

Passport



Purpose



Journeys of Self-Discovery

led by Jeannine LaSovage,
Martha Toth & Serina Brown of
Michigan Reach Out

Users Praise *Passport 2 Purpose*

“The first lesson is to recognize the story one is stuck in and then want to re-write it. The book can help no matter how far along we are on our life’s journey, particularly if you’re broken down on the metaphorical side of the road without a jack.”
– Anne, retired attorney, San Diego

“My children know I have been an impostor. What I said I wanted them to be like is not who I was. The investment in time to learn about beliefs and to seriously define your own and then live them out could not be better spent.”
– Blake, father and business leader, Ann Arbor

“Boundaries, feelings, beliefs and values – no one ‘teaches’ you these things. It takes hard work to learn about ourselves, but is it a requirement for being the kind of persons we want to become.”
– Mark, mentor and college student

“Committing to paper my beliefs and values has given me real insight into those areas that maybe don’t ‘line up.’ The portion on boundaries has really helped me – at 63 years of age! I can look back and see where setting boundaries has been a perpetual problem for me. Most helpful!”
– Susie L., Ypsilanti

“We have choices. We don’t have to keep being the person that we are today. That is the message that I found most encouraging. [The book] is like a map. You can face who you have become and then make some choices about how you want to change, and then what you do with your life.”
– Brian, mentor, college student, president of a fraternity

“Through journaling, I realized that I was a pretty judgmental, selfish, and callous person. I have learned some of what happened in my life to bring me to this point. [This book] is like a personal manual. You spend time with it and you will start the process to change and become someone that embodies your values.”
– Max, mentor, university professor

“When we moved to this country, I thought my children and my husband would keep our faith, our beliefs, our traditions and our values. Slowly but surely, everything we stood for was challenged. When we parents do not know and cling to our beliefs and traditions, our children will grow up without them. They will be lost. We must have personal and family boundaries to protect our values.”

– Victoria, mother and recent immigrant

“I had been on an achievement merry-go-round most of my life. As a pleaser, I pretty much went along the path that my dad, my counselor, and my coach put out for me. I think every teen and college student needs something like this, to have the luxury of time and guidance to figure out who we are individually and who we can become. Then we can live our own lives.”
– Marcia, mentor and college student

“When I became a mentor, I immediately saw that I was grooming my mentee to be like me. Just do what is expected of you, excel, and that is your life. I was stuck from the first session when we were to try to help our kids think about their beliefs, their passions, and what character traits they valued the most in themselves and others. You can’t make huge changes right away. You have to keep taking steps in the direction of the person you want to be and packing up in a box the robot you had become.”
– Alex, mentor and college student

“When I started learning about beliefs and values and trying to choose what mine really are, the word ‘character’ started to make sense to me. I want certain character traits. I want to be known for these character traits. I wrote down what I want them to be. And now I look at them and see if I am really doing them.”
– Jason, Ypsilanti

“The book does affirm the lessons I’ve learned from various places (therapy, self-help books, 12-step meetings) into a neat and powerful package. What seems most relevant to me right now is that it supports genuine spirituality. I know I spent many years ‘trying to be good’ and seeking approval in the eyes of others or attaining holiness by my own efforts. I’ll pray that your book is found by people that can benefit from it (practically everyone).”
– Susan D., Ann Arbor

“When I lost my job, I was devastated. I fell into despair. I groped for what to do next. I came across Passport 2 Purpose on the internet. I printed out the free excerpts. This book is really helping me to step back and breathe and use this time to figure out who I am, what I believe about myself and my life, and to be patient before jumping into something.”
– James, Chicago

“When I started honestly learning about beliefs and values, I saw that what I called a belief was actually a fleeting opinion. My opinions shifted and changed all the time. We really need this to get us to stop and realize we will never know what we really believe and want to stand up for unless we take time to figure out our core beliefs.”
– Veronica, Toledo

Copyright © 2017 Michigan Reach Out

ISBN: 978-1-63492-851-9

LCCN: 2011939628

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the authors.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2017

Fourth Edition

Cover Design by Martha Toth
Typeset by Martha Toth

Photo & Graphic Credits

Martha Toth: title page, 8, 31, 48, 54, 56, 57, 63, 64, 80, 98, 108, 109, 120, 142, 153, 157, 159

Valerie Toth: cover, 6, 24, 29, 38, 66, 71, 83, 86, 88, 104, 116, 126, 127, 130, 132

Linda Salesky: page facing 1, 3, 58, 66, 73, 76, 136, 145

Anne Mayer: 5, 13, 21, 95, 120, 147, 158

Jesse Karnes: 34, 52, 59, 90, 110

Mollie VanDerBos: 111, 113, 156

Darius Dixon: 117, 150

Alice Wright: 15

Beth Pepper: 157 (bottom)

PASSPORT 2 PURPOSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Journey 1: Beliefs & Values	5
Why we need to be alone with our thoughts	10
Personal Beliefs Revealed	13
Time for a change?.....	15
Learning from a Child	20
Origins of Beliefs & Values	24
What if we missed out in childhood?	29
Choosing New Beliefs.....	34
Choosing New Values	39
Group Beliefs and Values	48
What We Have Learned.....	52
My Beliefs & Values Compass	54
Journey 2: Healthy Boundaries	57
How beliefs become boundaries	60
Concept of Physical Boundaries	63
Boundaries may require defense	66
When boundaries are violated.....	71
Personal boundaries as expressions of ownership.....	74
Mental or Internal Boundaries.....	81
Emotional boundaries	83
Signs of Boundary Trouble	88
Our Sphere of Influence	94
Boundaries of friendship in a new age	98
Evolution of Boundaries	103
Journey 3: Understanding Feelings	109
Origins of Feelings	112
Clues to our critical memories	115
Decoding the clues.....	119
Feelings and Relationships	125
Feelings about ourselves.....	129
Consider the source of criticism.....	135
Feelings we engender in others.....	138
Chasing happiness.....	141
Managing Strong Emotions	145
Making peace with the past.....	146
Second thoughts about recurring emotions.....	147
A Special Case: Feelings about Learning.....	153
Taking the Reins	156
Summary of Our Journeys	158
About the Authors	161



- Introduction -

Life Is Not a Dress Rehearsal

You only get one chance at life. Who's writing your life story?

Do you know where you're going and why? When you come to forks in the road, do you choose your path deliberately or just coast along in the deepest ruts? Are you enjoying the adventure of your life journey or finding it an arduous trek?

Do you have the courage to get off autopilot and to take responsibility for directing your life and writing your own story? If you pick up this book, you are committing to taking charge of your life. You are ready to give up the excuses, to stop blaming others, and to put in real effort—because only *you* can find *your* answers.

Do you feel trapped like a hamster in a wheel, running hard but getting nowhere? Things will not change unless you step off. If you find yourself repeating the same mistakes—in any arena of your life—then you are overdue for serious self-reflection. Life is not a dress rehearsal. The time to make your days meaningful and satisfying is right now.

Passport 2 Purpose is about stepping off the treadmill to nowhere to regroup, to analyze the path of your past, and to replot your journey with real direction and purpose. We are here to help.

Where are you going in life?

That is the central question behind this book. It is a platform for self-exploration. Throughout each chapter, there are Journal Entry pages, where you may personalize the exploration by reflecting upon yourself and your life. We highly recommend that you take time for these meditations, although you certainly need not use all of them. Pay attention, though, when one catches your eye, as that likely indicates an unresolved issue for you. This is not an assignment on which you will be graded! It is a gift to yourself.

Have you lost your way?

Many of us feel lost. The teen confused about who and what she might become, the college student who discovered he chose the wrong major, the young adult who got her dream job and found she hates it, the newly unemployed, those with so many interests and so much potential they don't know how to

focus on one, those who have retired and have the luxury of time to do what they want, those who have suffered losses that upend their lives—all have in common that “*Now, what?*” sense of being lost without a guide.

We are offering you a guide, a map, a compass, a passport to a future filled with purpose and satisfaction. We cannot tell you what you should do, of course, but we have successfully led others through the process of figuring it out for themselves.

Where you should go depends entirely upon who you are. Yet few of us spend much time or get much help in analyzing ourselves. We are certain that making the effort to know yourself is time that could not be better spent. The alternative is drifting aimlessly through life, rather than setting off on a journey with a clear idea of where you are going and why.

Getting to know yourself means deciding what you value and believe.

Who are you, really?

Who do you want to become?

What are your beliefs and values?

Do your actions line up with your beliefs?

Do you have a sense of purpose for your life?

How are you making a difference in the lives of others?

We guide you through determining your personal answers to these important questions.

Does the way you live truly reflect what you say you value and believe?

Once we can say definitively what we stand for, do we prove it with our actions? Much of the unhappiness and dysfunction in our lives can be traced back to a disconnect between our values and our behavior. We can help you understand why that is so.

Have you thought deeply about how your childhood experiences have molded your feelings and reactions as an adult? Are you unconsciously replaying childhood roles without questioning why? Are you driven to act in ways that are not in your own best interests? Insight into your own history can allow you to live more intentionally, to assert the control that is rightfully yours.

No one is an island.

We may think that we come into this world alone and we leave this world alone but, for most of our days here, we are in casual or significant relationships with others. We believe that no one can be truly happy as a loner, since we are innately social creatures, but we often need help negotiating this tricky terrain. There is an inherent tension between asserting our individuality and modifying our behavior to allow for the reciprocal give-and-take of successful relationships.

A deep understanding of who you are, at your core, and how you want to live will guide you in building and preserving rewarding relationships throughout life. Only when you understand your unconscious impulses and their sources can you choose to override them. Only when you know exactly who you are looking for can you choose complementary souls for the voluntary relationships that bring you joy. Developing wisdom about what life has taught you will give you the tools needed to repair relationships that have become disappointing or unfulfilling.



That is why there is a “2” in our title: as difficult as they can be, relationships are the source of our most enduring life satisfaction. How crucial it is to be in relationship with others that we strive to be like, with whom we accomplish tasks that are important to us, who can support and advise us when the journey is bumpy or even outright catastrophic.

With the right direction and companions, the pleasure and satisfaction of your journey may surprise you.