

Story of Next
(My future Story)

Lucy Guevarra

It has been twenty-one years since God first led my husband and me to an unfamiliar and remote place in the western part of the Philippines. Throughout these years, God has never wavered in sustaining us in every area of our family life—through joy and sorrow, success and failure, sickness and health. He has been faithfully crafting the events of our lives. God's presence is constant and unwavering!

Allow me to share the next chapter of my story, one that highlights what God has been preparing in me for His purpose in my life as what was written in *Proverbs 19: 21* "*Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails*".

The uptick training has been a tremendous blessing for all women leaders. During the challenging nights of training, I gained invaluable insights into God's purpose for a man's life, and more specifically, for my own life as a wife, a mother, a teacher, a friend, and a leader. One of the key lessons we learned was about the "Five Capitals." This lesson made me reflect on how I prioritize each capital, as seen in the time and effort I invest in each one. In each of these capitals, God has revealed Kairos moments to me—opportunities for growth and reflection. He allows me to process these moments so that I can take the necessary actions, relying on His wisdom.

Through the teachings on the Rhythm of Life, I learned that balance is essential among these capitals so that God's work can bear fruit in my life. The stages of the cross reminded me that all my struggles and challenges can be laid at the feet of Jesus, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Only He can transform these experiences into a beautiful story that will unfold in the future.

Spiritual Capital. At first, spiritual capital wasn't at the top of my priorities. However, I thank God that during a time of reflection, He made me realize that I needed to confront my personal challenges in sustaining my devotion and quiet time with Him. This Kairos moment served as God's way of drawing my attention to the fact that He was no longer at the center of my life. As a woman leader, it is crucial for me to process these Kairos moments with the Lord and seek His guidance and comfort. I need to intentionally make Him my priority each morning, starting my day by winning the first battle in prayer. God is gently drawing my attention and lovingly helping me grow each day as I spend more time with Him. This is an experience I can share as a testimony to others.

As I continue to grow as a Christian woman, I can see that in the years to come, these experiences will encourage me to pursue further knowledge and training, particularly by attending Bible school for ministry-related courses. I envision myself actively discipling other women for mission outreach, both locally and internationally, offering counseling for women, parents, and senior citizens in our community, and collaborating with local NGOs that assist women in crisis. I know that God loves and cares for them.

To nurture my spiritual growth, I will pursue our family devotion, as much as I wanted to be use by the Lord outside our home, my family's spiritual nourishment is likewise my priority it is very clear in *Deuteronomy 6:6-7*, "*These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up*". Also, I plan to attend discipleship and leadership training, both locally and abroad, much like the uptick global training. I will also encourage other women to do the same. The lessons from these trainings are a blessing, and the opportunity to disciple others using these teachings—so they, too, can disciple others—is a great reward! I believe that God is still at work in my life, and I must continue to rely on Him as I face any obstacles that come my way in fulfilling this vision. I am encouraged by the verse in *Colossians 2:6-7*:

"So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude".

Relational Capital. Relational capital has been a significant challenge for me, as I tend to be more introverted. However, the verse *"Love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34)*, God has certainly captured my attention with the lesson about the Triangle Character and Skills questions. This lesson reminded me that while I may have connections with others, I may not always love them the way Jesus does. At times, it feels like it doesn't matter, but in reality, it does. I tend to limit myself to what I think I can do, forgetting what "God can do." The lesson on the triangle of character and skill has helped me address my personal insecurities, encouraging me to focus on improving my "up"—my devotional life with God. As I grow in my relationship with Him, I can strengthen my "in"—my community life with the church, which will lead to a fruitful missional life, my "out," in the world.

With these improvements, I believe God will lead me to take the next step in partnering with a local church community—working alongside its leaders and members to share the gospel with the unreached and unengaged, introducing them to Christ. As a woman leader in our church, I am committed to helping other church workers process their own "Triangle" in life, applying the principle of the "Square" of discipleship so that they, in turn, can disciple others.

Through these efforts to improve relational capital, I believe God will use me as an instrument to help make our local church a dynamic community that actively participates in mission work for the lost. We will continue to engage with people of peace through prayer and discipleship. Understanding the principle of the Person of Peace brings me comfort and assurance, as it reminds me that identifying this person is God's work, not mine. This principle encourages me to seek the Person of Peace in God's way, not through my own efforts. It relieves the pressure of putting in unnecessary effort, which may not benefit me or the person I might mistakenly consider a Person of Peace. I believe that God will also use these connections to build godly relationships, not just within our local area, but also in other places across the province, including with people from different cultures. I will be intentional about understanding intercultural differences, which will be especially valuable in areas where traditions and rituals still hold strong significance.

Physical Capital. At first, physical capital was the least of my priorities. I used to think that being physically healthy simply meant having the strength to handle physical tasks—and that was enough. However, the lesson on the Rhythm of Life taught me that, like all other capitals, physical health should not be neglected. I learned that there must be a balance between work and rest, and that being physically capable doesn't always mean being truly healthy. God got my attention during this reflection, showing me that the quality of my physical work is deeply affected by my physical and mental health. When I'm physically tired, my mind doesn't function as efficiently either. My body is signaling that I need rest. God reminded me that as His child, I am called to do good works, and that according to *1 Corinthians 6:19–20* *"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."* I should take care of my body since it is His temple. This lesson was a gentle reminder that to glorify God, I must prioritize self-care and maintain a well-balanced work and rest routine. Resting doesn't mean doing nothing—it means resting in the Lord as what in *Proverbs 3:5–6* says: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* I learned that in every task I seek to accomplish, He is the one who should be working in me and through me. Without Jesus, all my efforts are in vain. Obedience and resting in Him are key.

Through God's intervention, I plan to invest in physical capital by engaging in activities that reflect resting in the Lord. I will encourage our church community to practice prayer retreats in peaceful places, providing opportunities for personal reflection and cultivate a prayer walk ministry within the church and our neighborhood devotion to God's word. This will not only promote physical exercise but also foster relational connections as we meet new people in the area. I also plan to spend quality time with my family on annual vacations, both locally and abroad. To enhance understanding, I will propose training sessions and seminars on the importance of balancing work and rest. For my own personal physical capital, I will encourage my family to take daily walks together for exercise and adopt healthier eating habits.

Intellectual Capital. With the lessons about the “Five Voices”, it helped me identify my personal voice, which is “Creative”. Exploring the “Five Voices” in depth allows me to understand myself better and recognize how my actions and responses impact those around me:

- I tend to be relatively quiet, and expressing my thoughts is something I’m actively working on.
- Thinking about the future is important to me, which is why I am driven to study and learn topics that foster personal growth and prepare me to adapt to change.
- I firmly believe that in God, all things are possible.
- Commitment and accountability are deeply valuable to me. I am determined to complete any work I start, giving my absolute best no matter the challenges. I trust that the outcome will align with God’s intended purpose.

Given my own voice, some ways I need to grow in welcoming other voices so I can become a healthy leader is to pray for them and with them. It is always an encouragement to pray for others and much more to know that there are people praying for you. It is one way of modelling what Jesus did for His disciples. Listening with understanding is also important in any relationship. Through listening, we show our sincerity and deep interest on what other people are thinking. Understanding what they have to say is to build trust and allowing myself to be open and know their perspective in issues that requires group participation

As a university instructor, I strive for excellence in both my role as a teacher to my students and as a homeschool mother to my children. While I may not be perfect, I do my best, and I am thankful to the Lord for placing a desire in my heart to continue learning—not only in academics but also in my spiritual growth and practices. After graduating with my Master’s in Education in January 2025, I prayed to the Lord, asking if He might spare me from the burden of pursuing a PhD due to the heavy responsibilities it entails. However, as expected, God had a better plan. Two years from now, I see myself completing the PhD program. I firmly believe that God’s way is always the best, and while it won’t be an easy journey, Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” God has never failed to show me how He transforms hardships into beautiful stories of success, all for His glory.

Looking ahead, I believe God will continue to use the lessons and experiences I’ve gained as a teacher. Working with a diverse group of learners and addressing their individual needs helps me better understand the various voices within our local church. By understanding these voices, I can help our church members recognize and embrace their own unique perspectives, enabling them to be instruments of God in His great work. In addition, applying the principles from the lesson on the “Square” complements the teachings on the five voices. The Uptick training has helped me recognize my own journey as both a disciple and a leader. My experiences in discipleship reflect how I apply these lessons in leadership. This lesson clarifies the individual phases of learning for both the discipler and the disciple. The insights shared about each stage are essential in understanding the phases of the square. Both the leader and the disciple are undergoing adjustments, as people learn in different ways, and both must practice humility and accept each other’s struggles.

As a leader—both in the women’s ministry and in the church—I face many challenges. In the future, there may be times when I feel overwhelmed with frustration, especially when it seems like my efforts in discipleship are not yielding the desired results. I may struggle to help my disciples understand that God’s intention is for them to grow spiritually so that they, too, can help others grow. With these challenges in mind, receiving mentorship on how to address them, as well as praying for and with my disciples for more patience, would be incredibly helpful.

Through the principles learned in the square lesson, I envision myself applying strategies that encourage an atmosphere of discipleship in our local church. By making adjustments, we can ensure that everyone continues in their journey despite struggles and difficulties. Cultivating a mentorship atmosphere means assuring others that they are never alone in the process.

Additionally, I will initiate continuous learning and the application of these lessons within our church organization. This will help members develop a deeper understanding of and embrace the principles of intercultural differences. They will learn to apply the teachings of Jesus and His heart for all people, including those in areas and communities where diverse cultures and traditions are present.

Financial Capital. While financial capital may not be my top priority, I recognize its importance. God has entrusted us with the wealth we need, and we are responsible for using it wisely. In the past, finances were never a concern for our family. God's grace allowed us to live comfortably, and we were able to experience a life that I can truly say was well-off. However, as time passed, we began facing financial challenges. It felt like a long period of silence from God, despite our fervent prayers. It took me a while to understand what God was trying to teach me during those years: to surrender everything to Him, for He will provide for all our needs (*Philippians 4:19*)—*"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

I praise and thank the Lord because, in the midst of what we lost, He replaced it with something far greater. He is a good God, and through the resources He has placed in our hands, He is teaching us to lean on Him and learn from Him. While our financial situation may not be the same, we find joy in managing what we have, striving to make God the center of every decision and spending choice.

Given our current financial situation, our family is learning to place mission work at the very core of our ministry. We are filled with joy to support the various mission initiatives of our local church—both locally and globally—including assisting church planters and providing scholarship grants to students in need.

We continue to pray that, with God's provision and blessing, we will one day have the financial resources to further invest in Christian education. One of our hopes is to partner with our local church in establishing a Christian pre-school. I envision this as a meaningful avenue to nurture young minds with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to be used by God as an instrument of His love to the families who choose to enroll.

Beyond education, the school will also serve the community by supporting mission efforts such as offering free reading and math classes during the summer to underprivileged children in our church's surrounding area.

I firmly believe that our God is the Alpha and the Omega. I place my full trust in His will and His ways, holding on to His powerful promise in *Jeremiah 32:27*: *"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"*

To God be the Glory, forever and ever!

Story of Then

By Lucy

I am the youngest in a family of seven. With both my parents working, I was often left at home with a relative when my brothers were at school. Before I finished primary school, our family moved to a new place. Despite the change, I adjusted quickly and even joined the children's choir at the local chapel. I have fond memories of attending daily Mass at 6 AM, as the chapel was just across from my school.

It was during high school that I first encountered Christ in a personal way. My seatmate, Cristina, introduced me to Him by sharing God's Word and teaching me about Jesus as revealed in the Bible. Her words stirred something in me, and I soon found myself voluntarily reading the Bible. It was there that I found the answers to my questions about life and purpose. The Bible became my source of truth and clarity.

However, my newfound faith presented a challenge. I had a growing desire to attend a local Christian church, but when my parents discovered I was going to a "different church," life at home became difficult. To restore peace in our family, I had to let go of my new faith in Christ, a decision that left my spiritual life in limbo.

During my college years, my parents continued to insist I attend Catholic Mass, but my heart longed for a different form of worship. After graduating, I was blessed with an opportunity to work as an overseas Filipino worker in Israel as a caregiver. It was there, in the most unexpected place, that God began to work in mysterious ways. Through the emerging technology of that time, I met my now husband, even though I was in Israel and he was in the Philippines.

When I returned home, we got married. Shortly after, my husband was offered a job in a place that was completely unfamiliar to both of us. What we didn't realize was that God was orchestrating every detail of our lives for His glory. It was in this unfamiliar place that I re-encountered Christ, and my husband came to know Him as well.

Now, together with our two sons, we have been faithfully serving in the Lord's ministry in this once unfamiliar place. Looking back, I see how God used every moment—both the challenges and the blessings—to bring me to where I am today, all for His glory here in the unfamiliar place which we now called our home.

My Story of Now

By Lucy

The province of Antique, though often unfamiliar and overlooked, has been our home for the past 20 years. Alongside my husband and two children, we have faithfully served in the Lord's ministry here for 16 years. I have dedicated myself to the women's ministry in our local church, as well as at both the convention and national levels. My faith has always driven me to say "yes" to the Lord, but over time, I realized that serving in ministry is far from easy. In fact, it's not just hard—it's impossible without God's supernatural power. Without His strength, giving up would often seem like the easiest choice.

As a women's leader, my goal is not to please people but to do my best to help others remain faithful to the Lord, seek heavenly things, and be available for God's work. Despite challenges in my personal life, I have never hesitated to give my time, effort, or resources for ministry work. However, there have been moments when my efforts felt futile—when rejection and persecution from those I served alongside seemed overwhelming. In one of my prayers, I cried out, "Lord, isn't this what You called me to do?" The Lord answered me through Proverbs 3:5-6: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."*

I am still a work in progress, but God's word in Proverbs 3:5-6 has become a source of comfort and assurance, reminding me that He is at work in and through me. Every time I encounter a roadblock, I am encouraged by Romans 12:12, which says, *"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."*

Though discouragement, failure, and rejection can be painful, I trust that the Lord will use them to craft a beautiful story—one that glorifies Him. I am certain that He is already writing the next chapter of my life, and for that, I am deeply grateful for my story of next!

Uptick 2024 Reflections

My 2024 journey with the Uptick training has been so rewarding. The lessons have helped me to understand God's design for my life and how He is working and leading me to be fruitful by yielding to His will. The reflection time made me realize that being part of His ministry may not always be easy and can often be inconvenient, but rather than prioritizing my comfort, God is more concerned with shaping my character to be Christ-like. The Uptick huddles and sharing sessions were more than just enjoyable; they were heartwarming and deeply encouraging. It was inspiring to see how the women blessed the Lord and how their lives impacted others.

Working on tasks and assignments felt like a breather from the secular world, where most of my time is consumed by work and other responsibilities. I discovered that these moments of sitting down to work on the assignments became precious times with the Lord. Through these moments, He spoke to me through the Bible passages I had to read, the devotionals I reflected on, and the realizations I wrote about. This practice transformed my spiritual exercises and deepened my relationship with Him.

Through the Uptick training, I had the privilege of meeting other women from different cultures. I was deeply blessed by their life stories. Despite the hurdles and challenges they faced, their testimonies were inspiring and comforting, as they reflected God's work in and through them. The mentoring lessons during the Uptick training helped me cultivate and nurture my relationships with others. One of the many takeaways I have from this program is the ability to listen to understand, rather than just listening to hear. This shift has built my patience and given me a better understanding of what others are going through, enabling me to respond in ways that encourage and uplift them.

I firmly believe that God has used the Uptick training program to help women grow spiritually. It has been a transformative experience that not only deepened my faith but also equipped me to better serve and connect with others in His ministry.