

Crossing the Nonsense Divide



**Steps to Finding *Your* Path
to a successful life**

by

James Henry McIntosh

a NonsenseAtWork book

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**Crossing the Nonsense Divide:
steps to finding *y o u r* path to a successful life**

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This book is about nonsense, because...

...what stops most of us from living a more successful life is nonsense.



A book tends to find you when you are ready for its message.

If you are holding this book and reading this,
and it feels comfortable in your hands
and in your mind,
don't stop.

Maybe...

...you are ready to admit to the nonsense in your life

...you are ready to walk your path

*Maybe you are ready
to be nudged
across the*

nonsense divide

Welcome to our side



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Symbolic nonsense



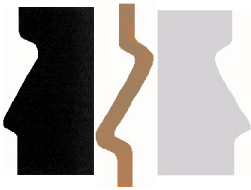
ego self



Higher Self



Nonsense



*Divided by
nonsense*



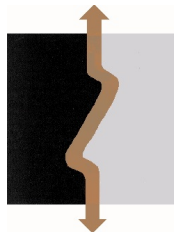
*Nonsense
as energy
rising*



*Nonsense as bridge
to your path*



*Nonsense
as energy
flowing*



Walking your path



This book is about nonsense, because...

...what stops most of us from living a more successful life is nonsense.

Having read that statement, you probably fall into one of two camps. Either you want to question what I mean with ‘nonsense’ or you want to question my understanding of what it means to live a successful life. By the end of this book you should have your own understanding of what nonsense means, but here is a quick explanation to get started:

The term ‘nonsense’ describes absurd, ridiculous, foolish or meaningless words, ideas, or conduct. Nonsense is purely subjective: you are likely to see ‘nonsense’ when *you* disapprove of it. (For example, you might disapprove of the word ‘bullshit’, although others commonly use it to indicate nonsense.)

If, on the other hand...,

...you question whether I understand what it means to live a successful life, then you have just tripped over a bit of nonsense, because the real issue is this:

It does not matter whether you understand your life; it matters that you live it.

Actually, that is almost a bit of nonsense, for what really matters is that you *choose* to live it. Your freedom to choose, your very ability to make choices, makes you a co-creator with whatever universal creative force you acknowledge. You did not take on a physical body to be inactive on earth. You came to *do*, to *act*, to be a *creator* in your own right.

Even though you are free to choose, you are not free to ‘not-create’. Every thought you have in making choices, even a thought to ‘not-create’, is an act of creation. Thoughts are creations. The New Physics is now consistently showing that the mystics of the ages are right. *You can never not create.*

So, what happens when you think about your life? That’s right—you are creating your life—even when you are having *nonsense* thoughts. Perhaps I should say especially *nonsense* thoughts, because *nonsense* stops you from finding your path in life, *nonsense* side-tracks you from your path and *nonsense* makes you hesitate at every fork in your path.

That is the nature of nonsense as well as its purpose, because every time you encounter nonsense, you are free to decide whether you see ‘sense’ or ‘non-sense’. You are, indeed, the creator of *nonsense*.



*You are free to sit and wonder ‘what’s it all about?’
You are also free to wander and experience what it’s all about
But know that if you choose to wander you will wonder less and less
For it is by walking your path that you cross the nonsense divide*



The best way to read this book is one idea a day.

So I suggest that you go back
and read the previous part (again?),
then put the book down until tomorrow.



One successful life (at a time)

According to the commonly shared definition of success, we can assume that a successful life is one that ‘turned out well, accomplished what it set out to do’. The problem with this way of evaluating life-success is that you will only know at the end of your time whether your life was a success or not.

Most of us have no recollection of our past lives, nor do we have any certainty about life after death. This one life is all that we know; this is the one that matters. Surely, then, it should matter to us whether this one life is a success or not. However, it is this very characteristic, this ‘one-strike and you’re out’ concept, that makes it traumatic for us to consider, even briefly, our success at living it. But sooner or later we all begin to wonder....

Although thinking is creating, wondering about it will not automatically create a more meaningful life. Wondering is too much like wandering: walking without a clear destination in mind. And yet, you have the power to create a life-experience more to your liking, one that you could view as a success.

This creative power needs clarity and focus to be effective. So, begin by trying to understand what you want to do with this one life, what, at its end, would be a favorable outcome. Next, commit fully to living this one life as if you are walking one path. For if you don’t commit, you will hesitate, you will hold back, you will always wonder if there is a better way, another path. But once committed, act. Step out and start walking.

The problem, of course, is that life has a habit of not unfolding according to your schedule and dictates. Added to that, as you change (which you will) your perception of what constitutes success changes as well. All this makes ongoing success tricky, unless you are prepared to make adjustments all the time, unless you are willing to learn to improve.

Actually, the tricky bit is not your willingness to improve. It is your understanding of what it means to improve. Many of us have been taught that 'learning to improve' simply means getting better at what we are already doing. In an ever-changing world, that is simply not enough. What is required is that you get better at clarifying what *you* mean by life-success and then get better at staying purposeful in terms of *your* clarity.



*You already know ongoing success requires learning-from-doing
So why stubbornly deny that life-success demands experience-from-living?
Do not seek understanding by mindlessly copying another's way
Instead, commit to the path that holds your heart
And walk it as if your life depends on it*

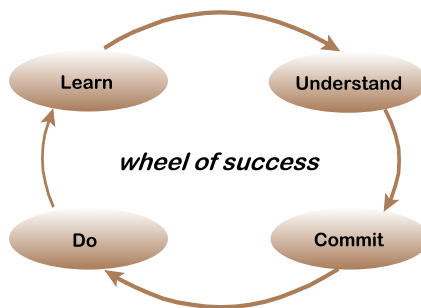


The circular path to success

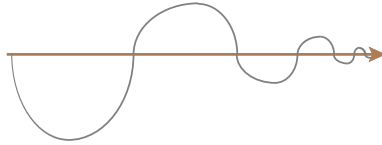
Mystics over the ages have always known that we can ‘create’ our own reality—not only by changing our view or judgment of events. More and more creating your reality comes down to what *you* think, what you *choose* to think. We now know that perception is not objective and seeing is not believing, but is based on projecting what is already in you, on what you already believe.

In other words, (1) what you *understand* to be reality is based on what has meaning for you; (2) what you perceive as meaningful is what you will *commit* to; (3) what you commit to is what you *act* on; (4) what you act on is what you *learn* from; and (5) what you learn influences your understanding. Thus, the way to change your ‘reality’ is simply to *act*, to *do*, for your actions ultimately change your understanding of reality and what has meaning for you. To put it paradoxically, you will live a successful life only if you live it.

Here the wheel of success can be helpful. Before you do anything, it is best that you *understand* what is to be done, why it is to be done and how it is to be done. This understanding must result in your being willing to *commit* to a certain planned and measurable *doing* or action. Lastly, to ensure ongoing improvement, your *doing* must lead to *learning* which in turn must lead to a ‘better’ *understanding*. Note that success results from the interaction between all four elements. However, the presence of all four factors does not necessarily ensure success, but an absence of any one ensures failure.



Learning can lead to a new understanding on a 'higher plane', resulting in radical insights and enlightening revelations. When this happens, the wheel becomes a spiral, because radical shifts tend to trigger new shifts as your awareness expands and your behavior follows. A success spiral reflects that you are now doing what is required by *doing right things*. On the other hand, a 'flat' cycle is when you get better at doing the same thing, at *doing things right*. Ongoing success is then a combination of the two: *doing right things right*. This is what walking your path is all about, namely doing the things that are right for you, and doing them right. And the more you do this, the less you stray from your path.



*Each step you take makes for a journey
Even a step taken blindly is a step on a path
Know then: you find your path by taking steps*



Why your path matters

Each one of us comes here with a built-in purpose, something we agreed to create or make happen. Have you forgotten? Probably, for as children we were not encouraged to share our strange visions and memories, and so our recollection of why we are here quickly fades. Yet, the feeling of something lost lingers and during young adulthood this grows into feelings of emptiness and a longing for meaning.

Recent medical research shows that this is the stage when many of us experience a peak in *déjà vu* moments, feelings of having already experienced the present situation. Little wonder, for this is also the stage many of us must choose between remembering or walking aimlessly. The original meaning of *déjà vu* is ‘already seen’, and indeed many of us have already ‘seen’ our paths, or ‘felt’ that there is a special path for us. Often, these unclear feelings of already having ‘seen’ or ‘felt’ are enough to set us on the quest for our path.

What do I mean by a path? Simply put, a path is a journey that lasts a lifetime. Your path is your unique journey through this one life. You have no option but to walk your path, because from the moment you are born you have a destination: to return to the place from where you came. You cannot change that destination, but you can choose how you get there. It is this freedom to choose your path which gives your path its meaning, its significance, and its majesty. And it is your freedom to make choices which creates what happens along the way, which in turn determines *who* you will be at your final destination. *That is why your path matters.*

There is not one path, but many. There are many different paths you may choose to walk. Some paths can touch you emotionally, but only one path, the one that holds your *heart*, can touch you on a spiritual level. This is the one that will lighten your load as it enlightens you. This is the one that is unique to you, the reason it is called *your* path.

Your path is not the same as the path others are walking; it is not the same as the one your elders walk or your ancestors walked, for if you walk their path, you will not experience your life as your own creation. And creation is what freedom to choose is all about: what you create is what will make you smile, or not, at the end of your journey. On your path, the one you have created with heart, your authentic being and your true purpose are aligned. On your path, you cannot help but create what is *right* for you.



*Do not walk a path by following in another's worn footprints
You are not sheep that you must find a way by walking head-down in a rut
Find your path-with-heart, or learn to love the one you're on
Everything else is nonsense*



Nonsense and the divide

The term ‘nonsense’ describes absurd, ridiculous, foolish or meaningless words, ideas, or conduct. Nonsense is purely subjective: you are likely to see ‘nonsense’ when *you* disapprove of it. (For example, you might disapprove of the word ‘bullshit’, although others commonly use it to indicate nonsense.)

Deciding on what is nonsense and what is not depends on your state of mind, for what matters is not nonsense itself, but how you look at it. No-one can tell with confidence what you regard to be nonsense. One person’s nonsense could be another person’s sense. However, if walking your path is a measure of a successful life, then nonsense is anything that prevents you from walking it.

The nonsense divide is that imaginary ‘—’ which separates ‘non’ and ‘sense’ so that we find sense on the one side and ‘no sense’ on the other. It is the gap between the wheat and the chaff, between life-success and not-quite-success, between your ego self and your Higher Self. You can arrive at the divide due to some crisis in your life. That does happen. But more often, the divide opens out of the mundane, slowly and quietly, as everyday nonsense erodes your equanimity.

Undoubtedly, you have already crossed many nonsense divides. Merely being alive creates situations where an understanding you thought was clear, or a belief you held dear, clashes with your direct experience. Every clash opens a new divide. When it does, you must decide whether your understanding or belief, which carried you to this moment, should override your direct experience.

Deciding is only possible at the divide itself, because until the divide opens, the distinction between belief, understanding and experience is blurred. But as you cross over, beliefs and ideas you once thought rational and sane suddenly seem meaningless. Having served their purpose by nudging you to the edge, they simply fall away.

Whether through a crisis or a buildup of the mundane, sooner or later you will arrive at another nonsense divide. Standing at the edge of the divide, you must decide which side is sense, and which is non-sense. Know that with every crossing you align your ego-self a bit closer with your Higher Self. With every crossing your ego dissipates a bit more, until your Self is free to be all that you can be instead of staying what your ego once was.



*On the one side you are trapped in who you were
On the other you are free to be who you can be
The divide itself is a chance to go either way
It all depends how you look at nonsense*



Steps to cross the divide

These 5 steps will help you across the divide and help you walk your path on the other side: (1) *drop it*, (2) *find it*, (3) *live it*, (4) *be it* and (5) *share it*. You have already taken these steps, many times. Let me explain and you will recognize them:

- (1) Often in looking back, we can see where we were obliged to stop something that no longer served us (*drop it*),
- (2) where we uncovered something more meaningful (*find it*),
- (3) where we tried to behave or act according to this new meaning (*live it*),
- (4) where this new way slowly became habit until it was just the way we did things (*be it*), and
- (5) where along the way we started talking openly about what had happened to us, what we had experienced (*share it*).

Looking back is hindsight. Although hindsight is interesting, it has to do with the past, with what is gone. It is only really useful if it helps us create a better future. Where do you plan to spend the rest of your life? Surely, you plan to spend it in the future, not in the past. An understanding of your history and what happened to you up to this point cannot create the what-should-have-been that you so clearly see in looking back. But a better understanding, and *acting-on*, of how your life unfolds can create a better what-can-be. It is the acting-on part that matters, because it is through living that you gain experience.

Experience is hindsight with enough bite to influence the future. Act according to these 5 steps and you will become experienced in finding and walking your own path, the one that holds your heart:

- 1 *Drop it* - drop what no longer matters, the nonsense of your history
- 2 *Find it* - find what has meaning for you, not for somebody else
- 3 *Live it* - live by pro-actively choosing, not by merely dreaming
- 4 *Be it* - become it fully, unconsciously (don't out-*think* it, just in-*habit* it)
- 5 *Share it* - share what you have learned on your path, don't teach your way

There are two ways you can take each step, depending on which foot you step out on. This matters, for being wrong-footed leads to pitfalls. Yet, it matters more that you step out, for steps only move you when you take them, one after the other.



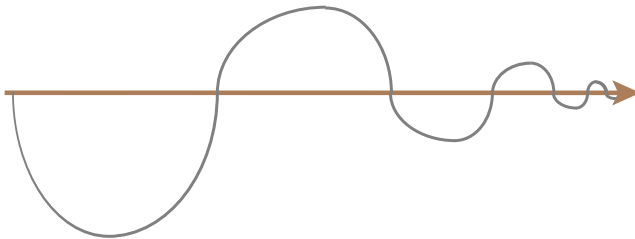
*When walking, never hesitate mid-step, for you will lose your balance
Keep moving or stop completely, with both feet firmly on the ground
But know this: You cannot 'stand' your path, you must walk it*



The 5 Steps

It takes 5 steps
to walk *your* path
to a life that turns out well.

You will take them over and over,
and step faster and faster,
as you get closer and closer
to *your* path.





Take the 1st step: *Drop it*

History's purpose is to get you where you are now, but depending on how you see it, history can hold you where you were. Elephant trainers don't bother to tether their adult elephants to large stakes; they know that small stakes will do just as well. As babies, these elephants were tied to strong stakes from which they could not pull free; as adults they have stopped trying, for they still feel the 'weight' of their baby stakes. It is not the stake that secures the powerful animal, but the power of its memory. The elephant does not realize this, and so remains trapped by nonsense.

You are likely to pull free and step onto your path once you have overcome enough resistance to what stops you doing so. You must be willing to (1) *learn* from what makes you uncomfortable with your life as it is now; you must (2) *understand* how it could be better; you must (3) *commit* to do what it takes to change; and you must have clear, practical steps to (4) *act* on. If not, you are likely to put off making changes; your efforts will be haphazard; you will make false starts that fizzle out; or you will suffer from anxiety, frustration, or burn-out.

Above all, you must weigh your history to know what to put down and what to carry. A diver with a weight-belt struggles to walk on dry land, because the lead of the weight-belt serves no purpose. Undoubtedly, the weight of your history once served a purpose and helped you to reach your current state. Can you now feel where the lead weight has become dead weight? This is trickier than you might realize, as society values you more for what you have achieved than for what you may yet contribute.

In basic psychological terms, you are an accumulation of your stakes and tethers. You carry with you all that you once were: your experiences, education, memories, hurts, joys, hopes, and so on. You also carry perceptions of your role and position: what you think it should be, what you think others expect of you, what you think dependants need from you, and so on. The greater the influence these have on you, the weightier your history, the heavier your ego, and the more difficult it is to see your historic nonsense.

Only once you realize that you have the power to pull out the stakes are you free to choose between sense and non-sense.

Of course, as we learn by doing, the simplest way to unlearn is to stop doing. In other words, the quickest way to pull out the stake might very well be to '*stop doing*' what you keep doing. Yet again, only you would know what to stop, for that is the 1st paradox:



*Everything in your life is nonsense
Everything in your life has meaning
(Your life has as much nonsense/meaning as you give it)*



Take the 2nd step: *Find it*

There are two basic ways to find meaning in life: bottom-up or top-down. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a well known example of a bottom-up approach: you experience a series of needs, from basic to higher order, which you must satisfy one after the other. The highest order need, your need for self-actualization, is defined as the need to 'be all that you can be'.

This need is intrinsically motivated and unique to each one of us, as we must each discover what self-actualization means to us, and then achieve it for ourselves. According to the bottom-up approach, you are 'a physical being striving for a spiritual experience based on the *need-to-do*.' (*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.* This quote has been attributed to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin as well as to G. I. Gurdjieff, and it has popularized by Wayne Dyer and by Stephen Covey. And yet, its true origin remains unclear.)

According to the top-down approach, promoted by existentialists, spirituality and religion are integral parts of our psychic functioning to the extent that we are viewed primarily as spiritual beings. Your spirituality does not develop over time, but is present at birth: you are born spiritual. This means that your life is directed by spiritual forces within your unconscious being.

At the same time, you have free will, which means that you 'will' (drive or search) for meaning because you are conscious of your spirituality. In a sense, you await instructions from your Higher Self because you are conscious of and receptive to your Higher Self – you are a 'spiritual being experiencing a physical existence based on the *want-to-do*'.

The main difference between the two approaches is the *understanding* each invokes. If you see yourself as a physical being striving for meaning, then you understand that life is a struggle. You must satisfy needs before you can embrace meaning; you must be selfish to survive or be lost to someone else's need. However, if you feel that you are already a spiritual being, then you understand your path to be one of remembering your spirituality, not one of striving to find it. The one approach is *striving, bottom-up*; the other is *remembering, top-down*.

To find your own understanding, meditate gently on this question: *Are you a physical being striving for a spiritual experience or are you a spiritual being experiencing a physical existence?* Be authentic, for your answer determines your attitude to the path you are walking and thus the outcome of the life you are creating everyday. And it determines how you resolve the 2nd paradox:



*All paths are the same: they lead nowhere
Only one path has heart for you
(Striving or remembering, either way you will find it)*



Take the 3rd step: *Live it*

Having found your path, you must walk it. This is easier said than done, for until you are used to this new path, you will see it through the memory of a different path. What you see is really a projection of what you already believe, of what is already *in* you. Until you replace your old way of walking with this new path, you will continue to project your old ways. This is why you will live a successful life only if you *live it*. And the way to live it until it becomes habit, until it becomes just the way you live, is to commit constantly to the *outcome* you want. How you commit depends much on whether you see yourself as a physical being or a spiritual being, whether you are striving or remembering.

Physical beings are more concerned with the physical needs and necessities of bodily survival. These must-have things are found outside the physical body, and can be taken and used up by any other body. Being *attached to outcome*, physical beings walk with a fearful sense of urgency as they *fixate on* the desired outcome.

Many of us *fixate on outcome* or *attach to outcome* because we were taught ‘if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again’. Yet, if you don’t succeed, it is often wise to let go and *detach from outcome*. Although detachment implies passive acceptance or fateful resignation, it can be used as a step towards being *open to outcome*. *Open to outcome* hints at a willingness to consider any outcome as a potential opportunity. This is as far as a physical being can go in terms of letting go of control over outcome.

On the other hand, spiritual beings sense that any spiritual void is satisfied by seeking ‘internally’, irrespective of where the spirit finds itself physically. In seeking internally you are actually trying to remember. Trying to recall something is less fearful than trying to secure something, because not remembering is a deficiency, not a complete absence. In trying to remember, we admit that we once knew, and we are confident that we will remember sooner or later. In fact, we *anticipate* remembering.

Being *in open anticipation of outcome*, now there's a thing! It conjures up images of butterflies in the stomach, of excitement at what the universe has to offer next, and shows that you are confident that any outcome can be positive on your path. On this planet you are both body and spirit. To walk your path, your body and spirit must be in harmony. And so you must constantly strive to remember what to make habit even though this creates the 3rd Paradox:



*Live in open anticipation
by fixating on outcome
(Your path will not become habit if you remain detached)*



Take the 4th step: *Be it*

You will walk your path consistently when you remember what to make habit. And once you have made that a habit, through committed practice and repetition, what then? Then that is just the way you live. It just *is*. Of course, most of us experience a gap between practice and habit. It is called Time. The New Physics shows that time only exists from the perspective of the observer. In other words, as observers of time, we make time. And we waste it.

We waste it by not being *in* time. We live in any time zone except the *moment*. How can you stay in this moment? By being free of fear. Fear keeps you remorseful about the past, doubtful about the future, and absent from the here-and-now. Fear lies in *what-if* and *what-was*, not in *what-is*. Fear is never of the present; it is of the past and of the future. But neither the past nor the future exists. It is your fear which holds you in a time that does not exist, stops you being here-and-now, and kills the moment.

It is not death itself we fear; we fear not having any more time. No more time for those we love and what we love to do. In our fear of dying we postpone our living. We fill today with remorse for a yesterday that should have been different and clutter the present with dreams of a better tomorrow. And so we suffocate the life out of the moment. Why? Because we are confused about time.

We express time as being linear although we experience much of it as being cyclical: As the earth turns, day follows night follows light follows dark. This duality of time, its circular nature experienced as being linear, is neatly captured by the ubiquitous clock face: a circular design to reflect a linear experience. Cyclical time pulsates with energy because periods of exertion are followed by periods of rest. But we expect a beginning to lead to an end, not another beginning, and thus we feel linear time to be enervating. This is the source of confusion—a linear, individual life is lived in the circle of Life.

Do not let your confusion about time make you judge the *present* in terms of the *past*, nor make you think that *tomorrow* things will be better. The *future* cannot be an opportunity to allay your guilt by making amends for the past, because the past is *past*. The *future* can only be about what you create next, because that is what the rest of your life is about. Although you walk your path here and *now*, the purpose of your path is to create your *anticipated* outcome. Hence the 4th Paradox:



*Inhabit the present, now
As you create the future moment
(Your path is as long as the time you make)*



Take the 5th step: *Share it*

When your path has become habit, when you are one with it, then an interesting thing happens: you are unconscious of it. It's as if you have forgotten it. Why is this? To a great extent, when you have mastered your path, you don't have to worry about it all the time. When you *in-habit* it, you don't have to *out-think* it any more. But as your awareness fades, you risk forgetting again. Not so long ago you were also unconscious of the path you were on then. Although you were not on *your* path, *you did not know that you did not know*. Then came nonsense after nonsense until you stood at the nonsense divide. Suddenly, *you knew that you did not know*.

This was a critical moment, for in admitting that you did not know, you opened yourself to new ideas, weird concepts and help from unexpected sources. As you learned new things, you understood more, until one day you realized how much you had changed and how much, in changing yourself, you had changed (*created*) your world. It dawned on you that now *you knew that you knew*. Soon this state became just the way-you-are and your path just the way-you-live. Now *you don't know that you know* for in *being it*, you don't need to know that you know.

Walking your path with the subconscious confidence of a master is like riding a bicycle: you have no conscious awareness of your skill in balancing-pedaling-steering-breaking and your conscious mind is free to focus on other things. But try to explain to a kid how to ride a bicycle. Now you have to think very carefully; you must make your unconscious skill conscious again. In trying to explain, you realize that you don't know how much of what you know is relevant or helpful.

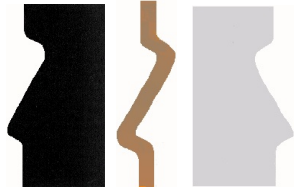
This is the dilemma of a master: you know what has meaning to you, but you don't know how to pass this on to others. Being a master means that you have mastered, even briefly, all the nonsense which kept you from walking your path.

Once you have mastered this you must mentor, for that is the role of a master. This does not entitle you to be the master of others; it merely means that you have mastered *your* path. You can never know with confidence what has value to others and thus what should be taught. The way to mentor is to share your path with whoever wants to walk with you for a while.

As we walk with you, we will notice what you have not yet learned. That is what you will teach us, unknowingly. As we learn that, you will see it in us, and you will remember. Hence the 5th Paradox:



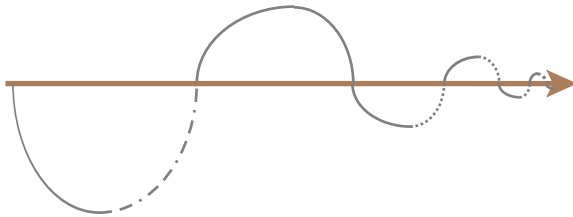
*You share what you don't know you know
While teaching what you have yet to learn
(By mentoring you remember not to forget what is now habit)*



Pitfalls on Your Path

Life is dynamic.
By constantly changing,
it creates many surprises,
each a seductive fork in your path.

Every fork can ease your way or lead to pitfalls.
As always the outcome depends on you,
for you are free to choose
between sense and
nonsense.



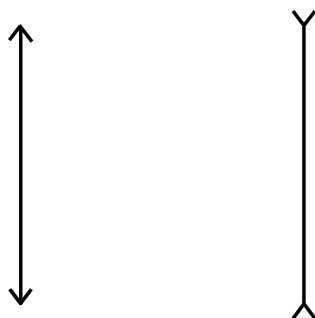


Pitfall #1: Perception is nonsense...

Do not assume that there is complete agreement between the world around you and your perception of it. For that to be, you must add nothing, leave nothing out, distort nothing, and misrepresent nothing in what you perceive. The fact is, we all reconstruct and interpret reality, mainly by relying on past experiences to such an extent that there is no reality without interpretation. In other words, you imagine (*create*) both the sense and the nonsense you see.

We are taught that seeing is believing. This is clearly not correct, because we attribute meaning to what we see. It is more correct to say that we see what we already believe, what is already *in* us. Furthermore, we are mentally lazy and so make perceptual mistakes.

Look quickly at the two lines in the picture below. Which of the two lines is shorter?



Which line is shortest?

Actually, the two lines are exactly the same length, but the addition of a set of arrows pointing in different directions tricks your mind's eye into seeing one line as being longer. (Be very careful of the pointers on your path, for they can make the length of your path appear to be confusing. And the direction of an arrow matters only if you know whether you're coming or going.)

Know that mental mistakes matter. If reality is uncertain, then only you can distinguish between sense and nonsense, and only you can know your path. Finding your path will depend on how you interpret reality, on how you attribute meaning, because what you see out there is based on what is already in you. So you had better be aware of perceptual errors, not because you must make the 'right' objective, rational decision about your path, but because perceptual errors, by their very nature, can help you uncover the heart *you* attribute to any path. Be open to the possibility that mental mistakes happen as a means for your inner self, your intuition, to get your attention.

Your perceptions might be 'wrong', they might be nonsense, but they're *yours*. They are your frame of reference which establishes your point of view. And it is your point of view which determines what you create on your path. The only way to see where you're going (*who you can be*), and how far you've come (*who you were*), is to walk a path with a view.



*Projection makes perception: as you think, so you perceive
Your path is your projection - it is already inside you
Walking merely takes it out of you*



...but woolly thinking makes sense

Having a point of view is essential for finding your way, but being attached to a point of view can stop you in your tracks. Often, woolly thinking can create just the right perception of a point of view to get you going again. In his book *The Dancing Wu Li Masters - An Overview of the New Physics*, Gary Zukav explains that physics in Taiwan is called *Wu Li* (pronounced 'woo lee'), because *Wu Li* means *patterns of organic energy*. In Chinese, Zukav explains, *Wu Li* can also mean *my way*, *nonsense*, *I clutch my ideas*, and *enlightenment*, depending on how the 'wu' is pronounced.

More than a decade after first coming across Zukav's book, I had an unexpected insight: Surely, *my way/I clutch my ideas/nonsense/patterns of organic energy/enlightenment* is the way most of us do things. For example, when I started writing this book, I wanted to do it *my way*. But there were certain ideas that did not flow. I tried to force ideas and concepts, because I was emotionally attached to *my way* and *I clutched my ideas*. Finally, frustrated, I admitted that it was all *nonsense* and pushed it away. Yet, I could not stop mulling over it. I kept seeing different ways to present my ideas as various *patterns* formed in my thoughts. Finally, in a moment of *enlightenment*, it all made sense as a complete whole, a set of books.

Once I experienced this state, all I had to do was to let it flow. And if it didn't flow, to wait until new patterns emerged. Of course, once this process has happened often enough for you to recognize it, it becomes easier not to fall all the way back to *my way*. You become confident that ultimately you will see *patterns* in the *nonsense* and you will quietly wait for *enlightenment*. Which is why, when I get what at first seem to be nonsense ideas, I now give them mind-space to swirl around and time to form patterns.

Nonsense almost always serves a useful purpose. The point is, like all worthwhile things, you have to look for the value in nonsense. (At least you don't have to look for nonsense, because that tends to stand out.) Giving mind-space to the *nonsense* idea that nonsense serves a purpose is the critical shift in consciousness which allows for emptying the mind of history.

Every time you empty your mind to start anew, you will again create the mind of the beginner, a mind that is open and willing to entertain and explore all possibilities, both sense and nonsense.



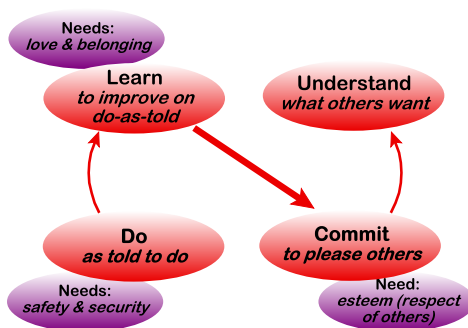
Don't be locked in 'my way' and 'my ideas'
Be open to nonsense patterns of woolly perceptions
And you will alight once more on your path with a view



Pitfall #2: Living another's life is nonsense...

Birth is triggered by the womb becoming uncomfortable (too small) and even toxic (the mother can no longer cope with the baby's waste products). If this did not happen, you would never leave the peaceful darkness, because the small tunnel ends too abruptly in a place with bright lights, loud noise and rough giants waiting to catch you. From the moment of your birth these giants tell you what to do and what not to do. They don't check whether you understand, or whether you are committed. They don't ask what your plans are on this trip to earth, as they know you have no option but to do as you are told. This sets the pattern for your life: People physically and emotionally stronger than you tell you what to do and expect you to get better at it. Your parents, teachers, boss (politely called 'significant others') all seem committed to getting you to learn to do as you are told to do, even though you are not necessarily committed. Most of the time you are simply committed to keeping them happy.

Trying to please significant others has effectively broken the wheel of success: you *do* as you are told because you want to feel safe and secure; you *learn* to get better at it because you realize that we are more often loved and accepted for how we behave (not for who we are), and you *commit* to please as a way of earning respect and being esteemed. You do all this out of fear because you want to protect yourself and your *ego-self*. The problem is that you end up understanding what *they* want from you, but not what *you* want from life.



The broken wheel of success

One of the early lessons we learn as children is that any little step we take in trying to find our own way, whatever the form of experimentation, is likely to make some adult uncomfortable. Yet, you will never find your path if you submit to someone else's wishes or perceptions. Even if you stumble onto your path while trying to please others, you will not walk it for long if you behave according to their expectations.

It is unlikely to be *your* path if others have placed you on it, and it will never be your path unless *you* are committed to walk it.



*No matter how you try, you please no-one by living someone else's life
Instead, your life will become uncomfortable and even toxic
Until you give life to your path*



...but being selfish makes sense

What traps us into living someone else's life, or at least living out their expectations for us? It is fear. Fear in the form of selfishness, fear for the *self*. Of course, we don't recognize this as selfishness, for the simple reason that it is presented as *selflessness*. You willingly sacrifice your 'self' because you care so much for your significant others. How on earth did we become this self-deceiving? From a very young age we are taught by our significant others that selfishness is wrong and that selflessness is an admirable quality. What nonsense! Even as children we realize that society admires people who have accumulated material wealth by selfishly exploiting others and that society condones the meek being exploited by the selfish.

Paradoxically, it is selfishness that will enable you to break free to find your own way. Unless you value yourself, you cannot value others, for lack of self-worth leads to envy. And unless you deem yourself worthy of love, you cannot love another unselfishly, for lack of self-love leads to jealousy. *Love your neighbor as you love yourself* is not mere religious piety; it is sound practical psychology, for you cannot love anybody else unless you already love yourself. This is *enlightened self-interest*, not base, exploitative selfishness. This is because you place your Self first in such a way that others also benefit, or at least are not harmed.

How does enlightened self-interest develop? According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, once you have satisfied your safety and security needs, and as you gain confidence from feelings of love and belonging, you feel safe enough to explore what makes you different and unique. You are now ready to satisfy your need for self-esteem. Self-esteem has two aspects, namely respect from others and self-respect. Respect from others is relationship-dependent, because you earn it by being in some form of relationship with others. Self-respect is also relationship dependent, as much of it stems from understanding yourself in terms of others. This means that you cannot satisfy your need for self-esteem 'apart from' others, but only as 'a part of' others.

However, you will only be free to be yourself, to walk your own path, when you break the shackles of relationships (be 'apart from'). This occurs when your need for self-respect is stronger than the need for the respect of others and when your need for self-actualization is stronger than the need to be loved and accepted. Of course, in terms of enlightened self-interest, these higher-order needs should not negate the respect and love of others; you should still be 'a part of'.



*Be selfish out of fear-for-self and you will feel exploited
Instead, be self-interested out of love-for-Self
And you won't fear being all you can be*



Pitfall #3: Fearing your needs is nonsense...

Fear is another word for need: when we need something we are afraid that we may not get it. Yet, we are born with only two natural fears, namely the fear of falling and the fear of certain noises. All other fears are learned, mainly through our ability to imagine outcomes. Fear is really just pre-judgement. We are judging what has not yet happened. This is why fear is time-based, but never in the 'now'. If we are afraid of something, then it is because we are afraid that it could happen. If we are afraid of someone, then this fear is based on what we imagine they could do to harm us. If we are afraid of something that has already happened, then it is because we are afraid of the future consequences of what has already happened even if we are only afraid of feeling guilty or remorseful. Once something is happening, there is no time to be afraid; there is only time for what is happening.

Tensions invariably develop between what we *want* to do and what we think we *must* do. 'Want to do' comes from love, whereas 'must do' stems from fear. We do not find our path in fear; we find it in what we love. Yet, knowing that we have limited time on earth makes us afraid of not doing what we want to do. And then, in our rush to *do*, to make something of our lives, we forget how important it is to first understand.

It is not by chance that 'understand' is opposite to 'do' on the wheel of success. We invariably start with 'do' because physical survival depends on action, and because from the moment of birth we are told what to *do* and what not to *do*. On the other hand, understanding has to do with purpose, meaning and remembering, which concerns our higher Self and the Soul. But, wrapped in our fear for physical (the body) survival, we think that the Soul can wait.

At the core of our fear lie the mistakes we make in interpreting our 'must do' and our 'want to do'. We think that what we must do is about our needs, and that what we want to do is about self-actualization. We forget that Maslow identified self-actualization as a need. This should warn us that, ultimately, we will look for our own path because we *must* out of a deep need, not because we *want* to out of feeling that it could be 'nice to have'.

Once we realize that we *must* each find our path, we run the risk of starting off on the wrong foot by fearing that we will not find it, and so we grow to hate *having to* find the path, which makes us fearful. And in hating it, we will continue to put off finding the path.



*The opposite of love is fear, for all hate is born out of fear
Do not struggle onto a path out of fear, nor out of hate
You will find your path in the need to express love
For you are Love, but have learned to fear*



...but flowing with needs makes sense

How we perceive our needs can help us to decide between sense and nonsense. If we fear our needs, we are likely to be trapped by them; if we flow with them, they can take us closer to our path. The reason is that our unsatisfied needs create energies which drive us to behave or react in certain ways. When our need for safety and security is not met, we are likely to feel dependent on significant others to the extent that when they tell us to *do as we are told*, we don't feel empowered to stand up to them. We are likely to feel that they are taking advantage of us and we might even find ways to retaliate (by seeming to be more helpless than we really are or by using other forms of passive-aggressive behavior.) Hence, the dominant driving energy on the *doing* level of the wheel of success is *mutual exploitation*.

When we feel exploited, we simply want to get done what we are told to do, without caring how well we do it. But sooner or later we find that our *current* 'doing' is being compared with our *previous* 'doing': we are unexpectedly competing against ourselves. This is a good way of learning to improve, because when we do things right, we feel loved and accepted, and good about ourselves. However, a destructive form of competition soon takes over. Significant others tell us that 'you can do better than that, because so-and-so already does'. Thus, *competition* is the dominant driving energy which paradoxically satisfies our need for love and belonging.

On the other hand, *co-operation* satisfies esteem needs. As explained previously, we satisfy our need for self-esteem as 'a part of', in a relationship. To be in a relationship is to be willing to co-operate; if we are not willing, then by implication we still want to compete and exploit. However, when we co-operate, we risk performing at the level of the lowest contributor. This happens because, in a relationship, we try not to hurt other's feelings. This sub-optimization leaves us 'incomplete' and unable to become all that we can be. And so our need to self-actualize drives us to fill our 'gaps' with things which *complete* and *complement* us.

As the scarcity of people like Mandela, Gandhi and Mother Theresa shows, not many of us can begin our journey at the level of self-actualization. Most of us need to work through our hierarchy of needs. How we do this matters, for there is no reason to stay trapped at any level. No-one traps us; we trap ourselves. It is our choice whether we fill our gaps by exploiting (and being exploited), by competing, by co-operating or by complementing.



*Fear for self keeps you exploited, exploiting and competing
Love of self opens you to co-operate and to complement
That which completes you, complements others*



Pitfall #4: Losing yourself is nonsense...

To complete a jigsaw puzzle you must fit all the individual pieces together. Each piece on its own does not make much sense, but when pieced together correctly, the no-sense disappears. It makes no difference to the final picture if you attached more importance to any piece during the building process. However, you know from experience that one piece can make the puzzle easier, because the right piece anchors the picture and serves as a frame of reference. In the puzzle of your life, you are that one special piece. Without you to anchor it, your picture will have no reference point and thus no meaning. And without you, your picture cannot be completed. This is why enlightened self-interest matters.

Do not become self absorbed in how important your piece is. As with your special puzzle piece, once you have *complemented* the pieces around you, you fade into the bigger picture. To be whole and *complete*, the puzzle of Life needs you to be 'a part of'. Remove yourself, make yourself 'apart from' and the hole is glaringly obvious in the whole. In the picture of your life, you only stand out by being absent, by being 'apart from'. This does not mean that you should become selfless. For you cannot make yourself whole and complete by making yourself *less*. The more you try to become oblivious to your 'self', by putting others first to the detriment of your 'self', the less likely you are to uncover your *authentic* self, the piece that matters in the picture of your life.

Enlightened self-interest is based on 'a part of' thinking. This means it can do no harm because you do not value yourself at the expense of another. It also means you value your self enough for your 'self' to be your point of reference and you listen to your Self before you listen to others. Selfishness is based on fear whereas enlightened self-interest is based on love. It is love which takes you beyond yourself, and which will make you transcend yourself. Self-transcendence takes you 'out of yourself' to a state where you will 'see' the inter-connectedness of all things and you will want to help others because you are inter-connected.

Do not confuse enlightened self-interest with selflessness. Selflessness is really an extreme form of selfishness. Selflessness makes you 'lose' (hide) your 'self' to another's will and makes you serve others out of fear for the 'self'. Either way, the key is not to choose a path because it makes someone else happy.

To sacrifice yourself and your Self to please others leads, sooner or later, to unhappiness for many.



*Be present and interconnected and your picture will be complete
Be absent or disconnected, and the hole is obvious to all
Transcend yourself to know how essential you are*



...but transcending reason makes sense

There are two ways of looking at a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. You can see it as an individual piece with its own shape and color, or you can see it as part of the complete picture, where it takes on an entirely different meaning. So it is with your 'self' and your Self. This duality is actually supported, if not encouraged, by your brain. The two hemispheres of the brain are responsible for different modes of perceiving and reasoning. Words commonly used to describe left brain thinking are *logical, sequential, rational, analytical, objective, parts*. Right brain thinking is described in terms of *random, intuitive, holistic, subjective, wholes*. (Note: recent research has shown that the brain is not nearly as dichotomous as once believed.)

For centuries the mechanistic Cartesian way of acquiring knowledge was left brain, cold logic and objective reasoning based on the idea of the 'objective observer'. The New Physics has changed all that by showing that there is no such thing as an objective observer. (In 1923 Arthur Compton showed that light could have wave-like properties, particle-like properties, or even both, *depending on the type of experiment performed*. In other words, the properties of light are actually properties of our *interaction* with light.) The Old Physics gave us '*laws*', such as Newton's '*laws*' of motion, of gravity and of thermodynamics. According to Einstein, the Old Physics was not wrong, but merely incomplete, which is probably why the New Physics has replaced '*laws*' with '*theories*' (the *theory* of relativity). In other words, what went before is not 'wrong'; we are now merely better equipped to take things further, and a new generation may one day come along to 'complete' our understanding.

Trying to make sense of who you are by seeing yourself as an 'objective observer' is not wrong. It is merely incomplete. The New Physics shows us that not only are we influenced by what we observe, but that our mere observing also influences the universe. This poses the question: are you looking at a universe that already exists or do you create your universe as you look at it? All the pieces of a toy puzzle already exist, and their positions are predetermined before you start working on the solution. Everything in your universe already exists, and your role is predetermined before you start living your part in it. The difference between you and a puzzle piece is that the puzzle piece cannot change the final picture. You can.

The puzzle piece does not have free will, but you do. By changing yourself, you change the picture. You are designing and completing the puzzle merely by living it. That is free-will creation, but you must go beyond reason to 'see' it as it is.



*The laws of Old Physics ruled that 'everything is matter'
New Physics theorizes that 'everything matters'
Transcend reason to know that it just 'is'*



Pitfall #5: *My way* is nonsense...

Many of us get stuck on living according to the concepts of *my way* and *I clutch my ideas*. We ‘see’ a world which demands that we perfect a few potent skills which will help us survive by exploiting or competing against others. So we stay trapped in the left-brain mind-set that views success as the selfish ownership of objects (*apart from*), rather than the nurturing of relationships (*a part of*). Even as the repetitive pushing-and-prodding, fighting-and-struggling take their toll, we shrug and believe that this is perfectly normal and *reasonable*, for that’s just the way it is.

Why? From the start of our lives, our needs clash with the expectations of significant others. As babies we want food when we are hungry, not when it is convenient; as toddlers we get annoyed when others tell us what to do and how to do it; as youngsters we rebel by doing things *our way*. As we grow older, *my way* becomes our way of claiming some independence, of building self-esteem, and even of defining ourselves. Soon, *my way* becomes the way we expect everybody else to behave. Even as we rebel against *doing as we are told*, we tell others what to do.

Our need for safety and security results in us being exploited by significant others into *doing as we are told*. What happens once you have become the significant other? We casually fall into the same trap and perpetuate the cycle of submission and exploitation. We think it natural to expect anyone weaker or ‘lesser’ than we are to do things *our way*. Of course, we believe we are not exploiting others; we are merely trying to help. We may even soften our ‘telling’ by calling it ‘teaching’, believing it to be right for those who know better to teach those who don’t know. Indeed, this applies to teaching ‘facts’, but not to mastering a path.

We have simply mastered *our* paths, and what we have mastered has become habit. How then will we know what is of value to others and what should be taught? We should not perpetuate the cycle by teaching our version of *my way*. We know first-hand that *my way* is the root of too many problems. Too many people shout “do it my way!” resulting in many people living stillborn lives.

Most of us drag our accumulated history, that which explains who we were, into our future. This is how past success creates future failure, for we continue as we were *then* instead of becoming who we can be *next*. The lesson seems obvious: don't be so attached to *my way*, because too much of *our way* can cause us to fail.



*A mind filled with 'my way' cannot teach
It can only instruct without learning
And be trapped by what it knows*



...but *my way* makes sense

When his end was near, what did Frank Sinatra sing about? At the end of your time, will you be happy to sing that you did it your mother's way? Or your boss's way? Or your lover's way? Probably not, for most of us want to think we did it *my way*. After all, this is what the need for self-actualization is all about: the desire to become all *you* are capable of becoming. Indeed, at the end of your time you will likely be thinking of what you became because, unlike other needs, this need cannot really be satisfied. It won't go away. Even when you are actively striving to become what you can be, you will continue to experience the need to self-actualize. In fact, this need can even become stronger as you work at it.

You become all that you can be by *doing the right thing right for yourself*. Until you find *your* right thing, others will continue to tell you what right thing you should do. The chances are you will do what they say, even knowing deep down inside that it is not the right thing for *you* to be doing. As already discussed, you tend to *do as you are told* out of fear (the need for safety and security). You also tend to *learn to do it right* out of fear (the need for love and belonging). In both cases, you are not concerned about whether what you are doing is the right thing to be doing in the first place.

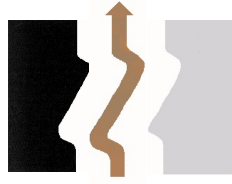
When your higher-order needs kick in (self-esteem and self-actualization), then an interesting change takes place: you are more interested in the 'rightness' of what you are doing. Here the concept of *right* does not imply the opposite of wrong. Rather, it implies a state of being which is appropriate for you because your authentic being and your true purpose are aligned. Once you know what your right thing is, then you have found *your* path, the one where your heart has led you. By never straying from your path-with-heart, you reach a state of *being right*, for being on your path-with-heart is the equivalent of *being right for you*, consistently.

However, walking your path is a constant balancing act. In an ever-changing world of interconnectedness, you should remain *open to outcome*. Yet, to create the one life that is right for you means you must *fixate on outcome* by living it *my way*. The trick is not to do things *my way* by *clutching my ideas* out of the fear of not satisfying your lower-order needs (this is the ego-self at its divisive worst).

Instead, be open to your Higher Self to find ‘rightness’ in *patterns of enlightenment*. Then your ego-self will align with your Higher Self and *my way* will simply be enlightened self-interest.



*If you walk the path 'my way' it will resist you
If you don't walk 'my way', the path will not be yours
To claim your path without a struggle, walk 'my way' lightly*



Crossing Over

You will hesitate,
standing at the edge of the divide.
Your fear of falling and the tug of history
will hold you back.

Like all of us, you were born with the fear of falling.
Yet, time and again you stand up after every fall.
So don't take gravity too seriously.

And don't take your history too seriously.
Put down your history and lighten-up.
Or else *gravitas* will weigh on you.

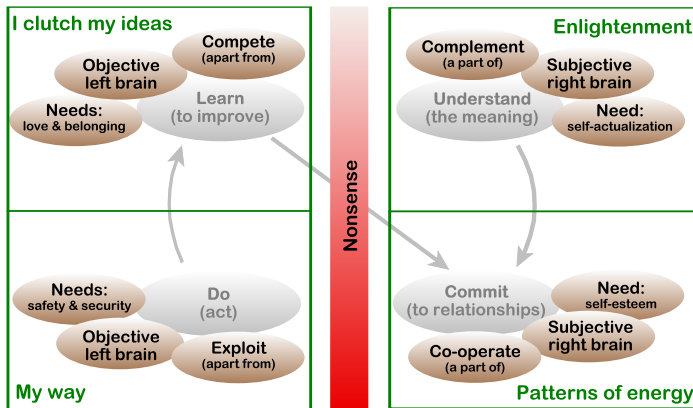
Above all, don't encourage gravity and *gravitas*.
Fear of gravity makes you heavy.
Gravitas makes you serious.

Only the light of heart
can walk the path
with heart
and
skip across
the nonsense divide.



On the sides of the divide

What exactly is the nonsense divide? It is that mind-spirit space which separates ‘*any* thing’ from the ‘*right* thing’: the mental gap between doing something and doing the right thing, and the spiritual disconnect between merely being alive and living with meaning.



The sides of the nonsense divide

- (1) On the one side, you tend to *do* and you *learn* to get better at doing so, mainly because you are motivated by extrinsic rewards. These rewards (such as safety, security, acceptance, belonging) are best satisfied by being loved by others. On the other side, you will be motivated more by intrinsic rewards (self-esteem and self-actualization), even though these often put the same love to the test. Even so, you will *commit* to relationships because esteem is relationship-dependent and because relationships in general help you to *understand* what has meaning for you.
- (2) On the left side, *left-brain* rationalization tends to dominate because the outcome and results of doing and learning are mostly objective and in stark either/or terms. On the right side, *right-brain* intuitiveness dominates because relationships and meaning are subjective and occur in ‘gray’ and ‘maybe’ terms.

- (3) On one side, you experience the effects of *exploitation* and *competition* as you practice them. Although these are often excused as survival strategies, both destroy relationships because they encourage *apart from* thinking aimed at getting the better of others. On the other side, you are likely to *co-operate* and *complement* others based on a *part of* thinking that comes with enlightened self-interest.
- (4) One side is more about *me*, because *my way* and *I clutch my ideas* have to do with ownership and holding on to what is mine. The other side is more about *us*, as you open to the *patterns* in relationships and as *enlightenment* takes you out of and beyond your *self*.



*As we need both halves to make a whole
So we need both sides of the divide
To see nonsense as it is*

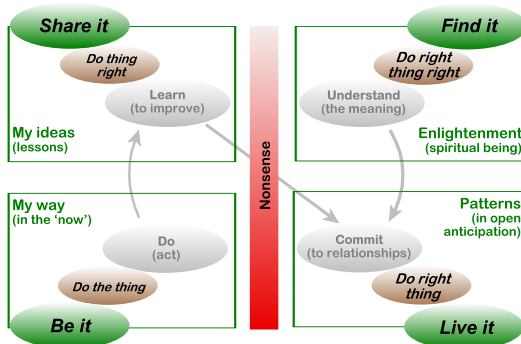


The crossing point

It is a small step from doing something to getting better at doing it, as both focus on *doing*. However, it is a big leap to deciding (choosing) what the right thing is to be doing in the first place.

This then is the crossing point from nonsense to sense—where you shift from *learning to do the thing right* to *committing to doing the right thing*. The leap is big because the wheel of success is broken. There is no easy way to uncover this *right* thing to do as long as you do as you are *told*, learn to get better at *that*, commit to what *others* want and understand what *they* mean.

When *learning* leads directly to a better *understanding* of *right*, as shown on the unbroken wheel, then the gap is much smaller. To cross over more easily, you must repair the wheel by beginning with *understanding*, not with *doing as you are told*:



The crossing point

- (1) *Understand to find it*: Only one path has meaning for you; only on *your* path will you project a spiritual being. Hence, you will find your path once you *understand* what has meaning for you, what the *right-thing-to-do-right* is for you.

- (2) *Commit to live it:* On your path you will commit to doing what is *right* for *you*, but as a spiritual being you know that this right thing cannot be at the expense of relationships. This is why you will live your path once it becomes habit to commit to *doing the right thing* as a *part of* and not as *apart from* as your ego-self would have it.
- (3) *Do to become it:* In the moment of *doing*, time expands to infinity with no future and contracts to nothing with no past. This is why you will simply become one with your path when you are immersed in *doing it*.
- (4) *Learn to share it:* You teach best what you have yet to learn and share what you don't know you know. Hence, you will share what has meaning to others, consciously or unconsciously, when you are striving to *do it right*.



*But where does drop it lie?
Between share it/find it,
if you have learned that it no longer serves your understanding
And between live it/ be it,
if it stops you from doing what you feel committed to do
For the one is 'history' and the other is 'fear'*

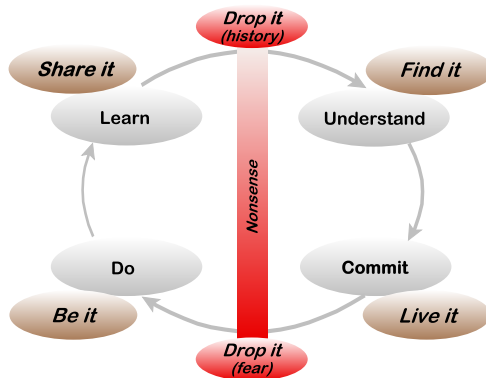


Fixing the wheel to cross over

You might be a little confused when you realize that the 5 steps do not make a linear sequence, but are a circular cycle. Where to begin? You begin where your memory finds you. The beauty of a circular path is that you've been there before. Well, sort of, as some things changed while you were away.

For one thing, fear changes to history when you are busy elsewhere. Without your attention and energy to feed it, fear withers and fades. And when you come around again, you won't recognize your once-was-fear. But this creates a peril on your path: Every *fear* you have ever had, but not discarded, is waiting as *history* in your memory to trip you up when you come by again, unless you drop this nonsense once and for all.

Where does this nonsense await you? It awaits as history between *share it* and *find it*. You must learn from history what part of history helps your understanding and what does not. Only then will you know what of *it* to *drop*. (Or is it fear which stops you embracing a new understanding as yet too foreign for comfort? Often it is discomfort that moves us. So, welcome your nervous discomfort, the butterflies-in-the-stomach, which comes with being *in open anticipation* of an outcome as yet unknown on this turn of the wheel.)



Fixing the wheel of success

Between *live it* and *be it* nonsense awaits as *fear*. Is it not your fear which stops you *doing*? Even when you think you are committed, you may not be willing to act. Know that in the moment of doing there will be no time for fear. And when you don't acknowledge your fear by giving it the *time* of day, it cannot survive. It needs your *time* to make it real. Your willingness to act shows *fear* that it is unreal and, being unreal, it fades away.

As the wheel turns, you will reach a new divide to cross over. And then it will happen again, many more times. Every time *you* will be the only one who can distinguish between nonsense-*history* and nonsense-*fear*. In fact, only you can decide whether you really need to know which is which before you *drop it*.



Which drop it is 'drop-history' and which is 'drop-fear'?
It really doesn't matter for 'it' is simply
Nonsense wearing a different cloak



Stepping across

With the turning of the wheel we are back where we started: *What stops most of us from living a more successful life is nonsense.* And as you try to make sense of your life (again) you forget that it does not matter whether you understand your life. What matters is that you live it. Specifically, it matters that you *choose* to live it. Your freedom to choose, and your ability to make choices, enables you to create the life that you live.

You are here to *do*, to *act*, to be a *creator* in your own right. Even though you are free to choose, you are not free to ‘not-create’. Every thought you have in making choices, even a thought to ‘not-create’, is an act of creation. *You can never not create.* Every time you think about your life you are creating your life. Even *nonsense* thoughts create, because every time you encounter nonsense, you must choose to see ‘sense’ or ‘non-sense’. *You* are the creator of nonsense.

Creating your life comes down to what *you* think and what you *choose* to think. Perception is not objective and seeing is not believing. Perception is projecting what you already believe. What you (1) *understand* is based on what has meaning for you; what you perceive as meaningful is what you will (2) *commit* to; what you commit to is what you (3) *act* on; what you act on is what you (4) *learn* from; and what you learn influences your (5) *understanding*. Clearly, the way to change your life is just to get on with it, for your actions will ultimately change your understanding. In other words, you will live a successful life only if you *live* it.

In the end, you will live the life you believe, because what is in you is what you create out there. Until then, you can pro-actively change what is in you, every day. To make this easier, use the 5 steps as follows: read one of the steps; think about it and let it go. Read it again and repeat this until you feel you have uncovered the real meaning *you* can give it. Then choose this meaning and read the next step.

Choose to **drop** your history - *who you were is nonsense*

Choose to **find** your path top-down - *any other path is nonsense*

Choose to **live** in open anticipation - *apart-from is nonsense*

Choose to **drop** your fear of living - *fear of now is nonsense*

Choose to **be** present - *past and future is nonsense*

Choose to **share** your path - *'your way' is teaching nonsense*

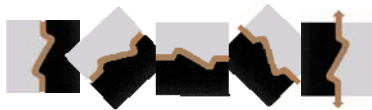


You are free to choose, but not free to not-create

Your every choice is an act of creation

Yet, the only creation that matters

Is the love of life you freely choose



Now keep on walking, lightly

Should you bother having your *own* path? Is the unknown of going your own way really worthwhile? After all, many people prefer the devil they know.... That is their choice. What is yours? The fact is you are already on a path of your choosing. The mere fact that you have free will and freedom to choose makes this so. But as the wheel turns, the question returns: is this *your* path, the one that will make you feel that your life turned out rather well?

Now we must ask the obvious question, 'If it is so necessary for you to walk your path, why is it that you don't know what it is in the first place?' If you did know, you would take it for granted, you would be an automaton and you would not *live* your life. If you did not *live* your life, you would not experience it as a creative force. Instead of creating according to the *a-part-of* theories of Quantum Physics, you will be observing according to the *apart-from* laws of Newtonian Physics. And without these *experiences* of creation, your life could not be judged 'successful' in terms of the interconnectedness of all things.

At some stage, your individual experiences must be integrated with the sum of all experiences, for that is the nature of Oneness. Most often this happens while you are in a deep sleep and 'out of your body', or at least out of touch with your ego. It can also happen when you are awake and aware. This is the moment of enlightenment.

The purpose of enlightenment is for you to consciously experience the moment your creation-experiences are 'lifted' from you and shared with all, *including with you!* Depending on your chosen path, this awake-awareness of being enlightened can happen many times during your time here on earth, or once only, at the moment of your passing.

Enlightenment, like experience, comes with age. Aging is a guaranteed by-product of life—neither experience nor enlightenment are. Aging happens, experience is earned, and enlightenment is sparked. Although you cannot directly choose to be enlightened, enlightenment is ultimately sparked by the ramifications of choice. And when you realize that the only choice that matters is the one that puts you on *your* path, then you are *enlightened*. Know that you don't make this choice once. You must make this choice every day, many times a day, to stay on your path. This is why enlightenment lasts but a moment at a time.



*Are you ever too old to step onto your path? Is it ever too late?
No, for it is the moment of choosing to 'step' that enlightens
But every moment you must choose again and anew
For you are enlightened only in the now
In the moment of choosing*



The half-way place
between the busy-ness of worldly affairs
and the quiet certainty of your path-with-heart
might seem like a vast chasm.

Don't be afraid.

Although your nonsense is unique,
and no-one has experienced it quite like you,
many have crossed over.

And although you might feel alone
at the edge of your divide,
many are already
on the other side
waiting to help
you.

In this way,
crossing
over is
indeed
a little
like
dying.

Or like
being
born.

Again.

Welcome
to our side



Welcome to our side

**Personal Stories
on crossing the nonsense divide**

No doubt, you have crossed many nonsense divides. Having read this far, I now ask you to please take Step 5 and become a mentor to us all. Share your story on crossing your nonsense divide, with family and friends.

(Or share it with the Chief Nonsense Officer. He would love to compare the size of your nonsense to his: james@nonsenseatwork.com)

In sharing, you will remember not to forget (again):

*Of course, in sharing your lessons
they will come back to you
much improved*

Oh, you need examples to see how to write your own crossing story?

Well then, turn the page



Christmas dinner with Perry Mason

On Christmas Day, 1962, I was spending my first Christmas outside the United States at Wakkanai, Japan. I entered the dining hall and began to eat Christmas dinner all alone. The dining hall was completely empty except for the cooks and staff.

I was feeling a little sorry for myself when a civilian walked in and asked if he could join me. It was Raymond William Stacey Burr.

At that time he was about half way through his hit TV series, Perry Mason, which won him two Emmy awards. What started as my worst Christmas dinner quickly became my most memorable. The great actor was familiar with my hometown. He had fished many times in the Arkansas Ozarks.

Raymond Burr could have spent Christmas anywhere he pleased. He unselfishly chose to spend it on the northern tip of Japan with me. He was a real Hollywood star who dated Natalie Wood and starred in movies, TV and radio. He was also a generous man. He donated his salary from the Perry Mason Movies to charity. He once sponsored 27 foster children through the Christian Children's Fund. He would take the children with the greatest medical needs. This is what I mean by noblesse oblige.

He was a great man and helped shape my life. When I commanded a three billion dollar multinational provisional wing, I never forgot to give back something.

Gene McVay
Author of *Top Gun Management*
[Find the book on Amazon](#)



Why can't I be the Lone Ranger?

It was the summer of '49. A hot day, too hot to play ball. The front stoop of our first floor apartment overlooking B Street was a good place for a twelve-year-old to idle away the heat. A cool place, even though nothing exciting was going on.

Suddenly, with horns a-tooting, several cars came cruising down the street. As they came closer, I recognized the Lone Ranger in one convertible. He was riding to the National Guard Armory for the evening show. At last, some excitement on a boringly hot day in the 'hood.

More exciting to my twelve-year-old mentality were the two very attractive ladies on either side of him. Nothing lonely about the Lone Ranger, it seemed to me. I had always been impressed with the Lone Ranger, with Tonto by his side. But this Lone Ranger with two beautiful ladies instead of Tonto was far more impressive. And it set me thinking . . .

What would it be like to hold the stature of the Lone Ranger, I wondered? Why was I the one sitting on the stoop, watching, while he was enjoying the good life? What would it take for me to be the Lone Ranger? What must I do? Or was it simply the luck of the draw?

At that young age, it seemed that luck played a huge part. I remember thinking that success was but the luck of the draw and that I might as well resign myself to my status quo – unlucky me sitting on my stoop watching some other lucky bastard rode in a convertible with two, not one, but two beautiful women.

But the image of the Lone Ranger and his two side-kicks would not fade. I wanted that. At least, I wanted more than just the stoop on “B” street. I wanted to be lucky, even if I had to create some luck. (Maybe I could commit to learn how to draw faster so that I did not have to rely on the luck of the draw.)

And that’s how it happened for me. Over the years, I came to recognize that in order to be successful, luck was only a minor element. One needed to get into a position to have luck. I needed to unblock whatever stopped me creating my own luck.

Looking back, I think that the day the Lone Ranger tooted past was the day I left B Street in my mind. I’ve been quite lucky ever since.

Dr Wally
(Dr Wallace R. Johnston)



One senseless murder too many

It was 29 September 2000. A Friday. How do I remember the date so clearly? I was driving the hour-long drive to Cape Town to meet a close friend for lunch. It was his birthday.

The mountain loomed in the distance. I mused about my forthcoming meeting with our bank manager and decided to call a friend who could offer advice about the meeting (how to wangle a lower mortgage rate!). The innocuous call from my cell phone, during a boring drive, would precipitate a series of events that would change my life, and those of my family, forever.

I marched into my husband's office. The mid-morning sun had not yet penetrated the coolness of the room. "We're leaving!" I said. My husband, accustomed to my histrionics and general A-type behavior, looked up mildly and said, "Really! Where? Are we going away for the weekend again?"

"No, we are leaving this godforsaken, #&*!#x@ country!", I said. "Oh, really, what on earth has happened now?"

I repeated the awful contents of my phone conversation (my friend's nanny had been brutally murdered, shot at point blank range in her own home, during that same week) and repeated that I had made my decision. After the 1994 change of government, I had spent years trying to persuade my friends not to leave - stay and build the country, be a part of the future, the crime rate will drop, don't desert South Africa. My husband knew that my decision indicated a great deal more than simply 'leaving' - I was giving up.

He also knows me well enough to know that sometimes it's best to leave well enough alone and allow me to sleep with my decisions for a few days. Many of them dissipate like remnants of a bad dream. He had time, he could wait - he wasn't ready to get onto an airplane and leave that afternoon.

His parting words as I left his office were "And how do you intend to arrange for us to leave the country?" "Don't worry. I will sort it out. We are leaving!" was my response.

I spent the next 18 months researching every possible opportunity, country, continent, researching ancestral links in various countries all over the globe - we considered Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia and even Argentina - or should I say that I actually considered and then bounced ideas off James. At the same time, friends and family were querying me, "Are you really serious? Haven't you changed your mind yet? Do you know what you are giving up? Do you know what it is going to do to your family?" I weathered it all! It took a lot of time and research, but finally the opportunity that opened up was in the USA.

And here we are, nearly seven years later. It's been the hardest thing I have ever done. Everything else pales by comparison. I have learned that pride and arrogance doesn't count, but self-reliance and confidence (act it, even if you don't feel it) go a very long way. I know that nothing that happens will ever seem that hard to me again.

During the initial years of hardship (emotional and financial), I likened our situation to those war-torn people who left Europe after WWII. They had to settle in a new land, often with large families and no belongings. I read their stories and I decided that if they could do it, then so could we. We were in a far better situation in many ways. America had opened her doors to us and we had to seize the opportunity. We had crossed our Atlantic Ocean.

Bronwyn McIntosh
Extract from *Torn In The New SA*
[Available on Amazon](#)
[Read more here](#)



Same path, different expectations

I once walked in fading light along a river trail somewhere in the USA. In the gathering gloom I pushed passed bushes, ducked under branches, and broke free of clinging cobwebs.

(How does this description make you feel, amused or apprehensive? Yes, it depends on your past experiences, on your history.)

At one stage during the walk I turned to my daughter and asked, ‘What if elephants suddenly come charging through?’ Even though she was born in Africa, she rolled her eyes.

Why did I think elephants in the USA? Because I had once stumbled onto a herd of elephants in the African bush. On the same day I came perilously close to a rhino and her calf, was mock-charged by a herd of buffalo and charged by an angry lioness. It was not a good day, from a fear perspective.

However, from a career perspective, it was a fantastic day. A day to remember. A day to honor, because it changed me. Years later I understood the Day of the Charging Lioness to have been what I now call a *nonsense moment*. It was the day the idea for Nonsense At Work was planted in my mind, although I did not know it then.

Years later, after I had crossed the Atlantic Ocean and was struggling to build a new life in a strange land, I realized that trying to fit in by being not-me was bound to fail (because people tend to pick up on unauthentic nonsense). I had to use my obviously-not-from-here to stand out in a constructive way. I had to use my Africa-experience to build my America-expertise. But how?

One day, within the first year of my arrival in the USA, I casually told

an American that I had once been charged by a lioness in Africa. His reaction surprised me into recognizing that the lioness had done me a favor (apart from not catching me, of course). She had given me a way of being different enough to be heard. All I had to do was not talk nonsense.

I decided to speak the (my) truth. I used the lioness and the elephants to explain how fear and history keep us stuck or help us to change for the better. And I used the dung beetle to explain the difference between sense and nonsense. (That's right. It all depends on how you look at it.)

Even though I think nonsense and sense every day, and even though I have crossed many nonsense divides, my history means that will always imagine lions and elephants where none are to be expected. And I will frequently imagine very different outcomes from the endings my daughter expects, even though we often walk the same path.

The Chief Nonsense Officer



Thank you for your thoughts

Thoughts are creations set free by thinking. Once you have had a thought it is 'out there' beyond your control. That is a simple consequence of the interconnectedness of all things. (A simple example of this is what the psychotherapist Carl Jung called synchronicity: meaningful coincidences that cannot be explained through normal causality. An example of that is when you think of someone and they suddenly call you. And yet, we still believe that we think in a vacuum.)

This is why you cannot own ideas, for you do not know where they came from nor where they are going. Nor should you lock up your ideas, because the more you share ideas, the more they come back to you, much improved. Like love, some things are simply not diminished when given away.

Sharing this book with you is my way of sending ideas 'out there' in the hope that they will come back to me, much improved. Also, it is my way of making sure that I don't forget (again) what I have remembered and what I have learned on my path. And so I thank you for writing this stuff by helping me to remember what to write, and I thank you for what I will get back from you having written it.

Does this sound like nonsense? Let us make some sense of it. All the ideas in this book came to me from all of you out there, past and present. As we are all interconnected, I cannot say with certainty, nor with completeness, who told me what which lead to this thought nor which book triggered that memory in me.



Nevertheless, I do wish to thank those people whose energy directly helped to create this book, even if they were unaware of it at the time. In order of appearance:

Nicki, for bravely using her role as first-wife to push me towards my path

Ray and Julie Hattingh for lighting the first candle and fanning the flame

Bronwyn, my muse again, for being sent to help me walk my path

Suzanna for smiling at death's door

Mary Simons for helping me to connect with my guides and my Self

Joe Wolfson for holding up the 'share it' mirror, at first unknowingly

Jan van Zyl for getting me to the land of my 'writing' guides and for other things

Lynn Spitzer for not hesitating to shout 'nonsense' when I lost the plot

Elizabeth Roark for pushing me to present my ideas in public

The Real Jim Wilson for prodding and asking nonsense questions

Julie Hattingh for editing with an enlightened hand

All the others who played their part on cue (their names are in the small-print of my life)

And you, the reader, who in reading is co-creating this book

May you all walk with heart



The secret is not:

*Pick up your load
And follow the road.*

But rather:

*Put down your pack
And go find the track.*

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