# The 11 Most Dangerous Myths about Finding Your Path

*by Pace Smith*

# The 11 Most Dangerous Myths about Finding Your Path

You feel a calling in your heart. You want to help others, to follow your dreams, to change the world. You close your eyes and you can see your path laid out before you. It looks like this:

**Step 1: Feel a calling in my heart**
**Step 2: ???**
**Step 3: Profit!**

It's that pesky little Step 2 that's keeping you tossing and turning. And even Step 1 is vague and uncertain.

You feel the pull of your path but you don't know where it's leading you, so you're terrified to step onto it. Those giant question marks feel like a dense fog, obscuring all sorts of unknown pitfalls and dangers.

Let's clear the fog.

Let's bust some myths.

Let's get real about what that calling in your heart *actually is,* and what you can do about it.

# About the Author

But first, allow me to introduce myself.

Hi! I'm Pace Smith. **I help sensitive spiritual misfits follow their hearts to a wild crazy meaningful life.**

I'm a Pathfinding coach, a teacher, a speaker, and a writer. I'm a spiritual misfit with Sufi, Buddhist, and Reclaiming influences. I'm a speedrun fanatic and an open-source Reiki healer. I'm vegan, transgender, polyamorous, bisexual, and I love to play Dance Dance Revolution. I dyed my hair purple the day I quit my day job, and I love it every single day, even (especially?) after the purple has faded to pink.

My wife Kyeli and I live in Portland, Oregon with our two cats. Kyeli and I often co-teach classes, collaborate on projects, and dance to chiptune dubstep together.

# My Story

I began following my heart in 2007, when Kyeli and I presented some tips and tricks we'd learned about communication and relationships to a small audience. After the presentation, oodles of the audience members came over to thank us and tell us how much we had helped them. Several even encouraged us to write a book about the topic. So we did.

My heart felt so full of love that day that I could no longer ignore it. That was the day I decided to follow my heart.

***That was the day I found my path.***

I knew I wanted to help others, but I had to learn how first. I studied, I experimented, I practiced. I coached, taught, wrote, presented, and blogged my heart out. I succeeded enough to keep me going, I failed enough to keep me humble, and I learned enough to allow me to be of service to others. I helped handfuls, then hundreds, then thousands of people listen to their hearts and find their paths, and in doing so I laid the foundation of what was to become the Pathfinding Program.

I grew my business and was able to quit my day job. I deepened my spiritual practice and was able to keep myself from totally losing my shit in the process.

Now I'm free to pursue my life's work full-time: helping spiritual misfits find their own paths.

In the process, I've encountered some dangerous myths. **I'm going to bust the crap out of these myths,** because I don't want any of them to stand between you and your own heart.

# The 11 Most Dangerous Myths about Finding Your Path

**Myth #1: My true calling will strike me like a lightning bolt.**

**Myth #2: My path will make use of the skills I've learned.**

**Myth #3: I need to quit my job to follow my path.**

**Myth #4: It's selfish to focus on what's best for me.**

**Myth #5: It's unlikely I'll ever find true fulfillment, so I might as well settle for good enough.**

**Myth #6: I must walk my path alone.**

**Myth #7: I'm too much of a mess to find my path.**

**Myth #8: Knowing my path is like having a map of the rest of my life.**

**Myth #9: My path will be epic.**

**Myth #10: My path will be hard.**

**Myth #11: My path will be easy.**

# Myth #1:
# My true calling will strike me like a lightning bolt.

**Mother Teresa** felt her true calling like a lightning bolt, but for most of us, it's more like putting together a jigsaw puzzle without being able to see the picture on the front of the box.

In fact, feeling like you already know your true calling can be an obstacle to finding your path, because it locks you into one direction.

### Curious exploration

Curious exploration is the beginning of all Pathfinding journeys. And it can be a very difficult place to be, because the ego wants to make progress, wants to accomplish, wants to figure it all out.

But if you can let go of that anxiety about the future and be in the present moment, curious exploration can be a ton of fun.

It's like wandering around Oz, seeing the sights, meeting the people, and picking up stones as you go.

### Noticing patterns

Then, at some point, you hear the call, a yearning in your heart. Something calling you, drawing you toward it. Something that wants to come through you.

Hey, look, a lot of these stones are yellow. What could I build with them?

***How about a Yellow Brick Road?***

There's always a common thread. It can be more difficult to find it if you have lots of varied interests, but it's always there. And if it's not there yet, maybe

more curious exploration is exactly what's right for you at this moment. You can't make a Yellow Brick Road without first gathering lots of stones.

What if where you are right now is exactly where you need to be?

***Be open.***

And if you've got it stuck in your head that you're only looking for round stones, you might not notice that all the stones you're drawn to are yellow.

If you've got it stuck in your head that you're a computer programmer, you might overlook your gift for poetry.

If you've got it stuck in your head that you're a detail-oriented problem solver, you might not notice that all the work you're drawn to helps people grieve.

If you've got it stuck in your head that you're a landscape artist, you might overlook the fact that you could use your art to help people communicate their ideas.

And if you've got it stuck in your head that stones aren't bricks, you might not notice that you could still build a road out of them.

***Don't wait for the lightning bolt to strike.***

Don't wait for the lightning bolt to strike. Keep exploring curiously, gathering as many stones as you can.

Keep exploring curiously, and you will find the pattern.

***Keep adding pieces to your jigsaw puzzle, and you will see the picture that makes your heart come alive.***

# Myth #2:
# My path will make use of the skills I've learned.

**The pieces of your jigsaw puzzle aren't your skills.**

The jigsaw puzzle of your life forms a picture, and your skills are in the foreground of that picture. Your path is the background. It's the common theme that threads in and out through your life.

I spent 17 years of my life researching artificial intelligence. Now I help sensitive spiritual misfits follow their hearts. My artificial intelligence skills are **completely irrelevant** to the current leg of my path.

***If I had looked only for paths that used my skills, I would have never found my true calling.***

Sometimes a lawyer switches gears to become a yoga teacher, and finds his true calling.

Sometimes a yoga teacher switches gears to become a lawyer, and finds her true calling.

Don't let the skills you gained in the past lock you into a future you don't love.

**“But how can my path be something I'm not skilled in? Don't I need to practice for 10,000 hours to become a true expert?”**

It's easy to get discouraged by the 10,000-hour rule. It's easy to think,

**"I haven't put 10,000 hours into practicing yoga/law/glassblowing, so I'd better keep my mouth shut because I'm not an expert."**

So let me ask you this:

***What have you put 10,000 hours into?***

Have you spent 10,000 hours learning how to love and be loved? **You're an expert on love.**

Have you spent 10,000 hours appreciating nature? **You're a nature appreciation expert.**

Have you spent 10,000 hours practicing knowing yourself in all your parts? **You're a self-knowledge expert.**

Have you spent 10,000 hours struggling through heartbreak, grief, and loss? **You're a grief expert.**

Have you spent 10,000 hours following your heart, seeking your purpose in life? **You're a pathfinding expert.**

Sometimes we're blind to our expertise because it doesn't fit the mold of a commonly accepted profession, like glassblowing or accounting. But shine the spotlight of your attention on the parts of your life you take for granted. Listen for the backing vocals instead of the lead melody.

That decade of working odd jobs? Maybe you were learning **resilience and flexibility.**

Those long years getting into and out of that abusive relationship? Maybe you were learning **self-respect and boundaries.**

That dead-end tech career that wasn't aligned with your heart? Maybe you were learning **analytic problem-solving.**

**What have you been learning from your life?**

***To find your path, look at the background of your life, not just the foreground.***

# Myth #3:
# I need to quit my job to follow my path.

**Many people are deeply unhappy in their jobs.** When asked why, two of the most common answers are:

1. I don't have enough **freedom.**
2. My work is **unfulfilling.**

Most people assume that to find freedom and fulfillment, they'll need to quit their job. But sometimes that's the right choice - and sometimes it's not.

Sometimes quitting your job opens up new possibilities, and you feel free to pursue a more fulfilling path.

Sometimes quitting your job makes things even worse, and you feel even more unhappy and unfulfilled because of money stress and paralyzing uncertainty. And you feel even less free than you did before, because you're forced to make decisions based on desperate financial need.

The decision of whether to quit your job is a very personal one. I can't give you a formula for how to tell which decision is right for you.

But if you are working at a job right now, and you're feeling that you don't have enough freedom, I can give you two pieces of advice that can help you find peace. These pieces of advice might sound contradictory, but they're actually not.

**My advice to you: Grab on to control to feel more free.**

Human beings hate to feel like they have no control. The brain is a problem-solving machine. When you are powerless and have no freedom, you can't solve any problems so your brain kind of freaks out.

The fact of the matter is that you don't have complete freedom at your job. You don't have all the decision-making control. You probably can't change that even if you wanted to.

## *But what can you control?*

Can you control what you do during your breaks and off-time?

Can you make your workspace feel more like you?

Can you carve off one area of work or one project, make it your own, and do your best at it?

Can you reframe your life as a quest to find your path, and wholeheartedly *choose* this job as a way to make money to fuel your quest?

What else can you control?

**My advice to you: Let go of control to feel more free.**

On a deeper level, control is impossible. You can't control other people, you can't control Nature, you can't control all sorts of things that happen to you.

The brain is a problem-solving machine and wants to control, but your heart is your connection to Source and wants to connect.

What the brain sees as an obstacle to control, the heart sees as an opportunity for connection.

What the brain sees as bullshit, the heart sees with compassion.

Those annoying coworkers? If you let your heart be a tube, not a bucket, you'll see other hearts that are feeling afraid and trying to get their needs met.

This doesn't mean that you have to put up with unacceptable behavior, but it can give you the ability to handle it with compassion and grace instead of annoyance and frustration.

In other words:

***Can you reframe your job as an opportunity to practice compassion?***

True freedom isn't building a concrete bunker to protect you from all storms. **True freedom is being the eye of the hurricane** - being the calm center even amidst chaos.

**When your heart aligns with Spirit, all paths are less bumpy.**

When your heart aligns with Spirit, it's smooth sailing. The bumps are choppy ocean waves, but your heart is enveloped deeply in the sea of Source. You look up at the stormy waves above and you see them, but your heart is held, nourished, loved.

I once had a Pathfinding client who came to me because she hated her job and wanted to create her own business.

After her heart felt held and nourished and loved, after she felt the calm of the deep sea instead of the choppiness of the ocean waves, she chose to make peace with her job. She found other ways to feel fulfilled and in flow - by creating art during the evenings and weekends, and by weaving her art into her life.

***It's not always about your job or your work. But it is always about your heart.***

# Myth #4:
# It's selfish to focus on what's best for me.

**What's best for you is also what's best for others, and what's best for the world.** Here's why.

### Be yourself

Being yourself isn't easy, especially living in a culture of conformity and complacency.

When you follow your heart and choose to be yourself - your true self - you embody courage and freedom. And you show others that it's possible for them to be courageous and free, too.

**"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."**

**-Howard Thurman**

### *Maria and her Monkeysphere*

Imagine you have a friend who would love to live life differently, but feels *there's no real option other than the status quo.* Let's call her Maria.

Then imagine that **you** begin following your heart. You begin expressing yourself as you truly are. Maria sees you do this. And since you're in Maria's monkeysphere, she cares.

**At first, Maria will get pissed at you.** You're threatening her paradigm, taking away her only excuse. She may "helpfully" try to tell you everything that's wrong with the "selfish" act of following your heart. She'll try to smush you back into the box, because she desperately wants to believe that **it's impossible to escape the box.**

***Your wild, free existence proves her wrong.***

Maria's door only opens from the inside - you can't *force* her to open up and change - but you can show her that it's possible to live differently. It's possible to be yourself truly in the world. It's possible to break out of that box and be free, be true to yourself.

**This is how we will change the world - one person at a time.**

Because it's not just me over here following my heart. It's you. It's Maria. It's our whole tribe. It's our whole tribe of tribes, our whole community.

It's everyone we inspire. *And it's everyone you inspire.*

**Now imagine this - a whole world full of people following their hearts.**

Doesn't that feel like a worthy goal?

***You can't reach that goal unless you first do what's best for you –***

***because the first step is you "selfishly" following your own heart.***

# Myth #5:
# It's unlikely I'll ever find true fulfillment, so I might as well settle for good enough.

### The chasm that separates the possible from the impossible

**Rate your life on a scale of 1 to 10.** 1 is horrible, 5 is so-so, 10 is perfect. Base your rating on how you're feeling right now.

Overall: ____

Now break it down and rate each area of your life on the same 1-10 scale. These can fluctuate from day to day, so base your ratings on how you're feeling right now.

Physical: ____
Social: ____
Emotional: ____
Spiritual: ____
Romantic: ____
Financial: ____
Career: ____
Creative: ____

**Go ahead, write them down.** Or at least take a minute to honestly think about what your ratings would be for each area of your life.

When I rated my life several years ago, I came up with a lot of numbers in the 7-8 range. "I'm doing pretty well," I thought to myself. "Quite well. Good enough."

I felt good about my life. I was doing better than average, and it's not like anyone strolls around with all 10s. 7 is really good. 8 is even better.

## *It's not such a bad life, is it?*

I came to recognize this as my "doth protest too much" voice.

When you're truly wholehearted, you don't need to convince yourself that you're happy. You just are.

If you notice yourself thinking thoughts like, *"It's not such a bad life, is it?"* or *"I'm doing better than average, and it's not like anyone strolls around with all 10s",* that's a signal to look deeper. Those thoughts are papering over the truth - **if there were no deeper truth underneath, there would be no paper.**

So Kyeli and I began a daily routine where, at the end of each day, we each answer three questions:

1. ***What did I do today?***
2. ***What could I make better in the future?***
3. ***What did I love?***

The first question helps us accept what is. The second helps us learn and grow. The third reminds us of what we're grateful for.

We did this for years.

Then one day, I came up blank on question #2. What could I make better in the future? **Nothing. Nothing at all.**

What went wrong today? **Nothing. Nothing at all.**

What was good, but could have been great? **Nothing. Nothing at all.**

## *I had a perfect day.*

I had a *perfect day.*

I didn't even think that was *possible.*

I had somehow crossed the chasm that separates the possible from the impossible. I didn't take a giant leap of faith. I didn't spend months sitting on this side of the chasm, designing an elaborate system of ropes and pulleys.

**I took three tiny steps each day.** One tiny step of acceptance, one tiny step of growth, and one tiny step of gratitude.

And I made it to the other side.

You can make it to the other side, too.

**Your path isn't going to dead-end at Impossible Chasm. Your path will lead you through a long, wide, grassy meadow with a gentle upward slope.**

What's one tiny step you could take toward living a happier, more fulfilled life?

## *What's one tiny step you could take today?*

# Myth #6:
# I must walk my path alone.

### Being pushed out to the edge

**When you're walking your own path, it often leads you away from the center** - away from the status quo, away from the commonly accepted norm.

In fact, you may feel like you've been *pushed* out to the edge - by society, by circumstances, by other people.

The edge is uncomfortable. The things that work for most people don't work for you. You feel different, alone, unsteady.

And then someone starts talking about finding your path, and you think to yourself, "Whoa, hold your horses. I'm doing my best to survive out here on the edge. If I do have a path, it would surely lead me *even farther out,* even farther away from the comfortable center, even farther away from everyone I care about, and I don't think I could handle that. I'm barely getting by where I am."

"I'm only out here on the edge because I was forced here. And now you're asking me to *choose* to go out even farther, to even more distant, perilous, unfamiliar territory? No thanks."

### Why it *really* sucks to be an edgewalker

The truth is that it's not like that at all.

Yes, there is a center of what's commonly accepted in society. The tried and true, the paths well-traveled. Yes, it's true that you don't fit in there - even if you can fake it. Yes, the center exists, and yes, you are on the edge.

***But that's not why the edge is uncomfortable.***

### The edge is uncomfortable because *you* aren't in touch with *your* center.

**When you find your own center, you redraw the map.** You stop orienting your heart's compass toward - or away from - what "they" do, and start orienting it toward your own path. The mainstream becomes just another territory on the map. It loses the power it currently holds over you.

What you resist persists. True freedom is defining yourself as yourself, not defining yourself as anti-anything.

### Finding your own center

Finding your path makes edgewalking *more* comfortable, not less comfortable. Finding your path relieves the pressure of trying to define yourself according to standards that don't fit you - or trying to rewrite those standards.

**Finding your path is finding your own center.**

### And there are actual people here out on the edge, too!

Even though each of us Pathfinders walks our own unique path, we have a lot in common. We come together in community to share stories, to collaborate, to support each other, to rest, to play, and to take comfort in the knowledge that **we are all in this together.**

***You are not alone.***

# Myth #7:
# I'm too much of a mess to find my path.

**Do you ever feel like all the other shiny, happy people know exactly what to do** and where they're going, while the rest of us are just trying to navigate the rapids without drowning?

I hear you. It's hard to be struggling under any circumstances, let alone struggling while others on the other side of the room are shining happily and making life look like a cakewalk. And it's even harder to find the time and energy for something as huge as "finding your path" when it's all you can do to keep your head above water.

**But you know, not even those shiny, happy people know exactly what to do and where they're going.**

Some people have learned some tools and techniques. Some people have gained a bit of wisdom over the years. But nobody gets a map. Nobody knows what's around the next bend in life.

And everyone, everyone feels lost and adrift sometimes. Everyone, even the people who look like they've got it all figured out, feels like they're stumbling around in the dark, afraid that today they'll be exposed for the flawed, imperfect, uncertain human being they truly are.

***When you compare yourself to others, you compare your insides to everyone else's outsides.***

**You feel the sticky sweat on your palms.** You feel your shoulders shrinking up. You feel the wibbly-wubbly feeling in the pit of your stomach.

**You don't feel the sweat on Seth Godin's palms.** You don't feel Brene Brown's shoulders shrinking up. You don't feel the wibbly-wubbly feeling in the pit of Danielle LaPorte's stomach.

But they all feel it. Whoever it is that you think has got all their shit together - that person sometimes still feels just as anxious as you, just as afraid as you, just as small as you.

When you compare your insides to other people's outsides, you don't see - you don't feel - their internal wibbles and wubbles. *Especially* when you compare yourself to people who put a lot of effort into presenting themselves, like marketers or actors.

## How to Navigate the Rapids - Option 1 (The Surface)

Even though the wibbles and wubbles never go away, it is possible to feel more clear and confident in life.

Learning how to hold healthy boundaries.

Learning how to make better decisions.

Surrounding yourself with people who support you in being the best you that you can be.

Knowing yourself in all your parts.

Aligning your life with your core values.

All these tools and techniques make your journey down the river much smoother.

And best of all, these aren't secrets whispered in dark alleys by the legendary Awesome People. They're available to all of us. They're taught in books, in academies, in spiritual paths.

These are tools and techniques that you can start learning right now.

## How to Navigate the Rapids - Option 2 (The Depths)

The other way to smoothify your journey down the river is to capsize your canoe.

**To surrender.**

To say, "I can't do this alone," and ask Spirit for help.

To dive beneath the swirling, churning rapids, down to the calm, peacefully flowing waters under the surface.

***To find your peace not out in the world, but within your heart.***

And best of all, this isn't a secret whispered by a guru living on a mountaintop. This peace and clarity is available to you. It's whispered on every breath of the wind. It is the song of the stones, the music of the spheres.

**Take a moment right now.** Breathe.

And listen.

**It's okay to be a mess.**

Anything that isn't messy can be done by a machine.

Your heart is messy. That's how it's meant to be.

And here's the deepest secret of Pathfinding:

**Your most desperate need is also your greatest gift.**

What you need to learn is what you need to teach.

What you need the most is what you're called to turn around and give to others.

You are a conduit, a channel, a tube. Your neediness, your thirst, is not a problem. It's a magnet. It pulls you desperately toward what you need so you can receive it until your heart overflows with it - and then that overflow will spill out onto others and fill their hearts.

***Your mess is your mission.***

# Myth #8:
# Knowing my path is like having a map of the rest of my life.

### A path is a flowing river, not a fixed destination

**A path isn't a destination, like a spot marked X on the ground.** It's more like a river, winding and turning and constantly flowing. What was your path a decade ago, a year ago, yesterday - may not be your path today.

**There is always a common thread.**

The common thread is spiritual, so it might not always make obvious sense to your brain.

For example, Kyeli's path has led her toward being a writer, being a photographer, and being a poet - but in all of these forms of self-expression, her common thread is *courage.* She shows up courageously and encourages others to show up courageously, too.

As another example, my own path has led me toward spirituality, writing, teaching, and coaching. For me, each of these is a way to express and experience *love.* Divine love, self-love, compassion - all kinds of love.

***There is no One True Path.***

Since one divine quality can manifest in multifarious ways in the physical world, this means you actually have quite a bit of flexibility in choosing what you do on your path. **God isn't a micromanager.** As long as you're expressing your divine gifts in the world, you'll get a big fat thumbs-up from Spirit.

## Your heart's compass

Since your path is a flowing river, ever-changing, you don't get a map. **But you do get a compass.**

The most reliable way to get on your path and stay there is to access divine guidance via your heart's Compass.

This is a technique that's hard to explain in words. I teach it in my Pathfinding Program and I also teach it in *Choose Wisely,* one of the courses at Spiritual Rollercoaster Academy.

But in this ebook, all I have are words, so I'll do my best. I'll share three hints that are useful guideposts for finding your path.

## Your emotional compass: 3 hints that you're near your path

You're near your path when you feel the most

1. flow
2. fulfillment
3. fear

Let me unpack each of those.

### *Flow*

That feeling when you lose yourself in what you're doing, you're so engrossed that you lose track of time. When you pop your head back up, you feel more energized and alive than you did when you started.

### *Fulfillment*

That feeling of doing something meaningful, something that fills you up, something that matters. And to be sure you're *really* on your path instead of just a fulfilling-feeling but ultimately fruitless dead end, you want to feel not just fulfilled, but aligned.

### *Fear*

Specifically, the fear that what you're about to do is so big and you are so small that you can't do it justice and you will just fuck it up completely. **Everyone** feels this when they are on or near their path. I call this type of fear "pathfear", and I'll say more about it later. But for now, take heart in knowing that it's actually a *good* sign.

### An infinitely large backpack

Note that your path is NOT when you feel the most

- safe
- secure
- comfortable

It's certainly possible to feel safe, secure, and comfortable while on your path, but intrepid Pathfinders will need to upgrade their **physical** safety, security, and comfort to **spiritual** safety, security, and comfort.

**Spiritual safety, security, and comfort are the only kinds of comfort you can carry with you wherever you go.** They're the only kinds of comfort that don't depend on your external circumstances. Your path will take you out into the unknown, where you don't know what the circumstances will be like. So you'll need to carry your comfort with you on your back.

In other words:

***When you pack your backpack for a journey into the Infinite, you'd better bring along an infinitely large backpack.***

# Myth #9: My path will be epic.

**Following your path means creating *your own* meaning, not living by anyone else's standards.** Who comes to your mind when you think of someone who truly followed their path and lived in alignment with their heart? It's an awesome famous person, right?

### What's the bar for a meaningful life? How awesome do I have to be?

**You're living a meaningful life if you feel you're living a meaningful life. Meaning is created, not earned.**

Some people measure meaning by "What would people say about me at my funeral?" but that's measuring your own meaning by others' standards. What if you nursed injured squirrels back to health and never told anyone? What if your only claim to fame was a kind word and a smile to strangers you passed on the street? What if you did *absolutely nothing measurable,* but held unmeasurable love and compassion for all beings deep within your heart?

Wouldn't you call that a meaningful life? Wouldn't you call that following your path?

### Can I follow my path while sitting on my couch?

**Yes.** Meaning is not something that you earn with your actions. Meaning is something you find in your heart.

Now, once you find that meaning, you may feel moved to get up off the couch. But sustainable, meaningful action only works inside-out, not outside-in. If you start from outside (your actions) and hope to find meaning inside (in your heart), it won't work. **You must start from the inside and let your heart move you toward meaningful action.**

How many stories have you heard about people seeking meaning through wealth or fame, then they

get it and they feel empty inside?

Meaning comes from the inside, not the outside.

### So how do I find this meaning inside my heart?

The meaning in your heart is like a reflection in a still pool. Stop poking and making ripples for a minute. Sit in stillness and notice how your heart feels. Does anything bubble up from the depths of your heart? A feeling, an inspiration, a longing?

If the surface of your heartpond is too turbulent, you might not be able to make anything out. If your basic needs aren't being met, you won't be able to listen to your heart clearly.

Once your needs are met, it's a matter of practice. Spiritual practice, practicing listening to your heart, and practicing following your heart. At first, it feels like following a black cat at night, but **it does get easier and clearer.**

And of course, the first step to finding the meaning within your heart is **to care.**

Do you want to find your path? Do you want to live a meaningful life? What does that mean to you? What might that look like? What are you willing to risk for it?

And most importantly, what would it *feel* like?

### Wholehearted

**Every minute of every day, no matter how mundane and un-epic, can be part of your path if you walk it wholeheartedly.**

Let me tell you a story.

I've had a long day. I worked from 8:30am to 6:30pm, and by the end of my work day I was already exhausted. Now it's 10:00 at night and I've been assembling this damned Ikea bed for the past two hours.

I grumble as I contort myself to screw in a Philips-head screw with a flathead screwdriver because we lost our grumble grumble Philips-head screwdriver.

"Is there a way you could make this fun?" Kyeli asks me.

"Grumble grumble," I reply, annoyed. It's not fun because I don't want to be assembling this bed. I want to be done working for the day. I want to be playing Fez or reading my book or -

Wait a second. What's the definition of halfhearted? **Wishing you were somewhere other than where you are.**

And what's the definition of wholehearted? **Choosing to be exactly where you are.**

What am I choosing? I've already committed to assembling the bed, so my only two options are:

1. Assemble the bed and wish I could be doing something else (the halfhearted option)
2. Assemble the bed wholeheartedly

Why am I choosing #1 instead of #2? What do I get out of it? Hmm. I get a "poor me" feeling. I want sympathy, or pity, or for someone to rescue me from having to do all this work I don't want to do.

Nobody's going to rescue me. I can either assemble the bed and be annoyed, or assemble the bed and be happy. The choice is up to me.

I let go.

**I turn the next screw, and smile.**

**This is what a wholehearted life looks like.**

It's not all epic. It's not all changing the world. It's not all quitting your day job and gallivanting across the country.

It's mundane. It's assembling Ikea beds with peacefulness instead of grumpiness. It's letting go of judging others harshly when they spell "a lot" as one word. It's communicating with compassion instead of with a need to be right.

It's forgetting to be wholehearted.

***And it's remembering.***

# Myth #10:
# My path will be hard.

**Finding your path in life can be hard.** Finding the courage to walk it can be even harder.

***But there's one kind of hard that's a green light and another kind of hard that's a red light.***

Here's how to know the difference.

### Path-creating

An intrepid explorer slashes her way through the jungle with a machete. She hacks through some vines above and passes by some trampled undergrowth to the left and some brambles to the right. She knows she needs to keep moving forward at all costs. Everything depends on her. She grits her teeth, and with firm resolve takes one more step forward, hacking at anything that gets in her way.

### Pathfinding

An intrepid explorer winds her way through the jungle, ducking underneath some vines above. She notices some trampled undergrowth to the left and some brambles to the right. She curiously investigates the undergrowth and notices a pattern - there is a faint but definite path to the left! She eyes the dense jungle ahead, knowing her destination lies in that direction. She takes a deep breath and lets go. She turns left, and follows the path.

### Path-creating vs. Pathfinding

This is the difference between path-creating and pathfinding.

Path-creating is about deciding what you want and making it happen. Pathfinding is about noticing the patterns in your life, finding your calling, and then

bringing that out of your heart and into the world.

Path-creating is about shouting. Pathfinding is about listening.

Path-creating comes from your ego. Pathfinding comes from your heart.

When you're path-creating, you sometimes run into a dead end. When you're pathfinding, there's always a way forward.

### The Machete of Divine Righteousness +2

But it's not as simple as "Path-creating is power over, Pathfinding is power with." It's not as simple as "Path-creating is forcing it, Pathfinding is going with the flow." It's not as simple as "Path-creating is control, Pathfinding is connection" - because Pathfinding has some control in it too.

The Pathfinder has a machete, too. She'll use it to cut through obstacles in her path - but she won't use it to create her own path.

The Pathfinder might shout, too - but she'll listen first to be sure that shouting is necessary.

Both the Pathfinder and the Path-creator struggle. But it's a different kind of struggle.

### A different kind of struggle

It's the difference between **pushing the river** and **swimming with the current**.

The river is the flow of your life. The river is your path.

Path-creating feels like swimming against the current. You're swimming as hard as you can, but you're having a hard time just staying in place, let alone making progress. You're getting more and more tired, and you don't know how long you can even keep your head above water...

Pathfinding feels like swimming with the current. You're still swimming - you're not sunbathing on the shore. You're not sitting there and letting your life pass you by. Your arms are wheeling, your legs are

kicking - but you're swimming *with* the current, not against it.

**Do you feel alone?**

Path-creating feels like it's you against the world. It's all up to you. You've got to be strong enough, determined enough, creative enough, open enough. You've got to be enough.

Pathfinding feels like co-creating your life. Pathfinding feels like being the oboe player in an orchestra conducted by God - it's still up to you to play that oboe as best you can, but you're not in control of the whole symphony.

**Do you feel like it's all on your shoulders?**

Path-creating feels like you've got to keep moving forward at all costs. Everything depends on you, and you can't let go.

Pathfinding feels like you need to show up wholeheartedly and do your best.

Path-creating feels like being Link.

Pathfinding feels like being you.

**How to switch from path-creating to pathfinding, in one not-so-easy step**

It takes a lot of courage to create your own path. But it takes even more courage, plus a heaping teaspoon of humility, to

***Let go.***

If you feel like the weight of the world is on your shoulders... **let go.**

If you feel like you've got to be enough... **let go.**

If you feel like everything depends on you... **let go**.

If you feel like you're the last stalwart defender, the only one keeping everything from falling apart... **let go.**

If you feel like you can't let go... **let go**.

**Let it be easy.**

Once you let go, you'll be able to see the gifts you bring to the world that you've been taking for granted this whole time. Talents that come naturally to you, so easy you don't even see them as worth mentioning. They're the air you breathe, the floor you walk on.

But to others who don't have those gifts, **you are immensely talented.**

What do others ask you for help with?

What do others seek your advice on?

What do others see as your strengths?

**Ask them.**

Then look for patterns. Look at the background.

**Remember:**

***What seems mundane to you may be immensely valuable to others.***

What if the heart of your path was something that comes naturally to you?

What if you were making it harder than it needs to be, simply because you've labeled it "work"?

***What if you could let go?***

***What if you could let it be easy?***

# Myth #11:
# My path will be easy.

**This dangerous myth is peddled by "make money online" marketers who sell the dream but don't tell you the reality.**

An intrepid pathfinder starts a business so she can do what she loves for a living. But it's hard. Not everything flows easily. And she starts to doubt herself, thinking, "This must not be my true calling. I chose this path so I could do what I love, but I'm not loving it. I must have been wrong. There must be something wrong with me. Maybe I'm not cut out for this."

***No one loves what they do 100% of the time. Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something.***

But it *is* possible to do *more* of what you love. It is possible to feel more fulfilled. It doesn't have to be all or nothing.

Maybe, further along down your path, you'll love 99% of what you do. But right now, **wouldn't 10% feel better than zero?** What if that were enough - at least for now?

It's also possible for things you love to be hard. Some people love extreme mountain climbing, and that certainly isn't easy.

***What if it were okay for it to be hard?***

There will always be things you don't love in the work itself - for example, I left behind office politics, but now I get to deal with WordPress security issues. It

still sometimes feels like bullshit, but when I connect with my heart and remember why I care (e.g. I care about my customers' privacy) then the bullshit feels more like fertilizer for my Great Work.

Following your path isn't always easy, but at least you're heading where you want to go.

**Finding your path can be scary.**

Finding your path isn't all skipping down the Yellow Brick Road singing songs about brains.

Finding your path is terrifying. It's unimaginably massive. It takes your breath away - which is awesome at first - and then you realize you can't breathe.

Finding your path brings up this deep sense of terror and dread because the very existence of this calling smashes everything you thought you knew about your life.

**Yesterday**

Yesterday, you were living your life, doing your thing, getting by.

Yesterday, you knew the score. You knew the game. You knew what to do, even when doing it wasn't easy.

Yesterday, you took solace in the knowledge that you were doing your best, that you were doing all you could.

**Today**

Today, you glimpse the glint of the edge of your path out of the corner of your eye, and it changes everything.

Today, you have a new path that is open to you. A weighty, daunting path of meaning and danger, of fulfillment and fear.

***Today, you are a Pathfinder.***

### "Pish and/or tosh!"

It would be so easy to just shut your eyes and pretend you never saw that glint of the edge of your path.

It would be so easy to just roll your eyes and laugh at the silly woo-woo idea that a "true calling" is something that could even exist.

It would be so easy to turn away.

It would be so much easier than facing this question:

***What if I fuck it up?***

What if I choose this wild crazy meaningful path, and I stumble?

What if I allow this delicate, fragile gift to be placed into my upturned palm, and then I drop it?

What if I accept the call, but I don't measure up?

### Pathfear

I call this special, weighty flavor of terror "pathfear," because it's the surest signpost that your path is **toward** - not away from - the fear.

Pathfear is actually a *good* sign, because it shows that you care so incredibly deeply that you're utterly terrified of failing.

I know that these words won't magically make the fear go away. I still feel it myself.

But take heart. **You're not being called to master your path.**

***You're being called to show up wholeheartedly.***

***You're being called to take that first step - and then another, and then another.***

# 11 Truths about Finding Your Path

**Truth #1:** Keep adding pieces to your jigsaw puzzle, and you will see the picture that makes your heart come alive.

**Truth #2:** To find your path, look at the background of your life, not just the foreground.

**Truth #3:** It's not always about your job or your work. But it is always about your heart.

**Truth #4:** Being true to yourself is the best thing you can do for others.

**Truth #5:** You can find true fulfillment: not by a giant leap, but by taking one step at a time.

**Truth #6:** Finding your path is finding your own center.

**Truth #7:** Your mess is your mission.

**Truth #8:** You don't get a map, but you do get a compass.

**Truth #9:** Meaning is not something that you earn with your actions. Meaning is something you find in your heart.

**Truth #10:** What seems mundane to you may be immensely valuable to others.

**Truth #11:** You're not being called to master your path. You're being called to show up wholeheartedly.

# A Pathfinding Recipe (and an Extra Bonus Truth)

**Pour these eleven truths into a cauldron,** stir to boil, and two truths twist together to form something greater.

***Your mess is your mission***

twists together with

***What seems mundane to you may be immensely valuable to others***

Messy and mundane, hot and cold, struggle and ease. How do these fit together?

**Start with the struggle.**

**What do you struggle with?**

Finding motivation?

Relationships?

Accepting yourself for who you are?

Getting in touch with your heart?

Creating order and structure in your life?

Anxiety?

Money?

What's something you've struggled with for 10,000

hours? What's something you've struggled with for so long you feel like you'll never master it? What's something you've struggled with so much that you feel like old frenemies?

**Express it with ease.**

Now take that struggle, wherever you are with it.

You'll never be done. You'll never be ready. You'll never know "enough" or be skilled "enough." But you can help people who are also struggling with it.

Take that struggle and express it.

Express it in a way that feels mundane to you but is immensely valuable to others. Share your struggle in a way that comes naturally and easily to you - **in a way that you love.**

If you love to tell stories, tell the story of your struggle.

If you love to teach, teach about your struggle.

If you love to write, write about your struggle.

If you love to paint, paint your struggle.

If you love to speak to audiences, speak about your struggle.

If you love to dance, dance your struggle.

If you love to code, code software that helps others with your struggle.

If you love to organize, organize in a way that helps others with your struggle.

If you love nursing, nurse in a way that helps others with your struggle.

If you love to sing, sing your struggle.

If you love to craft, craft your struggle.

If you love to heal, heal others who are struggling with the same struggle.

Share it. Teach it. Write it. Paint it. Speak it. Dance it. Code it. Organize it. Nurse it. Sing it. Climb it. Play it. Plan it. Craft it. Perform it. Balance it. Coach it. Design it. Heal it.

**Get it out of your heart and into the world.**

## *Find your path at the crossroads of struggle and ease.*

Find your path by starting with the struggle, then expressing it with ease.

Someone who struggles with motivation and loves to teach could teach classes about motivation.

Someone who struggles with grief and has a natural talent for energy healing could become a grief healer.

Someone who struggles with self-love and loves photography could help others love themselves through selfies.

Someone who struggles with money and loves to code could create software that helps others with money.

Someone who struggles with trust and loves to make jewelry could create jewelry that helps others trust.

Someone who struggles with overwhelm and loves to organize could help others organize their workspaces so they'll feel less overwhelmed.

Someone who struggles with finding their path and loves to write could write an eBook to help others find their path.

***What's your struggle?***

***How could you express it with ease?***

# 12 Truths about Finding Your Path

**Truth #1:** Keep adding pieces to your jigsaw puzzle, and you will see the picture that makes your heart come alive.

**Truth #2:** To find your path, look at the background of your life, not just the foreground.

**Truth #3:** It's not always about your job or your work. But it is always about your heart.

**Truth #4:** Being true to yourself is the best thing you can do for others.

**Truth #5:** You can find true fulfillment: not by a giant leap, but by taking one step at a time.

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**Truth #9:** Meaning is not something that you earn with your actions. Meaning is something you find in your heart.

**Truth #10:** What seems mundane to you may be immensely valuable to others.

**Truth #11:** You're not being called to master your path. You're being called to show up wholeheartedly.

**Truth #12:** Start with the struggle. Express it with ease.

# The Pathfinder's Blessing

*May you have the courage to take the first step.*

*May you have the grace to make mistakes.*

*May you have the resilience to take the next step.*

*May you have the faith to not turn away.*

With love,
Pace

p.s. Please share this eBook with friends!
Send them to: pacesmith.com/11-myths/