

WORKBOOK

BUMP IN THE ROAD

Bump In The Road Workbook

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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 Life Story

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.

We will explore this through the power of story. 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.

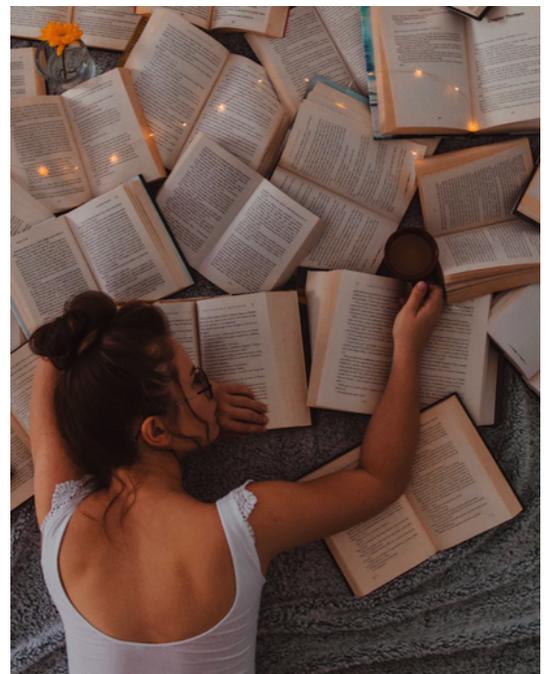
We are all unique with our individual stories. But our stories share the same themes. Themes of self-reflection and reclamation, evolution and even transcendence.

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 of our stories 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.

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 your own journey. There's no right or wrong. There's just experience and your perception of it. What any of us decide to do with it all is up to us



Thoughts To Ponder

Take any story from the book and consider how these themes have played a role in your own life.

Each of these pairs seem to be opposites but think of them as being on a spectrum. We all move from one end of the spectrum to another throughout our lives.

The key is to realize that you are experiencing a sliding scale, and not stuck in an absolute state of existence. Consider how isolated Eric Weihenmayer was when he went blind. But, over time, he built his "rope team". You can do the same.

Wherever you find yourself, be kind, and know that it takes time for to move across any of these spectrums. But the choice to move and to experience new things is always there. You just have to take the first step in that direction.



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, 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 they move across the spectrum?
- ***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 Reader's Portal and enjoy 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:



Finally, consider this 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."

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.



The moral of the story:

Events may be neither good nor bad. What do we gain by labeling them?

Try to see an event as part of a larger continuum, with the outcome unknown.

No one controls the future, but you do control yourself, your thoughts, and responses, in this moment, now. Set judgement aside and simply be present.



Pivoting Your Perspective

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Seventeen

The ability to see events from different perspectives was important in every story. The lens you choose defines your story.

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. It offers an insight into how you view your own history.

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.

I did not arrive at gratitude overnight. I spent many months in judgement, in victim mode and in anger. But with time, I saw how lucky I was to be out of a marriage that was no longer mutually agreeable and to be free to find adventure again. Even in cancer, I found a deep appreciation for beauty and for the present moment. But none of it happened overnight. It took time, perspective and a great deal of looking within to redefine my perspective and thus my story.

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.

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.

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?



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

Gratitude
Love
Connection
Isolation
Anger
Abundance
Lack
Joy
Depression

Compassion
Peace
Perseverance
Being True To Yourself
Finding Your Tribe
Control
Saying Yes To New Experiences
Adventure
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. Let me share a story about how your view of the world impacts your purpose, perspective, and mission.

A traveler was walking down the road and observed three bricklayers on a scaffold.

She asked the first man "What are you doing?"

The bricklayer replied, "I'm a bricklayer. I'm working hard laying bricks to feed my family."

The traveler asked the same question of the second bricklayer, who responded, "I'm a builder. I'm building a wall which will support a building."

The traveler came to the third bricklayer. "What are you doing?" she asked. T

The third bricklayer responded "I'm a cathedral builder. I'm building a great cathedral where people from all over can come and worship."

Three men, all performing the same task day in and day out.

How do you choose to see your life?



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; I brought enormous creativity to my work. 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; and coordinating with my tech team. Teamwork is still a strength I can access as I need to.

Authenticity is a combination of self-knowledge and exploration. It means looking within, finding what is true, and living by it. It carries effortlessly into the different aspects of your life, from parenting to work to time alone. When it isn't effortless, stop and ask yourself why, recalling that the answers lie within you.

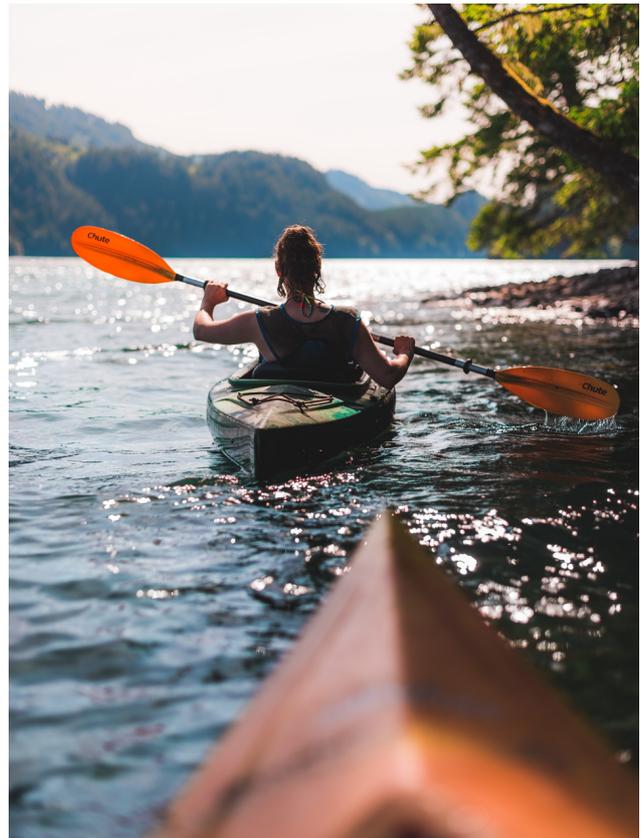
Take some time and explore what makes you tick. Choose an aspect of your life: home, work or play.

- 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? Leading or supporting? Tech or touch?
- Take one theme that you've found on your "like" list. Go deeper. List five things in that theme that you might explore.
- Have competing interests but limited time? If you've done the ViaCharacter assessment, list your personal strengths under each choice. Which choice resonates most with you?

For example, this past winter I was feeling a bit closed in. I decided I would join a pickleball league and get a kayak. But I have limited time, and photography is important to me too.

So, I listed the ViaCharacter strengths associated with each choice. With both my kayak and with my camera, I could get outdoors and enjoy the beauty (appreciation of beauty is high on my list); I could use my curiosity to explore; I could travel for adventure and fulfill my love of learning; I and could expand my interest in photography.

Similarly with a kayak, I could focus on beauty, curiosity, and adventure. The two interests actually overlapped.



As much as I love racquet sports, I realized that I don't enjoy the competition (it fosters my perfectionism, the downside of pursuing excellence); it involves teamwork (not a natural for me); and it didn't score highly on the things that really did touch my soul. It was time for me to leave that behind and follow what is true for me now.

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. Then go for it. Adjust, then pursue it some more. Be open to new experiences and be open to evolving and growing over time. It's ok to change direction and leave those racquet sports behind.



Release, Rewrite and Rebuild

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Nineteen

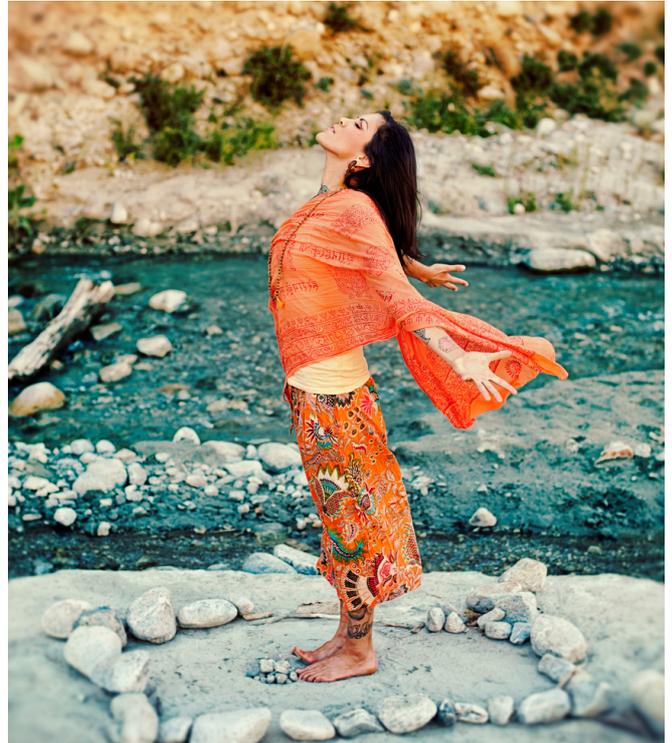
Do you feel your energy stuck somewhere in your body? Is something holding you back? Stifling your progress?

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 response to events was 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.

Your subconscious perceptions, guided by the stories of yourself and your tribe, become your belief system. They may be totally erroneous, yet they govern your life. You can start to see how important it becomes to challenge your beliefs.



Once you start releasing your subconscious misconceptions, it can become 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. Use the worksheet from the previous chapter to experience your life through the lens of trauma: hurt, shame, guilt, unworthiness, fear, anger, anxiety. 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 hold you back.

From the book:

- Darryll Stinson had a roller coaster ride when he abandoned his “good student” identity to please a peer group. He had to release that false identity and find himself again.

What did he learn about the importance of being true to himself? How have you tried to please others at your own expense? How do you benefit from that behavior?

- 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.)

Compassion, for ourselves and for others, is part of an authentic life. Do you think you need to learn to be compassionate to yourself before you can show compassion to others? Can you give what you do not have?

- Liz O’Riordan lost everything she had worked for. Decades of medical training, hard work and sacrifice were just gone! As was her health. And her long-term survival faced serious odds.

How do you think she felt when she lost it all and faced an unknown future? Confronted with a similar situation, what would you let go of, and what would you hold onto?

By exploring our belief systems and 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 choose our path with kindness and good intent towards ourselves and others.



The Mind Game

This exercise is a companion to Chapter Twenty

Our world is full of beliefs that define us. Friends, jobs, families, and communities exert their influence. Social structures mold us. This is good; this is not. Be this, not that. Do this; not that. Can we ever break free?

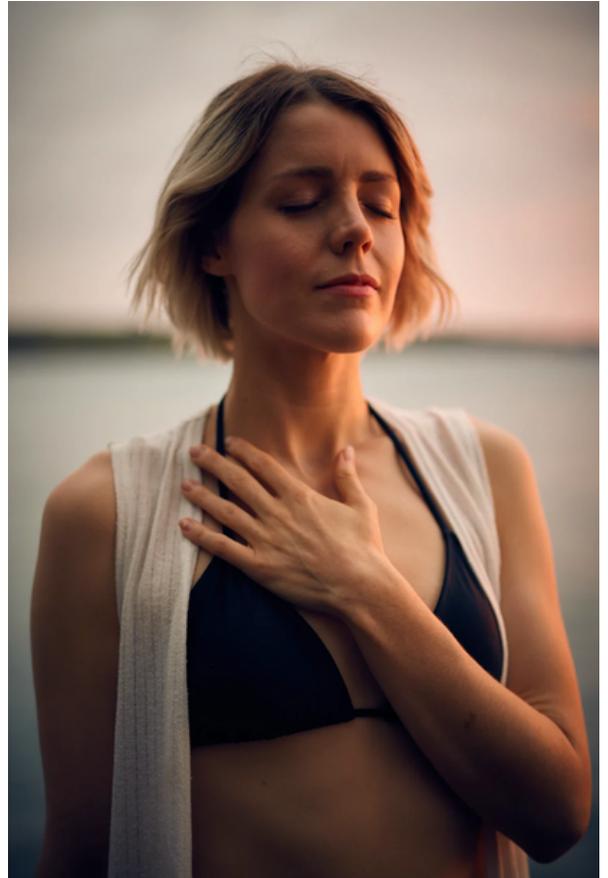
Freedom starts in recognizing that we have a choice in determining our beliefs. The first step is to recognize our beliefs and explore where they come from. Are they the result of our own choice, or are they from something outside of ourselves?

How can we even tell?

A key step is to learn to still your mind. Stillness will provide the contrast from your normally busy mind, which the Buddhists call "Monkey Mind". Once you experience quiet, you can have a contrast to all the noise.

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 view of the world, with a totally different perspective from that of the trail.

A quiet mind, 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 that stillness, you can watch your thoughts. Are they truly yours, or do they reflect a belief system that no longer serves you?

In this stillness, you find the power to authentically choose.

From there you have the power to create.

What do you choose to create, for yourself, your family and your world?

Finding Peace:

- List the places you find peace. It might be outdoors; in a creative art; with a newborn baby; in the kitchen; in a sport. Maybe it's hiking or driving. Feel that peace. Be that peace. Does your mind still? Can you stay with your mind long enough to allow it to be still? Contrast the stillness 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.
- Try Victor Davich's 8 Minute Meditation (from the Reference Section of the book). He just asks for eight minutes a day. Can you give yourself just eight minutes a day to explore the power of greater stillness and awareness?
- 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. This meditation releases stress, calms your mind, and resets your brain.

I am a fan of meditation. For me it offers an experience of peace that I carry with me into my day. I know that peace is present no matter what is happening, and I can always access it.

Meditation allows me to quiet my mind so I can watch my thoughts. That opens the door to more conscious choices. And finally, it offers a mental discipline that is invaluable. It helps me reject the temptation of distraction (such as TV and internet), focus for longer periods of time, and simply be more present.

Find what brings you peace and immerse yourself in it. Find that experience where you are so present, 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. You might find it walking, sitting in the sun, or in meditation. As you get better at the process of finding that place of peace, living in peace becomes part of your existence. It will give you the contrast to your busy life, to see through the non-essential, and to discover what matters to you.

And that will transform your life.



Your Unique Purpose

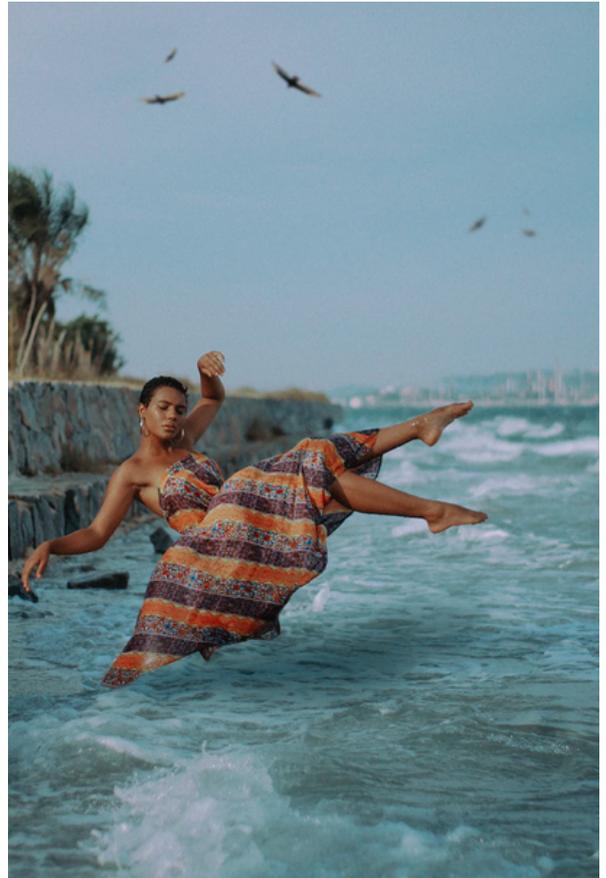
This exercise is a companion to Chapter Twenty-One

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?

Start with the ViaCharacter.org assessment. Remember that it helps evaluate your strengths. There are no weaknesses! Take note of your strongest characteristics and consider how they play in your life.

My strongest characteristic is Creativity. That alone explains so much of my life path! It explains how I tend to see opportunity and many paths forward, even in difficult situations. I see the world differently than the status quo, which sometimes creates problems. Knowledge of my relative strengths gives me a window into my own decision making, for better and for worse.

Your unique purpose lies in emotional meaning, not material meaning. What resonates with you on a deep level? Is it connecting with and helping others? Is it creating a work of art? Could it be creating a new technology that impacts the world for the better? Search for that emotional energy, in your work and in your life. That is where you will find purpose.



The more aware and attune you are to your authentic self, the more meaningful your path will be.

- 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 change his perspective? How did it change his life path when he dared to follow his deep emotional reaction to the Burning Man principle of gifting? How did it impact others?

Purpose provides a grounding and a direction for our lives. It will require you to persevere for your truth. You will find unknown places, try new things, and meet new people. Best of all you will meet yourself.

It takes time for all this to unfold, and it can be easy to get discouraged. I have been there. A life changing illness, divorce, the terrible existential crisis of dealing with "incurable" cancer and my own mortality; self-doubt; isolation; and uncertainty.

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 you've done the ViaCharacter.org assessment, consider leading with your strengths.

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. Just be true to our inner being. Be patient, be aware, and most of all, be kind to yourself along the way. Then you'll be able to return that kindness to others.



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



