

# WordPoint

PUBLISHING GROUP, LLC

## TFT Timeline

*While at times it feels like we've been working on this book forever, in reality it hasn't been all that long since we embarked on this journey. Read on to learn the "what" and "when" in the development of Transformation from Tragedy.*



*The Winkels in Indonesia*

**DECEMBER 26, 2004:** This is when it all started. As described in the first story in the book, "the call," right after the tsunami Thomas felt called to go and help the survivors. He traveled to Indonesia just weeks after the disaster. For his trauma counseling work there, we developed a customized training curriculum called *Restoring Hope*, which focused on the needs of the survivors and relief workers.

**SEPTEMBER 2005:** Nine months after the disaster, we returned to Indonesia together (the chapter "the team" describes the amazing way this trip came about). This time, we conducted trainings and a retreat for a women's organization and Indonesian teachers. It was during this trip that small inklings about telling the story started to emerge.

**SPRING 2006:** Over a period of months, we started to feel more and more strongly that there was a story to tell relating to the tsunami, and that possibly we could be the ones who could tell it. This process of discovery culminated in the writing of a book proposal. The final story ended up being substantially different than the proposal, but writing it helped us focus our thoughts. We also sought the services of a freelance editor to help us hone our ideas. As you'll see next, a "chance" encounter kept the process moving forward.

**AUGUST 2006:** We hadn't yet been able to connect with the editor, Elaine, who lives in Washington state, due to her travel schedule and commitments. It just so happened, though, that when we were up in Washington for a family wedding in August, she was home for just a week. She sent us an email, and amazingly, we were staying a little over an hour from where she lived. We each drove halfway and met in a diner. We shared our book proposal, Elaine asked some good clarifying questions, and we had a great conversation. On the drive back to the hotel, the entire concept of our book crystallized into something very close to the final product. We like to say that this one meeting with Elaine moved our project forward six months in about an hour.

**SEPTEMBER 2006:** Armed with a newfound sense of clarity about the project, we made plans to attend a writer's conference in New Mexico to meet up with Elaine and her community of writers. As part of our preparation, we had our friend Lisa, who designed the entire book, website, and all our marketing materials, draw up some sample spreads of the book. Looking back on them, they are incredibly simple compared to what we ended up with, and yet you can see the framework for the finished product.

**OCTOBER 2006:** The writer's conference was held in an absolutely beautiful and serene setting, just outside Santa Fe. Elaine and her community of writers welcomed us into the fold and provided more encouragement than we could have imagined when we made plans to attend. The conference also gave us the chance to meet with a experts and professionals from the publishing industry. We pitched them our concept and soaked up all the feedback. This experience reassured us that we had a compelling story worth telling and that we had the potential to manage the production of this project ourselves. (As one editor put it, "you could give this project to a publishing company, but why do that? You have everything right here, and if you go through a publisher it will likely reduce the amount you can give to tsunami relief—a major reason for doing the project—by ten times.)

**NOVEMBER 2006:** Fresh off the writer's conference, we got to work writing. Initially, we envisioned a relatively simple project and planned a very aggressive timeline that would have us finished in just a few months. Soon, it became apparent that what we wanted to do with this story would take a bit more time.

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2007:** We started working on cover concepts with Lisa. It took a few rounds to hone in on what would best represent this story of transformation. In March we pulled together the image of the rubble, to represent the disaster, and the two little girls, to represent the hope. Rodney Rascona, a photographer we met on our September trip to Indonesia, was kind enough to permit us to use these photos and several others throughout the book. We fine tuned the cover over the next several months, but it is principally the same concept that emerged originally.



**MARCH 2007:** Our website went up this month. Lisa designed a great book-themed design. With most of our attention on the book, the website didn't get much love in the beginning. (Hopefully we're making up for it now!)

**SPRING 2007:** We continued to write and work with Lisa weekly to develop the design elements and layout of the book. Our focus was on creating a totally unique book format, one that combines the visual elements of a coffee table book with a compelling narrative that stirs the soul. Nothing was a "throwaway," every element on every page has intention behind it.

**JULY 2007:** We had a relatively complete, though very rough, version of the book done by this point. Gordon, one of our teammates from the September trip, was kind enough to garner us an email introduction to the chief of staff of former President George H.W. Bush. We submitted a copy of the book along with a letter asking if he would consider providing a foreword for our book. He was an ideal person to introduce this story, as he and President Clinton visited the very places where the first half of the book takes place. We sent the package off and waited hopefully.

**AUGUST 2007:** It was time to get the story out there! Okay, not quite into the big world, but at least to a trusted team of reviewers. Family, friends, and fellow writers all signed on to help us make the book the best it could be. We are forever grateful to the entire team of reviewers for taking the time to be a part of telling this story. The book would not be anywhere near what it is today without them.

**SEPTEMBER 2007:** As we busily compiled all of the feedback from the reviewers (a long and challenging process), we received some wonderful news. Former President Bush agreed to contribute a foreword to the book. We consider this an incredible honor, especially since Thomas served under President Bush's command during his time in the Marines.

**OCTOBER 2007:** Armed with the compiled feedback from the reviewers, we set out to do a complete edit of the book ourselves. This included reworking several of the stories for better flow and clarity, along with fixing formatting issues and typos. We figured out that the book was almost 50,000 words. Not terribly long for a book, but with all of it broken up into so many bits and pieces (long stories, sidebars, journal entries, captions, etc.), editing was a huge challenge. The editing process was challenging, even painful at times, however it was definitely worth it in the end.

**NOVEMBER 2007:** This was the month of completion. We received both the foreword from President Bush, as well as a couple of White House photos we had requested during the summer (the request had to go through the photo office, media affairs office, and White House counsel for review!). We also completed all of our revisions and corrections, and had the book professionally proofed (definitely a necessity after looking at it almost every day for a year!). At the end of the month, we traveled to California to meet with our printer to review the specs for our book.

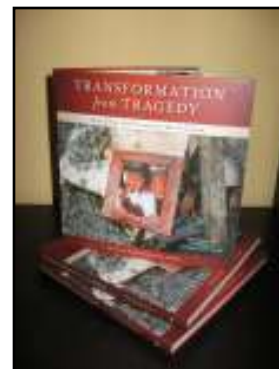
**DECEMBER 2007:** Unbelievably enough, the time came to say "it's done" and to give Lisa the okay to upload the file to the printer. Wow! We received color proofs back from the printer, which we reviewed with a fine toothed comb. We only found a few pages that we needed to correct, either for color or minor mistakes. Off they went back to the printer. Then it was time to wait. While waiting, we traveled to Chicago to work with Thomas' brother-in-law, who has a video production company. He helped us make a wonderful short video to promote the book.

**JANUARY 2008:** We spent the month of January finishing up the proofing process with the printer (the diecut and other elements of our book made this process a little longer than normal). We received our first set of advance copies in mid-January...what an experience to finally hold a finished book in our hands. We then turned our attention to our website and promotional materials.



**Before**

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**After!**

**FEBRUARY 2008:** The books are scheduled to arrive on March 15<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, our attention turns to getting this story out into the world.

*Thanks for reading...stay tuned for what's next...*