

Wake Up to What You Love

A Self-Directed Workbook

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Welcome to Wake Up to What You Love

What if someone told you, right now, that you could have a whole day to do whatever it is your heart desires.

Would you jump for joy and get right on with whatever it is you love to do or would you spend the day trying to figure out what it is you love to do and end up feeling miserable because you don't know? If you are reading this, I would guess your answer is the latter. Hopefully, by the end of this workbook you will be much closer to jumping for joy and spending your free time doing what you love.

There are many reasons why we have gotten to today without really knowing what we love. Maybe we had to work really hard all our lives and never had much free time to discover our passions. Maybe we put our family's wants and needs ahead of our own and we got lost in the background. Whatever the reason, it is never too late to find out. It is never too late to add more joy to your life.

This interactive workbook is about finding out what you love. It will give you an opportunity to play and get to know yourself while guiding you through five steps to waking up to what you love.

And don't forget, no idea is too silly. Think of this as brainstorming - all ideas are explored, no matter how silly they seem at first glance. You never know where the "silly" ideas may lead.

Life isn't about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.

~George Bernard Shaw

A Little Background

Several years ago I went to a counsellor because I was feeling "blah". I had little enthusiasm for life.

I felt slightly embarrassed to be going to a counsellor with no real problem - I wasn't addicted to anything, I wasn't abused, I had a good life going on.

We chatted for awhile and just when I was about to say "I think we're done here, I should just go home and pull my socks up", she asked me about my childhood.

Now, I didn't have a bad childhood but I was a bit of a latch-key kid. We left England, and all the family I had known, when I was seven and came to Canada. Both my parents had to work full-time and we didn't know many people so I was basically on my own.

I always thought that this type of upbringing made a person self-reliant, but what I didn't realize was that childhood is when our personalities are formed and we learn (from the safety of our family) what we like and don't like.

Because I was fairly busy taking care of myself, I didn't have time to explore my likes and dislikes.

The counsellor gave me homework - figure out what I liked.

I knew what I *had* to do in life, but I didn't know what I *wanted* to do. It didn't take me long to realize that I did have preferences and that realization spilled over in many areas of my life. When you have preferences, you have choices. Choices that you might not even have seen before because you didn't realize you had a preference.

For example, one day I was walking home with my husband and daughter when they decided they wanted to walk over to a store to look at something. I had no interest in going to this particular store. Before I would have just gone along because I wouldn't have even thought there was an option, "Oh, we're going to the store now, okay".

However, because I was beginning to think about what I liked, and it was starting to find its way into my consciousness, I stopped to think about whether I *wanted* to go to the store. No, I didn't. Instead I walked home while they went to the store. Everyone did what they wanted and everyone was happy.

It sounds simple but if you are not aware of your likes and dislikes you can easily get carried away in someone else's plan.

The other example that stands out in my mind from that time was one night my husband was making dinner. He had bought a cabbage and he was looking at cabbage recipes. I was doing, and thinking about, something else at the time and was just happy that I didn't have to make dinner. He found two recipes and asked me which one I would like. My initial response was "whatever, you choose, I don't care". But then it dawned on me, I did care. One recipe had a tomato base and the other had a sweet and sour base. When I stopped to think about it, I realized that I was not in the mood for a tomato-based dish.

I realized I was on autopilot and just coming up with the easiest response. However, because my likes and dislikes were now on my radar screen, I took the time to choose what I wanted. Again, everyone was happy.

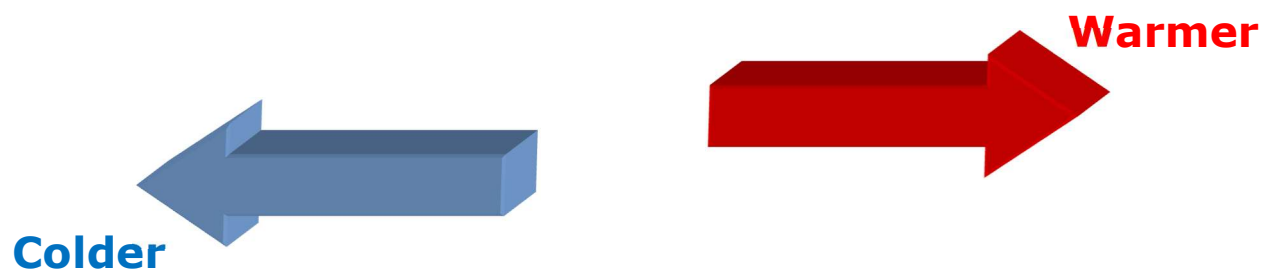
If you don't paddle your
own canoe, you don't move.

~ Katharine Hepburn

Step One: Pay Attention

This step is all about learning to pay attention to the details of your day and your life. Learning to be present and not just running through the *must-do list* of your day on autopilot.

Life is made up of a series of very small choices. Do you want a hot drink or a cold drink? Do you want to read a book or a magazine? Dr. Martha Beck, a popular life coach, calls this paying attention to your warmer/colder reactions.



What do you like? What do you prefer? Would you prefer toast or cereal for breakfast this morning? Which makes you feel warmer right now? If you choose cereal this time, it doesn't mean that you will never have toast again. It just means that today you prefer cereal. Cereal is your warmer reaction right now. Cereal will make you happy at this moment. Toast may make you happy tomorrow.

If you make each small decision this way, choosing what you like or prefer, you will be on your way to creating a life filled with what you love. Whenever possible, choose what makes you feel warmer.

*Happiness is a direction,
not a place.*

~ Sydney J. Harris

Breakthrough Moment

A real breakthrough moment for me was distinguishing between what I think **I should do** and what **I want to do** and actually choosing to do what I want. There are always things we should do - fold the laundry, empty the dishwasher, tidy the living room, etc. Usually, when I have a free moment, I will do one of those things. Of course, sometimes I will just sit there thinking about how much I don't want to do any of them.

After doing the 'pay attention' exercises for awhile, I realized that it is now easier to recognize when I am simply thinking of the things I should do. Now, when possible, I give myself permission to do something that I want to do and leave the 'shoulds' for another time. Of course, this is not always possible, but sometimes it is. It feels great to make a conscious decision and say "yes, I know the laundry needs folding, but right now I feel like reading a magazine and having a cup of tea". The laundry can wait.

Ah, the satisfaction of choosing your warmer reaction!

Your life is the sum result of all the choices you make, both consciously and unconsciously. If you can control the process of choosing, you can take control of all aspects of your life. You can find the freedom that comes from being in charge of yourself.

~ Robert Foster Bennett

Assignment



Carry a small notebook with you everywhere you go to record everything you see during your day that you like. Make a record of things that make you smile, things that you wish you had, things that make you feel good. It may be the colour of someone's shirt, a dog, a flower, a tree, a car, a bird, a friendly face - anything. This will help put your likes on your radar screen and train you to think about your preferences.

Again, this may seem simple, but it will get you thinking about what you like. It will force you to pay attention and get you off autopilot. Your preferences will finally be on your radar screen - **you** will finally be on your radar screen.

When I started doing this, I realized that I had been living a good portion of my life on autopilot. My main criteria had been whatever was easiest or fastest, not what I wanted or liked most. This exercise made me put myself in the equation. What do I want? I started pausing to think about **my preference**, not just what was easiest.

When your heart
speaks, take good
notes.

~ Judith Campbell

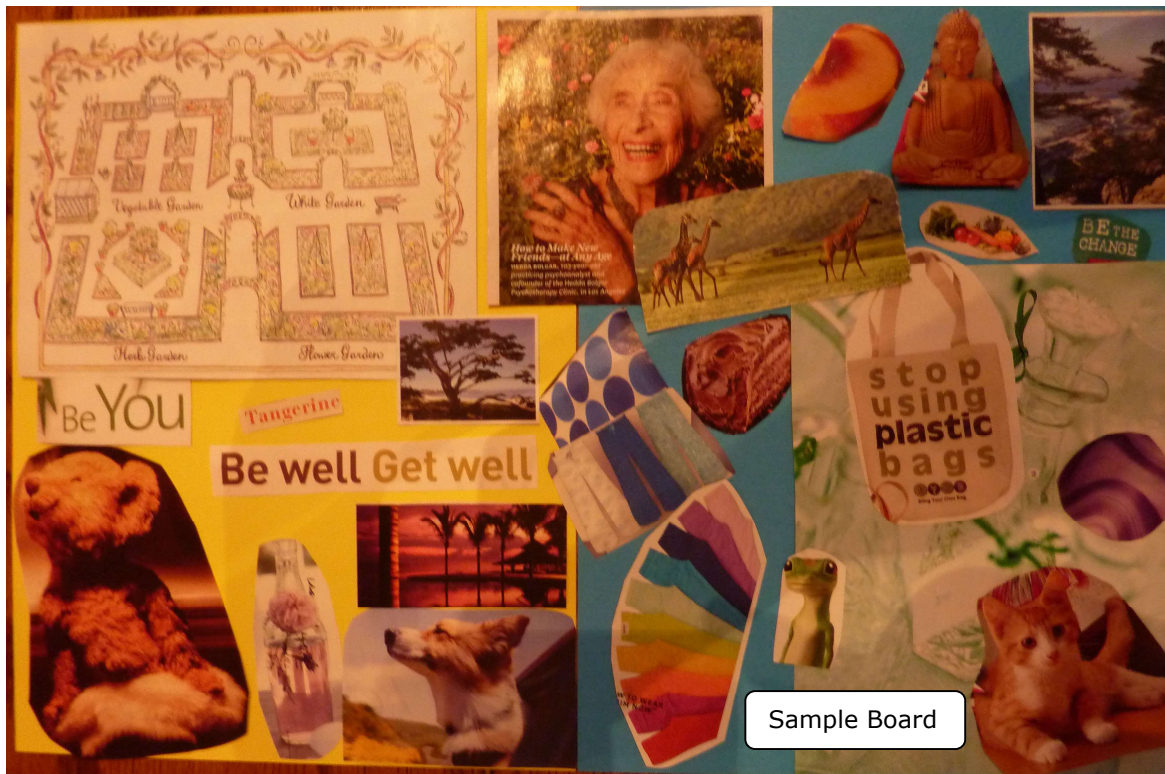
NOTES:

You can use this area to make a note of your experiences from carrying a notebook and paying attention to your preferences.

What Makes Me Smile?

Step Two: Create a Self-Discovery Board

A Self-Discovery Board is a visual representation of things you like or are attracted to. But don't worry, the great part is you don't have to know what they are before you begin. Creating the board will nudge your unconscious mind into bringing your likes to the surface.



*At the center of your being.
you have the answer;
you know who you are
and you know what you want.*

~ Lao Tzu

Assignment

What You'll Need:

- Paper, Notebook, Posterboard, Corkboard (your choice)
- Magazines, Store Catalogues, Photographs, Travel Brochures
- Scissors
- Glue
- Some time to yourself
- Note: You can also do this online

Steps to Create Your Self-Discovery Board:

1. Start gathering old magazines, catalogues, and brochures from friends and family to help you make your Self-Discovery Board. You want magazines with lots of pictures. Try to get magazines other than the ones that you would normally read. You want to expand your horizons here.

If you don't have enough of these at home you could:

- Ask your friends, family, or people at work to give you their old magazines and catalogues
 - Ask your local library if they have any old magazines that they are no longer using
 - Ask your local travel agent for old travel brochures
2. Once you have several magazines, catalogues, and brochures, flip through them and cut out any pictures or words that you really like. You may like the colours in the picture or the way the picture makes you feel. You may like the people or animals in the picture or some of the words or phrases in the pictures may resonate with you. It doesn't matter why you like the picture, if you like it and it makes you feel good, cut it out. Don't second guess yourself or think about it too much.

Go through the magazines fairly quickly and just cut out what stands out for you. Remember not to get stuck on what you *think* you know about

yourself or what you *think* you like or what you *think* you should like. Just cut out the pictures that you like at that moment and don't try to justify your choices - go with your gut instincts. When looking at the pictures, ask yourself, "Do I like this?", "Am I attracted to this?". Stay focused on finding pictures that make you feel good (warmer choices).


3. You may also want to include a copy of a picture of yourself that you really like. It doesn't matter if it was taken today or when you were two years old, as long as you like the picture and it makes you feel good when you look at it.

Remember, this board is all about you - who you are and what you like - you are the focal point. This isn't about what your spouse or partner likes, what your kids or parents like, what society says you *should* like, or what you *think* you *should* like. This is about what you really like, what resonates with you and gives you a warm, fuzzy feeling. It's about what makes you smile and feel good.

Again, don't get stuck in what you think you know about yourself. That may not really be you, it may be what you've been told by others and now think of as truth. Go with what you feel, even if it is completely contrary to what you think you like.

This is another way to put your likes on your conscious radar screen.

4. Once you have all your pictures and words cut out, trim them or shape them any way you like and glue them to your board or notebook or pin them to your corkboard. Attach them in any way or pattern you like.
5. Now, put your board somewhere you will see it every day so that you will have a visual reminder of all the things you love. This will be a daily reminder to pay attention to what you love and to keep yourself as the focal point of your life.



And you? When will you begin
that long journey into yourself?

~ Rumi



Step Three: What Can't You Live Without?

Many of us have trouble determining our passions. When people ask, nothing comes to mind. We can't think of anything that we love to do so we assume that we don't have any passions.

Let's turn it around and approach it from another angle. What can't you imagine living without? This will be different for everyone. What if you could never walk outside in nature again? What if you could never travel again? What if you could never spend time with your family again? What if you could never read a book again? What if you could never play the piano again?

Whatever you can't imagine living without - those are your passions. Don't judge or compare them. Knitting is just as valid a passion as gardening or mountain climbing. Passions are personal.

I used to think that my passion for reading didn't compare to my husband's passion for long-distance cycling. How could sitting or lying down for hours immersed in a book compare to the hours of physical exertion of riding a bike? It can't. But guess what? It doesn't have to. Reading is my passion. Cycling is his passion. No comparison. One is just as good and valid as the other.

It's a helluva start, being
able to recognize what
makes you happy.

~ Lucille Ball

Assignment

Think about what you can't live without and write down everything that you can think of. Again, don't judge them, just write them down.

A large rounded rectangle with a green border, containing two columns of horizontal blue lines for writing. The rectangle is divided into two equal columns by a vertical line, with 15 lines in each column.

See, you do have passions! When asked what my passions were, I used to answer that I didn't really have any passions. Now I know that some of my passions are reading, travelling, and walking in nature.

Step Four: Try Things on For Size

Sometimes we have to try different things on for size to see what we really like. In order to find out what we like, we have to be open to new experiences and trying different things.

So now you are going to step out of your comfort zone and try some new things. If you find yourself saying, "Oh, that's not for me", try it anyway. Maybe it is for you and you just didn't know.

What things have interested you in the past? What has come up that caught your attention but you dismissed it thinking it wasn't for you? What are you curious about?

Maybe you've always thought about taking a dance class or a badminton class, or learning to play bridge or the trumpet. Maybe you have always wanted to know more about gardening or psychology, or learn a foreign language or how to cook Thai food.

The possibilities are endless. You could try:

- different types of food and drinks
- wearing different styles of clothes
- new experiences and activities
- new approaches to life - try being the outgoing one or the confident one or the beautiful one

If you try something on for size and it doesn't fit, don't give up - try something else. I thought I would really like line dancing, but when I took a class at a local school, I discovered that I didn't. I thought I wouldn't like meditating at all, but when I went with my husband to a weekly class, I found out that I liked it. This isn't a race to find out what you love, the journey is all part of the experience and the fun.

Try a thing you haven't done three times.
Once, to get over the fear of doing it.
Twice, to learn how to do it. And a third
time, to figure out whether you like it or not.

~ Virgil Garnett Thomson

Assignment

Think about some things you might like to try, even if they scare you a bit.

You could look over your Self-Discovery Board to see if anything shows up there. Also, think about what interested you as a child or in the past. Some other places you might find inspiration are:

- Library books and videos
- Continuing education and school catalogue listings
- Online videos
- Local clubs or associations

List some things you'd like to try:

Now it's time to give some of them a try. Don't overdo it. Try them one or two at a time. You can sign up for a beginner class or join a group. You can get "how to" books and videos from the library. You can look up "how to" videos online. If you find something that you really like, then you can pursue it further in any way that feels good.

If you try something and it doesn't feel good, don't worry about it. Don't hold on to anything because you *think* you *should* like it. Chalk it up to experience and move on to the next experiment. Have fun!

*You have to leave the city of your comfort
and go into the wilderness of your intuition.
What you'll discover will be wonderful.
What you'll discover is yourself.*

~ Alan Alda

Step Five: Let Go of What You Don't Love


Sometimes you have to let go of what you don't love in order to make room in your life for what you do love. Now we are not talking about what you *think* you *should* love or *think* you *should* do. Maybe you are on committee because you think you should be, but you don't like it. You dread going and you leave feeling drained every time. Let it go. Resign. Create a space for someone who is passionate about the committee or the cause. It doesn't make you a bad person. It's just not for you.

Don Miguel Ruiz says it well in his book *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom*, "If you take action because you have to, then there is no way you are going to do your best ... it is better not to do it." Once you say no to what you don't love, everyone wins - you leave room for someone who is passionate and will do a great job and you will have some time to fill with something you do love.

Perhaps you have objects in your home that you don't love but they belonged to, or were given to you by someone you love - your grandmother or father or best friend. Give them to someone who will cherish them or at least use them. You don't have to keep things that you don't love just because they were given to you by someone you do love.

This is another opportunity to use the warmer/colder method. Choose to keep in your life only those activities and things that make you feel warmer.

You will be creating some space in your life that you can fill with things you do love. You will also be passing on some great items or opportunities to others who will appreciate them.



All the art of living lies in a fine
mingling of letting go and holding
on.

~ Havelock Ellis



Assignment

How do you spend your time? Take an inventory of your life - what fills up your time? (you can use the blank sheet on the next page). Once you have an inventory of your life you can look at each activity and decide if there are any that you don't love. Highlight the ones you don't love so that you can let go of them.

When I did this exercise, I realized that I had one client in my business that I really didn't enjoy working with. They paid well and the work was fairly regular, but I didn't like doing it. The work was tedious and boring. I would put it off until the last minute because I really did not like doing it. Once I acknowledged this, I was able to stop working for this client. I opened up some room in my life for work that I like doing and they had the opportunity to find someone more interested in doing their work.

Now I know there are many activities in our lives that we don't really love but are necessary - cooking, cleaning, laundry, washing dishes, going to work. This will be different for everyone. Some people love cleaning and others hate it. If you hate it, highlight it on your list.

Now that you have your list of activities that you don't love, it's time to start figuring out how to let go of them. Be creative here. If you hate cleaning but you love gardening, maybe you could trade your gardening services with someone who loves cleaning but hates gardening. Perhaps you could hire a cleaning service or enlist your family to do more of the chores that you really don't like.

Remember, you really don't owe anyone any detailed explanations. If you are on a committee that you don't like, it's okay to resign just by saying that you need to step down or that you are no longer able to continue in the position or that it's time for you to move on. You didn't sign up for life.

Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.

~ Carl Sandberg

[illegible]

Now, do the same thing with your home. Stand in each room and look at everything in the room - do you like it; does it make you feel good? If not, it's time to let it go. It is your house, your room, and it should make you feel great. If there is something you don't like that belongs to another person in the house, ask them if they like it, you may find that they don't really like it either. If they do, you could ask them if you could move it to an area where they can enjoy it alone.

As you walk from room to room to see if there are any things that you don't love that you could pass on to someone who will, make a list (there is a blank sheet on the next page). You don't have to get rid of everything now. You can do it item by item as and when you are ready.

If you are comfortable with it, you could skip the list and just remove anything you don't love and put it in another room or a box until you decide what to do with it. This way you can feel the result right away.

Until recently, every time I walked into our bedroom I would think "I don't like those lamps - why haven't we replaced them yet?" The two mismatched table lamps and the ugly floor lamp we had were quick and cheap buys from garage sales to get us by until we found something better. I think that was 17 years ago! We finally got new bedroom lamps and I love them.

Some things don't need to be replaced, as we never really needed them in the first place. This isn't about filling your house with stuff, it's about making sure that you love what is in your house. Don't worry about how you are going to replace things. Only think about what items you would like to replace. Once something is on your radar screen it is amazing how quickly it will get resolved.

I recently decided that I would like some new house plants. When I went to an acquaintance's house, she had a kitchen full of purple heart plant cuttings. I asked if I could have one and presto I had a brand-new house plant.

From now on, make sure that you love or need everything you bring into your home. If you don't love it or need it, don't buy it!

Not what we have but what we
enjoy, constitutes our abundance.

~ Epicurus

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Summary

1. Pay Attention:

- Carry a small notebook and take note of things you like
- For every decision you make, choose what makes you feel warmer

2. Create a Self-Discovery Board:

- Create your own picture board of what you love
- Keep your board somewhere you can see it every day to remind you of what you love

3. What Can't You Live Without:

- Keep in mind the things you can't imagine living without - these are your passions
- Try to enjoy these things as much as possible every day

4. Try Things on For Size:

- Make a list of things you might like to try
- Try them!

5. Let Go of What You Don't Love:

- If you've tried it and you don't love it, say no to it
- Open up space in your life for what you love
- Choose what makes you feel warmer



No man is a failure who is enjoying life.

~ William Feather



Congratulations on taking these five steps to finding out what you love. Now let's make putting your likes, passions, and loves on your radar screen by making a habit of recognizing them.

Let's continue to focus on ourselves for a change. It's not selfish, it's actually the opposite. Think of it as the safety procedure on an airplane - you must first apply your own oxygen mask and then worry about helping the people around you. After all, you won't be much use to them if you have passed out from lack of oxygen. You also won't be of much use to those around you if you are not happy.

Thank you for joining me to discover what you love and are passionate about.

Here's to living a life filled with joy.

Lisa Ivaldi

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You only live once, but if you do it
right, once is enough.

~ Mae West