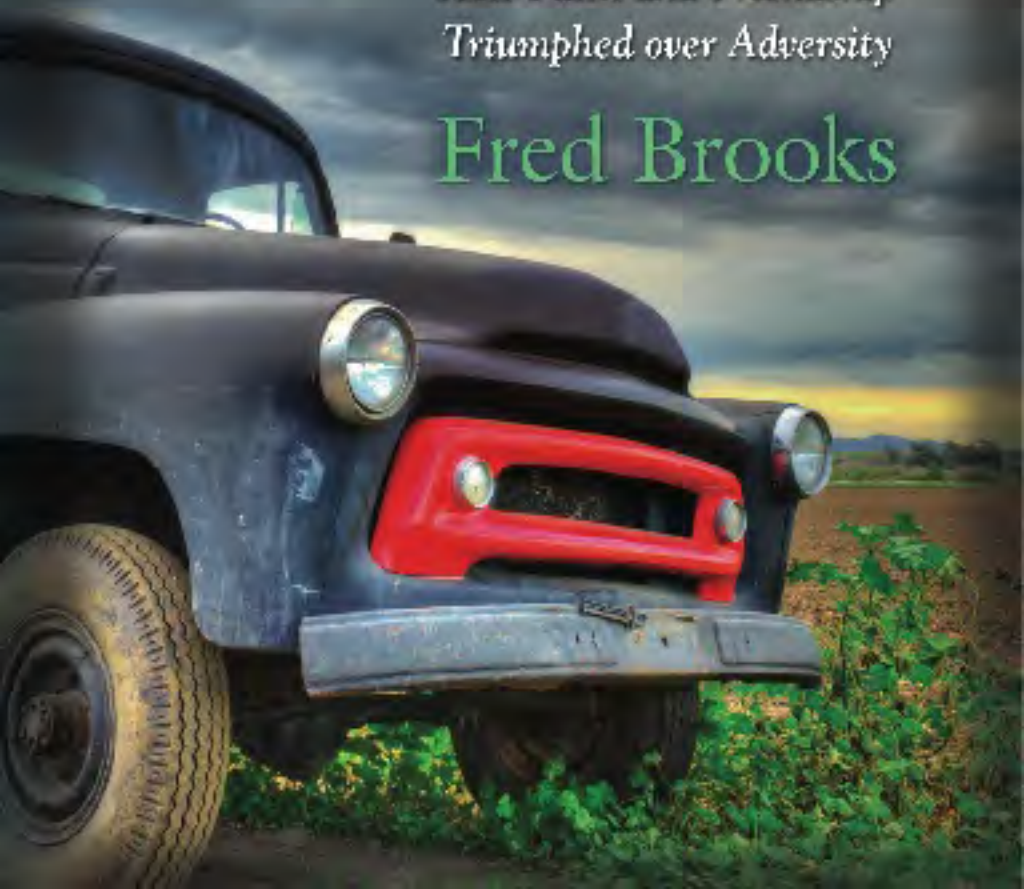


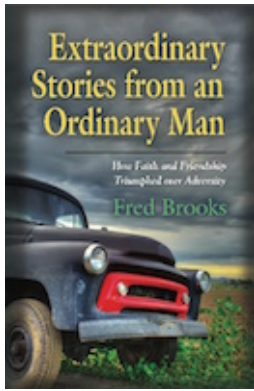
# Extraordinary Stories from an Ordinary Man

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*How Faith and Friendship  
Triumphed over Adversity*

Fred Brooks





*About a decade ago, Fred Brooks was given a journal as a gift. It sat on top of his bedroom dresser for months before he decided, one spring morning, to put pen to paper. The result is this entertaining and inspiring book.*

*Fred's early years were darkened by tragedy. His twin brother died at a young age in a car accident. His father abandoned the family and later committed suicide. Fred grew up in poverty, raised by a single mother.*

*These kinds of childhood experiences often derail a person's chances to lead a happy and fulfilled life. But Fred was fortunate—several men entered his life and played positive roles in shaping and forming his character. That strong foundation, along with his eternal optimism, work ethic, deep appreciation for life's joys, and profound faith in God, enabled Fred to persevere through life's difficulties, and achieve great success.*

*Extraordinary Stories from an Ordinary Man takes us through the ups and downs in the life of an ordinary man, to show us how extraordinary our lives really are.*

# **Extraordinary Stories from an Ordinary Man: How Faith and Friendship Triumphed over Adversity**

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**How Faith and Friendship Triumphed  
over Adversity**

**Fred Brooks**

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## **Introduction**

A decade prior to writing this memoir, I had been given a journal as a gift. It sat on top of my bedroom dresser for months before I decided, one spring Saturday morning, to thumb through the blank pages and begin to put pen to paper. Documenting my life on paper was foreign and belaboring at first. The journal contained entries spanning across many years. Yet as I wrote, a feeling of enjoyment and gratitude began to build inside me. After all, I had always enjoyed sharing my life through storytelling. Now, capturing my life events on paper seemed a fitting way to memorialize them. Page after page of handwritten notes began accumulating as I told my story.

As I spoke with others about the idea of writing a memoir, a common theme resonated: “Wow, I have always wanted to do that!” and “What a great idea!” For me, the notion of memorializing my first 40 years was exceptionally important, as I had lost my father at age 18

and often yearned to know about his life, thoughts, and stories. As I continued to gather information for this book, I found it therapeutic not only for myself, but also for the family members who graciously shared their stories. Now, as the father of an eight-year-old daughter, I want to ensure that she, her children, and her children's children have a documented legacy of their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. This book seemed a fitting way to accomplish that goal.

My second intention is to illuminate the specific roles men have played in positively shaping and forming my life. One does not need to look far to see the heartache caused by absentee fathers. Simply watch a documentary on prison inmates, visit a local pregnancy resource center, volunteer at an elementary school, or turn on the radio and listen to song lyrics. LL Cool J's "Father" depicts a man who beats his wife and uses cocaine. Harry Chapin's "Cats in the Cradle" describes a workaholic father who never has time for his son, who then takes on the same traits as his father. It's not just sons who are affected by a father's absence. Kelly

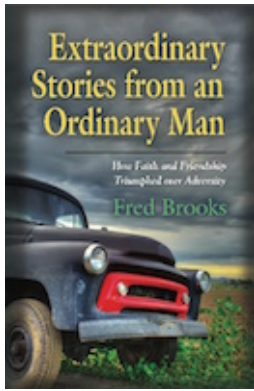


Clarkson's heartfelt lyrics in "Piece by Piece" describe a daughter's heartache at being abandoned by her father. The list goes on and on.

My third desire is to share how faith in God encourages and fosters perseverance like no other force in one's life. His hand in my life is clearly evident, and I want to share how He comforted me in my deep valleys and helped me to triumph. My heart's desire is for this story to inspire belief in the power of our mighty God.

Lastly, I want to encourage others to write and share their stories. Hopefully, the mere title *Extraordinary Stories from an Ordinary Man* will motivate readers to realize that we all have incredible stories to share. Unfortunately, most of us are deceived into believing our life stories are average. But in truth, they are extraordinary! I hope you will follow my example and set your life down to paper.

Fred Brooks



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