

FIND YOUR WAY

grow through challenge and change
to live a more meaningful life

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PREFACE

I am not a psychologist, counsellor or therapist of any kind.

I do not claim to know the answers but as someone who has lived with debilitating chronic gut pain and difficult-to-diagnose symptoms for more than 30 years, I am very familiar with how challenging life's journey can be.

I have also navigated multiple career moves, small business ventures and interstate relocations, endured unsuccessful pregnancies and a bout of breast cancer and through it all dealt with the crippling self-doubt that comes with the writing territory.

I know uncertainty; I know overwhelm; I know helplessness; and I know them well.

I know what it is to wait, to fall, to lose, to come undone. But I also know what it takes to be patient, to rise, to win and be whole.

But so do you.

My story is your story.

It is the narrative of every human, living or dead.

When we set aside the personal circumstances of every life story, what we're left with is universal - recurring themes of love and loss, joy and disappointment, success and sorrow, triumph and tragedy.

We are each living what American professor of literature and acclaimed author Joseph Campbell coined 'The Hero's Journey'. Every one of us is 'called', every one of us is 'tested' and every one of us has the potential to be 'transformed' by our experiences.

But there is no map - we each have to find our own way.

INTRODUCTION

We're all travellers on the journey of life. And it's a journey fraught with challenge and change that tests our ability to achieve a happy, meaningful and fulfilling life.

Uncharted territory stirs up confusion and fear. Whether it's voluntarily evoked or comes to us spontaneously, change has the potential to overwhelm us and send us spiralling into self-doubt and apprehension. When we don't know what to do next or which way to turn, a sense of powerlessness can set in, perpetuating more struggle and more suffering.

No wonder we loathe change - it signals a loss of control and raises doubts that we have what it takes to handle the unknown.

But we can't avoid it. Change is a constant in our life - the one thing we can be sure of and the one thing we should expect. Many of us do so, reluctantly and ineffectively, and we suffer for it.

Our inability to manage it successfully directly affects our wellbeing - our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health are all at risk of being depleted and damaged; our self-esteem takes a hit; our relationships deteriorate; our dreams are diminished and the chance to live our most satisfying life disappears.

So how do we navigate the twists and turns of life? How do we handle the bumps, the sharp bends and the dead ends?

To navigate is to find the way, but there isn't one way.

And there is no right way or wrong way - just your way.

That's what this book is - a companion to help you find your way.

It encourages a growth mindset - one that is open to change - and the opportunity to journey consciously and compassionately so we can manage change more effectively and love ourselves along the way.

How we view the challenges of life says a lot about how we will cope with them and how successfully we will manage them. While we can't always change the environment or situation we find ourselves in, we can choose our approach and response to it.

We will be tested. We will want to close down when what is needed is to open up and we will turn on ourselves when what we need is to apply patience and care.

This book shows us how we can approach the journey with a willingness to learn from it and grow through it while navigating it consciously and compassionately in our own unique way.

It's a collection of insights, observations and understandings I have taken and made from my own challenges and the many years I have supported clients, students, friends and family with their own difficulties.

What I've noticed over and over is we don't easily embrace change because we doubt our ability to handle it and don't know how to find our way through it. Therefore, changing our relationship with change is vital. And if we want to come through change intact, then changing our relationship with ourselves as we find our way is essential.

Find Your Way is a compilation of reminders distilled from years of journeying with my eyes and heart open - observing, listening, reflecting, learning and letting go. They have helped me overcome confusion, doubt, helplessness and overwhelm, and assisted me to move into acceptance, courage and consciousness while guiding me to face my challenges honestly and with greater compassion.

Five chapters explore what I consider fundamental aspects that help us find our way more consciously and compassionately. They are to: Live aware; Look within; Lead with purpose; Let life change you; and Love yourself through the process.

The entries within each chapter are designed to remind us of what we forget when we're feeling overwhelmed or uncertain. Some will provide a quick prompt while others offer a deeper dive bringing you back to you and to what matters most.

But this is not a book to read - it's a book to use.

you are enough

Along the way it's easy to get trapped into thinking and believing that we are not enough: that we are lacking in some quality or skill that renders us insufficient, incomplete, unacceptable and unworthy.

The faulty thinking we buy into tells us we're not smart enough, good enough, lucky enough, clever enough, tall enough, creative enough, talented enough, successful enough. Enough!

You are enough. Exactly as you are, how you are, and who you are.

This doesn't mean we don't continue on our path of evolution - growing, shedding and becoming.

That will always be.

That is the nature of nature.

It means that at every stage we are enough exactly where we are.

LIVE WITH PURPOSE

When we're going through a transition we naturally want to focus on the end result, but this can inadvertently make the days between here and there feel meaningless and insignificant.

Purpose is not just about the big picture, the meaningful goal or desired outcome we are working towards.

Every day we have the opportunity to live with purpose.

Every task, every job, every encounter can be met and executed intentionally and purposefully.

To live with purpose is to consciously engage with every experience, each moment, as though it really matters. Because it does! It's the only moment we can live - the only moment we have.

Why not make it matter by giving it the attention and importance it deserves - you deserve! This life is yours, and what you bring to each and every one of your experiences has the capacity to turn a time of worry and waiting into one of wonder, meaning and connection.

When we approach everything we do as important and everyone we connect with as valuable, our days are suddenly, miraculously transformed. The mundane becomes meaningful and we begin to experience a richness and depth in our life we thought could only come from attaining our big-picture purpose.

Bring your being to your doing and live each moment with intention. Be deliberate daily, no matter what the task, and your life will again be purposeful.

May I live with purpose, approaching every situation with the importance it deserves.

CHANGE IS AN OPENING

Life is always changing but we don't necessarily want to change with it. We fear what it may bring or do to us and the uncertainty cripples our ability to work with it.

We'd rather cling to what we know - to what feels safe and familiar - even if it makes us feel unhappy and unfulfilled. When we do this, we resist the inherent growth that is available through every obstacle and so-called issue.

We forget it's natural to change - that life is change and we're meant to change with it.

Opportunities to change often come disguised as illnesses and accidents, job dissatisfaction, relationship breakdowns, housing issues, financial crises, family upheavals, significant birthdays, the death of loved ones, environmental disasters and spiritual longings.

These journeys within the journey can leave us reeling and grasping for answers. But no matter how big or small the change, it is our relationship with it that matters the most.

The meaning we assign to it and what we tell ourselves about it has the power to send us into further fear, anxiety and panic, or into a mindset that is open and accepting of what is a much bigger picture.

We are all at risk of suffering from change but when we see it as an opening for valuable learning and transformational healing to take place, then we are not just surviving life, we are thriving.

This is true change. This is the change the world needs each of us to make.

May I be open to this change and what it is asking of me.

This journey is one of *evolution.*

It's not about arriving -
it's about who you become
along the way.

Sometimes change is sparked by adversity. Other times, the familiar frustrates us and we realise it's time to find a new groove. Regardless of its origin, we can't ignore the call. We must step bravely toward the unknown and embark on the journey of becoming all that is being asked of us.

Becoming is not something we can strive for nor can it be rushed. We can only face each challenge as it arises, consciously and honestly, honouring our unique process and the person we are called to be.

We don't decide to become more of one quality and less of another and we're done! It's a series of internal shifts and changes that occur as a result of the choices we make daily - one choice at a time.

Becoming is what happens when we let life change us - let it move us and shift us and shape us into the person we came here to be.

Becoming holds within it the truth of who we are.
Trust it and the path that beckons.

PERMISSION TO BE

Where you are right now on the journey, what you're experiencing and what you're feeling is to be acknowledged and accepted. No apologies. There's no need to justify or explain being you, exactly as you are.

Why? Because to validate our experience and our feelings is what initiates the compassion we need during tough times. And because every time you deny your experience and invalidate your true feelings, you abandon yourself.

Whatever we are going through right now - the upset, the disruption, the difficulty, the pain - will not disappear just because we've dismissed it or downplayed its impact.

You matter. Your feelings matter. Your needs matter. Your experience matters. What you want matters. And there's only one person you need permission from to be who you are, where you are. That person is you.

To let yourself be human is the greatest gift you can give yourself, especially during upheaval and uncertainty. The acceptance that comes from the permission you give yourself to be as you are and where you are has the capacity to help and heal.

Seeing and accepting the despair, the pain, the anguish, the struggle - that deep recognition and acceptance of our self, our situation and our suffering - exactly as it is, opens the door to us finding the strength to carry on.

Give yourself the permission you need to be who you are, where you are, with all the fears, tears, hopes and struggles you're feeling right now. It's the most potent form of self-love you can give and receive.

May I give myself permission to be me, exactly as I am, where I am.