*Parent on Purpose by Amy Carney Introduction*

**The Decision That Changed Everything**

In 2014, my husband Keith and I bought a motorhome, packed up our twelve- year-old triplet sons and eleven-year-old daughter, said goodbye to our carefully constructed Phoenix lifestyle, and left to travel around the United States.

*Why would we do such a thing?
Because we had to.*On the surface, life couldn’t have appeared more successful. There were A’s

on the kids’ report cards; trophies on the shelves; and money in the bank. Yet, underneath this facade of worldly success, our family was disconnected and drifting apart.

We claimed one reality yet lived another. Our children were accomplished and achieved at a high level while we funded their opportunities and shuttled them around. We rarely gathered around the dinner table or sat together in a church pew. Although Keith and I said faith and family were priorities, our calendars told a different story. We consistently divided and conquered life apart from one another. With kids in various activities, Keith and I continually sat, separately, on the sidelines of our children’s lives cheering them on until one day we woke up to the fact that we were growing apart as a couple and as a family, and we needed to make a change.

We had allowed popular culture to dictate our family narrative. I had wanted to cultivate a more connected family than the one I grew up in, yet how could that ever be possible when we didn’t even spend much time together? I wanted my children to grow up in an outward focused home with God at the helm, yet our priorities served ourselves rather than Jesus.

Though it was scary, we knew that bravely saying yes to this RV adventure was precisely the medicine our disconnected family needed. So, Keith sacrificed his position as player development coach for the Chicago Blackhawks. We pulled our kids out of their public-school classrooms and off of their club sports teams, and we resigned from our organized activities. We said goodbye to our friends and life as we knew it, and, for over half a year, our family bonded our way around forty- four states. It was a journey that strengthened our disjointed family and changed our perspectives on parenting.

My blog followers, friends, and family encouraged me to write a book about our adventures, so I began writing this narrative about what I thought you’d want to know regarding touring around our beautiful country. I planned to tell you about the friendly town of Lava Hot Springs, Idaho, and how you should visit the covered bridges of Quechee, Vermont, in the fall. I was going to write about our stay at the unique sheep farm in Montana and about the natural waterslide our kids went down over and over again in Asheville, North Carolina.

But, as I began to write these stories, I realized that this wasn’t what I wanted to share with you. I’d already written about our experiences and the places we visited on my blog, so I no longer wanted this book to be about where to take your kids or the best routes to get there.

I realized that what I wanted to share with you was the heart behind our trip—our why. How we became proactive instead of reactive parents, and how we learned to consciously parent on purpose today to cultivate the legacy that we want to leave behind tomorrow.

Just as our family couldn’t travel around the USA without a roadmap and a plan, you and I can’t aimlessly lead our families without claiming where in the world we’re headed or how we plan to get there.

I’ve written this book as a reminder that we, as parents, only get one shot at raising a child and cultivating a healthy childhood. We get one chance to take the time and make the effort to influence the people who currently live in our care and under our guidance.

Keith and I will soon launch our triplets and our daughter within one year of each other. I don’t want to sit at their high school graduations or at college drop-

off feeling sad or regretting that I should have done this or could have done that differently. Instead, I want to embrace the end of full-time parenthood now and make choices today with this inevitable moment in mind.

*Parent on Purpose* is not about striving to be the perfect mother or father or to raise perfect children. We are imperfect humans raising imperfect little humans. Perfection is never our goal; the objective of this book is to help you become more intentional.

In this book, I share my process of how to better parent on purpose through three simple pillars—LEAD, LOVE, and LAUNCH.

In the first part, LEAD, we will discuss how to strengthen our personal and family identity by taking the time and making the effort to claim who we are, what we believe, and how we can better live what we say to be our truth. In this section, we determine our vision, values, and purpose.

The second part, LOVE, is about purposely strengthening our family relationships by taking the time and making the effort to put down the screens and play more. We’ll touch on the importance of developing a unique family culture that is abundant in meaningful traditions and rituals.

Finally, we will talk about how we need to better prepare our child for the LAUNCH into adulthood. We will focus on strengthening our child’s life skills and their ability to focus on others rather than just themselves. We will discuss how we can raise hard working, responsible, and empathetic adults.

My hope is that one of the ideas, inspirations, strategies, or stories in here was written just for you. I hope this book inspires you to better parent on purpose today so that you feel more joy and peace raising your child and launching them into the world tomorrow. No matter how many children you have or how many years have already passed, you can pause, pivot, and plan a purposeful course for your family.

Let’s parent on purpose today, my friend, while we still can!

