



Melissa Dawn

AUTHOR | COACH | SPEAKER
CEO OF YOUR LIFE



Workbook

CONGRATULATIONS on taking a big step toward removing the masks that hide you from the world and from yourself!

Very few people are courageous enough to do it, so I would like you to acknowledge the work you are embarking on. This work makes you part of a growing community of amazing people striving to create a better world for themselves, the people around them, and the generations to follow. Be proud. You are a changemaker, ready to make life happen *for* you, not *to* you.

My hope is that this workbook helps you connect with yourself in ways you never imagined, and empowers you to partner with your body, what it is telling you, and where it is directing you. I hope you uncover your own awesomeness, and recognize your inherent worth and your right to step out into the world, each day, as YOU, living your life in alignment with who you truly are, heart, mind, body and soul, and not the life others want for you.

With heart energy,

Melissa

Chapter 1

No matter how hard things get, don't let negativity hold you back. Continually ask yourself questions that enable new possibilities in every situation.

When you feel yourself being pulled down by something, a powerful way to start lifting yourself out of that negativity is to ask yourself questions that open up possibilities for you and help you reclaim control over how you respond.

Here are some questions you can try asking yourself:

- **What else is possible here?**

- **What is my fear/concern here?**

- **What is my yearning?**

Asking yourself powerful questions like these is a valuable practice in leadership and in everyday life. The above are just 3 examples and you can [find a lot more right here](#).

Chapter 2

Where do you need to take a stand in your life? Listen to that voice inside you. What step can you take—however small—that is led by your heart, not other people’s opinions?

When it comes to creating big shifts in our lives, many of us do better by starting small. That feeling can start opening your eyes to all the possibilities around you. As James Clear of Atomic Habits says, “Start small if you have to. Start privately if you have to. Just start.”

Ask yourself, “What small change can I make, starting today, that is led fully by my own heart; nothing or no one else?”

Maybe it’s taking up a new hobby (or rediscovering an old one), wearing clothes that make you feel good, listening to music that makes you want to dance, blocking off time that’s for you alone, or even deciding to *stop* doing something that your heart isn’t into.

A small change I can make right now is:

I promise to do this _____ .
(daily, weekly, monthly, or some other regularity that works for you).

Schedule it in your calendar. This way it is more likely to get done.

Let yourself practice the change for a little while (how long depends on how often you’ve scheduled it and what feels right to you) then ask yourself what shifts or insights you’ve noticed.

A shift or insight I’ve noticed in practicing this change is:

Chapter 3

You don't have to keep carrying beliefs that someone else handed you. Keep asking yourself, "Is this belief truly mine? Is it serving me? Do I want to keep carrying it, or can I shed it?"

So often, the beliefs that hold us back aren't our own, but were passed on to us by someone else. These beliefs can come from family, friends, community, media, and so on, and can even be passed to us from strangers on the street!

If those beliefs are serving you, great. If they're not, you don't have to keep carrying them!

[Watch this short video from Dain Heer](#). After watching it, what comes up for you? What beliefs have been holding you in status quo? What will you do to let those self-limiting beliefs go?

A belief that isn't serving me is:

Say goodbye to this belief. You can journal it, [burn it](#), whatever works for you. Reflect on what you truly believe around this topic. Where do you feel it in your body? What is it telling you?

Chapter 4

Opportunity will always come knocking. It's up to you to decide if you answer, or if you let your fear, hurt, and limiting beliefs answer. When you make the choice to drop your mask and open that door as your truest, most vulnerable self, you begin to create true, heartfelt connection that empowers genuine shifts in your life and the lives of those around you.

Do you feel you are taking responsibility for your world? Part of responsibility is owning how you respond to opportunities. That doesn't mean seizing all of them. It means that when you pass one up, you're not doing so out of fear or hurt, but from the knowledge that it isn't truly right for you, or that another path is better aligned with what you want to create for yourself.

What is an opportunity in your life right now, and what's driving your thoughts or feelings about it?

An opportunity in my life is:

My thoughts and feelings about it are:

What's driving those thoughts and feelings is:

If it's fear, hurt or limiting beliefs driving your thoughts and feelings, ask yourself, "If I let go of all that negativity, what does the opportunity look like?"

Reflect on this with compassion and non-judgment. Shifting our approach to what comes up is no small feat. Celebrate the fact that you are starting the work, and lean into every success, however small.

Chapter 5

You are already authorizing your own story. The only thing holding you back from writing yourself as the hero is you. Commit to taking full responsibility for YOUR world, starting now.

You are not to blame for what life throws at you - not now, and not in your past. However, you are responsible for how you respond to it, and that's a truly empowering thing when you recognize how your response creates your world.

What is something happening in your world today that feels out of your control, and how can you assume ownership of your experience?

Something out of my control today is:

How this is impacting my life is:

3 things I can do to take control of my experience of the situation are:

1.

2.

3.

Don't feel pressured to find exactly 3 things. For you, maybe it's just 1, or maybe more than 3. Go with what feels right to you, and remember that shifting your inner voice *is* an active step.

Chapter 6

Your leader within is You. Tune into it. Trust in your inner GPS. This is the path to truly honoring and being You.

The Light Method is a handy tool to practice tuning into your innate inner leader.

Think of a decision you need to make and visualize yourself taking each potential path. Try to feel how each option resonates in your body. When a path feels heavy or uneasy in your body, that’s often your inner leader trying to guide you away. When it feels light or energizing, that’s your body telling you there’s something to explore!

A decision I need to make is:

Choices I could make	How that choice feels in my body

Chapter 7

Your shadow is part of You and is worthy of full acceptance. As you practice accepting your own shadow, set the intention to accept the shadow in others as well. Accept that the people around you will make mistakes. They will say and do things that seem hurtful to you but may not have anything to do with you. You can set healthy boundaries around hurtful behavior AND respect the person on the other side.

Reconnecting with your shadow can ignite a lot of emotions; some difficult, some soothing. One of those emotions is deep compassion for yourself, and for others. The more you embrace your shadow, the more you will learn to honor your humanity and the humanity of others.

Without thinking too much - just letting your mind wander and pick up whatever it finds - list 5 things that are in your shadow:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What you list can be emotions, memories, desires, regrets, feelings toward yourself or others, things you secretly do or want to do, things in your present or your past. If you struggle to list 5, just go as far as feels right for you. If you can easily list more, then keep going. **Review your list and ask yourself:**

Do I see any themes emerging?

What came up for me as I was making the list?

How do I feel about these things being written out?

If you have uncomfortable feelings about your list, you may want to perform a fire ceremony - not to keep things in your shadow, but to try releasing yourself from any negative feelings around your own humanity.

Chapter 8

Life is in the details. Commit to becoming conscious of the rituals, habits and practices holding you where you are today and consciously creating new ones that nourish You. Work on your energy. Try different things until you find what works for you. Recognize your wounds and embrace them with love and acceptance. Give your body what it needs. Refuel in nature. Eat healthy foods to help you show up as your best self. Above all, put yourself in charge of how you show up every day.

One of the most impactful rituals in daily life is your morning routine. It sets the stage for the rest of the day, and does so day after day, creating well-forged paths that, if they aren't truly serving you, are hard to get out of. The good news is, small shifts, practiced consistently and intentionally, can begin forging new paths.

What does your morning routine look like today?

How is it serving you?

What would you like it to look like?

What is getting in the way of changing your routine?

What small shift can you make that either creates a part of your ideal routine, or begins breaking down what's holding you back?

After you've practiced that first shift, reflect on any changes you've noticed:

Chapter 9

The wisdom in your body is your bridge to life around you and your path to healing the fragmentation of your mind and body. Don't ignore or discredit the messages your body is telling you. They are coming up for a reason and deserve your attention. Meditation is a practice that guides us to reconnect our bodies and minds with intention. Consider trying a few different approaches to meditation to see if there is a good fit for you.

In simple terms, meditation is a practice of continually bringing your focus back to the present moment. It can be practiced while sitting still, or in movement, indoors or outdoors, with or without music or other sounds, with a guide or on your own. Whatever works for you.

Here are some different types of meditation you can look into:

- Guided meditation (there are many free apps, podcasts and playlists you can try)
- Sleep meditation
- Walking meditation
- Yoga meditation
- Visualization meditation
- Insight meditation
- Body scan

If you struggle with stillness - as many people do - you might find it beneficial to practice in movement. Examples could be lifting weights, household chores, cycling, knitting, yard work, and so on. If you are washing dishes, for example, practice continually bringing your focus back to the sensations of the moment; the warmth of the water, the smell of the soap, the splashing sounds of the water, etc.

The important part is practicing noticing without judgment. Even straying from the present is noticed without judgment. Practicing this in low stakes moments trains your brain to behave in a similar way when the stakes are higher, which helps you stay calm in times of stress.

Choose a type of meditation to try and record how the experience goes for you:

How did you feel during the experience? What other meditations would you like to try next?

Chapter 10

Real progress happens when you are clear on what you're working toward. Having a life purpose statement and vision of what you want to create empowers you to make choices that propel you in the direction you want to go.

Consider what your life purpose might be using the formula, "I am the _____ [metaphor] that/who _____ [action]."

Here are some examples of life purpose statements:

- I am the leader that looks out for those around me.
- I am the courageous sentry that stands up for what I believe in.
- I am the fearless lion that lives my truth freely and respects the truth in others.
- I am the bottomless well of compassion that inspires others to lead themselves with kindness and understanding.
- I am the creative wellspring that creates joy for myself and the world.
- I am the magical light that radiates positivity.
- I am the light bringer that loves myself unconditionally, empowering me to be strong for the people I love.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself that may help you uncover your purpose:

- When do I feel I am at my best?
- When do I feel I am living life on purpose?
- What was one of the most painful things to happen in my life?
- When do I most feel at ease with myself?

Keep in mind that determining your purpose is not a one-time thing. Think about what resonates with you right now and practice starting each day by saying your statement to yourself in the mirror.

After a few days of this practice, ask yourself, "How does this feel in my body?"

If it isn't quite right, how will you adjust your statement?

Continue adjusting and practicing until you have something that feels right for you.

When you arrive at a statement that feels right for you, ask yourself, "How aligned are my current habits and goals with my purpose statement?"

If the idea of a life purpose feels out of reach for you, some people resonate more with the concept of Ikigai. You can read more about it on my blog:

<https://ceoofyour.life/2022/04/what-is-the-ikigai-concept-and-can-it-bring-you-purpose/>

Chapter 11

A heart of war can mean you're on the offensive or defensive, triggered by self-preservation mode. A defensive heart isn't looking for a fight but desperately trying to avoid one and can't help but see everything and everyone around it as obstacles to overcome. Work within to connect with your heart and bring it into a state of peace. From a heart of peace comes infinite possibility.

Ask yourself, "When do I feel the need to defend or protect myself?"

Consider people you spend time with, places you go, and tasks you regularly need to complete:

What might you be saying yes or no to when you lead from a heart of war?

What could you start saying yes or no to in order to shift to a heart of peace?

Chapter 12

Your state of being is yours to determine. Tap into habits and practices that put you, repetitively, into the CEO seat of your own life.

What thought continually holds you back from pursuing something you want?

What's an empowering thought you could replace it with?

Write this new thought down and put it somewhere you will see every day.

Chapter 13

To end the draining, people-pleasing cycle, you need healthy boundaries - a place where you can love yourself fully while honoring and respecting the other person. You have to put up walls against situations and people that cause you to feel less than whole. You are responsible for your wholeness and yours alone. Trust that others will find their own way if, and when, they're ready. And if you're a parent, remember that setting your own healthy boundaries and respecting your children's boundaries sets a loving example that will continue for generations.

What are some relationships in your life today that feel heavy, draining, or otherwise difficult?

Keeping in mind that boundaries are not about controlling another person's behavior, but about being clear on what you will and will not engage with, ask yourself, "What boundary might help make this relationship healthier for us both?"

Is this a boundary you can simply set on your own, or does it require a conversation?

If it requires a conversation, by when will you have it?

(If you don't feel ready to set a deadline for the conversation, ask yourself who else you can talk to. Do you have a trusted, supportive person who can act as a sounding board for you?)

Chapter 14

Every relationship has one element that you can fully control: You. In fact, it's the only element you fully control. If you have a relationship that is troubling you, or that you want to take to the next level, turn your perspective back onto yourself. How can you author your next steps in a way that you are your own hero, advocating for yourself and owning your self-worth?

Decide to take an active role in the relationships that are meaningful to you by speaking your truth. Ask yourself, "What have I been holding back from saying or asking in an important relationship?"

Something I have been holding back is:

Holding back is impacting my life by:

An action I can take to be my own hero is:

Chapter 15

Embracing confrontation is essential to progress and well-being and keeps you firmly in the CEO seat of your life. Partner with confrontation, prepare yourself for who you are about to confront, and approach the conversation with peace and curiosity.

In work and in life, conflict = growth. Compassionate confrontation breaks down barriers and empowers connection. Get curious about where you've been avoiding confrontation in your life, how it is impacting you, and what you can do differently.

An area where I have been avoiding confrontation is:

This avoidance is impacting me by:

By embracing confrontation, I stand to gain:

What I feel needs to come up is:

I will bring this forward by day/time/occasion/event:

Chapter 16

Pour your heart out through a pen. Speak from where and when the hurt happened. Writing will help you release unhealthy emotions and unexpressed words and let go of what could have/should have been. If you feel you need more help processing your emotions and healing your wounds, talk with a coach, healer, or therapist you trust.

A healing letter can be to another person, another version of yourself, or even to a situation.

If writing isn't for you, you can also speak out loud to a photo of the person, or record a voice memo.

Giving voice to your biggest hurts can be like debriding a wound. It's painful, but critical for healing.

Get a pen and paper or voice recorder and begin unburdening. Remember that this is for you and you alone. It does not need to be shared. Once done, you may want to keep it for a time to let the healing continue, but make a plan for eventually letting it go.

A fire ceremony is a powerful way to release your letter and all the negative energy within it. If you've recorded a voice memo, you can take the feelings on that memo and blow them into a paper or onto a stick, then burn that into your fire ceremony after deleting the memo.

A person or situation I need to write/speak to is:

Chapter 17

Your past has already written the blueprint for your future, but it isn't written in stone. Do the work to tune into all four levels of perception and create the necessary shifts in your energetic self to change your momentum. That's how you take charge and write your future the way YOU want.

Visualize the future you want to create for yourself. Does your current momentum tunnel - the energy of your path today - feel like it's leading there?

If not, what 3 things need to shift to get your momentum moving in a better direction? (You may have more or less than 3. If more, start with the first 3 that come to mind.)

3 shifts I need to make are:

Examples:

- *Develop an actionable 5 year plan for my career to get myself out of "hamster wheel mode" at work.*
- *Take control of my emotional well-being so that I can see the potential around me, and get excited about it.*
- *Establish better sleep habits so that I have the energy to create what I want.*

Note that these are big shifts meant to be worked on in small steps. You don't have to know the "how" at this stage. It's more about identifying the broader shifts.

One change I can start making right now is:

Examples:

- *I can meet with my manager/mentor/coach for guidance in developing a plan.*
- *I can start a regular meditation or journaling practice and see how it impacts my emotional well-being.*
- *I can work on breaking my nightly phone scrolling habit to improve my sleep.*

How will I acknowledge and celebrate this shift that I just took a step toward?

Chapter 18

Often, it's where we're most afraid to speak our truth that we most NEED to speak our truth. It's where we most need to bring our shadow into the light. The problem is, most of us were never taught how to speak our truth in professional settings. Lean into that. This is just a new skill to learn. And, like any new skill, there will be a learning curve.

When you think about a professional space - your job, school, community group, or other situation where professionalism is the expectation - what truth is your heart telling you needs to come forward?

A truth that needs to come forward is:

The person/group I need to share this truth with is:

How I will prepare myself to bring this truth forward is:

Chapter 19

Mental models are strong but not fixed. When you commit to building your awareness, intentionally creating new patterns, and retraining your mind to see others through a lens of curiosity, you open so many possibilities for yourself and those around you.

A conflict, ongoing disagreement, or tense relationship I will commit to exploring is:

After completing the mental models worksheet (available as a [free download here](#)), the next step I will take is:

Chapter 20

A candle loses none of its light by lighting another. Forget about what you can't do and focus on how you can show up in a way that creates safe space and positive change for you and everyone around you.

When you put yourself in the CEO seat of your own life, you begin to realize how much impact you have on the world around you, and how endlessly renewable that impact can be. How can you start creating, and/or being, a safe space for those around you? How can you develop your knowledge and understanding of those with different lived experiences from yours?

An action I will take/change I will make is:

An action or change you choose will depend on where you are at today, and can be as preliminary as seeking to educate yourself.

Chapter 21

Remember, always, that what's in your heart is meant to come forward. It is your truest self, and it is your best self. Take those brave steps. Drop the masks and be YOU. Bravely and unapologetically.

Fully visualize the life you want to create for yourself. Let yourself feel the full energy of that future. Imagine how you will feel and how life will be for you when you have created your ideal future. As Neville Goddard wrote in *Feeling is the Secret*, "You are already that which you want to be, and your refusal to believe this is the only reason you do not see it."

How I will FEEL when I have my dream life:

Imagine and tune into that feeling daily. As you move along your journey, continually come back to this vision for your future, and be sure to celebrate every ounce of change you create for yourself and the people you care about.

You have a right to love yourself and love your life. You have a right to feel fulfilled, empowered, and joyful. You have a right to continue to work toward that even when it seems like the world around you is falling apart. Stepping into full authorship of your own world is how you best serve yourself, the people you care about, and the larger world around you.

Throughout your journey, freely come back to these lessons and exercises, as well as the ones in *Why Can't I Just Be Me*. Creating the life you deserve is a process. Going back to an earlier step is not backtracking. It's progress. It's part of the ongoing work of reconnecting with your inner leader and becoming fully, authentically, YOU.



About Melissa Dawn

Melissa Dawn is a Master Certified Coach (MCC), executive coach, bestselling author, and former VP with more than two decades of corporate experience.

Through CEO of Your Life, Melissa works with CEOs, executives, and senior leaders to lead with greater clarity, courage, and humanity. Her approach brings together Heart + Strategy, helping leaders understand themselves more deeply, navigate change, make courageous decisions, build stronger relationships, and create success without losing themselves along the way.

Melissa is the bestselling author of *Why Can't I Just Be Me? - Remove the Masks That Hide You From the World and From Yourself*, a deeply personal exploration of what becomes possible when we stop performing who we think we should be and reconnect with who we truly are.

At the heart of Melissa's work is a simple belief: before we can lead others, we have to know how to lead ourselves.

[Explore Executive Coaching](#)

AS SEEN ON



FORTUNE



Entrepreneur



CJAD
800 AM
News-Talk-Radio

HubSpot