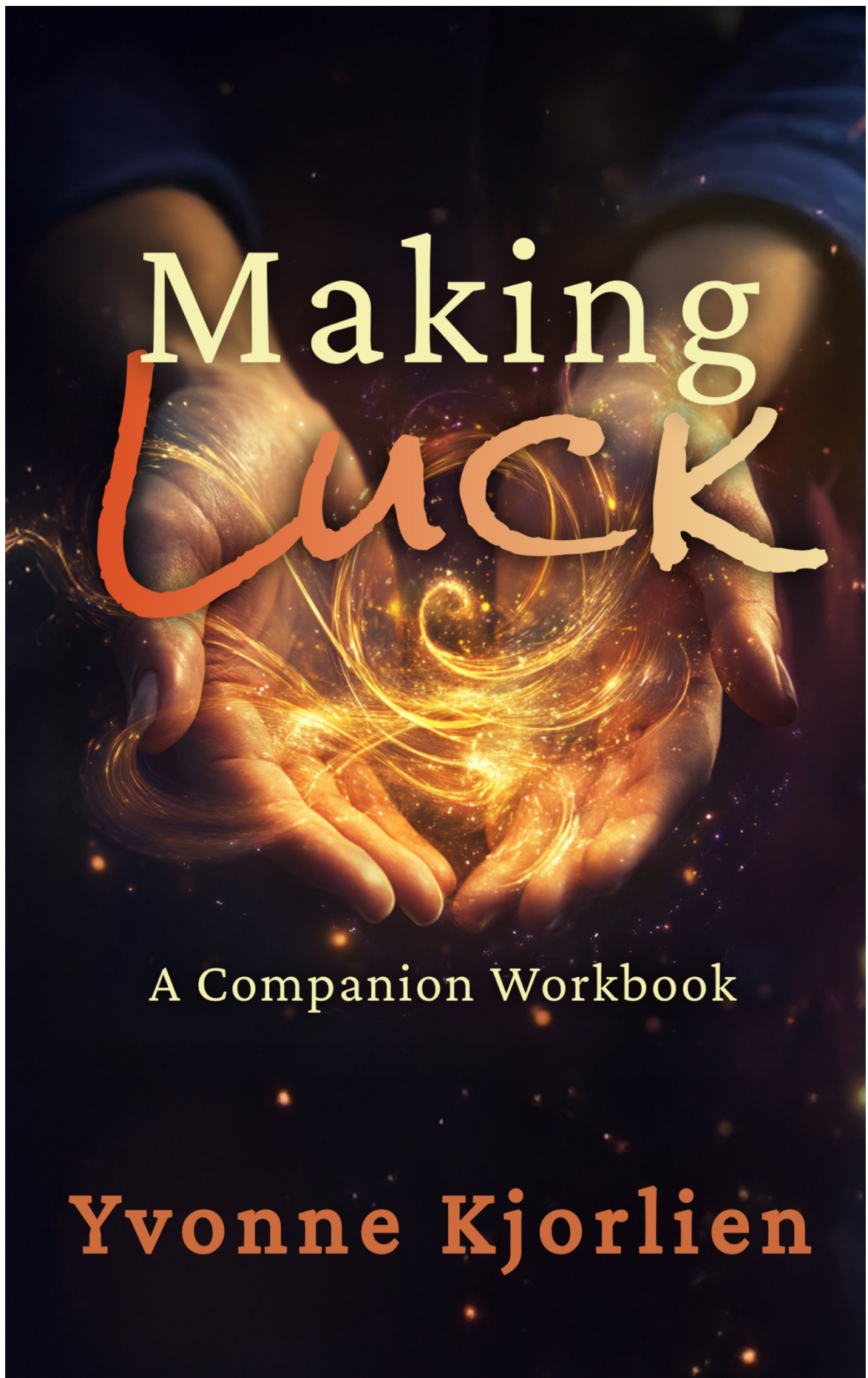




This is the Companion Workbook for *Making Luck: A True Story About Quitting School and Getting a Life*, available in all formats through online retailers.



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Introduction

Why You're Here

If you've picked up this workbook, chances are something in *Making Luck* resonated with you. Maybe it was the burnout. The people-pleasing. The longing for a life that actually fits. Maybe you've been on a perfectly acceptable path—only to realize it was never really yours.

This workbook is not a “how-to” manual. There is no one right way to navigate collapse, grief, or reinvention. Instead, this is a guided companion to help you explore your own journey—gently, honestly, and at your own pace.

In *Making Luck*, I walked through my own reckoning with societal expectations, family dysfunction, burnout, trauma, and the slow, nonlinear process of reclaiming identity. This workbook isn't here to tell you what to do. It's here to invite you into deeper conversation—with yourself.

Think of each section as a small dig site. You'll uncover the old structures you inherited, recognize the places that cracked open, and begin sifting through what's worth keeping and what's time to let go. There will be places to write, doodle, cry, swear, rage, imagine, and redefine.

The purpose of this workbook is simple:

- ◆ To help you make sense of the story you were given
- ◆ To empower you to rewrite it in your own voice
- ◆ To support you as you define what “making luck” means on your terms

There is no final exam here. No timeline. No gold star. Just your honest answers, your curiosity, and the quiet knowing that your story—messy, beautiful, unfinished—is worthy of being told.

This is your invitation.

Section 1: *The Path You Were Given*

“You are your own stories, and therefore free to imagine and experience what it means to be human... without borders.”

— *Toni Morrison*

Before we can change direction, we need to know where we started.

This section is about uncovering the blueprint you were handed: the beliefs, rules, expectations, and stories that shaped your early sense of self. These may have come from family, culture, religion, school, or even the media. You may have followed them without question. Or you may have questioned them all along but didn't yet have the power—or safety—to veer off course.

Sometimes these stories sound like love.
Sometimes they sound like fear.
Sometimes they sound like silence.

In *Making Luck*, I began by reflecting on the forces that shaped my early choices—air cadets, my family's complicated dynamics, the unspoken rules of academia, and what it meant to be “successful” or “good.” I didn't realize it at the time, but I was living someone else's definition of a meaningful and successful life.

This section helps you pause and ask:

- What path was I given?
- Whose voice have I been listening to?
- Which expectations have I absorbed that no longer serve me?

Before we go digging into who you are now, we need to look at the story you inherited.

It's not about blame.
It's about awareness.
And with awareness, comes choice.

Goal: Help uncover the inherited expectations, cultural narratives, and systemic assumptions you have internalized.

Reflective Prompts:

What path were you told to follow — by family, culture, or society?

What unspoken rules or expectations shaped your choices?

Who benefits from you staying on this path? Who suffers?

What did you have to suppress in order to keep going?

Journaling Prompt:

Write a letter to your younger self, the one who started on this path. What do you want them to know now?

Optional Creative Activity:

Create a “False Map” — draw or list all the detours, wrong turns, or imposed destinations others laid out for your life journey.

Section 2: *Breaking Points*

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

— *Anaïs Nin*

We don’t change just because we want to.

We change because something stops working.

This section is about recognizing the moments when your old life—your old self—began to crack under pressure. Burnout. Grief. Illness. Trauma. The quiet breakdowns and the big, messy ones. The moments you whispered, “*I can’t do this anymore*”—even if no one heard you.

In *Making Luck*, I hit multiple breaking points: burnout from archaeology, the loss of my father, perimenopause, toxic work environments, and a body that simply refused to keep going. I didn’t recognize these as “messages” at first. I thought I was just failing.

But breaking down can be the first step to breaking *free*.

This section is not about fixing you. It’s about honouring what was too heavy, too much, or too long ignored. It’s about listening to the signals—emotional, physical, and spiritual—that were asking for something different.

Here, you’ll reflect on your own moments of rupture and reckoning. You’ll start to make meaning out of what may have once felt like chaos. And, just maybe, you’ll begin to ask: *What if I wasn’t falling apart? What if I was being re-formed?*

Explore the cracks.

That’s where the light gets in.

(Good ol’ Leonard Cohen!)

Goal: This section helps you recognize the moments when your life stopped working—so you can understand them not as failures, but as necessary turning points toward change.

Reflective Prompts:

What warning signs has your body or mind been sending you that something needs to change?

(Think: fatigue, resentment, anxiety, brain fog, dread, headaches, impulsivity, etc.)

When have you overrode your own signals in favor of 'pushing through'? What did that cost you?

What systems (jobs, relationships, cultural norms) have made you feel trapped or erased?

Describe a moment when you knew — in your bones — that something needed to give.

If your nervous system could write you a letter, what would it say?

Optional Creative Activity:

Burnout Collage

Using cut-out words, images, or hand-drawn sketches, create a visual representation of your “breaking point.” Not to dwell in it — but to witness it. Use a second page to collage or draw what that moment began to open up. This doesn’t need to be a one-sitting type exercise. Stand back and witness what you’ve done. Is something missing? Do you need to add something? Keep adding until you feel it’s all “out”.

Section 3: The Shift

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

— Mary Oliver, from *The Summer Day*

There comes a moment—sometimes quiet, sometimes seismic—when your focus starts to change. You’ve spent so long noticing what’s broken, missing, or wrong that it becomes second nature. But then something small breaks through: a laugh, a moment of ease, a flicker of possibility.

And that flicker matters.

This isn’t about blind positivity. It’s about shifting from rumination to reflection. From asking, “What’s wrong with me?” to “What might be right for me?”

It’s a gentle reframe, but it’s a reframe that could save your life. It saved mine.

You’re still in the mess—but you’ve begun to ask different questions. You’re no longer just trying to survive the old. You’re starting to imagine something new.

This is a tender, powerful stage. It’s where denial loosens its grip, and clarity begins to take shape. In *Making Luck*, this shift showed up through breakdowns, burnouts, and unexpected breakthroughs. Now it’s your turn to reflect on the whispers, nudges, and wake-up calls that asked you to choose yourself.

You don’t need a fully-formed plan to move forward—only the willingness to start listening to the part of you that’s asking for more.

Goal: To help you recognize the internal shifts, awakenings, or breakdowns that signaled it was time to change—and begin honoring the part of you ready for something more.

Reflective Prompts

What was your breaking point? What cracked open? What did you discover about yourself?

Surprise yourself and make a list of what you *do* know or *can* handle, even in the middle of collapse.

Describe a moment when your body, intuition, or emotions knew something before your mind could catch up.

What belief or pattern no longer fits you, and how does it feel when you think about letting it go?

Journaling Exercise:

Start by drawing a line down the middle of a journal page. Label the left column **“What’s Not Working”** and the right column **“What Might Be Possible.”**

In the left column, let yourself name anything that feels stuck, heavy, or off. Be honest, but gentle.

Then — without trying to fix anything — move to the right column. For each item, ask:
What small thing *could* work instead? What shift could lighten this, even slightly?

You’re not committing to change right now — you’re just letting possibility speak.

This exercise isn’t about solving everything. It’s about noticing what part of you is already starting to move toward light.

Creative Activity: *Postcard From the Turning Point*

Imagine you've just crossed an invisible threshold. You're not “there” yet — but you're no longer where you were.

On a blank piece of paper, write a **postcard from this in-between place**.

Include:

- A **short message to your past self** (the one still stuck)
- A **note to your future self** (the one who's walking the new path)
- A sketch, symbol, or image that represents this moment of shift

You can decorate it however you want — words, colors, shapes, even a small collage. The point is to **make this moment real**. To give your shift form.

Tuck it somewhere safe, or tape it to a mirror. It's your reminder:

You are already moving.

Section 4: *Claiming the Real You*

“I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.”

— *Louisa May Alcott, from Little Women*

There comes a point when unlearning old patterns isn't enough—you must begin to build something new. This section is about reclaiming your voice, values, and truth from under the rubble of who you were told to be.

By now, you've seen where the cracks formed and what no longer works. Now it's time to identify what *does*. This is the part of the journey where you stop reacting to life and begin responding—with clarity, with compassion, and with a growing sense of who you truly are beneath all the roles, expectations, and obligations.

In *Making Luck*, this stage shows up as I start to notice what my body needs, what my soul resists, and what I'm hungry for—creativity, autonomy, honesty, rest. You may find your own version of these needs. Or you may find something entirely different.

This section invites you to begin naming those things. The real you has always been there, waiting not just to be found—but to be welcomed back.

Goal: To help you identify your core values, authentic needs, and emerging truths so you can begin aligning your life with who you really are.

Reflective Prompts:

What parts of yourself have you been hiding or suppressing in order to “fit in” or be accepted?

What brings you energy—even if it seems silly, childish, or impractical?

Think about a time you felt deeply at peace or truly seen. What was happening? Who were you with? What does that reveal about your needs?

In what situations do you feel most “you”? What do those situations have in common?

What messages did you internalize about what it means to be “successful”? How do they feel in your body when you hold them up to the light?

Activity: Core Values Clarification

Instructions:

Circle or highlight 8–10 values from the list below that resonate with you. Then narrow your selection to your top 3–5.

Sample Values:

Curiosity • Freedom • Integrity • Creativity • Honesty • Joy • Solitude • Security • Adventure • Connection • Compassion • Impact • Beauty • Truth • Learning • Playfulness • Justice • Belonging • Bravery • Humility • Innovation • Accountability • Adaptability • Dependability • Boldness • Authenticity • Autonomy • Balance • Fame • Faith • Growth • Friendship • Influence • Kindness • Loyalty • Poise • Recognition • Respect • Self-respect • Service • Status • Trustworthiness • Wealth • Wisdom • Peace • Love • Pleasure • Popularity • Learning • Leadership • Knowledge • Optimism • Responsibility • Happiness

For each of your top values, reflect in your journal:

- How has this value shown up in your life—even when things were hard?
- What happens when this value is missing from your life?

Optional Creative Exercise:

Create a “Self-Knowing Collage”

Gather images, textures, colors, or words that represent how you want to feel in your life—whether you use old magazines, a Pinterest board, or hand-drawn sketches. Let your intuitive self lead the process. Then, write a short paragraph:

- What do you notice about the patterns?
- Is there a theme?
- What does this say about what matters most to you?

Section 5: *Letting Go and Moving Forward*

“You do not have to be good... You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.”

— *Mary Oliver, from Wild Geese*

Letting go isn't about forgetting or pretending something didn't matter. It's about making peace with the past so it no longer defines your future. It's choosing to release roles, expectations, or versions of yourself that no longer fit—even if they once did.

In this section, you'll be invited to process grief, offer yourself forgiveness, and begin envisioning what forward might look like. This isn't about tidy resolutions or tying things up in bows. This is about making space—for healing, for rest, for movement.

Letting go might feel like free fall. But you're not flailing anymore. You're learning to steer.

Goal: To release outdated identities, grieve what's been lost, and create space for self-forgiveness, healing, and forward motion.

Reflective Prompts:

What belief systems, roles, or relationships are you ready to release?

What guilt, shame, or self-blame are you carrying that doesn't belong to you?

Who (or what) do you need to forgive in order to move forward?

What version of yourself are you ready to say goodbye to—with love?

What version of yourself are you finally ready to welcome?

Activity: “*Burn It*” or “*Bury It*” Ritual

Choose something you’re ready to release: a belief, a memory, a story, a should. Write it down. Then either:

- **Burn it** (safely), symbolizing release and transformation, or
- **Bury it**, as a gesture of closure and peace.

Follow up in your journal: What do you feel now that this is gone?

Optional Creative Exercise: *Write a Letter from Your Future Self*

Imagine it's five years from now. You've let go of the things that held you back and built a life that fits.

What would your future self thank you for? What guidance or reassurance do they have for you now?

Consider writing this letter in your future self's handwriting, if that feels playful or grounding.

Section 6: *Making Luck*

“The universe buries strange jewels deep within us all, and then stands back to see if we can find them.”

— *Elizabeth Gilbert, from Big Magic*

This final section is about integration, intention, and claiming your own version of success.

By now, you’ve likely unearthed parts of your story that were hidden beneath obligation, fear, or cultural conditioning. You’ve met your patterns with curiosity. You’ve grieved losses, confronted old narratives, and begun to articulate what matters most to *you*—not to your family, society, or resume.

Now, you’re invited to shape what comes next.

This section is less about plans and more about **piloting your own story forward**—with insight, integrity, and yes, a little luck. But not luck as something handed to you. **Luck as something you make**—through alignment, honesty, and agency.

This isn’t about tying things up neatly. It’s about giving yourself permission to live a life that fits.

Goal: To help you define success on your own terms, integrate the lessons you’ve uncovered, and craft a personal manifesto that aligns with who you truly are.

Reflective Prompts:

What does success mean to you now, in this season of life?

What would a “life that fits” feel like—emotionally, energetically, spiritually?

What rhythms or habits help you stay grounded in your own truth?

In what ways can you make your own luck, rather than wait for it?

What systems, structures, or relationships support your personal definition of success?

Core Activity: *Write Your Personal Manifesto*

Using everything you've learned through this journey, write a one-page manifesto for the life you are building. You can write it as:

- A series of "I believe..." or "I will..." statements
- A mission or vision statement
- A poem or metaphor (e.g., "I am a rainforest in a city of sidewalks")
- A narrative paragraph beginning with "My life works best when..."

Don't worry about it being perfect. This is your *current* truth, and it can evolve.

Optional Creative Exercise: *Design Your “Making Luck” Map*

Draw or collage a visual map of what a lucky life looks like to you. Include:

- values, people, places
- goals or milestones
- things that propel you
- what made you strong

Use whatever format feels natural: mind map, doodles, Pinterest board, cut-and-paste collage, or even a flowchart of chaos and calm.

Closing Prompt:

If you were to pass this workbook on to someone else, what would you want to say to them?
What would you tell them about making their own luck?

You are Making Your Luck

You've made it to the end of this companion workbook — and whether you journaled every prompt, doodled your way through the exercises, or just let the ideas simmer quietly inside you, *you showed up for yourself*. That's the heart of this work: choosing to be present with your story, your patterns, your longings, and your power.

This isn't a workbook with a finish line. It's a portal.

A portal into a version of your life that's *crafted*, not inherited. *Rooted*, not restless. *Unfolding*, not dictated.

"Making luck" was never about chasing good fortune or controlling outcomes. It's about noticing the patterns you didn't know were there. It's about realizing you're not broken — you're unlearning systems that never made space for who you are. It's about defining success on *your* terms, in a world that loves to hand you someone else's script.

This is your life. Your experiment. Your landscape to explore.

So pause here and take a moment. Revisit what you've written. Breathe in the pages you've filled — even the hard ones — and offer yourself the grace of becoming.

Your story isn't over.

And now, you're holding the pen.

Resources

I've provided here some resources with which I have personal experience. The categories below aren't exclusive; some books may talk about more than the category within which I've placed it.

Adrenal Fatigue & Burnout

Borysenko, J. (2011). *Fried: Why you Burn Out and How to Revive*. Hay House.

Turner, N. (2010). *The Hormone Diet: Lose Fat, Gain Strength, Live Younger Longer* by Natasha Turner. Rodale Press.

Wilson, J.L. & Wright, J.V. (2001). *Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome*. Smart Publications.

Creativity

Bowley, F. (2012). *The Art of Aliveness: A Creative Return to What Matters Most*. Hierophant Publishing.

Bowley, F. (2016). *Creative Revolution*. Quarto Publishing Group USA.

Cameron, J. (2002) *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. Tarcher/Putman Books.

Gilbert, E. (2015). *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. Riverhead Books.

Nordby, J. (2016). *Blessed are the Weird: a Manifesto for Creatives*. Manifesto Publishing House, Inc.

Narcissism

Orloff, J. (2018) *The Empath's Survival Guide: Life Strategies for Sensitive People*. Sounds True.

Stout, M. (2006). *The Sociopath Next Door*. Harmony.

Money Management

Cameron, J. and Bryan, M. (1992) *Money Drunk Money Sober: 90 Days to Financial Freedom*. Ballantine Wellspring.

Chilton, D. (1989) *The Wealthy Barber: The Common Sense Guide to Successful Financial Planning*. Financial Awareness Corp.

Kinder, G. (1999). *Seven Stages of Money Maturity: Understanding the Spirit and Value of Money in Your Life*. Dell Publishing

Orman, S. (2000). *The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom: Practical & Spiritual Steps So You Can Stop Worrying*. Three Rivers Press.

Vaz-Oxlade, G. (2012). *Money Rules: Rule Your Money or Your Money Will Rule You*. Collins.

Personality and Temperament

Cain, S. (2013). *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking*. Random House.

Jacobsen, M-E. (2000). *The Gifted Adult: A Revolutionary Guide for Liberating Everyday Genius*. Ballantine Books.

Kagan, J. (1994). *The Nature of the Child*. Basic Books; 10th Anniversary ed. edition.

Nerenberg, J. (2012). *Divergent Mind: Thriving in a World That Wasn't Designed for You*. HarperOne.

Prober, P. (2016). *Your Rainforest Mind: A Guide to the Well-Being of Gifted Adults and Youth*. GHF Press.

Sapala, L. (2019). *The INFJ Revolution*. Bowker.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Levine, P.A. & Frederick, A. (1997). *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*. North Atlantic Books.

Mate, G. (2011) *When the Body Says No: Exploring the Stress-Disease Connection*. Wiley.

Van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books.

Walker, P. (2013). *Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving: A Guide and Map for Recovering from Childhood Trauma*.

Success & Authenticity

Holden, R. (2005) *Authentic Success: Essential Lessons and Practices from the World's Leading Coaching Program and Success Intelligence*. Hay House.

Joseph, S. (2016) *Authentic: How to be Yourself and Why it Matters*. Piatkus.

About the author

Yvonne Kjorlien is an anthropologist, writer, and independent creator based in Calgary, Alberta. A former consulting archaeologist, she now works in research facilitation while building a creative life that integrates art, publishing, and public education.

Her work explores autonomy, identity, and what it means to design a life on your own terms.

Learn more at yvonnekjorlien.com.

Also By Yvonne Kjorlien

Elise Marquette adventures

Value (a short story)

Further Adventures of Elise Marquette (a novella)

The Reluctant Archaeologist

The Main Gate

Fate series

Waiting for Fate

The Skirts of Fate (coming soon)

Non-Fiction

Making Luck: A True Story About Quitting School and Getting a Life

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