

True Resilience

- The Phoenix's Workbook -

A Practical Guide to bounce back from a major disruption



About the Author



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Preface

What a time we live in!

Unprecedented times, difficult times, challenging times, uncertain times, new normal, front lines, we are in this together...

Sound familiar?

During these "unprecedented times", what do people need the most?

That is the question I asked and I came up with no clear answers but more questions.

Do we really need more information? Do we need to be told what to do with our lives and our time? Do we even know what we need or want?

In today's reality, I'm questioning the value of information, words, and free advice.

I wrote this workbook because everything I see out there: well intentioned books, articles, podcasts and posts make me feel empty, uninspired and frustrated. If it were as simple as listening to the voice of reason and following the instructions, all we'd need is a subscription to HBR and we would become the greatest leader the world has ever seen. In reality, information or intellectual knowledge, is not enough, we also need an emotional component, the gut feeling inside that gives us the will to be different, to transform our thoughts into actions.

This is why I wrote this workbook as a guide to the inner self, to how you feel inside, to what you really want. It begs you to embark on this journey not just with your mind but also your gut and your heart, all working together as one.



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"Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." - Lao Tzu

CHAPTER 01

Introduction



Getting started

This workbook will help you find the inner resources you need to be more resilient through practice and deep reflection.

As you start your journey, I invite you to slow down and approach this inner work with an open mind and a non judgmental attitude.

I invite you to be fully present and aware of yourself here and now as you read this book.







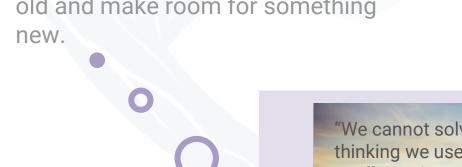
ls this for you?

People today more than ever are asking themselves difficult questions, trying to find meaning in chaos.

Life as we know it took a pause and creating the new normal requires thinking differently and adopting new perspectives.

Now, a setback, or major disruption can also be seen as a gift. It can be an opportunity to start over, to give up some of the old and make room for something new.

If you are open minded and willing to take a leap of faith, to listen to your guts and your heart, this workbook will unlock your true potential.







What's in this book?

The goal was to write something practical, and inspiring rather than just informational. Something conducive to higher consciousness sometimes bypassing the rational mind.

Each chapter contains practical applications of one or more concepts and an invitation to go into deep reflection.

The exercises and reflections in this guide will help you connect with your true self, with others and with the world around you on a deeper, meaningful level. They will help you find a space in yourself which may feel strangely familiar and from which you can make informed, resonant choices and move towards an honest, courageous and fulfilled life.





How does it work?

Simply go through it at your own pace, taking as many days as you need for each chapter.

Use the tools, images and suggestions to stop and get out of the hamster wheel, to sit down with yourself and really think about who you are, where you are, and where you want to go.

Use the activities in this book to find your current purpose, your own path and who knows? Maybe a date with destiny.

What do you see?

Simply looking at symbols or images, you can skip the binary mind, and invoke the part of you that can create stories and metaphors, and also acquire new knowledge and fresh perspectives.





"Always start from where you are. Other places lead nowhere." - La Palisse

CHAPTER 02

Where are you?



Where are you now?

Wheel of life

Fill out the wheel of life and reflect on it.

Even if you have done one before, take the time to do it and reflect deeply on it.

The reflection and realization of where you are now will give you a place to start that is based on your current reality.

How does it work

Print the next page or draw your own on a piece of paper.

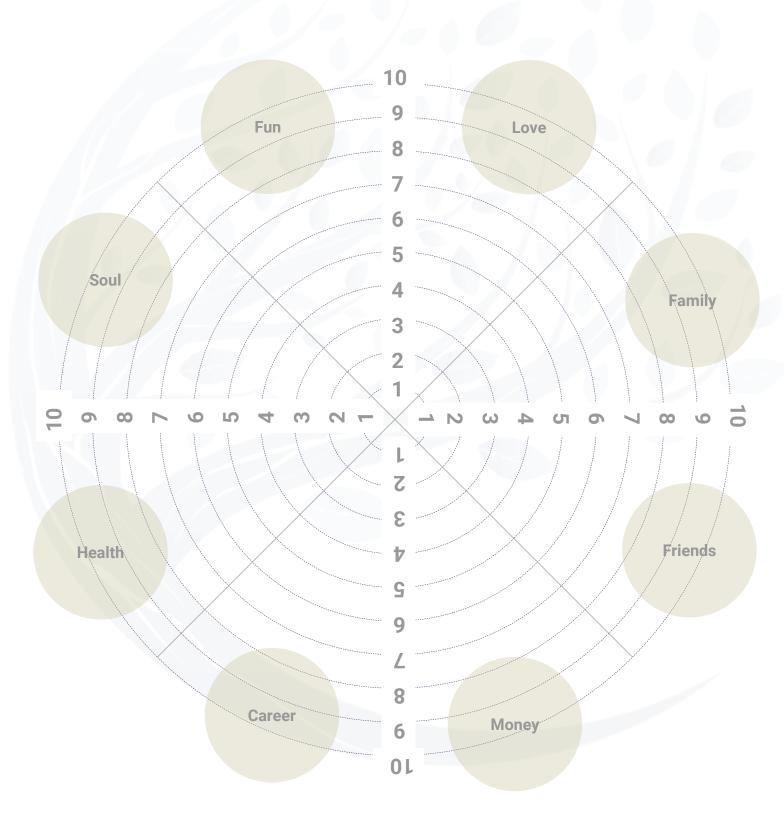
From 1 to 10, rank the different aspects of your life. Start with the one aspect of your life that you feel really good about and rank it an 8 or 9. Then, move on to the other aspects of your life and rank them in comparison.

As you do this exercise, be honest with yourself and don't overthink it.

The next pages will take you through it step by step.



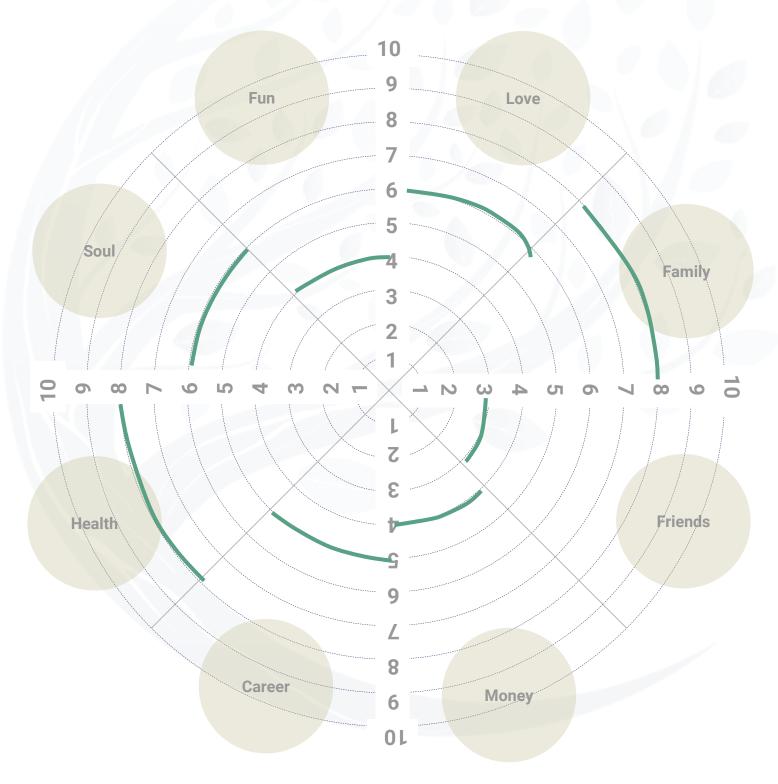
Wheel of life





Filling the wheel of life part 1

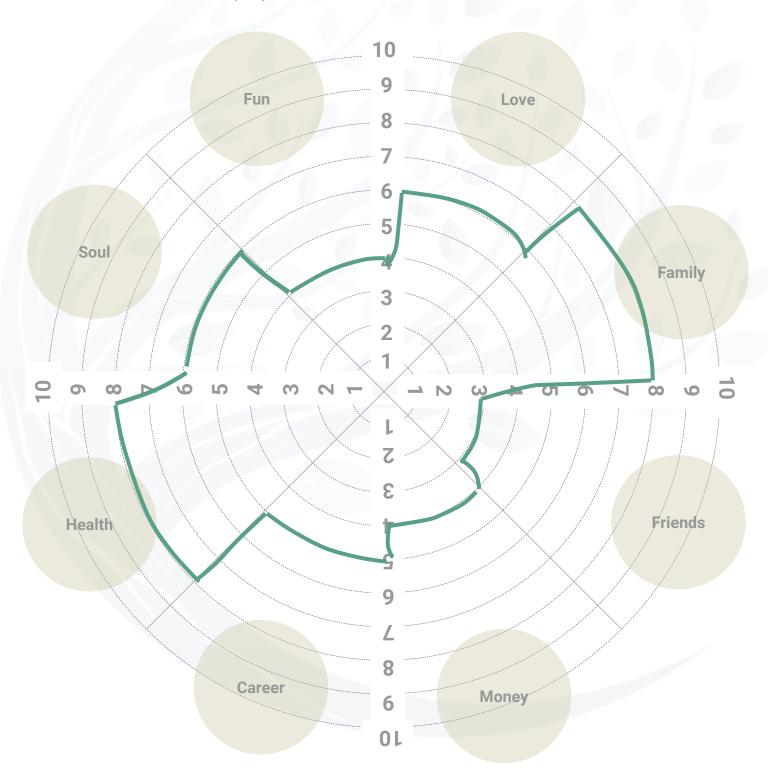
Print the previous page and following example below, from 1 low to 10 highly satisfying, use a marker to rank the different aspects of your life.





Filling the wheel of life part 2

When done, connect all the lines together to form a shape. Notice if yours looks more like a wheel or a propeller.





WOL Reflection

Looking at the example provided, you can see that the marker creates an interesting shape that is more like a propeller than a circle. The ride is a bit bumpy.

What does yours look like?

Spend as much time as you need to make some adjustments and reflect. Maybe a whole weekend..

Once you know and accept where you are, not only will you know where to start but it will be easier to make the efforts necessary to move forward.

There is no right or wrong, only resonance and dissonance. Some of the aspects of your life you rated the lowest may not be the ones you want to tackle first. It's important to look at the whole picture to try and figure out where your energy and time will have the most impact.





The Wheel of Fortune

Everyone's wheel of life is a loosely coupled cog in a larger wheel: work, family, country, humanity, eventually leading to the WHEEL OF THE UNIVERSE.

Let's assume there is a big universe out there and it has a job to do. Sometimes its path coincides with your success and wellbeing, and sometimes it does not. One day the universe makes you rich, successful, powerful, attractive and the next day maybe not.

One meaning of the Wheel of Fortune is that nothing is permanent, the only sure thing is change. Good luck and bad luck happen to all of us and it is safe to assume that there is nothing personal about it.

The Wheel of Fortune

Take the time to reflect on it. What does it evoke in you? What new perspectives come to mind? Where is your agency?





"People never change because they are under threat or under duress. Never. They change because they see something that makes their life seem valuable enough to start moving towards a life worth living." - Robert Downey. Jr.

CHAPTER 03

Choosing your trajectory



What is your current trajectory?

We are creatures of habit and our routines and roles dictate how we live from one day to the next.

To make real changes, you need to make your goals stronger than your habits, you need to cultivate purpose and resolve.

Take a moment to close your eyes, and imagine meeting your older self 10 years from now. Ask him how you got there, what you liked and what you regret. Let it flow and write a couple of pages including advice to your younger self.

Meet your older self

This is a 10-15 minute contemplative exercise. Best done alone in a quiet and safe place. Use all your senses and notice the specific shapes, colors, smells, and sounds. Really look and listen attentively as you meet your older self.





Who's pulling the strings?

Life is about making choices. In order to change trajectory you need to cultivate being intentional and courageous with the choices you make.

When in the default mode, we tend to rely on automatism and the choices made for us lean towards being safe and keep us from exploring what else is possible.

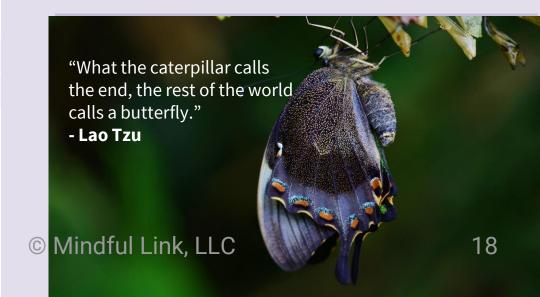
With your core values in mind, you can override the default system and take calculated risks.

THE POWER OF HABIT

"When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. So unless you deliberately fight a habit—unless you find new routines—the pattern will unfold automatically."

Duhigg, Charles. The Power of Habit







Finding your core values

Print this page and circle the values you believe are your core values, the ones you feel are motivating you the most. Feel free to add your own values or create your own list using your own words. Choose between 15 and 20 core values total.

Achievement	Friendship	Popularity	(+ my own values)
Adventure	Fun	Power	1010
Authenticity	Growth	Purpose	
Autonomy	Happiness	Recognition	
Beauty	Harmony	Respect	
Be of Service	Honesty	Responsibility	
Belonging	Humor	Safety	
Challenge	Justice	Self-Assurance	
Community	Kindness	Self-Confidence	
Compassion	Knowledge	Self-Esteem	
Competency	Leadership	Sensuality	
Competition	Learning	Sexuality	
Connection	Love	Spirituality	
Creativity	Loyalty	Stability	
Curiosity	Material goods	Status	
Determination	Money	Success	
Fairness	Nature	Trustworthiness	
Faith	Openness	Wealth	
Fame	Optimism	Wining	
Family	Peace	Wisdom	



Refine your list

Your list should look like something like this. Now go through it several times, eliminating redundancy and keeping only the values you cannot give up until you get to 5 or 6. There is no right or wrong as you pick, only resonance, a strong vibration in your heart and gut.

Friendship	Popularity	(+ my own values)
Fun	Power	Ocean
Growth	Purpose	Children
Happiness	Recognition	Dogs
Harmony	Respect	Stars
Honesty	Responsibility	Exploration
Humor	Safety	Inclusion
Justice	Self-Assurance	Climate
Kindness	Self-Confidence	Tidepools
Knowledge	Self-Esteem	Travel
Leadership	Sensuality	
Learning	Sexuality	
Love	Spirituality	
Loyalty	Stability	
Material goods	Status	
Money	Success	
Nature	Trustworthiness	
Openness	Wealth	
Optimism	Wining	
Peace	Wisdom	
	Fun Growth Happiness Harmony Honesty Humor Justice Kindness Knowledge Leadership Learning Love Loyalty Material goods Money Nature Openness Optimism	Fun Power Growth Purpose Happiness Recognition Harmony Respect Honesty Responsibility Humor Safety Justice Self-Assurance Kindness Self-Confidence Knowledge Self-Esteem Leadership Sensuality Love Spirituality Love Spirituality Loyalty Stability Material goods Status Money Success Nature Trustworthiness Openness Wealth Optimism Wining



What's at the core?

Keep refining this list, including finding the right words to describe these values to yourself. You should end up with something that is resonant, vibrant and true to you.

Achievement	Friendship	Popularity	(+ my own values)
Adventure	Fun	Power	Ocean
Authenticity	Growth	Purpose	Children
Autonomy	Happiness	Recognition	Dogs
Beauty	Harmony	Respect	Stars
Be of Service	Honesty	Responsibility	Exploration
Belonging	Humor	Safety	Inclusion
Challenge	Justice	Self-Assurance	Climate
Community	Kindness	Self-Confidence	Tidepools
Compassion	Knowledge	Self-Esteem	Travel
Competency	Leadership	Sensuality	
Competition	Learning	Sexuality	
Connection	Love	Spirituality	
Creativity	Loyalty	Stability	
Curiosity	Material goods	Status	
Determination	Money	Success	
Fairness	Nature	Trustworthiness	
Faith	Openness	Wealth	
Fame	Optimism	Wining	
Family	Peace	Wisdom	



A source of strength

Now that you have your core values, take the time to reflect on them.

Practice bringing up your core values (what you really stand for) as you wake up in the morning. Bring them to mind and feel them, in your body, in your gut, your heart, your chest...

Take note throughout the day when you feel like you are going against your core value and when you are honoring them. Notice the sensations in your body.

No judgment, simply check when and where there is resonance or dissonance.

Strength

One definition of strength is the ability to master our emotions. Ready to look inside the lion's mouth?





"Be yourself, everyone else is already taken".
- Oscar Wilde

CHAPTER 04

True north



Inner Compass

In addition to your core values, there are other currents and forces pressuring the needle to point in a given direction.

Let's take a look at what they are and create a space from which you can point to your guiding star.





Magnetic fields

Let's start with you at the center.

Following the instructions in the next couple of pages, you will take a blank sheet of paper and draw your face in a small circle at the center.

Then, draw bubbles in a circle around you and write down the jobs you have been paid for.

Now, draw another larger circle of bubbles with your skills, what you know and do well.

Finally, a larger circle of bubbles with your passions and hobbies, the things you like to do, that give you energy, that you want to keep doing in your life.

How does it work?

Don't think too hard and follow your instincts. What you need is a picture you can look at to find patterns or synergy, that will help you figure out what you are ready to share with the rest of the world.

It is a snapshot in time and may change a bit over time or as you think it over. No need for a pretty picture.

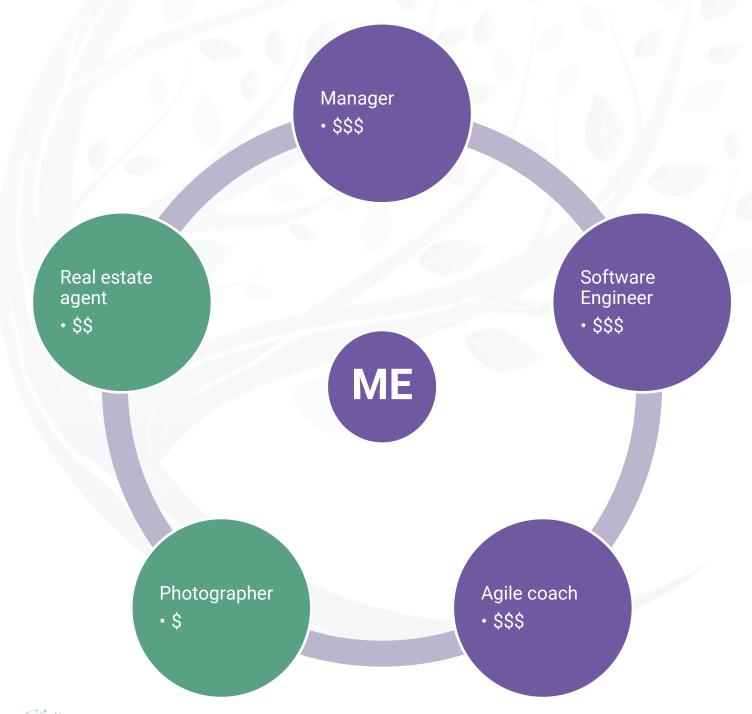
As you ponder over it, some of the bubbles will gain in intensity and others lose a bit of strength or even disappear affecting the needle of your inner compass.

Take a look at the next 3 pages before you start.



Magnetic field layer 1

Layer 1: Using the example below, list the activities where you have experience and for which you'd get paid. Blue established, green Emerging, \$ to \$\$\$ for pay. This magnetic field layer is what you get paid for.





Magnetic field layer 2

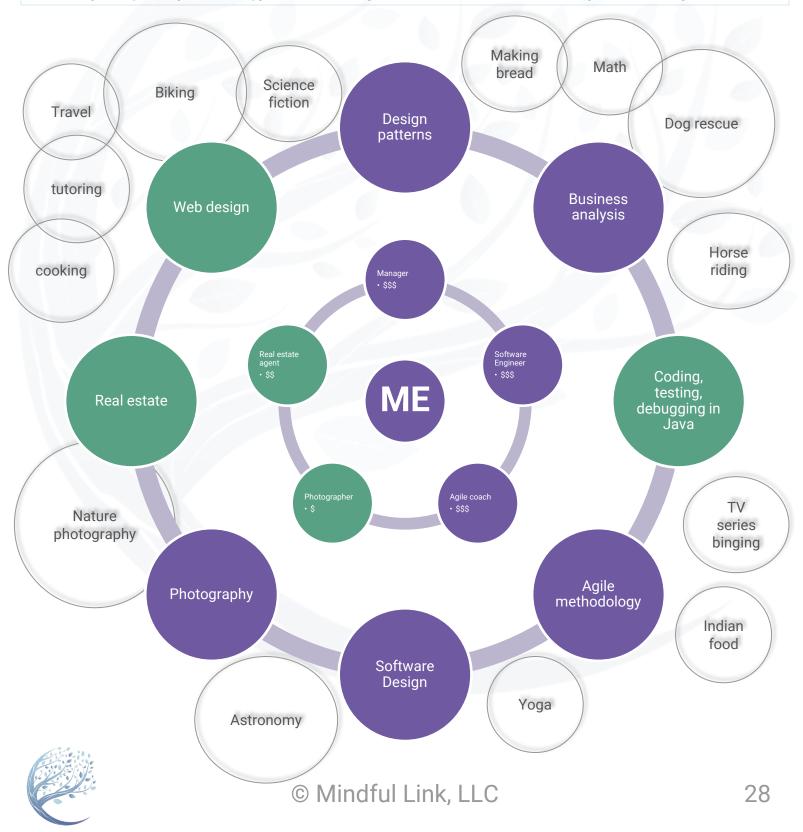
Using the example below, list your skills, things you do well and effortlessly in blue and emerging or a bit rusty in green. This layer is what you are good at.





Magnetic field layer 3

Now, draw bubbles for the passions that drive you, activities that you enjoy doing, what moves you, gives you energy and makes you feel more alive. This layer is what you love.

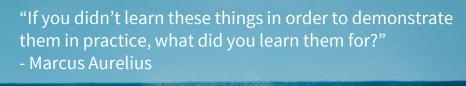


The magnetic field outside

Contemplate what you have to offer, your motivators and strengths. Keep looking at your diagram and refine as you go.

Next come up with what the world needs. What you offer to the world is very specific and personal. Anything you do well and with your heart can be life changing for someone else, whether it is debugging software, selling ice cream, building a hospital for children or working on the unified theory.





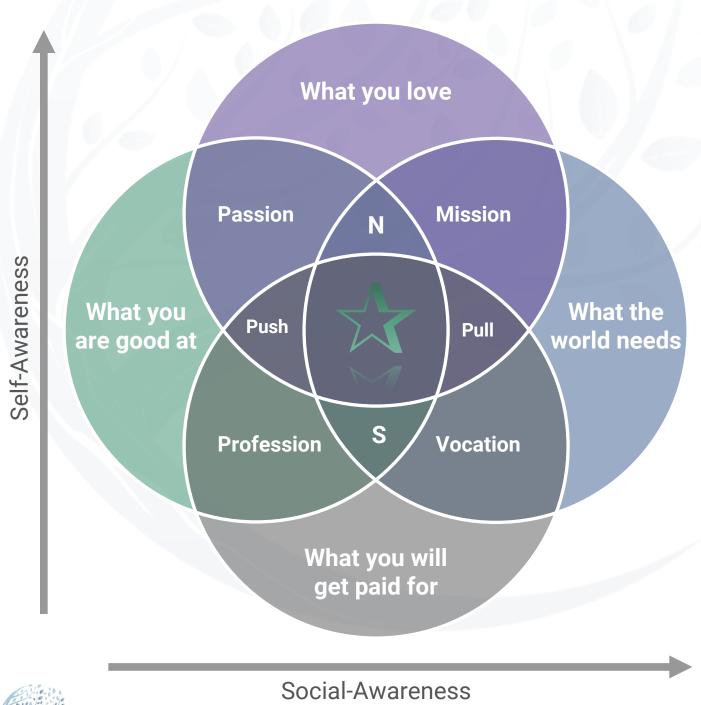
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Tuning in

The following purpose diagram (AKA Ikigai), helps define purpose and is useful to contemplate how you want to contribute. Use it as an invitation to reflect, and tune your inner chords, values and skills, to what the world needs right now.





The Guiding Star

From the previous exercises it may have become clear that higher awareness of who you are and of the world around you is key to finding your true path.

Higher awareness of the world, creating with others, will exercise a pulling force, making it easier for you to fully participate, grow and feel appreciated.

Higher awareness of yourself will help you make the resonant choices, the ones that will drive you towards a meaningful life.

By frequently tuning in to the world, you invite your essence (what's true and real in you), to participate fully in your life.

The Star

Find a quiet space or take a walk in nature to meditate and find your own personal guiding star, an image, metaphor or mantra you can easily bring to mind.





"Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny."

- Lao Tzu

CHAPTER 05

Blue Sky



How full is your cup?

This chapter is last and in a way takes you back to the beginning. The tools you develop here will help you get to where you want to be.

Like a wheel, personal development work never stops and the end of a cycle is the beginning of another one.

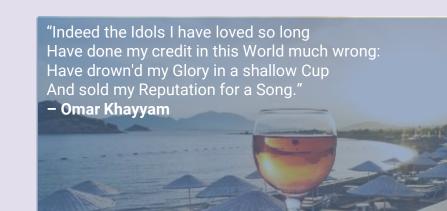
With each cycle come new perspectives, new sensations, new ways of thinking.

As you go on with your journey remember that no wine can be poured into a cup already full.

Are you willing to let go of old beliefs, thought patterns and habits that do not serve you any longer?

What you already know or believe, may keep you from having an open mind. When you engage with others, or a new activity, I invite you to intentionally empty that cup and find the beginner's mind.







What's in your cup?

Examine your thoughts for a moment. It may be easier if you meditate or simply close your eyes and focus on your breath, counting from 1 to 10 on each exhale and then back from 10 to 1 and over again. Do that for 5 minutes and notice the number of times you lost count and ended up in your thoughts.

These unsolicited thoughts are manufactured by the wandering mind.

The wandering mind does not like empty space and fills your cup with inner conversations, negative talks and all kinds of improbable scenarios. They tend to fill your cup with vinegar, not wine.

The fool

A possible representation of the wandering mind. Unaware of his surrounding, oblivious and preferring its own chimeras to reality.





The gray sky above us

The wandering mind is that voice in your head that never seems to stop. Some people do not even know it exists simply because it's always there, like the air we breathe.

Like fog or a gray sky, the wandering mind keeps reality from shining through.

When you meditate or remember to be yourself, here, in this moment, you disperse some of the clouds and start seeing a little bit of the blue sky.

Notice the changes when you stop engaging the wandering mind and direct your attention towards the present moment, even for a couple of minutes.

WANDERING MIND RESEARCH

In a 2010 study titled "A wandering mind is an unhappy mind" Dan Gilbert and Matthew Killinworth found out that people are not focusing on what they are doing at least 47% of the time. Our mind wanders and takes us into inner conversations, narratives, stories, as if we were continually rehearsing both realistic and improbable scenarios.

It ranges from what's for dinner to maybe an imaginary conversation with our boss about the promotion, giving an Oscar acceptance speech or facing a lion escaped from the zoo. Most of us would be too embarrassed to share the kind of stories we manufacture in our head.

This wandering would only be a waste of time except that according to the study we are mostly attracted to negative scenarios. We create unnecessary stress from imaginary stories manufactured by our wandering mind.



Breathing calmness

During stressful event our thoughts can be out of control. Or we may be reactive, let disruptive emotions get the better of us which can affect our behavior and reputation.

Breathing intentionally helps regaining control and respond to stress with calm and intentionality.

It will send signals to your brain that everything is OK and switch you from the sympathetic fight/flight system to the parasympathetic system which is more calm and discerning.

Breathing Calmness

Whether it is stress or a disruptive emotion, when your visceral system is sending you this burst of energy, the default mode is fight/flight/freeze. You can react with anger, leave in fear, just freeze speechless or you can divert the energy to good use in 3 simple steps:

- 1. Breathing slowly and intentionally
- 2. Sensations awareness
- 3. Reframing your thoughts

Try it now to get yourself ready for next time you get triggered.

- First become aware of your body, your surrounding and your breath.
 Deliberately slow your breath down, breathing deeply and intentionally, like 3 to 5 big long happy sighs.
- Now feel the sensations in your body, likely in the belly, chest of head, simple awareness with no judgment, no agenda.
- Finally check your thoughts and reframe them. Let go of blaming, justifying and look for reconciling thoughts.



Changing the weather

Besides meditating and being present, another powerful tool is to minimize negative self-talk.

Little by little, as you take control back and bring intentionality where there was mindlessness, you create more breaks from which you can see the blue sky.

Your thoughts influence your behavior, your moods and your health. Stress and chronic stress feed on negative talk. Refraining from negative talk is letting go of unnecessary suffering.

What if I have a real issue?

When you find it difficult to harness your mind, maybe because you are under stress or shaken: Take 2-3 slow deep breaths to center yourself and bring to mind someone you have in the highest esteem, either dead or alive, like your favorite historical character or one of your mentors and ask them for advice or how they would respond in your situation.

This simple exercise will help you find new perspectives and get the additional push you need to get back on track.



"Our life is what our thoughts make it. Dwell on the beauty of life. Watch the stars, and see yourself running with them."
- Marcus Aurelius



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The art of letting go

Letting go of old habits and selflimiting beliefs takes time, determination and requires absolute faith in yourself.

Faith in yourself can be summed up as recognizing your potential, your strengths and what a wonderful human being you already are. It is also having the humility to accept not being perfect, of being a work in progress. Such self-assurance does not require justifying. It is free of right and wrong, free of judgment and fear, and includes a touch of cheerfulness and joy.

Finding humor in your habits or weaknesses is like disarming landmines. If you can honestly laugh at yourself, you will create a safe space from which you can grow indefinitely.

The Moon

Old habits never totally disappear and tend to resurface in times of stress. This is a good time to call a trusted friend. Sharing with a nonjudgmental friend will help you get back quickly on your feet with ease and style.





Self-compassion

To keep faith in yourself you need to cultivate self-compassion.

Self-compassion means you know that you will always take good care of yourself emotionally and physically. It's not a given and contrary to popular belief, not the default mode for most people. For many, it may be easier to care for others than to care for oneself. One step towards self-compassion is to take good care of yourself.

Self-care can be defined as being on top of life's priorities:

- 1. Taking care of your most basic needs
- Living life according to your values
- 3. Finding the right balance between all the different aspects of your life

Taking care of yourself

Taking care of the basic needs includes eating well, exercising, sleeping well, learning, connecting with your friends and family, and other activities that help you recharge.

To live according to your values means staying true to yourself. It can be more important than having a comfortable life. There are many people who seem to have everything but are still depressed and unhappy. One reason can be the ignorance of their core values, of them not following their guiding star.

To find the right balance is the final touch. A little discomfort here or there may mean unfathomable joy in other parts of your life. You own the choice.



Self-compassion exercises

To ignite self-compassion, you need to feel good about yourself. Sometimes, it needs a spark or two to get the engine started.

Try the exercises in the opposite column or remember a time when you did them.

Notice how you feel after you told someone how grateful you are for what they have done and how each ARK is making you feel.

With the energy you get from these exercises, motivate yourself to consistently show appreciation to others. The more you learn to appreciate others, the more you will learn to appreciate yourself.

Gratitude and ARK

Showing gratitude

According to Martin Seligman, the father of positive psychology, one of the best exercises to feel good about yourself is to write a letter of gratitude to someone who has done something for you in the past. Pick someone who made a difference in your life when you needed it and write to them on one or two pages, how grateful you are for what they have done for you and how you were impacted. Next step is to read the letter to them in person if you can, or on the phone. Ask them for permission and go ahead with reading the letter with sincerity. Crying or having strong emotions during or after this exercise is perfectly normal.

Acts of random kindness

Anytime you see an opportunity to do something small and kind for someone else, go ahead and do it. It works beautifully when you do not take credit for it. It is showing kindness for the sake of it, often incognito and with no expectations at all.



A mirror to ourselves

C.G. Jung said: "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."

In theory, what we can see in others most likely exists in ourselves as well.

Next time you see something annoying in someone else like being stubborn, defensive or full of themselves, rather than judging them, check if there are any circumstances where you might appear that way to others.

The same is true when you admire someone. Chances are that you also have the same qualities or you would not be able to recognize them. Remember a time when you exhibiting the same qualities.

Empathy

Seeing in yourself what you see in others and vice versa puts you in an interesting situation where you realize that there is a lot in common between you and others.

Leveling the playing field and observing others and yourself without judgment or making assumptions dramatically reduces your biases.

The more you cultivate that notion, realizing how alike we all are, the more empathy you will have, the more approachable you will be and the more connected you will feel.

Belonging is one of the most potent influences you can have in your life. Feeling connected to others can make you rise above all kinds of personal problems. It can give you the courage to achieve more than you ever thought was possible.

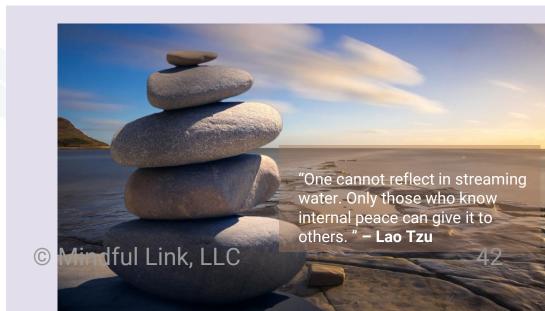


Compassion

Sometimes, it is easier to start showing forgiveness and appreciation to others, before we can do it with ourselves and sometimes, we need to start with ourselves before we can do it with others.

It is another wheel where one half starts where the other ends, where one cannot exist without the other. If you lack in one, the wheel stops, and you feel stuck. Compassion makes you feel connected to others and to a higher cause, a powerful energy field that blows like wind at your back.





The alchemy of transformation

The old alchemists' dream were to transform lead into gold. Philosophically, one meaning is transforming imaginary suffering into higher emotions, to create a richer, more fulfilling life.

Depending on your thoughts and inner stories, the energy driving your emotions can become disruptive and create anger, disgust, fear or it can be uplifting and create hope, compassion and acceptance.

The recipe is simple: be aware, keep your thoughts light and fair and listen attentively to the wisdom in your body, your gut, your chest and your heart.

Temperance

It is easy to go from one extreme to another. Moderation in action, thoughts and feeling is how you make gold.





The World

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." - **Wayne Dyer**

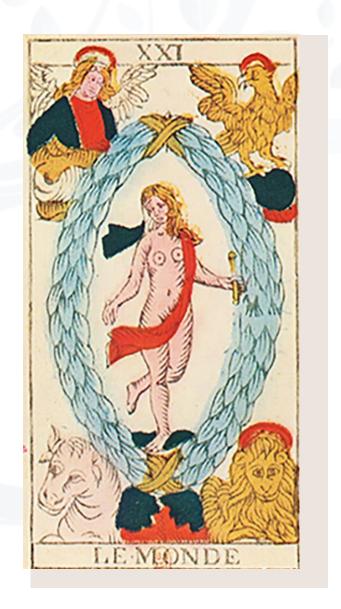
The thoughts you entertain, your actions and inactions, the people you hang out with and what you read or watch on TV are all influences that shape who you are and how you see the world. Trading influences can change your life.

Self-awareness, a non-judgmental attitude, finding your values, tuning in with the world, self-care and connecting with others creates a sense of inner <u>agency</u>.

This feeling that you are in the driver's seat, deciding who you want to be and how you want to show up in life is the basis of a meaningful life.

The world

One meaning is: Emotions, mind and body all working together in unison to support your goals. Another is: "Help yourself and heaven will help you." What else do you see?





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