



HOW TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

INTRODUCTION

Still not sure what you want to “be” when you grow up?

Guess what? That’s OK.

We live in a culture that places so much pressure on people, of all ages, to figure it out... now, now, now!

But it’s perfectly fine to be open and curious about your career.

You’re allowed to try things out, take chances, ask questions, and “not know” everything.

The purpose of this workbook isn’t to help you find “all the answers,” instantly — but rather, to help you get just a little bit clearer about the kind of career that will make you truly happy.

Step into these exercises with an open mind + heart. And remember:

A little bit of clarity is better than none at all!

Every step = progress.



WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?

“The most important thing is to enjoy your life. To be happy. It’s all that matters.” — Audrey Hepburn

My philosophy is that work should make you happy.

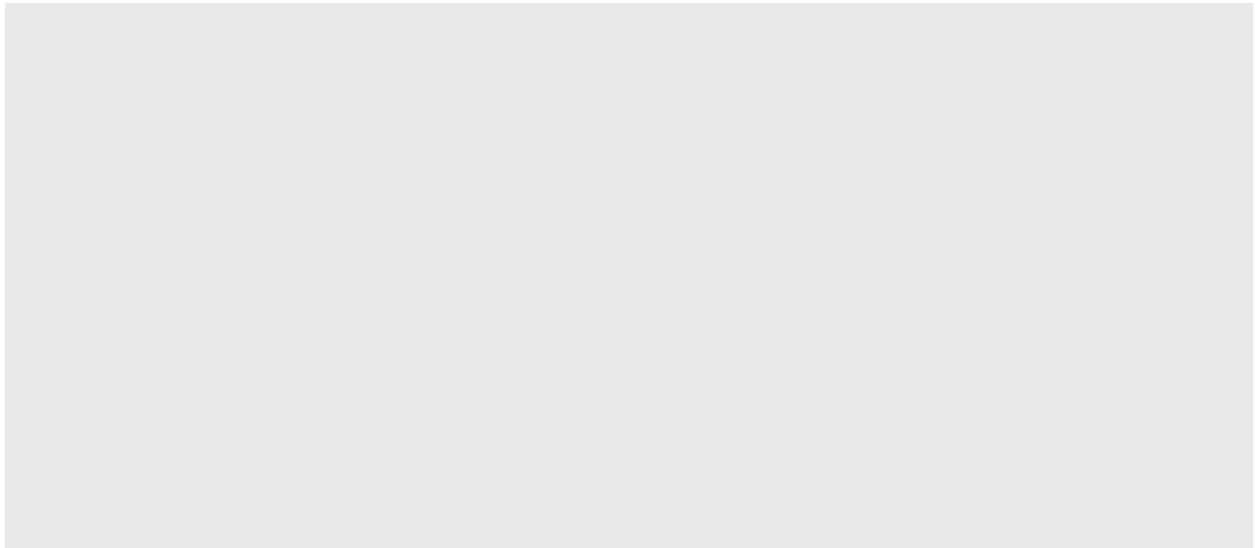
Otherwise, what’s the point?

The questions on the following pages will help you discover (or remember) what makes you happy in life — and at work.

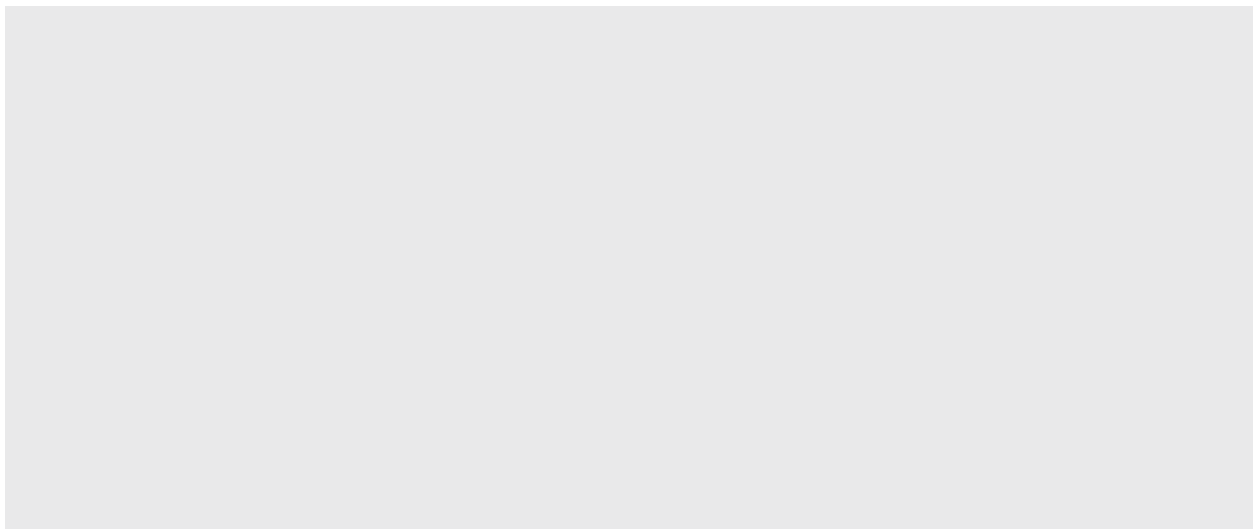


WRITE AND REFLECT

Think about the happiest moment of your entire life. What was happening? Why were you so happy?



Next, think about the happiest moment of your academic or professional life — a moment where you were learning or teaching, serving or helping. What was happening? Why were you so happy?



Congrats! You're going to be featured in a fancy magazine. The interviewer wants to know, "What makes you happy?" Write down as many things as you can.

Looking at everything you've written down, try to complete the following statement:

More than anything in the world, _____ makes me happy.

WHAT MAKES YOU MAD?

“Every super hero needs a bad guy. Without one, the super hero has nothing to fight against.” — Todd Henry

When my clients are struggling to figure out which direction to take their careers, I often ask, “What are the kinds of problems that you would like to solve, out in the world?”

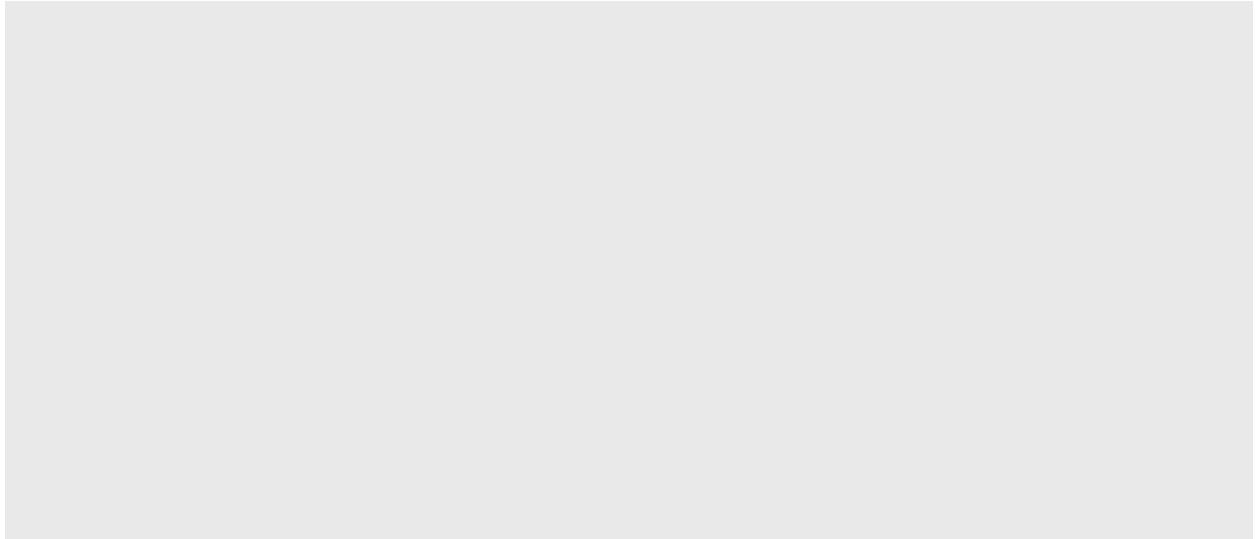
In other words, “What makes you mad?”

By tapping into your anger, you can find a lot of answers...

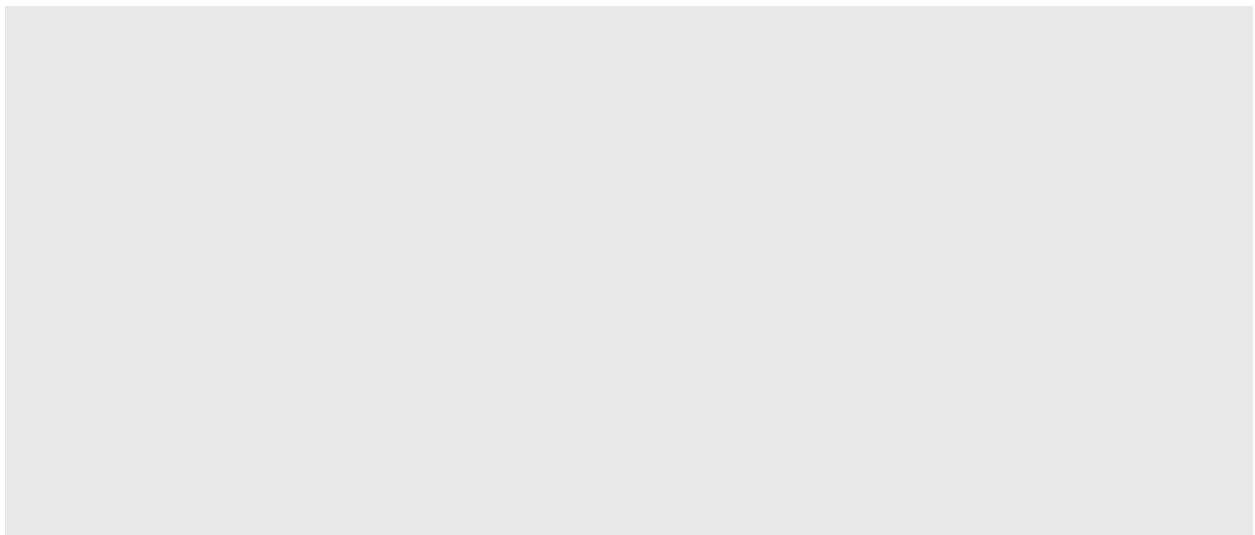


WRITE AND REFLECT

Think about a moment where you got really, really angry — at a particular person, at a situation, at yourself, at an institution, at a policy, or even just a crummy, poorly-designed website. Why were you so angry?



What are three problems that you see out in the world that you, personally, would like to help solve?



Note: It's OK if the kinds of problems that you want to solve aren't "big" or "dramatic." Not everybody is destined to find a cure for malaria. You might be destined to solve small, everyday problems... and that's valuable, too!

After all, people wearing pants that don't fit right... is a problem! People eating boring, unhealthy sandwiches instead of delicious ones... is a problem! Hideous websites that make the Internet look ugly... are a problem!

So, keeping in mind that the problems you want to solve might be small, everyday problems (not necessarily big, dramatic ones), tackle this question once again:

What kinds of problems do you want to help solve?

Looking at everything you've written down, try to complete the following statement:

More than anything in the world, _____ makes me mad / sad / frustrated. And it's a problem that I'd like to help solve.

WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL WORKING ENVIRONMENT?

“Be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you.” — W. Clement Stone

Many people snap up the first job they get offered, right out of college... without considering whether or not the environment is truly the right fit.

Whether you work for yourself or somebody else, you're likely to spend 30 - 50 hours of your life, every week, at work.

It's worth it to spend some time thinking about the kind of environment that will suit you.

WRITE AND REFLECT

“When I think about my ideal working environment, I imagine ...”

(Check whichever scenarios and qualities resonate with you)

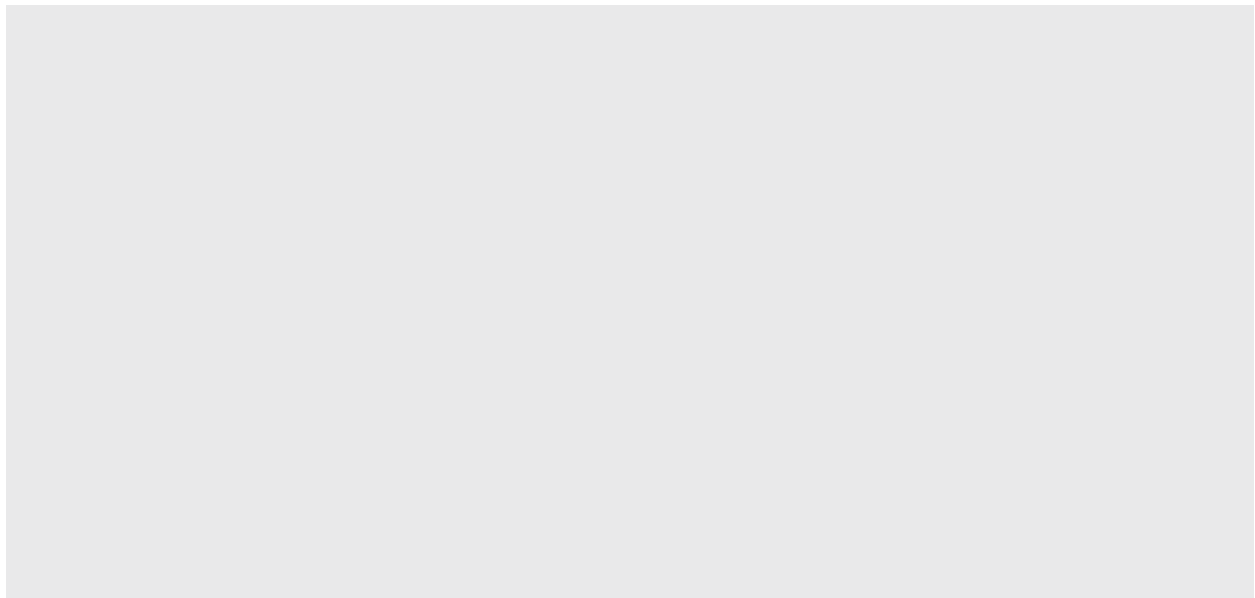
- Working for myself
- Working for somebody else
- Working with one other person — like a business partner
- Working inside of a big company
- Working for a small mom `n pop shop
- Working from home
- Working in a peaceful environment
- Working in an exciting environment
- Working close to home
- Working overseas, in a brand new country
- Working to inspire people
- Working to educate people
- Working to entertain people
- Working to heal people
- Working to motivate people
- Staying in one place, at the same desk every day



- Traveling or having the option to travel, often
- Collaborating with lots of people
- Mostly working alone, in solitude

What else?

Write down everything that comes to mind when you think about your ideal working environment. (Location, architecture, tools at your disposal, music, food, the kinds of people around you...)



Looking at everything you've circled and written down, try to complete the following statement:

My ideal working environment would definitely be _____ and would definitely NOT be _____. The most important quality for me, above all else, is _____.

WHAT ARE YOUR UNIVERSAL SKILLS?

“The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest happiness in using it.” — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

You might not have a twenty-page résumé packed with impressive credentials — but you are valuable, right now, exactly as you are. You have skills that people need.

The most important thing to understand is that your skills are transferrable. In fact, many skills are **universal** — meaning, they’re highly valuable in lots of different settings and scenarios, not just one.

For example:

The fact that you’re always asked to train new food servers on how to use the cash register means that you’re a patient teacher who is great at explaining things. That’s a universal skill. It would be a valuable asset to just about any company.

The fact that you have no problem booking gigs for your rock band means that you’re really good at being brave, picking up the phone, and making things happen. That’s a universal skill. Again: it would be a valuable asset in just about any position or career.

Try to complete each of the following statements to find your **universal skills** — skills that are valuable across the board, in any company, position or career.

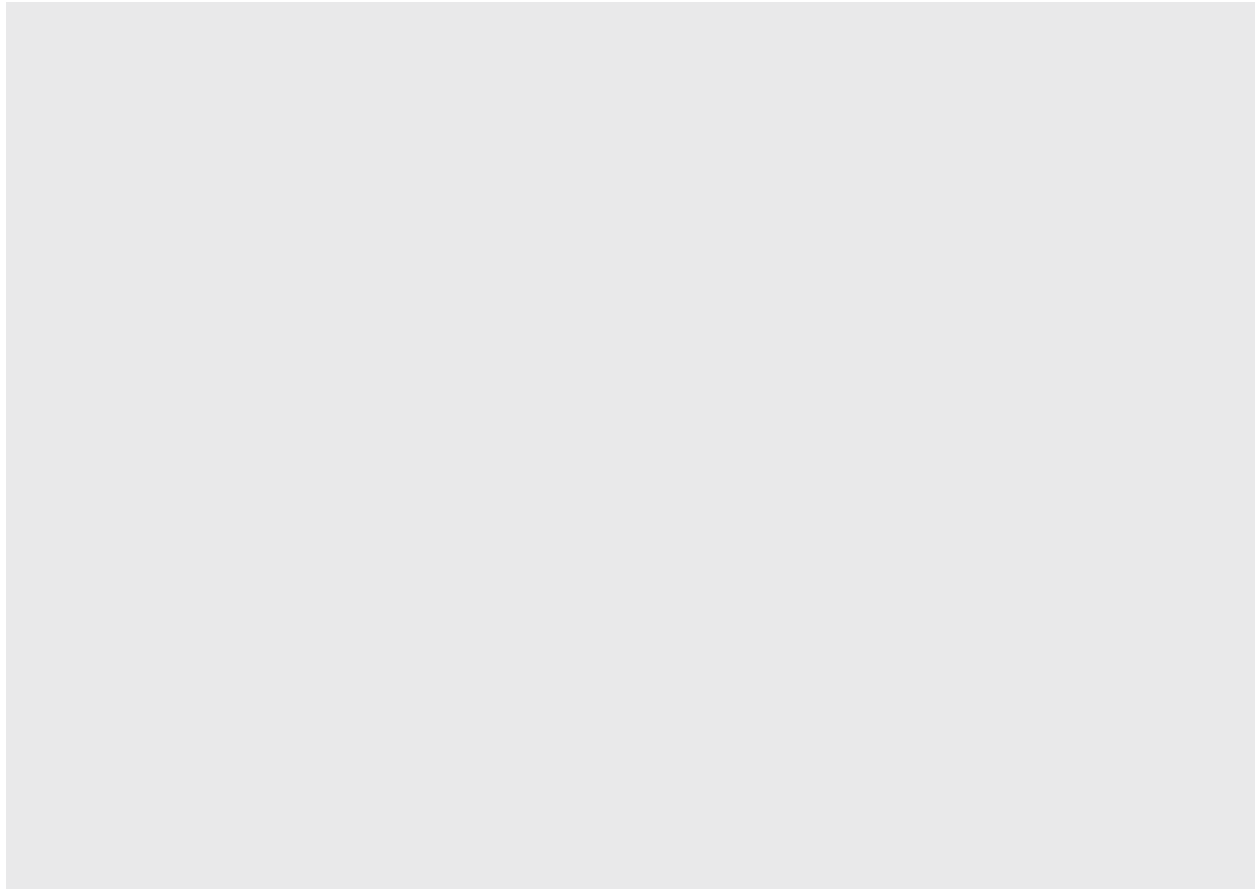


WRITE AND REFLECT

"I am really good at ..."

"People often ask me for help with ..."

"I feel amazing when I ..."



Looking at everything you've written down, try to complete the following statement:

*Three of my universal skills are _____,
_____, and _____.*

No matter where I work, or what I choose to do, these are skills that would be valuable in just about any scenario.

WHO IS LIVING YOUR DREAM?

“The starting point of all achievement is desire.” — Napoleon Hill

By now, you’re probably feeling a little clearer about the kind of career that will make you happy.

My next question for you is... who is living your dream?

Is there someone you know — or someone you’ve been admiring from afar — who has the kind of career that you *think* might be right for you?

Set up a date to talk to that person about their life and career — to get an inside look at what it’s really like to be them.

Just for the sake of exploration, write down the names of **three different people** that you admire — with **three different careers** that appeal to you, for different reasons. (Like: a physical therapist, a professional blogger, and a public speaker.)

1.

2.

3.

Got their names? Great.

Next: write a handwritten note, or an email, or pick up the phone and try to set up a meeting with each person.

You can say something like this:

Dear [name],

I discovered [you / your work] through _____. I'm curious about beginning a career in [subject].

I admire you and the career that you've built, and I am wondering if you'd be willing to let me spend a little time with you — to see what your work looks like, from the inside out.

It could be a 10 minute coffee date (my treat, of course. I'll even bring lattes straight to your office, to make it super-convenient.)

Or, I could shadow you for a day, helping you out with any tasks you've got.

Like a quiet research-mouse. You'll barely even notice I'm there. You'll barely even notice I'm there.

Let me know what you think. Thank you so much!

[your name here]

Spending time with people that you admire is a priceless experience.

It's a rare chance to see what it's really like to be a florist (or nurse, or writer, or taxi driver, or marketing consultant, or farmer, or insert-career-here).

The reality might not match the vision you had in your head...or, it might be even better!

ALL TOGETHER, NOW

Go back through this workbook and review what you've written, so far. Then, re-write your responses — making any changes that you need to — right here, all in one place.

More than anything in the world, _____ makes me happy.

More than anything in the world, _____ makes me mad / sad / frustrated. (And it's a problem that I'd like to help solve.)

My ideal working environment would definitely be _____ and would definitely NOT be _____.

Three of my universal skills are _____, _____ and _____. No matter where I work, or what I choose to do, these are skills that would be valuable in just about any scenario.

Three people that I deeply admire are _____, _____, and _____. I'm impressed by all of them because _____.

Now that I have all of this new information, I know that I do NOT want to work as a _____, _____ or _____.

One career that does feel exciting to me, right now, is _____.



TAKE A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE

What you've just written down reflects a LOT of personal clarity!

You've learned a great deal about yourself, what you want, and what you don't.

That's huge.

Enjoy the next few days, weeks and months, as you take the next couple of steps towards building a happy career — whatever it turns out to be.

And if you're feeling overwhelmed about how to take that next step, struggling to revamp your résumé, or feeling panicked because your dream is much bigger than you thought, you can always set up an appointment to [work privately with me](#).

I'd be honored to support you, whenever the timing is right.



10 RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

01 [Who are you meant to be?](#)

A self-assessment quiz from Oprah.com based on seven different “striving styles” — “modes of thought and behavior that direct us to seek satisfaction in different ways.”

02 [The Desire Map.](#)

A unique approach to setting goals and designing a life and career that you love, from Danielle LaPorte. Rather than asking, “What do I want to do?” Ask: “How do I want to feel?”

03 [Steve Jobs and Alan Watts: Follow Your Heart.](#)

A beautiful video featuring excerpts from speeches by Jobs and Watts. (Warning: grab your Kleenex.)

04 [Finding Your Own North Star: Claiming the Life You Were Meant to Live.](#)

This classic book by Dr. Martha Beck can help you to step into your “right life” — the ultimate realization of your potential for happiness.

05 [100 questions to spark conversation and connection.](#)

I love this collection of playful questions from wordsmith Alexandra Franzen. Answer all of them and you’ll gain tons of amazing insights about yourself! (They’re great ice-breakers for networking events, too.)



06 [The Ultimate Guide to Becoming An Idea Machine.](#)

If you feel like there's "something" amazing that you're meant to be doing, but you just can't figure out what it is... this inspiring guide from entrepreneur James Altucher can help you generate tons of creative ideas.

07 [Is It Really Possible To Design Your Life?](#)

Artist and visual storyteller Debbie Millman says that "you have to create your own happiness." In this thought-provoking video, she explains exactly what that means.

08 [Why 30 Is Not the New 20.](#)

Clinical psychologist Meg Jay has a startling reminder: "30 is not the new 20." "Your twenties are not a throwaway decade," she says. Use the time wisely. Make progress towards building the kind of life that you want.

09 [Body of Work: Jonathan Fields in conversation with Pam Slim.](#)

Pam Slim is the bestselling author of *Escape From Cubicle Nation*. Her latest project is called *Body of Work* — a guide to finding the "thread that ties your story together."

10 [Crossing The Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage to Identity.](#)

A powerful book by the legendary poet David Whyte. "For anyone who wants to deepen their connection to their life's work — or find out what their life's work is — this book can help navigate the way."



ABOUT THE CREATOR OF THIS WORKBOOK



Hello! I'm Ellen Fondiler.

I'm a lifelong entrepreneur who has worked as a death penalty attorney, a baker, a documentary filmmaker, an award-winning landscape designer, a nonprofit director and fundraiser who raised millions.

My career history sounds slightly unbelievable to many people... including myself! I'm often asked, "How did you make all those big dreams come true?"

My answer? Nothing is impossible when you love what you do.

Of course, "love" isn't the end of the story. You also need a solid plan... a networking strategy... clear language to woo and excite people... and allies to support you when you get stuck, feel lost, or slam up against a locked door.

As a career and business strategist, that's what I'm here for. I offer several services to help you build your dream career and move big projects forward — including [editing for your résumé, cover letter, website, blog or book](#), [brain pickin' dates](#) and [consulting](#) for start-ups and entrepreneurs.

You can visit my blog and check out my work at EllenFondiler.com — and you can reach out to me anytime at: elfondiler@gmail.com.

Wherever you are? Do great work, today.

GRATITUDE

Creating The Unlocked Academy — and all of its workbooks, like this one — has truly been a labor of love.

It wouldn't have been possible without the following people:

Shauna Haider from [We Are Branch](#). Your graphic design skills make my work look so... stunning!

[Alexandra Franzen](#). Thank you for all of the brainstorming, writing and editing support! You make my stories sparkle and shine.

My boys, my family and friends. You never fail to brighten my day and steady my course. Thank you for all the ideas, encouragement, love and support.

My [clients](#), my [blog readers](#), my online peers and collaborators. You inspire me on a daily basis.

To you, the reader of this workbook. You bought it. You read it. You made it all the way to the end. You did it! Thank you for taking some time to think deeply about the kind of life and career that you want.

I'm grateful for you all.



FINAL WORDS

Scrapping The Lawn **By Maya Stein**

It would be simpler, surely, to stay in tune with the neighbors, whose yards rest, placid, at the foot of each house with nary a dip in topography save a trio of bushes soldiering the front windows. And it's true that what you've got planned is an upheaval you can't predict, a loose cannon of horticultural proportions, since you've neither the education nor experience to guide you, exactly. But there are sacrifices for every choice that goes against the grain. You don't slash and burn without cleaving from your own comfort. Even now, as the lawn lies partially scraped and scorned, you see you could turn back, patch the broken pieces, ignore the song of wildness and color calling you. Maybe the grass doesn't need changing. But you do, and that knowing's clear enough to wrap your novice hands on awkward tools to find the garden living there.

Excerpted from the [10-line Tuesday](#) series. Explore Maya Stein's beautiful body of work at [MayaStein.com](#).



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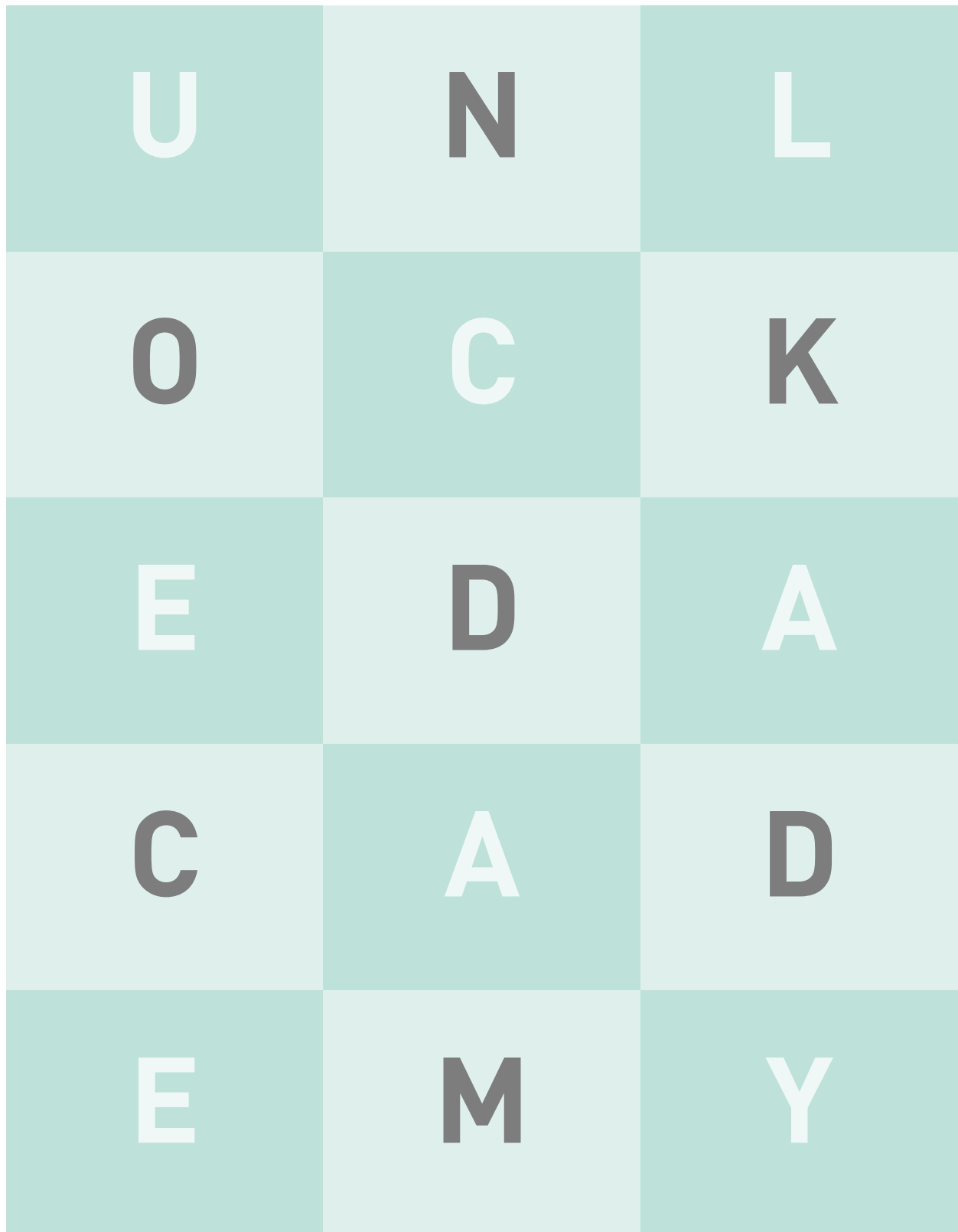
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If you'd like to include a longer excerpt (a page or more) please reach out to me first.

You can reach me at: elfondiler@gmail.com.

Thank you for respecting my work and for doing your amazing work, too.



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THANK YOU

