

Matthew West shares life stories through songs

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—For his album, *The Story of Your Life*, singer/songwriter [Matthew West](#) took an unusual approach to find inspiration. He posted a note on his website asking people to share their life stories and said a select few would be turned into songs.

For his album, *The Story of Your Life*, singer/songwriter Matthew West drew inspiration from the personal stories from more than 10,000 people around the world who shared their greatest joys and most heart-wrenching moments.

West never expected to receive more than 10,000 responses from people in 20 countries who provided detailed accounts of their greatest joys and most heart-wrenching moments.

"I've always been sort of a storyteller at heart," West said. "Up until now, I've written songs telling the story of my life and talking about what I've been through—my experiences, faith and family.

"As I was getting ready to work on a new album, I thought it might be interesting to see what would happen if I turned the microphone around and created songs based on other people's experiences. That was the initial plot behind it, but what wound up happening from that one little idea was an experience much bigger than I originally anticipated."

West was deeply affected by the responses and took the time to read each

one.

"The mountaintop experiences and the joys that we have, those are all defining moments in our lives," West said. "But the stories that were most often shared were the weakest moments. People shared the greatest trials they've ever faced—the illness that they suffered, the loved one that they lost, the desire to have a child, and many people shared about abuse or addictions they were dealing with.

"This project has changed me and challenged me to look at the world in a different way. These people were trusting me to be their messenger. I was up late into the night for several months just reading about people's lives, and I felt like I had been given a window into their world.



"These songs will now go on to hopefully encourage other people who might be going through similar struggles. My desire is that people will realize that their life is telling a story, and by allowing God to work and mend the broken pieces, it can be a beautiful story that impacts the world around them."

In addition to serving as the inspiration for the songs on the album, West also was able to create a devotional book, [*The Story of Your Life: Inspiring Stories of God at Work in People Just Like You*](#).

This month, West is releasing another book and companion DVD, *What's*

Your Story? This book and interactive guide further illustrate the impact of God's hope and redemption working throughout each life story.

"I want to encourage people to realize that God hasn't stopped working in their lives," West said. "I think a lot of times, we get so defeated in our lives—thinking we've made too many mistakes or that our lives are too bruised and broken that we can't have any impact in the world.

"The truth is that no matter how many mistakes you've made or trials you've faced, it's the brokenness of our lives that God uses to give us something to say to the world. I hope it's an empowering message that people can cling to during difficult times, when they realize that God has something to say to us and through us."