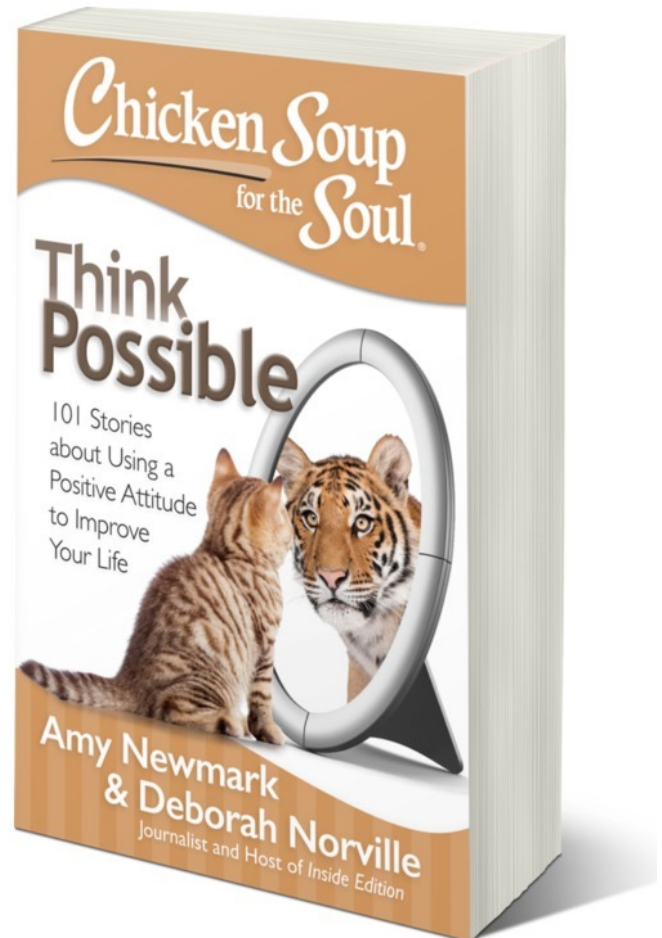


# Featured Story

## "How Gratitude Got Me Through"

Speaker | Author | Purpose Igniter

**Chicken Soup**  
for the **Soul.**



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“How Gratitude Got Me Through” by Vidal Cisneros Jr.

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## What they're saying about Vidal

“Vidal has blown me away with his knowledge in online business and leadership development, but ultimately what I’ve been most impressed with is his ability to inspire others to chase their dreams and reach peak performance.

Vidal is about transforming lives and enhancing minds and does it in a unique way with the utmost integrity. I highly recommend working with Vidal!”

*Gavin Cornelius, Co-Founder Of The Young Entrepreneurs Society International*

"Vidal's spirit is authentic and the work he does to help and inspire others is genuine. In a world of unknowns, Vidal is a constant source of strength and hope. He offers a knowing of better days to come. He is a mentor and positive role model for all those who meet him. I am honored to call him my friend."

*Marla Mckenna, published children's book author*

“Vidal is a very motivated, determined, and knowledgeable individual. Being a part of a mastermind group he leads, I know Vidal is going to make huge waves in this world. I attended his book signing for his story in Chicken Soup for the Soul, heard him speak and read his story. If you haven't heard him speak or read his work, you're missing out on something that will transform your life in some way.”

*Lucas Robak, Certified Life Coach, Melody of Life Foundation, Executive Director*

“Vidal is the real deal. He has heart and passion for what he does and a humility that is only surpassed by his innate ability to uplift and share the best of others.”

*Faydra Koenig, MA America's Crisis Coach*

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*If a fellow isn't thankful for what he's got, he isn't likely to be thankful  
for what he's going to get.*

*~Frank A. Clark*

“My life will not end like this. My family needs me and I have to follow my dreams and start now.” That’s the promise I made myself one evening years ago. I was sitting in my work truck on a road construction site that was the culmination of my dead- end career. My dreams had faded to nothing, my marriage was stuck in idle, and my daughters only saw the remnants of the father they’d once known, when they saw me at all, which was seldom.

Riding on the power of that decision, I left my financially comfortable, soul- destroying construction career behind. I jumped into a success mentorship program, quickly discovering the power of personal development and opening myself to the idea that my life was in my hands. I believed I had embarked on a journey that was waiting just for me. Then the unexpected happened.

I was quickly building momentum and learning the principles of building a successful business when my wife of seven years began to change. She had gone so far into her new reality that it took all the courage she had to confess it all. “I’m seeing someone,” she finally admitted.

All of the momentum I’d been building crumbled under the devastating blow as she hesitantly said, “There’s more.” A long pause, and then, “I’m pregnant.”

In that moment my heart and soul were shattered. I grasped for a straw of hope. “It’s mine, right?”

One word blew that straw away. “No.”

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I still wanted her as my wife. I held on to that thought and tried desperately to make it work and win her back, but it was hopeless. As much as I prayed for a miracle, I had to accept she wasn't in the relationship with me anymore. It was time to let her go and move out.

Almost overnight, I went from new success to new distress. That year I spiraled into a deep depression and found myself sitting at bars and drinking more than I ever had. The rage I was trying to suppress came out one night in a drunken bender. In a high-speed chase one hopes to see only in a movie, I eluded a deputy sheriff twice, finally losing the officer but causing an accident and totaling my Jeep. While thankfully no one was severely injured in the accident, I was a mess. Unsurprisingly, I was placed under arrest.

I'd worked with deputy sheriffs on construction sites and I had always respected the law. This behavior was out of character for me. I had to ask myself who I had become.

Sitting in that cell for four days straight not only sobered me up, but also woke me up to the reckless way I was living my life. I hit rock bottom sitting in that cell, locked up with people who were on trial for awful crimes.

In those four days of incarceration I went through a wide range of emotions, but what I found was clarity in my mission and the passion that would pick me up from the deep depression I was in. I prayed. I fasted. I found inspiration in others' stories. Most of all, the light was beaming brightly out from me again. I realized that I needed to forgive if I was going to move forward with my life.

Praying for everyone, especially for those who had created my nightmare, softened my heart and made things turn around faster than I'd imagined. Words, I learned, have power, and the ability of grateful prayer to change your life should never be underestimated.

I had fallen prey to situational alcoholism and depression. But now I held fast to my new vision. I would be grateful and wish everyone the

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best, including my enemies. I prayed for blessings for my ex-wife, her lover, and their unborn child.

Unfortunately, the day following the arrest, my name was plastered all over the news as a suspect in a high-speed chase. I was sentenced to six months for Driving While Intoxicated and Reckless Driving.

I saw the emotional effect my sentencing and conviction had on my family, and it was devastating to face six months behind bars away from my daughters when they most needed me. Although I thought this was the last thing I needed, looking back I realize it was, in fact, the best thing.

Those six months helped clear my mind from the nightmare and gave me the courage to accept professional therapy and get refocused. Most of all, it awakened my heart to a new relationship.

Before serving time, I had become friendly with a woman at work. Unbeknownst to me, she was also going through betrayal and divorce. The similarity in our situations was eerie, and it was obvious to us that our becoming friends was no coincidence. I began to write her daily, and the closer we became the more she was my ray of light in the storm I was living through.

She brightened my days with her letters and visits. She gave me hope, and it inspired me to keep going.

In the outside world, the life I once knew was being pummeled to dust. But in my incarcerated world I found contentment in writing, drawing, singing in the choir and inspiring others to chase dreams.

I learned something powerful—being incarcerated doesn’t mean being unhappy. Happiness is a choice. You can choose to believe in something bigger and have faith that your journey will take you to better circumstances.

When my six-month sentence was over, traveling on that bus back to my reality was surreal. I was returning, but with a new level of awareness

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for life. Learning from others’ stories gave me insight into how powerful the principles I learned from my success coaches and millionaire mentors really were.

I’ve learned that we all have the same twenty-four hours each day to sow seeds of abundance. And we can’t receive greater gifts if we don’t let go of the past ones.

It became obvious that I had been blind for many years to the power of visionary gratitude. I had taken so many things for granted for so long, including achieving my dreams. But by intentionally envisioning and being grateful in the now, it gives way to abundance in the future.

When I’m asked to speak to audiences about my story and how I persevered in spite of circumstances, I talk about the power of words and prayer, and about holding that vision of gratitude for what you have so that greater possibilities become real.

“Instead of waiting for the light at the end of the tunnel, be the light that sparks everyone on fire.”

~Vidal Cisneros Jr.

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Vidal Cisneros Jr. is a speaker, author, coach and purpose igniter.

While overcoming betrayal, divorce, depression, situational alcoholism, incarceration and life transformative experiences, during a dream chasing journey. Vidal's mission became clear, to help dream chasers in need of inspiration and coaching, during life's unexpected storms.

Vidal inspires through his story of trials to triumphs, as he sparks a purpose-driven passion with audiences. He's been featured in the Huffington Post, the Good Men Project, and is a contributor for Chicken Soup for the Soul.

For speaking and coaching connect via email: [info@vidalcisnerosjr.com](mailto:info@vidalcisnerosjr.com)



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