**Starting-Over Guidesheet #2**

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**Planning Value-Driven Change**

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*Each of us bears an inner compass . . . When our actions match our values, this compass points true north. —Julia Cameron*

As you engage in starting over, keep Julia Cameron’s image of a compass in mind. If your actions match your underlying value system, then the compass will point to true north, guiding you more accurately. But if your actions don’t match your values, you can send the compass needle spinning. And you’ll be confused about direction.

A “value” is anything you hold dear, believe in, and don’t want to compromise. For example, spending time with family, or cultivating a relationship with God, or making enough money to take care of yourself. Ideally, values guide your thinking, exploration, decisions, and actions. When you follow them, you feel more centered within your soul. But when your actions don’t match your values, you experience a “values disconnect” that unsettles the soul and eventually withers and deadens it.

Sticking to your values can be challenging, especially when you’re pressured by circumstances to make a quick fix. When my writing income dips and I struggle, well-intentioned people encourage me to “get a real job” and keep my creative pursuits as hobbies. (A few haven’t been so well-meaning. In fact, they’ve been downright mean.) But every time I re-evaluate my values, calling, and direction, I wind up at the same place: I’m created to be a writer. Placing my primary focus anywhere else grinds against my God-given destiny. However, following this value also demands sacrifice. The writing life requires that I live simply, and I’m a person who likes stuff!

Living by your values, it’s the sacrifice that can throw you off course. If you’re like me, you want to have it all. But “having it all” probably slides outside your unique set of values—the compass that leads you to purpose, meaning, and satisfaction. Sticking to your values keeps you authentic and minimizes inner turmoil. It’s not always easy, but eventually it’s rewarding. Your “inside” will match your “outside,” and most likely, you’ll accomplish what you want the most.

As you think about starting over, also consider your values. These questions can help keep your values and actions connected while you move forward.

1. What are your top five to ten personal values?
2. At this point, which of these values affect how you live? Briefly explain this.
3. Which values are not affecting how you live? Why?
4. How do you feel about the “values disconnect” in #3?
5. How can you bring your actions closer to each of your values?
6. What values are crucial to your starting-over process? Why?
7. How can you honor these values as you start over? Give examples.
8. As you transition your life, how will you evaluate whether you’re sticking to your values?

For a more detailed look at your values, you could create categories such as spiritual, physical, social, mental; or home, work, family, friends, etc.

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