a kind and wise friend, Karen takes the time to sit with us, listens to our hopes and fears, and at the same time, gives us a good swift kick in the butt to remind us just how much we have to offer.

She believes in us and our ability to change.

She's an observer. She sees things in us we can't always see. She sees our strength. She sees our truth. She sees the things we want to hide, the sometimes shame, the sometimes regret, the oftentimes feeling that we won't be able to get it done. Yet she sees it all with caring eyes, letting us know there's nothing wrong with us. In fact, there's everything right with us.

She sees what we can be, and won't let us rest until we've become it.

The *Sequoia Seed* is a gift. It's Karen being the friend who calls on the phone at night, wanting to know how our day went, wanting to know what amazing things we accomplished, wanting to know what's been tough, wanting to help us stand up after a particularly hard fall. Then, when we tell her how rough it's been, she understands. When we laugh, she laughs. When we cry, she's just quiet and listens, which is exactly what we need exactly when we need it.

In these pages, you'll find her compassion. She understands we're all going through something, struggling to greatness, trying to be our best, wanting to love and be loved—forever and a day—and even a few minutes after that.

In these pages, you'll find her belief that we create our reality, and that we have the ability to punch holes through the walls of illusion we've also created to hide from the responsibility.

She knows there is dignity in the struggle, divinity in being human, divinity in losing our way and then finding it on a moonstruck night in June.

Her words are a poet's words—"To see truth, you must come from truth."

Her words are inspiring—"You are eternal. You are safe. You are stronger than anything this world visits upon you."

Her words are strong—"Ironically, what you heard was not, 'No.' It was 'Know.'"

Her words are clear—"Life is not in the answer business. It, forever and always, asks questions."

Her words are thoughtful—"Behave yourself into becoming the person you wish to be."

Her words are her words. Yet, they're ours, too. Because, in many ways, Karen speaks for us.

As you read *The Sequoia Seed*, you'll find yourself constantly amazed by how Karen seems to know you, because she does. She knows what we're all going through. She knows it because she's going through it, too. Her gift is that she can take that knowing and put it into words. Glorious, grace-filled words.

Thank you, Karen, for the gift of this book. It came from your heart.

I can tell.

—Jim Warda, Author, *Where Are We Going So Fast?*

Preface

It can grow taller than the Statue of Liberty and live nearly forty centuries. Ancient fossil remains show that its ancestors date back for 175 million years. The giant of its species is the most massive of all living forms on the planet. It would take twenty adults, holding hands with outstretched arms, to encircle its base. Yet, paradoxically, it begins as a tiny seed smaller than a flake of oatmeal. This is the mighty Sequoia tree.

Its egg-sized cone can lie undisturbed on the forest floor for fifty years before surrendering its seeds. Ironically, the forest fires that destroy other trees are friends to the Sequoia. Its four-foot thick bark chemically repels the flames, and the fire's heat opens the cone, to at last, release its seeds to take root.

Like the dormant Sequoia seed, our destinies are often set in motion by our own personal fires. A health crisis, the loss of a loved one, and the acceptance of a truth not before seen—these are the infernos that reduce our ideologies to ashes and give birth to new sight. These are the precious moments when we can release our grip on old realities and open ourselves up to the budding possibilities of a bountiful life.

This is the purpose of *The Sequoia Seed*: to cast seeds and embrace the fires—for they shall surely come, these struggles that transform our lives. The question is, will we bud or will we burn? Will we trust that life's abundance is our ever-present inheritance, or will we cling to the lie of unworthiness? Will we give this world our sacred gifts of contribution and passion, or will we die with our music still inside us?

Problems, difficult people, tragedies—these are our fires; these are our teachers. When the heat approaches we can choose to release or retreat. And that choice becomes our experience and fashions the fate of our lives. Each day we may choose again—to see with new eyes; to look beyond the illusion of limitation to the magnificence that we are!

This book's seeds lie in the inspirational and provocative insights of my on-line subscription-based e-zine, "Waking Up." For years, loyal readers throughout the world have received timely messages challenging them to give more, love deeper, and

engage wholeheartedly with life. Hundreds wrote to tell me of their hurdles and their growth. Here, you'll read the stories of real people who've faced real dilemmas. People who have struggled with all the troubles you too may have faced. People who didn't have it all figured out, but kept walking anyway. Those who felt the pain and still got out of bed to take on another day because they learned to listen to their inner voice of wisdom over the barrage of world opinion. Life is not for the weak of spirit. It requires much. My respect and admiration for those who shared their stories with me is endless.

Unlike lighter reading, *The Sequoia Seed* is best enjoyed with time between readings since each chapter is intensely thought provoking. Some chapters will present new ideas to contemplate; others will pose questions that may trigger personal soul searching. It's best to let a chapter ripen for awhile—let it germinate and take root. View your reading as a journey through your mind and life to unearth old forgotten beliefs and discover new insights. Some chapters will ask you to dig in and immerse yourself in exercises. I encourage you to get involved and not skip through these opportunities so that you will have a richer experience. Isn't that what you're after?

The Sequoia Seed contains a series of three acts or parts that parallel our process of growth. Act One: *The Cone Awaits*, contains chapters that ask you to notice the self-identity you've created and how you are demonstrating that identity to the world. Act One is the beginning of growth toward wholeness. In Act Two: *The Fires Come*, you dig into how you navigate the journey of your life. Act Two will sharpen your spiritual skills and simplify your daily challenges. With the spiritual skills of Act Two in place, you'll now determine how to follow your heart and resolve your will. This is also a time of celebration and to remember what's most valued in this journey to wholeness. Act Three: *The Mighty Sequoia Grows*, our final section, glimpses destiny and explores the ripening of your purpose and path.

As you read, dare to question and to be accountable for the choices you've made and the life you've lived thus far. Owning your choices is the key to freedom. We can never really release anything until we fully take responsibility for it. This is where you'll begin to create with intention and return to the wholeness of your spirit.

On the path to spiritual evolution, what you do means far less than who you become. How did you manage your Self through the journey of life? Did you use your hardships to forge stronger determination and commitment? Did you learn that losses show up to prove that you never really lose anything that's truly yours?

Enjoy The Sequoia Seed time and time again. Each reading will prompt personal growth and in that growth you will find new insights in future readings. You'll see things that you will swear weren't there before because you'll be reading with new eyes. I'd love to hear about your experience of strolling through the forest of these pages.



12 Diving with the Brake On

"Once we become aware of how much our daily experiences are influenced by our inner programs, the more imperative it becomes to examine our beliefs and be prepared to change those beliefs that are limiting us"

—John Kehoe

In the winter of 1984 I rented a U-Haul truck to move cross-country from Cleveland, Ohio, to San Francisco, California. The incredibly long journey was made even longer by the truck's persistently sluggish speed. No matter how hard I stomped on the gas pedal, the truck would go no faster than forty-five miles per hour.

After miles of frustration, increasingly vile thoughts, and exhausted leg muscles, I pulled into the only town I had seen for hours. I was in Texas. After failing to get help at two gas stations, I learned a new lesson—people who work at gas stations do not repair cars anymore, not even in Texas.

I hoped against hope to find an open mechanic's shop. It was Sunday. Fortune finally smiled on me, and I came upon a tiny shop on the outskirts of town. I pulled in and a robust man with overalls as greasy and black as his filthy floor strolled over to ask how he could help. I told him of my dilemma and my hopes to arrive in California before growing old! He popped the truck's hood and smiled. "U-Haul sometimes installs speed governors on their trucks, and you got one of them."

"What is a speed governor?" I asked.

"It limits how fast you can go, as you found out. The accelerator will only depress enough to reach the speed U-Haul chooses. They figure that most folks moving their

own furniture and stuff are not very experienced at driving trucks this size, so they make sure you don't go faster than you can handle," he concluded.

"Can you disengage it or whatever you have to do to make it go faster?" I pleaded.

"Nope. Against regulations," he said, a bit too smugly.

"A mechanic with ethics," I glibly mumbled to myself. Well, at least I knew why all my efforts to gain speed were fruitless. All the while that I had been stomping on the gas, the truck was applying the brakes!

I once heard a financial consultant say that each of us will only make as much money as we believe we are worth. He warned that our financial futures were limited by a money governor. Just like that governor limited the speed of my trip, a money governor will limit how much financial momentum we achieve.

Each of us operates under a particular standard of personal wealth. That standard was set long ago by our parents' beliefs about money and the lifestyle we lived as a child. The financial status of the friends we had then, as well as the prevailing influences of our childhood community also helped forge that financial model. Each factor colluded to create a level of normal for us. And for us, normal is reality.

Intellectually we might think we deserve much more money than we have, but deep in our subconscious, we have exactly what we are comfortable having. On those occasions when we earn or have much more than our normal funds, we seem blindly compelled to get rid of it quickly. We either spend it—sometimes frivolously or sometimes unexpectedly—like an expense to replace your vehicle's transmission or to handle an increase in property taxes, or whatever pops up to siphon off the excess cash. It seems that when we exceed our money comfort zone, the world and we conspire to do whatever it takes to get back to normal.

I can imagine the groans of disbelief now. But, consider this for a moment. When was the last time you made or had money that far surpassed your usual finances? What

happened to that excess? Did you use it to secure your future or put it to use making even more money through wise investments?

Did you splurge on something that in hindsight seemed rather foolish? Maybe you took the recommendation of a friend and bought shares of a highly speculative stock. Maybe you just squandered it away and ended up with little to show for it at all. Chances are, if you are like most of us, whatever you did with it, you soon found yourself right back at the same net worth that you had before the windfall.

Ponder this revealing statistic: eight out of ten lottery winners declare bankruptcy within five years of winning the jackpot? Eighty percent! And these are folks who won millions of dollars! The problem was: that instant wealth was being handled by a non-millionaire mind. A mind with non millionaire habits of managing money.

It is much like a typical college student in their freshman year of college. For many, this is the first taste of real independence from the parental restrictions they endured in the past. Suddenly, they can go where they want, when they want, for as long as they want. They can do what they want, whenever they want. And with little to no accountability to anyone in authority, many students spend a great part of their first college year engaging in behaviors that would shock their parents. Kids rebel and flaunt their newly found freedom . . . until one day they wake up to the inevitable reality that their irresponsibility has been personally damaging.

And so it is with many of the instant lottery millionaires created every day. With all that new money, they sometimes go a little crazy and buy incredibly expensive things just because, suddenly, they can. Mesmerized by burgeoning bank accounts, they proceed to spend their windfall like it will last forever. But, pretty soon—sooner than they ever dreamed—the money is gone, the bills are piled up, and their bank balance once again reflects their true money sophistication. It shrinks to their normal level of funds. Back to what is comfortable. And the promise of a life of ease disappears as quickly as the money did.

This notion of a governor started me wondering what other parts of our lives might be limited by unnoticed governing beliefs.

Perhaps we only have as much happiness as we believe we deserve. After all, if we walk around happy all the time, someone or something is sure to take it away. We do not want to invite scrutiny. And why do we merit such happiness when the world around us is filled with so much unhappiness? Maybe being that happy, especially for no logical reason, is just being naive. And God knows, with all the wrongs we have committed in our lives, we don't really deserve to be feeling so good.

Maybe we get only as much love as we believe we are due. Again, we're nothing special, just one person making it through life. With all our faults, and we know them well, why would anyone truly love us? So, we end up suspicious of those who care, knowing that we do not deserve it. We might not even let that love in, since we know it will likely end badly anyway. Many folks just decide to avoid the whole issue of love altogether thinking that there's too much vulnerability—too many chances to get hurt.

Do we have a worthiness governor that limits our level of confidence or self-worth to a paltry level that someone like us ought to have? After all, it's wise to know your place.

We could go on and on. In just about every aspect of our lives, we have developed a comfort with a certain quality of existence. Too much less than that level causes pain and too much more causes anxiety. So, we stay within our self defined boundaries of normality and make adjustments when we stray too far away.

Consequently, your life, for better or worse, is a diary of who you have believed you are. No point in disagreeing. If you truly believed you could be and have more, you would. There is no judgment in that. Not really. It is just factual. You have become the version of you that you have chosen to be. You have become the you that you are comfortable with, as one of my "Waking Up" readers woke up to.

"Why am I spinning my wheels? Why does this constantly happen to me? What is going on that I can't press forward? I read your message about the governor and I said, 'She's absolutely correct!' In the job I have right now, I'm taking on a lot of responsibilities and not getting the recognition for it. When I read your governor message, what that said to me was, 'I'm doing it.' The reason that this is constantly happening to me is because my mental governor is saying I have to do a lot for everyone, to

keep on taking on more and more and more. And don't expect, or don't even ask for the recognition. I need to move out of the governor thing where I'm going 45 miles an hour, and I'm pressing my foot to the accelerator. I need to . . . I want to go faster.

I have, this week, consciously been setting limits for myself where I'm saying no. To me, that is actually moving my governor, because I'd never say no before and I'm starting to do that. It's a little scary for me, but I'm actually getting a reaction to it where they're saying, 'Gee, we should have recognized you. Yes, you are doing the work of three people.' So, I'm liking that part." —Toni D.

Do you really want more money, more love, and more happiness? Then stop chasing after a new job, a new romance or greater thrills. The thrill of something new will lift your spirits for a moment or two. But, newness wears off and your life will once again look remarkably the same as it did before. Remember the governor. Without changing its limiting settings, getting more money, love or happiness will be temporary at best.

Your beliefs about who you really are, are much stronger than the circumstances you find yourself in. Just changing your surroundings isn't enough to experience a new life. You need to change how you think of yourself and what you believe is possible.

Work on the governor, not the world. Find out why you have chosen to have what you have and not what you say you want. What is holding you back? What sabotaging beliefs limit your choices? Why don't you believe you deserve more?

The good news is that all of your limiting beliefs and your habitual comfort zones are merely safe choices you once made and kept making. They were just choices, like what to wear today.

But, for you, tomorrow can be a very different day from today. You can choose to let more love, more happiness, and more money in. You can choose to believe you are worth all of it—and even more. Or, instead, you can choose to believe that even if you did, by some fluke, get what you really wanted, it wouldn't last anyway, so why bother.

In this lifetime, on this planet, experience is all we have. What are you choosing to experience? Why? Figure that out and you will advance to a higher order of will—a stronger discipline to choose according to your values. You won't long for the healing of a strained relationship, yet continue to behave distant and angry. You won't wish for an end to your money worries, but continue to spend excessively. You will make conscious choices and stop unwittingly sabotaging your results.

There is so much of everything in this life. You are as deserving as the next soul. Being happy, being rich, having a rewarding life—these are not evil. You are not taking anything away from anyone else. Quite the contrary, in a state of abundance, you will be a wonderful gift of an example to the world. One that will hopefully inspire others to break free from their self-limiting governors too, and contribute greatness to the world, governed by conscious will, not mindless comfort.

About the Author

Karen Wright's life is summed up in her favorite Marcel Proust quote, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."



Her nomadic search for Self, seeking numerous careers and locales, became her soul's curriculum. Her many paths led to lessons in letting go of fear, listening to inner guidance, and coming home to her own spirit. It was an inner journey—a shift in perspective—that prepared her to help others navigate that rocky course to spirit. "It is the longest journey and the shortest distance," she confides. "With a shift in thought, entire lives can change."

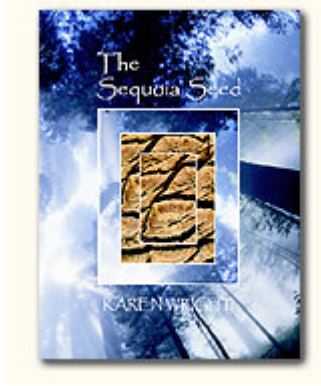
An acclaimed inspirational speaker and consultant to leaders, Karen opens new doors of possibility and partnership when confusion and stagnation threaten to demoralize teams and destroy personal lives. She teaches leaders how to earn employees' discretionary effort—the available, but rarely accessed, wealth of talent, creativity, and passion that all individuals possess.

Karen is the author of the internationally read "Waking Up," an inspirational and life changing, on-line e-zine with a fiercely loyal following. Her writing speaks of everyday challenges with self-worth, fear, and life purpose—encouraging us to embrace the unknown and recognize the greatness in us all.

Karen's study of chaos theory, quantum physics, and brain physiology led her to see that the fulfillment of our individual lives is inextricably connected to humanity's spiritual evolution. Her position is succinctly profound. "Whether we speak of countries or families, all life is one."

Karen resides in the Pacific Northwest—close to family and the nurturing sustenance of undisturbed natural beauty. You may contact her at: karen@wrightminded.com or visit her website at <http://www.wrightminded.com>.

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Energize Your Dreams with Waking Up!

WAKING UP!

...TO YOUR LIFE, YOUR POTENTIAL, YOUR FUTURE

It's easy to get lost in life. Distracted from what's real by what's urgent. With all the noise of your day, wouldn't it be wise to consciously choose an antidote to the insanity?

Touted as a *Cyber Oprah*, Karen will challenge you to live a more conscious life. Her writing will inspire your passions and expose your procrastinations. This spiritual kick-in-the-butt will buzz you better than a double espresso. What a way to stay on track!

Life is flying by; there is no time to lose. Sign up and hold on - as Karen asks you to live up to your dreams and make your mark. Subscribe and get a coach that believes in you and won't let you sell out. Subscribe at: http://www.wrightminded.com/free_ezine.html.