



# Seek, Plan, Strive: How I Turned Sad into Glad and Plucked Magic from Tragic

*James R. Storey*

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## **Seek, Plan, Strive: How I Turned Sad into Glad and Plucked Magic from Tragic** James R. Storey

The author, retired after a long career as a public policy expert in Washington, D.C., recounts major life events with humor and poignancy, beginning with his childhood in the Deep South during World War 2. He attended 10 schools in 4 states and 5 cities, as his family moved often. This extreme mobility added to the angst from the loss of a parent, membership in a newly blended family, and being forced to abandon his childhood religion. He had to overcome an anxiety disorder to turn his life around and attain the goals to which he aspired. The author describes his romantic life in vivid detail as he made the transition from the sexually oppressed 1950s into the swinging 1960s, enduring 2 depressing breakups before finding his soulmate. Major events in his Washington career are discussed, including brushes with high-level political power. Anecdotes of his interactions with the powerful and famous are presented. The impact of family tragedy and dislocation is woven throughout the narrative as the author navigates a minefield of loss, disappointment, and anxiety. Interspersed where appropriate in the text are 20 "Happiness Rules" that the author has lived by to maintain a stable, positive outlook. One chapter is devoted to a solo bicycle adventure the author completed from the Atlantic shore in Delaware to a Pacific beach in Southern California. Reflecting the important role music has played for the author, he includes a playlist, "Soundtrack of My Life," with a description of a song for each year and why it played an important role in his life. The author's life is filled with eerie coincidences which seem prophetic in regard to residential, marriage, and career choices. He discusses these happenings throughout the text under the heading "Fluke or Fate?" In 2014 the author published "Deadly Mix: An American Dreamer, Mental Illness, and Crisis in Cairo" about the impact the Egyptian revolution had on his only child. It was described as "extraordinary" by Arnold Packer, former Assistant Secretary of Labor and Johns Hopkins University professor. Susan Allen Toth, published memoirist and former Macalester College literature professor, called it "a stunning memoir."

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