

## Chapter 1

# Collapse



The last thing Michael remembered before waking up in the hospital was running through the city streets and thinking about ways to build his company. Now he was lying on his back with wires and machines connected to his body as his wife, Sarah, sat by his side and a nurse stood over him.

“What am I doing here?” he asked groggily. “Did I get hit by a car or something?”

“You passed out on your run,” answered Sarah, who was crying and shaking. In all the years she had known him, she couldn’t recall him having more than a cold, never mind being in the hospital.

“How? Why?” he asked.

“That’s what the doctor is trying to figure out right now. He’s reviewing your tests and should be in shortly,” the nurse said.

“I hope I’m okay,” Michael said as he looked around the room and then at Sarah. She tried to smile and act reassuring but she couldn’t. She was scared and expecting bad news.

Michael lifted his arm and felt a bandage and lump on his head. “How did I get here?”

"The ambulance brought you. Your head hit the ground pretty hard. The EMTs told us that a man saw you collapse and helped you. He used his shirt to stop the bleeding and called 911. He just might have saved your life."

"Who was it?"

"They didn't get his name. He just gave them that card sitting on your table."

Sarah picked up the card and showed it to Michael. It was a simple plain white card with only the word *Carpenter* and a phone number in black, bold ink.

"Not much of a marketer," Michael said, coming to his senses and regaining his sense of humor.

Sarah's nervousness turned to laughter as she shook her head. Even while in the hospital he was thinking about business. She was thankful, at least, that he was feeling more normal.

In that moment the doctor walked in and stood over Michael's bed. "Well, the good news is that you didn't have a heart attack like I had feared," he said as he shook Michael's hand.

"Heart attack!" Michael exclaimed. "I'm too young to have a heart attack!"

"Not necessarily," the doctor countered. "In fact, your body is warning you that you better slow down and manage your stress or you'll experience the real thing before too long. Have you been under a lot of stress lately?"

Michael and Sarah looked at each other. "We own a business," Sarah said. "We've been building it together, and with two kids, it's been a whirlwind."

“Well I advise you to slow down,” the doctor said as he made eye contact with Michael. “No business or success is worth your health and life. I want you to rest for a few weeks before heading back to work. It will do your heart and your head some good. You have a minor concussion as well. Nothing major or serious but we want your head to heal, too.”

Michael looked at Sarah. Rest was the last thing he needed with everything they had going on.

The doctor walked toward the door but before leaving the room he turned around and said, “You’re lucky this was just a warning. I see people all the time who don’t get a warning like this. Remember, life gives us warnings for a reason. Learn from this. Do things differently. Your health, kids, and future grandkids will be thankful you did.”

