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Bump In The Road Workbook

For Navigating Life's Twists and Turns

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*Disclaimer: Nothing in this workbook should be considered medical or psychological advice.
Please seek qualified guidance for any issues that you want to explore.*



Building Your Roadmap For Life

This workbook is for you. It draws on the stories from the book, *Bump In The Road*.

Stories are important because they connect us. We relate, we feel, we share. Sometimes we can only see our story in someone else's tale. And that tidbit of connection, that shared emotion, can help us discover ourselves.

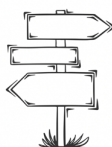
We are all unique with our unique stories. But the themes in each story touch us all. Themes of self-reflection and reclamation, evolution and even transcendence. They are themes of courage and of being open to creating new perceptions for a new life experience. They are about confronting adversity to find meaning, purpose, and peace.

Each story is about learning to look within, to confront our fears, find a path forward, and to realize our strengths. The path forward is always the path within.

So much of our society focuses on the tangible. I'm asking you to go on an adventure to explore the intangible. To explore your energy and perceptions. Because this is where your true power lies.

Each exercise in this workbook can be done in any order, and you can use the exercises with any chapter.

My hope is that this guide will help you dive deeper into each story and into your own journey. There's no right or wrong. There's just experience and our perception of it. What we decide to do with it all is up to each of us.





Thoughts To Ponder

Take any story from the book and discuss if and how these theme plays a role. Choose one or more themes and explore!

Each of these pairs seem to be opposites but think of them as being on a spectrum.

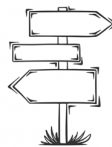
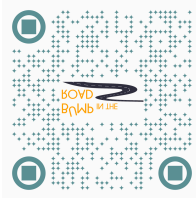
Inclusion	vs.	Exclusion
Isolation	vs.	Connection
Struggle	vs.	Transcendence
Outward Oriented	vs.	Inward Oriented
Materialistic	vs.	Minimalist
Depression	vs.	Meaning in Life
Handicapped	vs.	Living Your Best Life
Old Tribe	vs.	New Tribe
Fear	vs.	Courage
Control	vs.	Uncertainty
Thankless	vs.	Grateful
Lethargy	vs.	Perseverance
Loss	vs.	Gain
Judgement	vs.	Acceptance
City	vs.	Nature

- For example, Erik Weißenmayer went through a period of isolation and anger when he went blind. Slowly, he found connection and purpose. How did Erik find connection from his isolation? How did he deal with control and uncertainty, in the mountains and on the Colorado River?
- Effie Parks faced terrible isolation with the birth of her son. But she transformed that into connection when she reached out into the disability community and started her podcast, Once Upon a Gene. What themes come out of her story?

- Sarah Dransfield found herself with an amputated leg at just sixteen years old. Learning to walk again was not instant nor easy. But her perseverance and openness to new experiences took her to some amazing places, including a photo spread in Vogue Magazine. What are some of the major themes from her story?
- How do these themes relate to your story?

The stories in the book *Bump In The Road* are excerpts of the full conversations. You may want to listen to the full podcast in this exclusive Reader's Portal which also includes photos and videos for each guest. Accents, voice, and expressions help you get a fuller picture of the person. You can also explore the website for many more stories about navigating life's twists and turns.

This link will take you back to the Reader's Portal to listen in depth: BumpInTheRoad.us/Readers-Portal. Or you can use this QR Code:





Pivoting Your Perspective

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Seventeen

The ability to see events from different perspectives was important in every story. You can apply this to your life too.

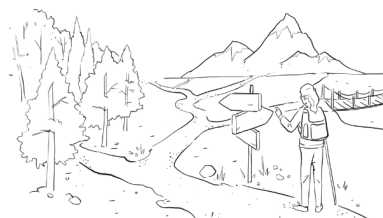
In this section is an exercise, The Road Map Of My Life. It's a way to gain perspective on some of the events that have shaped your life and how you choose to tell your story.

Here is an example from my life:

An Example: The Roadmap Of Pat's Life

Choose your time frame.

You can choose individual years, five-year periods or decades if you prefer.
I chose to look at three decades in this example.



Any one of these events is worthy of reflection. There is a huge range of emotions that go with each. I could write volumes about Whiskey Oscar alone. She was such an important piece of my life and my adventures with her taught me so much.

Overall, I like to see my story as told from the perspective of gratitude. Gratitude for some amazing experiences; gratitude for some awful experiences (I learned a lot from those!); gratitude for the wisdom which unfolded from it all.

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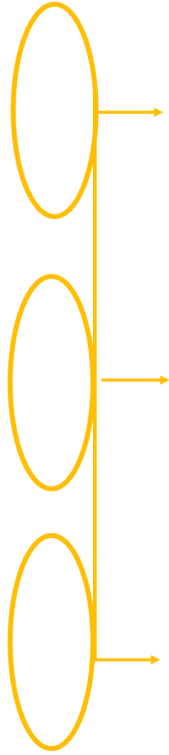
As I ask many of my guests on the podcast, “If you could rewrite your story, would you?”. My answer is absolutely not. I’d love to change some things; I’d love to learn more quickly; but overall, I am grateful for where I am and I wouldn’t trade that for anything.

On the next page is a blank worksheet for you to download to reflect upon the roadmap of your life. Print as many as you like.

The Roadmap Of My Life

Choose your time frame.

You can choose days, weeks, years, five-year periods or decades if you prefer.
What happened during that time? Print another page if you need to.



Write down your story.

Then tell your story from several perspectives.

For example, tell it from a perspective of anger, gratitude, or perseverance.

How do you choose to see your story?



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Create as detailed a map as you want. Use more than one page if you need it. Create more than one map if you wish.

Now, looking at the events you listed on your map, tell your story from the perspective of one or more of the following:

Gratitude	Compassion
Love	Peace
Connection	Perseverance
Isolation	Being True To Yourself
Anger	Finding Your Tribe
Abundance	Control
Lack	Saying Yes To New Experiences
Joy	Adventure
Depression	Wisdom

Feel free to add additional perspectives to your personal narrative. How does changing your lens change your story? How do those changes make you feel?

You might want to journal about this. There is something about writing our thoughts down, revisiting and understanding them, that makes them ever more powerful. Your words and reflections are a window into who you are. From there you can ask ‘who do you want to be?’ And that’s where your power lies, in understanding and consciously crafting yourself.

Pivoting your perspective is an important skill, particularly in times of turmoil. Simply applying non-judgement to events can open the door to larger possibilities.

Let me share a story.

There once was an old Zen farmer. Every day, the farmer used his horse work his fields.

One day, the horse ran away. All the villagers said, “We’re so sorry to hear this. This is such bad luck.”

The farmer responded, “Maybe.”

A few weeks went by and then one afternoon, the horse returned with a whole herd of horses. Now the farmer had ten horses to help work the fields.

The villagers came by. “Wow! Such good fortune!” they exclaimed.

The farmer responded “Maybe.”

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A few weeks later, the farmer's son was working on the farm when he fell off one of the wild horses and broke his leg.

The villagers said, "How awful. This is such bad luck."

"Maybe," the farmer responded.

A few weeks later, the army marched through town taking every able-bodied young man. They left the farmer's son since he couldn't walk.

The villagers came by and said, "You're so fortunate. Such good luck!"

"Maybe" the farmer replied.

Could you tell your story from this perspective of simply being non-judgmental and in the present moment? What benefits do you receive from applying this perspective?





Finding Your Authentic Self

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Eighteen

This exercise is just fun! Enjoy!

- ViaCharacter.org is a website that will rank your strengths. Note that there are no weaknesses! Order the full character assessment if you can (I am not compensated for this referral in any way). Some of the results may be surprising, but if you dig a little deeper, you'll see that these strengths have always been a part of your world view. They are part of the lens through which you respond to life.

If you're in a group, share your results. They're all positive! Can you see how your strengths differ and how that impacts how you relate to each other?

My number one strength was Creativity. As I look back at my life, I see how this trait has guided so much! Cooking has always been a part of my creative life; my work (yes, finance is creative) had elements of creativity. I was once offered a job creating financial products. Whoever interviewed me had enormous insight! It would have been a perfect job, but I was too sick with myasthenia to accept it.

Putting together the dots to discover an esoteric sport like soaring was Creative and it was also a result of my Curiosity, another top strength that shows up throughout my life. My Curiosity often drives my Creativity. What are your top strengths? How do they show up in your life? How can you use them to your best advantage?

Keep in mind with this assessment, that your lower ranked strengths are still strengths. You can access them anytime you need them. You just don't naturally lead with them. For example, I am a bit of an introvert and fairly self-reliant, and my traits show that. Teamwork is the least of my strengths. Yet as I write this, I am leading a class of over thirty people; working with a book production team; coordinating with my tech team; and arranging speaking engagements. Teamwork is still a strength I can access as I need to.

In addition to ViaCharacter.org, take some time and explore what makes you tick:

- List twenty (or more!) things you like. What makes you smile? Write it down!
- List twenty things you don't like. Set that list aside! Use it as a gauge of what to avoid.
- Of the things you like, is there a theme that appears? For example, do you like indoor or outdoor things? Art or sports? Cats or dogs?
- Take one theme that you've found on your "like" list. Go deeper. List five things in that theme that you might explore.

Allow yourself to experiment. Sense what feels right for you. There's no right or wrong, and you will come up with a path that is totally unique to you.





Release, Rewrite, and Rebuild

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Nineteen

Do you feel your energy stuck somewhere in your body? Is something holding you back? Stifling your progress?

That block is very real. It's the energy of buried emotion, in response to a trauma or event. . It's an unconscious belief that constrains your self-knowledge and limits your evolution. You need to dig into your subconscious and release it and free your energy to flow.

Psychotherapy is one route. I strongly recommend Joe Dispenza's book *"Breaking The Habit Of Being Yourself"*. He has a methodology that helps you find the emotional root cause of that block. Once you find it, he shows you how to release it.

I've tried numerous methodologies. They all seem to consist of getting into the mindset of your right, emotional brain, and *feeling* the emotion associated with the event.

Going into these emotions can be painful. Trauma most likely created the block. Your goal is to release the trauma by releasing the emotional experience associated with it. To do that, you must go back to the event, *feel it*, and understand it. Then you can bring new perspective to your experience and decide to let it go.

For me, taking responsibility for my story has been key.

I had a very dysfunctional childhood. My mother was an alcoholic who projected her unhappiness on her oldest child, yours truly. She did many things that were hurtful. One of the most harmful episodes happened in the sixth grade when she informed me that I could not spend time with my friends. Not at school, not after school, not over the summer. My "felony" was laughing in a sixth-grade class. Along with my two other "best friends", our silly laughter disrupted the class. So, she removed my friends from my life.

The punishment was way out of proportion to the "crime" and as an eleven-year-old, I translated that into "I was not worthy". I wasn't worthy of friends; I wasn't worthy of participating. I wasn't

worthy of being included. I had the distinct feeling that I was somehow evil. I felt shame that something was fundamentally wrong with me and that translated into wanting to be unseen. I just wanted to disappear from the face of the earth. That experience buried itself in my subconscious. Even as I achieved, it weighed me down. And that energy dogged me for decades.

In retrospect I can see that my emotions were just a story. It was a story created by a sensitive and upset eleven-year-old who was at the mercy of a not very benevolent parent. I just cry for that little girl, feeling so flawed and outcast!

But once I revisited that story as an adult, and *felt it*, I could own it. I could understand-*I could feel*- why my eleven-year-old self created that story. Since I created the story, I could also discreate it. When it was gone, my energy was no longer bound in an untruth. It freed my energy to flow. I could finally start to delve deeper, to be one with my kind self.

Once you start releasing your subconscious misconceptions, it becomes a bit of a game. Stripping away your old stories and, as the tea pouring Zen master explains in Chapter Twenty-Four says, making room for new ones, is positively rejuvenating.

Think about what haunts you. What are the stories you tell yourself? Write it down. Sit with it. *Feel it*. Those are the emotions that must be released to rewrite and rebuild. Seek out the help you need to do so. You deserve your best life, free of the stories that unconsciously guide your life.

From the book:

- Darryll Stinson had a roller coaster ride when he abandoned his “good student” identity. What did he learn about the importance of authenticity? About a life of service?
- How did Mark Philpott’s life change when he discovered compassion? (You may want to watch the video in the Reader’s Portal for more from Mark on this topic.)
- Liz O’Riordan lost everything she had worked for decades to attain. She lost significant aspects of her health. What emerged as she shed her lifelong identity of being a surgeon? What deep personal strengths guided her? What strengths might guide you?

No one has a perfect life. Everyone hits a bump in the road. By exploring our belief systems, by exploring our emotional responses, we can better understand who we are and what drives us. Ultimately, we want to strive to live in a state of consciousness and awareness, where we put our best foot forward and choose our path with kindness and good intent.

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Reflection Four: The Mind Game

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Twenty.

We all must respond to the world we live in. The question becomes are we responding consciously, choosing our thoughts and actions, or are we responding unconsciously, following the rote patterns and beliefs of our past?

In the stories in this book, each person hit a serious bump. That bump caused them to reconsider their world view. To do this, they had to turn within, question their beliefs, and rewrite the stories they told themselves about themselves.

- Consider Chapter Nine, about Tom Cronin. He went from a frantic lifestyle on the trading floor, to an emotional breakdown. In that space where he was stripped of his former self, he experienced peace. Peace became his passion. If you were stripped of your current self what qualities and traits would you choose to embrace?
- Consider Chapter Six, about Jesse Cody. Can his hike along the Appalachian Trail be a metaphor for all our journeys: following a trail into the wilderness; going through forests; emerging into bright meadows, finishing the task against all odds? In entering the trail, what did he gain and what did he lose?
- Consider Chapter Fourteen, about Mary Neal. Mary was trained to see the world in observable scientific terms. But science couldn't explain the synchronicity of events nor the reality of her experience when she died under the waterfall that day in Chile. Her experience forced her to re-evaluate the way she defined her very world. As Mary said, she found a spiritual reality that allowed her to move from "hope to trust". How would a shift "from hope to trust" change the way you live your life?

Conscious choices emerge when you have the courage to leave behind the stories that aren't working for your benefit and to write new ones. To see our stories, our beliefs, we need to find a place from which we can survey our thoughts.

It's like hiking up a large hill. En route we focus on watching each step, pushing aside the brush, noticing the fit of our boots, shifting the weight of a backpack. But once we reach the summit, all those thoughts fall away. We find an expansive a view of the world, with a totally different perspective from that of the trail.

Stillness, like a summit of a hill, provides the vantage point free of the trivia of daily life. It provides relief from a mind full of noisy stories, conversations, expectations, and failures. With stillness, you can survey your mental landscape and decide which stories move forward with you.

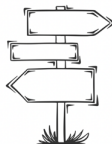
In this stillness, you find the power to choose. From that, you have the power to create.

What do you choose to create for your life?

On a personal level:

- List at least 5 places you find peace. It might be outdoors; in a creative art; with a newborn baby; in the kitchen; in a sport. Feel that peace. Be that peace. Does your mind still? Can you hold onto that feeling? Can you contrast that feeling with the busy-ness you usually experience? How does the stillness make you feel? Is it challenging, comfortable or uncomfortable? Experience whatever you are feeling. Write about it.
- Consider trying Victor Davich's *8 Minute Meditation* (from the Reference Section of the book). He just asks for eight minutes a day. Do you have eight minutes a day?
- Like to laugh? Check out Pragito Dove's books and works. (from the Reference Section of the book). Laughter meditation is unbelievably powerful. Listen to [Pragito's podcast](#) on the main website.

Find what makes you smile and immerse yourself in it. Find that experience of peace where you are so involved in what you're doing, that time falls away and your mind stills. Once you find that place, create a memory of it so that you can revisit it anytime you want. And as you get better at the process of finding that place of peace, living in peace becomes part of your existence. And that will transform your life.





Reflection Five: Your Unique Purpose

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Twenty-One.

This chapter is all about daring to explore. It's about energy. It's about being willing to take that first uncertain step into an unknown life of greater purpose.

Are you at a point in your life where your purpose is changing? Has your job gotten old? Are your children out of the house? Or does some indefinite feeling tell you that all is not well?

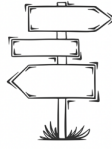
- Revisit Tama Kieve's story in Chapter Seven. Tama would tell you that you don't need to quit your job! But what *do* you need to do? What pulls at your heart? How might you get there?
- Listen to [Donna Bond's podcast](#) on the website (not in the book). How did serendipity influence her decision to move to Costa Rica? Would you have had such trust? Why or why not? What is serendipity? How might it be part of your life?
- Consider Nick Adkins' story. How did his experience at Burning Man emotionally change him, and how did that change his life? How have emotional experiences opened you to compassion or better understanding?

Purpose provides a grounding and a direction for our lives. It will require you to persevere for your truth. Do it. Following your unique path is what makes your personal road trip so special. You will find unknown places, try new things, meet new people, and have all sorts of adventures along the way.

Sometimes you hit a rocky road. It's easy to get discouraged. No matter how down and out you may feel, don't despair. Just take a first step into a direction with promise. East, west, north, south. It doesn't matter. Initially it's more about movement than direction.

If it seems you've taken the wrong road, don't worry. A path will appear. You've introduced energy into your wanderings, and that energy will propel you in a direction that resonates with you. Be patient, and most of all, be kind to yourself along the way.

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Putting It All Together

Once you start exploring within, life becomes endlessly more fascinating and rich. It's a landscape far greater than what we can touch or see. It's an endless horizon of feeling, knowing, and creating. Dare to embrace the adventure and enjoy the ride!

I hope the stories in this book and workbook can help you along that path. The path towards consciousness and meaning is a lifelong endeavor. As the Buddhists say:

*Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water
After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.*

Make it a point to enjoy every second of your road trip!

Be sure to check out the Resources section of the book. And explore the Reader's Portal. There is a wealth of interesting and entertaining information here to give you food for thought for your own journeys.

Most of all, thank you for buying *Bump In The Road* and for downloading this workbook. I wish you all the peace and wonder in the world and I welcome your thoughts and suggestions! You can reach me at talk@BumpInTheRoad.us

