THE PATH MADE CLEAR

Discovering Your Life’s Direction & Purpose



Oprah Winfrey

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# CHAPTER 1THE SEEDS

The Path Made Clear is a book about finding your purpose, something that Oprah believes every person has (and I agree wholeheartedly).

Oprah talks about when she recognized that first spark of “coming fully to life” in her work. She felt lit up from the inside, and that she had “come home to herself”.

She felt an inner knowing: “this is what you are supposed to do.”

“I was energised in a way that fueled every cell of my being…The seed had been planted. My job ended and my calling began.”

But many people struggle to identify their purpose or calling. So how does one begin?

Oprah suggests you begin by adopting this philosophy of life: Turn obstacles into opportunities.

“Life is not static. Every decision, setback or triumph is an opportunity to identify the seeds of truth that make you the wonderous human being that you are.”

Some people think that your purpose must be related to your job or career, but I disagree, as does Oprah…

“I’m not just talking about what you do for a living; When you pay attention to what feeds your energy, you move in the direction of the life for which you were intended. Trust that the universe has a bigger, wider, deeper dream for you than you could ever imagine for yourself.”

Oprah recalls her favourite parable from church as a child: The Mustard seed parable. A Mustard seed is tiny (they truly are the cutest little seeds), but from this tiny seed, a great plant grows, and many more seeds are sprouted. Faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains.

Oprah encourages you the reader to look for the seeds of knowing in your own self, and have the faith to follow them.

And if you struggle with faith, and feel unsure if the Universe has your back…

Ask yourself “What do I believe?”

Do you believe you are worthy of happiness, success, abundance, fulfilment, peace, joy and love. You become what you believe.

“Trust that the Universe has a bigger, wider, deeper dream for you than you could ever imagine for yourself.”

“On the surface, typing those four little words … what—is—my—purpose … and pressing Enter may seem trivial, but it’s really a profound reflection of an intimate prayer rising from the deepest part of the heart. It’s asking to be acknowledged. Initiating that search is a sign that the journey toward an elevated life filled with meaning and character is ready to begin.”

“Purpose is not static. Purpose is dynamic. Purpose continues to be applied throughout your life.”

~A.R Bernard.

“Here’s the question: What have I come here to do with my life? That’s the call.”

~Elizabeth Gilbert

“We are God’s seeds, becoming God’s selves.”

~Jean Houston

“If you have life you have purpose.“

~ Carolyn Myss

“You have unique gifts; focus on the gifts. Don’t focus on your weaknesses.” Deepak Chopra

# CHAPTER 2THE ROOTS

There are no coincidences: Oprah believes that there is a divine order to the magnificent mystery of our lives.

Like Oprah, I absolutely love watching someone experience an aha moment.

An ahamoment is a moment of recognition; when something clicks inside…And Oprah believes it is proof of our purpose deeply rooted within us.

“The oak within the acorn.”

~ James Hillman

Like Oprah, my deepest desire is to help people discover themselves and to connect them consciously with their true path. Wouldn’t the world be a better place if everybody was doing what they were born to do?

Your purpose does not have to be tied to your career. You may be clear it is to have children or to start a community.

“Whatever your calling, it is already rooted with you.”

According to Oprah: “Whatever your calling, it’s already rooted within you, and those roots can be trampled or tugged at but never removed. They grow stronger only when tended, nurtured—and, most important, shared with others.”

Or as Gary Zukav told Oprah:

“When you align your personality with your purpose, no one can touch you.”

The signs and signals of your personal calling often reveal themselves early in life, in profound ways.

“The most amazing thing that can happen in the life of a human being is to catch a glimpse of what God’s been dreaming for you.” ~ Wintley Phipps

# CHAPTER 3THE WHISPERS

“Passion whispers to you through your feelings, beckoning you toward your highest good,” Oprah tells us.

Your life can change in a flash, accidents, natural disasters and other circumstances beyond our control. But other things are well within our control. (See Circle of Influence LINK)

Oprah states that events like divorce, job loss, financial struggles can feel shocking, but they “rarely arrive without whispers along the way.”

Your life is always speaking to you.

It speaks to you in whispers, guiding you to your next right step. The whisper is often the first warning; a quiet nudge from deep within saying, “Hmmm, something feels off.”

Whispers are not coincidence: Your life is trying to tell you something.

Heeding these signs can move you closer to your life’s purpose. Ignoring them is an invitation to chaos.

Life is about growth and change, and when you are no longer doing either, you have received your first whisper.

“People hear when they betray themselves.”

~Carolyn Myss

Pay attention to makes you feel energised, connected and stimulated. Follow your intuition. Do what you love and you will do more than succeed, you will soar.

“We are out of our minds a lot of the time, but we have the capacity to know it, and we can drop back in.”

~ Jon Kabat Zinn

“I really believe that if I want something, God has three answers. It’s either yes, yes, but not right now, or no, because I have something better in store for you.”

~ Kerry Washington

God/Universe is always talking to us. It’s up to us to listen and pay attention, and choose to act on these whispers.

# CHAPTER 4THE CLOUDS

Most people fear public speaking, but not Oprah…that is until she was invited to give a speech at Harvard.

“I felt a lot of pressure, the kind of internal angst that makes you sit down at the computer to write, take one look at the empty screen, close the computer, and say, I’ll get to this in a little bit. Then worry about it more, set a deadline to work on it again, and, when the alarm goes off, find an excuse not to do it. You know how that goes.”

Oprah was stuck. She tried drawing on her personal mantras:

*“When you don’t know what to do, do nothing and the answer will come.” And “Doubt means don’t.”*

But she wasn’t uncertain – she knew what she wanted – but she was filled with fear and self-doubt. Who was she to speak to the great minds at Harvard?

Then she remembered these words of wisdom:

 “The more important an activity is to your soul’s evolution, the more resistance you will feel to it.”

~ Stephen Pressfield

Oprah realised that she was being held back by a spiritual law, that her fears were natural, and this shadow lives in all of us, and will try to convince us of our unworthiness: You’re not good enough.

*At times like this: Fear can manifest as procrastination and lead to guilt.*

For every dream, there will automatically be resistance. But you can decide to confront the fear and push through resistance.

Resistance often comes from your loved ones. Their personal fears can be projected onto you, as they caution you not to make a leap.

We hold ourselves back because our comfort zone is familiar. The brain is trying to keep us safe. We have to call deep on our courage and push through this natural response to change.

“You can talk yourself out of your dreams, or you can talk yourself into your dreams”

~ Joel Osteen

Be mindful who you surround yourself with. Be careful who you share your dreams with. Some people can suck the life out of you.

A great question to ask yourself, according to Indie Arie: ‘What would I do if I knew I was 100% worthy of this?”

“Energy goes into lower frequencies, so focus your attention on the possibilities, and your energy starts to go up: What if all my needs were met, what would I be doing with my life? What if everything is working together for my good? What if all the bad things that have happened in my life are leading me to activating some great potential? What if God really is on my side?”

~ Michael Bernard Beckwith

Fear is a thing. You can push it away or you can engage with it.

If you don’t allow fear to pass through you then you will try to control situations so you don’t feel fear.

Don’t fight with life. Harmonise and work with it.

Author Elizabeth Gilbert has a mantra to help her through touch emotions: “I love you fear. I love you shame. I love you failure. I love you guilt.”

# CHAPTER 5THE MAP

Before you embark on any quest, you must first articulate your vision. Set your course. Your destination needs to be clear.

Your vision must come from your core, be in total alignment.

Particularly in today’s climate, where there is a palpable craving for meaning and authenticity. People can feel what’s real and what’s not. So, if you want support for your idea, stand in what you hold sacred. Those who sense your truth will rise up.

The Universe rises up to meet the vision that lives inside your heart.

When dreams are crushed, Oprah believes the difference between winning and faltering lies with setting intention.

Your intention has to be pure, otherwise you will get derailed.

Articulate your vision. Set your course. Be authentic. Stand in what you hold sacred. Those who sense your truth will gravitate to you. Believe with your whole heart that you can achieve your goal.

If not, your path becomes murky, and the goal stays out of reach.

Committing to your course starts with a simple question:

**“Why?” Why are you doing this? What is your real intention?**

Only then, you can move to the next question: “How will I execute the action?”

Then let the Universe take care of the rest.

You’re not going to travel to a new place without studying the map beforehand, right? Why should living and achieving your goals be any different?

The vision will pull you forward, otherwise you remain stuck inside what you know; lost inside your comfort zone.

“Potential is always bigger than the problem. Your potential is infinite. When you begin to have a vision about the possibility you start to be pulled by it. You begin to walk in the direction of your purpose”

~ Michael Bernard Beckwith

“Every time you make a decision you turn the core part of yourself into something more elevated or more degraded. When you make disciplined choices you slowly engrave a set of habits and dispositions inside that core piece.”

~ David Brooks

# CHAPTER 6THE ROAD

This chapter is about how to travel the road, how to stay on the right road – to find your lane – and stay in contact with the natural rhythm of your life.

To do this Oprah quotes Gloria Steinem, who says she does this by bringing herself into the absolute present moment, so her mind is in a constant “on the road” state.

This mindset reminds her to remain constantly open to learning, because when we travel it “brings people out of their heads and into their hearts.” We gain access to parts of ourselves that we shut down or suppress when in familiar surroundings.

This “on the road” philosophy helps you feel “boundaryless, spontaneous, and at one with everything”—just like you do when travelling with a free spirit.

On your own path in life you can adopt a similar philosophy by focusing on forward motion, identifying and trusting your own current, and remaining open to all possibilities.

For me personally, this is how I experienced surfing and finding a wave – you feel and intuit the right place to be, you sense the wave before you see it, then you use your mind to choose the position and your body to paddle like hell to get in the best spot and launch yourself into the wave. For the optimal experience, you are not caught up in thinking and mental chatter, you are one with your surroundings – and this is the same idea as “flow states” or “being in the zone” as described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his book ‘Flow.’ It’s an integration of mind, body and soul. You are aligned completely within and without in the present moment.

So how do we get off track, Oprah asks…???

NBA star LeBron James explained it this way:

“I get off my game when I start playing for others and stop playing for myself.”

That’s why it’s essential to follow your heart, your passion, your inspiration, and choose a path that has meaning for you…and avoid a path that is based on what you think others want or need

Know that you have the right to seek the highest, truest expression of yourself. Be brave enough to embody your truth, and strive to be authentically you.

Bring your attention repeatedly back into the moment and focus on the next right choice. This is how you can find the sweet spot in your life.

It’s about shifting your focus from the destination, off in the future, to the journey here in this ever changing present moment

When you become one with the thing that you do, life becomes smooth; it flows…

Being content where you are does not mean you are not moving forward, it means accepting and working with your current reality. Not resisting.

Trust life. That is the beginning. Hope. Be open for surprise. Life will give you good things.

“In any situation, what is primary is your state of consciousness, the state with which you face that situation. Your state of consciousness will determine the form that your future will take. What happens to you is much less important than how you respond to what happens; that determines your life. You can choose to respond consciously, then you are free, no longer at the mercy of what happens to you.”

~ Eckhart Tolle

“If you don’t get happy where you are then you probably won’t get to where you want to be.”

~ Joel Osteen

# CHAPTER 7THE CLIMB

Oprah reminds us that the Mountain is a great metaphor for life. A mountain looks easy to climb from the base, but as you start your climb, you start to come across obstacles and the path forward becomes more challenging.

Oprah talks about the struggles she faced when launching OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network) and being asked to speak at Harvard at the same time. OWN was not doing well when she was asked to speak at Harvard about success. All Oprah could focus on was “How can I speak about success when I have stopped succeeding?” She was frustrated and embarrassed.

Then Oprah had a perspective shift: She finally decided to stop calling the experience of building her own network anything but a privilege. It dawned on her that it was the honour of a lifetime.

Accessing gratitude and appreciation in times of trouble and difficulty can be a transformative shift.

Oprah began to think differently about her struggles and she began to call on a few favourite mantras:

“This too shall pass.”

Or “Trouble don’t last always...”

She also remembered the words of Joel Osteen:

What follows “I am” is what we are inviting into our life.

When you use phrases like “I am struggling or I am exhausted, I am overwhelmed,” you are inviting exactly that energy into your life.

Instead she began to say things like “l am honoured. I am excited. I am a masterpiece. I am talented. I am strong.”

When Oprah changed he language her climb went from an arduous trek, to stimulating adventure.

From that moment forward, if she came up against an obstacle she would simply ask:

“What is this here to teach me?”

In life there are always setbacks. Detours are part of any worthwhile pursuit. You have to be prepared to fail up.

Regardless of what is happening to you,

everything is here to help you evolve into who you are meant to become. Nothing is ever wasted or out of order, only thinking makes it so.

When being tested, Oprah advises us to stop, get still and listen. Your heart will guide you to the next right step. And pay close attention to who stays with you in the gap. When life is treating you well, there’s always people who want to enjoy the limousine ride with you, but when it breaks down, it’s the people who are prepared to ride the bus with you that are your true friends.

Now, your Kilimanjaro awaits...

**Oprah then shares some wisdom from a few of her friends...**

Being challenged is a good thing. Obstacles seem to arise almost continuously. Some feel they are being sabotaged by life. Some people resent being challenged by life, they think there should be no obstacles. But the world isn’t here to make you happy. It can’t do that. What is happening now can be seen as a mistake, or it can be seen as part of your evolution. Everything that is happening to you, is happening for you. ~ Eckhart Tolle

“Try to see things as God might see them, with humility, acceptance and love. You can’t love something until you can accept it.” ~ Stephen Colbert

“Out of everything horrible something good will come if you look hard enough for it.” ~ Joe Biden

“You lose your job, get sick, child dies...You would never choose these places, you fall. That’s the way the self expands. If you don’t transform your suffering, you will transmit it.” ~ Father Richard Rora

“Marital difficulties as a creative adventure. Adopt curiousity. Look what came down the road today. What will we learn through this.” ~ Rob Bell

It’s ridiculous to fantasise that we can be exempt from pain. Pain is a part of life. So when the inevitable obstacles or difficulties arise on your path, don’t lose energy to resentment, simply ask: How can I approach this? How can this serve me? ~ Alanis Morissette

Whatever is happening is your life work. ~ Tracy McMillan

# CHAPTER 8THE GIVE

People may not remember what you said or did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.

Life’s goal is to be of service to a greater good and Oprah believes every moment is an opportunity to be of service to another human being.

Oprah is not just referring to volunteering or helping out, she’s recommending we each commit to a heartfelt and compassionate approach to life. And she believe that there is a growing desire and urgency to bridge divides and bring and end to vicious attacks on those whose viewpoints differ from ours and to focus on elevating humanity, because all humans have value.

Stand up for what’s right, just and good

Begin to structure your life and decisions on how you want to be remembered rather than on what you believe you still need to accomplish. Ask yourself today, what do I want my legacy to be. What energy do you choose to bring to the world - positive or negative. Ultimately, your legacy will be everyone who is touched by you being here.

**Some inspirational ideas from various thought-leaders:**

“Measure how you are doing not based on how much money you have, or traditional ideas of success, but on how many people you help.”

~ Brian Stevenson

“Deep listening can ease the suffering of others, which means to listen with compassion.”

~ Thich Nhat Hahn

“Be an engaged member of the human family.”

~ John Lewis

“Unity consciousness - we are all one; all separation is artificial.”

~ Deepak Chopra

“Withhold full participation in life. Anything that happens to any being is happening in you. Whatever you do to the world will come back to you. The world as consciousnesses and intelligence.”

~ Charles Eisenstein.

“Give to the world what you want to receive from the world, because you will receive that.”

~ Gary Zukav

# CHAPTER 9THE REWARD

“Wealth is a tool that gives you choices, but it can’t compensate for a life not fully lived,” says Oprah. Never let money define your worth. You are not your salary. You are not your bank balance.

When it comes to being rewarded, knowing what you don’t want is as valuable as knowing what you do want. Ultimately, the greatest reward is to know the joy of doing what you love and never stop pursuing it.

Oprah’s focus has never been on money. The great reward for her is the sense of contentment and self-respect that comes from living out the truth of who she is. Oprah believes the way you handle money reflects the way you see yourself.

Do not give up hope if you lose money or success changes. Life is cyclical. Success goes in cycles.

A simple tip for how to make choices that keep you in alignment with your true self is whether your skin tingles (yes) or stomach churns (no). It’s a simple signal to follow or not follow, and will keep you from making the wrong choices.

Never do anything for money. Always do things that advance humanity. Find the place of I am enough so you stop chasing things and success so you can feel fulfilled. The opposite of more is enough.

**Some inspirational ideas from various thought-leaders:**

“Release your grasp and that which is yours will come to you.” ~ Michael Bernard Beckwith

“We are all whole and compete people regardless of money. Money has nothing to do with your worth. Live in the place of sufficiency. Wholeness and completeness and deep appreciation of who you are. I’m not enough is the source of so much suffering.” ~ Lynne Twist

“Rewards are fine but don’t let them define who you are; define yourself by ability to give, by values, ethics, ability to have compassion and understand.”

~ Goldie Hawn

“The bigger reward is the fact that I get to do it again.”

~ Jordan Peel

“Success can be fleeting. And it’s beyond your control. Invest less in it in terms of how you define yourself.”

~ Jeff Weaner

“The opposite of more, is enough!” ~ William Paul Young

# CHAPTER 10HOME

Oprah explains that films and literature have changed her view of the world. A favourite is The Wizard of Oz – which she believes to contain a great spiritual teaching.

Dorothy believed she needed something outside herself to bestow the cherished virtues, so she went to see Oz. The teaching comes when, towards the end of the film, the Good Witch says to Dorothy: **“You don’t need to be helped any longer, you’ve always had the power.”**

Likewise, Oprah believes, you already know who you are and how to fulfill your destiny. You don’t need to look any further than your own back yard. You have the power to discover your purpose and live your truth. So stop looking outside yourself and start listening deeply to yourself. You’ve always had it, you’ve always had the power. You can never be lost, because you are always with yourself.

Coming home to yourself and trusting that you already know at a deep level who you are, is one of the most powerful things we can do.

**Some inspirational ideas from various thought-leaders:**

“We are all created with a phenomenal force inside us. We are never given more than we can handle.”

~ Debbie Ford

“I have my own back. I am going to be alright no matter what.”

~ Elizabeth Gilbert

“The answer to life is simple - you are enough.”

~ Elizabeth Lesser

“The whole purpose of life is to gain mastery, mastery over finances, relationships, consciousness, it’s not about the stuff. All the stuff can be taken away. You can lose you fortune, your spouse, your reputation. Who you become in the process can never be taken away. You are mastering through the process of overcoming these obstacles you face in life.” ~ Jack Canfield

“We are here with deep purpose. To become all that we can be. We have been given the most beautiful planet in the galaxy, to work out and enjoy the gifts of our incarnation. I believe that we are headed ultimately in the right direction. I believe that we have been given sufficient stress, crisis, complex and consciousness to do things that are beyond our image, larger than our aspiration, more complex than all our dreams. I believe in love, I believe in you, I believe in me, I believe in this the most potent moment in human history.”

~ Jean Houston