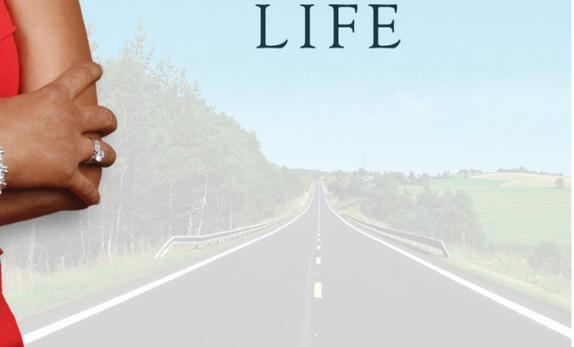


IF YOU'RE IN THE
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DRIVER'S SEAT,
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WHY ARE YOU
.....
LOST?



A
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ROADMAP
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TO AN
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AMAZING
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LIFE



DR. LAWANA GLADNEY

If You're In the
Driver's Seat,
Why Are You Lost?

A ROADMAP TO AN
AMAZING LIFE

Dr. Lawana Gladney

THE EMOTIONAL WELLNESS DOCTOR



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*To my loving mother, Shirley:
You have given me my emotional and
spiritual grounding, and
loved me through every part of my life's journey.*

*To my wonderful children, Jordan, Bria, Jazzy, and Lexi:
I love you with every fiber of my being and feel honored
and blessed to carry the most prestigious title this world
has to offer: your mother.*

*To my angels, Charles and Chelsie:
You are forever in my heart.*

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Introduction: The Journey

IT MAY HAVE BEEN early morning, midday, or late evening when you came into this world, and you may have entered kicking and screaming, or you may have needed a vigorous rub to kick-start that welcoming cry. But however it happened, from that very moment, you started on your journey. The journey called your life.

Your journey started out pretty fast. Within the first few years you learned to crawl, walk, and talk; you learned your ABCs and 1, 2, 3s; and you successfully adapted to change, transitioning from mommy's milk to solid food and from Pampers to Pull-Ups. "Growing up" was pretty normal and you probably even were applauded with each new progression you made.

As you continued to grow and develop, you began to experience life's ups and downs. If your childhood was ideal, then from the ages of five to twelve, it was filled with the innocence of school days, field trips, snack times, recesses, extracurricular activities, after-school programs, and weekends with family activities, birthday parties, and sleepovers.

But by the time you hit the magical "teen" years, you probably felt a bit (or greatly) lost for the first time. Maybe you were uncertain about who you were. Maybe your friends were changing. Maybe your parents became annoying and school became a place where you "had" to go. The older you became, the more you experienced the bumps, detours, traffic jams, and road blocks, which came in the form of break-ups, family fallouts, stalls in your career, or unexpected losses. You found that events and circumstances can knock you off your feet and leave you feeling stressed, confused, and lost.

Sometimes those uncomfortable feelings don't go away easily. Perhaps you still feel lost, or maybe you feel newly lost due to something that has occurred recently in your life. Whether you're embarking on a career at age twenty-two or are seeing your children off to college at age fifty-two, you need strategies to help you get "unlost." You need help in mapping out your life's direction so your path will lead you to the life you want—to what I call "your amazing life." *If You're In the Driver's Seat, Why Are You Lost?* is here to equip you with these strategies.

The Need for GPS

I've used car and trip terminology and analogies throughout the book because the journey of life is similar to the trips that we take each day when we get into our cars. Some trips are easy and uneventful—a direct shot from point A to B, with few complications along the way. Inevitably, however, we have trips that are delayed because of unforeseen circumstances—a detour, traffic, an accident, or faulty navigation. Anyone who has experienced any of these hindrances knows how frustrating they can be, and how they can lead us into feeling stressed out and out of control. Thus, we've seen the rapid rise in ubiquity of the Global Positioning System (GPS), which has become a lifesaver for many of us.

Like so many other modern conveniences, the GPS is so helpful that we've become dependent on it and can't imagine what we did before we had a lady talking to us and telling us where to turn in 0.5 miles or how to reroute. Well, I suppose I do remember. We used "cutting edge" technology like MapQuest—just plug in an address and you'd be given the directions to anywhere in the country. All you had to do was to print out twenty pages, keep them in order, and follow them closely while driving, and you'd actually reach your destination. Compared with using a GPS, that's a lot of work. However, it still beats trying to unfold a large physical map in the car while navigating at the same time! Just think what it once took to just drive across the city to a friend's house or an appointment. It was like working through a maze. Hopefully you

knew where you were going, because if you didn't, you'd have to find a phone so you could stop to call for directions.

We now live in the high-tech age where trifold maps have largely gone the way of cassette tapes and you don't have to print out directions, because you can download a navigation app to your phone. Or, even better, you can purchase a GPS to mount in your car or even buy a car that comes equipped with the technology.

Wouldn't it be great if we had a similarly helpful tool to guide us on a far more important trip: Life? Wouldn't it be great if this guide would keep us headed in the right direction, help us stay focused on our destination, and help us make sure we can get back on the right route if we get lost? Consider this book your personal GPS, a talking roadmap that will help you navigate from where you are in life right now to exactly where you want to be. Whether you are lost and wandering around without direction, or, if you've hit a roadblock, this book will help you understand how to manage your emotions, your stress, your health, and your overall life. *If You're In the Driver's Seat, Why Are You Lost?* is your new GPS for life. It's here to help you recalibrate and set off in the right direction for you.

The Voice Behind the GPS

As the Emotional Wellness doctor, I have worked with countless people who feel stressed, confused, and lost when "life events" and circumstances knock them off their feet. And, I have been able to provide empowering strategies to help my clients feel more confident and ready to be in the driver's seat of their lives. I have been fortunate enough to share this advice one on one, as well as through speaking engagements across the country, which has allowed me to share my message of taking control of our own destinies so that we can enjoy life with more than twenty-two million people.

And now I have the opportunity to help you through this book. Think of me as the voice of that nice, helpful lady behind your GPS. My

aim with *If You're In the Driver's Seat, Why Are You Lost?* is to guide you through everyday challenges and to help you let go of the things that are emotionally KILLING you—the people, thoughts, words, and regrets of the past—as well as help you build a plan for your future. I have written this book to be your own personal coach that you have access to twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It's a practical guide with essential tools that will help you take control of your destiny. It's loaded with information, tips, and strategies that will help you learn how to tap into the power of your mind; how to control your health; and how to connect to your spirit to live the life you want. Let the advice in these pages inspire, empower, and enrich your mind, body, and spirit. Believe it in your mind, and your heart will feel it, your hands will do it, and your spirit will rejoice in it.

In order to get the most out of this book, you will need to keep a blank notebook by your side and title it, *My Journey to an Amazing Life*. Always keep it and a pen handy as you read. In each chapter you'll find a REST STOP and ROADMAP, which feature suggested activities and questions that will help you evaluate your life, change your thoughts, make plans, and execute changes that will ensure that you are driving toward your destiny. Use your notebook to record your thoughts and do those exercises.

Now, buckle up, and get ready for the ride of your life. The ride to your amazing life!



Help, I'm Lost!

*Coping with a Broken GPS, No Maps,
and No Directions*

YOUR BIG DAY has arrived. You have been waiting for this opportunity to interview for your dream job. The interview is at 11:00 a.m. Your clock goes off at 6:00 a.m. to give you plenty of time to prepare. Although it should only take thirty minutes to get there, you plan to leave at 10:00 a.m. to allow extra time for traffic and other potential delays. You are familiar with the neighborhood where the office is located and have the address memorized. You are set. You start out on the journey to your destination and the trip is going smoothly. The traffic and other drivers are cooperating with you this morning. You are feeling good and very excited about your interview; you even smile and nod at the people in the car beside you.

You are getting close to your destination, but you can't seem to find the specific street. It was Walnut, wasn't it? You could have sworn that it was just off Brook Road. As time eases closer to 10:30 a.m., you become a little concerned. Did you pass the street and just weren't paying attention? As you make a U-turn and go back a few blocks to retrace your route, you begin to get nervous as it starts to *seem* like the street you are looking for doesn't exist. The clock is moving toward 10:40 a.m. and your body hits the panic button. You stop at the nearest 7-Eleven and hope that the cashier knows where you are. Unfortunately, he just moved to the city and doesn't have a clue. You get back in the car and

sit there with a racing heart. You were sure you knew where you were going, but you are not where you are *supposed* to be. You are *lost* and you only have fifteen minutes to get to the interview. You can hardly breathe as you realize that you are not going to make it. This is your big day, yet somehow you managed to get lost and blow it. You planned for everything, except for completely and utterly losing your way. After all, no one *plans* to be lost.

Lost in “Life Events”

Webster's Dictionary defines “lost” as having *gone astray or missed the way; bewildered as to place, direction, etc.* It's a feeling and emotion that every living and breathing human being—even highly trained doctors like yours truly—has felt at some time or another.

The day I found myself lost, the sun was shining and the temperature was a near perfect 75 degrees. I remember the weather so clearly because it ended up being so starkly opposite to what the day held. It was also memorable because it was Mother's Day, and I woke up feeling so blessed to be a mom to my four wonderful kids. I was, truth be told, looking forward to being showered with affection and gratitude by my husband and children in recognition for the hard work I do as a mom. Hey, I can be queen for one day out of the year, right? My husband and I had recently been having some serious strains in our twenty-year marriage, but I was hopeful we could put our issues aside for the day.

As a family, we attended church that morning and then later celebrated with a dinner at Grand Lux, one of my favorite restaurants. Despite my earlier optimism, there was palpable tension at dinner. Shortly after we arrived back at the house, my husband went into the bedroom, took out his suitcase, and began to pack his clothes and a few of our belongings. *You have to be kidding me!* We had talked about a separation to clear our heads, but I was blindsided and hurt that he chose *this* of all days to leave. By nightfall, he was gone. *Happy Mother's Day to me!*

The next morning as the sun peered through the window and I awakened to consciousness, it took a minute to realize that I was in a big empty bed all alone. I looked around the room and saw the closet door open with empty wire hangers swaying ever so slightly from the air of the ceiling fan. A suffocating sense of anxiety came over me. After more than two decades of being married, I was suddenly alone; I was “lost” and needed help to find my way. As I lay there, thoughts and questions swirled in my head: *Where do I go from here? What am I going to do now? How am I going to handle all the bills by myself? Who's going to fix the toilet when it leaks? Who's going to kill the creepy things? Who's going to protect me?*

While these seemingly unanswerable questions bombarded me, another little voice reminded me, *Hey, I am the Emotional Wellness doctor, and I help others find their way. I usually have the answers to everyone else's problems. Surely, I can handle my own.* Well, that all sounds good in theory. Although I was a strong, independent, smart, and tenacious woman, I was still lost. Even the most sophisticated map was not going to work at a time like this—how could I plow ahead when I had no idea where I was going? I needed to get to the nearest rest stop and park so that I could regroup and reroute my direction (once I figured out my destination). Over the next few months, as my husband and I finalized our divorce, I was forced to redefine who I was; reevaluate my priorities; undo and redo my life's goals; reevaluate the past; reorganize the present; and replan for the future. Because I never imagined myself in this place, I found myself grieving the loss of dreams, dealing with a gamut of emotions, and learning how to trust myself all over again. It was a watershed moment in my life, and it made me all the more empathetic to my clients and others who have felt like they were on the right path only to be blindsided and sent dramatically off-course. Clients like Jenny, Cassandra, and Tonya. (*All names of people in the scenarios have been changed to protect privacy.*)

Forty-five-year-old Jenny called me for help after a traumatizing career setback. She had been working at her job for more than six years. She was very resourceful and dedicated, and went over and beyond

everyone's expectations, but it seemed as if her manager just didn't value her potential, constantly overlooking her for promotions and raises. Although she was very good at her job, she was not happy and felt that she had more to give and that another company would value her skills more. She began to circulate her résumé, and after several months of searching, a company offered her what was basically her dream job. Finally, her potential was recognized! She turned in her letter of resignation with hidden excitement. Then, exactly one month to the day she started her new job, she was let go. Jenny was angry, humiliated, embarrassed, and confused, and she went into hiding. She was lost.

Cassandra was numb since the fateful Saturday she got the call that her husband was in the hospital. He'd had a heart attack. She rushed through traffic to get to the emergency room, unaware of stoplights and stop signs. Time seemed to stand still and speed by simultaneously. Unfortunately all the speeding didn't get her there in time to say good-bye. He had passed away before she arrived. *How could this happen*, she wondered. He had been in great health. He ran every day and had regular doctor visits. One minute he was on the phone laughing, and the next minute he was fighting for his life, and then was gone, just like that. Cassandra's world crumbled in an instant.

Tonya was crying so hard it was difficult for me to understand what she was saying. Through her muffled words and deep groans, I heard the words "breast cancer." She was under forty, hadn't had her first mammogram, and there was no family history of breast cancer. There was no reason this should happen to her. She only did self-exams because her doctor said that she should. Then she felt the lump. When she got checked out and heard the words "breast cancer," her world started spinning. *How could this be? What am I going to do? Will I be a survivor?* Tonya withdrew and became lost in being lost.

From a sudden loss to a health scare, all these individuals felt the overall feeling of, *It wasn't supposed to be like this*. Perhaps you can identify with such a feeling. I'd be surprised if you couldn't because at one point or another we've all faced similar difficult or uncomfortable circumstances. These situations can leave us with feelings of anger,

confusion, immobilization, and, in some cases, situational depression, which unlike clinical depression, is usually temporary, but often just as debilitating.

Here are some life situations that can make us feel lost:

- Loss of a job; unemployment
- Loss of a loved one from sudden death or long-term illness
- Loss/of relationships with friends, family, or lovers
- Loss of income, investments, or property
- Moving to another city, state, or country
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Parenting
- Family challenges
- Sickness and/or disease
- Aging parents/caregiving
- Experiencing failure
- Experiencing success
- Financial challenges
- Workload
- Dissatisfaction

The question then is not how you can avoid becoming lost. The question is, once you are lost, how quickly can you find your way back? To find the answer, you must first determine whether your situation was the result of an uncontrollable or controllable event.

Uncontrollable Events

Many events in life, like those presented in the earlier examples, are ones that individuals cannot control. These types of experiences I call “uncontrollable events.” They could be also placed under the “ebbs and flow of life” category. When it comes to marriages and divorces,

for example, there are choices and you have a say to some degree, but because there are two people involved, you cannot control the entire situation. You can only manage your responses, reactions, and thoughts.

ROAD TO RECOVERY AFTER LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS



It's normal to feel lost when major life-changing events occur. Remember that it's possible to bounce back, but getting "unlost" will be a process. There are key factors to focus on that will help you find your way, make the transition, and deal with the issues with less stress.

1. **Allow yourself the time to feel the emotions.** You will be flooded with a plethora of feelings, and you need to walk them. It's okay to be angry or cry. These are both such natural feelings that people often try to suppress. If you are angry and need to scream, go someplace where you'll have privacy. When you need to cry, don't hold back the tears. You may think that tears are a sign of weakness, but they are not. They are actually very cleansing for the soul and body.
2. **Avoid using your energy to try to make sense of things that don't make sense.** In Cassandra's situation, for example, you can't make sense of a healthy person dying of a heart attack, or for Jenny, that she was let go from her job a few weeks after being hired. Fixating on the "why" of senseless occurrences will keep you in a stagnated mental state that will in turn keep you from moving to the healing space.
3. **Focus on the people and/or things in your life that are good.** Even in the best of times, it's good to appreciate your blessings, but it is especially imperative during difficult times that you direct your attention into a spirit of gratitude. No matter how bad the situation was, it always could have been worse.

4. **Don't run and hide.** Your natural instinct may be to go into a shell and avoid all the people that love you. You may be thinking, *It's my personal pain and I want to work through it alone.* Or, maybe you feel like you'd be bothering others. Tonya, for example, didn't want to tell her friends and family about her breast cancer because she didn't want them to worry about her. However, in times like these, you'll want to engage in the opposite thinking. The more you isolate yourself, the more prone you can become to experiencing long-term depression. Without the support, love, and encouragement of others, it will be more difficult to find your way back.
 5. **Focus on and enjoy the present.** Challenging life situations have a way of giving us a different perspective on our journeys and almost force us to prioritize what's important. Make sure you enjoy and appreciate the people and things that are in your life today!
 6. **Create a new normal.** When things in life change, you have to change with it. My divorce forced me to create a new way to do holidays, dinners, celebrations, parenting, etc. While it may be uncomfortable in the beginning, much of it is the feeling of growing pains. You are transitioning to a new phase of your life.
 7. **Seek counseling.** Always be open-minded to the idea of counseling. We all need it at some time or another. A good counselor can help you to pick up pieces and give you a different perspective on things. I highly recommend it. Finding a good counselor is not as difficult as it may be perceived. First, ask for recommendations from your health care provider or friends who have had counseling. If you don't get any personal recommendations, go online to www.findapsychologist.com or search on Google for a counselor who specializes in your specific areas. There are thousands of mental health professionals that are available to help you find your way.
-

Controllable Events

While we have little (or no) control in some situations, other times we do have control. In the next group of scenarios I focus on four common, controllable categories that people find themselves lost in: yourself; addiction; relationships; or finances. It is these controllable events where we are lost because of our choices, decisions, and/or reactions to events.

Losing Yourself

Have you ever questioned who you really are or have become? This generally happens when you come to a point in your life when you feel like you have lost yourself in your work, family, culture, or social circle. The struggle with identity begins when you reach adolescence. While some are able to have a grasp on who they are becoming, it can change as you enter different phases of life. For example, when you go to college, you experience new things and people that impact your ever-changing individuality. As you grow into a career, start a family, or start a business, each phase has an effect on your identity. Feeling lost may mean that you don't know who you are any more or that you realize your identity is caught up in something or someone else.

Lisa couldn't remember the last time that she watched any channel other than Disney, Nickelodeon, or PBS. She knew every actor, character, and plot from most of the episodes on these three kid-focused channels. She longed for the days when she could sit and watch something that she truly enjoyed. She also realized that no one knew her actual name. Everywhere she went she was known as Ashley and Devin's mother. She thought back to all the parental advice she was given when she was pregnant. No one told her that she would lose her identity, not be known by her first name, and not have any room in her life for her interests and passions.

Although losing yourself in someone or something can happen subconsciously, a conscious choice happens when you realize that you

don't know who you are and you choose to take steps toward finding out who you are or you continue to be lost.

This is exactly where Carolyn found herself. Her husband was a very successful attorney and she dutifully attended the social functions that her husband's job sponsored. She would get dressed up in cocktail attire and schmooze the evening away as Mrs. Campbell. As she made small talk with her husband's associates, all she heard about was the success that her husband brought to the company. She endured story after story about "Mr. Wonderful" until her jaw hurt from the smiles. Carolyn silently wondered if anyone cared about her as an individual and the fact that she worked her dream job from her home office. As she listened to Chatty Cathy to her left, talking on and on about her trip to Paris, Carolyn grew increasingly frustrated that no one seemed interested in her or her interests. When another attendee walked up and she was introduced yet again as "Ted's wife, Mrs. Campbell," she stuck out her hand and said, "Hello, I'm Carolyn." After all, she was more than just Ted's wife... wasn't she?

Does any of this ring a bell for you? Many people are lost because their self-perception doesn't match their actions and behaviors anymore, or that outwardly they don't feel like they are the person they are inside. It can be hard to remember what makes you unique or what your own individual ideas or opinions are when there is so much pressure to conform to those around you and to fit into a certain mold as "the perfect mother/father" or the "ideal husband/wife." Some people are caught up in the whirlwind of our fast-paced culture that dictates what is in, out, cool, trendy, acceptable, or the latest and greatest. If you find yourself "outside the norm," it can impact your self-esteem. Only by finding and embracing your true authenticity (which we get discuss in Chapter 2) will you be able to make the decisions that will keep you on course.

Lost in Addiction

Some people find themselves lost in self-destructive behaviors or lifestyles. The desire to alleviate misery and pain, coupled with the inability to effectively manage emotions and stress, can drive an

individual to become dependent on an illicit substance or compulsive activity. This can develop into a vicious cycle because feeling lost can drive a person into these behaviors, and being trapped in the throes of addiction exacerbates the feeling of being lost, and so on. A person can become addicted, dependent, or compulsively obsessed with virtually anything. Some of the most common things that people find themselves “lost” in, are:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Gambling
- Sex
- Pornography
- Work
- Shopping
- Food

Rhonda couldn't believe what she saw when she looked at the picture. Surely, that woman in the photo was not her. The woman staring back at her was fifty pounds heavier than Rhonda used to be. She looked like her Aunt Lucy and not the young vibrant woman she used to be. Seeing this version of herself prompted her to reach out to me for help. She knew that she was overweight, but until she saw that picture she didn't realize it had gotten so out of control. She was stuck in a pattern. She ate when she felt good, she ate when she felt bad, she ate when she was afraid, and she ate when she wasn't afraid. She explained that food was her solace and her friend, but moreover, it had become a crutch for her. She desperately wanted to change her eating habits.

And then there was Brennon, who thought that he could handle his alcohol. He had a glass of wine in the morning, again at noon, and a stronger drink at night. Although his family became concerned, he assured everyone that he was fine and continued on his path. Eventually though, the two glasses of wine during the day became four and the one nightcap became a few. He was stuck.

When it comes to breaking addictive behaviors, there is a process. Because some addictions are physical addictions and others are psychological addictions, they will require different routes to overcome. By the time a behavior can be classified as an addiction, it requires outside help and counseling from a professional. So to get out of it, you must seek professional help. I can't adequately give you steps in this book that will help you to stop the behaviors yourself. You need to walk through it with a professional.

Lost in Relationships

Being lost in relationships encompasses many dynamics. You can be lost from the lack of a relationship with a parent, child, or sibling, or you can be lost in a dysfunctional relationship that you can't seem to get out of. Whether you're lost from the lack of a connection or dysfunction, it can be harmful.

As humans, we are from birth biologically hardwired to seek connections with other people. Our most fundamental relationship is with our parents, who establish our feelings of safety, security, and identity. If that bond is never established or is broken, children can experience despair, anger, self-doubt, confusion, suspicion, and a range of other troubled emotions, with lasting ramifications.

Growing up, Bob never knew who his father was. He constantly wondered about this mystery man. Did he look like him? Did they like the same sports or music? While he was curious about the man, he was also incredibly hurt and angry that his father apparently didn't care about him since he left his mother before he was born and never came back. All of his life, he felt incomplete and displaced with his identity. At the age of thirty-five, Bob found out who his dad was. But, did he really want to meet him? Could he forgive him? He decided not to connect with him. Meeting him could disrupt his life and while he felt displaced, he didn't want to take that risk.

While you may not have had an absent parent, you may be lost in a strained relationship with a parent, sibling, child, friend, or lover. When

relationships become distant and strained, it has an enormous impact on your well-being. Whether you shut down and tell yourself, “I don’t care anymore” or continue to attempt to reconcile without success, the strained relationship injures your soul and causes disappointment, remorse, and defeat.

When I heard Tracy’s story, I knew immediately that she was lost in her relationship. She had been married for several years, divorced, and was living with her ex-husband again. She had left her husband and sent him to prison for hurting their daughter. However, when he was released after serving his sentence, she accepted him back into her life, caging herself into the prison of the relationship. She could see that she was lost and that the relationship was not good for her, she just didn’t know how to free herself.

Breaking from a dependency like that won’t happen overnight. When a person is lost in another person, it is like an appendage of your body and soul, and it’s difficult and painful to cut ties. Chapter 9 is devoted to ways to deal with toxic people and relationships—it’s *that* important.

Lost in Finances

We may like to think otherwise, but in many ways money is the defining factor in life. It shapes your:

- Options
- Lifestyle
- Friendships
- Social class
- Tax bracket
- Housing
- Education
- Freedom
- Relationships

As you see, it is the foundation to most of life. While those who have money proclaim that it doesn’t buy happiness, those who don’t have it

would like to test that theory. Because money is the driving force, the lack thereof has the power to significantly influence your thoughts, confidence, relationships, and identity. Financial strain can make you feel less than, angry, unworthy, embarrassed, and helpless. Conversely, wealth can make you feel unsatisfied, guilty, empty, and distrustful. Whatever the case, money is a big influencer in terms of the direction of your journey in life.

Some people have bought into the theory that they don't have control over how much money they make and believe that only certain people are designated to be rich. That is unfortunate, because as with the other things in your life, you are always in the driver's seat. Again, because this topic is critical to your life, health, and well-being, Chapter 12 addresses it in much more detail.

Don't Get Stuck

Sometimes we don't realize or don't acknowledge that we're lost, and so we stay lost, and what's worse, we get "stuck" there. There are several types of people who are stuck and can't seem to reroute.

Stubborn Sam is always lost and stays that way because he doesn't acknowledge that he is lost and refuses to ask for help or directions.

Persuasive Polly has the skill to convince everyone that she isn't lost. Although you can see her "driving around" aimlessly, never going anywhere, she seems to have persuaded herself and others that she knows where she's going.

Fearful Fred is afraid to be on course. He has become comfortable living life in a disoriented state and is content to be displaced.

Sad Sabrina likes the attention that she gets when she acts confused. She has gained the reputation of being adrift and is not happy unless she is sad.

I am certain that you have seen yourself in this chapter in one way or another. It's all but impossible not to get lost in your life. No one is spared. This chapter's exercises take a look at your own experiences with getting lost and review some helpful strategies to find your way back. As I mentioned in the introduction, each chapter will have a "REST STOP" portion, and this is the time to get out your *My Journey to an Amazing Life* notebook; it should be new and empty, ready to fill with your notes from the exercises.

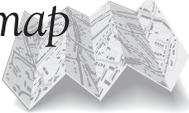


Your first task is to reflect on the following questions and write down the answers in your notebook:

- Which life events have left you with this feeling of being lost?
- How long have you felt off track?
- What have you done thus far to cope?

As you review your events and the ways you've coped and are currently coping, consult the directions below and see how you can take control of the wheel again and change your direction. Remember, no one controls your destiny but you. You and only you are in the driver's seat setting the course for your journey. This means that wherever you may be at this point in your life, you can begin to change your course.

Roadmap



Directions for getting “unlost”—

1. **Know that you are not alone.** Whatever “lost situation” you may find yourself in, know and understand that someone else has been there before and you are not alone.
2. **Admit that you are lost and need help.** You instinctively know that you are lost, but you have to admit it to yourself and others to get the help you need. Find someone, whether it’s a friend, mentor, coach, or counselor, to help you find your way. Don’t get caught up thinking that you can find your way by yourself.
3. **Change lanes.** Sometimes you are just driving in the wrong lane. Get out of the fast lane. You may be creating your stress. If you are busy at work or feel that you don’t have enough time for yourself, your family, or other things that you deem priorities, do your best to lighten your load. Stop taking on so many tasks at work, and at home, stop signing your kids up for all those activities. Slow down and take some things off your plate.
4. **Take the nearest exit.** Sometimes you just don’t need to stay on the freeway. You may need to exit out of a job, relationship, or behavior that is not positive for you. Understand that staying on this route may lead you to a dead end.
5. **Get to the nearest rest area.** Occasionally, you need to just stop and rest. The fast pace of life and the need for urgency in accomplishing things causes unsettled spirits, sleep deprivation, and health problems. Take a break from people, technology, routines, schedules, and deadlines. Just rest!
6. **Recalculate your route.** Because you’re given free will to make choices and decisions about your life, we all screw up every now and again. You were given clear directions, your internal navigation system told you where to turn, but you decided to go the opposite way—or you took a wrong turn. Like the

female GPS voice, your internal navigation system immediately detects that you did not go the way you were told and has to inform you that she is recalculating the route. What is significant to note here is that there is more than one way to reach a destination—if the road you are traveling on is too bumpy, has too much traffic, or construction, you can reroute.

7. **Make a U-turn.** If you are lost in addictive behaviors or unhealthy habits or relationships, you need to find the next street where you can make a U-turn and head in the opposite direction. Once you've discovered that you're going the wrong way, making a U-turn as soon as possible may save your life.



Thanks for checking out this preview of:

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