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## BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Take a moment to consider where you currently are in your life and how and why you've arrived at this point.

Like most folks who are on a similar path, you might feel like:

- you don't have a clear definition of what you're searching for or what you're working towards
- the life you're living isn't in alignment with your true values and desires, and/or
- you have no idea what decision to make next

and because of this, you're:

- playing it safe because there's comfort in knowing that if you do x, the outcome is y,
- shrinking yourself to keep being the person other people are used to you being,
- waiting for permission to live up to your potential, and/or
- wondering if what you currently have is all that's meant for you.

While clarity is useful for everyone, the way it does or doesn't exist will vary for each of us. You might even find that this clarity changes as time goes on—things that used to be a “no-brainer” might now be confusing and things that you weren't sure about before might finally seem to make sense.

Dear reader, that's why I am so excited that you're here right now because the time you put into this—the time you put into *you*—is going to change your life. And I don't say that lightly.

This workbook is designed to help you identify what you truly want and uncover the tools you already have to get it, even if it may seem impossible and all the cards are stacked against you.

I've packaged all of the lessons and experiences I've had over the last few decades into this combination of activities and questions because I believe that we all have one shot to make the most of the life we've been gifted.

By getting this workbook, you're making a commitment to yourself to not throw your shot away.

My hope is that, as you make your way through this book and live your life outside of it, you continue to show up, dream big, be intentional, be open to the possibilities, and do the work.

*Are you ready?*

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

As a multi-hyphenated clarity coach, educator, writer, and speaker, each day I interact with people who have one simple question:

*How do I get unstuck?*

Unstuck from an unfulfilling life.

Unstuck from regret.

Unstuck from the results of action (and the lack thereof).

Unstuck from wondering “*what's next?*”

While the circumstances that lead to the question may vary, my answer is always the same:

1. Define your ideal life
2. Align your actions to this ideal life
3. Decide to make a change

On this surface, this response seems to be both too simple and not nearly enough, but after using these three steps in countless situations myself and helping other people do the same, this framework is exactly what you need to get where you want to go.

This workbook takes you step-by-step through my Define, Align, Decide framework via specially curated activities and reflection prompts designed to help you dig deep and think critically about where you've been, where you are, and where you want to go.

In short, this workbook is designed to help you get unstuck even when—*especially when*—things seem out of your control.

But here's the thing:

While the workbook follows each step of my signature framework in order, at the end of the day, you get to decide how this experience unfolds.

Feel free to jump around and complete whichever activities and/or prompts are most useful to you at any given moment, to revisit things as often as needed, to change your mind about your initial responses, and most importantly, to surprise yourself along the way.

That being said, to help manage expectations, here is what this workbook is *not*:

- A one-size fits all prescription for how to live your life
- An “easy” solution to whatever challenge(s) you’re navigating
- The only option you have

While you might see yourself reflected in these pages or discover new layers of yourself as you make your way through it, this workbook is designed to spark a conversation with your family, your friends, your coworkers, and most importantly, with yourself.

As you look through this workbook, you’ll notice that there is a heavy focus on reflection.

*Why?*

Because through reflection I’ve realized that when I didn’t trust my gut or listen to my intuition, I was always off-kilter and acting against my best interests, but when I made decisions and took action based on my gut and intuition—on an inner knowing—I always got exactly where I needed to be, regardless of what happened along the way.

Strengthening this inner knowing required that I took—and continue to take—time to review and sort through all the noise surrounding me to know what to listen to.

And when I talk about “noise,” I mean the things you need to consider when it comes to how you choose to live your life.

There’s the *internal noise* which refers to your own personal hopes, desires, next steps, etc. and then there’s the *external noise* which refers to the hopes, desires, next steps, etc. of other people including, but not limited to, friends, family, associates, and strangers.

Internal noise can come in the form of your gut, intuition, doubts, and fears.

External noise can come in the form of how things have “always” been done; family, friends, and associates who offer well-meaning (or not) opinions; or the shadow of the person you were yesterday looking at the person you are today wondering if tomorrow will be the day you finally become the person you’ve dreamed of.

Both types of noise impact your decisions and actions and neither is 100% right or wrong.

That’s why clarity matters—it amplifies the volume of the noise that you need to guide you at any given moment.

Clarity removes doubt, hesitation, and regret.

Clarity requires honesty, reflection, and accountability.

That’s what my framework and this workbook offer you.

### SO HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

**PART I** sets the foundation. It digs a little deeper into what clarity is and why it’s important.

**PART II** guides you through my Define, Align, Decide framework and includes several activities to crystallize the concepts in your mind.

**PART III** serves as a journal and provides prompts for intentional reflection so that you can fully incorporate the strategies you learned into your day-to-day life.

As you make your way through this workbook, honor whatever emotions and understandings come up for you. Oftentimes it’s so easy for us to discount our thoughts and feelings, undervalue them, and/or to allow them to completely overwhelm and immobilize us. I encourage you to be nonjudgmental of your progress and open to this experience.

**I encourage you to imagine new outcomes.**

**To expand yourself and discover new layers.**

**To give yourself permission to grow and change.**

Because, regardless of where you currently are, there’s much more to your life than this.

*Let’s get started.*

# step one:

## Define your ideal life

Without a clear definition of your values and desires, you will spend precious time and energy working towards someone else's goals with very little to show for it.

### CONSIDER

- When you envision your ideal life, what does it look like? (e.g., Where do you live? Who are you surrounded by? What are you doing when you wake up?)
- What do you want to accomplish between now and the end of your life? (e.g., Is there a project you want under your belt? Do you have a health goal in mind?)
- In your ideal life, what brings you joy and energy? How often are you doing or experiencing these things? (e.g., What are your days filled with? What do you miss doing? What are you happy to no longer be doing? How are you prioritizing the things you value?)
- What are your talents and gifts? In an ideal world, how are you using them?

## - ACTIVITY A - LETTER TO SELF

As you get started with this process, write a letter to yourself that provides honest insight into where you are at this exact moment.

### SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What are some of the major topics, questions, and/or concerns in your life right now?
- What things are going well for you?
- What change(s) would you like to see?
- What are you looking forward to in the next month? Three months? Year? Beyond?
- Who are some of the most meaningful people to you?
- What do you hope to never lose as you enter the next season of your life?
- What do you hope to gain as you move forward?

To give you an idea of what this can look like, I've included a real letter I wrote to myself back in August 2010 and had delivered right around my college graduation in May 2011. I share this so you can see that the letter does not have to be an elaborate process.

Reading what I was doing, experiencing, and working towards back then gives me a better understanding of myself and what priorities, expectations, ways of thinking, etc. have changed and stayed the same.

For your own letter, you can use websites like FutureMe.org as I did, write an actual letter to be delivered to you at another time, send yourself a time-delayed email, etc. And of course, you can also write your letter directly in this workbook.

- ACTIVITY C -

# IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

Values are basic, fundamental beliefs that guide and influence attitudes or actions and change over time based on experience.

Once you have a firm grasp on your values, you'll have the compass you need to address difficult situations, make decisions, remain focused, and of course, be clear about what you're working towards.

Take a few minutes to think about the meaning of the items listed below and select the ones that are important to you.

## VALUES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. A physical appearance to be proud of             | 21. Accomplishment of something worthwhile  |
| 2. To graduate with honors                          | 22. A secure and positive family life   |
| 3. Being an honest person                           | 23. An enjoyable, leisurely life  |
| 4. To have political power                          | 24. Unlimited travel, fine foods, entertainment, recreational, and cultural opportunities |
| 5. Being known as a "real" person                   | 25. Getting things changed for the better   |
| 6. A meaningful relationship                        | 26. A beautiful home in the setting of my choice  |
| 7. Self-confidence and personal growth              | 27. A chance to develop creativity/potential in any area                                  |
| 8. Enjoyment of nature and beauty                   | 28. Owning a possession of great value  |
| 9. A life with meaning, purpose, fulfillment        | 29. To speak up for my personal beliefs   |
| 10. Continuing to learn and gain knowledge          | 30. To have better feelings about myself  |
| 11. A chance to help the sick and disadvantaged     | 31. To be needed and to be important to others  |
| 12. To be attractive to others                      | 32. To become a good parent   |
| 13. Some honest and close friends                   | 33. To have a better relationship with my parents   |
| 14. A long and healthy life                         | 34. To be sexy  |
| 15. A meaningful spiritual relationship             | 35. To persevere in what I am doing   |
| 16. A good marriage                                 | 36. Time for prayer   |
| 17. Satisfaction/success in the career of my choice | 37. To give of myself freely in helping others  |
| 18. An equal opportunity for all people             | 38. A safe and secure environment   |
| 19. Freedom to live life as I want                  | 39. To be loved by a special few  |
| 20. A financially comfortable life                  | 40. To be trusted by others   |

- ACTIVITY C -

# IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

Of the items you selected, list the numbers of four or five that are most important to you:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have listed four or five items that are most important to you, refer to the "Value Characteristics" chart on the next page and write the appropriate characteristics related to these numbers.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

# reflections

## SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

What is your biggest takeaway from this exercise?

What surprised you?

What does this mean for your day-to-day life?

## Pause for a quick CHECK-IN

During these activities, have you felt:

### OVERWHELMED?

Are you prioritizing what actually matters and answering these prompts and completing these activities from a place of alignment? If you're considering things that don't actually matter to you, you'll continue to be bogged down by things that matter to *everyone else* and don't deserve your attention and energy right now. Stay focused on yourself for a little bit and give the real you a chance to speak.

### STRESSED?

Are you considering everyone else and leaving yourself on the back burner? Remember, in the words of Lauryn Hill, how you gon' win if you're not right within? Taking care of yourself is a prerequisite for successfully helping other people.

### UNINSPIRED?

Are you thinking big and using your imagination or are you playing it safe and going for what's "easy"?

### BORED?

Are you tapping into your emotions? Whether it be excitement, anger, frustration, sadness, disappointment, joy, or anticipation, feel the full range of feelings that come up as you complete these activities and channel them into your responses. Don't hold back.

### TIRED?

Whose voice are you listening to? If you're speaking from your heart and trusting your intuition, this will be effortless. If you're trying to get it "right" or "perfect," it will feel like a chore.

### FEARFUL?

Good. This is a sign that you're challenging yourself and moving outside of your comfort zone into a whole new arena.