

**POWER WALKING, A JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS**

By Maxine Bigby Cunningham

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**A READER’S/DISCUSSION GUIDE**

By Pauline A. Bigby, PhD.

Power Walking, A Journey to Wholeness is a collection of poetry, prose, sacred writings and art. The term “power walking” is used as a metaphor for the process, or journey, to wholistic wellbeing – body, mind and spirit. Which of the following *depictions do you believe* also apply? Why?

A memoir

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A psalm

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A roadmap

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A guidebook

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Cunningham sets the stage of her story with a narrative of her maternal Great Great Uncle Sam, a former slave who raised his nephew Robert, her mother's father. At the untimely death of Robert and his wife Ella, Uncle Sam became the guardian of their eight children, ranging in age from 18 months to 14 years old. Cunningham's mother was eight years old. An elaboration of this event follows in chapter three, "Holding On."

What might be the significance of this history in Cunningham's Acknowledgments?

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## **PROLOGUE**

The prophet Isaiah has the first (Prologue) and the last words (Epilogue). This prophet chastises, encourages and then offers those who are attentive, a preview and promise of things to come.

How does the selected scripture prepare readers for the author's story?

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## **CHAPTER LEADS\***

Each of the four Parts of the book begins with a scripture from the Old Testament Book of Psalms and the New Testament Book of Philippians.

What might be the significance of the selection of the Book of Psalms?

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What might be the significance of the selection of the Book of Philippians?

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**PART I**  
**GETTING ON MY FEET**

The author tried multiple ways to get on her feet. Some ways were successful; some were not.

What choices were not effective?

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Which choices were successful?

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What was the turning point?

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Describe critical experiences that Cunningham encountered before she was able to “get on her feet”?

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Name critical decisions that enhanced Cunningham’s ability to get on her feet?

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## **PART II**

### **TAKING BABY STEPS**

In this chapter, Cunningham provides the reader with a close view of her life as she structures a revitalized life. She reveals her successes while sharing her disappointments.

Do any of her experiences resonate with you? If so, what are they?

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What actions did you take to sustain your efforts?

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Name actions you took that were most helpful in your journey.

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Share major actions or realizations that helped propel you as you relearned “how to walk.”

### **PART III STAYING ON MY FEET**

Cunningham demonstrates that staying on one’s feet is “more than a notion.” As stated in a review by Rev. Michael A. Torres, M.D., Cunningham depicts a journey that requires three dimensions: “physical rehabilitation, mental health recovery, and spiritual resilience.”

As you reflect upon Cunningham’s experiences of “staying on her feet,” which emotions seem most relevant to your experiences?

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Describe specific interactions with others during this process.

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Were there friends who boosted your day?

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How have you supported another's wants and needs?

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What steps did you take that enhanced your "physical rehabilitation, mental health recovery and/or spiritual resilience?"

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Were there specific activities in which you engaged to assist yourself or those of a friend?

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What were the actions?

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## PART IV WALKING DIFFERENTLY

It is noteworthy that the final chapter of this book is the longest one. The author focuses on multiple deliberate events in her life. We begin by engaging with her “Prayer Journey” providing the reader with six steps that can assist us “When We Lose Our Way.”

Cunningham’s honesty, humility, and transparency throughout this guidebook *supports* those who are ready to begin or continue their journey and nurtures those who are preparing for that first step.

This final chapter engages the reader with the power of transformation...mentally and spiritually. She details her necessary steps that prepared her and continues to sustain her in her life anew. The powerfulness of this story is revealed by her determination to be healed and be renewed.

Cunningham made “A U-TURN” in her life that resulted in major life changes. Using four Books of the Old Testament, she reveals her new attitude/way of thinking. (Page 56)

What steps did Cunningham take that might assist you in your renewal process?

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What steps might you take as you make your U-turn?

\* For each of the four referenced Books, briefly Describe the theme  
Daniel-

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Name the “former” mindset  
Daniel -

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State the action taken -  
Daniel

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Identify the “new” attitude -  
Daniel

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Describe the theme  
Proverbs-

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Name the “former” mindset

Proverbs -

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State the action taken -  
Proverbs

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Identify the “new” attitude -  
Proverbs

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### **EPILOGUE\***

The epilogue is God’s promise to the children of Israel,  
taken from the Book of Isaiah.

Why is this promise so powerful?

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This promise can be interpreted as a prayer, also. What is the significance of this prayer to you?

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What is your prayer to God? What is your song of praise?

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What is your song of praise?

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