

# NOW WHAT? REVISED EDITION: 90 DAYS TO A NEW LIFE DIRECTION BY LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG

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"Laura Berman Fortgang is your perfect guide to making change in your life.  
You will be inspired, but more important, you will finally take action."  
—PAMELA SLIM, author of *Body of Work* and *Escape from Cubicle Nation*

LAURA BERMAN  
FORTGANG



90 DAYS TO A  
**NEW** LIFE DIRECTION

UPDATED AND REVISED THIRD EDITION  
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# **NOW WHAT? REVISED EDITION: 90 DAYS TO A NEW LIFE DIRECTION BY LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG PDF**

Well, e-book *Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction By Laura Berman Fortgang* will make you closer to just what you are prepared. This *Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction By Laura Berman Fortgang* will be constantly buddy any kind of time. You may not forcedly to constantly finish over reading a book in short time. It will certainly be simply when you have extra time and investing few time to make you feel satisfaction with what you review. So, you can obtain the definition of the notification from each sentence in guide.

## Review

"This is it--a turbocharged, high-energy, stripped-to-the-core distillation of key insights and practices to truly move you forward. After reading Laura's loving and potent guidance, you can't help creating the life you yearn for."

—Jennifer Loudon, author of *Comfort Secrets for Busy Women*

"Laura Berman Fortgang is your perfect guide to making change in your life. You will be inspired, but more importantly, you will finally take action."

—Pamela Slim, *Body of Work*

"If this book delivers just ten percent of the power of Laura's coaching, it will be worth thousands of times the price."

—Mark Bryan, co-author of *THE ARTIST'S WAY AT WORK*

"We all need to plug into an energy source for our lives and once you plug into Laura Berman Fortgang and *Now What?* you will be electrified and raring to go. Listen to what she has to say and you will move your life to new heights."

—Iyanla Vanzant

"Thinking of making a big change in how you make a living--or how you live your life? Having trouble getting started? This wise, honest and practical book can help you figure out what may be holding you back, and where to go from here. I'm recommending it to everyone I know. Great stuff!"

—Anne Fisher, *FORTUNE*

Praise for *LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE....*

"Laura Berman Fortgang will help you reach the success and fulfillment you are destined for."

--Ken Blanchard

"A brilliantly written, indispensable guide that touches and expands the very best of our hearts, minds, and

spirits."

--Harold Bloomfield, M.D., author of *Making Peace with Your Past* and *How to Survive the Loss of a Love*

"Beware-this thought-provoking book will put you on a one-way path to a more creative and fulfilling life."

--Kyle MacLachlan

"Fortgang generously offers glorious, refreshing guidance to help us each find our unique path in life."

--Jennifer Loudon, author of *The Woman's Comfort Book*

"Fortgang's *Wisdom Access Questions* have the makings of brilliance-simple, easy to use, hugely effective, and humbly obvious."

--Judy George, founder and CEO, Domain

"Laura helps you organize information... so you can move your life forward in positive ways. I can't recommend this enough!"

--Julia Sweeney

#### About the Author

Laura Berman Fortgang is a nationally renowned speaker, life coach, and career strategist, helping individuals, small businesses, and corporations forge new directions and weather change. Laura is a recent Huffington Post blogger and a media perennial appearing on Oprah, various morning shows, CNN, MSNBC, and in many print publications. She lives in Montclair, New Jersey.

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#### Introduction

[nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what)

#### Welcome

It's not what you do that brings career satisfaction. It's who you get to be while you're doing it.

—LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG

Being given the opportunity to revise this book after more than a decade since it was written is a great gift. It's also bittersweet. On the one hand, it's wonderful to confirm that the material is still relevant. On the other hand, it's sad that the material is still relevant. In fact, it's not only relevant; it's needed more than ever.

It was originally written as a result of eighteen months of work starting four days after September 11, 2001. I had told my agent that I was not interested in writing any more books. I felt my two previous ones were enough proof that I deserved to have been plucked out of obscurity to be the first American coach featured prominently in the media and awarded a book contract without a proposal. I had settled back into coaching clients in the relative quiet of suburban life with two infants and a toddler. However, 9/11 changed everything. Suddenly, my phone was ringing off the hook with people who felt panicked that life was short and anything could happen so they better take those dreams off the back burner and get moving. For the next year and a half, my coaching clients reflected one specialty: supporting people to figure out what they wanted to do with their lives. And that has not stopped. I've written two books since this one, and I speak to

corporations on a variety of success topics, but when the phone rings with a coaching request, it's for career transition, and that has only intensified since the Great Recession.

This book is for you if you've been wondering if you're losing your marbles because you are considering a career change when most people think you have it good. Maybe everyone around you just thinks you're nuts for complaining or thinking of shifting gears. My motto is: "If everyone is saying you're crazy, you're on the right track."

Now, please understand, I am not talking about true mental illness. I am talking about the very scary and unpleasant feeling of considering walking away from a good paycheck or years of experience in one area to do something else. You wonder if you're losing a grip on reality because our society (and likely our partners, spouses, and friends) are reflecting back on you how illogical your rumblings are. And again, that's good. That's very, very good. Logic is a left-brain function, and as a population (first world, likely two or three generations away from our immigrant ancestors), the notion that having a job or an income of any kind should be happiness enough has become outdated. You know your life is good by the standards that society measures it, but you are not happy and can't seem to justify it or name why it is so. You may not be sure how else to go about things or what else you should do with your life.

If you're unemployed, don't think I've forgotten you. This book is for you, too, especially if your industry is shrinking or gone altogether. So many people are finding themselves "old," "overqualified," or "shut out" of opportunities and industries due to the quickly changing landscape. Complete reinvention is required.

You're being asked to send your résumé out into cyberspace with barely the courtesy of an acknowledgment that anyone's read it and no way to follow up with anyone. It's pretty easy to feel hopeless. New tactics are a must. Social media and who you know matter. One big problem is that we've been trained to believe that if we do our résumé right, network, and interview well, a job is a given. Not in today's world. It's not about doing all the "right" things better. It's doing something entirely different.

As you'll see in the upcoming chapters in this book, your résumé will not come into play for an indication of where new momentum might come from. Your life story (Chapter Four) will show you what needs to come back from the past or what needs to be pursued to get the ball rolling in your life again. After a decade of experience with this program, it's almost become formulaic: Something from the past rolled into the skill set of today equals your new direction, or at least the key to having luck return to your side. It's OK if you are doubtful, but proceed anyway. I need you to trust this process.

Since launching the hardcover of this book in 2004 and the paperback in 2005, almost five hundred career coaches in the United States and abroad have trained with me to use this material with their clients. I have continued to coach people one-on-one myself and I have spoken publicly to tens of thousands of people, sharing the insights and exercises herein. Learning from all these outlets that the material really works time and time again surprises me. I wrote the original first draft in ninety days with four beta-testing groups standing by to work the program week by week. It was based on everything I did intuitively, shooting from the hip with my clients after twelve years of experience and the intense post-9/11 experience. But it's been the decade since that has shown me hundreds, if not thousands of times over that this program works and that the trend toward stepping away from soul-deadening jobs is only growing with no sign of stopping.

The New Economy or Human Evolution?

Many people in America, and other countries that have had an immigrant culture, are the descendants of a work ethic that has taken its toll. The immigrant work ethic was that of hard work and sacrifice to provide for one's family. The next generation or two followed the rules as they were outlined for us. Those rules have changed, along with our desire to follow them. What we are left with is feeling like we are in foreign

territory. It's like being asked to change our internal operating system, and it feels as unnatural as it would to a PC user trying to become a Mac user.

Today's professionals who have reached some level of success are longing for right-brain freedom. They want to create, innovate, and express themselves through work. Their intuition or inner promptings are pestering them, but we were not usually raised to respect those. Those musings have been traditionally labeled "frivolous," "selfish," and substandard to the American ideal of "making it."

Where it would make sense that people today would just be grateful to be employed when so many others were losing their jobs, I've seen more people instead ready to do something else with their life. The shape that work takes in our lives and the place that it holds in them has become as varied as the individual. People are experimenting with finding what is going to make them happy and, in many instances, money is no longer the main criterion for staying or going.

My own Polish immigrant grandfather would have no basis for understanding that I work with people to find work they really love. In his day, feeding your family through the work you did was reason enough to be happy!

In his book *Linchpin*, Seth Godin says: "Now we live in a world where all the joy and profit has been squeezed out of following the rules . . . The working middle class is suffering. Wages are stagnant; job security is, for many people, a fading memory; and stress is skyrocketing."

Is it any wonder that so many people are longing to make a change?

Godin goes on to say that this presents us with an opportunity to become "highly sought-after, indispensable, and unique." That is what this book aims to help you do. Whether you develop a new role right where you are, switch companies or careers to do so, or start your own enterprise,\* we have to disrupt the status quo and break out to be uniquely ourselves. Being a cog in the wheel and like everyone else is no longer the secret to a protected, secure future.

To make the change, you have to be a little bit crazy. You have to break out of the norm and trust your intuition and where your craziest ideas are leading you. As humans we are ready to be all that we are capable of; therefore, reorienting from a five-sensory existence to a sixth-sensory one. That means people are wanting to include all of who they are in how they work. They don't want to leave at home their intuition and deepest desires to make a difference.

Just as we humans are not conscious of the evolution that led to us to having thumbs, neither is most of our society aware of the evolution that is leading us to long for expression of who we truly are in our day-to-day existence. More and more of us are starting to make drastic changes to honor the parts of ourselves we have left behind. In doing so, we feel more alive—connected to ourselves and the world around us. This explains why in recent years I've stopped saying that people come to me with career crises. I see them now more as spiritual crises. It's not necessarily about God but rather about your desire to align with who you really are instead of who you think you are expected to be.

It's Not "What" You Do but "Who" You Get to Be

What has become undeniably clear to me over the past few years, as I continued to work with clients, is that career and life satisfaction stems less from what we choose to do for a living and more from who we get to be while we are doing it. We want work that allows us to feel in harmony with ourselves. It is at this point that we equate having "more" with being more and feeling more alive. When this happens, we don't care as much about what we are doing. We focus more on who we are becoming. This affords us the ability to dream

about things bigger than ourselves. This becomes the point at which life feels more meaningful and you become curious (with less worry) about how it might all play out.

As you get yourself on a path to honor this evolution, you are tapping into what I call your Life Blueprint. Your Life Blueprint is the unique imprint on your soul that helps determine what will make you happiest and most fulfilled. The philosophy is introduced in my second book, *Living Your Best Life*, as part of a process of self-discovery. This book provides you with a concrete and chronological ninety-day path to specifically uncover the direction your blueprint indicates for your life.

### How to Use This Book

Though most people have come to me over the years longing for clarity about career direction, this book is designed to also uncover other next steps such as what will follow divorce, separation, loss, or relocation. Whether you are employed, unemployed, a young searcher, a midlife searcher, or a retired person looking forward to another chapter, this process will work for you. Age is not a factor as long as you have a deep sense within you that there is more you are meant to contribute and that this greatness still wants to come out of you before your time here is through. True greatness is not tethered only to a deed or career, but encompasses a general ability to communicate with the world from a place of contentment and peace. That is as great a purpose as any.

This book will take you through an encapsulation of the process my clients go through to find out what their next step or steps should be. The goal: a happy life. And to me, that is all that matters.

In 2001, I made a conscious decision to exclusively work with clients for ninety days at a time (versus previous relationships of six months to a year). I had noticed time and again in my work with clients that people could produce extraordinary results when given less time within which to do it, and so I designed the ninety-day program we are about to embark on together.

Ninety days—forty-five days to find the new direction and forty-five days to set the course toward it—will sound like a lot to some people and not nearly enough to others.

First, I should tell you that there are no overnight solutions. Some discoveries take time to mature. I've had people take as long as a decade to cross over into the path they discovered in our times together, but most happen within one to three years. The discoveries can be profound, but sometimes people are slower to put them into action. Then again, you will be surprised at how much you will accomplish in ninety days. Hundreds of people have already made major changes in their lives using this program, and I hope that you, too, will find that this book helps you discover the next step on your path.

This ninety-day program has been effective in more than 90 percent of my clients. Here are some examples:

When Carla entered the 90 Days, she was on medical leave, dreading going back to work, and clueless about a new direction. When she finished the 90 Days, she was ready to give notice and pursue a degree in sports psychology.

When Jake started the 90 Days, he was disappointed and depressed by his current career, with no particular passions he would like to pursue. When he finished the 90 Days, he was clear that he wanted to work with children and was putting a two-year plan in place for retraining and getting into a new line of work.

When Taylor entered the 90 Days, she was hoping to create a plan to cross over from professional stylist to art dealer over the course of the next four years. When she finished the 90 Days, she was selling art, planning new buying trips to Cuba, and moving into her new living/gallery loft space.

When Jennifer started the 90 Days, she was facing mounting debt as she struggle to keep her business and life afloat and wanted to gain new ideas to rebuild her company. When she finished the 90 Days, she was enrolled in a seminary after admitting the truth about what she knew deep down was her new direction.

When Scott entered the 90 Days, he was spinning his wheels in a midlevel management job at a large corporation, which was frustrating and unsatisfying. He felt trapped by a recent divorce and child custody issues and saw no way to make a career move. Shortly after leaving the ninety-day process, he was offered a position as CEO for an \$800-million-plus company with more than eight hundred employees across the country from his old job.

This work takes attention and focus and self-reflection. There are exercises in every chapter. If you are one of those people who skips the exercises and, despite your best intentions, doesn't get back to them later, you will cheat yourself. It is a process. It's ninety days to a life direction, not ninety days to landing a job. So trust the author, the process, and the time frame, and you will see results. If you rush, skip around, or try to force answers, you'll only grow frustrated, blame the program, and throw the book in the pile with the rest you attempted.

The beta groups that tested this book specifically asked me to tell you that every exercise is crucial, even those that may appear trivial initially. They would recommend that you do them all, even if you think they don't apply to you, because you will discover something new about yourself by doing so.

The steps outlined in this book are meant to be executed in the order in which they appear. Each chapter is a week. Some of them, like Chapter Six, which includes a research project, and Chapter Eight, on money, will take longer, but keep up with their demands in the background as you move forward with the program. You may also decide to revisit a chapter as things change and evolve. You'll notice there are a few QR codes throughout the book. If you've never seen this before, it's pretty easy. Download a QR code reader in your app store. Neo Reader and Quickmark work well with different devices. You'll scan the code with your phone or tablet and see the page open up. If you want to print it out or get it to your computer, you can e-mail it to yourself and download it to get to work on it. Please enjoy the videos and supplemental materials. It's my intent to give an extra boost to your process by adding this twenty-first-century tool that the original book did not have.

You'll notice that this book is divided into two parts: "Naming What 'It' Is" and "Getting There." The first part helps you determine the direction or next moves and does so by asking you to look in unexpected places for answers. The second part gets you into action and helps you redesign your life to accommodate the changes you are thinking of making.

You'll also notice that each chapter has a box with summary questions. Most of them you'll have answered during the course of reading the chapter and doing the exercises, but they are there at the end to create a more concise record of your progress.

Working with a buddy or a small group to have further support will expedite this process and keep you on track. If you enter the process with an open mind and try not to force an outcome, you will be surprised by how well it can work.

If you are one of the people it does not work for, do not fret. Your time will not be wasted. Any insight counts, and finding one's place in life is often a process of trial and error. I know it can be frustrating to feel that the answers elude you, but timing is everything and the answers will come eventually. If your "it" does not become clear by the end of the first section, you will find that the exercises in the second forty-five days can be used to further explore what "it" is, although other readers will be using it to forge their new path.



For some of you, the “it” will be a direct hit. You’ll know exactly what you need in order to set out to do or become. For others of you, the “it” will be an undeniable direction or preference, and for others, “it” may be very clear, strong criteria for what will make you happy, even if it is not specifically a chosen direction yet. The results will vary for each individual, but I can promise insights and clarity that will move you forward. With it will come the return of happiness (even if you did not think you ever lost it) and a sense of peace (even if your every question is not yet answered).

To help you get an early indication of where your blocks to clarity may be, and to prepare you for what’s to come, take the following assessment.

### Why Can’t I Figure This Out?

Being unable to see what’s next for you and your life’s direction could be a reflection of many different blocks. Answer the questions on this checklist truthfully to find where the blocks may be for you. Mark all the statements that are true for you. Don’t fret, because each upcoming chapter is designed to help you through these groups of obstacles to clarity. Each chapter breaks you through to the next. Use this list to help you find where the program will help you most.

[nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment)

Print out the assessment if you like by scanning above.

#### A. TRUE

My life is chaotic and out of control.

I have no time for the things I really want to do.

I have interpersonal conflicts in my workplace or at home.

My home and/or office environment is cluttered and not conducive to good work.

I am the sole provider or caretaker of my immediate and/or extended family.

#### B. TRUE

I have trouble seeing myself doing anything new with my life.

I pride myself on my position and reputation.

I have put years of investment into my current work or life role.

I feel that my position or role gives me approval and admiration from those around me.

I feel that what I do reflects positively on my family and others around me.

#### C. TRUE

I have a list of fears and reasons why I can’t make a change right now.

I perceive negative consequences to making any radical change now.

Money fears are a major consideration in my thinking now.

I question my ability to do anything else.

I worry that my age could get in the way of being able to make a change.

#### D. TRUE

I feel lost and off track but can't really say specifically what the problem is.

I have a dream (or dreams) that I have yet to fulfill.

There are things I used to enjoy and excel at that I don't get to do now.

I have a hobby or volunteer interest that I wonder about making into a career.

I have a repeating pattern of failures or mishaps in my work and/or relationships.

#### E. TRUE

I want to do something more meaningful or to feel that life has more meaning for me.

People are always telling me I should do or be x, y, or z, but I never really feel motivated to fulfill their expectations.

I am not necessarily aware of the impact I have on people and on my community.

I wish I knew how I and/or my work fit into the grand scheme of things.

I often long to know how I can make a difference in the world.

#### F. TRUE

I have ideas about what I'd like to do, but I'm not sure how to go about them.

I am not exactly sure what would make a job or role satisfying for me.

I vacillate between a few future possibilities but have yet to decide on one that suits me.

I am not sure if I can find a career that fits my values.

I want to be certain before I make a move that it will work out.

#### G. TRUE

I dread looking at my money situation.

I already live beyond my means and wonder how I could ever support a change.

I have been financing a lull in work activity.

I do not have a money plan for making a transition.

I am convinced that any change would mean a step backward financially.

## H. TRUE

I am a realist.

I avoid any strategy that is not logical and almost foolproof in its desired outcome.

It's hard for me to invest in things I cannot see or touch.

I tend to need external proof before trusting someone or something.

I take on new ideas slowly.

## I. TRUE

I tend to do more for the people around me than they do for me.

I find it hard to ask for help.

I often drop what I am doing when someone else needs my help.

I wish I had more of a personal and professional network to tap into.

There are people in my life who doubt me or think I am crazy to make a change.

## J. TRUE

I have no plan for transitioning to something new.

I find it hard to manage many projects at once.

I tend to make progress on projects in spurts instead of being consistent.

I tend to lose interest if I come up against roadblocks while I am executing a plan.

I have a lot of ideas that I have done nothing about (projects, jobs, products, the arts).

Take note of which sections you scored three or more Trues in. Go back to the earliest section where you had three or more positives, and be ready to tackle those obstacles when you arrive at the corresponding place in the program. Using the correlated list on the following pages, you can see which chapters will hold the most punch for you in breaking through your blocks to clarity. It is strongly recommended that you do the program in order, but if you feel moved to jump straight into your blocks, do so according to the chapter breakdown here. If you are ever stuck or unclear as you go, go back a chapter or two to make sure you really covered everything.

### A. Chapter One: What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Getting a hold of your whirlwind life is important to finding what's next.

### B. Chapter Two: With Every Gain, There Is a Loss

Recognizing that you are not what you do, and finding the permanent attributes you can use to move forward, are critical to your progress.

### C. Chapter Three: Most Limits Are Self-Imposed

Identifying and working through your self-imposed limits and obstacles will pave the way to more possibilities.

### D. Chapter Four: The Past Holds the Clues to the Future

There are clues in your life story that you may not be recognizing as strong indicators for your future direction.

### E. Chapter Five: Your Purpose in Life Is Right Under Your Nose

A sense of purpose will give great context to your life and help ease you into new and satisfying directions.

### F. Chapter Six: Your Purpose Needs a Vehicle and Chapter Seven: Your Criteria for Happiness: Is This Really “It”?

Finding a way to bring who you are into what you do is critical to your happiness and satisfaction. These chapters will help you put form and function to your new life.

### G. Chapter Eight: The Bottom Line Is the Bottom Line

New awareness of your financial life and how it can ease your transition is in order. There is no time like the present to begin.

### H. Chapter Nine: Life Often Does Imitate Art: Write Your Own Fiction and Chapter Ten: Put Yourself in Opportunity’s Way

Giving up old ways of achieving and taking big steps to trust yourself, your instincts, and the flow of life are necessary to move you on to new horizons.

### I. Chapter Eleven: You Don’t Have to Do It Alone

The quality of support from the company you keep is crucial to making your transition to something new. You can train those around you to be better supporters. This chapter will show you how.

### J. Chapter Twelve: Following Your Life Blueprint

Implementation and execution are just as important as innovation. Putting one foot in front of the other and monitoring all your opportunities are key to moving on.

I welcome you to an exciting (and sometimes scary) exploration that will reveal the truth about what you really want, who you really are, and what you are truly capable of. This truth will accelerate your life and spur your personal evolution. You will invite your Life Blueprint to integrate itself into your life and, as a result, experience a time of great wonder and unexpected surprises. You will see your way to a new life direction. It will be up to you whether you pursue it or not. However, in my experience, once “it” is undeniably clear, it is virtually impossible to ignore its call.

## NAMING WHAT “IT” IS

(weeks 1–7)

### CHAPTER ONE | week one

What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.

—HENRY J. KAISER

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# **NOW WHAT? REVISED EDITION: 90 DAYS TO A NEW LIFE DIRECTION BY LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG PDF**

A clear and utterly practical ninety-day program for discovering a new direction for your life—now completely revised and updated by the author!

In *Now What?* pioneering life coach Laura Berman Fortgang shares the process that she has used to help hundreds of clients make major changes in their lives. Whether it's moving on from a dead-end job, discovering an entirely new creative outlet, or answering the age-old question "What am I meant to do with my life?" this book provides a clear and practical ninety-day program that can help you make major changes in your life.

This revised edition valuable insights into how to stoke change, including:

- Ten years of additional client experience
- Reports from 500 coaches worldwide who have trained to use this material with clients
- New stories and modern-day dilemmas addressed
- QR codes and additional interactive materials

For anyone who feels drawn toward a life-changing move but is not sure exactly what to do or how to move forward, *Now What?* presents a concrete process for finding and pursuing a new path in life.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

## Review

"This is it--a turbocharged, high-energy, stripped-to-the-core distillation of key insights and practices to truly move you forward. After reading Laura's loving and potent guidance, you can't help creating the life you yearn for."

—Jennifer Loudon, author of *Comfort Secrets for Busy Women*

"Laura Berman Fortgang is your perfect guide to making change in your life. You will be inspired, but more importantly, you will finally take action."

—Pamela Slim, *Body of Work*

"If this book delivers just ten percent of the power of Laura's coaching, it will be worth thousands of times the price."

—Mark Bryan, co-author of *THE ARTIST'S WAY AT WORK*

"We all need to plug into an energy source for our lives and once you plug into Laura Berman Fortgang and Now What? you will be electrified and raring to go. Listen to what she has to say and you will move your life to new heights."

—Iyanla Vanzant

"Thinking of making a big change in how you make a living--or how you live your life? Having trouble getting started? This wise, honest and practical book can help you figure out what may be holding you back, and where to go from here. I'm recommending it to everyone I know. Great stuff!"

—Anne Fisher, FORTUNE

Praise for LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE....

"Laura Berman Fortgang will help you reach the success and fulfillment you are destined for."

--Ken Blanchard

"A brilliantly written, indispensable guide that touches and expands the very best of our hearts, minds, and spirits."

--Harold Bloomfield, M.D., author of Making Peace with Your Past and How to Survive the Loss of a Love

"Beware-this thought-provoking book will put you on a one-way path to a more creative and fulfilling life."

--Kyle MacLachlan

"Fortgang generously offers glorious, refreshing guidance to help us each find our unique path in life."

--Jennifer Loudon, author of The Woman's Comfort Book

"Fortgang's Wisdom Access Questions have the makings of brilliance-simple, easy to use, hugely effective, and humbly obvious."

--Judy George, founder and CEO, Domain

"Laura helps you organize information... so you can move your life forward in positive ways. I can't recommend this enough!"

--Julia Sweeney

About the Author

Laura Berman Fortgang is a nationally renowned speaker, life coach, and career strategist, helping individuals, small businesses, and corporations forge new directions and weather change. Laura is a recent Huffington Post blogger and a media perennial appearing on Oprah, various morning shows, CNN, MSNBC, and in many print publications. She lives in Montclair, New Jersey.

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Introduction

[nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what)

Welcome

It's not what you do that brings career satisfaction. It's who you get to be while you're doing it.



—LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG

Being given the opportunity to revise this book after more than a decade since it was written is a great gift. It's also bittersweet. On the one hand, it's wonderful to confirm that the material is still relevant. On the other hand, it's sad that the material is still relevant. In fact, it's not only relevant; it's needed more than ever.

It was originally written as a result of eighteen months of work starting four days after September 11, 2001. I had told my agent that I was not interested in writing any more books. I felt my two previous ones were enough proof that I deserved to have been plucked out of obscurity to be the first American coach featured prominently in the media and awarded a book contract without a proposal. I had settled back into coaching clients in the relative quiet of suburban life with two infants and a toddler. However, 9/11 changed everything. Suddenly, my phone was ringing off the hook with people who felt panicked that life was short and anything could happen so they better take those dreams off the back burner and get moving. For the next year and a half, my coaching clients reflected one specialty: supporting people to figure out what they wanted to do with their lives. And that has not stopped. I've written two books since this one, and I speak to corporations on a variety of success topics, but when the phone rings with a coaching request, it's for career transition, and that has only intensified since the Great Recession.

This book is for you if you've been wondering if you're losing your marbles because you are considering a career change when most people think you have it good. Maybe everyone around you just thinks you're nuts for complaining or thinking of shifting gears. My motto is: "If everyone is saying you're crazy, you're on the right track."

Now, please understand, I am not talking about true mental illness. I am talking about the very scary and unpleasant feeling of considering walking away from a good paycheck or years of experience in one area to do something else. You wonder if you're losing a grip on reality because our society (and likely our partners, spouses, and friends) are reflecting back on you how illogical your rumblings are. And again, that's good. That's very, very good. Logic is a left-brain function, and as a population (first world, likely two or three generations away from our immigrant ancestors), the notion that having a job or an income of any kind should be happiness enough has become outdated. You know your life is good by the standards that society measures it, but you are not happy and can't seem to justify it or name why it is so. You may not be sure how else to go about things or what else you should do with your life.

If you're unemployed, don't think I've forgotten you. This book is for you, too, especially if your industry is shrinking or gone altogether. So many people are finding themselves "old," "overqualified," or "shut out" of opportunities and industries due to the quickly changing landscape. Complete reinvention is required.

You're being asked to send your résumé out into cyberspace with barely the courtesy of an acknowledgment that anyone's read it and no way to follow up with anyone. It's pretty easy to feel hopeless. New tactics are a must. Social media and who you know matter. One big problem is that we've been trained to believe that if we do our résumé right, network, and interview well, a job is a given. Not in today's world. It's not about doing all the "right" things better. It's doing something entirely different.

As you'll see in the upcoming chapters in this book, your résumé will not come into play for an indication of where new momentum might come from. Your life story (Chapter Four) will show you what needs to come back from the past or what needs to be pursued to get the ball rolling in your life again. After a decade of experience with this program, it's almost become formulaic: Something from the past rolled into the skill set of today equals your new direction, or at least the key to having luck return to your side. It's OK if you are doubtful, but proceed anyway. I need you to trust this process.

Since launching the hardcover of this book in 2004 and the paperback in 2005, almost five hundred career

coaches in the United States and abroad have trained with me to use this material with their clients. I have continued to coach people one-on-one myself and I have spoken publicly to tens of thousands of people, sharing the insights and exercises herein. Learning from all these outlets that the material really works time and time again surprises me. I wrote the original first draft in ninety days with four beta-testing groups standing by to work the program week by week. It was based on everything I did intuitively, shooting from the hip with my clients after twelve years of experience and the intense post-9/11 experience. But it's been the decade since that has shown me hundreds, if not thousands of times over that this program works and that the trend toward stepping away from soul-deadening jobs is only growing with no sign of stopping.

### The New Economy or Human Evolution?

Many people in America, and other countries that have had an immigrant culture, are the descendants of a work ethic that has taken its toll. The immigrant work ethic was that of hard work and sacrifice to provide for one's family. The next generation or two followed the rules as they were outlined for us. Those rules have changed, along with our desire to follow them. What we are left with is feeling like we are in foreign territory. It's like being asked to change our internal operating system, and it feels as unnatural as it would to a PC user trying to become a Mac user.

Today's professionals who have reached some level of success are longing for right-brain freedom. They want to create, innovate, and express themselves through work. Their intuition or inner promptings are pestering them, but we were not usually raised to respect those. Those musings have been traditionally labeled "frivolous," "selfish," and substandard to the American ideal of "making it."

Where it would make sense that people today would just be grateful to be employed when so many others were losing their jobs, I've seen more people instead ready to do something else with their life. The shape that work takes in our lives and the place that it holds in them has become as varied as the individual. People are experimenting with finding what is going to make them happy and, in many instances, money is no longer the main criterion for staying or going.

My own Polish immigrant grandfather would have no basis for understanding that I work with people to find work they really love. In his day, feeding your family through the work you did was reason enough to be happy!

In his book *Linchpin*, Seth Godin says: "Now we live in a world where all the joy and profit has been squeezed out of following the rules . . . The working middle class is suffering. Wages are stagnant; job security is, for many people, a fading memory; and stress is skyrocketing."

Is it any wonder that so many people are longing to make a change?

Godin goes on to say that this presents us with an opportunity to become "highly sought-after, indispensable, and unique." That is what this book aims to help you do. Whether you develop a new role right where you are, switch companies or careers to do so, or start your own enterprise,\* we have to disrupt the status quo and break out to be uniquely ourselves. Being a cog in the wheel and like everyone else is no longer the secret to a protected, secure future.

To make the change, you have to be a little bit crazy. You have to break out of the norm and trust your intuition and where your craziest ideas are leading you. As humans we are ready to be all that we are capable of; therefore, reorienting from a five-sensory existence to a sixth-sensory one. That means people are wanting to include all of who they are in how they work. They don't want to leave at home their intuition and deepest desires to make a difference.

Just as we humans are not conscious of the evolution that led to us to having thumbs, neither is most of our society aware of the evolution that is leading us to long for expression of who we truly are in our day-to-day existence. More and more of us are starting to make drastic changes to honor the parts of ourselves we have left behind. In doing so, we feel more alive—connected to ourselves and the world around us. This explains why in recent years I've stopped saying that people come to me with career crises. I see them now more as spiritual crises. It's not necessarily about God but rather about your desire to align with who you really are instead of who you think you are expected to be.

### It's Not "What" You Do but "Who" You Get to Be

What has become undeniably clear to me over the past few years, as I continued to work with clients, is that career and life satisfaction stems less from what we choose to do for a living and more from who we get to be while we are doing it. We want work that allows us to feel in harmony with ourselves. It is at this point that we equate having "more" with being more and feeling more alive. When this happens, we don't care as much about what we are doing. We focus more on who we are becoming. This affords us the ability to dream about things bigger than ourselves. This becomes the point at which life feels more meaningful and you become curious (with less worry) about how it might all play out.

As you get yourself on a path to honor this evolution, you are tapping into what I call your Life Blueprint. Your Life Blueprint is the unique imprint on your soul that helps determine what will make you happiest and most fulfilled. The philosophy is introduced in my second book, *Living Your Best Life*, as part of a process of self-discovery. This book provides you with a concrete and chronological ninety-day path to specifically uncover the direction your blueprint indicates for your life.

### How to Use This Book

Though most people have come to me over the years longing for clarity about career direction, this book is designed to also uncover other next steps such as what will follow divorce, separation, loss, or relocation. Whether you are employed, unemployed, a young searcher, a midlife searcher, or a retired person looking forward to another chapter, this process will work for you. Age is not a factor as long as you have a deep sense within you that there is more you are meant to contribute and that this greatness still wants to come out of you before your time here is through. True greatness is not tethered only to a deed or career, but encompasses a general ability to communicate with the world from a place of contentment and peace. That is as great a purpose as any.

This book will take you through an encapsulation of the process my clients go through to find out what their next step or steps should be. The goal: a happy life. And to me, that is all that matters.

In 2001, I made a conscious decision to exclusively work with clients for ninety days at a time (versus previous relationships of six months to a year). I had noticed time and again in my work with clients that people could produce extraordinary results when given less time within which to do it, and so I designed the ninety-day program we are about to embark on together.

Ninety days—forty-five days to find the new direction and forty-five days to set the course toward it—will sound like a lot to some people and not nearly enough to others.

First, I should tell you that there are no overnight solutions. Some discoveries take time to mature. I've had people take as long as a decade to cross over into the path they discovered in our times together, but most happen within one to three years. The discoveries can be profound, but sometimes people are slower to put them into action. Then again, you will be surprised at how much you will accomplish in ninety days. Hundreds of people have already made major changes in their lives using this program, and I hope that you,

too, will find that this book helps you discover the next step on your path.

This ninety-day program has been effective in more than 90 percent of my clients. Here are some examples:

When Carla entered the 90 Days, she was on medical leave, dreading going back to work, and clueless about a new direction. When she finished the 90 Days, she was ready to give notice and pursue a degree in sports psychology.

When Jake started the 90 Days, he was disappointed and depressed by his current career, with no particular passions he would like to pursue. When he finished the 90 Days, he was clear that he wanted to work with children and was putting a two-year plan in place for retraining and getting into a new line of work.

When Taylor entered the 90 Days, she was hoping to create a plan to cross over from professional stylist to art dealer over the course of the next four years. When she finished the 90 Days, she was selling art, planning new buying trips to Cuba, and moving into her new living/gallery loft space.

When Jennifer started the 90 Days, she was facing mounting debt as she struggle to keep her business and life afloat and wanted to gain new ideas to rebuild her company. When she finished the 90 Days, she was enrolled in a seminary after admitting the truth about what she knew deep down was her new direction.

When Scott entered the 90 Days, he was spinning his wheels in a midlevel management job at a large corporation, which was frustrating and unsatisfying. He felt trapped by a recent divorce and child custody issues and saw no way to make a career move. Shortly after leaving the ninety-day process, he was offered a position as CEO for an \$800-million-plus company with more than eight hundred employees across the country from his old job.

This work takes attention and focus and self-reflection. There are exercises in every chapter. If you are one of those people who skips the exercises and, despite your best intentions, doesn't get back to them later, you will cheat yourself. It is a process. It's ninety days to a life direction, not ninety days to landing a job. So trust the author, the process, and the time frame, and you will see results. If you rush, skip around, or try to force answers, you'll only grow frustrated, blame the program, and throw the book in the pile with the rest you attempted.

The beta groups that tested this book specifically asked me to tell you that every exercise is crucial, even those that may appear trivial initially. They would recommend that you do them all, even if you think they don't apply to you, because you will discover something new about yourself by doing so.

The steps outlined in this book are meant to be executed in the order in which they appear. Each chapter is a week. Some of them, like Chapter Six, which includes a research project, and Chapter Eight, on money, will take longer, but keep up with their demands in the background as you move forward with the program. You may also decide to revisit a chapter as things change and evolve. You'll notice there are a few QR codes throughout the book. If you've never seen this before, it's pretty easy. Download a QR code reader in your app store. Neo Reader and Quickmark work well with different devices. You'll scan the code with your phone or tablet and see the page open up. If you want to print it out or get it to your computer, you can e-mail it to yourself and download it to get to work on it. Please enjoy the videos and supplemental materials. It's my intent to give an extra boost to your process by adding this twenty-first-century tool that the original book did not have.

You'll notice that this book is divided into two parts: "Naming What 'It' Is" and "Getting There." The first part helps you determine the direction or next moves and does so by asking you to look in unexpected places for answers. The second part gets you into action and helps you redesign your life to accommodate the

changes you are thinking of making.

You'll also notice that each chapter has a box with summary questions. Most of them you'll have answered during the course of reading the chapter and doing the exercises, but they are there at the end to create a more concise record of your progress.

Working with a buddy or a small group to have further support will expedite this process and keep you on track. If you enter the process with an open mind and try not to force an outcome, you will be surprised by how well it can work.

If you are one of the people it does not work for, do not fret. Your time will not be wasted. Any insight counts, and finding one's place in life is often a process of trial and error. I know it can be frustrating to feel that the answers elude you, but timing is everything and the answers will come eventually. If your "it" does not become clear by the end of the first section, you will find that the exercises in the second forty-five days can be used to further explore what "it" is, although other readers will be using it to forge their new path.

For some of you, the "it" will be a direct hit. You'll know exactly what you need in order to set out to do or become. For others of you, the "it" will be an undeniable direction or preference, and for others, "it" may be very clear, strong criteria for what will make you happy, even if it is not specifically a chosen direction yet. The results will vary for each individual, but I can promise insights and clarity that will move you forward. With it will come the return of happiness (even if you did not think you ever lost it) and a sense of peace (even if your every question is not yet answered).

To help you get an early indication of where your blocks to clarity may be, and to prepare you for what's to come, take the following assessment.

#### Why Can't I Figure This Out?

Being unable to see what's next for you and your life's direction could be a reflection of many different blocks. Answer the questions on this checklist truthfully to find where the blocks may be for you. Mark all the statements that are true for you. Don't fret, because each upcoming chapter is designed to help you through these groups of obstacles to clarity. Each chapter breaks you through to the next. Use this list to help you find where the program will help you most.

[nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment)

Print out the assessment if you like by scanning above.

#### A. TRUE

My life is chaotic and out of control.

I have no time for the things I really want to do.

I have interpersonal conflicts in my workplace or at home.

My home and/or office environment is cluttered and not conducive to good work.

I am the sole provider or caretaker of my immediate and/or extended family.

#### B. TRUE

I have trouble seeing myself doing anything new with my life.

I pride myself on my position and reputation.

I have put years of investment into my current work or life role.

I feel that my position or role gives me approval and admiration from those around me.

I feel that what I do reflects positively on my family and others around me.

#### C. TRUE

I have a list of fears and reasons why I can't make a change right now.

I perceive negative consequences to making any radical change now.

Money fears are a major consideration in my thinking now.

I question my ability to do anything else.

I worry that my age could get in the way of being able to make a change.

#### D. TRUE

I feel lost and off track but can't really say specifically what the problem is.

I have a dream (or dreams) that I have yet to fulfill.

There are things I used to enjoy and excel at that I don't get to do now.

I have a hobby or volunteer interest that I wonder about making into a career.

I have a repeating pattern of failures or mishaps in my work and/or relationships.

#### E. TRUE

I want to do something more meaningful or to feel that life has more meaning for me.

People are always telling me I should do or be x, y, or z, but I never really feel motivated to fulfill their expectations.

I am not necessarily aware of the impact I have on people and on my community.

I wish I knew how I and/or my work fit into the grand scheme of things.

I often long to know how I can make a difference in the world.

#### F. TRUE

I have ideas about what I'd like to do, but I'm not sure how to go about them.

I am not exactly sure what would make a job or role satisfying for me.

I vacillate between a few future possibilities but have yet to decide on one that suits me.

I am not sure if I can find a career that fits my values.

I want to be certain before I make a move that it will work out.

#### G. TRUE

I dread looking at my money situation.

I already live beyond my means and wonder how I could ever support a change.

I have been financing a lull in work activity.

I do not have a money plan for making a transition.

I am convinced that any change would mean a step backward financially.

#### H. TRUE

I am a realist.

I avoid any strategy that is not logical and almost foolproof in its desired outcome.

It's hard for me to invest in things I cannot see or touch.

I tend to need external proof before trusting someone or something.

I take on new ideas slowly.

#### I. TRUE

I tend to do more for the people around me than they do for me.

I find it hard to ask for help.

I often drop what I am doing when someone else needs my help.

I wish I had more of a personal and professional network to tap into.

There are people in my life who doubt me or think I am crazy to make a change.

#### J. TRUE

I have no plan for transitioning to something new.

I find it hard to manage many projects at once.

I tend to make progress on projects in spurts instead of being consistent.

I tend to lose interest if I come up against roadblocks while I am executing a plan.

I have a lot of ideas that I have done nothing about (projects, jobs, products, the arts).

Take note of which sections you scored three or more Trues in. Go back to the earliest section where you had three or more positives, and be ready to tackle those obstacles when you arrive at the corresponding place in the program. Using the correlated list on the following pages, you can see which chapters will hold the most punch for you in breaking through your blocks to clarity. It is strongly recommended that you do the program in order, but if you feel moved to jump straight into your blocks, do so according to the chapter breakdown here. If you are ever stuck or unclear as you go, go back a chapter or two to make sure you really covered everything.

#### A. Chapter One: What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Getting a hold of your whirlwind life is important to finding what's next.

#### B. Chapter Two: With Every Gain, There Is a Loss

Recognizing that you are not what you do, and finding the permanent attributes you can use to move forward, are critical to your progress.

#### C. Chapter Three: Most Limits Are Self-Imposed

Identifying and working through your self-imposed limits and obstacles will pave the way to more possibilities.

#### D. Chapter Four: The Past Holds the Clues to the Future

There are clues in your life story that you may not be recognizing as strong indicators for your future direction.

#### E. Chapter Five: Your Purpose in Life Is Right Under Your Nose

A sense of purpose will give great context to your life and help ease you into new and satisfying directions.

#### F. Chapter Six: Your Purpose Needs a Vehicle and Chapter Seven: Your Criteria for Happiness: Is This Really "It"?

Finding a way to bring who you are into what you do is critical to your happiness and satisfaction. These chapters will help you put form and function to your new life.

#### G. Chapter Eight: The Bottom Line Is the Bottom Line

New awareness of your financial life and how it can ease your transition is in order. There is no time like the present to begin.

#### H. Chapter Nine: Life Often Does Imitate Art: Write Your Own Fiction and Chapter Ten: Put Yourself in Opportunity's Way

Giving up old ways of achieving and taking big steps to trust yourself, your instincts, and the flow of life are necessary to move you on to new horizons.

#### I. Chapter Eleven: You Don't Have to Do It Alone

The quality of support from the company you keep is crucial to making your transition to something new. You can train those around you to be better supporters. This chapter will show you how.



## J. Chapter Twelve: Following Your Life Blueprint

Implementation and execution are just as important as innovation. Putting one foot in front of the other and monitoring all your opportunities are key to moving on.

I welcome you to an exciting (and sometimes scary) exploration that will reveal the truth about what you really want, who you really are, and what you are truly capable of. This truth will accelerate your life and spur your personal evolution. You will invite your Life Blueprint to integrate itself into your life and, as a result, experience a time of great wonder and unexpected surprises. You will see your way to a new life direction. It will be up to you whether you pursue it or not. However, in my experience, once “it” is undeniably clear, it is virtually impossible to ignore its call.

part one

### NAMING WHAT “IT” IS

(weeks 1–7)

#### CHAPTER ONE | week one

##### What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.

—HENRY J. KAISER

#### Most helpful customer reviews

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

'Your purpose in life is right under your nose.'

By Grady Harp

New Jersey author Laura Berman Fortgang originally published the first edition of this now revised book in 2005 and it was a success - helping readers re-mold their lives to match their expectations. Laura is a nationally renowned speaker, life coach, and career strategist, helping individuals, small businesses, and corporations forge new directions and weather change. She now is a Huffington Post blogger and a media perennial appearing on Oprah, various morning shows, CNN, MSNBC, and in many print publications.

Laura’s edict is that we each are capable of forging a new life in just 90 days, a life that lives up to our expectations. The summary of the book spells it out well: ‘In Now What? Pioneering life coach Laura Berman Fortgang shares the process that she has used to help hundreds of clients make major changes in their lives. Whether it’s moving on from a dead-end job, discovering an entirely new creative outlet, or answering the age-old question “What am I meant to do with my life?” this book provides a clear and practical ninety-day program that can help you make major changes in your life. This revised edition offers valuable insights into how to stoke change, including ten years of additional client experience, reports from 500 coaches worldwide who have trained to use this material with clients, new stories and modern-day dilemmas addressed, and QR codes and additional interactive materials. For anyone who feels drawn toward a life-changing move but is not sure exactly what to do or how to move forward, Now What? presents a

concrete process for finding and pursuing a new path in life.'

Terrific way to start a New Year – change directions and learn how to get what you truly want out of life.  
Grady Harp, December 15

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

This is a life transforming book - highly recommended!

By Leslie MacDonald

Holy cow - where to begin... Last fall I enrolled in a coach-facilitated Now What Program based on this book. It was a commitment - the process involved a weekly group meeting for about 10 weeks coupled with weekly homework (read a chapter of the book, complete the assignments in the book). The homework required a lot of introspection and reflection - this was a time commitment. It was often frustrating to be thinking about, but not knowing, what my "it" was and whether it would ever become clear. The process revealed patterns I was aware of but learned anew - this excellent book coupled with expert coaching/facilitation made that possible. By the end of the program I had clarity about which of two disparate paths I wanted to go down. Since that time that clarity has crystalized into something amazing that I never saw coming. In short, I realized that, at this moment, I am exactly where I need and want to be (and I haven't changed a thing about my employment situation). What I intend and want to do in the future is only slightly different from, yet is 100% congruent with, what I am currently doing. This epiphany is a complete game changer. I no longer expending energy wondering "what if..." or "should I..." With this clarity, every thought - every action - is purposeful and propels me forward. I am energized in a way I haven't been in a long time and in a way I though might no longer be possible for me. I realize that I had been working very hard but not seeing the full fruit of my labors because my energies were divided due to indecision and uncertainty. What a gift I have been given. I feel truly blessed. If you are looking for clarify, you owe it to yourself to give this a try. Commit the time to the process described in this book. Believe me when I say I understand "busy" - but I was committed to the process and found the time - some weeks it was in 10 minute chunks here and there. Buy the book, complete one chapter at a time; don't move ahead until the chapter assignments are completed (I know this is hard - I wanted to read the whole book in a weekend and be handed enlightenment instantly). Be patient. Do the assignments - especially when you're frustrated. If you feel stuck, re-reach the chapter or sections of the book. Have a faith that the process can work; for me, the outcome is priceless!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Sandra M Schiff

Great new edition.

See all 3 customer reviews...

# **NOW WHAT? REVISED EDITION: 90 DAYS TO A NEW LIFE DIRECTION BY LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG PDF**

Yeah, checking out an e-book **Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction By Laura Berman Fortgang** can add your good friends listings. This is just one of the solutions for you to be effective. As recognized, success does not suggest that you have wonderful points. Understanding as well as recognizing greater than various other will provide each success. Close to, the message as well as impression of this **Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction By Laura Berman Fortgang** could be taken and also picked to act.

## Review

"This is it--a turbocharged, high-energy, stripped-to-the-core distillation of key insights and practices to truly move you forward. After reading Laura's loving and potent guidance, you can't help creating the life you yearn for."

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--Kyle MacLachlan

"Fortgang generously offers glorious, refreshing guidance to help us each find our unique path in life."

--Jennifer Louden, author of *The Woman's Comfort Book*

"Fortgang's Wisdom Access Questions have the makings of brilliance-simple, easy to use, hugely effective, and humbly obvious."

--Judy George, founder and CEO, Domain

"Laura helps you organize information... so you can move your life forward in positive ways. I can't recommend this enough!"

--Julia Sweeney

#### About the Author

Laura Berman Fortgang is a nationally renowned speaker, life coach, and career strategist, helping individuals, small businesses, and corporations forge new directions and weather change. Laura is a recent Huffington Post blogger and a media perennial appearing on Oprah, various morning shows, CNN, MSNBC, and in many print publications. She lives in Montclair, New Jersey.

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#### Introduction

[nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/welcome-to-now-what)

#### Welcome

It's not what you do that brings career satisfaction. It's who you get to be while you're doing it.

—LAURA BERMAN FORTGANG

Being given the opportunity to revise this book after more than a decade since it was written is a great gift. It's also bittersweet. On the one hand, it's wonderful to confirm that the material is still relevant. On the other hand, it's sad that the material is still relevant. In fact, it's not only relevant; it's needed more than ever.

It was originally written as a result of eighteen months of work starting four days after September 11, 2001. I had told my agent that I was not interested in writing any more books. I felt my two previous ones were enough proof that I deserved to have been plucked out of obscurity to be the first American coach featured prominently in the media and awarded a book contract without a proposal. I had settled back into coaching clients in the relative quiet of suburban life with two infants and a toddler. However, 9/11 changed everything. Suddenly, my phone was ringing off the hook with people who felt panicked that life was short and anything could happen so they better take those dreams off the back burner and get moving. For the next year and a half, my coaching clients reflected one specialty: supporting people to figure out what they wanted to do with their lives. And that has not stopped. I've written two books since this one, and I speak to corporations on a variety of success topics, but when the phone rings with a coaching request, it's for career transition, and that has only intensified since the Great Recession.

This book is for you if you've been wondering if you're losing your marbles because you are considering a career change when most people think you have it good. Maybe everyone around you just thinks you're nuts for complaining or thinking of shifting gears. My motto is: "If everyone is saying you're crazy, you're on the

right track.”

Now, please understand, I am not talking about true mental illness. I am talking about the very scary and unpleasant feeling of considering walking away from a good paycheck or years of experience in one area to do something else. You wonder if you’re losing a grip on reality because our society (and likely our partners, spouses, and friends) are reflecting back on you how illogical your rumblings are. And again, that’s good. That’s very, very good. Logic is a left-brain function, and as a population (first world, likely two or three generations away from our immigrant ancestors), the notion that having a job or an income of any kind should be happiness enough has become outdated. You know your life is good by the standards that society measures it, but you are not happy and can’t seem to justify it or name why it is so. You may not be sure how else to go about things or what else you should do with your life.

If you’re unemployed, don’t think I’ve forgotten you. This book is for you, too, especially if your industry is shrinking or gone altogether. So many people are finding themselves “old,” “overqualified,” or “shut out” of opportunities and industries due to the quickly changing landscape. Complete reinvention is required.

You’re being asked to send your résumé out into cyberspace with barely the courtesy of an acknowledgment that anyone’s read it and no way to follow up with anyone. It’s pretty easy to feel hopeless. New tactics are a must. Social media and who you know matter. One big problem is that we’ve been trained to believe that if we do our résumé right, network, and interview well, a job is a given. Not in today’s world. It’s not about doing all the “right” things better. It’s doing something entirely different.

As you’ll see in the upcoming chapters in this book, your résumé will not come into play for an indication of where new momentum might come from. Your life story (Chapter Four) will show you what needs to come back from the past or what needs to be pursued to get the ball rolling in your life again. After a decade of experience with this program, it’s almost become formulaic: Something from the past rolled into the skill set of today equals your new direction, or at least the key to having luck return to your side. It’s OK if you are doubtful, but proceed anyway. I need you to trust this process.

Since launching the hardcover of this book in 2004 and the paperback in 2005, almost five hundred career coaches in the United States and abroad have trained with me to use this material with their clients. I have continued to coach people one-on-one myself and I have spoken publicly to tens of thousands of people, sharing the insights and exercises herein. Learning from all these outlets that the material really works time and time again surprises me. I wrote the original first draft in ninety days with four beta-testing groups standing by to work the program week by week. It was based on everything I did intuitively, shooting from the hip with my clients after twelve years of experience and the intense post-9/11 experience. But it’s been the decade since that has shown me hundreds, if not thousands of times over that this program works and that the trend toward stepping away from soul-deadening jobs is only growing with no sign of stopping.

The New Economy or Human Evolution?

Many people in America, and other countries that have had an immigrant culture, are the descendants of a work ethic that has taken its toll. The immigrant work ethic was that of hard work and sacrifice to provide for one’s family. The next generation or two followed the rules as they were outlined for us. Those rules have changed, along with our desire to follow them. What we are left with is feeling like we are in foreign territory. It’s like being asked to change our internal operating system, and it feels as unnatural as it would to a PC user trying to become a Mac user.

Today’s professionals who have reached some level of success are longing for right-brain freedom. They want to create, innovate, and express themselves through work. Their intuition or inner promptings are pestering them, but we were not usually raised to respect those. Those musings have been traditionally

labeled “frivolous,” “selfish,” and substandard to the American ideal of “making it.”

Where it would make sense that people today would just be grateful to be employed when so many others were losing their jobs, I’ve seen more people instead ready to do something else with their life. The shape that work takes in our lives and the place that it holds in them has become as varied as the individual. People are experimenting with finding what is going to make them happy and, in many instances, money is no longer the main criterion for staying or going.

My own Polish immigrant grandfather would have no basis for understanding that I work with people to find work they really love. In his day, feeding your family through the work you did was reason enough to be happy!

In his book *Linchpin*, Seth Godin says: “Now we live in a world where all the joy and profit has been squeezed out of following the rules . . . The working middle class is suffering. Wages are stagnant; job security is, for many people, a fading memory; and stress is skyrocketing.”

Is it any wonder that so many people are longing to make a change?

Godin goes on to say that this presents us with an opportunity to become “highly sought-after, indispensable, and unique.” That is what this book aims to help you do. Whether you develop a new role right where you are, switch companies or careers to do so, or start your own enterprise,\* we have to disrupt the status quo and break out to be uniquely ourselves. Being a cog in the wheel and like everyone else is no longer the secret to a protected, secure future.

To make the change, you have to be a little bit crazy. You have to break out of the norm and trust your intuition and where your craziest ideas are leading you. As humans we are ready to be all that we are capable of; therefore, reorienting from a five-sensory existence to a sixth-sensory one. That means people are wanting to include all of who they are in how they work. They don’t want to leave at home their intuition and deepest desires to make a difference.

Just as we humans are not conscious of the evolution that led to us to having thumbs, neither is most of our society aware of the evolution that is leading us to long for expression of who we truly are in our day-to-day existence. More and more of us are starting to make drastic changes to honor the parts of ourselves we have left behind. In doing so, we feel more alive—connected to ourselves and the world around us. This explains why in recent years I’ve stopped saying that people come to me with career crises. I see them now more as spiritual crises. It’s not necessarily about God but rather about your desire to align with who you really are instead of who you think you are expected to be.

It’s Not “What” You Do but “Who” You Get to Be

What has become undeniably clear to me over the past few years, as I continued to work with clients, is that career and life satisfaction stems less from what we choose to do for a living and more from who we get to be while we are doing it. We want work that allows us to feel in harmony with ourselves. It is at this point that we equate having “more” with being more and feeling more alive. When this happens, we don’t care as much about what we are doing. We focus more on who we are becoming. This affords us the ability to dream about things bigger than ourselves. This becomes the point at which life feels more meaningful and you become curious (with less worry) about how it might all play out.

As you get yourself on a path to honor this evolution, you are tapping into what I call your Life Blueprint. Your Life Blueprint is the unique imprint on your soul that helps determine what will make you happiest and most fulfilled. The philosophy is introduced in my second book, *Living Your Best Life*, as part of a process

of self-discovery. This book provides you with a concrete and chronological ninety-day path to specifically uncover the direction your blueprint indicates for your life.

## How to Use This Book

Though most people have come to me over the years longing for clarity about career direction, this book is designed to also uncover other next steps such as what will follow divorce, separation, loss, or relocation. Whether you are employed, unemployed, a young searcher, a midlife searcher, or a retired person looking forward to another chapter, this process will work for you. Age is not a factor as long as you have a deep sense within you that there is more you are meant to contribute and that this greatness still wants to come out of you before your time here is through. True greatness is not tethered only to a deed or career, but encompasses a general ability to communicate with the world from a place of contentment and peace. That is as great a purpose as any.

This book will take you through an encapsulation of the process my clients go through to find out what their next step or steps should be. The goal: a happy life. And to me, that is all that matters.

In 2001, I made a conscious decision to exclusively work with clients for ninety days at a time (versus previous relationships of six months to a year). I had noticed time and again in my work with clients that people could produce extraordinary results when given less time within which to do it, and so I designed the ninety-day program we are about to embark on together.

Ninety days—forty-five days to find the new direction and forty-five days to set the course toward it—will sound like a lot to some people and not nearly enough to others.

First, I should tell you that there are no overnight solutions. Some discoveries take time to mature. I've had people take as long as a decade to cross over into the path they discovered in our times together, but most happen within one to three years. The discoveries can be profound, but sometimes people are slower to put them into action. Then again, you will be surprised at how much you will accomplish in ninety days. Hundreds of people have already made major changes in their lives using this program, and I hope that you, too, will find that this book helps you discover the next step on your path.

This ninety-day program has been effective in more than 90 percent of my clients. Here are some examples:

When Carla entered the 90 Days, she was on medical leave, dreading going back to work, and clueless about a new direction. When she finished the 90 Days, she was ready to give notice and pursue a degree in sports psychology.

When Jake started the 90 Days, he was disappointed and depressed by his current career, with no particular passions he would like to pursue. When he finished the 90 Days, he was clear that he wanted to work with children and was putting a two-year plan in place for retraining and getting into a new line of work.

When Taylor entered the 90 Days, she was hoping to create a plan to cross over from professional stylist to art dealer over the course of the next four years. When she finished the 90 Days, she was selling art, planning new buying trips to Cuba, and moving into her new living/gallery loft space.

When Jennifer started the 90 Days, she was facing mounting debt as she struggle to keep her business and life afloat and wanted to gain new ideas to rebuild her company. When she finished the 90 Days, she was enrolled in a seminary after admitting the truth about what she knew deep down was her new direction.

When Scott entered the 90 Days, he was spinning his wheels in a midlevel management job at a large

corporation, which was frustrating and unsatisfying. He felt trapped by a recent divorce and child custody issues and saw no way to make a career move. Shortly after leaving the ninety-day process, he was offered a position as CEO for an \$800-million-plus company with more than eight hundred employees across the country from his old job.

This work takes attention and focus and self-reflection. There are exercises in every chapter. If you are one of those people who skips the exercises and, despite your best intentions, doesn't get back to them later, you will cheat yourself. It is a process. It's ninety days to a life direction, not ninety days to landing a job. So trust the author, the process, and the time frame, and you will see results. If you rush, skip around, or try to force answers, you'll only grow frustrated, blame the program, and throw the book in the pile with the rest you attempted.

The beta groups that tested this book specifically asked me to tell you that every exercise is crucial, even those that may appear trivial initially. They would recommend that you do them all, even if you think they don't apply to you, because you will discover something new about yourself by doing so.

The steps outlined in this book are meant to be executed in the order in which they appear. Each chapter is a week. Some of them, like Chapter Six, which includes a research project, and Chapter Eight, on money, will take longer, but keep up with their demands in the background as you move forward with the program. You may also decide to revisit a chapter as things change and evolve. You'll notice there are a few QR codes throughout the book. If you've never seen this before, it's pretty easy. Download a QR code reader in your app store. Neo Reader and Quickmark work well with different devices. You'll scan the code with your phone or tablet and see the page open up. If you want to print it out or get it to your computer, you can e-mail it to yourself and download it to get to work on it. Please enjoy the videos and supplemental materials. It's my intent to give an extra boost to your process by adding this twenty-first-century tool that the original book did not have.

You'll notice that this book is divided into two parts: "Naming What 'It' Is" and "Getting There." The first part helps you determine the direction or next moves and does so by asking you to look in unexpected places for answers. The second part gets you into action and helps you redesign your life to accommodate the changes you are thinking of making.

You'll also notice that each chapter has a box with summary questions. Most of them you'll have answered during the course of reading the chapter and doing the exercises, but they are there at the end to create a more concise record of your progress.

Working with a buddy or a small group to have further support will expedite this process and keep you on track. If you enter the process with an open mind and try not to force an outcome, you will be surprised by how well it can work.

If you are one of the people it does not work for, do not fret. Your time will not be wasted. Any insight counts, and finding one's place in life is often a process of trial and error. I know it can be frustrating to feel that the answers elude you, but timing is everything and the answers will come eventually. If your "it" does not become clear by the end of the first section, you will find that the exercises in the second forty-five days can be used to further explore what "it" is, although other readers will be using it to forge their new path.

For some of you, the "it" will be a direct hit. You'll know exactly what you need in order to set out to do or become. For others of you, the "it" will be an undeniable direction or preference, and for others, "it" may be very clear, strong criteria for what will make you happy, even if it is not specifically a chosen direction yet. The results will vary for each individual, but I can promise insights and clarity that will move you forward. With it will come the return of happiness (even if you did not think you ever lost it) and a sense of peace



(even if your every question is not yet answered).

To help you get an early indication of where your blocks to clarity may be, and to prepare you for what's to come, take the following assessment.

### Why Can't I Figure This Out?

Being unable to see what's next for you and your life's direction could be a reflection of many different blocks. Answer the questions on this checklist truthfully to find where the blocks may be for you. Mark all the statements that are true for you. Don't fret, because each upcoming chapter is designed to help you through these groups of obstacles to clarity. Each chapter breaks you through to the next. Use this list to help you find where the program will help you most.

[nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment](http://nowwhatcoaching.com/now-what-assessment)

Print out the assessment if you like by scanning above.

#### A. TRUE

My life is chaotic and out of control.

I have no time for the things I really want to do.

I have interpersonal conflicts in my workplace or at home.

My home and/or office environment is cluttered and not conducive to good work.

I am the sole provider or caretaker of my immediate and/or extended family.

#### B. TRUE

I have trouble seeing myself doing anything new with my life.

I pride myself on my position and reputation.

I have put years of investment into my current work or life role.

I feel that my position or role gives me approval and admiration from those around me.

I feel that what I do reflects positively on my family and others around me.

#### C. TRUE

I have a list of fears and reasons why I can't make a change right now.

I perceive negative consequences to making any radical change now.

Money fears are a major consideration in my thinking now.

I question my ability to do anything else.

I worry that my age could get in the way of being able to make a change.

#### D. TRUE

I feel lost and off track but can't really say specifically what the problem is.

I have a dream (or dreams) that I have yet to fulfill.

There are things I used to enjoy and excel at that I don't get to do now.

I have a hobby or volunteer interest that I wonder about making into a career.

I have a repeating pattern of failures or mishaps in my work and/or relationships.

#### E. TRUE

I want to do something more meaningful or to feel that life has more meaning for me.

People are always telling me I should do or be x, y, or z, but I never really feel motivated to fulfill their expectations.

I am not necessarily aware of the impact I have on people and on my community.

I wish I knew how I and/or my work fit into the grand scheme of things.

I often long to know how I can make a difference in the world.

#### F. TRUE

I have ideas about what I'd like to do, but I'm not sure how to go about them.

I am not exactly sure what would make a job or role satisfying for me.

I vacillate between a few future possibilities but have yet to decide on one that suits me.

I am not sure if I can find a career that fits my values.

I want to be certain before I make a move that it will work out.

#### G. TRUE

I dread looking at my money situation.

I already live beyond my means and wonder how I could ever support a change.

I have been financing a lull in work activity.

I do not have a money plan for making a transition.

I am convinced that any change would mean a step backward financially.

#### H. TRUE

I am a realist.

I avoid any strategy that is not logical and almost foolproof in its desired outcome.

It's hard for me to invest in things I cannot see or touch.

I tend to need external proof before trusting someone or something.

I take on new ideas slowly.

#### I. TRUE

I tend to do more for the people around me than they do for me.

I find it hard to ask for help.

I often drop what I am doing when someone else needs my help.

I wish I had more of a personal and professional network to tap into.

There are people in my life who doubt me or think I am crazy to make a change.

#### J. TRUE

I have no plan for transitioning to something new.

I find it hard to manage many projects at once.

I tend to make progress on projects in spurts instead of being consistent.

I tend to lose interest if I come up against roadblocks while I am executing a plan.

I have a lot of ideas that I have done nothing about (projects, jobs, products, the arts).

Take note of which sections you scored three or more Trues in. Go back to the earliest section where you had three or more positives, and be ready to tackle those obstacles when you arrive at the corresponding place in the program. Using the correlated list on the following pages, you can see which chapters will hold the most punch for you in breaking through your blocks to clarity. It is strongly recommended that you do the program in order, but if you feel moved to jump straight into your blocks, do so according to the chapter breakdown here. If you are ever stuck or unclear as you go, go back a chapter or two to make sure you really covered everything.

#### A. Chapter One: What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Getting a hold of your whirlwind life is important to finding what's next.

#### B. Chapter Two: With Every Gain, There Is a Loss

Recognizing that you are not what you do, and finding the permanent attributes you can use to move forward, are critical to your progress.

#### C. Chapter Three: Most Limits Are Self-Imposed

Identifying and working through your self-imposed limits and obstacles will pave the way to more possibilities.

#### D. Chapter Four: The Past Holds the Clues to the Future

There are clues in your life story that you may not be recognizing as strong indicators for your future direction.

#### E. Chapter Five: Your Purpose in Life Is Right Under Your Nose

A sense of purpose will give great context to your life and help ease you into new and satisfying directions.

#### F. Chapter Six: Your Purpose Needs a Vehicle and Chapter Seven: Your Criteria for Happiness: Is This Really “It”?

Finding a way to bring who you are into what you do is critical to your happiness and satisfaction. These chapters will help you put form and function to your new life.

#### G. Chapter Eight: The Bottom Line Is the Bottom Line

New awareness of your financial life and how it can ease your transition is in order. There is no time like the present to begin.

#### H. Chapter Nine: Life Often Does Imitate Art: Write Your Own Fiction and Chapter Ten: Put Yourself in Opportunity’s Way

Giving up old ways of achieving and taking big steps to trust yourself, your instincts, and the flow of life are necessary to move you on to new horizons.

#### I. Chapter Eleven: You Don’t Have to Do It Alone

The quality of support from the company you keep is crucial to making your transition to something new. You can train those around you to be better supporters. This chapter will show you how.

#### J. Chapter Twelve: Following Your Life Blueprint

Implementation and execution are just as important as innovation. Putting one foot in front of the other and monitoring all your opportunities are key to moving on.

I welcome you to an exciting (and sometimes scary) exploration that will reveal the truth about what you really want, who you really are, and what you are truly capable of. This truth will accelerate your life and spur your personal evolution. You will invite your Life Blueprint to integrate itself into your life and, as a result, experience a time of great wonder and unexpected surprises. You will see your way to a new life direction. It will be up to you whether you pursue it or not. However, in my experience, once “it” is undeniably clear, it is virtually impossible to ignore its call.

part one

NAMING WHAT “IT” IS

(weeks 1–7)

CHAPTER ONE | week one

What You Hate Gives a Name to What You Want

Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.

—HENRY J. KAISER

Well, e-book *Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction* By *Laura Berman Fortgang* will make you closer to just what you are prepared. This *Now What? Revised Edition: 90 Days To A New Life Direction* By *Laura Berman Fortgang* will be constantly buddy any kind of time. You may not forcedly to constantly finish over reading a book in short time. It will certainly be simply when you have extra time and investing few time to make you feel satisfaction with what you review. So, you can obtain the definition of the notification from each sentence in guide.