

Life's Path (Second Edition) is about making the life you want your way and making choices that bring you happiness.

Life's Path
Your Life. Your Way.
(Second Edition - Revised, Updated & Expanded)
by Orlando Blake, Ph.D. CPT.

Order the book from the publisher [Booklocker.com](https://www.booklocker.com)

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/10766.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

SECOND EDITION

Life's Path

Your Life. Your Way.

REVISED, UPDATED & EXPANDED

Orlando E. Blake PhD CPT

First Edition © 2010 Orlando Blake, Ph.D. CPT. All rights reserved.
Second Edition © 2019 Orlando Blake, Ph.D. CPT. All rights reserved.

www.blake-group.com

ISBN: 978-1-64718-079-9

All rights reserved. The contents of this book are protected by United States and international copyright law. 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 author. Please do not participate or encourage piracy of copyrighted material in violation of our rights.

However, you are allowed to make copies of the worksheets as you deem necessary for your personal use during the course of reading and using this book. This free permission is restricted to you and the paper reproduction of the materials for personal education. It does not allow for large scale or systematic reproduction or distribution, transmission, electronic reproduction, or inclusion in any publication offered for sale or used for commercial purposes – none of which may be done without the prior written permission of the author.

Limit of Liability & Disclaimer of Warranty: This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering legal, therapeutic, clinical, or psychological services. The publisher and author are not offering such advice in this publication. If legal, therapeutic, clinical, or psychological advice or other expert assistance is required; the services of a competent professional should be sought. No warranty may be created or extended by the author, publisher or The Blake Group. The advice, strategies and techniques contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The publisher, author and The Blake Group shall not be and are not liable for any loss or damages including, but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Readers should be aware that Internet Web and other reference sites that may be offered as citations and/or sources for further information may have changed or disappeared between the time this was written and when it is read.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2019
Second Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Blake, Ph.D. CPT, Orlando E.
Life's Path Second Edition Revised, Updated & Expanded by Orlando E. Blake, Ph.D. CPT
Library of Congress Control Number: 2019917853

“I had no idea how helpful & crucial this would be. I’m a new and more confident person as I leave today.”

Monica Eng, Therapist

“Without fail, the curriculum was extremely challenging, due to the abstract perspectives; only then to turn around, and pull out genuine and accurate analyses to solve complex problems... your course proved most advantageous for developing critical “soft skills... I’ll keep you posted as I continue on my professional and academic journeys.”

Antonio McCloud, Financial Analyst, Boeing

“Thank you for sharing your expertise and adding to my cache of knowledge. I know I’m a better person to have known you.”

Sandra Wolfe, Medical Director

“If you only you knew how much you opened my mind on a professional level and personal... I continue to lean more through your website.”

Jennifer Smith, Recreation & Aquatics Manager, City of Douglas

“I really enjoyed your class...I think you are an incredible professor and you made that class extremely interesting. That was one of the best classes that I have taken in graduate school. (No, I'm not just saying this for a better grade...it truly was a great class!) Thanks!”

Jenny Baumel, Claremont Graduate University

“Excellent... always inspiring!”

Leslie Walton, Sony Pictures

“I just wanted to thank you for a very enjoyable and enlightening workshop. You are obviously very good at what you do and work well together. Unlike most seminars I've been to, you had my attention consistently throughout the entire class. It appeared that the same was true for the other attendees.”

Wendell Harness, Board Member, APLS Inc.

Table of Contents

About the Author	ix
Preface to the Second Edition	xi
Introduction to the Second Edition	xiii
Author's Note	xv
A Few Words About Words	xv
Acknowledgments	xvii
From the First Edition	xvii
Preface to Walking the Path	xix
Introduction: Where We've Been; Where We're Going	xxi
Objectives & Principles of Life's Path	xxv
Key Principles of the Life's Path Program	xxvii
How to Use This Book	xxix
Part One: Choosing To Live	1
Chapter 1: Living a Radiant Life	2
Chapter 2: Becoming an Individual	6
Chapter 3: An Unexamined Life	8
Chapter 4: Living On Purpose	10
Chapter 5: Self Fulfillment	12
Part Two: Skills for Success	15
Chapter 6: What It Takes to Walk the Path	16
Chapter 7: Skills of Successful People.....	17
Chapter 8: Self-Acceptance.....	22
Chapter 9: Change Your Beliefs & Change Your Habits	26
Chapter 10: Effective Thinking	29
Chapter 11: Creative Thinking	31
Chapter 12: Making Decisions & Choices.....	37
Chapter 13: Living From Your Strengths	41
Chapter 14: How Do You Measure Success	49
Part Three: The Pursuit of Happiness	53
Chapter 15: What Is Happiness?.....	54
Chapter 16: Eye of the Beholder	62
Part Four: Dealing With Change	65
Chapter 17: Riding the Roller Coaster.....	66
Chapter 18: Let's Move: a parable about resistance to change	70
Chapter 19: Creative Personal Change.....	72
Chapter 20: Response-Ability.....	81
Chapter 21: Reflection Session	82
Part Five: Emotional Healing	83
Chapter 22: Honoring Our Emotions	84
Chapter 23: Transform Fear With Positive Energy.....	87
Chapter 24: Toxic Shame.....	90

Part Six: Beliefs & Values	95
Chapter 25: Beliefs - Conventional vs. Reality	96
Chapter 26: Values	104
Chapter 27: Personal Values Clarification Exercise	106
Chapter 28: Working Your Values Exercise	108
Chapter 29: Reflection Session	111
Chapter 30: Inner Voice Messages	112
Chapter 31: Reflection Session - It's All About the Feeling.....	115
Chapter 32: Understanding Our Stress	116
Chapter 33: Worry	121
Chapter 34: Valley of the "Shoulds" Exercise	123
Chapter 35: Self Reflection & Self Awareness Session	126
Chapter 36: Reflection Session - Self-Awareness Feedback	129
Chapter 37: Mission Messages	130
Chapter 38: Life & Career Decisions	131
Chapter 39: Our Unique Gifts.....	133
Part Seven: Moving Forward	135
Chapter 40: Getting Unstuck	136
Chapter 41: Clear It Up.....	138
Chapter 42: Risk Graph.....	143
Chapter 43: Goals & Objectives.....	146
Chapter 44: Support.....	149
Chapter 45: Commitment	151
Chapter 46: Personal Strategy Exercise.....	154
Chapter 47: Making Contact.....	156
Chapter 48: "I Want..." Exercise	157
Part Eight: Career Exploration and Resilience	159
Chapter 49: I Am a Career; and So Can You.	160
Chapter 50: Describing Your Career Objective	193
Chapter 51: Life as Metaphor Exercise.....	196
Chapter 52: The Ten Steps©	198
Chapter 53: Genuine Happiness Exercise 1	208
Chapter 54: Genuine Happiness Exercise 2	210
Chapter 55: Genuine Happiness Exercise 3	211
Chapter 56: Conclusion.....	215
Chapter 57: Your Development Plan	216
Final Thoughts	219
The Blake Group	221
References & Bibliography	223

How to Use This Book

The best way to use this book is to think of it as one of your tools to generate thoughts, feelings and of course, action. Read through the entire book first before you complete any exercises. That way you will understand what we are trying to accomplish together. Then go back to the beginning and read for reaction.

Read and react to what you are reading. Make notes in the margins or in a journal about how you feel or what you think when you read the text. Next, go through the exercises at your own pace. Don't rush through them. Record your reaction to the exercises in your journal separately from the workbook. Take time to reflect on your experience of the exercises. Revisit your reaction journal after you have finished the book and the exercises. You will see how much you have grown through the process.

As you take action to achieve your goals, journal your thoughts, feelings and record your accomplishments. Go back to your exercises and process them again and again if it helps you become clearer about what you want to achieve and what you are accomplishing.

Take time to celebrate your accomplishments. Treat yourself well; give yourself permission to enjoy the path to wholeness. Be grateful for the experience of the journey. Express your gratitude in your reaction journal or to other people that are in your support system. Share your experience with others. Maybe you can invigorate their life with your enthusiasm!

Part One: Choosing To Live

...everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence.

American Indigenous Religions, Mourning Dove [Christine Quintasket] (Salish)

For self is the master of self; self is the refuge of self. Therefore, tame yourself, like a merchant tames a noble horse.

Buddhist saying

...no matter what stage or grade of life, the call brings up the curtain. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.

Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces

Life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds you down or polishes you depends on what you're made of.

Jacob Braude

Chapter 1: Living a Radiant Life

To go to a new level on the outside you have to go to a new level on the inside. - Todd Duncan

Do you view life as a problem to be solved? Or do you see it as a mystery to be welcomed? Now is your time to see it as both.

Taking a journey to an unknown place is always exciting and scary. That is why we do it so seldom in a lifetime.

This book is about making a choice and taking action for a more genuine life. It is also about tapping into the mystery of life. Jung defined life as, “a luminous pause between two great mysteries which yet are one.” Socrates said that an unexamined life was not worth living.

But what does that mean to you? How much do you want success and self-fulfillment? How do you define success? How far are you willing to go to achieve it? What are the mysteries in your life that you want to uncover and learn from?

If I asked you if you want to be successful, you would answer yes. Do you want to be happy? Who wouldn't? We dream about it. We say we want happiness. But maybe we aren't sure what it is. Maybe we aren't sure we want to pay the price. When it is time to act, we hesitate. When it is time to act, we may even retreat. Our words don't fool anybody. Not even ourselves.

The Life's Path framework in this book has been developed to address the major tenets of a holistic approach to help you move toward your definition of success, happiness and authenticity. The complete integration of this framework is called: Radiant Living. Why radiant? I use radiant because if you can fully integrate these aspects into unity and wholeness, then you are truly a shining radiant star for others to see.

You can be an example of how to live in the solution of your evolving self and genuine self. Radiance shines a light on the mystery of life so we can see ourselves more fully and completely. We learn to see and accept ourselves while evolving and integrating what we learn at the same time. The process requires that we immerse our-self into the process completely to emerge our best-self

There are three critical issues facing us today: vision, character, and competence. Vision has to do with aspirations, dreams and goals of what is possible and desirable to do. Character deals with the habits or patterns of thinking, feeling, willingness, and behaving that relate to choices and consequences, to justice and equity, and to morality and ethics. Competence concerns the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills that link to successful living. All three issues are intertwined, difficult to isolate and form the foundation of our ability to evolve.

There are three interrelated aspects of our human capability for happiness:

- Intrapersonal – inside ourselves. The way we relate to ourselves. The way we treat, talk, think and feel about ourselves.
- Interpersonal – the way we interact with other people. This includes family (mate selection, spousal relationships, parenting); friends (peer groups, interpersonal relations), work and career (arts and professions), wealth and finances (material wealth, sources of income, stewardship), and

- Social - the type, quantity and quality of relationships in our community; sociocultural (involvement with social/cultural issues such world peace, unity of humankind, gender and racial equality, etc.)

There are also three *core essentials* (spiritual, moral character, and personal style) included in the above three categories. The three core elements are considered central to interpersonal and intrapersonal capability. Each element supports and is in turn, influenced by each of the other elements:

- Spiritual: deep and significant relationships to self, to others, to nature, and to the major unknowns of the universe, including its origins and the origin of life. This may or may not include a relationship with a Supreme Being or Creator.
- Moral character: the knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to reasoning, valuing, committing to, and habitually acting in accordance with standards of right and wrong;
- Personal Style: conceptions of temperament, intelligence, learning style, and personality that describe individual differences related to preferences in the intrapersonal and interpersonal spheres of our life.

The Life's Path framework also recognizes that the core essentials are developed in interaction with social and cultural influences. Interactions among different people, beliefs, institutions, etc. form the social aspects of our lives and influence our development and behavior. As a child, the first interactions are with the family, school, religious organizations, and friends or peer groups. As we mature and we become more aware of our global village, such areas include the culture and the global conditions that impact our sense of security and daily life.

There are many sources of knowledge about what it means to develop human potential and what we should use to define how to live a radiant life. Science, religion, philosophy, history, literature, and the arts each address different perspectives. Each has different standards by which to judge perceptions of reality, beliefs, values and principles. For example, history tells us what happened in the past while science identifies the concepts, principles, and laws that govern what happened. Religion provides a vision of what is possible and the moral code necessary to achieve it. The arts express history, science, and religion in creative and meaningful forms. Philosophy provides the organizing ideas that show the possibilities of connections among ideas. Philosophy can also show us related meanings and potential logical gaps or inaccuracies. Each of these can provide standards by which we can judge how to develop our human potential.

However, success in anything we choose to do is the result of:

- First developing a vision of what is possible.
- Developing written goals to achieve that desired outcome.
- Taking action and assessing results.
- Reflecting and adjusting until desired results are achieved.

Developing our potential and making a choice for happiness and then living in that solution is not any different. From this viewpoint, we can see ourselves as dynamic beings. We are self-organizing, living in relationship with our internal world (intrapersonal) and external (interpersonal and social) world. That is, internally we are simultaneously addressing spiritual, physical, and social issues and needs. Externally, we are influencing and being influenced by the natural, social, and cultural contexts in which we live.

Why bother considering these things? We bother because if we are going to take personal responsibility for our success and happiness, we need to understand and appreciate the whole picture. If we are going to start doing something for ourselves, we need to go for it! We need to understand our world around us and seek the solution within.

We need to understand where we are given our life situation. We need to understand how we are dealing with the interrelated aspects of our potential for success and happiness. We need to understand how each aspect of our intrapersonal, interpersonal and social worldview is affecting us before we can change for our personal wellbeing.

Life's Path approach to coaching is about unifying the whole person. Life's Path process and approach is not based on any pre-conceived theory or set of beliefs. It has evolved organically over a period of years in the field of personal and professional development. Our approach to the route of self-discovery covers every aspect of the whole person. As Charles Bentley, Ph.D., Founder of Life Coach UK and Unitive™ coaching explains:

- At the rational level, it works experientially to bring to awareness obsolete and redundant patterns of acquired behavior
- At the emotional level it seeks to reconcile spontaneous feelings with intellectual insight
- At a psychological level, it aims to empower individuals with self-knowledge and the strength of their unique authenticity
- At the higher, integrated level of intuition, its goal is to facilitate personal development on issues of imagination, spirit and creativity

As an old saying explains, “We don't see the world as it is; we see it as we are”. You'll never be able to see what's really going on in the present if your attitudes and patterns of behavior remain stuck in the past. If you want to become aware of whom you really are - to start feeling comfortable in your own skin - you'll need to examine your own habitual outlook on life. You will need to discover the hidden and negative functions at work within you and work to bring them up to date and find yourself relevant to present reality.

It's a demanding and often difficult task, but you'll find the rewards are enormous. Personal authenticity is all about experiencing each event in life in the light of present reality, instead of through the distorting mirrors of the past.

Once you've become part of that experience, your entire being - mind, body and spirit - will become an instrument for opening up receptive channels of communication. It's a magical process: experiencing the power of the present instead of just observing it.

Within yourself you have the potential to integrate your internalized conflicts into a unitive whole, greater than the sum of its separate parts. The ultimate goal of Life's Path is to facilitate this liberating insight and action.

The Life's Path framework includes considering all these factors. The approach to coaching and personal development exemplified in this book is intended to integrate these factors as part of your journey to wholeness.

So, you might ask yourself, “Who am I and do I really want to know?” This question implies that “who I am” is constant. That is, once you answer the questions you can sit back and stop looking. But for really alive people this isn't the case. Who I am changes continually and when I am able to get in touch with my own process of changing, this energy becomes a more exciting part of living.

Consider this quote:

"...Change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not. Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him, but it does take place if one takes the time and effort to be what he is – to be fully invested in his current positions. By rejecting the role of change agent, we make meaningful and orderly change possible" (Bessler, 1970).

In other words, change begins with the idea that before we change, we must first be where and what we are. Neither we nor others can force change or stimulate change by insight. As poet David Whyte has said, any journey must begin from where we are, from the situation in which we find ourselves at this moment. In other words, for change to begin we must surrender the dream of what we would like to be because it is blocking us from being who we are.

Chapter 2: Becoming an Individual

The mystery of life can be narrowed by living consciously. In living consciously, we accept our adulthood and turn consciously, letting go of ego concerns, to begin a process of transformation. This experience is not a collapse of our essential selves, but a shedding of our assumptions.

As we look around for those who have gone before us, we look for models, behaviors we can emulate, and attitudes we can adopt. The assumption is that if we follow their program, we will learn who we are, and we will learn what life means. When that turns out not to be true, we feel disillusioned, anxious and even betrayed. We feel that no one really knows what life means and we cannot explain life's mysteries. Those who say that they know, we see as hucksters, satisfying their own truth not ours. No gurus then - for each of us, our path is different. After all is said, we wonder if we have been content with inadequate answers to the questions of life.

As you consider courageously pursuing and addressing the Life's Path program, no one can say where the journey will take you. We only know that we must accept responsibility for ourselves, that the path taken by others is not necessarily ours. And that what we are ultimately seeking lies within, not out there. It is only from within that we perceive these revelations.

The hero in each of us is required to answer the call of self-fulfillment (or self-actualization) and becoming a complete genuine individual. This conscious experience of seeking individuation and fulfilling the highest goal requires separating who we are from the sum of our experiences we have internalized. As we think of ourselves as more human, more individualized, our relations with others become less dependent; we ask less of others and more of ourselves. If we have traveled this path honestly, we reposition ourselves regarding the outer world – career, relationships, sources of empowerment and satisfaction. In asking more of ourselves and less of others, we give up disappointment in others from not “delivering” our happiness. We acknowledge that their responsibility is their own journey – just like ours.

If your courage holds through this Life's Path experience, it will bring you back to the life you have been cut off from. You will feel some sense of freedom. You may even realize that what happens outside does not matter if you have a vital connection to yourself. This new-found relationship with your inner life more than balances losses on the outer. The richness of the inner path proves at least as rewarding as worldly achievement.

So, the Life's Path process in this book, workshops and coaching enables us to know better, who we are. This leads us to acquire new tactics for living and thinking so we can work toward determining and then becoming who we want to be. You will discover that quickly engaging in this quest for honesty gives your life added depth, meaning and dimensions. Asking more and better questions will give you better autonomy. You will never see the world and your place in the world in quite the same way again as you expand your intellectual, imaginative, and personal horizons.

Contrary to popular belief, the more questions you have the firmer footing you are on. The more you know yourself, the more you can map out and set a meaningful path for your future. Self-understanding can put your life in new perspective. You can see your place in the scheme of things from new vistas and vantage points because you are further discovering your mind and your sense of self. Discovering your mind could be like discovering a new universe.

Answering the questions in the Life's Path program requires that you use your imagination. It requires that you dare to think up compelling alternatives to ways you are currently going about your

life and living. It requires that you take risks with your thinking and emotions. Then the even harder work involves taking concrete steps toward making your imaginative vision a reality.

Asking and answering questions can enable us to experiment and to try on for size different ways of seeing. As you answer the questions in this book, don't try to come up the definitive answer right away. Instead, try to come up with several different points of view and a several of potential answers. Play the devil's advocate with yourself and then ask, "What speaks for and against each of these perspectives?" Questions can take a long time to bear fruit.

Chapter 3: An Unexamined Life

If you recall, Plato said that an unexamined life was not worth living. Of course, there are those days where we might prefer to be relieved of that anxiety. However, sooner or later we must address those existential questions. On one occasion after a presentation, a man came to talk to me and asked, “Why should I think about these things? Why does it matter if I am happy?”

“Because,” I replied, “if you don’t you might be living someone else’s life.”

While I am not sure, I persuaded him to pursue fervently an examined life his response is one we all have made. In other words, we might respond to the prospect of examining our lives with, “Why bother?”

I think the response to that question is another question:

What would avoiding the questions do for you?

The real question is: What are the questions we need to address?

Is an unexamined life worth living? Here is an example of looking at that question from at least two perspectives:

I think it is pointless to examine your life, philosophically or otherwise. Hindsight is always 20/20. If you spend time brooding over your past, you’re not living in the present. What good does it do? It doesn’t change anything. It just keeps you from living now.

The alternate view:

If you don’t examine your life, you can never make changes that will make life more fulfilling here and now. You need to look at the decisions you made and ask, “How can I do better next time?” You don’t do it to feel guilty or to be hard on yourself, but to give today more meaning and clarity.

You may be asking, or you may have frequently asked yourself, “Why can’t I just be normal and accept the fact that (jobs) (relationships) etc. are not meant to be all that fulfilling. Why can’t I just accept the fact that most adults end up abandoning their more youthful and idealistic aspirations?”

The answer is: Because life is not a dress rehearsal. Because you shouldn’t settle for less than doing exactly what you want to do with your life, despite the risks or because of the risks.

I don’t think you can examine your life in every way possible. You wouldn’t know every way possible and you would be overwhelmed in the attempt. You wouldn’t get around to doing the everyday business of life. The real secret is to allow yourself to be open to new ways of examining your life. That is, new perspectives and new methods. This openness allows us to experience the variety of alternatives and delve into the following questions honestly:

Why am I doing this?

What brings me to this work?

Why do I think I need to make this journey?

What is urging me to make a change in my life?

What is calling me?

What gives life meaning?

What gives my life meaning?

What is the meaning of life?

Whose life am I talking about?

What do I mean by meaning?

What can I do to give my life the kind of meaning that makes my spirit soar?

What can I do that makes me feel like I am making the world at least a better place to live in?

What do I need to unlearn and what information do I need?

Instead of focusing on the outer cosmos, these questions ask us to journey within; our inner cosmos. You need to be in touch with that part of you that searches for something different, seeks meaning, explores and wanders. You can use these questions and the exercises in this book to open up new realms of self-knowledge while at the same time exposing a great deal of error, superstition and dogma. Any question can be examined from different perspectives and their relevance to you. Sometimes you don't know what question the most lasting and significant impact will have until you take a risk and delve into them for a while.

Chapter 6: What It Takes to Walk the Path

As you read this, I am sure you are sincere about wanting to achieve happiness, self-fulfillment and your definition of success. Everyone has a similar dream. Most of us have more than one dream. There are at least three qualities that will set you up for getting what you want.

Everyone dreams and desires. But do you have a burning desire or passion about what you want? Is your desire a quest to get what you want? Some people would say that it is a single-minded obsession. I would say that it is connecting with your passion in such a way that you are excited about taking the risk to reach your ideal. This connection will give the energy for your journey on your path. Your aspiration for what you want, plus your passion coupled with the energy to take action is what gives birth to your immutable happiness.

Connecting with your passion is not enough. You must know what you want. Clarity about your goal is critical. If you don't know where you are going you will surely get there. You must be clear about what you want and delineate your path to happiness no matter how tempting the tangents along the way might be.

Now comes the most important and hardest part: perseverance. You must realize that there will be some stalling points along the way. There will be setbacks – some will be our fault, and many others won't. What will we do when we meet an obstacle? What will we do when, despite our best laid out plans, we stumble? Read “Skills of Successful People” for the answer. But when it does happen, reach for support, use your internal loving voice and accept yourself.

Realize anything can happen so; believe in yourself. Cultivate an attitude that you have the power to accomplish whatever you desire. First, you must decide if an obstacle is going to get you down or if you are going to look at it as a challenge to overcome. Should you decide that an obstacle is too great, you must take what you have learned and turn it into a positive experience. It is your choice how to react to situations.

Welcome change. The world is always changing. Don't be afraid of change. While change involves risk, you can use change to your advantage. I devote a chapter in this book covering change and how you can take advantage of all change offers.

Chapter 17: Riding the Roller Coaster

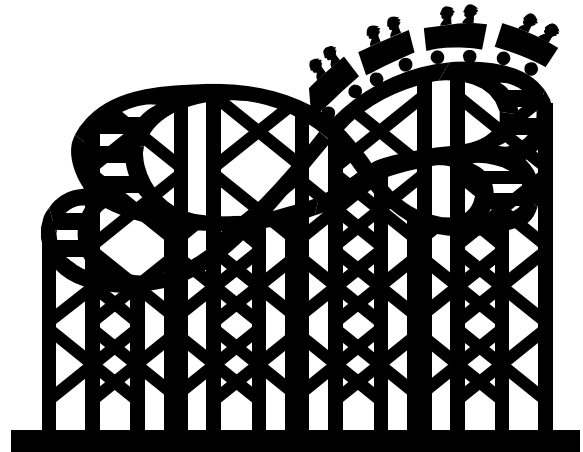
Adapted from Weisbord, M.R. & Janoff, S, (1995). *Future Search*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler Publishers, Inc. Adapted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. www.bkconnection.com

Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.

Richard Hooker, English theologian.

The notion of self-diagnosing your situation, assessing yourself, receiving and reflecting on the feedback you receive, then planning your individual development, implementing your action plan, and living in the planned change during sets up powerful dynamics. Uncertainty, frustration, confusion and more ambiguity are necessary side-effects. So are fun, achievement, energy, enthusiasm and realization. True learning and personal growth sets up emotional rising and falling between achievable desired outcomes, uncertainty and fear.

As Weisbord and Janoff (1995) have explained, during this change, you will experience peaks and valleys as though you were riding an emotional roller coaster.



After the Life's Path experience, being in contact with your ups and downs and accepting the pandemonium leads to realistic choices.

It is normal to experience information overload and a sense of confusion when you return to the "real world." You may feel overwhelmed. You need to appreciate that each peak and valley you work through has vital potential.

Getting Aboard

You come aboard the learning process with your own experiences and background. These include experiences of yourself, of other people, your world and the reason you chose the Life's Path program. Whether oriented toward facts, feelings, or both, you will soon find out that each of your experiences has potential to help shape your future toward desired outcomes.

Plunging to the Depths

Emotion, which is suffering, ceases to be suffering as soon as we have a clear picture of it. - Spinoza

After you establish a common ground, from which you can work and a sense of connectedness to your past, you face a complex mess that may seem out of your control. You may plunge toward denial, gloom, mistrust, challenge, even a sense of hopelessness. You may think or feel, "This is a big mess!"

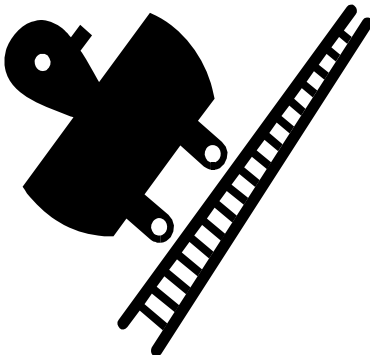
As you get further into your personal development experience, more and more problems surface: unplanned events, the generation of inadequate or distorted data, the development of political resistance, or the lack of the necessary resources, money, or time. Critical problems have been identified, but you see few solutions available. Your change and development may seem unattainable or unrealistic. Your morale drops, and you may ask yourself, “Why did I ever get involved or think I could accomplish the task in the first place?”

Owning Up

“I’m very brave generally,” he went on in a low voice: “only today I happen to have a headache.” - Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

As you accept what you are doing, want to do, and how you feel about it, you will discover, “You are all you’ve got.” You will encounter what is working and what is not working, and you begin to climb out of despair. Now your mood will change, and you will say, “It’s my mess!”

When you accept the situation, you are more likely to work collaboratively with yourself despite skepticism, gloomy predictions, blind faith, and other “shadows” that might annoy you. You will make discoveries along the way to your desired outcomes and you will have many thoughts and emotions.



Rising to the Heights

You will enact your ideals and discover your future. You can create portraits of the world you really want as if you already have it. You will feel energized and excited. At this critical turning point comes the awareness that you can successfully complete your development. Your awareness has shifted from a possibility to a probability. The problems have certainly not disappeared, but you begin to feel a sense of realistic hope based on solid reality testing between you and your Life’s Path development program.

Making Choices

Now you will face some choices. Will you act now and put your energy into understanding differences and defining problems? You might fluctuate between talking and acting as you confront the reality that the world is neither all bad nor all good. It is as if the roller coaster has a throttle and a brake, and you are using both at the same time. The choice is going back to the familiar (and unproductive) patterns and inching toward the unknown (and appealing) future. The transforming step is to agree to work on the possibility of the future and making a choice to live in the solution. You might say to yourself, “This is the best I can do now.” This is an invaluable insight. It enables you to take back control of your self-determination and feel more secure in your planning and gain greater support for your vision.

Individual development puts people in a position of choosing which way to go - *right now*. Bringing to a halt old ways of relating and behaving is no small feat. It opens doors to new experiences. When we suspend our sense of security, we free ourselves to make more creative choices. We can

establish common ground that you might not have known before. This trip into unknown territory can be made because you work on tasks of mutual concern.

Taking Responsibility

If you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain. - Dolly Parton

The powerful ups and downs of your growth and development can feel like trial by walking through fire and an overwhelming alchemic experience. Going through the process means accepting the crucial dynamics of choosing what you will be and do in the next moment. Once the decision is made to go forward with your individual development, other processes follow. We move through four destinations along the track to certainty, security and empowerment, since the roller-coaster (our metaphor) is our only means of transportation.

We leave the station of *contentment* where we accept things the way they are, making the best of what is, without hassling. What moves us to personal development and change might be an unfamiliar experience that disturbs the status quo or a compelling reason to change for our own purposes. Sometimes we would rather not admit it, let alone deal with it!

So, our next stop along the way is the *denial* station. This is where we act as if everything is okay when at a deep level a faint little voice is nagging us that things are really a mess. At some point however, we are more than likely to own up.

When we admit we are frustrated or unsure of what to do, we have arrived at the station of *confusion*. The station is decorated with high anxiety. This place is a mess and we know it. Only then are we ready for new possibilities.

In learning for personal change and growth, we do our most creative work in the confusion station waiting room. We spend roughly half of our time here, although to some it seems like a lifetime. It is here we ride the roller coaster through emotional and intellectual ups and downs. Without doubt, you will move to *renewal* as you generate ideal outcomes. When you identify your preferred future and start action planning, renewal becomes an unexpected and welcome possibility.

Here, there is a fresh burst of energy linked to overcoming problems and uncertainty and a sense that success is near. For example, despite all the logistical problems and resistance you feel, the usefulness of your personal development begins to emerge and becomes real for you. At last, a successful change has been made, the experience processed, and your goals and objectives accomplished. This last phase is characterized by a feeling of being rewarded and satisfied with the accomplishment of your growth and development

Many people do not like anxious moments when facing the complexity of change. For some of us, it seems like it isn't worth the effort if we can't do anything about it. Alone you can do something, but with support, you can do more. Take the time to discuss, understand and work it through with your trusted friends, family or support group. You should discuss how you travel on the track to the four stations of change and accept the feeling of anxiety without which you would not know certainty, security, and empowerment. All feelings are valid. The passage to renewal leads from denial through confusion. You can't get there by any other route, in this metaphor; the roller coaster is the only means of transportation.

The highs and lows you experience during your change are a distillation of what occurs in the real world of constraints and opportunities. Everything that does happen is real, appropriate, and useful

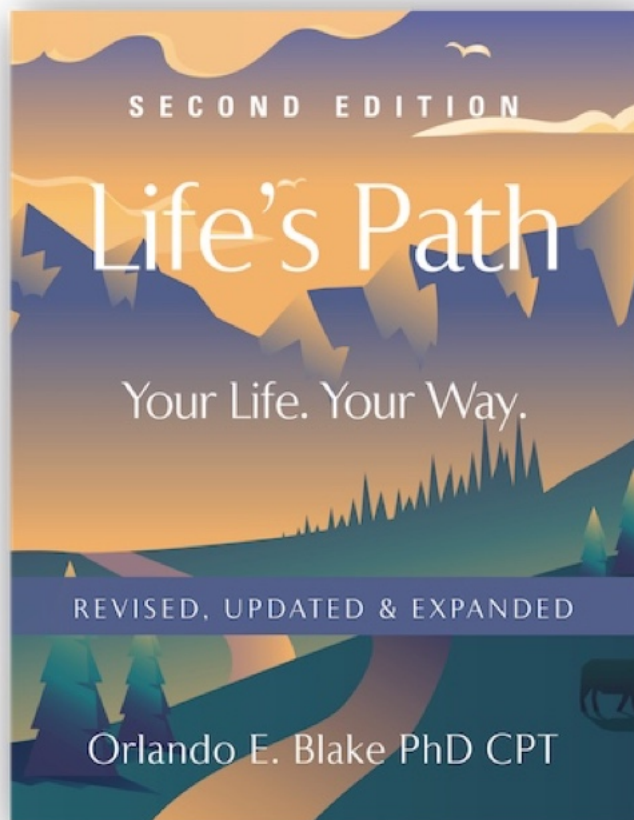
for you. The purpose is to own up and not to deny your feelings or thoughts. If you are immersed in the Life's Path™ experience, you will remember the experience more vividly.

Overcoming the temptation to quit or withdraw requires hope, determination, and support from others, as well as confidence in both self and the faith in the desired outcome.

Reflection Questions

What do you feel after reading “Riding the Roller Coaster?”

Do you believe that you can ride the roller coaster and make it to the end of the ride?



Life's Path (Second Edition) is about making the life you want your way and making choices that bring you happiness.

Life's Path
Your Life. Your Way.
(Second Edition - Revised, Updated & Expanded)
by Orlando Blake, Ph.D. CPT.

Order the book from the publisher [Booklocker.com](https://www.booklocker.com)

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/10766.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**