

# The Pathless Path



Imagining  
a New Story  
for Work  
and Life

Paul Millerd

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Paul Millerd  
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The Pathless Path  
无路之路

Imagining a New Story for Work and Life  
想象一种新的工作和生活故事

First published by Paul Millerd 2022  
首次由Paul Millerd于2022年出版

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First edition  
第一版

ISBN: 979-8-9855153-3-6  
ISBN : 979-8-9855153-3-6

This is the pathless path. Where the journey leads is to the deepest truth in you.

这是一条无路之路。旅程的终点是你内心最深处的真理。

— Ram Dass

- 兰姆达斯



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**I**

# **The Default Path**

## **默认路径**

# 1

## Introduction 介绍

I was extremely nervous. As the teacher of my semester-long Chinese language class called my name, my heart started to race. I took a deep breath and began. I shared the story of quitting my job, deciding to move to Taiwan, meeting the woman who would become my wife, starting an online business, and living in five different countries. It was the first time I had shared my story in another language, and as I finished, a calmness swept over my body. It was the end of a three-month period where I had felt completely alive, spending my time learning, creating, solving problems, and spending time exploring Taipei with my wife.

我非常紧张。当我这个学期长的中文课的老师叫到我的名字时，我的心开始加速。我深吸一口气，开始讲述。我分享了辞职、决定搬到台湾、遇到将成为我妻子的女人、开始网上生意以及在五个不同的国家生活的故事。这是我第一次用另一种语言分享我的故事，当我讲完时，一种平静笼罩了我的身体。这是一个为期三个月的时期的结束，在这段时间里，我感到完全活着，花时间学习、创造、解决问题，并与妻子一起探索台北。

This would have been unimaginable to me five years earlier when I lived in New York City. I was single, spending my time at work, eating out, partying with friends, dating, and constantly plotting ways to work less or escape work altogether. I was working at a consulting firm making nearly \$200,000 a year and working on projects for some of the most recognizable CEOs in the world. I was successful, and on my way to being even more successful. 这对我来说是无法想象的，五年前我还住在纽约市的时候。那时我单

身，把时间花在工作、外出就餐、与朋友聚会、约会，还不断策划着如何少工作或完全逃避工作。我在一家咨询公司工作，年薪接近20万美元，为一些世界上最知名的首席执行官做项目。我很成功，而且正在走向更大的成功。

This was the end result of an obsessive focus on getting ahead in my twenties. It's a state familiar to many. Study hard, get good grades, get a good job. Then put your head down and keep going, indefinitely. This is what I call the "default path."

这是我在二十多岁时对追求成功的过度关注的最终结果。这是许多人熟悉的状态。努力学习，取得好成绩，找到一份好工作。然后低头继续前进，无限期地。这就是我所说的“默认路径”。

Growing up, I thought making \$100,000 a year made someone rich. When I made that amount for the first time at 27, I felt like I had more than I could ever need. Yet I opted into an identity that didn't accept such complacency. Everyone around me was always moving forward towards the next achievement.

成长过程中，我认为年薪10万美元就能让人富裕。当我在27岁时第一次赚到这个数额时，我觉得自己拥有了比我所需更多的东西。然而，我选择了一个不接受这种满足的身份。我周围的每个人都在不断向前迈进，追求下一个成就。

Chasing achievements is what brought me to that New York City job working with CEOs, the final one before I decided to quit. Most mornings I came into the office and sat there struggling to start my day. I watched the people pass my desk and wondered if they felt the same stuckness as I did. 追求成就是我来到纽约市与首席执行官合作的工作的原因，那是我决定辞职之前的最后一份工作。大多数早晨，我走进办公室坐在那里努

力开始新的一天。我看着人们从我办公桌前经过，想知道他们是否和我一样感到困顿。

Eventually, I would start my work, helping company boards assess their senior executives to see who the next CEO of the company should be. I read through feedback reports from people throughout the company and created summarized reports of each executive's strengths and weaknesses. We like to think that once we "make it" we can finally be ourselves, but based on who the companies selected, it was clear that the longer people stay at a company, the higher odds that they would become what the company wanted. I realized I didn't want that to happen to me.

最终，我会开始我的工作，帮助公司董事会评估他们的高级主管，以确定公司的下一任首席执行官应该谁。我阅读了来自公司各个部门的反馈报告，并总结了每位高管的优点和缺点。我们常常认为一旦我们“成功了”，我们就可以真正做自己，但根据公司的选择，很明显，人们在公司呆得越久，他们变成公司所期望的人的几率就越高。我意识到我不想让这种事情发生在我身上。

In a ten-year period, I worked for five companies and spent two years in grad school. I moved from job to job, convinced the next stop was always the final stop.

在十年的时间里，我曾为五家公司工作过，并在研究生院度过了两年。我从一个工作跳到另一个工作，坚信下一站总是最终的停留地。

My restlessness was easy to hide because my path was filled with impressive names and achievements, and when you're on such a path, no one asks "Why are you doing this?" It took me a while to recognize this blind spot and have the courage to start asking myself those kinds of deeper questions in a serious way.

我的不安很容易隐藏起来，因为我的道路上充满了令人印象深刻的名

字和成就，当你走在这样的道路上时，没有人会问“你为什么这样做？”我花了一段时间才意识到这个盲点，并有勇气开始认真地问自己那些更深层次的问题。

Which led me to walk away. Scratch that – run away. I even gave back a \$24,000 signing bonus and missed out on a \$30,000 bonus if I had been able to stick it out for another nine months. I left with the intention to become a freelance consultant, but soon enough, that story started to show its cracks as well. It didn't take me long to realize I had been on a path that wasn't mine and to find a new way forward, I would need to step into the unknown.

这导致我离开。改正一下，是逃离。我甚至还退回了2.4万美元的签约奖金，错过了3万美元的奖金，如果我能再坚持九个月的话。我离开的时候打算成为一名自由顾问，但很快，这个故事也开始显露出裂痕。我很快意识到我一直走的路不是我的路，为了找到新的前进方向，我需要踏入未知。

About a year into this journey, I stumbled upon a phrase which helped me take a deep breath. It was the idea of a “pathless path,” something I found in David Whyte's book *The Three Marriages*. To Whyte, a pathless path is a paradox: “we cannot even see it is there, and we do not recognize it.”<sup>1</sup> To me, the pathless path was a mantra to reassure myself I would be okay. After spending the first 32 years of my life always having a plan, this kind of blind trust in the universe was new, scary, and exciting. Whyte says that when we first encounter the idea of a pathless path, “we are not meant to understand what it means.”

大约一年后，我偶然发现了一个短语，帮助我深呼吸。这是我在大卫·怀特的书《三重婚姻》中找到的“无路之路”的概念。对怀特来说，无路之路是一个悖论：“我们甚至看不到它的存在，也无法认识到它。”对我来说，无路之路是一个口头禅，让我放心自己会没事。在我生命的前32年里，我总是有一个计划，这种对宇宙的盲目信任是新的、可



怕的和令人兴奋的。怀特说，当我们第一次遇到无路之路的概念时，“我们并不打算理解它的意义。”

To me, however, it meant everything.  
对我来说，然而，这意味着一切。

The pathless path is an alternative to the default path. It is an embrace of uncertainty and discomfort. It's a call to adventure in a world that tells us to conform. For me, it's also a gentle reminder to laugh when things feel out of control and trusting that an uncertain future is not a problem to be solved. 无路之路是一种与默认路径不同的选择。它是对不确定性和不适的接纳。它是在一个告诉我们要顺从的世界中冒险的呼唤。对我来说，它也是一个温柔的提醒，当事情感觉失控时要笑一笑，并相信不确定的未来不是一个需要解决的问题。

Ultimately, it's a new story for thinking about finding a path in life.  
最终，这是一个关于思考人生道路的新故事。

As the world continues to change and technology reshapes our lives, the stories we use to navigate life become outdated and come up short. People are starting to feel the disconnect between what we've been told about how the world works and what they experience. You work hard, but get laid off anyway. You have the perfect life on paper, but no time to enjoy it. You retire with millions in the bank, but no idea what to do with your time. 随着世界的不断变化和技术重塑我们的生活，我们用来引导生活的故事变得过时且不足以应对现实。人们开始感受到我们被告知の世界运作方式与他们的实际经历之间的脱节。你努力工作，但最终还是被解

雇了。你在纸上拥有完美的生活，但没有时间去享受它。你退休时银行里有数百万，但不知道如何度过时间。

The pathless path has been my way to release myself from the achievement narrative that I had been unconsciously following. I was able to shift away from a life built on getting ahead and towards one focused on coming alive. I was able to grapple with the hard questions of life, the ones we try so hard to ignore. And I was able to keep moving when I realized that the hardest questions often don't have answers.

无路之路一直是我摆脱我曾无意中追随的成就叙事的方式。我能够摆脱一个建立在超越他人之上的生活，转而专注于活出真我。我能够与生活中那些我们努力回避的艰难问题抗争。当我意识到最难的问题往往没有答案时，我能够继续前行。

One of the biggest things the pathless path did for me was to help me reimagine my relationship with work. When I left my job, I had a narrow view of work and wanted to escape. On the pathless path, my conception expanded, and I was able to see the truth: that most people, including myself, have a deep desire to work on things that matter to them and bring forth what is inside them. It is only when we cling to the logic of the default path that we fail to see the possibilities for making that happen.

无路之路对我最大的帮助之一是帮助我重新构想与工作的关系。当我离开工作时，我对工作有着狭隘的看法，渴望逃离。在无路之路上，我的观念扩展了，我能够看到真相：大多数人，包括我自己，都渴望从事对他们来说有意义的工作，并发掘内在的潜力。只有当我们坚持默认路径的逻辑时，我们才看不到实现这一切的可能性。

I had been following a formula for life that was supposed to guarantee happiness. It didn't. Confusion kept me on a path that wasn't mine for more than ten years. Along the way, I learned how to play the game of success

and achievement, but never paused to find out what I really wanted. I found myself in rooms surrounded by business leaders and didn't quite fit in. I was in the wrong rooms, asking the wrong questions about how to live.

我曾经遵循一种被认为能够保证幸福的生活公式。但它并没有。困惑让我走上了一个不属于我的道路，持续了十多年。在这个过程中，我学会了如何玩成功和成就的游戏，但从未停下来弄清楚我真正想要什么。我发现自己置身于商业领袖的包围之中，却并不完全适应。我进入了错误的房间，问了关于如何生活的错误问题。

## The Default Path

### 默认路径

This book does not argue for or against any singular way of living, but it contests the idea that the default path is the *only* way.

这本书不主张或反对任何一种特定的生活方式，但它质疑默认路径是唯一的方式的观念。

By default path, I mean a series of decisions and accomplishments needed to be seen as a successful adult. These vary by country, but in the United States, we refer to this as the “American Dream,” which means a life centered around a good job, owning a home, and having a family.

默认路径是指成为一个成功的成年人所需的一系列决策和成就。这些因国家而异，但在美国，我们称之为“美国梦”，意味着以良好的工作、拥有房屋和组建家庭为中心的生活。

Researchers Dorthe Berntsen and David Rubin study what they call “life scripts,” which they describe as “culturally shared expectations as to the order and timing of life events in a prototypical life course.”<sup>2</sup> Their research found remarkable consistency across countries with regard to the events that people expect to occur in their lives. Most of these moments occur

before the age of 35: graduating from school, getting a job, falling in love, and getting married.<sup>3</sup>

研究人员Dorthe Berntsen和David Rubin研究了他们所称之为“生活脚本”的东西，他们将其描述为“在典型的生活过程中，对生活事件的顺序和时间的文化共享期望”。他们的研究发现，人们对于生活中预期发生的事件在不同国家之间具有显著的一致性。大多数这些时刻发生在35岁之前：毕业、找工作、恋爱和结婚。

This means that for many people, expectations of life are centered around a small number of positive events that occur while we are young. Much of the rest of our lives remains unscripted and when people face inevitable setbacks, they are left without instructions on how to think or feel. While very few young people expect to have one job or career, most still rely on the logic of the default path and assume they need to have everything figured out before the age of 25. This limits the ideas of what we see as possible and many, including me, internalize the “worldly wisdom” that John Maynard Keynes once pointed out, “that it is better for reputation to fail conventionally than to succeed unconventionally.”<sup>4</sup>

这意味着对于许多人来说，对生活的期望主要集中在我们年轻时发生的一小部分积极事件上。我们生活的大部分时间都没有预设的剧本，当人们面对不可避免的挫折时，他们没有指导如何思考或感受的指示。虽然很少有年轻人期望只有一份工作或职业，但大多数人仍然依赖默认路径的逻辑，并假设他们需要在25岁之前把一切都弄清楚。这限制了对可能性的看法，包括我在内，内化了约翰·梅纳德·凯恩斯曾指出的“世俗智慧”，即“失败常规比成功非常规更有声望”。

Since 2017, I’ve had hundreds of virtual “curiosity conversations” with people from around the world about work and life. I’ve seen the shame of unexpected layoffs, the panic attacks from changing jobs, and the loss of hope people experience when they can’t make it work on the particular path they think they are supposed to follow. On top of that, people are ashamed to talk about these things with the people in their lives.

自2017年以来，我与来自世界各地的人进行了数百次虚拟的“好奇对话”，谈论工作和生活。我见证了意外解雇带来的羞愧，换工作时的恐慌，以及当人们无法在他们认为自己应该追随的特定道路上取得成功时所经历的希望的丧失。除此之外，人们还感到羞愧，不愿与他们生活中的人谈论这些事情。

This anxiety is not limited to young people. Increasingly, people at the end of traditional work careers tell me they are not excited about the default story of retirement. They still have a desire to engage with the world but don't know how to make that happen. As of 2018, men and women in developed countries are expected to spend nearly 20 years in retirement.<sup>5</sup> As the baby boomer generation enters this new life stage, bringing with them unprecedented wealth, health, and energy, they will be looking for new stories about how to live their lives.

这种焦虑不仅仅局限于年轻人。越来越多的人在传统工作生涯结束时告诉我，他们对退休的默认故事并不感到兴奋。他们仍然渴望与世界接触，但不知道如何实现。截至2018年，发达国家的男性和女性预计将在退休中度过近20年的时间。随着婴儿潮一代进入这个新的人生阶段，带来了前所未有的财富、健康和活力，他们将寻找关于如何过好生活的新故事。

These stories motivate me to keep going on my own journey and give me plenty to write about. Without intending to, I've become a repository of wisdom about how to navigate life and build a better relationship with work. Much of what I've learned through these conversations has inspired this book.

这些故事激励我继续走自己的旅程，并给我提供了很多写作素材。无意间，我已成为一个关于如何应对生活和建立更好工作关系的智慧库。通过这些对话，我学到了很多，这些启发了我写这本书。

Prior to embracing the pathless path, I was the friend that people came to when they had career challenges. I once worked closely with a young professional in his mid-20s who wanted to escape his current job. As he described his career options, he told me he could keep progressing at his company and become a partner or he could take a position at a client's firm and "coast," as he put it.

在追求无路可寻的道路之前，我是人们在职业挑战时寻求帮助的朋友。曾经我与一个二十多岁的年轻专业人士密切合作，他想要逃离他目前的工作。当他描述他的职业选择时，他告诉我他可以在自己的公司继续进步并成为合伙人，或者可以在客户公司担任一个职位并“轻松度日”，正如他所说的。

"Are those the only two options?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. I listed a few other paths that he conceded were possible, but he added, "I don't know anyone who has done that." Many people fall into this trap. We are convinced that the only way forward is the path we've been on or what we've seen people like us do. This is a silent conspiracy that constrains the possibilities of our lives.

“这是唯一的两个选择吗？”我问道。“是的，”他回答。我列举了几条他承认可能存在的其他路径，但他补充说：“我不认识任何人做过那样的事。”许多人陷入了这个陷阱。我们相信前进的唯一途径就是我们一直走过的道路，或者是我们看到的和我们类似的人所做的事情。这是一种默契的阴谋，限制了我们生活的可能性。

I was testing out a side gig as a career coach when I first met that young professional. He hated his job and wanted to make a change. As he found a new role, working in another company, he lost all motivation to keep working with me and exploring the things that mattered to him.

当我第一次遇到那位年轻职业人士时，我正在尝试兼职做职业教练。他讨厌自己的工作，想要做出改变。当他找到了一个新的职位，在另一家公司工作时，他失去了与我继续合作和探索对他重要的事情的动力。

This disappointed me. I wanted him to see the potential I saw. Yet in my own life, I was doing the same thing. With every new job, I convinced myself I was thriving. But what I was really doing was trying to escape feeling stuck.

这让我失望。我希望他能看到我看到的潜力。然而在我自己的生活中，我也在做同样的事情。每当有新的工作，我都会说服自己我正在蓬勃发展。但实际上，我所做的是试图逃避感到困顿。

I was too afraid to have a deeper conversation with myself. The kind that might pull me towards a different kind of life.

我太害怕与自己进行更深入的对话。这种对话可能会引导我走向一种不同的生活方式。

## Why This Matters 为什么这很重要

For most of my life, I've had the gift of seeing the greatness in others. It hurts when I see people stuck or unable to pursue their dreams, and I want to do anything I can to help them. In writing this book, I realized that this has everything to do with my parents.

在我生命的大部分时间里，我都有看到他人伟大之处的天赋。当我看到人们陷入困境或无法追求自己的梦想时，我感到痛心，我想尽一切办法来帮助他们。在写这本书的过程中，我意识到这与我的父母有着密切关系。

I won the childhood lottery. I had two parents that devoted their lives to creating the best life possible for my siblings and me. They did this by figuring out what they were best at and then giving it their complete

commitment.

我赢得了童年的彩票。我有两个父母，他们把自己的生活都奉献给了为我和我的兄弟姐妹创造最好的生活。他们通过找到自己最擅长的事情，并全心全意地投入其中来实现这一目标。

For my mother, it was being an active parent. Right from the start, she had an intuitive sense of my needs. She gave me space to make my own decisions and I learned how to take ownership of my life. She helped remove any obstacles in my way and helped me grow into a confident adult. At every step of my journey, the courage to take the next step was a direct result of her abundant love and compassion.

对于我的母亲来说，她是一个积极的家长。从一开始，她就对我的需求有直观的感知。她给了我自主决策的空间，我学会了对自己的生活负责。她帮助我排除了道路上的障碍，帮助我成长为一个自信的成年人。在我旅程的每一步中，勇敢迈出下一步都是她丰富的爱和同情心的直接结果。

My father prioritized work. I struggled with this for many years. I wished he was around more. As I got older, however, I realized that this decision was just as hard on him and that he didn't have any other choice.

我父亲把工作放在首位。多年来，我一直为此感到困扰。我希望他能多陪伴我。然而，随着我长大，我意识到这个决定对他来说同样艰难，他别无选择。

At 19 he took a job at a manufacturing company and didn't think about working anywhere else for another 41 years. The story he told himself throughout his entire career was that he had to work harder than everyone else. Why? He didn't have a degree. As he earned promotions, he found himself surrounded by people with impressive credentials and likely felt more pressure to keep up. Yet he never complained. He woke up every day



at 5 a.m., put in 12-hour days, said yes to every single thing asked of him, and in doing so, was able to have a remarkable career and ensured that my siblings and I had more options than he did.

19岁时，他在一家制造公司找到了一份工作，并且在接下来的41年里从未考虑过去其他地方工作。他在整个职业生涯中告诉自己的故事是，他必须比其他人更加努力工作。为什么？因为他没有学位。随着他获得晋升，他发现自己周围都是拥有令人印象深刻的资历的人，可能感到更大的压力要跟上。然而他从未抱怨过。他每天早上5点起床，工作12个小时，对每一件事都说“是”，通过这样做，他能够拥有一个非凡的职业生涯，并确保我和我的兄弟姐妹比他有更多的选择。

My mother also believed that not having a degree held her back and she was right. A couple of years after college, I helped her apply for a job at another school as a director of a financial aid department. The recruiting committee said that her cover letter “was one of the best they had seen” and that she was the best candidate, but because she didn’t have a degree, they were offering the position to someone else.

我母亲也认为没有学位限制了她的的发展，她是对的。大学毕业几年后，我帮她申请了另一所学校的财政援助部门主任职位。招聘委员会说她的求职信是他们见过的最好的之一，她是最佳候选人，但因为她没有学位，他们把职位给了别人。

This hurt me so much. I knew that my mother was smart and capable and that a degree had nothing to do with what she had to offer the world.

这让我非常伤心。我知道我的母亲聪明能干，学位与她对世界的贡献无关。

The best option available for my parents was the default path. This worked remarkably well for them, which is what made leaving it so damn hard. I know how much they sacrificed so that I would have better career

opportunities. However, what they really gave me was so much more than the ability to succeed in school and work. It was space to dream, take risks, and be able to explore more possibilities for my life.

我父母能够选择的最佳选项是默认的道路。这对他们来说非常有效，所以离开它是如此的艰难。我知道他们为了让我有更好的职业机会而做出了多大的牺牲。然而，他们真正给予我的远不止是在学校 and 工作中取得成功的能力。他们给了我梦想的空间，冒险的机会，以及探索生活更多可能性的能力。

Many people find it difficult to create change in their lives because they lack someone that believes in them. I have parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers, and managers who believe in me. Their support gives me an advantage and because of this, nothing motivates me more than trying to be that person for others. I am inspired by what the writer Leo Rosten once argued was the purpose of life: “to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”<sup>6</sup> The pathless path has helped me see that quitting my job was never about escaping work or living an easier life, it was about using the gifts I received from my parents to benefit others.

许多人发现在他们的生活中创造改变很困难，因为他们缺乏有人相信他们的人。我有父母、姑姑、叔叔、祖父母、老师和经理都相信我。他们的支持给了我一个优势，因此，没有什么比试图成为别人的那个人更能激励我。我受到作家Leo Rosten曾经认为生活的目的是“有用，有荣誉，有同情心，让你的生活有所不同，而且过得好”的启发。无路可走的道路帮助我看到，辞职并不是为了逃避工作或过上更轻松的生活，而是为了利用我从父母那里得到的天赋来造福他人。

Helping people live courageously so that they can thrive is one of the most important things in the world. I want to see people live the lives they are capable of, not just the ones they think they are allowed to live.

帮助人们勇敢地生活，让他们能够茁壮成长，是世界上最重要的事情

之一。我希望看到人们过上他们有能力过的生活，而不仅仅是他们认为自己被允许过的生活。

I wrote this book to show you that this is possible.  
我写这本书是为了向你展示这是可能的。

My journey on the pathless path is about slowly figuring this out and helping countless people from around the world realize the same thing.  
我在无路之路上的旅程是关于慢慢弄清楚这一点，并帮助来自世界各地的无数人意识到同样的事情。

Now it's your turn. What follows is not a simple playbook, but an invitation to join me on the pathless path to see what might happen if we imagine a new story together.

现在轮到你了。接下来的内容不是简单的指南，而是邀请你与我一同踏上无路之路，看看如果我们一起想象一个新的故事会发生什么。

Ready?  
准备好了吗？

## 2

# Getting Ahead 取得进步

The ease of having an ambition is that it can be explained to others; the very disease of ambition is that it can be so easily explained to others.

– *David Whyte*

追求一个目标的好处在于可以向他人解释；而追求目标的弊端在于可以如此轻易地向他人解释。 - 大卫·怀特

# World Class Hoop-Jumper 世界级的跳圈者

The term “hoop-jumper” was coined by writer and former professor William Deresiewicz to describe the behavior of his students at Yale, who seemed more concerned about getting A’s and adding bullet points to their resumes than using their time at one of the world’s best universities to follow their curiosity.<sup>7</sup>

“hoop-jumper”一词是作家和前教授威廉·德雷西维奇创造的，用来描述他在耶鲁大学的学生们的行为，这些学生似乎更关心如何获得A的成绩和为简历增加亮点，而不是利用他们在世界顶级大学度过的时间来追随他们的好奇心。

Focused on landing good internships or jobs, or getting accepted into graduate schools, his students based their choices on which classes and activities would improve their chances. Many had been playing this game

for their entire lives, moving from one elite school to the next, fueled by lofty parental expectations.

专注于获得好的实习或工作机会，或被研究生院录取，他的学生们根据哪些课程和活动能提高他们的机会来做出选择。许多人一生都在玩这个游戏，从一个精英学校转到另一个，受到高远的父母期望的推动。

Even though I ended up playing the same games, my childhood was remarkable for its lack of pressure, hands-off parents, and a genuine love of school. In high school, I was a top student but never considered applying to top-ranked schools. I was only interested in going to the University of Connecticut, my home-state school. The biggest reason? I could get five-dollar tickets to sit in the student section of the men's basketball games.

尽管我最终玩的是同样的游戏，但我的童年因为缺乏压力、父母的放手和对学校的真正热爱而令人难忘。在高中时，我是一名优秀的学生，但从未考虑过申请排名靠前的学校。我只对去康涅狄格大学，我的家乡学校感兴趣。最大的原因是什么呢？我可以买到五美元的票坐在男子篮球比赛的学生区。

When I was accepted, I was admitted into the honors program, and assigned to live in a building with other honors students. I didn't know it at the time, but this would have an enormous impact on my future. I was surrounded by people with bold aspirations and impressive achievements. People with perfect SAT scores, full scholarships, and five-year plans. I was genuinely surprised to hear about the extensive processes that some students had gone through to pick a school, weighing the trade-offs among scholarships, rankings, job opportunities, and access to grad schools. I just wanted to go to basketball games.

当我被录取时，我被分配到与其他优秀学生一起住的楼宇，并进入了荣誉项目。当时我并不知道，这对我的未来会产生巨大的影响。我周围都是有着雄心壮志和令人印象深刻成就的人。他们的SAT成绩完

美，获得全额奖学金，还有五年计划。听到一些学生为选择学校而经历的复杂过程，权衡奖学金、排名、就业机会和研究生院的机会，我感到非常惊讶。我只是想去看篮球比赛。

But these people became my friends and I started to want what they wanted. They embodied a *success ethic* that focused on maximizing achievements in the present to create better options in the future. I started to resent the high school I had attended, where the guidance counselor suggested I try a major other than engineering because “it was hard.” *Why hadn’t people pushed me harder? Should I have applied to better schools?*

但是这些人成为了我的朋友，我开始渴望他们所渴望的。他们体现了一种成功伦理，专注于在现在最大化成就，以创造更好的未来选择。我开始对我上过的高中感到不满，那里的辅导员建议我尝试除了工程以外的专业，因为“那太难了”。为什么人们没有更加努力地推动我呢？我应该申请更好的学校吗？

As a late arrival to this game, I didn’t have the baggage of anxiety and stress that a lot of my new friends seemed to have after years of chasing achievements. I was shocked at how some of them worked to exhaustion, filling their schedules beyond what they could handle. I wasn’t willing to compete on that level, but I still wanted to keep up, so I became obsessed with figuring out the rules and learning how to hack the system.

作为这个游戏的后来者，我没有像许多新朋友那样多年追逐成就而带来的焦虑和压力。我对他们有些人工作到筋疲力尽感到震惊，他们的日程安排超出了他们的承受能力。我不愿意在那个层面上竞争，但我仍然希望跟上，所以我变得痴迷于弄清规则并学会如何突破系统。

During my first semester of college, I created an Excel spreadsheet of my schedule for the next four years. Then I cross-referenced it with a site called RateMyProfessor.com so I could optimize my schedule based on the easiest

graders for my courses. In my second year, I figured out how to petition the school to take more than the maximum 18 credits so that I could add easy classes, or as we called them, “guaranteed A’s,” to my course load.

在我大学的第一个学期，我创建了一个Excel电子表格，记录了接下来四年的课程安排。然后我在一个叫做RateMyProfessor.com的网站上进行了交叉参考，以便根据课程中最容易给高分的教授来优化我的课程安排。在我大二的时候，我找到了一种向学校申请超过最大18学分的方法，这样我就可以增加一些容易的课程，或者我们称之为“保证A”的课程，来增加我的课程负担。

When I started college, earning an A was table stakes for my honors classmates and me. This was the result of decades of grade inflation. By the mid-2000s, 42% of college students received A’s in their classes.<sup>8</sup> This was a shift from the past. In the 1960s, earning an A was the third most likely grade after C’s and a B’s. For us, since getting an A was not only possible but expected, my classmates and I spent as much time finding loopholes to improve our grades as we did studying for tests.

当我开始上大学时，对于我和我的荣誉班同学来说，获得A成绩只是基本要求。这是几十年来成绩膨胀的结果。到了2000年代中期，42%的大学生在课程中获得了A成绩。这是与过去不同的变化。在20世纪60年代，获得A成绩是继C和B之后的第三可能成绩。对于我们来说，由于获得A不仅是可能的，而且是期望的，我和我的同学们花了很多时间寻找提高成绩的漏洞，与备考同样重要。

I loved finding the loopholes. My dual engineering and business degree was challenging, but it conveniently avoided the hardest engineering classes. I also took classes at weird times to get easy grading professors. I still pursued impressive achievements like graduating with honors, but I picked a thesis advisor and classes that wouldn’t push me too hard. With every internship offer, Dean’s list award, and scholarship I earned, the intoxicating feeling of success ran through my body. I felt like I had it all figured out.

我喜欢找到漏洞。我的双学位工程和商业学位很有挑战性，但它方便地避开了最难工程课程。我还在奇怪的时间上课，以便得到容易评分的教授。我仍然追求令人印象深刻的成就，比如荣誉毕业，但我选择了一个不会对我施加太大压力的论文导师和课程。每次实习机会、院长名单奖和奖学金都让我沉醉在成功的感觉中。我觉得我已经把一切都弄明白了。

I was becoming a hoop-jumper just like Deresiewicz's students at Yale, internalizing the idea that education is "doing your homework, getting the answers, acing the test." I had not developed a sense that "something larger is at stake" as Deresiewicz says, and only was playing the game of student, not using my mind. <sup>9</sup>

我正在变成像Deresiewicz在耶鲁大学的学生一样的跳圈者，内化了教育就是“做作业、得到答案、考试得高分”的观念。我没有培养出“有更大的事情在牵扯”的意识，只是在玩学生的游戏，没有运用我的头脑。

## Strategy Consulting 战略咨询

By the end of my junior year, I had a high GPA, completed multiple internships, and had won several awards. Yet as I entered senior year, I was about to commit to the first goal worthy of my hoop-jumping ambitions. I decided to attempt to break into the elite world of strategy consulting. 到我大三结束时，我的GPA很高，完成了多个实习，并赢得了几个奖项。然而，当我进入大四时，我即将致力于我值得奋力追求的第一个目标。我决定尝试进入精英战略咨询的世界。

Strategy consulting was born out of the growth of the manufacturing industry in the late 1800s in the United States. Originally referred to as



“consulting engineers,” people like Frederick Taylor, Arthur D. Little, and Edwin Booz worked with manufacturing plants to increase their efficiency and profitability.<sup>10</sup> They eventually helped establish some of the first consulting firms and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these companies evolved and expanded in scope and ambition. By the time I graduated, it was a multi-billion-dollar industry with hundreds of firms spanning the globe. These firms worked with CEOs and senior executives on large, important problems. For young ambitious people, they offered the potential to skip “climbing the ladder” and work directly on the most interesting business problems immediately after graduation.

战略咨询起源于19世纪末美国制造业的发展。最初被称为“咨询工程师”，像弗雷德里克·泰勒、亚瑟·D·利特尔和埃德温·布兹这样的人与制造工厂合作，提高其效率和盈利能力。他们最终帮助建立了一些最早的咨询公司，并且在20世纪期间，这些公司在范围和雄心上不断发展和扩大。到我毕业时，这已经是一个价值数十亿美元的行业，遍布全球数百家公司。这些公司与首席执行官和高级管理人员合作解决重大问题。对于年轻有雄心壮志的人来说，他们提供了在毕业后立即直接参与最有趣的商业问题的机会，而无需“攀爬晋升之路”。

Initially, these companies only hired from elite schools like Harvard and Yale. Later, as the industry expanded, they recruited more widely but were still selective. The University of Connecticut was not one of them, and instead was what they called a “non-target” school. I knew it would be a challenge to break into the industry, but I still wanted to give it a shot. 最初，这些公司只招聘哈佛和耶鲁等精英学校的毕业生。随着行业的扩大，他们开始更广泛地招聘，但仍然很挑剔。康涅狄格大学不在其中，被称为“非目标”学校。我知道要进入这个行业会很有挑战性，但我仍然想试一试。

Committing to this goal gave me a mission, which also helped me ignore the growing anxiety about the transition from school to the “real world.” I had no wisdom to draw upon for navigating this important phase in life

other than what everyone around me was doing: picking a path.

承诺这个目标给了我一个使命，也帮助我忽视了从学校到“真实世界”过渡时不断增长的焦虑。在生活中，我没有其他可以借鉴的智慧来应对这个重要阶段，除了身边的每个人都在做的事情：选择一条道路。

The modern world offers an abundance of paths. In one sense this is great. It's the result of an industrial system and resulting prosperity that has created opportunities for people around the world. However, the proliferation of paths presents a challenge. With so many options it can be tempting to pick a path that offers certainty rather than doing the harder work of figuring out what we really want.

现代世界提供了丰富的选择。从某种意义上说，这是很好的。这是工业体系和由此带来的繁荣所创造的机会，为全世界的人们提供了机遇。然而，路径的多样化也带来了挑战。有这么多选择，很容易选择一条能提供确定性的道路，而不是去努力找出我们真正想要的东西。

A friend, Ranjit Saimbi, who has since left law to pursue software development, shared that he was attracted to the law profession because “the steps are laid out for you.” A career in the law signaled to others that he “was a serious and intelligent person.” But the longer he spent on the path, he realized that the real promise had been that “life's existential fears are traded for certainty.”<sup>[11](#)</sup>

一个朋友Ranjit Saimbi，后来离开法律行业去从事软件开发，他分享说他被法律职业吸引是因为“一切都为你安排好了。”从事法律职业向他人传达了他“是一个认真和聪明的人”的信号。但是，他在这条道路上花费的时间越长，他意识到真正的承诺是“将生活的存在恐惧换成了确定性。”

The paths that Ranjit and I were drawn to also offered something else: prestige. Though hard to define, prestige can be thought of as the attention

you get when you do things that others see as impressive. Paul Graham, the founder of a startup incubator and mentor to thousands of young people, sees this attention as a trap. In his view, prestige is “a powerful magnet that warps even your beliefs about what you enjoy.”<sup>12</sup>

Ranjit和我所选择的道路还提供了另一种东西：声望。虽然难以定义，声望可以被视为当你做一些他人认为令人印象深刻的事情时所获得的关注。创业孵化器创始人、数千名年轻人的导师保罗·格雷厄姆将这种关注视为陷阱。在他看来，声望是“一个强大的磁铁，甚至扭曲了你对自己喜欢什么的信念。”

Ranjit and I were both pulled by the force of the impressive stories associated with prestigious jobs like strategy consulting and law. These paths are too good to be true for driven young people who want to turn their success in school into something tangible for others to see. Zen philosopher Alan Watts argued that “the desire for security and the feeling of insecurity are the same thing,” and that “we look for this security by fortifying and enclosing ourselves in innumerable ways. We want the protection of being ‘exclusive’ and ‘special.’”<sup>13</sup> This was exactly what I was looking for.

兰吉特和我都被与战略咨询和法律等崇高职业相关的令人印象深刻的故事所吸引。对于那些渴望将学校的成功转化为别人可以看到的实际成果的年轻人来说，这些道路太美好了。禅宗哲学家艾伦·瓦茨认为，“对安全的渴望和不安全的感觉是一样的”，并且“我们通过各种方式来加强和封闭自己来寻求这种安全感。我们希望得到‘独特’和‘特殊’的保护。”这正是我所追求的。

Entering my senior year of college, the pull of prestige took the wheel and I started plotting ways to overcome my status as a “non-target” applicant. 进入大四的时候，声望的吸引力占据了主导地位，我开始策划如何克服自己作为一个“非目标”申请者的身份。

# Chasing Prestige

## 追逐声望

What I really wanted was to be part of the “inner ring,” which C.S. Lewis famously detailed in a lecture given at King’s College in 1944. He argued, “...in all men’s lives at certain periods...one of the most dominant elements is the desire to be inside the local Ring and the terror of being left outside.”<sup>14</sup>

我真正想要的是成为“内圈”的一部分，正如C.S.刘易斯在1944年在国王学院的一次讲座中所详细描述的那样。他认为，“在每个人的生活中，在某些时期...最主要的元素之一就是渴望成为地方圈子的一员，以及害怕被排除在外。”

Before the fall semester of senior year, I had built a spreadsheet of consulting companies and other jobs perceived as prestigious. This was the inner ring I cared about. Beyond consulting companies, it included investment banks, technology startups, and hedge funds. I wasn’t picky about the type of work I’d be doing, I just wanted it to be seen as impressive. I spent most of that semester in a frenzy, searching for companies I had missed, networking, sending cold e-mails, and trying to land interviews. Unfortunately, most of my efforts were met with near-instant rejection. My credentials were good enough but most of the companies had met their hiring targets with students from better schools.

大四秋季学期之前，我建立了一张咨询公司和其他被认为有声望的工作的电子表格。这是我关心的内圈。除了咨询公司，还包括投资银行、科技初创公司和对冲基金。我对自己将要从事的工作类型并不挑剔，只是希望它被视为令人印象深刻的。那个学年的大部分时间我都在疯狂地寻找我错过的公司，建立人脉，发送冷邮件，试图争取面试机会。不幸的是，我的大部分努力几乎都遭到了即时的拒绝。我的资历足够好，但大多数公司已经通过来自更好学校的学生满足了他们的招聘目标。

Out of a couple of hundred companies, I did have a handful of interviews. This gave me a peek into the secret world of the inner ring. One of these interviews brought me to North Carolina where I took part in a “superday” for Wachovia’s investment bank. A superday is a two-day ordeal that includes meals, casual conversations with employees and other interviewees, and finally, several formal interviews on the second day.

在几百家公司中，我确实参加了几次面试。这让我一窥内部圈子的秘密世界。其中一次面试带我来到了北卡罗来纳州，参加了华科维亚投资银行的“超级日”。超级日是一个为期两天的考验，包括用餐、与员工和其他面试者进行随意交谈，最后在第二天进行几次正式面试。

When I arrived, I checked into my hotel and made my way to a high-end cocktail bar down the street. Within fifteen minutes, I discovered that in a group of 30–40 people I was one of the few “non-target” applicants. Realizing this, I started to feel like I had crashed a wedding. Some of the candidates mentioned that their friends from school were already working at the company or that Wachovia was “only” a backup option. They were intrigued that I had landed an interview, but ultimately did not see me as a threat. These students from places like the University of Virginia, Duke, and Cornell oozed confidence, and as I now realize, they were already part of the inner ring. All they had to do now was figure out which company badge they would be wearing come graduation.

当我到达时，我办理了入住手续，然后走到了街上的一家高档鸡尾酒吧。在十五分钟内，我发现在30-40人的群体中，我是为数不多的“非目标”申请者之一。意识到这一点后，我开始感觉自己像是闯入了一场婚礼。一些候选人提到他们的学校朋友已经在这家公司工作了，或者沃卡维亚只是他们的备选方案。他们对我能够得到面试机会感到好奇，但最终并没有把我视为威胁。这些来自弗吉尼亚大学、杜克大学和康奈尔大学等地的学生充满自信，我现在意识到，他们已经是内部圈子的一部分。他们现在只需要弄清楚毕业后将会佩戴哪个公司的徽章。

The next day, I went through the motions in eight 30-minute interviews, but the entire time it felt like both the interviewers and I already knew what would happen. I received the rejection call two days later, and by the end of the semester, every company on my list had either rejected or ignored my application.

第二天，我参加了八个30分钟的面试，但整个过程中，无论是面试官还是我自己，都感觉已经知道结果会是什么样子。两天后，我接到了拒绝电话，到学期结束时，我名单上的每家公司要么拒绝了我，要么忽视了我的申请。

Still, my first close look inside the inner ring, while awkward, furthered my motivation. Now I wanted not only to break into this exclusive world but also to rid myself of the shame I felt that weekend, the feeling that I was not good enough.

然而，尽管感到尴尬，但我第一次近距离观察内圈，进一步激发了我的动力。现在，我不仅想进入这个独特的世界，还想摆脱那个周末感受到的羞耻感，那种觉得自己不够好的感觉。

Despite not breaking into the inner ring, I had still been working on a backup plan, which was to work in one of General Electric's (GE) leadership development programs. At the time, GE still had a great reputation in the business world and prided itself on shying away from hiring the elite students I had been competing against. They preferred to hire people just like me, high achievers at big public schools.

尽管没有进入内圈，但我仍在制定备用计划，即在通用电气（GE）的领导发展计划中工作。当时，GE在商业界仍享有很高的声誉，并以不雇佣我所竞争的精英学生而自豪。他们更喜欢雇佣像我这样的人，那些在大型公立学校取得较高成就的人。

I had interned at GE prior to my senior year and had the option to return the following year in an engineering role. However, during that summer, when I was first infected with the desire to chase prestige, I found out about their Financial Management Program. It was the inner ring within GE and seen as the fast track to success inside the company. Even though my internship had been in engineering, and I had taken only a few finance classes, I applied to the program and convinced recruiters that this was my ideal path. When I got the offer, I canceled the other interviews I had on-campus. GE wasn't part of the inner ring I cared about, but it was still seen as one of the best jobs you could get at my school.

我在大四之前曾在GE实习过，并有机会在接下来的一年回去担任工程师职位。然而，在那个夏天，当我第一次被追求声望的欲望感染时，我了解到了他们的财务管理计划。这是GE内部的核心圈子，被视为公司内部成功的快速通道。尽管我的实习是在工程领域，我只修过几门财务课程，但我还是申请了这个计划，并说服招聘人员这是我理想的职业道路。当我收到offer时，我取消了其他校园面试。GE并不是我关心的核心圈子的一部分，但在我的学校，它仍然被视为你能得到的最好的工作之一。

Why would anyone go through the trouble of applying to so many jobs? One part of the answer is that I have always enjoyed the job search process. The more complicated and more accurate answer would be that I got sucked into a chase after achievement in an environment where maximizing potential success was one of the best things to do with your time. My friends all had impressive plans after graduation, and I didn't want to be left behind. People were impressed by the job I was taking at GE, and I liked how the attention made me feel. I felt smart. It didn't matter that I had never worked in finance and had never spent any time in Ohio or the Midwest, where I would be located. Out of all the jobs I could get from my school, this was one of the best and the magnet of prestige convinced me that was what I wanted.

为什么有人要费心申请这么多工作呢？答案的一部分是我一直喜欢求职过程。更复杂、更准确的答案是我被追求成就的追逐所吸引，而在这个环境中，最大化潜在成功是你用时间做的最好的事情之一。我的

朋友们毕业后都有令人印象深刻的计划，而我不想被落下。人们对我在GE公司的工作印象深刻，我喜欢这种关注让我感觉很棒。我觉得自己很聪明。我从未在金融领域工作过，也从未在俄亥俄州或中西部待过，那里将是我的工作地点。在我学校能找到的所有工作中，这是最好的之一，而声望的磁力使我相信这就是我想要的。

After graduation, I made the two-day drive to Ohio with my cousin Brian. I remember two things about the drive: *Hey There, Delilah* coming on the radio every forty minutes and being filled with a sense of unease. For the first time, I would be living outside of a 15-mile bubble in Connecticut. Moving to a new city and working for a great company like GE was exciting, but deep down I felt like I wasn't where I wanted to be. I tried to pretend I was happy to be starting the job, but I wanted more.

毕业后，我和表弟布莱恩一起开车两天去了俄亥俄州。我记得这次旅行有两件事：每隔四十分钟就会在收音机上播放《嘿，德丽莎》这首歌，而我内心充满了不安感。这是我第一次离开康涅狄格州15英里的范围，去到一个新的城市，在一个像通用电气这样的伟大公司工作，这让我感到兴奋，但内心深处我知道我并不是我想要去的地方。我试图假装对开始这份工作感到开心，但我想要更多。

My unease quickly morphed into a desire to escape. When I joined, GE was a 100-year-old company with a great reputation but was starting to show its age. I couldn't imagine spending the rest of my career there, let alone two years. No one seemed to care about anything. My colleagues had been coming to the same desks for decades and were more interested in their retirement portfolios than working and told me that if not for the benefits, they probably wouldn't show up.

我的不安很快变成了逃离的欲望。当我加入时，通用电气是一家有着很好声誉但开始显露老态的百年老公司。我无法想象自己会在那里度过余生，更别说两年了。似乎没有人在乎任何事情。我的同事们已经在同样的办公桌前工作了几十年，对他们的退休金组合更感兴趣，而不是工作，并告诉我，如果没有福利，他们可能不会出现。



My program included four 6-month rotations in different parts of the business, and I barely finished two. I decided I was going to quit as I drove to Jacksonville, Florida, for my second rotation. I called my friend Mike, who was set to move to Boston for a job later that year. “Mike, if I move to Boston in June, do you want to live together?” “Hell yeah!” he said. It was settled. Boston was a place where I might have a better shot at landing a job at one of those companies in the inner ring while being closer to my friends and family.

我的计划包括在业务的不同部门进行四个为期六个月的轮岗，但我只完成了两个。当我驱车前往佛罗里达州杰克逊维尔进行第二个轮岗时，我决定辞职。我给即将在今年晚些时候搬到波士顿工作的朋友迈克打电话。“迈克，如果我六月份搬到波士顿，你想一起住吗？”“当然！”他说。事情就这样定了。波士顿是一个我有可能会在内环的那些公司中找到工作机会，并且离我的朋友和家人更近的地方。

In Jacksonville, I ramped up part two of my job search, applying to many of the same companies that had rejected me only a year earlier. Crazy enough, this period ended with me landing my dream job. Yes, that’s right. About a month after arriving in Florida, I found a job posting for a research analyst at McKinsey & Company, the company at the top of my list. After several rounds of interviews, I landed an offer to join the company in the Boston office.

在杰克逊维尔，我加大了第二阶段的求职力度，申请了许多之前拒绝我的同一家公司。令人疯狂的是，这段时间结束后，我竟然得到了我梦寐以求的工作。是的，没错。在抵达佛罗里达大约一个月后，我在麦肯锡公司找到了一个研究分析师的职位招聘信息，这家公司是我名单上的首选。经过几轮面试，我得到了加入该公司波士顿办事处的工作机会。

It felt too good to be true, and how people perceived this achievement differed from how I experienced it. Others saw an impressive new job at McKinsey, a smart career move. Yet for me it was a lucky outcome after a year of restlessness, immaturity, insecurity, and a desperate desire to escape. 这感觉太美好了，人们对这个成就的看法与我所经历的不同。别人看到的是在麦肯锡的一份令人印象深刻的新工作，是一个聪明的职业选择。然而对我来说，这只是一年来不安、不成熟、不安全感和迫切渴望逃离的幸运结果。

Part of me had been secretly excited about quitting my job and moving to a new city without a job, drawn by the possibilities of adventure. That part of me would get its chance but it would have to wait several years. 我内心的一部分一直暗自期待着辞掉工作，毫无工作的情况下搬到一个新城市，被冒险的可能性所吸引。这部分的我将有机会实现，但需要等待几年。

I said goodbye to Florida and drove a U-Haul back north with my father, excited about my next step. I had a second chance at starting my post-college life, this time in the real inner ring. 我和父亲告别了佛罗里达，驾驶着一辆U-Haul卡车向北方驶去，对我接下来的步骤感到兴奋。我有了第二次机会开始我的大学毕业后的生活，这一次是在真正的内环地区。

## The Inner Ring

### 内圈

Walking into the office on that first day, I was thrilled. At McKinsey, I was grateful to be surrounded by enthusiastic and curious people instead of people working for the weekend. I worked with managers that cared about me and pushed me to improve.

走进办公室的第一天，我感到非常兴奋。在麦肯锡，我感激自己周围都是热情而好奇的人，而不是只为周末而工作的人。我与关心我的经理们一起工作，他们推动我不断进步。

Although I felt like an outsider that had somehow broken into an exclusive world, I slowly started to absorb the norms and desires of the people around me. Unlike at GE, where mentioning any interests beyond the job was taboo, at McKinsey people openly shared their ambitions to attend top graduate schools, become CEOs, or work for other prestigious institutions. For many of my coworkers, McKinsey was only a stop on the way to bigger things.

虽然我感觉自己像是一个闯入独特世界的局外人，但我慢慢开始吸收周围人的规范和愿望。与通用电气公司不同，在那里提及工作以外的兴趣是禁忌的，而在麦肯锡，人们公开分享他们上名校、成为CEO或为其他知名机构工作的雄心壮志。对于我的许多同事来说，麦肯锡只是通往更大事业的一站。

I adopted this attitude and embraced a version of a career which philosopher Andrew Taggart, who writes about our modern relationship to work, describes as “a first-person work-centric story of progress about an individual’s life course.”<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, my career was not a series of jobs, but a high-stakes proposition, one where falling behind felt like failure. My colleagues and I dealt with this pressure by constantly talking about potential career paths and “exit options.” This was helpful for someone new to this world like me. I could figure out how to stay in the inner ring by following the wisdom of my peers.

我采取了这种态度，并接受了哲学家安德鲁·塔加特所描述的“关于个人生涯的第一人称工作中心的进步故事”的版本。从这个角度来看，我的职业不是一系列的工作，而是一个高风险的提议，其中落后感觉像是失败。我和我的同事们通过不断谈论潜在的职业道路和“退出选择”来应对这种压力。对于像我这样新来到这个世界的人来说，这是有帮助的。我可以通过遵循同行的智慧来找到如何留在内圈的方法。

A year went by and I decided my next step was going to a top business school. This idea did not emerge out of thin air. Talks of applications, essays, and school rankings filled the daily lunchroom conversations. These people were my friends and when they were accepted into elite business schools like Harvard and Stanford, it seemed obvious that I should do the same thing. This is the trap of prestigious career paths. Instead of thinking about what you want to do with your life, you default to the options most admired by your peers.

一年过去了，我决定下一步是去一所顶尖的商学院。这个想法并非突然冒出来的。申请、论文和学校排名的讨论充斥着每天的午餐室谈话。这些人是我的朋友，当他们被哈佛和斯坦福等精英商学院录取时，我觉得我应该做同样的事情是显而易见的。这就是声望职业道路的陷阱。你没有考虑自己想要做什么，而是默认选择了同行们最羡慕的选项。

In describing the power of the inner ring, C.S. Lewis warns that, "unless you take measures to prevent it, this desire is going to be one of the chief motives of your life, from the first day on which you enter your profession until the day when you are too old to care." He believed "any other kind of life, if you lead it, will be the result of conscious and continuous effort."

在描述内圈的力量时，C.S. Lewis警告说：“除非你采取措施防止，否则这种欲望将成为你生活的主要动机之一，从你进入职业的第一天起，直到你年老无所谓为止。”他相信“如果你过其他任何一种生活，那将是有意识和持续努力的结果。”

In this world, the natural thing was to leave McKinsey, despite loving the work, because that was what everyone did. Near the end of my second year, I was accepted into a dual-degree program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. If you had shown me Lewis' quote and tried to convince me there was any "other kind of life" I would not have believed it.

在这个世界上，尽管喜欢这份工作，但离开麦肯锡是很自然的事情，因为那是每个人都做的。在我第二年快结束的时候，我被麻省理工学院录取了一个双学位项目。如果你给我看了刘易斯的这句话，试图说服我存在任何“其他种类的生活”，我是不会相信的。

The path I was on was too good to be true and I was more than happy to be on it.

我所走的道路太美好了，我非常愿意继续走下去。

## Existential Opening

### 存在性开放

The philosopher Andrew Taggart believes that crisis moments lead to “existential openings” that force us to grapple with the deepest questions about life.<sup>16</sup>

哲学家安德鲁·塔加特认为，危机时刻会引发“存在性开放”，迫使我们与关于生命的最深刻问题进行抗争。

He argues there are two typical ways this happens. One is the “way of loss,” when things that matter are taken from us, such as loved ones, our health, or a job. The other path is the “way of wonderment,” when we are faced with moments of undeniable awe and inspiration.

他认为这种情况有两种典型的方式。一种是“失去的方式”，当我们失去重要的东西，比如亲人、健康或工作时。另一种方式是“惊叹的方式”，当我们面对无可否认的敬畏和启发时。

I first experienced the “way of loss” in 2010 at the end of my second year at McKinsey, a month before starting graduate school.

我第一次在2010年经历了“失去的方式”，那是在我在麦肯锡工作两年后的最后一个月，也是我开始研究生学习之前。

I was at my parent's house and we received a call from my sister who was visiting my grandfather. She seemed worried. My grandfather had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He had dealt with health issues for years, but this felt different. As soon as I heard, I had a lump in my throat. I sat on the back deck with my mother trying to make sense of the news.

我在父母家，接到了姐姐的电话，她正在探望我的祖父。她似乎很担心。我的祖父被诊断患有胰腺癌。多年来，他一直有健康问题，但这次感觉不同。一听到消息，我就感到喉咙有个硬块。我和母亲坐在后院的露台上，试图理解这个消息。

We did what almost everyone does when faced with a harsh truth: we denied it. It was early May and my grandparents were scheduled to return to Connecticut for the summer in a few weeks. The news was bad, but neither my mother nor I thought it was urgent. He'd make it back to Connecticut we told ourselves

我们做了几乎每个人在面对残酷事实时都会做的事情：我们否认了它。那是五月初，我的祖父母计划在几周后回到康涅狄格州过夏天。消息很糟糕，但我和我妈妈都认为没有那么紧急。我们告诉自己他会回到康涅狄格州的。

Life had other plans. By mid-week, he had taken a turn for the worse, and by Friday, almost all of my relatives from across the country had boarded planes to see him in Arizona. I arrived towards the end of the week and shared the back seat with my cousins as my uncle drove us to my grandfather's house. That 30-minute ride was one of the longest in my life. No one spoke and we were all thinking the same thing: *please still be alive*. 生活有其他的安排。到了中周，他的情况变得更糟，到了周五，我国

内的几乎所有亲戚都搭乘飞机去亚利桑那州看望他。我在周末末尾抵达，坐在后座上与表兄弟姐妹们一起，由叔叔开车送我们去祖父的家。那30分钟的车程是我生命中最漫长的之一。没有人说话，我们都在想同样的事情：请还活着。

Over the next couple of days, 25 of us were scattered around the two-bedroom house taking turns visiting him one-on-one and as a family. I remember standing around the bed holding hands with my family and feeling the deepest pain of my life as tears streamed down my cheeks. 在接下来的几天里，我们中的25个人被分散在这个两居室的房子里，轮流单独或作为一个家庭去看望他。我记得站在床边和我的家人手牵手，感受到我一生中最深的痛苦，泪水顺着我的脸颊流下来。

My grandfather was a larger-than-life figure, and I loved spending time with him. When I was 13, he bought a house on the lake in my town, and I developed a deeper relationship with him and my grandmother. The house became not only a second home, but a gathering space for friends, family, and acquaintances. The door was open to everyone as long as they agreed to eat my grandfather's food.

我的祖父是一个活力四溢的人物，我喜欢和他在一起。当我13岁的时候，他在我镇上买了一座湖边的房子，我和他以及我的祖母之间的关系更加深厚了。这座房子不仅成为了第二个家，也成为了朋友、家人和熟人聚集的地方。只要他们同意吃我祖父做的食物，门对每个人都敞开。

He never talked about his childhood, but according to his siblings, after their mother died, he was sent to live on a farm with his uncle. Sometime around fourth grade, he stopped going to school so that he could start working with his uncle. He didn't have a childhood filled with love and support. He chose to deal with it by trying to do better for his children and

grandchildren and he succeeded. Like many of my cousins, we feel like we won the lottery growing up with a family like ours, where thanks to my grandfather we had access to a magical world filled with love, laughter, and possibility.

他从不谈论自己的童年，但根据他的兄弟姐妹们说，在他们母亲去世后，他被送到农场与叔叔一起生活。大约在四年级的时候，他停止上学开始和叔叔一起工作。他没有一个充满爱和支持的童年。他选择通过为自己的孩子和孙子做得更好来应对这一切，而他成功了。像我许多表兄弟姐妹一样，我们觉得自己在在一个像我们这样的家庭中长大就像中了彩票一样，多亏了我的祖父，我们拥有了一个充满爱、笑声和可能性的神奇世界。

Sitting in the house in Arizona, I knew I was about to lose him, one of the most important people in my life. Those few days were filled with tears and overwhelming emotion, but also with beauty and a profound sense of meaning. The proof of his life's work was in front of us. He had succeeded in creating a world better than the one he had grown up in. It was clear to me in those moments that family, love, and relationships were the most important things in the world.

坐在亚利桑那州的房子里，我知道我即将失去他，他是我生命中最重要的人之一。那几天充满了眼泪和压倒性的情感，但也充满了美丽和深刻的意义。他的一生工作的证明就在我们面前。他成功地创造了一个比他成长的世界更好的世界。在那些时刻，我清楚地意识到家庭、爱的人际关系是世界上最重要的事情。

Despite this clarity, I struggled to remain present in the days before he passed. I couldn't stop thinking about work. What if my colleagues needed me? To settle my anxiety, I drove to a local café and checked my email. Everything was fine. A colleague messaged me, "What are you doing!? Go back with your family, we got you!" I smiled and closed my laptop.

尽管如此清晰，但在他去世前的日子里，我仍然努力保持在场。我无法停止思考工作。如果我的同事需要我怎么办？为了缓解焦虑，我开



车去了一家当地的咖啡馆，查看了我的电子邮件。一切都好。一个同事给我发了消息：“你在做什么！？回去陪家人，我们会照顾你！”我微笑着关闭了笔记本电脑。

Driving back from the café, I was angry at myself. Why had I been so worried about work, something that was clearly not important? As I walked back into my grandfather's house, the house was silent. He was taking his final breaths. Had I nearly missed this moment because of some silly emails? I joined hands with my family, said a prayer, and left my worries aside for the next few days.

从咖啡馆开车回来时，我对自己感到很生气。为什么我会对工作如此担心，明明那并不重要？当我走进爷爷的房子时，房子里一片寂静。他正在做最后的呼吸。因为一些愚蠢的电子邮件，我差点错过了这一刻。我与家人紧握双手，祈祷了一番，接下来的几天我把烦恼放在一边。

That experience sent me down the “way of loss,” opening me up to the questions I had ignored by orienting my life around my work.

那次经历让我走上了“失去之路”，让我开始思考我曾忽视的问题，因为我过于专注于工作。

What was I living for?  
我为什么而活着？

What did I really want?  
我真正想要什么？

How did I want to look back on my life when it was my time to go?  
当我离开这个世界时，我希望回顾自己的一生是什么样子？

Difficult questions but ones that I was finally ready to contemplate.  
困难的问题，但我终于准备好思考了。

# Business School

## 商学院

I started business school a month after losing my grandfather. I was excited to be in school again, but his loss overshadowed everything and opened me up emotionally. In those months, everything was filled with meaning.

Relationships felt more important. Books, songs, and movies made me cry, and I became more curious about everything.

我在失去爷爷一个月后开始上商学院。我对再次上学感到兴奋，但他的离世使一切都黯然失色，让我情感上变得敏感。在那几个月里，一切都充满了意义。人际关系变得更加重要。书籍、歌曲和电影让我哭泣，我对一切事物都变得更加好奇。

I tried to integrate these changes into my life by shifting my attention away from my career and towards my friendships, relationships, and learning. I prioritized classes that interested me, and I didn't pay as much attention to grades. In my first semester, one of my classes was filled with what I determined was pointless busy-work. I decided to skip most of the assignments, earning a C+ in the class, the first "C" of my life, and a failing grade in business school.

我试图通过将注意力从事业转向友谊、人际关系和学习来将这些变化融入我的生活中。我优先选择了我感兴趣的课程，对成绩没有那么在意。在我第一个学期，我上的一门课充斥着我认为毫无意义的繁琐作业。我决定跳过大部分作业，在这门课中得到了C+的成绩，这是我人生中的第一个"C"，也是商学院的不及格成绩。

I still passed most of my classes, but after three years of putting my career first, I was able to put life first. My memories of business school are the conversations with friends at Beacon Hill Pub, watching Jersey Shore at Mike's, cultural celebrations, formal parties, intramural hockey, and basketball games, touring factories across the world, and most notably, performing an Irish Jig in front of 500 people. In a class at the end of the two years, my friend Kurtis shared that he thought I was someone that "lived life to its fullest." This was surprising and humbling to hear. It was the first time I realized that I had leaned into the questions that arose after losing my grandfather and had focused more on creating memories than getting good grades.

我仍然通过了大部分课程，但在将我的职业放在首位三年后，我能够将生活放在首位。我对商学院的回忆是在比肯山酒吧与朋友们交谈，观看迈克的《泽西海岸》节目，参加文化庆祝活动，参加正式派对，参加校内曲棍球和篮球比赛，参观世界各地的工厂，尤其是在500人面前表演爱尔兰舞蹈。在两年结束时的一堂课上，我的朋友库尔蒂斯分享说他认为我是一个“充分享受生活的人”。这让我感到惊讶和谦卑。这是我第一次意识到，在失去祖父后，我更多地关注创造回忆而不是取得好成绩。

Unfortunately, I wasn't on a permanent vacation. I spent all my savings and took \$70,000 in debt with an intention to continue on my path.

不幸的是，我并不是在度假。我花光了所有的积蓄，并负债70,000美元，打算继续走我的道路。

McKinsey had a program that would pay for school if you committed to returning to work there for at least two years. I was so confident that I didn't want to return to consulting that I never considered it. Unfortunately, by the time recruiting started in the second year, I had not come up with any other plan. So I applied to all the same consulting firms that I had in college.

麦肯锡有一个计划，如果你承诺至少在那里工作两年，他们会支付你

的学费。我当时非常自信，不想回到咨询行业，所以从未考虑过这个计划。不幸的是，到了第二年开始招聘的时候，我还没有想出其他计划。所以我申请了和大学时期一样的所有咨询公司。

The companies were confused. McKinsey was seen as the top firm, so why was I applying to their competitors? My explanations didn't suffice, and all of the big firms rejected me. Then McKinsey rejected me too. I had been far too casual about the whole process and assumed that they would accept me. This was naïve. I was walking down Charles Street in Boston when I got the call. It was embarrassing. I felt like a loser. I might be the only person ever rejected by a company both before *and* after having worked there. Was I back to where I had been just a few years earlier, still trying to break into the inner ring?

公司们感到困惑。麦肯锡被视为顶级公司，那么为什么我要申请他们的竞争对手呢？我的解释不足以让他们满意，所有的大公司都拒绝了我。然后麦肯锡也拒绝了我。我对整个过程过于随意，以为他们会接受我。这是幼稚的想法。当我接到电话时，我正在波士顿的查尔斯街上走着。这很尴尬。我觉得自己像个失败者。我可能是唯一一个在曾经工作过的公司之前和之后都被拒绝的人。我是否又回到了几年前的那个位置，仍然试图进入内部圈子呢？

Now, it's easy to see that I wasn't as committed to this path as my classmates and when I was "putting my life first" they were preparing for interviews.

现在，很容易看出我对这条道路的承诺不如我的同学，当我在“把生活放在第一位”的时候，他们正在准备面试。

Cracks in my career identity were starting to appear, but I was barely aware of them and had no conception of any other kind of life other than the default path I was on.

我的职业身份开始出现裂痕，但我几乎没有意识到，并且对除了我所走的默认道路之外的任何其他生活方式都没有概念。

Months after most of my classmates had secured offers, a small consulting firm in Boston offered me a position. The opportunity was exciting, but it enabled me to ignore those emerging cracks. I had loosened my attachment to “Paul as a successful person,” but was still firmly located in that successful world.

几个月后，大部分同学都已经拿到了工作机会，而波士顿的一家小型咨询公司给了我一个职位。这个机会很令人兴奋，但它让我能够忽视那些正在出现的裂痕。我已经放松了对“保罗作为一个成功人士”的依赖，但仍然坚定地处于那个成功的世界中。

## Health Crisis

### 健康危机

The most interesting thing about the company I joined was the part-time consultants we hired to augment our projects, giving me exposure to the emerging gig economy. In addition to normal consulting projects, we recruited and staffed these consultants on short-term projects. These people, self-described “independent consultants,” were fascinating. Everyone had a unique story and way of working. Some worked three days per week. Others worked for six months and then took six months off to travel. Some people worked on side projects and others spent time with their families. This was the first time I had direct contact with anyone who did anything other than work full-time. I was intrigued.

我加入的公司最有趣的事情是我们雇佣的兼职顾问，他们为我们的项目提供支持，让我接触到了新兴的零工经济。除了正常的咨询项目，我们还招募和安排这些顾问参与短期项目。这些自称为“独立顾问”的人非常有趣。每个人都有自己的独特的工作方式。有些人每周工作三天，有些人工作六个月然后休假六个月去旅行。有些人从事副

业，有些人则与家人共度时光。这是我第一次直接接触到不只是全职工作的人。我对此感到很好奇。

I might have explored that kind of life sooner if I had not spent most of my 18 months at the company dealing with health issues. In my first weeks at the company, I developed a cold that never went away. Persistent fatigue took over my body and over a couple of months, I also started experiencing bouts of brain fog and physical pain throughout my body. My life became a blur. I went through the motions at work and spent the rest of my time going from doctor to doctor trying to figure out what was wrong.

如果我没有花去18个月的大部分时间处理健康问题，我可能早就探索了那种生活方式。在我刚开始工作的几周里，我得了一场一直没有好转的感冒。持续的疲劳占据了身体，几个月后，我还开始经历脑雾和全身的疼痛。我的生活变得模糊不清。我在工作中机械地应付，其余的时间则花在了医生和医生之间，试图找出问题所在。

I developed strategies to deal with exhaustion and pain and blocked off at least 10-12 hours every night for sleep. Somehow, I still showed up every day and did as well as I could. About five months after the issues began, I was working on a client project in Princeton, New Jersey, when the doctor called with what I thought was good news. Tests confirmed I had a complex case of Lyme disease and there was a treatment she thought could help.

我制定了应对疲劳和疼痛的策略，并每晚至少保留10-12个小时用于睡眠。不知怎么的，我仍然每天都出现并尽力做好工作。问题开始约五个月后，当我在新泽西州普林斯顿为一位客户项目工作时，医生打来了一个我认为好消息的电话。检测确认我患有一种复杂的莱姆病，并且有一种治疗方法她认为可能会有帮助。

I started taking the medicine and immediately found myself in more pain. Doctors call this a “herx” reaction, something that occurs from the die-off

of a bacterial infection, common for people dealing with Lyme disease. I spent eight hours at the client's office building an impressive spreadsheet, drenched in sweat, trying to handle the pain. I couldn't wait to get back to my hotel room.

我开始服用药物，立刻感到更加疼痛。医生称之为“赫克斯”反应，这是细菌感染死亡产物引起的，对于患有莱姆病的人来说很常见。我在客户办公室花了八个小时建立了一份令人印象深刻的电子表格，浑身大汗，努力忍受着疼痛。我迫不及待地想回到酒店房间。

That room might have been impressive in 1980, but by 2012 it existed only to house corporate types like me doing business somewhere along Route 1, a road lined with office parks, chain restaurants, and hotels. Randomly, the room had a large jacuzzi bathtub in the middle of the bedroom and I decided to use it to relieve my discomfort. As I sat in the tub, surrounded by the room's off-brown wallpaper, I felt helpless and afraid.

那个房间在1980年可能很令人印象深刻，但到了2012年，它只是为像我这样的企业人士提供住宿，他们在1号公路沿线的办公园区、连锁餐厅和酒店进行业务。房间里随意地放着一个大型按摩浴缸，我决定使用它来缓解我的不适。当我坐在浴缸里，被房间那种暗褐色的壁纸包围着，我感到无助和害怕。

I made it through the week and that weekend I called Peter, the head of our office, and told him everything. He clearly understood how scared I was because when I proposed taking a week off or working remotely, he suggested I take a month off, paid, to focus on recovery. I was worried about letting him and the client down, but he told me that those things were trivial. At the time, our firm was struggling and as the head of the office, he put his own job at stake by pausing an important client project. It was a moment of leadership that inspired me.

我度过了这一周，那个周末我给我们办公室的负责人彼得打了电话，把一切告诉了他。他清楚地理解我有多害怕，因为当我提出休假一周或远程工作时，他建议我休一个月的假，带薪，专注于康复。我担心

让他和客户失望，但他告诉我那些事情微不足道。当时，我们公司正面临困境，作为办公室负责人，他为了暂停一个重要的客户项目而冒着自己的工作风险。这是一个激励我的领导时刻。

Unfortunately, I didn't improve. One month became several and I went from paid to unpaid leave. Several treatments seemed to work before becoming ineffective. My doctor was just as confused, and I drifted into despair. Why me? When would this nightmare end?

不幸的是，我没有改善。一个月过去了，变成了几个月，我从有薪假期变成了无薪假期。几种治疗方法似乎起作用，但后来失效了。我的医生也感到困惑，我陷入了绝望。为什么是我？这场噩梦何时才会结束？

To process these questions, I wrote. I had written the occasional blog post over the years, but this was the first time writing became necessary. I was a typical guy who hid his emotions and writing gave me a way to share without dealing with the discomfort of doing so in person. I created a blog called "Lyme Sucks" to share my progress with concerned friends and family. Over time, writing the blog became an essential part of maintaining hope. It wasn't easy, and the following post shows how desperate I was for good news:

为了处理这些问题，我写了。多年来，我偶尔写一些博客文章，但这是我第一次写作变得必要。我是一个典型的男人，隐藏自己的情感，写作给了我一个分享的方式，而不必面对面地处理不适。我创建了一个名为“莱姆病很糟糕”的博客，与关心的朋友和家人分享我的进展。随着时间的推移，写博客成为保持希望的重要部分。这并不容易，下面的文章显示了我对好消息有多么渴望：

*January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - I've written a couple blog posts over the past couple months that I never posted because I deemed them too depressing or emotional. I decided to go ahead with this one because I threw some fun stuff in at the end. If anything, it will give you some insight into what people*



*go through when they get sick. A lot of what I struggle with is really irrational and wouldn't ever occur to me if I was healthy, but I am learning more every day how to cope with it all. I was ignorant of people suffering before I got sick last year, and I've definitely learned a lot. Hopefully I can be there for others in the future that are going through tough things in their life.*

2013年1月8日 - 过去几个月里，我写了几篇博客文章，但因为觉得它们太沮丧或情感化而没有发布。我决定继续发布这篇，因为最后我加入了一些有趣的内容。如果有什么，它会让你了解人们在生病时经历了什么。我所面临的很多问题实际上是不合理的，如果我身体健康的话，我根本不会想到这些，但我每天都在学习如何应对这一切。在我去年生病之前，我对人们的痛苦一无所知，而现在我肯定学到了很多。希望将来我能帮助那些正在经历生活中困难的人。

*For me, these blog posts are a good way to vent and figure out my own thoughts. Generally, I am in good spirits and happy, but every new day is tough to get through. I can't even really describe the panic that comes over me during moments of doubt and fear, but I've realized those are part of the journey. When I come up for air, I realize how great things are, how lucky I am and that things aren't so bad. I appreciate the friends and family that stick by me when things get ugly. I need all of your help to keep the good times rolling and helping me through those bad moments.*

对我来说，这些博客文章是发泄和理清自己思绪的好方法。总的来说，我心情很好，很开心，但每一天都很难熬过去。我甚至无法真正描述在怀疑和恐惧时我所感受到的恐慌，但我意识到这些都是旅程的一部分。当我重新振作起来时，我意识到事情是多么美好，我是多么幸运，事情并不那么糟糕。我感激那些在困境中一直支持我的朋友和家人。我需要你们所有人的帮助，让美好的时光继续下去，并帮助我度过那些困难的时刻。

By forcing my fingers to type sentences filled with optimism and hope, I was able to keep that part of me alive. This is the hardest thing about being sick. It isn't like a breakup when people tell you it will get better and you know they're right. When you're sick, you have to believe you will get

better even though your body is telling you you're crazy to think that. 通过强迫我的手指打出充满乐观和希望的句子，我能够保持内心的那一部分活着。这是生病最困难的地方。这不像分手那样，人们告诉你会好起来，你知道他们是对的。当你生病时，你必须相信自己会好起来，尽管你的身体告诉你这样想是疯了。

My version of “better” was to restart my career. I could start working again, hang out with my friends, do the things I liked, and pretend that nothing had ever happened. I shared this desire with my friend Jordan over pizza: “Just wait until I recover, then you can get to know how fun I really am.” His reply shocked me: “Paul, that’s crazy, I’ve only known you since you’ve been sick and you’re still pretty great.” I tried to change his mind, but I couldn’t.

我的“更好”的版本是重新开始我的职业生涯。我可以再次开始工作，和朋友们一起出去玩，做我喜欢的事情，假装什么都没有发生过。我在吃披萨的时候和我的朋友乔丹分享了这个愿望：“等我康复了，你就会知道我有多有趣。”他的回答让我震惊：“保罗，那太疯狂了，我只知道你生病后的样子，你还是很棒的。”我试图改变他的想法，但我做不到。

The truth was that my experience of the illness was changing me and there would be no going back. Jordan’s compassion gave me the courage to abandon my attachment to seeing myself as a “broken” sick person waiting to restart my life and realize that something new was likely emerging.

事实是，疾病给我带来的经历正在改变我，而且没有回头的可能。乔丹的同情给了我勇气，放弃把自己看作是一个“破碎”的病人，等待重新开始生活，意识到可能正在出现一些新的东西。

With a new doctor in Boston, I found better treatments that worked and after more than a year of struggling, I started to improve. I returned to work

part-time and eventually full-time, but I was not the same person. While I was sick, I had contemplated the question, “what would people think if I couldn’t work again?” and had been surprised by my answer. I would be okay. So much of my identity had been connected with being a high achiever. Straight A’s. Dean’s List. McKinsey. MIT. When I was sick, I would have traded every last credential for a single day of feeling okay. 在波士顿找到了一位新医生后，我找到了更好的治疗方法，经过一年多的努力，我的病情开始好转。我开始兼职工作，最终恢复到全职，但我已经不再是同一个人了。在我生病的时候，我曾思考过这个问题：“如果我再也不能工作了，人们会怎么想？”而我对这个问题的答案感到惊讶。我会没事的。我的很多身份认同都与成就高度相关。全优。院长名单。麦肯锡。麻省理工。当我生病的时候，我愿意用所有的证书来换取一天的好身体感觉。

As I started to feel better, a different kind of energy showed up in my life. Professors Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun have suggested that many people who face crises often experience “post-traumatic growth” and that this manifests as an “appreciation for life in general, more meaningful interpersonal relationships, an increased sense of personal strength, changed priorities, and a richer existential and spiritual life.”<sup>17</sup>

当我开始感觉好转时，我的生活中出现了一种不同的能量。Richard Tedeschi教授和Lawrence Calhoun教授指出，许多面临危机的人常常经历“创伤后成长”，表现为“对生活的整体欣赏，更有意义的人际关系，增强的个人力量感，改变的优先事项，以及更丰富的存在和精神生活。”

This is exactly what I experienced over the next few years. Through a series of unexpected steps, I was shifting towards embracing the pathless path. 这正是我在接下来的几年中经历的。通过一系列意想不到的步骤，我正在转向接纳无路可循的道路。

# 3

## Work, Work, Work 工作，工作，工作

Until I had to take a leave from my job during my health crisis, work had been a fact of life for me. I, like many others, had expected to work in a full-time job for most of my adult life. My illness helped me see the fragility of this worldview because now I understood that building a life around work was not so simple.

直到我在健康危机期间不得不请假，工作一直是我生活中的一部分。和许多人一样，我曾期望在成年大部分时间里从事全职工作。我的疾病让我看到了这种世界观的脆弱性，因为现在我明白了围绕工作建立生活并不那么简单。

My new perspective on work led me down a deep rabbit hole of questions and curiosities that led to me leaving my path and also led to this book. This is why before we move forward in my story, we need to take a step back.

我的对工作的新视角让我陷入了一连串的问题和好奇心，这导致我离开了原来的道路，也导致了这本书的诞生。因此，在我们继续讲述我的故事之前，我们需要退后一步。

If we are going to imagine a new way forward for our work and our lives, we need to understand where our current ideas from work come from and how they have changed.

如果我们要为我们的工作和生活设想一种新的前进方式，我们需要了解我们当前的工作观念来自何处以及它们如何发生变化。

# Where Do Work Beliefs Come From?

## 工作信念从何而来？

German historian Max Weber found that the “spirit of capitalism” struggled to take hold in societies that embraced a “traditionalist” mindset towards work.<sup>18</sup> In Weber’s view, a “traditionalist” view of work is one where people work as much as they need to maintain their current lifestyle, and once that aim is achieved, they stop working.

德国历史学家马克斯·韦伯发现，“资本主义精神”在接受“传统主义”工作观念的社会中难以扎根。根据韦伯的观点，传统主义的工作观念是指人们只工作到维持当前生活水平所需的程度，一旦达到这个目标，就停止工作。

In my travels, I have been surprised to find this perspective alive and well all over the world. In Mexico, I overheard a conversation about hiring locals: “You can’t pay people too much because they’ll stop working!” The idea that people might decide to work less is hard for some people to imagine. This person, a foreigner, likely grew up in a culture like mine where working in a formal job continuously throughout adulthood is what most people do.

在我的旅行中，我惊讶地发现这种观点在世界各地都很普遍。在墨西哥，我无意中听到了一段关于雇佣本地人的对话：“你不能付给他们太多钱，因为他们会停止工作！”对于有些人来说，人们可能决定工作更少的想法很难想象。这个人，一个外国人，很可能在一个像我一样的文化中长大，在那里，人们在成年后持续地从事正式工作。

The difference between working to meet one’s needs versus meeting expectations raises a question. When did this shift occur and why did it not

happen universally?

满足自己需求与满足期望之间的差异引发了一个问题。这种转变是何时发生的，为什么它没有普遍发生？

It might surprise you that in Greece, during the time of Aristotle more than 2,000 years ago, work was simply considered a necessary evil. The prime aim of life according to philosophers was “Eudaimonia,” which translates literally as “happiness,” but is better expressed as “flourishing.” In Aristotle’s words, “the more contemplation, the more happiness there is in a life.” Contemplating one’s place in the universe was seen as one of the most worthwhile things to do and at minimum, more important than the “money-making life,” which Aristotle described as “something quite contrary to nature...for it is merely useful as a means to something else.”<sup>19</sup>

在希腊，可能会让你惊讶的是，在2000多年前的亚里士多德时代，工作只被视为一种必要的邪恶。哲学家们认为生活的主要目标是“幸福”，直译为“Eudaimonia”，但更好地表达为“繁荣”。用亚里士多德的话来说，“越多的思考，生活中就越多的幸福。”思考自己在宇宙中的位置被视为最值得做的事情之一，至少比“赚钱的生活”更重要，亚里士多德将赚钱的生活描述为“与自然完全相反的东西...因为它仅仅作为达到其他目的的手段而有用。”

For the next 1,500 years, most of the world either remained skeptical of work or saw it simply as a way to meet basic needs. The latter idea was strengthened by the Catholic conception of work.

在接下来的1500年里，世界上大部分地区要么对工作持怀疑态度，要么将其仅视为满足基本需求的一种方式。后者的观念得到了天主教对工作的理解的加强。

Genesis, the first book of the Christian Old Testament, mentions work as God is condemning Adam for eating fruit from the Tree of Life. God tells

him that only “through painful toil” will Adam continue to eat fruit and only “by the sweat of your brow will you eat your food until you return to the ground.” Later, in the New Testament, St. Paul warns against idleness more directly: “He who shall not work shall not eat.” In regard to those who refuse, he continues: “do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed.”<sup>20</sup>

《创世纪》是基督教旧约的第一卷书，其中提到上帝因亚当吃了生命树上的果子而谴责他。上帝告诉他，只有“通过痛苦的劳动”，亚当才能继续吃果子，只有“靠着你的汗水，你才能吃饭，直到你归于尘土。”后来，在新约中，圣保罗更直接地警告不要懒惰：“不劳动的人不得吃饭。”对于那些拒绝工作的人，他继续说：“不要与他们交往，以便他们感到羞愧。”

The lesson is clear: work is a duty. However, it was still in a limited sense. We see this articulated by 13<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic priest Thomas Aquinas, as he argues “labor is only necessary ‘naturali ratione’ [by natural reason] for the maintenance of individual and community.”<sup>21</sup> People should be expected to work, but the reason is to meet the needs of our families and communities.

这个教训很明确：工作是一种责任。然而，这仅仅是在有限的意义上。我们可以看到这一点在13世纪的天主教神父托马斯·阿奎那所表达的观点中，他认为“劳动只是出于‘自然理性’的需要，为了个人和社区的生活维持。”人们应该期望工作，但原因是为了满足我们家庭和社区的需求。

In the 1500s, Martin Luther and John Calvin expanded this definition as part of what is now known as the Protestant Reformation. They had grown disappointed in religious leaders and attacked them for living idly in monasteries. Their angle of attack was one’s relationship to work. Max Weber summarizes the shift, saying that the way to honor God, “was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfillment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in

the world. That was his calling.”<sup>22</sup>

在16世纪，马丁·路德和约翰·加尔文扩展了这个定义，作为现在被称为新教改革的一部分。他们对宗教领袖感到失望，并指责他们在修道院里懒散地生活。他们的攻击角度是一个人与工作的关系。马克斯·韦伯总结了这种转变，说要尊重上帝，“不是通过修道院的禁欲主义来超越世俗道德，而是通过履行个人在世界中所承担的义务。那就是他的使命。”

With the introduction of a “calling,” Luther and then Calvin both wanted to undermine the authority of the Catholic Church to govern an individual’s relationship with God. Luther took issue with the Church’s system of “indulgences,” in which people paid the Church to absolve them of their sins. He thought individuals should be able to have their own relationship with God. Calvin paired Luther’s increase in individual freedom with the idea that everyone is predestined to serve God through a specific calling. Working hard in the area of one’s calling determines the status of a person’s relationship with God.

随着“呼召”的引入，路德和加尔文都希望削弱天主教会对个人与上帝关系的管理权。路德对教会的“赎罪”制度有意见，即人们向教会支付费用以获得赦免。他认为个人应该能够与上帝建立自己的关系。加尔文将路德增加的个人自由与每个人预定为通过特定的呼召事奉上帝的观念相结合。在自己呼召的领域努力工作决定了一个人与上帝关系的地位。

In the 1940s, philosopher Erich Fromm summarized this transformation, saying, “in the Northern European countries, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, man developed an obsessional craving to work which had been lacking in a free man before that period.”<sup>23</sup> Following the Reformation, then, work as an end in itself was no longer a crazy idea. People traded one master, the Catholic Church, for another, their vocation. But along with greater freedom and self-determination came the anxiety and insecurity of never really knowing if you were working hard enough or doing the right thing. The



Church's expectations had always provided a way to measure "goodness," and for many, these benchmarks no longer applied.

在1940年代，哲学家埃里希·弗洛姆总结了这种转变，他说：“在北欧国家，从16世纪开始，人们对工作产生了一种病态的渴望，而这种渴望在此之前的自由人身上是缺乏的。”随着宗教改革的进行，工作本身成为了一个不再疯狂的想法。人们将一个主人，天主教会，换成了另一个主人，他们的职业。但是，随着更大的自由和自主权，也带来了焦虑和不安，因为你永远不知道自己是否工作足够努力或者做对了事情。教会的期望一直是衡量“善良”的标准，而对许多人来说，这些标准已经不再适用。

Over the last 500 years, this freedom has taken us in many different directions, yet remnants of the Catholic and Protestant conceptions of work are still with us. When entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk tells us in his book *Crush It* to “wake up before everybody else and work into the night. Hustle,” he accepts both the duty of work and absolute commitment to work as integral to life.<sup>24</sup> Oprah Winfrey channels a modern spin on Calvin's calling, arguing that “each of us has a personal calling.” To her, the “best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you.”<sup>25</sup>

在过去的500年里，这种自由带领我们走向了許多不同的方向，然而天主教和新教关于工作的观念的痕迹仍然存在。当企业家加里·维纳丘克在他的书《压垮它》中告诉我们“比其他人早起并工作到深夜。努力工作”，他接受了工作的责任和对工作的绝对承诺作为生活的一部分。奥普拉·温弗瑞则以现代方式诠释了加尔文的使命，她认为“我们每个人都有自己的使命。”对她来说，“成功的最佳方式是发现自己喜欢的事情，然后找到一种方式以服务的形式提供给他人，并努力工作，同时也允许宇宙的能量引导你。”

These Catholic and Protestant perspectives on work are deeply embedded in the modern default path view of work that spans the globe but has become detached from the time periods and traditions from which they emerged. Religious scholars point out that the Protestant “work ethic” is more than a blind obsession with work. It is paired with thrift, self-discipline, and humility. Yet as fewer people look to religion for wisdom on how to navigate life, they are only left with the watered-down version of these views.

这些天主教和新教对工作的观点深深融入了现代对工作的默认路径观念，这种观念遍布全球，但已经脱离了它们产生的时期和传统。宗教学者指出，新教的“工作伦理”不仅仅是对工作的盲目迷恋，它还与节俭、自律和谦逊相结合。然而，随着越来越少的人寻求宗教的智慧来引导生活，他们只剩下了这些观点的淡化版本。

In Anne Helen Peterson’s widely read essay “How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation,” she voiced her confusion with work as she wrote that she had “...internalized the idea that I should be working all the time. Why have I internalized that idea? Because everything and everyone in my life has reinforced it – explicitly and implicitly – since I was young.”<sup>26</sup>

在安妮·海伦·彼得森广为流传的文章《千禧一代如何成为“燃尽一代”》中，她表达了对工作的困惑，写道她“内化了我应该一直工作的观念。为什么我会内化这个观念？因为自从我年轻时，我的生活中的一切和每个人都在明示或暗示地强化了这个观念。”

Peterson’s experience is similar to my own. As I was growing up, work was such an obvious goal of life that I never paused for a moment to question it. Adults talked about work all the time and constantly asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. Schools reinforced this perspective and we learned to study hard to earn good grades to get a good job. As I grew older, I was convinced that a good career was the most important thing in life. Later, I was shocked to learn that for most of human history, this was not the case.

彼得森的经历与我自己的相似。在我成长的过程中，工作是如此明显的人生目标，以至于我从未停下来质疑过。成年人们一直谈论工作，并不断问我长大后想做什么。学校加强了这种观点，我们学会了努力学习以获得好成绩，从而得到一份好工作。随着我年龄的增长，我确信一个好的职业是生活中最重要的事情。后来，我震惊地发现，在人类历史的大部分时间里，情况并非如此。

## It Was an Anomaly! 这是一个异常现象！

The educated, hardworking masses are still doing what they're told, but they're no longer getting what they deserve. – *Seth Godin*

受过教育、勤奋的群众仍然按照指示行事，但他们不再得到应得的回报。

The modern version of the default path was born after World War II, in a period of unprecedented economic growth. This shift in thinking was led by the United States which, due to its financial and industrial advantages, achieved a period of success now known as the “long boom” during which annual GDP growth rates of at least four to five percent were the norm. 默认路径的现代版本诞生于二战后，这是一个前所未有的经济增长时期。这种思维转变由美国主导，由于其财政和工业优势，在这个被称为“长期繁荣”的时期，年度GDP增长率至少达到四到五个百分点成为常态。

This economy generated full-time jobs with good incomes, benefits, and career opportunities, enabling a broad middle class to reach new levels of wealth and material comfort. Professor Raj Chetty at Harvard found that nine out of ten people born right after World War II did better economically than their parents.<sup>[27](#)</sup> Over time people came to expect constant advancement in their lives. John Steinbeck captured the sentiment in his book *America*

and Americans in 1966:

这个经济创造了收入丰厚、福利良好、职业机会多样的全职工作，使广大中产阶级达到了新的财富和物质舒适水平。哈佛大学的拉吉·切蒂教授发现，二战后出生的十个人中有九个在经济上比他们的父母更好。随着时间的推移，人们开始期望生活中的不断进步。约翰·斯坦贝克在他的1966年的书《美国 and 美国人》中捕捉到了这种情绪。

No longer was it even acceptable that the child should be like his parents and live as they did; he must be better, live better, know more, dress more richly, and if possible, change from father's trade to a profession. This dream became touchingly national.<sup>28</sup>

不再接受孩子像父母一样生活的事实，他必须更好，生活得更好，知道更多，穿得更富裕，如果可能的话，还要从父亲的行业转行为一个职业。这个梦想变得感人地成为全国性的。

The baby boomer generation was born in the middle of this period, came of age at the tail end of it, and rose to leadership in global institutions by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the time I graduated from college in 2007, the idea that life should be built around a good corporate job was so sacred that almost everyone had forgotten that only 100 years earlier most people worked on farms.

婴儿潮一代出生在这一时期的中期，成年于其尾声，并在20世纪末在全球机构中崛起为领导者。到我在2007年大学毕业时，围绕着稳定的公司工作来构建生活的观念已经如此神圣，以至于几乎每个人都忘记了仅仅100年前大多数人都在农场工作。

Peter Thiel, born right after the baby boom generation, reflected on this mentality in his book *Zero to One*, saying, "Since tracked careers worked for them [the baby boomers], they can't imagine that they won't work for their kids, too."<sup>29</sup>

彼得·蒂尔在他的书《从零到一》中反思了婴儿潮一代之后出生的人们的这种心态，他说：“因为追踪职业对他们（婴儿潮一代）起作用，所以他们无法想象这对他们的孩子也不起作用。”

Asset manager, writer, and baby boomer Jim O'Shaughnessy argues that this approach to life is flawed and his generation's mistake was to assume that the paths that worked for them would work forever:

资产管理人、作家和婴儿潮一代的吉姆·奥肖内西认为，这种生活方式是有缺陷的，他们这一代的错误在于假设适用于他们的道路将永远有效

We made a mistake and by that, I mean my generation and my parents' generation. The mistake we made was thinking that the period from 1946 to 1980 was the norm. No, it was not! **It was the anomaly!** We had just wiped out the manufacturing capabilities of anyone who could challenge us. So, the idea that you had that job with the gold watch, and you could work there for your entire career and raise a family of four and all of that, that was an anomaly.<sup>30</sup>

我们犯了一个错误，我指的是我这一代和我父母那一代。我们犯的错误是认为1946年到1980年的时期是正常的。不，不是！那是异常情况！我们刚刚消灭了任何可能挑战我们的制造能力。所以，你拥有那份工作，可以获得金表，可以在那里工作一辈子，养活一个四口之家，所有这些，那是个例。

During that stretch of time, it would have been a mistake to opt-out of the default path because as Thiel points out, “whether you were born in 1945 or 1950 or 1955, things got better every year for the first 18 years of your life, and it had nothing to do with you.”<sup>31</sup>

在那段时间里，选择不走默认的道路是一个错误，因为正如Thiel指出的那样，“无论你是在1945年、1950年还是1955年出生，你的前18年生活每年都会变得更好，而这与你无关。”

By the time I graduated from college many decades later, I assumed that the path to a good life was through a steady career path at a big company. Now I know that what I assumed was an outcome of a certain way of working was instead accidental meaning. The paths that enabled people to thrive

were the result of unique economic and historical circumstances and as I entered the workforce, these circumstances were no longer.

几十年后，当我从大学毕业时，我认为通往美好生活的道路是通过在大公司稳定的职业生涯。现在我知道，我所假设的结果是一种特定工作方式的意外含义。使人们能够蓬勃发展的路径是独特的经济和历史环境的结果，而当我进入职场时，这些环境已经不再存在。

A look at the company where my father worked for 41 years demonstrates this point. During the first 20 years of his career, in the 1980s and 1990s, the company's sales grew on average by more than 14 percent per year. Over the next 21 years, the growth rate slowed to a little more than four percent per year. My father hadn't joined a big, boring company when he was young; instead, he joined a rocket ship, something closer to the fast-growing tech startups of the 2000s.

看看我父亲工作了41年的公司就能证明这一点。在他职业生涯的前20年，也就是在80年代和90年代，公司的销售额平均每年增长超过14%。在接下来的21年里，增长率放缓到每年略高于4%。当年我父亲年轻时并没有加入一家大而无聊的公司；相反，他加入了一艘火箭船，更接近于2000年代快速增长的科技初创公司。

It wasn't until my early 30s that I started to suspect something was amiss. Like many of the people I knew, I was single, renting, and living and working in a city away from my hometown. Those who were starting families were overwhelmed with the costs of daycare, healthcare, and housing. We entered adulthood thinking we could copy-and-paste what our parents had done, but it was more complicated than that. Factors that support meaningful lives, like economic growth across all sectors, a young population, two-parent households, generous pensions, and company loyalty were anomalies of the past, as O'Shaughnessy points out.

直到我30多岁的时候，我开始怀疑有些事情不对劲。和我认识的很多人一样，我单身，租房，生活和工作在离家乡很远的城市。那些开始组建家庭的人被托儿所、医疗保健和住房的费用压得喘不过气来。我

们进入成年后以为可以照搬我们的父母所做的，但事情比那更加复杂。像经济各个领域的增长、年轻人口、双亲家庭、丰厚的养老金和公司忠诚度这样支持有意义生活的因素，正如O'Shaughnessy所指出的，已经成为过去的异常情况。

Starting my career, I didn't understand any of this. Plus, I was too busy getting sucked into a new idea. That you didn't simply work to live, but that it should be one of the most important things in your life.

开始我的职业生涯时，我对这一切一无所知。而且，我太忙于被一种新的想法吸引。那就是你不仅仅为了生活而工作，而是工作应该是你生活中最重要的事情之一。

## The Meaningful Work Trap

### 有意义的工作陷阱

My generation entered the workforce with high expectations. We didn't want to see work merely as an obligation, we also wanted it to be meaningful and fulfilling. We wanted the modern version of the “calling” that Oprah talked about.

我的一代人进入职场时期抱着很高的期望。我们不希望把工作仅仅看作是一种义务，我们还希望它有意义且令人满足。我们想要奥普拉所谈到的现代版的“使命感”。

This idea gained popularity in the late 1990s. In “Jobs, Careers, and Callings,” a famous study by Yale professor Amy Wrzesniewski and others, people were asked if they defined their work as a job, career, or a calling. People who defined their work as a calling saw their work as “inseparable from their life” and worked, “not for financial gain or career advancement, but instead for the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual.” The researchers boldly concluded that if people could find work they saw as



a calling it would improve their “life, health, and job satisfaction.”<sup>32</sup>

这个想法在1990年代末开始流行起来。在耶鲁大学教授艾米·雷斯涅夫斯基和其他人的著名研究《工作、职业和使命》中，人们被问及他们是否将自己的工作定义为工作、职业或使命。将工作定义为使命的人认为他们的工作与生活“密不可分”，他们工作“不是为了经济利益或职业发展，而是为了个人从事这项工作所带来的满足感。”研究人员大胆地得出结论，如果人们能找到他们视为使命的工作，将会改善他们的“生活、健康和工作满意度。”

While Calvin argued that callings were predestined, Wrzesniewski and her co-writers were offering a new path to fulfillment and all it required was finding a better job or even simpler, changing our mindset toward work. This idea spread and many people, including myself, started to search for our own modern callings.

虽然卡尔文主张职业是命中注定的，但Wrzesniewski和她的合著者提供了一条通向满足的新路径，而这只需要找到一份更好的工作，甚至更简单的是改变我们对工作的心态。这个想法传播开来，许多人，包括我自己，开始寻找我们自己的现代职业。

In my first year at GE, in response to complaints from young employees, the company started building career pages on social media and investing in efforts to rebrand itself to potential employees. It wanted to present itself as a “cool” place for young people to build a career. One big reason companies like GE were willing to start making changes was the emerging tech industry in California. The tech industry was offering benefits that seemed too good to be true and this shift was led by Google, which gained attention by debuting on the 2007 Best Places to Work list at #1.

我在GE的第一年，为了回应年轻员工的抱怨，公司开始在社交媒体上建立职业页面，并投资于重新塑造自己的品牌形象以吸引潜在员工。它希望将自己呈现为年轻人建立职业的“酷”地方。像GE这样的公司愿意开始进行改变的一个重要原因是加利福尼亚州新兴的科技行



业。科技行业提供的福利看起来好得难以置信，而这一转变是由谷歌引领的，谷歌在2007年的“最佳工作场所”榜单上名列第一，引起了人们的关注。

I remember reading the description and being envious of the benefits they offered:

我记得阅读描述时对他们提供的福利感到羡慕

At Google you can do your laundry; drop off your dry cleaning; get an oil change, then have your car washed; work out in the gym; attend subsidized exercise classes; get a massage; study Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish, and French; and ask a personal concierge to arrange dinner reservations. Naturally you can get haircuts onsite. Want to buy a hybrid car? The company will give you \$5,000 toward that environmentally friendly end.<sup>33</sup>

在谷歌，你可以洗衣服；送干洗；换机油，然后洗车；在健身房锻炼；参加补贴的运动课程；享受按摩；学习普通话、日语、西班牙语和法语；并请个人礼宾服务安排晚餐预订。当然，你也可以在现场理发。想买混合动力汽车吗？公司将为你提供5000美元的环保补贴。

Google had made my list of prestigious companies, but it stood out from the rest. It was the only one at the time that promised that work could be fun. When I started at GE, my only understanding of a good relationship with work was “work-life balance,” a concept popular in the early 2000s. While the term is still used today, it feels like it belongs to another era.

谷歌已经成为我名单上的知名公司，但它与其他公司不同。当时，它是唯一一个承诺工作可以很有趣的公司。当我在通用电气公司开始工作时，我对与工作的良好关系的理解仅限于“工作与生活的平衡”，这是在2000年代初流行的概念。虽然这个术语今天仍在使用，但感觉它属于另一个时代。

In the 2010s the expectation that work should be meaningful became a default expectation of college graduates. Young people no longer wanted simply to bide their time at a job but wanted a job with passion, purpose, and fun. By 2019, a survey of workers in the United States and Canada found that more than offering good pay and benefits, 78% of people thought “employers have a responsibility to keep employees mentally and physically well.”<sup>34</sup>

在2010年代，工作应该有意义的期望成为大学毕业生的默认期望。年轻人不再只是想在工作中消磨时间，而是希望找到一份充满激情、有目标和有趣的工作。到2019年，一项对美国 and 加拿大工人的调查发现，超过78%的人认为“雇主有责任保持员工的身心健康”，而不仅仅是提供良好的薪酬和福利。

Companies do their best to keep up with these growing expectations, which can be easily observed by scanning the career pages of well-known companies. This is what I did in early 2021, compiled a list of recruiting slogans from over 100 companies.<sup>35</sup> Some examples:

公司尽力满足这些不断增长的期望，这一点可以通过浏览知名公司的招聘页面很容易地观察到。这就是我在2021年初所做的，我整理了来自100多家公司的招聘口号的列表。一些例子：

- Facebook: “Do the most meaningful work of your life”  
Facebook：“做你一生中最有意义的工作”
- McKinsey: “Have a career that fits your calling”  
麦肯锡：拥有适合你使命的职业
- Rope & Gray: “Write your own career story”  
罗普与格雷：“书写你自己的职业故事”
- Phillip Morris: “Change the world”  
菲利普·莫里斯：“改变世界”
- Comcast: “Create the future with us”  
康卡斯特：“与我们一起创造未来”
- Microsoft: “Do what you love”  
微软：“做你热爱的事情”

- Sears: “Jobs that transform your career”  
西尔斯：“改变你职业生涯的工作”
- Citibank: “Discover your next adventure”  
花旗银行：“发现你的下一个冒险”

When I graduated in 2007, Google’s promise to make work fun was the exception. Now every company is trying to be like Google. It’s high stakes when an entire generation of workers not only thinks that work should be the most important thing in their lives, but also that it should enable them to thrive in all aspects of their life.

当我在2007年毕业时，谷歌让工作变得有趣的承诺是个例外。现在每家公司都在努力像谷歌一样。对于整个工作一代来说，这是一个高风险的时刻，他们不仅认为工作应该是他们生活中最重要的事情，而且还应该让他们在生活的各个方面都能茁壮成长。

A study from the University of Sussex by professors Bailey and Madden should cast doubts on whether these expectations can be met. In their research, they did in-depth interviews with 135 individuals in 10 different professions about the most meaningful moments in their jobs. Their conclusion: “helping people find meaning in their work is complex and profound, going far beyond the relative superficialities of satisfaction or engagement.” Their research found that instead of joy, meaningful experiences were “associated with mixed, uncomfortable, or even painful thoughts and feelings, not just a sense of unalloyed joy and happiness.”<sup>36</sup>

来自苏塞克斯大学的贝利和麦登教授的一项研究可能会对是否能实现这些期望产生怀疑。在他们的研究中，他们对10个不同职业的135名个体进行了深入访谈，询问了他们工作中最有意义的时刻。他们的结论是：“帮助人们在工作中找到意义是复杂而深刻的，远远超出了满足或参与的相对表面。”他们的研究发现，有意义的经历与“混合、不舒服甚至痛苦思想和感受有关，而不仅仅是纯粹的喜悦和幸福感。”

Despite thinking I wanted fun and joy at work for most of my career, when I reflect on the most meaningful moments of my career, they involve overcoming obstacles, or getting through setbacks to complete something I didn't think I could.

尽管在我职业生涯的大部分时间里，我认为我想要在工作中寻找乐趣和快乐，但当我回想起职业生涯中最有意义的时刻时，它们都涉及克服障碍或克服挫折，完成我原本认为自己无法完成的事情。

This is much different than what most companies are promising and increasingly, what many people have come to expect out of work.  
这与大多数公司所承诺的以及越来越多人对工作的期望有很大的不同。

## Wage-based Society 工资制社会

Sociologist André Gorz spent the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> writing about the role of work in society. He argued that many countries had evolved into places where the primary way one gained “membership” in society was through formal work. He called these places “wage-based societies” where the central ethic was, “never mind what work you do, what counts is having a job.”<sup>[37](#)</sup>

社会学家安德烈·戈尔茨在20世纪后半叶写了很多关于工作在社会中的角色的文章。他认为许多国家已经演变成了通过正式工作获得“社会成员资格”的地方。他称这些地方为“以工资为基础的社会”，其中的核心伦理是“不管你做什么工作，重要的是有一份工作”。

A powerful example of this kind of ethic can be seen when people refer to a parent who decides to become a full-time caretaker of their children as someone that “decides to stay home.” This way of thinking leads to an

oversimplification of how societies operate, assumptions on how people should live their lives, and ignorance of the realities and downsides of the “regular” way of working. Many people are surprised to find out that in the United States, one of the strongest “wage-based societies” in the world, only about 40% of adult Americans, or 106 million people, have jobs where they work more than 35 hours per week.<sup>38</sup>

这种伦理观的一个有力例证是当人们称一个决定成为孩子的全职照顾者的父母为“决定呆在家里的人”。这种思维方式导致对社会运作的过度简化，对人们应该如何生活的假设，以及对“常规”工作方式的现实和不利因素的无知。许多人惊讶地发现，在世界上最强大的“以工资为基础的社会”之一的美国，只有约40%的成年美国人，即1.06亿人，有超过35小时工作时间的的工作。

Seeing the job as a central element of a good life and employment rates as a metric of a successful society was not a common assumption until after World War II. In 1946, the United States formalized this by passing the Full Employment Act “to promote maximum employment.”<sup>39</sup>

将工作视为美好生活的核心要素，将就业率视为成功社会的衡量标准，直到二战后才成为一种普遍的假设。1946年，美国通过《全面就业法案》正式确立了这一观点，旨在“促进最大就业”。

This created a clear metric that everyone could use to judge a government’s performance and today, political leaders do whatever possible to protect or create jobs. One striking example is from 2009 when U.S. President Barack Obama explicitly mentioned jobs as the reason why he did not want to pursue a more ambitious healthcare policy:

这创造了一个清晰的标准，每个人都可以用来评判政府的表现，如今，政治领导人尽一切可能保护或创造就业机会。一个引人注目的例子是2009年美国奥巴马明确提到就业是他不愿追求更雄心勃勃的医疗政策的原因。

Everybody who supports single-payer healthcare says, ‘Look at all this money we would be saving from insurance and paperwork.’ That represents 1 million, 2 million, 3 million jobs of people who are working at Blue Cross Blue Shield or Kaiser or other places. What are we doing with them? Where are we employing them?<sup>40</sup>

每个支持单一支付医疗保健的人都说：“看看我们将从保险和文书工作中节省下来的钱。”这代表着100万、200万、300万个工作岗位，这些人在蓝十字蓝盾或凯泽等地工作。我们对他们做什么？我们在哪里雇佣他们？

Regardless of whether single-payer healthcare would have improved lives or not, this decision shows that, at least in the United States, government leaders prefer to create or save jobs rather than doing anything that risks losing them. For Obama, it was also a smart decision, as the healthcare sector was one of the few areas that saw continued job growth after the 2008 recession, and the good “jobs numbers” were a key reason Obama was able to win re-election.

无论单一支付者医疗保健是否会改善生活，这个决定表明，至少在美国，政府领导人更喜欢创造或保住工作岗位，而不愿冒失去工作岗位的风险。对于奥巴马来说，这也是一个明智的决定，因为在2008年的经济衰退之后，医疗保健行业是少数几个仍然保持就业增长的领域，而良好的“就业数据”是奥巴马能够成功连任的关键原因之一。

For most people, having a job is better than not having a job, and the costs of unemployment are well documented in academic studies. Researchers at the University of Stirling found that people who are unemployed can become less friendly, less hard-working, and less open to new experiences.<sup>41</sup> Another study showed that although unemployed men have much more free time, they volunteer less often than similarly employed men.<sup>42</sup>

对于大多数人来说，有一份工作比没有工作要好，失业的成本在学术研究中已有充分记录。斯特灵大学的研究人员发现，失业的人可能变得不那么友好、不那么努力工作，也不那么愿意接受新的经历。另一

项研究显示，尽管失业的男性有更多的空闲时间，但他们比同样有工作的男性更少参与志愿活动。

Based on this analysis, you could conclude that jobs are good, full stop. Unfortunately, this way of thinking is challenged by the dramatic shifts in the ways people are working. In 2016, economists Lawrence Katz and Alan Kreuger highlighted a group of 30 million people categorized by the U.S. government as “alternative” or “nontraditional” workers and showed that they were responsible for nearly all of U.S. job growth from 2005 to 2015, adding nearly 10 million jobs.<sup>43</sup>

基于这个分析，你可以得出结论，工作是好的，就这样。不幸的是，这种思维方式受到人们工作方式的巨大变化的挑战。2016年，经济学家劳伦斯·卡茨和艾伦·克鲁格指出，美国政府将3000万人归类为“替代”或“非传统”工作者，并显示他们几乎负责了2005年至2015年间美国就业增长的全部，新增了近1000万个工作岗位。

McKinsey & Company found similar trends across Europe and estimated that more than 100 million people across the United States and Europe are now “nontraditional” employees. McKinsey compared these workers to “traditional” employees and found that they were as satisfied or more satisfied across fifteen different work characteristics, such as income, independence, hours, flexibility, creativity, and even recognition.<sup>44</sup> Though this group is quite large, it doesn’t have a cohesive voice, and people are often surprised to find that most of these “alternative” workers are quite happy.

麦肯锡公司发现，在欧洲各地也存在类似的趋势，并估计美国和欧洲共有超过1亿人是“非传统”雇员。麦肯锡将这些工人与“传统”雇员进行了比较，并发现他们在收入、独立性、工作时间、灵活性、创造力甚至认可等十五个不同的工作特征上与后者一样或更为满意。尽管这个群体规模相当大，但他们没有一个统一的声音，人们经常会惊讶地发现大多数这些“替代性”工人非常满意。



In addition to ignoring this new way of working, we also ignore the enormous amount of wasted energy and effort that is a part of many jobs. In his book *Bullshit Jobs*, David Graeber detailed stories of people working in jobs where they were personally convinced that nothing they did was of value. However, if you find yourself in such a job, it is rarely worthwhile to point this out to other people.

除了忽视这种新的工作方式，我们还忽视了许多工作中浪费的巨大能量和努力。在大卫·格雷伯的书《胡说八道的工作》中，他详细讲述了人们在工作中的故事，他们个人确信自己所做的一切都没有价值。然而，如果你发现自己在这样的工作中，向其他人指出这一点很少是值得的。

My first experience with this was as an intern at a large corporation after my first year of college. A few weeks in, the Vice President told me he had a special project for me. He wanted me to spend the next couple of weeks going through boxes of documents. Rumor had it that one of the boxes contained a record of the repair work the company performed on one of Amelia Earhart's planes. At first, it felt cool to be working on this project for one of the leaders of the organization, but the excitement quickly faded as my fingers dried out several days into my search through the boxes.

我在大学一年级结束后作为实习生在一家大公司的第一次经历是这样的。几周后，副总裁告诉我他有一个特殊的项目要交给我。他希望我花几个星期的时间翻阅一些文件盒。传闻说其中一个盒子里有公司对艾米莉亚·埃尔哈特的飞机进行维修的记录。起初，能为组织的领导之一参与这个项目感觉很酷，但随着我在文件盒中搜索几天后，兴奋很快消失了，我的手指也变得干燥起来。

When I tried to talk about the incredible amount of time I was wasting on this project, people quickly redirected my inquiry, saying, "It may suck, but you're getting something to put on your resume!" or "Everyone has to



work, what are you supposed to do?” or “You should be grateful for being paid.” No one wanted to grapple with this fundamental question: “Why the hell are so many grown adults spending their time on obviously pointless tasks?”

当我试图谈论我在这个项目上浪费的大量时间时，人们迅速转移了我的询问，说：“可能很糟糕，但你至少有东西可以放在简历上！”或者“每个人都得工作，你应该做什么呢？”或者“你应该感激有人付你钱。”没有人愿意去探讨这个根本问题：“为什么这么多成年人把时间浪费在明显毫无意义的任务上？”

During my second internship at the same company in a different department, I shared a cubicle with a man in his 50s who spent five to six hours a day surfing the web and printing out articles about celebrities. One of the other interns brought a pillow and took daily naps in an abandoned cubicle in another area of the building. I had studied advanced math and physics thinking I would apply those skills, but instead I spent my summers doing simple math on Excel spreadsheets. The notion of spending the rest of my life doing mindless busywork horrified me and motivated me to keep searching for better options. It's also what drove me to try to break into strategy consulting where I wouldn't have to spend so much time proving I was willing to do things I didn't believe in.

在同一家公司的不同部门进行第二次实习期间，我与一个50多岁的男人共用一个小隔间，他每天花五到六个小时上网浏览并打印有关名人的文章。另一个实习生带了一个枕头，在大楼的另一个区域的一个废弃的小隔间里每天午睡。我曾经学习过高级数学和物理，以为我会运用这些技能，但实际上我在夏天里只是在Excel电子表格上做简单的数学运算。想到自己余生都要做毫无意义的繁忙工作，我感到恐惧，并激励我继续寻找更好的选择。这也是我努力进入战略咨询领域的动力，我不想花太多时间去证明我愿意做我不相信的事情。

Yet at McKinsey, proving your commitment to work came in a different flavor. The work was much more interesting, but it seemed that people were

in an endless search to do more. In my first week on the job, my manager told me that I was expected to work 40–50 hours a week and I took her at her word. Yet most of my colleagues worked 50 to 60 hours a week or more.

然而，在麦肯锡，证明你对工作的承诺有不同的方式。工作更有趣，但似乎人们一直在不断寻求更多。在我上班的第一周，我的经理告诉我，我应该每周工作40-50个小时，我相信了她的话。然而，大多数同事每周工作50到60个小时甚至更多。

My colleagues always laughed when I left the office at 5:30. “Paul can get away with it, he’s just different,” they would say. I thought I was simply more efficient and worried a little less. The reality was that I never bought into the wage-based mentality and could never fully commit to placing work at the center of my life.

我的同事们总是在我下午5:30离开办公室时笑我。“保罗可以这样做，他就是不同”，他们会说。我认为我只是更高效一些，少一点担忧。事实上，我从未认同以工资为基础的心态，也无法完全将工作置于生活的中心。

Eventually, something would have to break.  
最终，某些事情必定会崩溃。

# 4

## Awakening 觉醒

The ultimate way you and I get lucky is if you have some success early in life, you get to find out early it doesn't mean anything. – *David Foster Wallace*

你和我最终能够幸运的方式是，如果你在生活的早期取得了一些成功，你会早早地发现这并不意味着什么。 - 大卫·福斯特·华莱士

I had no master plan to quit my job. Even now, several years after doing so, when people ask about my journey, I'm more confused than you might expect. Choosing to leave full-time work was not a single bold decision but a slow and steady awakening that the path I was on was not my path.

我没有计划辞职。即使现在，几年过去了，当人们问起我的旅程时，我比你们预期的更困惑。选择离开全职工作并不是一个大胆的决定，而是一个缓慢而稳定的觉醒，意识到我所走的道路并不是我的道路。

It's tempting to tell a simpler story. People want to hear about bold acts of courage, not years of feeling lost. On my way toward leaving my job, I never had a clear picture of my next step. Experiencing this makes it easy to spot these kinds of phases in other people's stories and I've done my best to highlight them in my writing and podcast.

诱人的是讲一个简单的故事。人们想听到勇敢的壮举，而不是多年的迷茫。在我离职的过程中，我从来没有清晰地看到下一步。经历过这一点，很容易在别人的故事中发现这些阶段，我尽力在我的写作和播客中突出它们。

My conclusion from this is simple: beyond the headlines of dramatic life changes are almost always longer, slower, and more interesting journeys. 我的结论很简单：在戏剧性的生活变化背后，几乎总是有更长、更慢、更有趣的旅程。

## Pebble in My Shoe 我的鞋里的鹅卵石

As I recovered from my health challenges, I entered a phase of restlessness typical of anyone that eventually makes a life change.

当我从健康问题中恢复过来后，我进入了一个典型的焦躁不安阶段，这对于任何最终做出生活改变的人来说都是正常的。

A friend, Khe Hy, provides a perfect description of this phase. Fifteen years into a successful career in finance, he walked away to find a new path. However, it took him a long time to make that decision. He reflected, “It definitely wasn’t a sudden realization. It’s a little bit like having a pebble in your shoe, where you’re walking and something is off, and it’s mildly uncomfortable.”<sup>45</sup>

一个朋友，Khe Hy，对这个阶段给出了一个完美的描述。在金融行业成功工作了十五年后，他选择了离开，寻找一条新的道路。然而，他花了很长时间才做出这个决定。他反思道：“这绝对不是突然的领悟。这有点像鞋子里有一颗小石子，你走路的时候感觉不对劲，有点不舒服。”

When he got raises or promotions the discomfort would subside but never disappear. Slowly, he became more curious about that feeling and realized that despite his external success, he had become a “passive participant” in his life. Eventually, this convinced him to embark on his own pathless path. 当他得到加薪或晋升时，不适感会减轻但从未消失。慢慢地，他对这

种感觉变得更加好奇，并意识到尽管他在外部取得了成功，但他已经成为了他生活中的“被动参与者”。最终，这使他决定踏上自己没有路径的道路。

When I returned to work after regaining my health, I had discomfort that could only be described the way Khe put it, as a pebble in my shoe. It wasn't enough of a feeling to make me do anything dramatic, but it threw me off just enough that I was forced to pay attention to my life in a different way.

当我康复后回到工作岗位时，我感到一种只能用Khe的话来形容的不适，就像鞋子里的一颗小石子。这种感觉不足以让我采取任何激烈的行动，但它让我稍微失去了平衡，迫使我以一种不同的方式关注我的生活。

As I started to pay attention, I slowly came to realize the reality that I had been living in was an invisible bubble, one of my own creation. I started to push the edges of that reality and wasn't sure what would happen.

当我开始关注时，我慢慢意识到我所生活的现实是一个无形的泡沫，是我自己创造的。我开始推动这个现实的边界，不确定会发生什么。

## A Daily Reminder

### 每日提醒

If there are clear boundaries to behavior within a given field of endeavor, then there is also great freedom to adapt and imagine within those lines. These boundaries, however, should always be tested to see if they are actually still real. It takes conscious acts by individuals to test these edges. – *David Whyte*

如果在某个领域内有明确的行为界限，那么在这些界限内也有很大的自由去适应和想象。然而，这些界限应该始终被测试，以确

定它们是否仍然存在。测试这些边界需要个体的有意识的行动。 -  
大卫·怀特

After returning to work, I felt like I had gone through a major transformation, but to my colleagues, I appeared back to normal. I was physically present but detached. Rather than participating in meetings as a good team member, I observed them as a visiting anthropologist. I saw my colleagues with new eyes. *Are they happy? What kind of pain or challenges are they dealing with? Is this how they want to be spending their time?*

回到工作后，我感觉自己经历了一次重大的转变，但在同事们眼中，我看起来又恢复了正常。我身体上在场，但心灵却疏离。我不再像一个积极的团队成员那样参与会议，而是像一个访问的人类学家观察它们。我用新的眼光看待我的同事们。他们快乐吗？他们正在面对什么样的痛苦或挑战？他们是否想要这样度过他们的时间？

Once you ask these questions there is no going back. Not because of the contradictions in other people's lives, but because it makes it difficult to live in contradiction in your own life.

一旦你提出这些问题，就无法回头。不是因为别人生活中的矛盾，而是因为它让你自己的生活中的矛盾变得难以忍受。

This inspired me to act. I wanted to design a career that worked for me and decided to start with a simple commitment, one inspired by a talk from Earl Jones, an MIT alumnus who had shared his leadership principles with my class in grad school. I remembered how he had a list of words that reminded him of what he values, something that popped up on his calendar every morning.

这激发了我行动的欲望。我想设计一份适合自己的职业，并决定从一个简单的承诺开始，这个承诺是受到了麻省理工学院的校友厄尔·琼斯的一次演讲的启发，他在我的研究生课堂上分享了他的领导原则。我记得他有一个单词列表，提醒他珍视的东西，每天早上都会在他的日历上弹出来。

I followed his example and created a daily calendar entry of priorities for my life. First on my list was health. After recovering from my health challenges, I would do anything to stay healthy. Next, my head told me to list “career,” but my heart told me to list it last. This simple decision was my first conscious commitment to exploring the possibility of a life not centered around work. My final list included four items: health, relationships, fun & creativity, and career. Since 2013, this list pops up on my phone at 8:30 a.m. each morning.

我按照他的榜样，为我的生活创建了一个每日日历条目的优先事项。首先是健康。从康复后，我会尽一切努力保持健康。接下来，我的头脑告诉我把“事业”列在最后，但我的内心告诉我把它列在最后。这个简单的决定是我对探索一种不以工作为中心的生活可能性的第一个有意识的承诺。我的最终清单包括四项内容：健康、人际关系、乐趣与创造力以及事业。自2013年以来，这个清单每天早上8:30会在我的手机上弹出。

Staring at those four items, in that order, was scary. Without knowing it, I had embraced a question that would shape my decisions: “How do you design a life that doesn’t put work first?”

盯着那四样东西，按照那个顺序，感觉很可怕。不知不觉中，我已经接受了一个会影响我的决定的问题：“如何设计一个不把工作放在第一位的生活？”

The answer, my dear reader, is simple. You start underachieving at work. 亲爱的读者，答案很简单。你开始在工作中表现不佳。

You stop setting an alarm and you cancel morning meetings because the energy gained is worth fighting for. You start working remotely on Fridays without asking because the extra 24 hours with your grandmother is worth

it. You start taking naps at the office because there's a nap room and someone has to use it, right?

你停止设置闹钟，取消早晨的会议，因为所获得的能量是值得为之奋斗的。你开始在周五远程工作，不需要请假，因为与祖母多度的24个小时是值得的。你开始在办公室午休，因为有个午休室，总得有人使用吧？

I felt like a rebel, like I was doing something wrong. At the same time, I had the sense that taking ownership of my life in this way, especially to prioritize my health, was something worth doing.

我感觉自己像个叛逆者，好像在做一些不对的事情。与此同时，我有一种意识，以这种方式拥有自己的生活，特别是将健康放在首位，是值得做的事情。

Instead of being consumed with thoughts about work and my next step, I had time to continue to experiment, and in the space that emerged, a creative energy entered which started to become a central force in my life. 不再沉迷于工作和下一步的思考，我有时间继续实验，在这个出现的空间里，一股创造力进入了我的生活，开始成为一个核心力量。

## A Fool's Journey

### 一个傻瓜的旅程

Creativity requires faith. Faith requires that we relinquish control. –  
*Julia Cameron*

创造力需要信仰。信仰要求我们放弃控制。 - 朱莉娅·卡梅隆

As I started to test my boundaries, I split into two different versions of myself. One, “Default Path Paul,” focused on continuing my career, looking for the next job. The other, “Pathless Path Paul,” was finding his footing



and starting to pay attention to the clues that were showing up. Clues that would lead me not to another job, but to another life.

当我开始测试我的边界时，我分裂成了两个不同版本的自己。一个是“默认路径保罗”，专注于继续我的职业生涯，寻找下一份工作。另一个是“无路径保罗”，他正在找到自己的立足之地，并开始关注出现的线索。这些线索将引导我不是去找另一份工作，而是去找另一种生活。

The first time I acted on one of these clues was during a conversation with a career coach in Boston. She shared how much she loved what she did. Her infectious energy made me want to know more.

我第一次根据这些线索行动起来是在与波士顿的职业教练交谈时。她分享了她对自己工作的热爱之情。她的积极能量让我想要了解更多。

One benefit of having learned to be a world-class hoop-jumper is being able to support friends. Most people hate thinking about career decisions, and I have always volunteered to help anyone that asked. I told the coach how much I enjoyed this and said that maybe one day I could do what she was doing. She looked at me quizzically and said, “it sounds like you’re already a coach, though?”

学会成为一个世界级的跳圈者的好处之一就是能够支持朋友。大多数人讨厌思考职业决策，而我总是自愿帮助任何需要帮助的人。我告诉教练我有多喜欢这样做，并说也许有一天我可以做她正在做的事情。她疑惑地看着我说：“听起来你已经是一名教练了，不是吗？”

Her comment rocked me. She urged me to try coaching as a side gig. I spent the next few minutes making excuses for why this was not possible but I think I had been waiting for someone like her to push me in a new direction. I finally had somewhere to direct my emergent creative energy and I told her that I accepted the challenge.

她的评论让我震惊。她敦促我尝试兼职做教练。接下来的几分钟里，我找了一些借口来解释为什么这是不可能的，但我觉得我一直在等待像她这样的人来推动我朝新的方向发展。我终于有了一个地方可以发挥我新兴的创造能量，我告诉她我接受了这个挑战。

It would be a while until I “launched” the career coaching experiment, but I got to work immediately. I started by building a website, Careerswithpaul.com, and writing several articles about why I enjoyed helping people with careers. I tinkered with this project for several months and lost myself in the flow of work at my desk, sneaking in a few hours whenever I could. I’d go home and keep working on it. This phase of writing and creating was thrilling. It was a sharp contrast with my day job where I was working hard, but only in safe, predictable ways.

我开始着手进行职业指导实验，但还需要一段时间才能“启动”。我立即开始建立一个名为Careerswithpaul.com的网站，并写了几篇关于为什么我喜欢帮助人们职业发展的文章。我在这个项目上摸索了几个月，沉浸在办公桌前的工作中，每有机会就偷偷地挤出几个小时来做。回到家后，我还会继续工作。这个写作和创作的阶段令人兴奋。与我在白天的工作相比，那里我虽然努力工作，但只是以安全、可预测的方式。

Instead of announcing this work to the world, however, Default Path Paul had orchestrated another job change, a position in New York City helping to build a consulting practice that provided services to CEOs and board members of large companies. Despite the obvious shift in my interests and energy, I was still searching for that elusive dream job and had not yet considered becoming self-employed.

然而，与其向全世界宣布这项工作，Default Path Paul却策划了另一次职业变动，他在纽约找到了一份工作，帮助建立一个为大公司的CEO和董事会成员提供咨询服务的咨询实践。尽管我的兴趣和精力明显转变，但我仍在寻找那个难以捉摸的梦想工作，并且还没有考虑过自己创业。

There was no dream job to be found but as soon as I moved to New York, the energy of the city supercharged every other aspect of my life. I started exercising, wearing better clothes, and feeling more confident. On the coaching front, I joined a two-year mentorship program for first-generation college students and finally sent an email announcing the career coaching side gig to 100 of my closest friends and family. Sending that email was terrifying because it was like a coming-out party for Pathless Path Paul, a side of me that I had previously kept hidden.

在纽约，我找不到理想的工作，但这座城市的活力让我生活的其他方面都变得充满活力。我开始锻炼身体，穿着更好的衣服，感觉更自信。在教练方面，我加入了一个为首批大学生提供指导的为期两年的导师计划，并向我最亲密的100个朋友和家人发送了一封宣布职业指导副业的电子邮件。发送那封邮件让我感到恐惧，因为这就像是Pathless Path Paul的出柜派对，是我之前一直隐藏起来的一面。

I landed my first two paid coaching clients, and I loved the challenge of doing something new and on my own. It led me to do many more experiments. Over the next year, I launched a group coaching workshop, created an online course on resumes, started sharing my writing publicly, helped several clients navigate career and life shifts, and was even invited to give two paid talks on careers.

我获得了我的前两个付费辅导客户，并且我喜欢面对新的挑战并独立完成的感觉。这促使我进行了更多的实验。在接下来的一年里，我推出了一个小组辅导研讨会，创建了一个关于简历的在线课程，开始公开分享我的写作，帮助了几个客户应对职业和生活的变化，并且还被邀请做了两场关于职业的付费演讲。

My view of the world was shifting and it was both exciting and disorienting. Austin Kleon, a prolific creator and writer, says that “creative work runs on uncertainty; it runs on not knowing what you’re doing.”<sup>46</sup> The

creative work of finding a new life path is similar. I acknowledged as much in that email announcing my coaching work: “So here I am. I’m going to pursue this on the side and I wanted to share it with you first. Do I know where this will take me? No, but I’m excited to find out.”

我的世界观正在转变，这既令人兴奋又让人迷失方向。创作者和作家奥斯汀·克利昂说：“创造性的工作依赖于不确定性；它依赖于不知道自己在做什么。”寻找新的人生道路的创造性工作也是如此。我在那封宣布我开始做辅导工作的电子邮件中承认了这一点：“所以我在这里。我打算兼职从事这个工作，并且我想先与你分享。我知道这将带我去哪里吗？不知道，但我很期待找到答案。”

I took more responsibility for my life and started questioning my beliefs about work. When we talk about our jobs we often say, “I’m learning a lot!” In the first few years working in consulting, this was true. I grew in so many areas: writing, giving better presentations, communication skills, and research. A few years into the path, however, the things I was incentivized to learn became specific to the organization, such as navigating political conflicts and adopting behaviors, dress, and attitudes that signaled I might be a future company leader. I sucked at these things and my motivation tanked.

我对自己的生活负起更多责任，并开始质疑我对工作的信念。当我们谈论工作时，我们经常说：“我学到了很多！”在最初几年从事咨询工作时，这是真实的。我在许多方面都有所成长：写作、做更好的演讲、沟通技巧和研究。然而，几年后，我被激励去学习的东西变得与组织特定，比如应对政治冲突和采取行为、着装和态度，以示我可能成为未来的公司领导者。我在这些方面表现糟糕，我的动力也下降了。

Daniel Vassallo describes experiencing a similar shift ten years into his career at Amazon: “Everything was going well and getting better. But despite all this, my motivation to go to work each morning was decreasing – almost in an inverse trend to my career and income growth.” He came to

the conclusion that “only intrinsic motivation lasts” and decided to leave a comfortable six-figure salary behind and create a life designed around flexible work, his interests, and his family.<sup>47</sup>

丹尼尔·瓦萨洛描述了他在亚马逊工作十年后经历了类似的转变：“一切都很顺利，而且越来越好。但尽管如此，我每天早上去上班的动力却在减少，几乎与我的职业和收入增长呈相反的趋势。”他得出结论：“只有内在动机才能持久”，决定放弃舒适的六位数薪水，创造一个围绕灵活工作、兴趣和家庭设计的生活。

My lack of motivation at work made it easy to stay focused on my side projects despite not knowing where they were headed. The only way through this kind of uncertainty is to embrace what author and educator George Leonard called “the spirit of the fool.” He argued that when you start learning anything new it will make you “feel clumsy, that you’ll take literal or figurative pratfalls. There’s no way around it.”<sup>48</sup>

我的工作缺乏动力，这让我很容易专注于我的副业项目，尽管我不知道它们的发展方向。面对这种不确定性，唯一的方法就是拥抱作家和教育家乔治·莱昂纳德所说的“愚者的精神”。他认为，当你开始学习任何新事物时，你会感到“笨拙，会遭遇字面或比喻性的失败。没有办法避免。”

I liked feeling like a fool and the excitement that comes with learning something new. The only problem? I was miserable at my job.

我喜欢感觉自己像个傻瓜，以及学习新东西带来的兴奋。唯一的问题是？我在工作中感到很痛苦。

## Pushing Forward 推动前进

It took a year and a half for me to admit I did not enjoy my job. I had spent years crafting an idea of who I thought I should be and working hard to find jobs that matched this idea. It was hard to admit that the foundation that I thought I had been building was incredibly fragile.

我花了一年半的时间才承认我不喜欢我的工作。多年来，我一直在塑造一个我认为自己应该成为的形象，并努力寻找与这个形象相匹配的工作。承认我所建立的基础非常脆弱，这让我感到很困难。

The first time I voiced an intention to “go work on my own” was in an annual performance evaluation with my manager. In a high-rise office overlooking the skyscrapers in New York, I acknowledged that I might be in the wrong place. He said something about me struggling to embrace the culture, and instead of arguing with him, I confessed, “My heart isn’t in it.” 第一次我表达了“自己去工作”的意愿是在一次年度绩效评估中与我的经理进行的。在俯瞰纽约摩天大楼的高层办公室里，我承认自己可能错了地方。他说了一些关于我难以融入公司文化的话，我没有和他争论，而是坦白承认：“我对此没有热情。”

I told him about my experiments with coaching and how the excitement I felt outside of work contrasted with the growing cynicism and frustration I experienced at work. For the first time, I was honest with my manager and with myself. As I shared my reflections, I blamed myself, and unexpectedly, I lost the ability to speak, finding myself on the verge of tears. While I didn’t know it then, this was the first step toward letting go of my deep attachment to the default path.

我告诉他关于我在教练方面的实验，以及我在工作之外感到的兴奋与在工作中越来越加的愤世嫉俗和沮丧形成鲜明对比。这是我第一次对我的经理和自己坦诚相待。当我分享我的思考时，我责怪自己，出乎意料地，我失去了说话的能力，发现自己快要哭出来。当时我不知道，这是放下我对默认道路的深深依恋的第一步。

I returned to my office and sat at my desk, staring blankly at my screen. If you had told me when I was building that spreadsheet of dream jobs during college that not only would I work for several of those companies, but also directly with some of the most famous CEOs in the world, I would have been shocked. But I also would have thought that was exactly what I wanted.

我回到办公室，坐在桌前，茫然地盯着屏幕。如果你在我大学时期编制那份梦想工作的电子表格时告诉我，我不仅会为其中几家公司工作，还会直接与世界上一些最著名的CEO合作，我会感到震惊。但我也会认为那正是我想要的。

As I sat there, I didn't know how to want it anymore.  
当我坐在那里时，我不知道如何再想要它了。

I had been hired to help build a consulting division. The success I achieved in my first year earned me a raise and I was asked to develop a proposal for a new career path for our growing group. At the time, I felt like I had a future at the company. In my second year, I started working on an internal project meant to take three months. As it dragged on for more than a year, however, things started to fall apart. I became frustrated with the snail's pace and that's when the pebble in my shoe feeling became too powerful to ignore.

我被雇佣来帮助建立咨询部门。我在第一年取得的成功使我得到了加薪，并被要求为我们不断壮大的团队开发一个新的职业发展方案。当时，我觉得自己在公司有未来。在第二年，我开始参与一个原本计划三个月完成的内部项目。然而，由于拖延超过一年，事情开始崩溃。我对缓慢的进展感到沮丧，这时脚上的鞋里的小石头感觉变得太强烈，无法忽视。

From my perspective now, I had no future at the company, and by the time I had that conversation about my performance with my manager, things were already headed south. Yet I was still working hard on my proposal for promotion, outlining a multi-year career path for my position. Based on the experiences of others who leave the default path, this stage of contradiction is common. You take a last stand, doubling down on the existing path despite all evidence that it is no longer working.

从我现在的角度来看，我在公司没有未来，而且在我与经理谈论我的表现时，事情已经朝着不好的方向发展。然而，我仍然在为晋升提案努力工作，为我的职位规划了一个多年的职业道路。根据那些离开默认道路的人的经验，这种矛盾的阶段很常见。你会坚持最后一搏，尽管所有证据表明现有的道路已经不再奏效。

My biggest barrier was my inability to imagine an alternative life. My creative experiments were exciting, but they didn't suggest an obvious next step. It was easier to aim toward another raise or promotion than daring to ask myself deeper questions.

我最大的障碍是无法想象出另一种生活。我的创造性实验很令人兴奋，但它们并没有提供一个明显的下一步。与其冒险问自己更深层次的问题，还不如更容易地朝着加薪或晋升的方向努力。

A passage from William Reilly's book *How To Avoid Work*, published in 1949, captures my reality at the time:

威廉·赖利（William Reilly）在1949年出版的《如何避免工作》一书中的一段话，捕捉到了我当时的现实

*Your life is too short and too valuable to fritter away in work.*

你的生命太短暂、太宝贵，不要把它浪费在工作上。

*If you don't get out now, you may end up like the frog that is placed in a pot of fresh water on the stove. As the temperature is gradually increased, the*



*frog feels restless and uncomfortable, but not uncomfortable enough to jump out. Without being aware that a chance is taking place, he is gradually lulled into unconsciousness.*

如果你现在不离开，你可能会像被放在炉子上的一锅清水里的青蛙一样。随着温度逐渐升高，青蛙感到不安和不舒服，但不足以让它跳出来。在没有意识到变化正在发生的情况下，它逐渐陷入无意识状态。

*Much the same thing happens when you take a person and put him in a job which he does not like. He gets irritable in his groove. His duties soon become a monotonous routine that slowly dulls his senses. As I walk into offices, through factories and stores, I often find myself looking into the expressionless faces of people going through mechanical motions. They are people whose minds are stunned and slowly dying.*<sup>49</sup>

当你把一个人放在他不喜欢的工作中时，类似的事情就会发生。他会变得烦躁不安。他的职责很快变成了一种单调的例行公事，逐渐麻木了他的感官。当我走进办公室、工厂和商店时，我经常发现自己在看着那些毫无表情的人们机械地行动。他们的思维被震惊了，慢慢地消亡。

*My path was suffocating part of me that I wanted to let breathe.*  
我的道路让我窒息，而我想让它呼吸。

*I had to do something.*  
我必须做些什么。

## **What Am I Worth?**

### **我值多少钱？**

Even though I had said I wanted to work “on my own,” based on my actions, I wasn’t there yet. In the months after I sat in my manager’s office

on the verge of tears, I did what I always did when I felt frustrated. I started looking for another job. I still thought the perfect job was just around the corner.

尽管我曾说过我想要“独立工作”，但从我的行动来看，我还没有达到那个阶段。在我坐在经理办公室快要哭出来的几个月里，当我感到沮丧时，我做了我一直做的事情。我开始寻找另一份工作。我仍然认为完美的工作就在不远处。

Another consulting firm in New York seemed to offer a way forward. I read a book by the firm's founder outlining a new way of running a company centered around self-organization. The ideas excited me. After a number of great interviews with the firm, I reached the phase of an interview when you are about to receive an offer. Typically, I would be telling myself a story about how it was the perfect next step in my career. This time things felt different. The leader of the team called me to discuss the details. He was direct, "We want you to join our team, but we can only offer you \$50,000 less than you make now."

纽约的另一家咨询公司似乎提供了一种前进的方式。我读了该公司创始人写的一本关于以自我组织为中心运营公司的新方法的书。这些想法让我兴奋不已。在与该公司进行了一系列很棒的面试后，我进入了即将收到录用通知的阶段。通常情况下，我会对自己讲述一个关于这是我职业生涯的完美下一步的故事。但这一次感觉不同。团队的领导打电话给我讨论细节。他直截了当地说：“我们希望你加入我们的团队，但我们只能给你比你现在的薪水少5万美元。”

This was a blow to the ego. I was worth more. Definitely \$50,000 more. 这对自尊心是一次打击。我值得更多。绝对值得多50000美元。

He argued that since I was passionate about the work, it was worth taking a pay cut. I pretended that this was reasonable and told him I needed a few

days to think about it. I hung up the phone and sat there. I was rattled. What the hell was I doing? Was I really trying to find work I cared about or was I just trying to move forward like I always did?

他认为，由于我对这项工作充满热情，所以降薪是值得的。我假装这是合理的，并告诉他我需要几天时间来考虑。我挂断电话，坐在那里。我感到不安。我到底在做什么？我真的在努力寻找我关心的工作，还是只是像往常一样向前迈进？

The low salary offer was a blessing in disguise. It forced me to think about money. Making more money was not one of the priorities on the list I read on my phone every morning, so why was I so attached to what I thought I was worth?

低薪的报价是一种悄然而至的福音。它迫使我思考金钱。赚更多的钱并不是我每天早上在手机上的清单中的优先事项之一，那么为什么我对我认为自己值多少钱如此执着呢？

In 2008, attorney Kenneth Feinberg was appointed to a position in which he set the salaries of bank executives involved in the global financial crisis. He had to inform executives who made \$5 million the previous year that they would only be making \$1 million in the upcoming year. He expected them to be frustrated but understand, given the broader challenges in the economy. That's not what happened. Most were outraged. He realized that "these corporate officials viewed their compensation as the sole barometer of self-worth." He wasn't lowering their salaries; he was dealing a blow to the essence of who they thought they were.<sup>50</sup>

2008年，律师肯尼斯·费恩伯格被任命为一个职位，他负责设定参与全球金融危机的银行高管的薪水。他不得不告知那些去年赚了500万美元的高管，他们在接下来的一年只能赚100万美元。他预计他们会感到沮丧，但能理解，考虑到整个经济面临的更大挑战。然而事情并非如此。大多数人都感到愤怒。他意识到“这些企业高管将他们的薪酬视为自我价值的唯一标尺。”他并没有降低他们的薪水；他是在打击他们认为自己是谁的本质。

I claimed not to care about money, but the truth was that I was more like those executives than I thought.

我声称不在乎钱，但事实是我和那些高管们更相似。

I turned down the offer and started to ask harder questions. Why was I trying to get a raise when I knew I was not in a good environment? What was I seeking? Why did I keep changing jobs every two years? What was that pebble in my shoe really telling me?

我拒绝了这个提议，并开始提出更难的问题。为什么我要争取加薪，当我知道我不在一个好的环境中？我在寻找什么？为什么我每两年就换工作？那个鞋子里的小石子到底在告诉我什么？

These questions inspired an idea: *what if I paired making less with working less?*

这些问题激发了一个想法：如果我将减少收入与减少工作时间相结合会怎样？

I started to imagine a new path. Why not attempt to do the work I wanted to do as a freelancer while also having more flexibility and control over my life?

我开始想象一条新的道路。为什么不尝试以自由职业者的身份做我想做的工作，同时对我的生活拥有更多的灵活性和控制权呢？

# 5

## Breaking Free 突破自由

Some people inherit values and practices as a house they inhabit; some of us have to burn down that house, find our own ground, build from scratch, even as a psychological metamorphosis. – *Rebecca Solnit*

有些人将价值观和做法视为自己居住的房子；而我们中的一些人必须将那座房子烧毁，找到自己的立足之地，从零开始建设，甚至进行心理上的变革。- 丽贝卡·索尔尼特

## Not Who I Wanted To Be 不是我想成为的人

After rejecting the job offer, I took time to reflect on what I wanted. I revisited a letter I had written for a leadership class during business school. In it, I defined a leader broadly as someone that could be a “role model in all aspects of their life.” I specifically listed nine principles, a collection of phrases, quotes, ideas, and beliefs that I hoped to embody throughout my career. Some examples included a desire to lead with empathy, to embrace humility, to inject humor wherever possible, to avoid becoming too serious, to prioritize learning, to think independently, and to create memorable experiences for others through my work.

拒绝了工作机会后，我花时间反思自己想要什么。我重新阅读了我在商学院领导力课程中写的一封信。在信中，我广泛地定义了领导者，认为他们可以在生活的各个方面成为“榜样”。我具体列出了九个原则，包括一些短语、引语、想法和信念，我希望在整个职业生涯中体现出来。一些例子包括希望以同理心领导，拥抱谦逊，尽可能地加入

幽默，避免过于认真，优先学习，独立思考，并通过我的工作为他人创造难忘的体验。

I decided to turn this into a self-assessment and reviewed each of the nine principles, scoring myself on a scale of one to ten. A few areas earned low scores. First, my curiosity and passion for learning at work were nonexistent. Second, I was struggling to think independently in a positive way. I was becoming cynical and confrontational rather than looking for ways to have a positive impact. Finally, I had become too serious about work. At some point, I had lost my sense of humor and was spending far too much time getting caught up in company politics.

我决定将这转化为自我评估，并对九个原则进行了回顾，按照一到十的评分标准对自己进行评分。有几个方面得分较低。首先，我对工作中的好奇心和热情几乎没有。其次，我在积极思考方面遇到了困难。我变得愤世嫉俗和好斗，而不是寻找积极影响的方法。最后，我对工作过于认真。在某个时刻，我失去了幽默感，花费了太多时间陷入公司政治之中。

Simply put, I was a curmudgeon at work, increasingly cynical about the intentions of leaders, not learning anything beyond the latest office gossip. 简单来说，我在工作中是一个脾气暴躁的人，对领导的意图越来越愤世嫉俗，除了最新的办公室八卦，我没有学到任何东西。

Deep down I knew these things, but I hadn't chosen to face what I knew. Putting a score on a page showed me that I was struggling to become the kind of person I thought I could be. Jerry Colonna, an investor turned executive coach, asks his clients this question, "How are you complicit in creating the conditions you say you don't want?" After the reflection, I knew that I was complicit. I also knew that if I wanted things to change, it was solely up to me.

深藏在我心底，我知道这些事情，但我选择不去面对我所知道的。将

分数写在纸上让我看到，我正在努力成为我认为自己可以成为的那种人。投资者转型为执行教练的Jerry Colonna问他的客户这个问题：“你在创造你所说不想要的条件中有何责任？”经过反思，我知道我是有责任的。我也知道，如果我想要改变，那完全取决于我自己。

In business school, I created a vision of the kind of leader and person I wanted to be, and five years later I realized I was headed in the wrong direction. When I wrote that paper, my model of the world was one in which my principles would triumph over my environment. If those principles still mattered to me, which they did, I needed to get more creative about how I could bring them forth in my life and career.

在商学院里，我构想了我想成为的领导者 and 人的形象，五年后我意识到我走错了方向。当我写那篇论文时，我对世界的模型是，我的原则会战胜环境。如果这些原则对我仍然重要，而它们确实重要，我需要更有创意地思考如何在我的生活和职业中体现它们。

## Email from Sarasota

# 来自萨拉索塔的电子邮件

*“I think it’s time to move on.”*  
我认为是时候继续前进了。

I wrote that sentence in a hotel room in Sarasota, Florida. I had just arrived for the weekend to attend a friend’s wedding. I opened my laptop to check work emails before heading down to the pool and saw several emails from my manager.

我在佛罗里达州萨拉索塔的一间酒店房间里写下了那句话。我刚刚到达那里参加一个朋友的婚礼的周末。在去游泳池之前，我打开了笔记本电脑查看工作邮件，看到了几封来自我的经理的邮件。

There was nothing special about those emails, but that day I couldn't pretend to care about the latest client crisis. Anyone who has worked in client or customer-facing jobs knows that the work mostly focuses on reacting to ongoing mini-crises. Almost everyone agrees that these issues are not all that important, but almost no one can stop themselves from reacting to each one with equal enthusiasm and panic.

那些电子邮件没有什么特别的，但那天我无法假装关心最新的客户危机。任何在与客户打交道的工作中工作过的人都知道，工作主要集中在对持续发生的小危机做出反应。几乎每个人都同意这些问题并不是那么重要，但几乎没有人能够停止自己对每个问题都以同样的热情和恐慌做出反应。

I told my manager that I found his emails unnecessarily aggressive. He disagreed and we argued a bit back and forth. At the end of one exchange, I added, "I think I should move on."

我告诉我的经理，我觉得他的邮件过于攻击性。他不同意，我们争论了一会儿。在一次交流的最后，我补充道：“我觉得我应该离开。”

He interpreted this remark as a formal resignation and had probably been expecting this moment since I had choked up in his office. I had no conscious intention to quit right then, but I couldn't muster up a single ounce of energy to tell him otherwise.

他把这句话解释为正式辞职的意思，可能自从我在他办公室里哽咽以来，他就一直在期待这一刻。我当时并没有有意识地打算辞职，但我无法集中一丝力气告诉他不是这样的。

I sat in my hotel room and didn't know what to think. I could stop what I had set in motion, but I didn't. I felt excited but confused. Did I just quit? I walked down to the pool to start the wedding weekend, saw a friend, and



said, “I think I just quit my job.”

我坐在酒店房间里，不知道该怎么想。我可以停止我已经开始的事情，但我没有。我感到兴奋但困惑。我刚刚辞职了吗？我走到游泳池，开始了婚礼周末，看到一个朋友，说：“我想我刚刚辞掉了工作。”

So much of life is like this. We are surprised at the moment something happens, but looking back, we realize that everything makes sense. Losing my grandfather, getting rejected from jobs repeatedly, never finding the right fit, facing health challenges and hard questions were all events that sent me in an inevitable direction that was only obvious upon reflection.

生活中有很多事情都是这样的。当某件事情发生时，我们会感到惊讶，但回过头来看，我们会意识到一切都有道理。失去祖父、一次又一次地被拒绝工作、找不到合适的工作、面对健康挑战和困难的问题，这些都是将我推向一个不可避免的方向的事件，只有在回顾时才显而易见。

When I quit, it was the only thing left to do. It took me 10 seconds at the bottom of an email.

当我辞职时，这是唯一剩下的事情要做。在一封电子邮件的底部，我花了10秒钟。

## Commuting in the Blob

### 在Blob中通勤

I stayed in the job for three months to train my replacement and help the team transition. It was about three months too long.

我在这个工作岗位上待了三个月，为了培训我的接替者并帮助团队过渡。这个时间有点太长了。

No single day stands out. I stuck to my daily routine, arriving each morning at the 7 train subway platform. I boarded the train for the single-stop journey from Queens to Manhattan. Then I slid my body into the masses of people and became part of a massive blob of workers making our way into the mecca of work.

没有一天特别突出。我坚持着我的日常生活，每天早上到达7号地铁站台。我上了地铁，从皇后区到曼哈顿只有一个站的路程。然后，我将自己的身体滑入人群中，成为一个庞大的工人群体的一部分，我们一起前往工作的圣地。

Each day I searched for signs of life. I would force a smile and look around to see if anyone noticed. No one ever did. So I gave up and adopted the neutral uninterested smirk that everyone seemed to understand was the proper way to be.

每天我都在寻找生活的迹象。我会强迫自己微笑并四处张望，看看是否有人注意到。但从来没有人注意到。所以我放弃了，采用了中立冷漠的笑容，似乎每个人都明白这是正确的方式。

When we pulled into Grand Central, the blob became active with people jockeying for position to embark on their unique paths through the labyrinth of stairs and tunnels. I had my own special route and knew the speed and angles to make it to my desk as fast as possible. On my first day at this job, the first time I had worked in New York City, I paused and took a deep breath as I walked through the center of the station. It felt special. It was special. Now I wanted no part of it, but each morning I continued to go through the motions. The building I worked in, now known as the MetLife building, was built next to Grand Central Station in 1963 and was universally panned at the time. Architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable called it “a lesson in how to be mediocre without really trying.”<sup>51</sup>

当我们驶入中央车站时，人群开始活跃起来，争相占据位置，踏上他们独特的迷宫般的楼梯和隧道之旅。我有自己特殊的路线，知道如何

以最快的速度 and 角度赶到我的办公桌。在我在这份工作的第一天，也是我第一次在纽约工作的时候，我在穿过车站中心的时候停下来深吸了一口气。它感觉很特别。它确实很特别。现在我不想再参与其中，但每天早上我仍然按部就班地去。我工作的大楼，现在被称为大都会人寿大厦，建于1963年，当时普遍受到批评。建筑评论家Ada Louise Huxtable称其为“如何在真正努力的情况下变得平庸的一课”。

Twenty stories up in that building was my office, its furnishings dating back to the 1970s or 1980s. The offices of the senior partners, still mostly men, were located along the building's outside walls. Decades after the offices had been built, their positions and sizes were still clear markers of importance. My small office was a step up from the cubicles, but I was still years away from having a real office. I always appreciated the clarity of these distinctions. So many companies seem afraid to make these power dynamics visible, disguising them behind open offices and casual dress codes.

那座大楼的二十层是我的办公室，里面的家具可以追溯到上世纪70年代或80年代。高级合伙人的办公室，大多数仍然是男性，位于大楼的外墙上。几十年过去了，这些办公室的位置和大小仍然清晰地标志着重要性。我的小办公室比隔间要好一些，但离真正的办公室还有几年的距离。我一直很欣赏这些区别的清晰性。很多公司似乎害怕让这些权力关系显而易见，它们把它们伪装在开放式办公室和休闲着装规定的背后。

In those final months, I was in a liminal space between two worlds. I had decided to take a leap to a different path but had not yet changed direction. I struggled to process how I was feeling, held captive by accumulated frustration and anxiety. When I thought about my future, everything came up blank. I did my best to pretend I knew what I was doing, but for the first time in my life, I was operating without a script.

在那最后几个月里，我处于两个世界之间的边缘空间。我决定迈向一条不同的道路，但还没有改变方向。我努力去处理自己的感受，被积累的挫折和焦虑所困扰。当我思考我的未来时，一切都变得空白。我

尽力假装我知道自己在做什么，但这是我生命中第一次没有剧本地行动。

Was I doing the right thing?  
我是在做正确的事吗？

It didn't really matter. There was no turning back. I was embarking on a new path, and I had no choice but to find out. As the final day at work approached, I pretended to be excited, but I was merely existing, one day at a time.

这并不重要。已经没有回头的余地了。我正在踏上一条新的道路，我别无选择，只能去发现。随着最后一天工作的临近，我假装兴奋，但实际上只是一天天地过着。

## Too Smart for Burnout 太聪明了，不会烧脑

I told myself I was smarter than other people. I knew what I was good at. I always took all of my vacation days. Didn't work crazy hours. Made time for friends and family. Changed jobs when I stopped learning. I had done all these things with the idea that this was how I would not only avoid burning out but that I would thrive. I wanted to hack the system and make it work for me. On my final day of work the feelings that flowed through my body told me I wasn't so clever.

我告诉自己我比别人聪明。我知道自己擅长什么。我总是利用所有的假期。不加班到疯狂的时候。为朋友和家人腾出时间。当我停止学习时换工作。我做了所有这些事情，以为这样不仅可以避免疲劳，而且可以茁壮成长。我想要破解这个系统，让它为我工作。在我最后一天工作时，我身体里流淌的感觉告诉我我并不那么聪明。

The first day after leaving my job I started my day like any other, waking up and making coffee. Our apartment in Long Island City had a beautiful view of the Manhattan skyline. My roommate and I had decided to move there six months prior, hoping to upgrade our apartment for the same rent we had been paying in Manhattan. It was a beautiful space. Yet as I looked out at the skyscrapers where I had been working just a day earlier, it felt weird. I was suddenly an outside observer not yet able to make sense of what I had left behind.

离职后的第一天，我像往常一样起床做咖啡。我们在长岛城的公寓可以欣赏到曼哈顿天际线的美景。六个月前，我和室友决定搬到那里，希望用同样的租金升级我们的公寓。那是一个美丽的空间。然而，当我望着我前一天还在工作的摩天大楼时，感觉很奇怪。我突然成了一个外部观察者，还不能理解我留下的一切。

I spent the next couple of hours wandering around the apartment, eventually sat down, and opened my computer. Something told me I needed to write and as soon as I started typing, an emotional flood of energy took over my body. Years of resentment, frustration, and confusion demanded to be released.

我接下来的几个小时在公寓里闲逛，最后坐下来，打开了电脑。有什么东西告诉我我需要写作，一旦我开始打字，一股情感的洪流就占据了身体。多年的怨恨、挫折和困惑迫切需要释放出来。

While working, I always sensed that these feelings were there, but the daily inertia of a life centered around work kept them hidden. Now, without a plan and without anywhere to show up, I had to feel the full force of my emotions.

在工作时，我总是感觉到这些情感的存在，但是以工作为中心的日常惯性使它们隐藏起来。现在，没有计划，也没有任何地方可以去展示，我必须感受到我的情绪的全部力量。

I gained my composure and kept writing. The words seemed to flow from my heart and as I got about halfway down the first page a word came out that surprised me.

我恢复了镇定并继续写作。文字似乎从我的内心流淌而出，当我写到第一页的一半时，一个让我惊讶的词出现了。

### **Burnout.**

### **疲劳过度。**

I couldn't be burnt out. I was too smart! Burnout is for investment bankers and lawyers working every weekend and logging 80-hour weeks. I tried to explain it away but I couldn't. This was the only word that seemed to capture the brokenness I had felt over the previous year.

我不可能被烧尽。我太聪明了！烧尽是给投资银行家和律师们的，他们每个周末都在工作，每周工作80小时。我试图解释它，但我无法做到。这是唯一一个似乎能够捕捉到我在过去一年中感受到的破碎感的词语。

The word burnout was coined in the 1970s by Herbert Freudenberger, an American psychologist who studied workers in free health clinics. He found that the prime candidates for burnout were those who were “dedicated and committed,” trying to balance their need to give, to please others, and to work hard. He noticed that when there was added pressure from superiors, people often hit a breaking point.<sup>52</sup>

70年代，美国心理学家赫伯特·弗洛伊登伯格创造了“倦怠症”这个词。他研究了自由医疗诊所的工作者，发现最容易出现倦怠症的人是那些“忠诚和执着”的人，他们试图平衡自己的付出、取悦他人和努力工作的需求。他注意到，当上级施加额外压力时，人们往往会达到一个崩溃点。

Throughout the 1980s, burnout was studied across most types of work and by the end of the decade, there were hundreds of definitions. Freudenberger seemed distraught by this fact but still wanted to understand what might cause burnout. He was intrigued by Professor Cary Cherniss' definition of burnout as "the bureaucratic infringement on a professional's autonomy" and thought that the right way to think about burnout was to focus on the disconnect between an individual and the culture of the company in which they worked.<sup>53</sup>

在整个1980年代，人们对各种类型的工作进行了疲劳研究，到了该十年末，已经有数百种定义。弗洛伊登伯格似乎对此事感到困扰，但仍然想要了解是什么导致了疲劳。他对卡里·切尼斯教授将疲劳定义为“对专业人士自主权的官僚侵犯”感到着迷，并认为正确思考疲劳的方式是关注个体与所在公司文化之间的脱节。

This also meant that burnout might be unavoidable which motivated Freudenberger to ask two provocative questions:

这也意味着精疲力竭可能是不可避免的，这促使弗洛伊登伯格提出了两个挑衅性的问题：

1. What if the value system of the institution is diametrically opposed to the values, ethics, and competencies of the individual professional?  
如果机构的价值体系与个人专业人士的价值观、道德观和能力背道而驰，会怎么样？
2. What if the individual professional seeks to live up to the external, organizationally imposed criteria of what constitutes success and achievement, but is unable to do so?  
如果个人专业人士努力达到外部、组织强加的成功和成就标准，但无法做到呢？

These questions still linger in our workplaces, and in the years since Freudenberger asked them, our economy has continued to shift towards the type of helping professions that are similar to the workers he studied in the health clinics.

这些问题仍然在我们的工作场所中挥之不去，在弗洛伊德伯格提出这些问题的几年里，我们的经济继续向与他研究的健康诊所工作者类似的帮助性职业转变。

People dedicate themselves to being “good workers,” and being successful means keeping clients, customers, and managers happy while fitting into a company’s cultural norms. Unfortunately, success for the company does not always align with what is best for the person, and over time, a disconnect can emerge. This is what happened to me.

人们致力于成为“优秀的员工”，成功意味着让客户、顾客和经理满意，同时适应公司的文化规范。不幸的是，公司的成功并不总是与个人最好的利益相一致，随着时间的推移，可能会出现脱节。这就是我所经历的情况。

At that last job, I wasn’t a team player and I could have tried harder to say the right things, dress the right way, or spend more time pleasing my manager. But I couldn’t do it. The norms of the organization were pulling me too far away from the person I wanted to be and the energy I used to manage this disconnect undermined anything good I had to offer.

在上一份工作中，我不是一个团队合作的人，我本可以更努力地说对的话、穿对的衣服，或者花更多时间取悦我的经理。但我做不到。组织的规范将我拉得太远，远离我想成为的人，而我用来管理这种脱节的精力削弱了我所能提供的任何好处。

A German report on burnout found that when burned out, people “may start being cynical about their working conditions and their colleagues...” and may “...distance themselves emotionally and start feeling numb about their work.”<sup>54</sup> This is the tricky thing about burnout. If you are suffering from burnout, you are likely not thriving at work, and over time it’s easy to see yourself as the cause. Add to this the common assumption that you should never leave a job too soon and you get a world in which millions of people



are experiencing the slow, marginal creep of burnout and have no way out. 德国一份关于倦怠症的报告发现，当人们感到倦怠时，他们可能会对工作条件和同事产生愤世嫉俗的态度，并可能在情感上疏远自己，对工作感到麻木。这就是倦怠症的棘手之处。如果你正在遭受倦怠症，你很可能在工作中无法茁壮成长，随着时间的推移，很容易把自己视为问题的根源。再加上普遍的观念认为你不应该过早离开一份工作，就会出现数百万人经历着倦怠症的缓慢、边缘化的蔓延，却无法摆脱的局面。

Luckily, I found my way out and as I finished writing the piece, I felt a sense of relief wash over my body. I was able to forgive myself for some of my failures in that job and with that, I was ready to move forward.

幸运的是，我找到了出路，当我完成写作时，我感到一种解脱感涌上心头。我能够原谅自己在那份工作中的一些失败，因此我准备向前迈进。

## The Dynamics of Mourning 哀悼的动态

But under the hardness of that armor there is the tenderness of genuine sadness.

但在那护甲的坚硬下面，隐藏着真正悲伤的温柔。

– Pema Chodron

- 佩玛·乔德龙

To celebrate leaving my job I decided to take an extended trip to Europe. As I was booking the flights, I initially typed in dates two weeks apart, but then realized I had no obligations to return to. Before this trip, I had never traveled anywhere for more than two weeks. As I extended the dates to five weeks on the booking app, sirens sounded in my head. This was the first of many experiences in which I pushed past the default setting of how I was

supposed to be living.

为了庆祝离职，我决定去欧洲进行一次长时间的旅行。在预订机票时，我最初输入了相隔两周的日期，但后来意识到我没有义务返回。在这次旅行之前，我从未去过任何地方超过两周。当我在预订应用上将日期延长到五周时，我的脑海中响起了警报声。这是我超越了我应该生活的默认设置的第一次经历。

In the first week, I watched an incredible sunset in Florence, sharing a cheap bottle of wine with a friend I had met from Ecuador earlier that day. As the colors exploded over the city, I was filled with joy and excitement about the new adventure in front of me.

在第一周，我在佛罗伦萨看到了一场令人难以置信的日落，与当天早些时候认识的来自厄瓜多尔的朋友分享了一瓶便宜的葡萄酒。当色彩在城市上空绽放时，我充满了喜悦和对面前新冒险的兴奋。

The next day, however, I woke up with one of the worst colds I've ever had. It was as if my body was saying, "not so fast!" Professor Freudenberger noted in his research that for some people, burnout involves the "dynamics of mourning" due to dealing with the "loss of something within yourself, something you treasured and valued, your ideals."<sup>55</sup> Freudenberger argued that recovering from burnout involves a grieving process to let go of those ideals. I had not factored this into my journey and did not expect how hard it would hit me in that first month. I settled into a slower pace as my trip through Europe shifted from a celebration to rest and recovery.

然而，第二天我醒来时感觉自己得了一场最严重的感冒。就好像我的身体在说：“不要那么快！”弗洛伊登伯格教授在他的研究中指出，对于一些人来说，倦怠症涉及到“哀悼的动力”，因为他们要面对“失去自己内心的某种东西，一些你珍视和重视的理想。”弗洛伊登伯格认为，从倦怠症中恢复需要一个悲伤的过程，来放下那些理想。我没有考虑到这一点，在我的旅程中也没有预料到它会在第一个月对我产生多么大的冲击。我逐渐适应了一个更慢的节奏，因为我在欧洲的旅行从庆祝转变为休息和恢复。

On the final weekend of my trip, I spent the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday in the small village of Praiano on the Amalfi Coast in Italy. A few people I had met at a dinner the night before joined me at the beach. One woman was a successful designer working at IDEO in Chicago and we started talking about why I had left my job. I told her I was excited about having space to experiment, explore ideas, and not have to work for someone else. She was confused and asked, “why not just find another job?”

在我旅行的最后一个周末，我在意大利阿马尔菲海岸的普赖亚诺小村庄度过了7月4日的假期。前一晚在晚餐上认识的几个人和我一起去了海滩。其中一位女士是芝加哥IDEO公司的成功设计师，我们开始谈论我为什么离开了我的工作。我告诉她，我对有空间进行实验、探索想法，并且不必为别人工作感到兴奋。她感到困惑，问道：“为什么不只是找一份新工作呢？”

A year earlier I would have shared my career ambitions and added her on LinkedIn. But instead, I answered, “Good question, I’m not sure.” I was living in the present, taking it one day at a time. It felt good. I was also nervous.

一年前，我会分享我的职业抱负，并在LinkedIn上添加她。但相反，我回答道：“好问题，我不确定。”我活在当下，一天一天地过。感觉很好。我也很紧张。

I was heading back to the United States, and I would have to see if I could turn those intentions into reality.

我正要返回美国，我得看看能否将这些意图变成现实。

## **Fool with a Sign**

### **傻瓜拿着标牌**

Reality was waiting in New York. I had quit my job and didn't have any work lined up. After ten years of being on the default path, I felt exposed. 现实正在纽约等待着。我辞掉了工作，没有任何工作安排。在走上默认的道路十年后，我感到暴露无遗。

Living in New York City didn't help. Being in one of the most expensive cities in the world, the pressure to make money was intense. When I was getting paid on a steady basis, the relationship between making money and my motivation was hard to understand. Without a paycheck, the combination of insecurity, fear, and my desire to prove myself made it much clearer. This ignited a period of frenzied activity, one which I've noticed is a common stage for people that leave their jobs without an income.

生活在纽约市并没有帮助。身处世界上最昂贵的城市之一，赚钱的压力非常大。当我稳定地拿到薪水时，赚钱和我的动力之间的关系很难理解。没有薪水，不安全感、恐惧和我证明自己的欲望的结合使这一点变得更加清晰。这引发了一个疯狂活动的时期，我注意到这是离开工作但没有收入的人常见的阶段。

I started proactively pursuing freelance projects and said yes to every opportunity. The first gig was one that paid me \$1,000 to walk around New York City, find people wearing Allbird brand shoes, and ask them four questions. On my first day, I struggled to find people by randomly walking around the city. On day two, I took a different approach, buying a large cardboard sign and writing in big letters, "Do you own Allbirds?" I held up the sign at the farmer's market in Union Square Park and started finding people. Despite some embarrassment, I was able to laugh at myself and have fun with it. Being a fool with a sign landed me my first paycheck and it also helped serve as a ritualistic shift away from a life of dress shirts and formalities to one that was a little more free.

我开始积极地追求自由职业项目，并接受了每一个机会。第一个项目是支付我1000美元，在纽约市四处走动，找到穿着Allbird品牌鞋子的人，并向他们提问四个问题。第一天，我随机在城市里走动，很难找到人。第二天，我采取了不同的方法，买了一个大纸板牌子，用大字

写着“你有Allbirds吗？”我在联合广场公园的农贸市场举起牌子，开始找到人。尽管有些尴尬，但我能够嘲笑自己并享受其中的乐趣。作为一个拿着牌子的傻瓜，我得到了第一笔薪水，这也帮助我从穿着衬衫和正式场合的生活中转变出来，过上了更自由的生活。

I landed a more substantial project a few months later working with a former professor launching a non-profit in Boston. As I signed the contract, I made the first substantial dent in the fear that I would fail. What a relief! I even ended up landing a few smaller projects and in one of the months, I made more in a single month than I did in any month I had as an employee. The project in Boston also convinced me to move from New York back to Boston, helping to cut down on my cost of living. These things all gave me a lot of confidence that my experiment to work on my own was something that had potential, and I started to ease into my journey.

几个月后，我接到了一个更大的项目，与一位前教授合作，在波士顿推出了一个非营利组织。当我签署合同时，我第一次对自己会失败的恐惧有了实质性的减轻。真是松了一口气！我甚至还接到了几个较小的项目，其中一个月的收入超过了我作为雇员的任何一个月。波士顿的项目还使我决定从纽约搬回波士顿，有助于降低我的生活成本。所有这些都给了我很多信心，让我相信自己独立工作的实验具有潜力，我开始逐渐进入我的旅程。

As my money anxieties receded, I realized I wanted to go deeper. Not with freelance work, but in my life. In those first six months, I experienced a remarkable sense of freedom and ownership over my life. Most days I decided when, where, and how I worked. It differed radically from how I had spent my days on my previous path and this made me curious enough to consider a question that would push me deeper into an exploration of my relationship to work.

随着我的金钱焦虑减轻，我意识到我想要更深入地探索。不是在自由职业工作上，而是在我的生活中。在那前六个月里，我体验到了一种非凡的自由感和对生活的掌控力。大多数日子，我决定何时、何地以

及如何工作。这与我之前的生活方式截然不同，这让我产生了好奇心，进一步思考一个问题，这个问题将推动我更深入地探索我与工作的关系。

## Am I a Worker? 我是一个工人吗？

During the first few months of self-employment, I read an article that jolted my reality. Titled, “If work dominated your every moment, would life be worth living?” the philosopher Andrew Taggart offered a powerful question that spoke to the underlying tension I lived with for most of my adult life. 在自雇的头几个月里，我读了一篇让我震惊的文章。标题为“如果工作占据你的每一刻，生活还有意义吗？”哲学家安德鲁·塔加特提出了一个有力的问题，这个问题触及了我成年生活中一直存在的潜在紧张感。

By my late 20s, I had oriented my entire life around work. I was always thinking about how I could get a better job or a higher salary. I had launched a side gig helping people navigate their careers and started writing about how the working world could be better. I could only afford my expensive New York City apartment because I was earning a high income, and my social life was spent with similarly high-earning friends.

到了我快30岁的时候，我把整个生活都围绕着工作展开。我一直在思考如何找到一份更好的工作或者获得更高的薪水。我开始了一项副业，帮助人们规划职业发展，并开始写作关于如何改善工作世界的文章。我之所以能负担得起昂贵的纽约市公寓，是因为我有高收入，我的社交生活也是与收入相当高的朋友们度过的。

At the time I could not imagine any other existence. Where I lived, what I did, how I thought about money, and the people I hung out with were all connected with my work identity. But if someone had asked me if work took

over “every moment” of my life, I would have declared “not me!”

当时我无法想象其他的存在。我居住的地方，我所做的事情，我对金钱的看法，以及我交往的人，都与我的工作身份有关。但如果有人问我工作是否占据了我生活的“每一刻”，我会回答“不是我！”

Yet when I became self-employed, I was surprised at how strongly I had internalized a worker identity. As I struggled to find my first project, I felt guilty when I wasn't working during typical work hours Monday through Friday. When I started working remotely on my first project, I had 100% control over when and how I did the work, but quickly fell into a routine of going to a coworking office five days a week. Many self-employed people are surprised to find that once they no longer have to work for anyone else, they still have a manager in their head.

然而，当我成为自雇人士时，我对自己多么强烈地内化了一个工人身份感到惊讶。当我努力寻找我的第一个项目时，如果在周一至周五的正常工作时间内不工作，我会感到内疚。当我开始在第一个项目上远程工作时，我对何时以及如何完成工作有着100%的控制权，但很快就养成了每周五天去共享办公室的习惯。许多自雇人士会惊讶地发现，一旦他们不再为别人工作，他们的脑海中仍然有一个经理存在。

As I started to experiment with how I spent my time, Taggart's question remained in my head. I was fascinated by his claim that we lived in a time of “total work,” a state of existence in which work is such a powerful force that almost everyone ends up identifying as a worker first and foremost. The idea of total work was inspired by the German philosopher Josef Pieper, who first wrote about it in his book *Leisure, The Basis of Culture*. Writing in Germany after World War II, Pieper was shocked at how people were eager to throw themselves into work without pausing to reflect on what kind of world they wanted to build. To Pieper, this was evidence that German society had abandoned a connection to a traditional form of leisure.<sup>56</sup>

当我开始尝试如何利用我的时间时，塔格特的问题仍然在我脑海中。他声称我们生活在一个“全面工作”的时代，这是一种工作如此强大的存

在状态，几乎每个人都首先将自己视为工人。全面工作的概念受到了德国哲学家约瑟夫·皮珀的启发，他在他的著作《闲暇，文化的基础》中首次写到了这个概念。皮珀在二战后的德国写作时，对人们急于投入工作而不停下来反思他们想要建立何种世界的现象感到震惊。对皮珀来说，这是德国社会已经放弃了与传统休闲形式的联系的证据。

Pieper argued that for most of history, leisure was one of the most important parts of life for people in many cultures. He noted that the ancient Greek translation for “work” was literally “not-at-leisure.” In Aristotle’s own words, “we are not-at-leisure in order to be-at-leisure.” Now, this is flipped. We work to earn time off and see leisure as a break from work. Pieper pointed out that people “mistake leisure for idleness, and work for creativity.” To Pieper, leisure was above work. It was “a condition of the soul,” and the “disposition of receptive understanding, of contemplative beholding, and immersion – in the real.”<sup>57</sup>

派珀认为，在历史的大部分时间里，休闲是许多文化中人们生活中最重要的部分之一。他指出，古希腊对“工作”的翻译字面上是“不闲”。亚里士多德自己的话是，“我们不闲是为了能够闲下来。”现在，情况正好相反。我们工作是为了有时间休息，将休闲视为工作的休息。派珀指出，人们“将休闲误认为是懒散，将工作误认为是创造力。”对派珀来说，休闲高于工作。它是“灵魂的状态”，是“接受性理解、沉思凝视和沉浸于真实之中的心态”。

As I embraced the freedom of self-employment, I was opening up to this kind of leisure but was also still dealing with the lasting power of a world of total work that I had fully embraced, one where my perceived value was derived from my ability to keep working. Yet Taggart’s question remained a daily companion:

当我拥抱自由职业的时候，我开始接受这种休闲方式，但同时也在应对我曾完全接受的全职工作世界的持久力量，其中我的价值感来自于我的工作能力。然而，塔格特的问题仍然是我每天的伴侣。



“If work dominated your every moment, would life be worth living?”  
如果工作占据了你的每一刻，生活是否还值得一过？

My answer was becoming a clear “no,” but I didn’t know what this meant for my life. Eventually, I reached out to Taggart directly and he proposed three more specific questions:

我的答案变得明确的是否定，但我不知道这对我的生活意味着什么。最终，我直接联系了塔格特，并且他提出了另外三个具体的问题：

1. Are you a worker?  
你是工人吗？
2. If you are not a worker, then who are you?  
如果你不是一个工人，那么你是谁？
3. Given who you are, what life is sufficient?  
鉴于你是谁，什么样的生活足够？

While these questions were terrifying, I was ready to start asking them seriously. According to Taggart, living in a world dominated by total work undermines the “playful contemplation concerned with our asking, pondering and answering the most basic questions of existence.”<sup>58</sup> As I gained confidence on my new path, I was starting to be able to ask these questions and was open to the possibilities that were about to emerge.

虽然这些问题令人恐惧，但我已经准备好认真地开始提出它们了。根据塔格特的说法，生活在一个被全面工作主导的世界中削弱了“对我们存在的最基本问题进行玩味思考、探索和回答”的能力。随着我在新道路上的信心增长，我开始能够提出这些问题，并对即将出现的可能性持开放态度。

## Possibility 可能性

After six months of freelancing, I had a nice ending point for several projects and decided to design my own non-work sabbatical. I abandoned the responsibility of being a “worker” and instead woke up each morning and

did what I felt like doing. Most days I woke up without an alarm clock, worked out when I felt like it and wandered around the city on what used to be “normal” workdays. For the first time, I was able to deeply know the type of leisure that Pieper wrote about.

六个月的自由职业后，我为几个项目找到了一个不错的结束点，并决定设计自己的非工作休假。我放弃了作为一个“工作者”的责任，而是每天早上醒来后做自己想做的事情。大多数日子我不用闹钟就能醒来，想锻炼时就锻炼，想在原本的“正常”工作日里在城市里闲逛。这是我第一次真正体会到皮埃珀所写的那种休闲方式。

This was also confusing. When people asked how my work was going, I offered a hand-wavey response, trying to hide my guilt of pursuing such a radical experiment.

这也令人困惑。当人们问起我的工作进展时，我给出了一个含糊其辞的回答，试图隐藏我追求如此激进实验的内疚感。

Yet my excitement for life grew and my curiosity soared. I felt drawn to creative projects again as I had been in New York. One was a blog. For months I had intended to bring together the writing I had been doing under the name of “Boundless,” but had been distracted by freelance work. With time and a nudge from my friend Greg, I finally launched the site as well as a podcast of the same name. I didn’t intend to make money with these projects which still felt like the “wrong” approach, but I was finding work I really enjoyed doing. I was having fun.

然而，我对生活的兴奋增长了，我的好奇心也飙升了。我感到自己再次被创意项目所吸引，就像在纽约时一样。其中一个是一个博客。几个月来，我一直打算将我以“无限”为名的写作汇集起来，但一直被自由职业工作所分散注意力。经过一段时间和朋友格雷格的鼓励，我终于推出了这个网站，以及同名的播客。我并不打算通过这些项目赚钱，因为它们仍然感觉像是“错误”的方式，但我发现自己真的很喜欢做这些工作。我玩得很开心。

For the first time, I was living the intentions I had set years earlier that popped up every day on my phone: health, relationships, fun & creativity, and career. In my official, public story I was doing freelance consulting, but really I was taking my first sabbatical, learning how it felt to live life not oriented around work.

第一次，我正在过着多年前设定的意图，每天在手机上弹出的意图：健康，人际关系，乐趣与创造力以及事业。在我正式、公开的故事中，我正在做自由咨询，但实际上我正在度过我第一次的休假，学习如何过一种不以工作为导向的生活。

My projects started to transcend my understanding of work. In my life as a full-time employee, work was a Monday through Friday thing I tried to minimize. Now it didn't matter when I worked on my projects. They were energizing and rarely left me drained. For a long time, I had thought that if I wanted to be happier with my work, I just needed a better job. Now I saw that I just wanted a different relationship with work, one that, at least for now, didn't come with a paycheck.

我的项目开始超越我对工作的理解。在我作为全职员工的生活中，工作只是我尽量减少的周一到周五的事情。现在，我在项目上工作的时间不再重要。它们给我带来了能量，很少让我感到疲惫。很长一段时间以来，我一直认为，如果我想对我的工作更满意，我只需要一份更好的工作。现在我看到，我只是想要与工作有一个不同的关系，至少目前不需要有薪水。

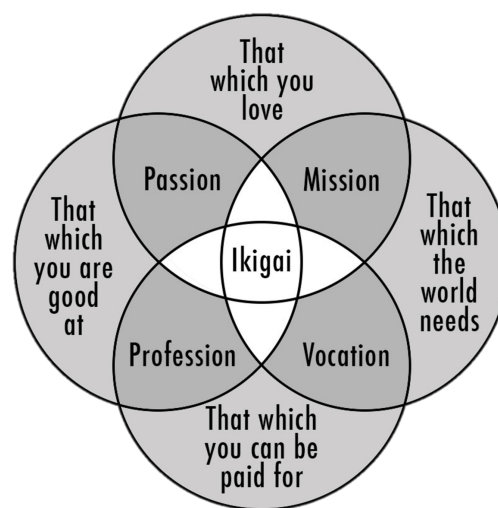
A lot of our confusion around work results from ideas like meaningful work and the widespread belief that we can always make money doing something we love. The blogger Marc Winn supercharged this idea in a viral meme. Winn translated a diagram created in 2011 by Andrés Zuzunaga and replaced the Spanish word for “purpose” with “Ikigai.”<sup>59</sup> In Winn's version, finding your Ikigai means aligning what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and what can be paid for.<sup>60</sup> You can see these two diagrams

here:

我们对工作的困惑很大程度上源于对有意义的工作和普遍认为我们总是能通过做自己喜欢的事情赚钱的观念的误解。博主马克·温恩在一个病毒式的迷因中加强了这个观念。温恩将安德烈斯·祖祖纳加在2011年创建的一个图表进行了翻译，并用“生き甲斐”替换了西班牙语中的“目的”。在温恩的版本中，找到你的生き甲斐意味着将你所热爱的事物、你擅长的事物、世界所需要的事物和可以付费的事物进行对齐。你可以在这里看到这两个图表：



Andrés Zuzunaga, 2011



Marc Winn, 2014

While many people have embraced this version of Ikigai, having discovered work I love doing that doesn't come with a paycheck, I've realized that it's wishful thinking. Plus, in Japanese, Ikigai is none of these things. Rather, its best translation is simply that it is a “reason for being” or “something to live for.”<sup>61</sup> Similar to expectations around meaningful work, far too many people limit their imagination of work worth doing to things that either come with a paycheck, require qualifications, or have a socially accepted story of impact. 虽然许多人接受了这种版本的生活目标，发现了一份我喜欢且不需要薪水的工作，但我意识到这只是一种美好的愿望。而且，在日语中，生活目标并不是这些东西。它最好的翻译只是“存在的理由”或“为之而活的东西”。与对有意义的工作的期望类似，太多人将值得做的工作的想象局限于那些带薪水、需要资格或具有社会认可影响力的事情。

If I limited myself in the same way I would have lost all energy to continue. For me, I was finding that the act of creation was the reward itself. The philosopher Erich Fromm has argued that “creative union,” or when “man unites himself with the world in the process of creation,” is a way to experience love.<sup>62</sup> I would have thought this completely absurd if I had not felt the depths of my connection to the world in those months.

如果我以同样的方式限制自己，我将失去继续下去的所有动力。对我来说，创造的行为本身就是奖励。哲学家埃里希·弗洛姆曾经争论过，“创造的联合”，或者说“人在创造的过程中与世界融为一体”，是一种体验爱的方式。如果在那几个月里我没有感受到与世界的深度联系，我会认为这完全荒谬。

After a few months of this, I was completely open to the world yet also starting to worry about eventually needing to make money again. Despite this, I had booked another month-long trip, this time to Asia. About a week before the trip, an opportunity emerged, one that would expand my own imagination about what was possible on my path.

几个月过去了，我完全敞开心扉迎接世界，但也开始担心最终需要再次赚钱。尽管如此，我已经预订了另一个为期一个月的旅行，这次是去亚洲。在旅行前大约一周，出现了一个机会，它将扩展我对自己的道路上可能性的想象。

A freelance recruiting company called me a week before the trip about an urgent client request to help them build a consulting skills training program. At first, I was disappointed because it was a project I wanted to do. I told the person I was leaving and that he needed to find someone else. He urged me to apply regardless. I decided to come up with terms that I would say “hell yes!” if they agreed. I would work on the job for 10–15 hours a week, for double the rate I had been charging other clients, and I would do it from Asia. I expected them to quickly reject this but to my surprise, they said yes within an hour of sending my proposal.

一家自由职业招聘公司在旅行前一周给我打电话，说有一个紧急客户要求帮助他们建立咨询技能培训项目。起初，我感到失望，因为这是我想做的项目。我告诉对方我要离开，他需要找别人。他坚持让我申请。我决定提出一些条件，如果他们同意，我会说“当然！”我每周会为这个工作投入10-15个小时，收费是我向其他客户收费的两倍，并且我会在亚洲完成。我以为他们会很快拒绝，但令我惊讶的是，他们在我发送提案的一个小时内就答应了。

Over the next few weeks, I worked in small bursts from a tiny Airbnb in government housing in Singapore, a luxury hotel in Kuala Lumpur, a café on a cliff in Bali, and the beach on an island in Thailand. In Bali, I commuted 30 seconds down the cliff from the \$20 surfer hostel I had rented to the café. I opened my laptop and drank thick, Balinese coffee while watching surfers in the distance. This weird kind of life was only possible due to the internet, and I could not have imagined it even one month earlier.

在接下来的几周里，我在新加坡政府住房的一个小型Airbnb、吉隆坡的一家豪华酒店、巴厘岛的悬崖咖啡馆以及泰国一个岛上的海滩上进行了小规模的工作。在巴厘岛，从我租的20美元冲浪旅馆下悬崖30秒钟的路程到达咖啡馆。我打开笔记本电脑，喝着浓郁的巴厘咖啡，同时观看远处的冲浪者。这种奇怪的生活方式只有因为有了互联网才可能实现，而我在一个月前甚至无法想象这一切。

In stepping away from my temporary identity as a freelance consultant, I let myself fully lean into what I would later call the pathless path. As I wandered Asia, my mind exploded with possibility. If it was possible to work from a laptop in Bali, what else had I not yet considered?

在放下我作为自由咨询顾问的临时身份后，我让自己完全投入到后来我称之为无路之路的道路中。当我漫游亚洲时，我的思绪充满了可能性。如果在巴厘岛可以用笔记本电脑工作，那还有什么其他我尚未考虑过的事情呢？

My imagination was open, and I was ready to see where it might take me.  
我的想象力是开放的，我准备好看看它会带我去哪里。

# 6

## The First Steps 第一步

The one who wonders not only does not know, he is intimately sure that he does not know, and he understands himself as being in a position of not-knowing. But this un-knowing is not the kind that brings resignation. The one who wonders is one who sets out on a journey, and this journey goes along with the wonder: not only that he stops short for a moment, and is silent, but also that he persists in searching. – *Joseph Pieper*

那个不仅不知道的人，他深刻地确信自己不知道，并且意识到自己处于不知道的位置。但这种不知道并不意味着放弃。那个好奇的人是一个踏上旅程的人，这个旅程伴随着好奇心：他不仅停下来片刻，保持沉默，而且坚持不懈地寻找。

## Prototype Your Leap 原型您的飞跃

Our tendency to glorify and simplify stories of people quitting their jobs convinces far too many people that this move is only possible for uniquely courageous people.

我们倾向于美化和简化人们辞职的故事，这使得太多人相信这种行动只有特别勇敢的人才能做到。



My story is not one of courage, but of pragmatic and safe experiments, experiences, and questioning over several years. This approach, one of prototyping a change, is not only a better way to think about taking bold leaps but is quite common across many people's stories.

我的故事并不是勇敢的故事，而是几年来实践、经验和质疑的务实和安全的实验。这种方法，即通过原型设计来进行改变，不仅是思考大胆跃迁的更好方式，而且在许多人的故事中非常常见。

I've developed a keen eye for seeing when there's more to a story beneath its surface. For example, when I saw an article by author and designer John Zeratsky titled, "I Quit My Job to Sail Around Central America for 18 Months," I knew immediately there was more. So I interviewed him for the podcast to find out just how he got to that point.

我对故事背后的更多内容有敏锐的洞察力。例如，当我看到作者和设计师约翰·泽拉茨基的一篇文章，标题为“我辞职了，为了环游中美洲18个月”，我立刻知道其中还有更多。所以我采访了他，想弄清楚他如何走到那一步的。

His story started several years earlier. He said, "before we left...we would take small sailing trips, we would go somewhere for one night...Later that year we would do that for a long weekend, then for a week, and then for two weeks. A couple of years before we left on the 'big trip' we went for two months."<sup>63</sup> It took several years and many smaller trips to decide that sailing for more than a year was something they definitely wanted to do.

他的故事始于几年前。他说：“在我们离开之前...我们会进行小型航行旅行，我们会去某个地方过一晚...那一年早些时候，我们会进行为期一个周末的旅行，然后是一个星期，再然后是两个星期。在我们开始‘大旅行’的几年前，我们进行了为期两个月的旅行。”经过几年的时间和许多小型旅行，他们决定进行一年以上的航行是他们确实想要做的事情。

This kind of approach, focused not on being brave, but instead on eliminating risk, is common for people who take unconventional paths. I hadn't set out to prototype a life beyond full-time work, but through freelance projects, coaching, paid speaking, writing, and connecting with people online, I achieved the same result. I knew what it felt like to work "differently" and make money on my own, and I learned to appreciate the "spirit of the fool" on an uncertain path. This was powerful because it helped me expand my perception of what I thought possible.

这种方法并不强调勇敢，而是着重于消除风险，对于选择非传统道路的人来说很常见。我并没有计划去尝试超越全职工作的生活，但通过自由职业项目、辅导、有偿演讲、写作和在网上与人们建立联系，我实现了同样的结果。我知道了“不同寻常”工作并独立赚钱的感觉，我学会了欣赏在不确定的道路上的“愚者精神”。这很有力量，因为它帮助我扩大了我认为可能的范围。

Diania Merriam had a similar experience in the years before she decided to leave her sales job. Her imagination was first sparked when she discovered the financially independent, retire early (FIRE) community. FIRE changed how she thought about money, which helped her get out of \$30,000 of debt in 11 months. After that, she negotiated with her manager to work remotely, which enabled her to move to Ohio and buy a house.

Diania Merriam在决定离开销售工作之前的几年里有着类似的经历。她的想象力首次被激发是在她发现了经济独立、提前退休（FIRE）社区之后。FIRE改变了她对金钱的思考方式，帮助她在11个月内还清了3万美元的债务。在那之后，她与经理协商远程工作，这使她能够搬到俄亥俄州并购买了一栋房子。

Without debt, she felt less dependent on her job and after a successful year in her sales job, she requested a two-month unpaid sabbatical instead of a pay raise.<sup>64</sup> Her dream was to walk the Camino de Santiago, a famous pilgrimage in Spain. She was prepared to quit if her manager said "no," but to her surprise, she said "yes" without much hesitation.

没有债务，她感到对工作的依赖减少了。在她销售工作的成功一年后，她要求休两个月的无薪休假，而不是加薪。她的梦想是走圣地亚哥之路，这是西班牙著名的朝圣之路。如果她的经理说“不”，她准备辞职，但令她惊讶的是，经理毫不犹豫地说“是”。

The trip was a powerful experience and her imagination continued to expand as she experienced more ownership over her life. These experiences inspired her to launch a conference called EconoMe for people like her who were reimagining the American Dream, and she continued to engage in many other projects beyond her job. A couple of years after launching the conference she was asked to help host a daily finance podcast. She was eventually offered a paid position to be the lead host. Although the pay was only one-third of her salary at the time, she thought it was a “manageable risk” and decided to use it as an opportunity to finally quit her job and explore the full potential of self-employment.

这次旅行是一次强烈的经历，随着她对生活的掌控力增强，她的想象力也不断扩展。这些经历激发了她发起了一个名为EconoMe的会议，为像她一样重新构想美国梦的人们提供平台，她还继续参与许多其他项目，超越了她的工作。在举办会议几年后，她被邀请帮助主持一档每日财经播客。最终，她被提供了一份有薪职位担任主持人。虽然薪水只有她当时工资的三分之一，但她认为这是一个“可控的风险”，决定将其作为一个机会，最终辞去工作，探索自雇的全部潜力。

Over several years, Diania was inadvertently prototyping new ways of living life. When she decided to quit, she already had some things she knew she wanted to work on such as her conference and an understanding of what it might feel like to live and work in a different way.

几年来，Diania无意中在原型中尝试了新的生活方式。当她决定辞职时，她已经知道自己想要做的一些事情，比如她的会议以及理解以不同方式生活和工作可能会有什么感觉。

Doing even a small experiment is scary, but the payoff can be profound. When I hosted a group coaching session in New York, I was extremely nervous. I had never done anything like it before, but by the end of the night, I knew that bringing together curious people around questions I was excited to explore was something worth being uncomfortable for. The more experiments I've done, the more comfortable I have become, and this gives me more freedom to try new things without being afraid.

做一个小实验都是令人害怕的，但回报可能是深远的。当我在纽约主持一次小组辅导会时，我非常紧张。我以前从未做过这样的事情，但到了晚上结束时，我知道聚集好奇的人围绕我感兴趣的问题是值得不舒服的。我做的实验越多，我就越舒服，这使我更有自由去尝试新事物而不害怕。

For most people, life is not based on all-or-nothing leaps of faith. That's a lie we tell ourselves so that we can remain comfortable in our current state. We simplify life transitions down to single moments because the real stories are more complex, harder to tell and attract less attention. The headline, "Quits To Live on a Sailboat" seems more impressive and is easier to talk about than "Couple Slowly and Purposefully Tests Out a Life Transition while Aggressively Saving Money over Five Years." As a result, we hear fewer of the real stories, most of which include some kind of prototyping. 对于大多数人来说，生活并不是基于全然的信仰飞跃。这是我们对自已说的谎言，以便我们可以在当前状态下保持舒适。我们将生活过渡简化为单一的时刻，因为真实的故事更加复杂，更难以讲述，并且吸引的关注较少。标题“辞职去住帆船”似乎更令人印象深刻，更容易谈论，而不是“夫妇在五年时间里缓慢而有目的地测试生活过渡，同时积极储蓄”。因此，我们听到的真实故事更少，其中大部分包括某种形式的原型制作。

By experimenting with different ways of showing up in the world and making small, deliberate changes, we can open ourselves up to the unexpected opportunities, possibilities, and connections that might tell us

what comes next.

通过尝试以不同的方式展现自己，并做出小而有意意识的改变，我们可以打开自己的心扉，迎接意想不到的机遇、可能性和联系，这些可能会告诉我们接下来会发生什么。

## Wonder Tips the Scales 奇妙的技巧左右天平

Many people dislike some parts of their jobs. But they stay in their jobs because their suffering is familiar. To change would be to trade the known for the unknown and change brings discomfort in hard to predict forms. So people avoid change and develop coping strategies. They learn to sidestep the manipulative manager, or like me, change jobs every couple of years, plan vacations, stay busy, and get drunk during the weekend. Play this game long enough without becoming too burned out and you might end up getting promoted.

许多人不喜欢自己工作的某些方面。但他们留在工作岗位上，因为他们对这种痛苦感到熟悉。改变意味着将已知的东西换成未知的东西，而改变会带来难以预测的不适感。所以人们避免改变，并发展出应对策略。他们学会绕过操纵性的经理，或者像我一样，每隔几年换工作，计划度假，保持忙碌，并在周末喝醉。如果你能够长时间玩这个游戏而不过度疲惫，你可能最终会得到晋升。

We can explain this strategy with a simple equation:  
我们可以用一个简单的方程来解释这个策略：

Uncertain Discomfort < Certain Discomfort + Coping Mechanism

In other words, given sufficient coping strategies, people will be willing to tolerate consistent levels of misery for long stretches of time. Is there anything that can override this? In my conversations with people who have made changes in their life, one thing seems to work reliably: wonder.

换句话说，如果有足够的应对策略，人们愿意忍受长时间的持续痛苦。有什么可以改变这种情况吗？在我与那些改变了生活的人的对话中，有一件事似乎总是有效的：好奇心。

Wonder is the state of being open to the world, its beauty, and potential possibilities. With wonder, the need to cope becomes less important and the discomfort on the current path becomes more noticeable. The equation becomes:

惊奇是一种对世界、美丽和潜在可能性敞开心扉的状态。有了惊奇，应对需求变得不那么重要，而当前道路上的不适变得更加明显。方程变为：

Uncertain Discomfort + Wonder > Certain Discomfort

In thoughts about the future, worry is traded for wonder. People stop thinking about worst-case scenarios and begin to imagine the benefits of following an uncertain path. They get curious about who they might become if they embrace discomfort and are filled with a sense of urgency that says, “if I don’t do this now, I might regret it.”

在对未来的思考中，担忧被换成了好奇。人们不再考虑最糟糕的情况，开始想象追随一条不确定的道路可能带来的好处。他们对自己可能成为的人感到好奇，如果能接受不适并充满紧迫感地说：“如果我现在不这样做，可能会后悔。”

Michael Ashcroft had worked as a consultant in the energy sector for almost ten years when he decided to quit and become self-employed. An experience with burnout motivated him to prototype different kinds of work that might enable him to leave his job like teaching online courses and coaching. Before he left his job, he told me, “I have a suspicion that a whole bunch of energy will get unlocked. I’ll just start doing things, and creating things and talking to people, and going to places...that I cannot fundamentally imagine right now, and it will be that stuff that shapes my life going forward...I am curious what else will show up.”<sup>65</sup> He was able to

take the leap because he had tapped into the power of wonder, enabling him to be excited about an uncertain future.

迈克尔·阿什克罗夫在能源行业担任顾问近十年后决定辞职，自谋职业。一次疲劳过度的经历激励他尝试不同类型的工作，比如在线教授课程和辅导，以便能够离开他的工作。在他离职之前，他告诉我：“我怀疑会有一大堆能量被释放出来。我将开始做事情、创造事物、与人交流、去不同的地方……这些我现在无法想象的事情将塑造我未来的生活……我很好奇还会有什么其他的事情出现。”他能够迈出这一步，是因为他发掘了好奇心的力量，使他对不确定的未来感到兴奋。

The travel writer Rolf Potts first experienced the power of possibility and wonder at the end of an eight-month trip he took around the United States when he was young. It was the first time he “[let] the journey breathe” and embraced a slower pace of travel. He described a complete transformation: “Who I was before and after was best defined as I was uncertain before the trip and I was confident after the trip in terms of what the potential for life was.”<sup>66</sup>

旅行作家罗尔夫·波茨在年轻时曾经历过可能性和奇迹的力量，这发生在他环游美国八个月之后。那是他第一次“让旅程自由呼吸”，拥抱了更慢的旅行节奏。他描述了一个完全的转变：“在旅行之前和之后，我最好的定义是在旅行之前我是不确定的，而在旅行之后我对生活的潜力是有信心的。”

I experienced a similar feeling after working remotely and traveling through Asia for that month. My path was more uncertain than ever, but the possibilities exploding in my mind overwhelmed any chance for my insecurity to take over.

在那个月远程工作并在亚洲旅行后，我经历了类似的感觉。我的道路比以往任何时候都更加不确定，但脑海中涌动的可能性压倒了我不安的机会。

One challenge to embracing possibility is knowing when to override what psychology professors Gilovich and Davidai call our “‘ought to’ self.” This is the voice that helps us follow through on commitments but can also keep us from making changes in our lives. This is the voice that might convince you that leaving a job is an abdication of responsibility. We “ought to” keep working. This impulse is helpful most of the time, but compounded over one’s life it stops us from moving towards what Gilovich and Davidai call our “ideal self.” When people reflect on their lives, these are the things that people regret most – not moving towards their ideal selves. The professors argue that people rarely regret the things they do in their lives. This is exactly because of the power of our “ought to” selves – even if we fail, we tend to take immediate action to fix those mistakes.<sup>67</sup>

拥抱可能性的一个挑战是知道何时要推翻心理学教授吉洛维奇和大卫艾所称的“‘应该’自我”。这是一个声音，帮助我们坚持承诺，但也可能阻止我们改变生活。这个声音可能会说服你，离开工作是对责任的放弃。我们“应该”继续工作。这种冲动在大多数情况下是有帮助的，但在一个人的一生中累积起来，它阻止我们朝着吉洛维奇和大卫艾所称的“理想自我”前进。当人们反思自己的生活时，这些是人们最后悔的事情-没有朝着他们的理想自我前进。教授们认为，人们很少后悔他们在生活中做的事情。这正是因为我们的“应该”自我的力量-即使我们失败，我们倾向于立即采取行动来纠正这些错误。

The author Gretchen Rubin decided to override her “ought to” self when she said, “I’ve come to a point where I’d rather fail as a writer than succeed as a lawyer, and I need to try and fail or try and succeed, but I need to do it.”<sup>68</sup> Rubin attended Yale Law School, clerked for Sandra Day O’Connor on the Supreme Court, and was at the start of a high-paying and promising law career. Yet, she understood that if she kept going and never took a chance on becoming a writer, she would regret it.

作者格雷琴·鲁宾决定放弃她的“应该”自己，她说：“我已经到了宁愿作为一名作家失败，也不愿作为一名律师成功的地步，我需要尝试并失败，或者尝试并成功，但我必须去做。”鲁宾曾就读于耶鲁法学院，在最高法院为桑德拉·戴·奥康纳担任助理法官，并且在一段高薪有前途



的律师生涯的起点。然而，她明白如果她继续下去，从不冒险成为一名作家，她会后悔。

Making life changes requires overcoming the discomfort of not knowing what will happen. Facing uncertainty, we make long mental lists of things that might go wrong and use these as the reasons why we must stay on our current path. Learning to have a healthy distrust of this impulse and knowing that even if things go wrong, we might discover things worth finding can help us open ourselves up to the potential for wonderful things to happen. Only when you reach this state are you at the same point as Rubin was, with no questions left about taking the next step. And don't worry, even if you do screw up a little, your "ought to" self is standing by, ready to help make things right.

进行生活改变需要克服不知道会发生什么的不适感。面对不确定性，我们会列出一长串可能出错的事情，并将其作为我们必须坚持当前道路的理由。学会对这种冲动保持健康的怀疑，并知道即使事情出错，我们可能会发现值得发现的东西，这可以帮助我们敞开心扉，迎接美好事物的可能性。只有当你达到这种状态时，你才和鲁宾一样，对下一步毫无疑问。而且不用担心，即使你稍微搞砸了一点，你的“应该”自我也会站在一旁，准备帮助你把事情弄对。

## Seeing the World in a New Way 以新的方式看世界

Opening yourself up to the possibilities for your life can help you decide to make a life shift, but it will not help you deal with the uncertainty of being on a path that others don't fully understand.

打开自己对生活可能性的接受能帮助你决定进行生活转变，但它无法帮助你应对其他人无法完全理解的道路上的不确定性。

In the months leading up to leaving my job and the year or two after quitting, I struggled to make sense of my journey. When others asked how I was doing, I felt compelled to give them proof that I had a plan and knew what I was doing. It was not until I found the philosopher Agnes Callard's idea of an aspirational journey that I started to be more comfortable not knowing where I was headed.

在离职前的几个月和辞职后的一两年里，我努力理解自己的旅程。当别人问我过得怎么样时，我感到有必要给他们证明我有计划，知道自己在做什么。直到我发现哲学家阿格尼丝·卡拉德关于理想旅程的观点，我才开始更加舒服地不知道自己的目标在哪里。

Callard defines aspiration as the slow process of “trying on the values that we hope one day to possess.”<sup>69</sup> This is in contrast to an ambitious journey where we already know what we value. For example, someone who wants to make a lot of money already values money. They don't need to learn why they want it along the way. An aspirational journey is more ambiguous, and it is harder to predict what sort of values we will adopt along the way.

Callard将渴望定义为“试穿我们希望有一天拥有的价值观的缓慢过程”。这与一个我们已经知道自己珍视什么的雄心勃勃的旅程形成对比。例如，想要赚很多钱的人已经珍视金钱。他们不需要在途中学习为什么他们想要它。渴望的旅程更加模糊，很难预测我们将在途中采纳哪种价值观。

When we reflect, we find many examples of aspirational journeys in our lives. One example in my life is my love of basketball. When I was younger, I was obsessed with it. I played the sport, watched it, collected trading cards, and read books about the history of the game. I came to understand what I loved and valued about basketball only by continuing to stay interested. Now, when I watch a game and see an incredible play, it moves me in a way that I can't quite articulate. To casual fans, this beauty remains hidden. I've never had any sort of outcome in mind with my love of basketball. Instead, it's been a constant decision to continue to learn and

stay engaged with the sport.

当我们反思时，我们会发现生活中有许多追求的旅程的例子。在我的生活中，一个例子就是我对篮球的热爱。当我年轻的时候，我对篮球着迷。我打篮球，观看比赛，收集交换卡片，读有关篮球历史的书籍。只有通过持续保持兴趣，我才能理解我对篮球的热爱和价值。现在，当我观看比赛并看到一个令人难以言喻的精彩表演时，它会以一种我无法言喻的方式感动我。对于普通观众来说，这种美丽仍然隐藏着。我对篮球的热爱从来没有特定的结果。相反，这是一个持续学习和保持对这项运动的参与的不断决定。

This journey contrasts with my pure ambition in college. I took classes with the sole intention of getting the best grade possible. I did not change radically as a person because nothing was at stake. I already valued good grades, which were proof to other people that I was succeeding at a certain kind of game. While ambition does not preclude aspiration, Callard argues that ambition “consumes much of an agent’s efforts and does not expand his value horizons.”<sup>70</sup>

这段旅程与我在大学时的纯粹野心形成了鲜明对比。我上课的唯一目的就是取得最好的成绩。我并没有因为什么事情都没有风险而发生根本性的变化。我已经珍视好成绩，这是向他人证明我在某种游戏中取得成功的证明。虽然野心并不排斥抱负，但卡拉德认为野心“消耗了一个人的大部分努力，却没有扩展他的价值视野。”

Aspirational pursuits go hand in hand with the pathless path because they can appear incomprehensible to others and even yourself, sometimes for years. Callard argues that the aspirant’s understanding of the value of their pursuits “is characterized by a distinctive kind of vagueness, one she experiences as defective and in need of remedy.”<sup>71</sup>

追求理想与无路之路相辅相成，因为它们对他人甚至自己来说有时可能是难以理解的，甚至可能持续数年。Callard认为，追求者对于他们

追求的价值理解“具有一种独特的模糊性，她将其视为有缺陷并需要纠正。”

Learning to exist with this vagueness is vital, especially at the earliest stages of making a change. It's worth it though, because as Callard says, what is really at stake is you are “learning to see the world in a new way.” 学会与这种模糊存在相处是至关重要的，尤其是在进行改变的最早阶段。虽然这值得，因为正如Callard所说，真正重要的是你正在“学会以一种新的方式看待世界。”

## Find the Others 找到其他人

According to Callard, people on aspirational journeys, or what I call the pathless path, are “characteristically needy people.” Because their worldviews are incomplete and evolving, they are dependent on the support of other people.

根据卡拉德的说法，追求理想的人，或者我所称之为无路可循的人，是“典型的需要帮助的人”。因为他们的世界观不完整且不断发展，他们依赖其他人的支持。

My family is filled with people who have thrived on the default path. I had many great role models who taught me the value of hard work, discipline, and commitment, but only on one kind of path. In addition, most of my friends were solidly committed to their full-time jobs. When I was starting to think about taking a different path, I had to find inspiration from podcasts and social media where people like Seth Godin, Derek Sivers, and Tim Ferriss exposed me to a broader set of ideas of how to live and work.

我的家庭中充满了在默认路径上取得成功的人。我有很多伟大的榜样，他们教会了我努力工作、纪律和承诺的价值观，但只限于一种路

径。此外，我的大多数朋友都坚定地致力于全职工作。当我开始考虑走一条不同的道路时，我不得不从播客和社交媒体中寻找灵感，像塞斯·高汀、德里克·西弗斯和蒂姆·费里斯这样的人向我展示了更广泛的生活和工作理念。

The person I was most drawn to, Seth Godin, had built a life around creativity, generosity, and helping others. I didn't know if I could be like Godin, but knowing that someone like him existed made me believe that kind of path was possible. One of the ideas that Seth Godin is known for is his suggestion that people on unconventional paths seek to "find the others." These are the people who give us inspiration that doing things differently is possible and who might even join us on our journey.

我最被吸引的人是塞思·高汀，他以创造力、慷慨和帮助他人建立了自己的生活。我不知道自己是否能像高汀一样，但知道有像他这样的人存在让我相信这样的道路是可能的。塞思·高汀以寻找“其他人”为人所知，他建议那些选择非传统道路的人去寻找那些能给我们灵感的人，让我们相信不同的做事方式是可能的，甚至可能与我们一同踏上旅程。

It's no surprise then that many people who take unconventional paths often grew up surrounded by people in their families who also took unconventional paths. Chris Donohoe worked in the consulting industry for several years before launching his own coaching business. He had always been inspired by "an entrepreneurial thread" in his family along with their "work for yourself mentality, and I've always had that as part of who I am."<sup>72</sup> For him, quitting to start his own business was natural.

许多选择非传统道路的人往往在成长过程中身边都有家人选择了非传统道路，所以这并不奇怪。克里斯·多诺霍在咨询行业工作了几年后，开始了自己的教练业务。他一直受到家人中的“创业精神”以及他们的“为自己工作的心态”的启发，这也一直是他自己的一部分。对他来说，辞职开始自己的事业是很自然的。

Others find the others in unexpected places. Lydia Lee, who left a sales job in education in Canada, now runs an online coaching business from Bali and Canada. On a trip she took to Malaysia while still working full-time, she met a digital nomad who was running a marketing firm from his laptop: “being able to meet him in real life...made me realize I could work from my laptop.”<sup>73</sup> Meeting that person and her small, but powerful realization planted a seed in Lydia’s mind. Even though it would be another six months before she quit her job, she knew a different way of living was possible. 其他人在意想不到的地方找到其他人。离开加拿大的教育销售工作后，李莉迪亚现在在巴厘岛和加拿大经营一家在线辅导业务。在她还在全职工作的时候，她去马来西亚旅行时遇到了一个从笔记本电脑上经营营销公司的数字游牧者：“能够在现实生活中见到他.....让我意识到我也可以从我的笔记本电脑上工作。”与那个人的相遇和她的小而强大的领悟在李莉迪亚的脑海中种下了一颗种子。尽管在她辞职之前还要过上六个月，但她知道有一种不同的生活方式是可能的。

While Lydia happened upon this person by chance and I found people through social media, I suggest people take a more active approach to find what I call “path experts.” These are people ahead of you on a path you might be interested in taking. It could be someone who left a job like yours or someone exploring a way of living that fascinates you. Nine times out of ten these people will be enthusiastic about connecting with you because they are still searching for people to learn from on their own journey. 虽然Lydia是偶然遇到这个人的，而我是通过社交媒体找到的人，我建议人们采取更积极的方式去寻找我所称之为“路径专家”的人。这些人在你可能感兴趣的道路上走在你前面。可能是离开了和你一样的工作的人，或者是探索一种你着迷的生活方式的人。十次中有九次，这些人会热衷于与你联系，因为他们仍在寻找自己旅程中的学习对象。

I like to joke that Seth Godin was my only friend on the path before I quit my job. I had read several of his books and devoured all of his podcasts. In today's world, we are lucky to have an abundance of people sharing their stories with us. However, this kind of digital inspiration is often only helpful at the beginning of the journey. Ultimately, you need to find people who are open to a deeper friendship and willing to spend meaningful time together.

我喜欢开玩笑说，在我辞职之前，塞思·高汀是我在这条道路上唯一的朋友。我读过他的几本书，也听过他的所有播客。在今天的世界里，我们很幸运能有很多人与我们分享他们的故事。然而，这种数字化的灵感通常只对旅程的开始有帮助。最终，你需要找到那些愿意深入交往并愿意花费有意义时间的人。

I was lucky to stumble upon a few people on the pathless path who would become these kinds of friends at a conference I attended only a few months after quitting my job. I met Noel Boyland, who left a promising consulting career in his early 40s after a health crisis. He's since become the mentor and friend I reach out to when I'm struggling and need a dose of courage. I also met Nita Baum, a consultant, coach, and founder of a talent collective who led a workshop during the conference. In our first conversation, she seemed to know everything about me without needing to ask. When you meet others on a similar path, there is an instant bond and a deep sense of knowing about the challenges you are both going through. You can smile in a way that says, "I know, I know," skip the "what do you do?" question, and start a deeper conversation.

我很幸运在辞职几个月后参加的一次会议上，偶然遇到了几个在无路可走的道路上成为这种朋友的人。我遇到了诺埃尔·博伊兰德，他在40多岁时因健康危机而放弃了有前途的咨询职业。自那以后，他成为了我在困难时寻求勇气的导师和朋友。我还遇到了尼塔·鲍姆，一位顾问、教练和人才集体的创始人，在会议期间主持了一个研讨会。在我们的第一次交谈中，她似乎无需询问就了解我所有的事情。当你遇到其他走在类似道路上的人时，会立即建立起一种纽带，对彼此所面临的挑战有一种深刻的认知。你可以微笑着说，“我知道，我知道”，跳过“你做什么工作？”的问题，开始一场更深入的对话。

On the pathless path, people like this are essential. You might find them in your family like Chris, while traveling like Lydia, or at a conference like I did. These relationships offer a space where you don't need to have good answers for what you are doing or what comes next. Two "characteristically needy people," as Callard describes them, isn't a recipe for disaster. In my experience, it's usually an opportunity for a beautiful friendship.

在无路可寻的道路上，像这样的人是必不可少的。你可能会在你的家庭中找到像克里斯这样的人，或者在旅行中像莉迪亚一样，或者在会议上像我一样。这些关系提供了一个空间，你不需要对自己正在做什么或接下来会发生什么有好的答案。正如卡拉德所描述的那样，两个“典型的需要帮助的人”并不是灾难的原因。根据我的经验，这通常是一个美好友谊的机会。

On my previous path, there was a hidden cost to my success. The consistent financial rewards helped me live a smooth existence, needing to rely less on others the more I succeeded. In some circles, this is celebrated as the ultimate aim of life, but for me it led to a certain emptiness that I didn't fully understand until I found myself on a path that forced me to find the others.

在我之前的道路上，成功是有隐藏成本的。持续的经济回报帮助我过上了平稳的生活，随着我越来越成功，我越来越不需要依赖他人。在某些圈子里，这被庆祝为生活的终极目标，但对我来说，这导致了一种特定的空虚，直到我发现自己走上了一条迫使我去寻找他人的道路，我才完全理解这种空虚。

## **Tame Your Fears**

### **驯服你的恐惧**

You can leave the default path before facing your fears, but the pathless path forces you to reckon with them no matter what. I've come to see this



as a benefit and I've shifted from someone that kept my fears buried beneath the surface to being aware of my fears and seeing them as tiny but manageable existential crises that are an inevitable part of an uncertain journey.

你可以在面对恐惧之前选择默认路径，但无路可循的路径会迫使你无论如何都要面对它们。我已经意识到这是一种好处，我已经从一个将恐惧埋藏在表面下的人转变为意识到自己的恐惧，并将它们视为微小但可管理的存在危机，这是不确定旅程中不可避免的一部分。

Although people considering the option of leaving the default path can list hundreds of things that might go wrong, they struggle to talk about the fears behind those risks. In hundreds of conversations with people, I've found that these fears fall into one of the following five areas:

尽管考虑离开默认路径的人可以列举出可能出错的数百件事情，但他们很难谈论这些风险背后的恐惧。在与人们进行的数百次对话中，我发现这些恐惧可以归结为以下五个领域：

1. Success: "What if I'm not good enough?"  
成功：“如果我不够好呢？”
2. Money: "What happens if I go broke?"  
钱：“如果我破产了会发生什么？”
3. Health: "What if I get sick?"  
健康：“如果我生病了怎么办？”
4. Belonging: "Will I still be loved?"  
归属：“我还会被爱吗？”
5. Happiness: "What if I am not happy?"  
幸福：“如果我不快乐呢？”

During my first few years of self-employment, these fears overwhelmed me, but Tim Ferriss' "fear setting" reflection exercise helped me reframe them and see fear in a completely new way.<sup>74</sup>

在我自雇的头几年里，这些恐惧压倒了我，但蒂姆·费里斯的“恐惧设定”反思练习帮助我重新构建了它们，并以全新的方式看待恐惧。

The exercise has six steps. The first four are straightforward:

这个练习有六个步骤。前四个步骤很简单：

1. Write down the change you are making.  
写下你正在进行的改变。
2. List the worst possible outcomes.  
列出最糟糕的可能结果。
3. Identify actions you could take to mitigate those actions.  
确定您可以采取的行动来减轻这些行动。
4. List some steps or actions you might take to get back to where you are today.  
列出一些你可能采取的步骤或行动，以回到你今天的位置。

Writing about fears has helped me transform abstract worries into concrete issues. When I wrote that I was afraid of going broke after I quit my job, I realized that there were fifty different things I could do to make money.

写下对恐惧的描述帮助我将抽象的担忧转化为具体的问题。当我写下我害怕在辞职后破产时，我意识到我可以做五十件不同的事情来赚钱。

However, some fear-related problems cannot be solved. The authors of *Designing Your Life* offer a helpful reframe, calling these issues “gravity problems” which are part of life “...but, like gravity, it’s not a problem that can be solved.”<sup>25</sup> This phrase helps me sit with my discomfort when I worry about my health. Due to lingering health issues, I sometimes go long stretches with very little energy. Reminding myself that this is a fact of life, like gravity, helps me accept the uncertainties of life and the pathless path. 然而，有些与恐惧相关的问题无法解决。《设计人生》的作者提供了一个有帮助的重新定义，将这些问题称为“重力问题”，它们是生活的一部分，但“就像重力一样，它不是一个可以解决的问题。”这个短语帮助我在担心健康时接受自己的不适。由于持续的健康问题，我有时

会长时间感到精力不足。提醒自己这是生活的一个事实，就像重力一样，帮助我接受生活的不确定性和无路可循的道路。

The final two questions of Ferriss' exercise are the most powerful:  
费里斯练习的最后两个问题是最有力的：

1. What could be some benefits of an attempt or partial success?  
尝试或部分成功可能有哪些好处？
2. What is the cost of inaction in three months, 12 months, and in a few years?  
三个月、十二个月和几年内不采取行动的成本是多少？

This shifts the focus from the future, which is inherently uncertain, to the present, which helps us see our tendency to overestimate future costs and underestimate costs related to the status quo.

这将把焦点从未来转移到现在，因为未来本质上是不确定的，而现在可以帮助我们看到我们倾向于高估未来成本和低估与现状相关的成本。

Bronnie Ware has taken care of many elderly people in the final stages of their lives. In a blog post titled, "Five Regrets of The Dying," one of the most viewed online posts, she shared her reflections. The most common regret? Not staying "true to themselves" in their lives and focusing too much on what others expected of them.

Bronnie Ware照顾过许多生命最后阶段的老年人。在一篇名为《垂死者的五个遗憾》的博文中，这是最受关注的在线帖子之一，她分享了自己的思考。最常见的遗憾是？在生活中没有保持“真实的自我”，过于关注他人对他们的期望。

The reason articles like this get so much attention is because they get to the heart of what matters to many people, how we spend our lives. Reflections

from people at the end of their lives often share similar sentiments, yet very few people know to directly apply it to their lives. The pathless path, however, offers a unique invitation to grapple with our insecurities. If we can accept the invitation, we can continue to ask and then hopefully answer questions about what we really want.

这类文章引起如此多的关注的原因是因为它们触及了许多人关心的核心问题，即我们如何度过生活。人们在生命的尽头常常分享类似的感悟，然而很少有人知道如何直接将其应用到自己的生活中。然而，这条无路之路提供了一个独特的邀请，让我们去面对自己的不安。如果我们能接受这个邀请，我们就可以继续提出并希望回答关于我们真正想要的问题。

## Will They Still Love You? 他们还会爱你吗？

I have talked with hundreds of people considering a change in their relationship to work or pursuing an alternative path, and one question consistently gets to the heart of their fears: “will the people in your life love you less if you do this?” It’s a terrifying question, but worth considering because many people will override their own desires to meet the perceived expectations of others, such as a spouse or parent.

我与数百人讨论过改变他们与工作关系或追求其他道路的问题，其中一个问题始终触及他们的恐惧核心：“如果你这样做，你生活中的人会不会爱你更少？”这是一个可怕的问题，但值得考虑，因为许多人会为了满足他人的期望（如配偶或父母）而放弃自己的欲望。

In my first year of self-employment, I knew I wanted to stay on my path, but lacking Callard’s language of an aspirational journey, I didn’t know how to make any sort of compelling case for why this was true. I shied away from criticism and questions from others, fearful that they would throw me into self-doubt. To protect myself, I overcorrected and developed something my friend Visakan Veerasamy calls “preemptive defensiveness.” I saw

myself in opposition to the world, seeing the simplest question as an attack on everything I stood for.

在我自雇的第一年，我知道我想要继续走自己的道路，但是缺乏卡拉德所说的渴望之旅的语言，我不知道如何提出任何令人信服的理由来证明这一点。我回避了来自他人的批评和问题，害怕他们会让我产生自我怀疑。为了保护自己，我过度修正，形成了我朋友维萨坎·维拉萨米所称的“预防性防御”。我把自己看作是与世界对立的，把最简单的问题视为对我所代表的一切的攻击。

After my month-long trip to Asia and experiencing the possibility of working remotely, I had decided to move there for several months that fall. Yet, I hid this from my parents for more than two months despite putting in motion a plan to end my lease, sell most of my stuff, and return to Asia. In fact, they didn't even find out from me, they heard it from my cousin. I was too scared of having the conversation.

在我去亚洲旅行一个月并体验到远程工作的可能性后，我决定在那个秋天去那里生活几个月。然而，尽管我已经开始计划结束租约、卖掉大部分物品并返回亚洲，但我对父母隐瞒了两个多月。事实上，他们并不是从我口中得知的，而是从我的表弟那里听说的。我太害怕进行这个谈话了。

A month before I left, I attended a wedding with my family and eventually faced the inevitable questions. At the hotel, everyone started asking: Why was I moving to Taiwan? Wasn't I worried about healthcare? Would I ever have a "real job" again? Didn't I want a family at some point? Why was I doing this? What was my long-term plan?

在我离开前一个月，我和家人一起参加了一场婚礼，最终面对了不可避免的问题。在酒店里，每个人都开始问：我为什么要搬到台湾？我不担心医疗保健吗？我还会有“真正的工作”吗？我不想要一个家庭吗？我为什么要这样做？我的长期计划是什么？

I felt under attack and that I had disappointed the people that mattered most. My parents had sacrificed so much for me and I felt selfish. Now I know they were coming from a place of love and concern and didn't want to see me suffer. But then, instead of sharing my own fear and uncertainty, I tried to convince them that my evolving vision of the pathless path was the best approach to life.

我感到受到了攻击，觉得自己让最重要的人失望了。我的父母为我付出了很多，我感到自私。现在我知道他们是出于爱和关心，不想看到我受苦。但当时，我没有分享自己的恐惧和不确定性，而是试图说服他们，我对无路可走的道路的演变视为生活的最佳方式。

Unfortunately, the pathless path is an aspirational path and can never be fully explained, as Callard tells us, so attempts to convince people that you are moving in the right direction can be futile. People who value comfort and security often cannot understand why anyone would willingly pursue a path that increases discomfort and uncertainty.

不幸的是，无路可寻的道路是一条理想的道路，无法完全解释，正如卡拉德告诉我们的那样，因此试图说服别人你正在朝着正确的方向前进可能是徒劳的。那些看重舒适和安全的人往往无法理解为什么有人愿意追求增加不适和不确定性的道路。

This path offers profound personal growth, but its benefits often remain invisible to others. When you are on such a path, you are hyper-aware of this disconnect, and this can cause a lot of distress. Amy McMillen, who took a year off after only a year in the workforce, recalls the questions that raced through her mind when she took an extended break from work a couple years into her career, "What will people think of me? I don't even know what to think of me. Am I being completely irresponsible? Do my parents think I'm a failure? Are my friends as supportive as they seem, or do they think I've gone off the deep end?"<sup>76</sup>

这条道路提供了深刻的个人成长，但其好处常常对他人来说是看不见的。当你走在这样的道路上时，你会对这种脱节感非常敏感，这可能

会引起很多困扰。艾米·麦克米伦在工作仅一年后休假一年，回忆起她在职业生涯的前几年休长假时脑海中闪过的问题：“别人会怎么看我？我自己都不知道该怎么看待自己。我是不是完全不负责任？我父母会不会认为我是个失败者？我的朋友们是真的支持我，还是他们认为我已经疯了？”

But thinking through such questions can be helpful. In particular, I've found the question, "will the people in your life love you less?" powerful because it addresses the scariest and deepest issues. I didn't want to disappoint my parents. I desperately wanted to convince them that I was doing the right thing. However, had I understood that I feared losing their love, I would have realized that the wiser response would have been to open up my heart and be vulnerable.

但是思考这样的问题可能会有所帮助。特别是，我发现这个问题：“你生活中的人会不会因此而爱你更少？”非常有力，因为它涉及到最可怕和最深层次的问题。我不想让父母失望。我非常希望能够说服他们我在做正确的事情。然而，如果我明白我害怕失去他们的爱，我就会意识到更明智的反应应该是敞开心扉，变得脆弱。

At peak uncertainty, I was about to step fully onto the pathless path when I headed halfway around the world to Taiwan. I brought several questions with me. I knew there might not be answers, but I sensed that there was something to be found.

在最不确定的时候，我正要完全踏上没有路径的道路，当我前往台湾时，我绕了半个地球。我带着几个问题来到这里。我知道可能没有答案，但我感觉到有些东西可以找到。

## II

# The Pathless Path 无路之路



# 7

## Wisdom of the Pathless Path 无路之智慧

*August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 (My Newsletter)* - In seven days, I'll be boarding a flight to Taipei to begin a chapter in my life of living and working nomadically. As I've simplified my life and embraced minimalism, I noticed that I have had more time and have been in less of a rush to "do things," giving me the chance to take routes that don't make sense, go for random walks through the city and make time to have conversations I wouldn't otherwise have. I feel so lucky and as I make the shift to Taipei, it seems much less a "vacation" or "trip" and much more an extension of an increased appreciation for life and the people in it.

2018年8月31日（我的通讯）- 在七天后，我将搭乘飞往台北的航班，开始我生活和工作的游牧生涯。随着我简化生活并拥抱极简主义，我注意到我有更多的时间，不再匆忙地“做事情”，这让我有机会选择一些看似没有意义的路线，随意在城市中漫步，并抽出时间进行我本来不会有的对话。我感到非常幸运，当我转移到台北时，它似乎不再是一个“度假”或“旅行”，而更像是对生活和其中的人们更加珍视的延伸。

\* \* \*

## The Life-Changing Magic of Non-Doing 非做的魔力改变生活

I rolled out of my twin bed and made my way into the living room in the small Airbnb apartment I had booked for my first couple of months in Taipei. It was the fall of 2018 and I had just moved across the globe. I started the coffeemaker and thought about my day and my week. I realized that there was nothing to do.

我从双人床上爬起来，走进我在台北预订的小型Airbnb公寓的客厅。那是2018年的秋天，我刚刚横跨地球搬迁过来。我启动了咖啡机，思考着我的一天和一周。我意识到没有什么事情可做。

Technically I was a self-employed freelancer, but I didn't yet have any clients. I had intentions of becoming what people refer to as a "digital nomad," being able to work from anywhere in the world, but didn't know how I would turn that into reality. I was also 33 years old, single, and had recently declared to my friends that I was giving up on dating and shifting to the "cool uncle" phase of my life.

从技术上讲，我是一名自由职业者，但我还没有任何客户。我有意成为人们所说的“数字游牧者”，能够在世界任何地方工作，但不知道如何实现这一目标。我现在33岁，单身，并且最近向朋友们宣布我放弃了约会，进入了“酷叔叔”生活阶段。

But just a year later I would be planning a tiny wedding, figuring out how to grow the business I created, realizing that writing was an essential part of my journey, and most of all, trying to make sense of my new, deep appreciation for life. Rebecca Solnit supplies the words I didn't have at the time:

但仅仅一年后，我将计划一场小型婚礼，思考如何发展我创建的业务，意识到写作是我旅程中必不可少的一部分，最重要的是，努力理解我对生活的新深刻欣赏。Rebecca Solnit提供了我当时没有的话语。

That thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you is usually what you need to find, and finding it is a matter of getting lost.<sup>22</sup>

通常你需要找到的那个你完全不了解的东西，就是你需要迷失自己去寻找的东西。

When I arrived in Taipei, I was lost in both the story of my life and in this new place where I couldn't read the signs or speak the language. Yet I also felt I was exactly where I was supposed to be, my days filled with lightness and ease.

当我抵达台北时，我在我的生活故事和这个我无法阅读标志或说话的新地方中迷失了方向。然而，我也感到我正处在我应该在的地方，我的日子充满了轻松和自在。

This feeling contrasted with the daily tension and low-grade anxiety that I had experienced in New York and Boston over the previous ten years. In Taipei, that feeling evaporated and I started to experience a lighthearted playfulness that had remained dormant since I had wandered in the woods as a kid.

这种感觉与我在过去十年里在纽约和波士顿经历的每日紧张和低级焦虑形成了鲜明对比。在台北，这种感觉消失了，我开始体验到一种轻松愉快的玩乐心情，这种心情自从我小时候在树林里漫游以来一直沉睡着。

There's a phrase in Chinese, "wu wei," that describes how I felt. In English, its translation is "non-doing," but not in the sense of doing nothing. Non-doing is not about escaping anything or being lazy but instead refers to a deep level of connectedness with the world. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote about this more than 2,500 years ago in the Tao Te Ching: "Less and less do you need to force things until finally you arrive at non-action. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way. It can't be gained by interfering."<sup>78</sup>

有一个中文词汇叫做“无为”，描述了我当时的感受。在英语中，它的翻译是“non-doing”，但并不是指什么都不做。无为并不是逃避或懒惰，而是指与世界深度连接的状态。中国哲学家老子在《道德经》中

写道：“越来越少地需要强迫事物，直到最终达到无为。当什么都不做时，什么都不会留下未做。通过让事物按照它们自己的方式发展，才能真正掌握。而不能通过干涉来获得。”

More recently, John Steinbeck channeled this sentiment in a letter to his son, telling him, “If it is right, it happens—The main thing is not to hurry. Nothing good gets away.”<sup>79</sup>

最近，约翰·斯坦贝克在给他儿子的一封信中表达了这种情感，告诉他：“如果是对的，它就会发生-最重要的是不要着急。没有什么好东西会逃走。”

In that first month in Taipei, I had stripped down my life to the bare minimum. I had few possessions, was releasing my grip on the future, and was opening myself up to the unknown. I spent these days shifting back and forth between the dizziness of feeling lost and the certainty that I was exactly where I was supposed to be.

在台北的那个第一个月，我将我的生活简化到了最低限度。我几乎没有什么财产，放松了对未来的控制，并向未知敞开了自己。在这些日子里，我时而感到迷失，时而确信我正处在我应该在的地方。

Then an invitation to commit to the pathless path showed up. 然后出现了一份承诺无路径之路的邀请。

My first date with Angie was at a tea house in Taipei. She would later tell me that she didn't have high hopes. My dating app profile highlighted my past employers and my graduate school experience. She expected a world-class hoop-jumper. When she shared her frustration with her corporate career and said she'd rather spend her time reading, learning, and exploring the world, she thought I'd be disappointed. But she was wrong. I

was falling in love.

我和安吉的第一次约会是在台北的一家茶馆。后来她告诉我，她并没有抱太大希望。我的约会应用程序档案突出了我的过去雇主和研究生院经历。她期望遇到一个世界级的成功者。当她与我分享她对公司职业的沮丧，并表示她宁愿把时间花在阅读、学习和探索世界上时，她以为我会失望。但她错了。我正在陷入爱河。

On subsequent dates, including bike rides along the river, reading in the park, exploring night markets, and hiking, I discovered someone else who was asking the deeper questions and was willing to embrace uncertainty over doing what was expected. In other words, I had found someone fully embracing their own pathless path.

在随后的约会中，包括沿着河边骑自行车、在公园里阅读、探索夜市和徒步旅行，我发现了另一个人，他在问更深层次的问题，并愿意接受不确定性，而不是按照别人的期望行事。换句话说，我找到了一个完全拥抱自己无路可循的人。

It's a cliché to say that we find things exactly when we least expect them, but that's exactly what happened to me. For years I had wanted to find someone to be able to "settle down" with. But I was looking for someone within the context of the default path, a script of how life should be rather than what I really wanted. I now agree with Joseph Campbell, who through his study of the human experience through our ancestors' stories, concluded that "We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us."<sup>80</sup>

当我们最不期待的时候，我们总是能找到东西，这是一个陈词滥调，但这正是我所经历的。多年来，我一直想找到一个人来“安定下来”。但我在寻找的过程中，只是按照默认的路径，按照生活应该是什么样子的脚本，而不是我真正想要的。现在我同意约瑟夫·坎贝尔的观点，他通过研究我们祖先的故事来了解人类经历，得出结论：“我们必须放下我们计划好的生活，接受等待我们的生活。”

So I might add to Steinbeck's advice: **nothing good gets away, as long as you create the space to let it emerge.**

只要你创造出让它出现的空间，我可以补充一下斯坦贝克的建议：没有什么好东西会逃走。

Living in a world with infinite distractions and interesting goals can make it impossible to stop moving forward. Yet more than ever this is exactly what we crave, and in those first few months in Taipei, I started to see the wisdom in embracing a state of non-doing. For most of my life, I had paired the idea of doing nothing with laziness. Living in another country enabled me to see that this was a very American way of seeing the world. In Taiwan, I was able to embrace a state of doing nothing that was not filled with anxiety and tension, but reflective and open. The possibilities that started to emerge at this time have changed my life. After more than three decades of constantly planning for the future, I was able to start living in the present.

生活在一个无限分心和有趣目标的世界中，让人不可能停止前进。然而，比以往任何时候，这正是我们渴望的，而在台北的那几个月里，我开始看到接受一种无为状态的智慧。在我生命的大部分时间里，我将无所事事的概念与懒惰联系在一起。生活在另一个国家让我看到这是一种非常美国式的看世界的方式。在台湾，我能够接受一种无为的状态，这种状态不充满焦虑和紧张，而是反思和开放的。在这个时候开始出现的可能性改变了我的生活。在不断为未来做计划的三十多年后，我终于能够开始活在当下。

## Give Me a Break 给我一个休息

The incommunicable trees begin to persuade us to live with them, and quit our life of solemn trifles. – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

那些无法言传的树开始劝说我们与它们共同生活，放弃我们那些庄重琐事的生活。 - 拉尔夫·瓦尔多·爱默生

On his honeymoon, Mohit Satyanand, a successful corporate manager, turned to his wife and asked, “do we need to go back?” They decided not to. Instead, they moved to a small stone cottage in the Kumaon region of India and spent the next six years as he recounted, “in our garden in the forest, watching the peaches grow, and our son toddle.” [81](#)

在蜜月期间，成功的企业经理Mohit Satyanand转向他的妻子问道：“我们需要回去吗？”他们决定不回去。相反，他们搬到了印度库马翁地区的一座小石屋，并度过了接下来的六年，正如他所描述的，“在我们的森林花园里观赏桃子的生长，看着我们的儿子蹒跚学步。”

When they returned to the city to send their son to school, Mohit didn't want to return to full-time employment. Although his friends pushed him to get a “real job,” his taste of a different life convinced him to continue on the pathless path. He got by on part-time assignments that “paid a fraction of a full-time wage for someone of my age and training,” but it was enough.

当他们回到城市送儿子上学时，莫希特不想再全职工作。尽管他的朋友们催促他找一份“真正的工作”，但他对不同生活的品味使他坚定地选择了一条没有路径的道路。他靠兼职任务维持生计，这些任务“支付的工资只是我这个年龄和培训水平的人的全职工资的一小部分”，但足够了。

I read Mohit's story while in Taiwan heading in a similar direction, and I started to wonder if taking a break from work and embracing states of non-doing were effective ways to improve life satisfaction. I was starting to realize a profound and positive shift in how I was thinking about my life and wondered if others had similar results. I reached out to people who had taken such breaks and found that most people credited these breaks from work as one of the most important things in helping them see the possibilities in their life. I also started to notice that many of the shifts that

people experienced were somewhat predictable. Four stand out:

我在台湾的时候读到了莫希特的故事，他也在朝着类似的方向前进。我开始思考，暂停工作并接受非行动状态是否是提高生活满意度的有效方式。我开始意识到我对生活的思考发生了深刻而积极的转变，想知道其他人是否有类似的结果。我联系了那些曾经休息过的人，发现大多数人认为这些工作休息是帮助他们看到生活可能性的最重要的事情之一。我还注意到，许多人经历的转变有些是可以预测的。其中有四个突出的方面：

First, people become aware of their own suffering. Often we don't notice our drift into a state of low-grade anxiety until we step away from what causes it, as I noticed the first day after I quit my job and realized I was burned out. After my friend, Kevin Jurczyk, took a planned sabbatical, he shared with me, "I used to think 'this job isn't so bad, I make enough money to make it worth it.' Then you get a breath of freedom and realize, no, it may have been worth it at one point, but not anymore."<sup>82</sup>

首先，人们意识到自己的痛苦。通常，我们不会注意到自己逐渐陷入一种低级焦虑的状态，直到我们远离引起焦虑的事物，就像我在辞职后的第一天意识到自己已经筋疲力尽一样。我的朋友凯文·杰尔奇克（Kevin Jurczyk）在计划的休假后与我分享道：“我曾经认为‘这份工作还不错，我赚的钱足够让我觉得值得。’然后你得到了一丝自由的呼吸，意识到，不，它可能曾经值得，但现在不再值得了。”

Similar frustrations with work inspired Jacqueline Jensen, a successful tech founder, to create a “structured sabbatical” to untangle her identity from her work. She asked herself, “What if I took work ... working for a paycheck, what if I took that out of the center of my life, what would my life look like?” It was difficult, she says, “to untangle myself from all the things I get from work – the validation, the excitement.”<sup>83</sup> However, a month into her break she felt lighter and had a clearer view of what she wanted from work and life.

类似的工作挫折激发了成功的科技创始人Jacqueline Jensen创造了一种



“有结构的休假”，以将自己的身份与工作分离开来。她问自己：“如果我把工作...为了薪水而工作，如果我把这个从我的生活中心拿出来，我的生活会是什么样子？”她说，这很困难，“从工作中解脱出来，解脱出来的东西太多了 - 验证，兴奋。”然而，休假一个月后，她感到轻松了，对工作和生活有了更清晰的看法。

Second, curiosity re-emerges. When people have time, they try new activities, revisit old hobbies, explore childhood curiosities, and start volunteering and connecting with people in their community. Edward, a friend and a doctor who has taken several sabbaticals, reflected that “new ideas often pop up and old topics of interest float back into my consciousness. I find myself writing notes and thinking more freely. This is the creative process, liberated by the neocortex now that the mind isn’t wholly occupied by the strain of everyday sustenance, the rat race, and the grind.”<sup>84</sup>

其次，好奇心重新浮现。当人们有时间时，他们尝试新的活动，重新追溯旧的爱好，探索童年的好奇心，并开始志愿工作并与社区中的人们建立联系。爱德华是一位朋友，也是一位医生，他曾经休假多次，他反思道：“新的想法经常冒出来，以前感兴趣的话题重新浮现在我的意识中。我发现自己在写笔记并更加自由地思考。这是创造过程，由于大脑皮层不再完全被日常生活的压力、竞争和苦工所占据，而得到解放。”

Third, people often desire to continue their “non-work” journey. Lenny Rachitsky, who took a sabbatical after a long career in product management, thought he would return to work, “...but by the end of the break, it was crystal clear to me that I was ready to move on to a new adventure.” Several weeks into his sabbatical, he stopped checking his email: “My heart was no longer in the work. I didn’t yet know what I wanted to do next, but I knew it was time to shake things up.”<sup>85</sup>

第三，人们经常希望继续他们的“非工作”之旅。Lenny Rachitsky在长期从事产品管理工作后休假，他原以为会回去工作，但在休假结束

时，他清楚地意识到自己已经准备好迎接新的冒险了。在休假的几个星期后，他停止查看电子邮件：“我对工作已经不再有兴趣了。我还不知道接下来想做什么，但我知道是时候改变一下了。”

Fourth, people write. When Alex Pang took a sabbatical after working in academia and the tech industry, he started to look at life differently, thinking, “maybe we had this idea about the relationship between working hours and productivity backward.”<sup>86</sup> Based on that question alone, he spent the next several years writing and publishing several books about how rest and shorter workweeks might improve our lives.

第四，人们写作。当亚历克斯·庞在从学术界和科技行业休假后，他开始以不同的眼光看待生活，思考：“也许我们对工作时间和生产力之间的关系有了错误的想法。”仅仅基于这个问题，他接下来的几年里写作并出版了几本关于休息和缩短工作周能如何改善我们生活的书籍。

Mohit, Kevin, Jacqueline, Edward, Lenny, Alex, and I were all surprised by how different life feels when it is not structured around work. We also became aware that our previous paths had kept the possibilities for our lives hidden, and in a short time, we started to recapture a youthful energy, one that enabled us all to take bold steps towards different kinds of lives.

莫希特、凯文、杰奎琳、爱德华、莱尼、亚历克斯和我都对没有工作结构的生活感到惊讶。我们也意识到，之前的道路让我们的生活可能性被隐藏起来，而在短时间内，我们开始重新获得了一种年轻的活力，这使我们都能够大胆迈向不同的生活。

## Waiting for Retirement 等待退休

The more we associate experience with cash value, the more we think that money is what we need to live. And the more we associate money

with life, the more we convince ourselves that we're too poor to buy our freedom. – Rolf Potts

我们越是将经验与金钱价值联系在一起，我们就越认为金钱是我们生活所需的。而我们越是将金钱与生活联系在一起，我们就越是说服自己我们太穷，买不起自由。 - 罗尔夫·波茨

One of the major barriers to taking a break is believing we have to wait for retirement.

休息的一个主要障碍是认为我们必须等到退休才能休息。

Retirement was introduced in the late 1800s in Germany to provide support for the small number of people who survived to the age of 70 and could no longer work. Now people live longer and are healthier, so retirement is no longer rare, and in some countries, people are projected to spend up to one-third of their life retired. This has led to enormous expectations that this period of one's life will be happy, peaceful, and enjoyable. Part of this is driven by financial firms, which spend millions on advertising campaigns showing happy elderly people smiling as they walk through beautiful meadows. The message? Work hard and invest until you reach the “magical number.” Then you can stop and smell the roses.

退休是在19世纪末引入德国的，为了为那些活到70岁无法再工作的少数人提供支持。现在人们寿命更长，身体更健康，所以退休不再罕见，在一些国家，人们预计将有三分之一的时间过退休生活。这导致人们对这段人生期间有巨大的期望，希望它会幸福、平静和愉快。其中一部分是由金融公司推动的，他们在广告宣传中花费数百万，展示快乐的老年人在美丽的草地上微笑行走。信息是什么呢？努力工作并投资，直到达到“神奇的数字”。然后你就可以停下来闻闻玫瑰的香味了。

This version of retirement is a core part of the default path and while it still works for some, the number of people who report being satisfied with retirement in an ongoing survey in the United States has been steadily

falling for twenty years.<sup>87</sup> Why might this be? Part of it is that when people stop working, they struggle to replace the meaning and joy they got from their work. I've talked with many people in their 60s and 70s who actively reject the idea that they should stop working. While they often don't have full-time jobs, they enjoy working part-time, volunteering, learning new things, or finding other ways to contribute.

这个版本的退休是默认路径的核心部分，虽然仍然适用于一些人，但在美国的一项持续调查中，报告对退休感到满意的人数已经连续二十年下降。为什么会这样呢？部分原因是当人们停止工作时，他们很难找到能够替代工作所带来的意义和快乐的事物。我曾与许多六七十岁的人交谈过，他们积极拒绝停止工作的想法。虽然他们通常没有全职工作，但他们喜欢兼职工作、做志愿者、学习新事物或找到其他贡献的方式。

While the traditional idea of retirement is motivating for many, others might benefit from thinking about it from the perspective of the pathless path. On the pathless path, retirement is neither a destination nor a financial calculation, but a continuation of a life well-lived. This shifts attention from focusing on saving for the future to understanding how you want to live in the present.

虽然传统的退休观念对许多人具有激励作用，但其他人可能会从无路可循的角度来思考。在无路可循的道路上，退休既不是一个目的地，也不是一个财务计算，而是对过去生活的延续。这将注意力从专注于为未来储蓄转移到了解如何在现在生活。

The best approach I've found for figuring out how I want to live is Tim Ferriss' idea of "mini-retirements," which he introduced in his book, *The Four-Hour Workweek*. He got the idea after realizing that he disliked typical vacations where you pack as much as possible into one or two weeks. After getting burned out on a short trip, he asked himself the question, "Why not take the usual 20–30-year retirement and redistribute it throughout life instead of saving it all for the end?"<sup>88</sup>

我发现了一个最好的方法来确定我想要过怎样的生活，那就是蒂姆·费里斯在他的书《每周工作四小时》中提出的“迷你退休”概念。他意识到自己不喜欢典型的度假方式，即在一两周内尽可能地安排多的活动后，得到了这个想法。在短暂的旅行后，他感到筋疲力尽，于是他问自己一个问题：“为什么不将通常的20-30年退休时间分散到生活的各个阶段，而不是全部留到最后呢？”

With this mindset, he designed his own mini-retirements, trips of “one to six months” where he would test out living in different ways. He described these as an “anti-vacation” and “though it can be relaxing, the mini-retirement is not an escape from your life but a reexamination of it—the creation of a blank slate.”<sup>89</sup> While designing these breaks into his life he asked himself three questions:

以这种心态，他设计了自己的小型退休，即“一到六个月”的旅行，他在其中尝试以不同的方式生活。他将这些描述为“反度假”和“虽然它可以放松，但小型退休并不是逃离生活，而是对生活的重新审视——创造一个空白的板。”在设计这些休息时间时，他问自己三个问题：

1. How do your decisions change if retirement isn't an option?  
如果退休不是一个选择，你的决策会如何改变？
2. What if you could use a mini-retirement to sample your future plans now?  
如果你能利用一个迷你退休来现在尝试一下你未来的计划，会怎么样呢？
3. Is it really necessary to commit fully to work to live like a millionaire?  
真的有必要全身心投入工作才能过上百万富翁的生活吗？

The power of these questions is that they force you to be creative and experimental. For me, I've found that this makes life more fun. As I've lived in different places around the world and focused on different kinds of work, I've created mini-experiments that help me learn more about how I want to live my life.

这些问题的力量在于它们迫使你变得有创造力和实验性。对我来说，

我发现这让生活更有趣。当我在世界各地生活并专注于不同类型的工作时，我创建了一些小实验，帮助我更多地了解我想要过怎样的生活。

I try to think about time in blocks of one to three months and within each block, I pick one or two things I want to prioritize and test. It might be living in a different type of place, working on new projects, traveling, or learning something new. My goal is to test my beliefs to get a better understanding of what really makes my life better. Many people say things to me like “I could never live like you do!” All I can think, however, is “have you tested that?”

我试着以一个到三个月的时间段来思考时间，在每个时间段内，我选择一两件我想优先考虑和测试的事情。这可能是居住在不同类型的地方，从事新项目，旅行或学习新东西。我的目标是测试我的信念，以更好地了解什么才真正让我的生活变得更好。很多人对我说：“我永远无法像你这样生活！”然而，我能想到的只有“你测试过吗？”

The spirit of the mini-retirement is not about escaping work. It is about testing different circumstances to see if you want to double down on them or change directions. When I started writing this book, I was studying Chinese thirty hours per week and running my online business. It was intense. It's not something I want to do year-round, but these intense periods of learning, creativity, and work followed by periods of rest provide a sustainable and energizing way to stay on this path over the long term. This kind of variability is hard to design into your life on the default path. On the pathless path not only is it possible, but it can be one of the most rewarding benefits.

迷你退休的精神并不是为了逃避工作，而是为了测试不同的情况，看看你是否想要加倍努力或改变方向。当我开始写这本书时，我每周花30个小时学习中文并经营我的在线业务。那是非常紧张的。这不是我想全年都做的事情，但是这种学习、创造力和工作的紧张时期之后的休息期可以提供一种可持续且充满活力的方式，让我长期保持在这条

道路上。这种变化是很难在默认的生活路径中设计出来的。在无路径的道路上，不仅可能实现，而且可能是最有回报的好处之一。

This kind of experimenting can be time-consuming, but for me, it's worth it. On my previous path, I was more than on my way to a magical retirement number but was also making great progress in undermining the spontaneity, creativity, and energy that would enable me to enjoy life once I got there. For me, testing out different ways of structuring my life now is a win-win proposition. I'm lowering the odds that I'll be unhappy in the future all while crafting a life I'm more and more excited to keep living.

这种实验可能会耗费时间，但对我来说是值得的。在我之前的道路上，我不仅在朝着一个神奇的退休数字迈进，而且还在不断削弱我享受生活所需的自发性、创造力和活力。对我来说，现在尝试不同的生活方式是一个双赢的选择。我降低了将来不快乐的可能性，同时打造了一个我越来越兴奋的生活。

These experiences have given me an alternative to the traditional retirement story. While I'm still saving for retirement, I'm not putting all my faith in reaching certain financial milestones as the most important thing. I'm much more focused on spending time and money now to experiment with different modes of living such that when I reach the latter stages of my life, I won't be making a dramatic shift in life priorities, but continuing on the pathless path.

这些经历给了我一个与传统退休故事不同的选择。虽然我仍在为退休存钱，但我并不把达到特定的财务里程碑视为最重要的事情。我更加专注于现在花时间和金钱来尝试不同的生活方式，这样当我进入生命的后期阶段时，我不会在生活优先事项上做出戏剧性的转变，而是继续走在无路可走的道路上。

# Have Fun on the Journey

## 在旅途中玩得开心

Even though the pathless path does not lead to a specific destination, there may be what Venkatesh Rao, a writer, and consultant, calls “fixed points.” A fixed point is a non-negotiable goal that you plan to achieve, no matter what. These fixed points are often a product of our unique cultural scripts. For example, in the United States, as Rao says, the “American Dream” story is based on “the standard fixed point of homeownership. As in, ‘no matter what happens in the future, I’ll be a homeowner.’”<sup>90</sup>

尽管无路可循的道路不会通向特定目的地，但可能存在文化学者和顾问Venkatesh Rao所称的“固定点”。固定点是你计划实现的不可谈判的目标，无论发生什么情况。这些固定点通常是我们独特文化脚本的产物。例如，在美国，正如Rao所说，“美国梦”故事基于“拥有房屋的标准固定点。也就是说，‘无论未来发生什么，我都会成为一个房主。’”

We all have fixed points that we aim towards in our lives. Homeownership is one of the most popular, but others include paying for children’s college expenses, becoming an executive or partner, founding a company, or reaching a certain net worth.

我们都有生活中的固定目标。拥有房屋是其中最受欢迎的之一，但还包括支付孩子的大学费用、成为高管或合伙人、创办一家公司或达到一定的净资产。

The problem with these default fixed points is that they are culturally derived rather than a product of our unique motivations and desires. Over time, this means they can become detached from what is possible or reasonable. For example, in Taipei, people in the previous generation were able to purchase property with only a couple of years of savings from an average job. Now Taipei is home to one of the highest price-to-rent ratios in



the world, and this same goal can take more than twenty years and for many, it is simply impossible. While the economic situation has changed radically, many young people orient their lives towards this same goal.

这些默认的固定点的问题在于它们是文化衍生的，而不是我们独特动机和欲望的产物。随着时间的推移，这意味着它们可能会与可能性或合理性脱节。例如，在台北，上一代人只需几年的平均工作储蓄就能购买房产。现在，台北是世界上房价租金比最高的地方之一，而这个目标可能需要超过二十年的时间，对许多人来说，它根本是不可能实现的。尽管经济形势发生了根本性变化，许多年轻人仍将他们的生活定位在这个相同的目标上。

Rao argues that the answer is not to abandon goals altogether but to take them more seriously and to put more thought into identifying unique fixed points, ones that align with the things that bring us alive.

饶认为，答案不是完全放弃目标，而是更加认真地对待它们，并更加深入地思考如何确定与让我们感到活力的事物相一致的独特固定点。

In his book, *On Liberty*, published in 1859, John Stuart Mill was giving similar advice, arguing that societies need people to embrace their individuality and perform “experiments in living.” He argued that such experiments are vital to the pursuit of knowledge and that cultures only learn and evolve when original approaches to living are discovered. Mill wanted people to act on their inspiration because “the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically when anyone thinks fit to try them.”<sup>91</sup> By choosing a unique and personal fixed point, in Mill’s view, you are not only raising the odds of finding a path worth staying on, but you are also serving an important role in pushing culture forward.

在他1859年出版的《论自由》一书中，约翰·斯图尔特·密尔提出了类似的建议，主张社会需要人们拥抱个性并进行“生活实验”。他认为这样的实验对于追求知识至关重要，只有当人们发现了原创的生活方式时，文化才能学习和进化。密尔希望人们根据自己的灵感行动，因为“不同生活方式的价值应该在任何人认为合适时通过实践来证明。”在

密尔看来，通过选择一个独特而个人的固定点，不仅增加了找到值得坚持的道路的机会，而且还在推动文化向前发展中发挥着重要作用。

Mill argued that conventional ways of living tend to “degenerate into the mechanical” and that if societal norms are too strong or rigid, original thinkers who would otherwise experiment will be stifled. He argues that trying to constrain these people is also not worth doing because they already struggle, “fitting themselves, without hurtful compression, into any of the small number of molds which society provides.”<sup>92</sup>

密尔认为传统的生活方式往往会“退化为机械化”，如果社会规范过于强大或僵化，原创思想家将被扼杀。他认为试图限制这些人也不值得，因为他们已经在努力“毫不受伤地适应社会提供的少数几种模式”。

Technology and increased prosperity make this the best time in our history for our own “experiments in living.” Yet Mill, who was frustrated in his time with how many people seemed “satisfied with the ways of mankind as they now are,” might be surprised at how much shame is still associated with taking a different path.

技术和繁荣的增长使得这成为我们历史上最适合进行自己的“生活实验”的时代。然而，米尔在他的时代对于许多人似乎“对现有的人类方式感到满意”感到沮丧，他可能会对于追求不同道路仍然带有多少羞耻感感到惊讶。

Embracing a unique fixed point can be an on-ramp to the pathless path. For example, when I was still at my last full-time job, I stopped setting an alarm clock in order to prioritize my health and sleep. I designed my life around that fixed point and did my best to lower the odds that it would lead to challenges at work. Right now, I’m orienting my work around taking every seventh week off from work no matter what. This was inspired by tech

entrepreneur Sean McCabe, who adopted the policy for himself and eventually, his entire company.<sup>93</sup>

拥抱一个独特的固定点可以成为通往无路径之路的入口。例如，当我还在我的最后一份全职工作时，为了优先考虑我的健康和睡眠，我停止设置闹钟。我围绕这个固定点设计了我的生活，并尽力降低它可能导致的工作挑战。现在，我正在调整我的工作，无论如何都要每隔七周休息一周。这是受到科技企业家肖恩·麦凯布的启发，他为自己采取了这一政策，最终也推广到了他的整个公司。

The fixed points along the default path are not inherently bad, but they do tend to push people towards doing what others do. This can be a good starting point, but if you lean into your own unique psychology, interests, and sense of humor, your journey will be a little more fun and much more meaningful.

默认路径上的固定点并不本质上是坏的，但它们往往会推动人们去做别人做的事情。这可能是一个好的起点，但如果你倾向于发掘自己独特的心理、兴趣和幽默感，你的旅程将会更有趣，也更有意义。

In addition, once you are on the pathless path, defining your own constraints and fixed points is not a choice, it's essential to thriving on your journey.

此外，一旦你走上无路可寻的道路，定义自己的限制和固定点不是一个选择，而是在你的旅程中蓬勃发展所必需的。

## Reimagine Money

### 重新构想货币

The secret to doing good research is always to be a little underemployed. You waste years by not being able to waste hours. —  
*Amos Tversky*

做好研究的秘诀就是始终保持一点点闲置。你因为不能浪费时间而浪费了多年。- 阿莫斯·特沃斯基

When everyone you know builds their lives around a steady paycheck, it is easy to lose track of what we give up for that paycheck and forget that for most of history this was not a normal state of affairs.

当你认识的每个人都以稳定的薪水为生活基础时，很容易忽视我们为了那份薪水而放弃的东西，并忘记在大部分历史上，这并不是是一种正常的状态。

When young people excitedly signed up to work for large organizations after World War II, their parents were stunned. They couldn't understand why their children would enthusiastically choose lives characterized by what they saw as containing far too much conformity. William Whyte, wrote about this shift in his book *The Organization Man*, published in 1956. He shared a snippet of writing from a young man typical of the era: "What distinguishes the comfortable young men of today from the uncomfortable young men of the last hundred years...is that for once the younger generation is not in revolt against anything...We don't want to rebel against our elders."<sup>94</sup>

二战后，年轻人兴奋地报名加入大型组织工作，而他们的父母感到震惊。他们无法理解为什么他们的孩子会热情地选择一种生活，他们认为这种生活过于符合规范。威廉·怀特在他1956年出版的书《组织人》中写到了这种转变。他分享了一段典型时代的年轻人的写作片段：“区别于过去一百年里不舒适的年轻人的是，如今舒适的年轻人们不再反抗任何事物.....我们不想反抗长辈。”

The organizations that these young people joined offered predictable incomes and, most of all, predictable lives. Whyte saw this as a dramatic shift from the past because these organizations offered something that previous generations did not have, a safe haven from the real world, noting that "come graduation, they do not go outside to a hostile world; they

transfer.”<sup>95</sup>

这些年轻人加入的组织提供可预测的收入，最重要的是，提供可预测的生活。为了避免真实世界的困扰，怀特认为这是与过去截然不同的重大转变，指出“毕业后，他们不会走向一个敌对的世界；他们只是转换了环境。”

Because I belong to the third generation of this tradition, I didn't have people around me to tell me how life without a paycheck would feel. When I left my job, I expected that working on my own would be challenging, but I did not expect my entire relationship to money and its role in my life to change.

因为我属于这个传统的第三代，所以我身边没有人告诉我没有薪水的生活会是什么感觉。当我离开工作时，我预料到自己独立工作会有挑战，但我没有预料到金钱在我的生活中的角色会发生如此大的变化。

When I quit, my mindset shifted immediately and I looked at every monetary transaction with the intensity of a financial auditor. I used Mint.com to audit my spending and was shocked that I had been spending nearly \$6,000 per month living in New York City. While this was less than I earned, it felt high. After factoring in taxes, I was spending close to \$100,000 per year for a life I considered “frugal.” This realization embarrassed me, but this story of frugality was easy to believe in a city where there are always people that spend more.

当我辞职后，我的心态立即转变，我以财务审计员的强度审视每一笔货币交易。我使用Mint.com审计我的消费，惊讶地发现我在纽约市的生活每月花费近6000美元。虽然这比我赚的少，但感觉很高。考虑到税收，我每年花费接近10万美元的生活被我认为“节俭”的。这个意识让我感到尴尬，但在一个总有人花更多的城市里，这个节俭的故事很容易被接受。

No underlying logic justified my spending and a lot of it could be classified under what writer Thomas J. Bevan calls a “misery tax.” This is the spending an unhappy worker allocates to things that “keep you going and keep you functioning in the job.”<sup>96</sup> For me, it was a mixture of alcohol, expensive food, and vacations, and as the amount inched up during my career, I started to believe that my spending was the reason I was working. 没有任何基本逻辑可以证明我花钱的理由，其中很多可以归类为作家托马斯·J·贝文所说的“痛苦税”。这是不开心的工人为了“让你继续下去，在工作中保持正常运转”而分配的开支。<sup>96</sup> 对我来说，这包括了酒精、昂贵的食物和度假，随着我职业生涯中的开支逐渐增加，我开始相信我工作的原因就是为了花钱。

When I quit, this kind of spending stopped immediately, and I was surprised at how little I missed it. I’ve since found guidance to reframe how I think about money from Ramit Sethi, an entrepreneur who helps people with personal finances. He asks a great question: “What is your rich life?” The purpose of this question is to stop you from looking at money as an accountant and looking at it as something that might help you live your ideal life. Over time, I’ve found a clear answer: having ownership of my time enriches my life.

当我辞职后，这种花费立即停止了，我惊讶地发现我对它的渴望很少。此后，我从帮助人们处理个人财务的企业家拉米特·塞蒂那里找到了重新思考金钱的指导。他问了一个很好的问题：“你的富裕生活是什么？”这个问题的目的是让你停止把金钱看作会计师，而是把它看作可能帮助你过上理想生活的东西。随着时间的推移，我找到了一个明确的答案：拥有自己的时间丰富了我的生活。

Knowing this inspired me to look for other ways to cut my spending since it would extend the time I could spend on my path without running out of money. When I landed my first real freelance project in Boston, this was what inspired me to sublet my New York apartment, find a cheaper one in Boston, and move there almost immediately. When I added up rent savings,

cheaper Chipotle bowls, and the lower tax rate, I was able to lower my spending by about \$3,000 per month.

知道这一点激励我寻找其他减少开支的方法，因为这样可以延长我在道路上花费时间而不会用尽钱。当我在波士顿获得了我的第一个真正的自由职业项目时，这就是激励我转租我的纽约公寓，在波士顿找到一个更便宜的公寓，并几乎立即搬到那里的原因。当我把租金节省、更便宜的Chipotle餐和较低的税率加在一起时，我能够每个月减少约3000美元的开支。

With money coming in and a lower cost of living, my financial insecurity decreased, leading to a chain reaction in my understanding of work. If I wasn't working for money, why was I working? When we work full-time, employers are paying for our dedication and commitment to the job as a central part of our life. When I became self-employed, I was disoriented because the people paying me for the projects didn't care when and how much I worked. They just wanted their problems solved. It was up to me to figure out how to spend my time.

随着收入增加和生活成本降低，我的财务不安全感减少了，这对我对工作的理解产生了连锁反应。如果我不是为了钱而工作，那我为什么要工作呢？当我们全职工作时，雇主支付的是我们对工作的奉献和承诺，这是我们生活的核心部分。当我成为自雇人士时，我感到迷茫，因为付钱给我做项目的人并不关心我什么时候以及我工作多少时间。他们只是想要解决他们的问题。我需要自己找出如何安排我的时间。

Working on my own, I had infinite degrees of freedom to shape what I worked on, who I worked with, and how much I worked. When people on the pathless path first discover this possibility, it can be jarring. Opting out of work and opting in to other aspects of your life can create questions about who you used to be. It feels weird at first, but over time, you start to change what you value. As I unlocked more time for creative projects, travel with my family, time with my grandmother, and time for learning, I was finally doing the things I claimed to care about.



独自工作时，我有无限的自由度来塑造我所从事的工作、与谁合作以及工作的时间。当追求无路径的人们第一次发现这种可能性时，可能会感到不适。放弃工作，选择生活中的其他方面，会对你曾经是谁产生疑问。起初感觉很奇怪，但随着时间的推移，你开始改变自己所重视的东西。当我为创意项目、与家人一起旅行、与祖母相处以及学习腾出更多时间时，我终于在做我所关心的事情。

No amount of money can buy the peace of mind that comes with finding a path that you want to stay on. Once we know, as Vicky Robin argues in her book *Your Money or Your Life*, that “money is something we choose to trade our life energy for,” it is nearly impossible to give up your time for money without thinking deeply about the trade-offs.<sup>97</sup>

没有任何金钱可以买到找到一条你想要走的道路所带来的内心的平静。正如维基·罗宾在她的书《你的金钱或你的生活》中所说，一旦我们知道“金钱是我们选择用生命能量来交换的东西”，就几乎不可能不深思熟虑地用时间换取金钱。

## Have a Little Faith 有一点信仰

Belief clings, but faith lets go. – Alan Watts  
信仰执着，但信念放手。 - 艾伦·瓦茨

I was lying on Angie’s bed in Taipei, listening to the music playing at the mall just outside her window. She knew that I planned to leave Taiwan and head to Vietnam. In the two months since we had met, however, it had become clear that I wanted to commit to this relationship. Angie had decided to embark on her own pathless path by leaving her corporate job and joining a local gym as a fitness trainer. Before starting, she planned to travel to Thailand for a month. She thought I was going to leave Taiwan and continue exploring the world, which is why I’m still impressed that she



asked me so directly, “so...what are your plans for December?”

我躺在台北安琪的床上，听着窗外商场里的音乐。她知道我计划离开台湾去越南。然而，在我们相识的两个月里，我已经明确表示我想要投入这段关系。安琪决定走上一条没有路径的道路，辞去了公司的工作，加入了当地的健身房担任健身教练。在开始之前，她计划去泰国旅行一个月。她以为我会离开台湾继续探索世界，所以我对她如此直接地问我“那么...你十二月的计划是什么？”仍然感到印象深刻。

We had been inseparable. Wandering around Taipei, going to night markets, reading in the park, and having deep conversations about life. It was beautiful. Whenever you are beginning a new relationship, it's easy to fast-forward to the future. Yet I tried to hold back. For most of my life, I had followed a script about how life should be, always trying to choreograph my future. Now I was embracing the pathless path and it was freeing.

我们曾经是形影不离的。在台北四处闲逛，去夜市，公园里阅读，进行深入的人生对话。那是美好的。当你开始一段新的关系时，很容易就会快进到未来。然而我试图克制自己。在我生命的大部分时间里，我一直按照一个关于生活应该是怎样的剧本行事，总是试图编排我的未来。现在我正在拥抱无路可循的道路，这是自由的。

On our second date, we rode bikes along the river in Taipei, making our way slowly down the path. We talked about our families, our desires, our fears, and our aspirations. I had felt so alone in the previous year, not able to fully share what I was feeling, and now I was talking to someone who was not only willing to listen but who also seemed to speak the same language.

在我们的第二次约会上，我们骑着自行车沿着台北的河边骑行，慢慢地沿着路径前行。我们谈论了我们的家庭、我们的欲望、我们的恐惧和我们的抱负。在过去的一年里，我感到非常孤独，无法完全分享我的感受，现在我正在和一个不仅愿意倾听而且似乎说着同样的语言的人交谈。

So I didn't need to hesitate when I answered her question: "I am coming with you to Thailand."

所以当我回答她的问题时，我不需要犹豫：“我会和你一起去泰国。”

I was guided by faith.

我被信仰引导着。

Having faith is admitting that you don't have all the answers for what comes next. Another phrase I've found useful to describe this state of mind is what the spiritual teacher Tara Brach calls "radical acceptance," which she says "is the willingness to experience ourselves and our lives as it is."

有信仰意味着承认自己对未来的一切问题都没有答案。另一个我发现有用的短语来描述这种心态是灵性导师塔拉·布拉奇所称的“彻底接受”，她说“就是愿意经历我们自己和我们的生活，就是它本来的样子。”

Faith is an essential part of the pathless path and many people mention it when talking about embarking on an uncertain path. This was the case for Michael McBride, who decided to leave his job after some of his history-related videos went viral on TikTok. He put it simply, "when I left my job, I took a leap of faith."<sup>98</sup>

信仰是无路可寻的道路的重要组成部分，许多人在谈论踏上不确定的道路时都会提到它。对于迈克尔·麦克布赖德来说也是如此，他决定在一些与历史相关的视频在TikTok上走红后辞去工作。他简单地说：“当我离开工作时，我做了一次信仰的飞跃。”

Many people I talk to are convinced that the formula for living on their own terms is saving up enough money. I wish they knew what I know: the longer we spend on a path that isn't ours, the longer it takes to move towards a path that is. Money might help pay for therapy, time off, and healing retreats, but it won't help you come to a place where you really trust and know that everything will be okay.

我与许多人交谈时发现，他们坚信按照自己的方式生活的秘诀就是存够足够的钱。但我希望他们知道我所知道的：我们在走一条不属于自己道路上花费的时间越长，走向属于自己的道路就需要的时间也越长。金钱或许可以帮助支付治疗费用、休假和疗愈之旅的费用，但它无法帮助你达到一个真正相信并知道一切都会好的地方。

Having faith does not mean being worry-free. I still worry about money, success, belonging, and whether I can keep this journey going. However, I'm able to recognize that the right response is not to restructure my life to make these worries disappear. It's to develop a capacity to sit with those anxieties, focus on what I can control, and to open myself up to the world. As the spiritual teacher Sharon Salzberg has written, "whatever takes us to our edge, to our outer limits, leads us to the heart of life's mystery, and there we find faith."<sup>99</sup> This is the essence of the pathless path, and the only way to develop room for faith in your life is to do exactly as Salzberg says, explore the limits and step into the possibilities for our life. The fact that the next steps are unknown to us is exactly the point.

有信仰并不意味着没有忧虑。我仍然担心钱、成功、归属感，以及我是否能够继续这段旅程。然而，我能够意识到正确的回应不是重新调整我的生活以消除这些忧虑，而是培养一种能够与这些焦虑共处的能力，专注于我能够控制的事情，并向世界敞开心扉。正如灵性导师沙龙·索尔兹伯格所写的那样，“无论是什么将我们带到边缘，到我们的极限，都会引领我们走向生命之谜的核心，而在那里我们找到信仰。”这就是无路可走的道路的本质，而在生活中培养信仰的唯一方法就是按照索尔兹伯格所说的那样，探索极限并踏入我们生活的可能性。下一步对我们来说是未知的，这正是关键所在。

This is how I knew that the only answer to Angie's question was that I was coming with her to Thailand. On that trip, we made a deeper commitment to each other, and I decided to return to Taiwan indefinitely to support her as she embarked on the next chapter of her journey. I had gone months without a stable income at this point and I didn't know if I would be able to figure out how to make money living abroad. But that didn't seem important at the time. I had faith. I didn't know what was going to happen next, but I had a hunch it was going to be okay.

这就是我知道安吉的问题的唯一答案是要和她一起去泰国。在那次旅行中，我们对彼此做出了更深的承诺，我决定无限期地回到台湾支持她迈向旅程的下一章。在那时，我已经几个月没有稳定的收入了，我不知道我是否能够弄清楚如何在国外谋生。但那时似乎并不重要。我有信心。我不知道接下来会发生什么，但我有一种直觉，一切都会好起来。

# 8

## Redefine Success 重新定义成功

People have the notion of saving the world by shifting things around, changing the rules, and who's on top, and so forth. No, no! Any world is a valid world if it's alive. The thing to do is to bring life to it, and the only way to do that is to find in your own case where the life is and become alive yourself. – *Joseph Campbell*

人们认为通过改变事物的位置、改变规则以及谁处于上位等方式来拯救世界。不，不！只要是有生命的世界都是有效的。要做的是给它带来生命，而唯一的方法就是在自己的情况中找到生命所在，并使自己活起来。 - 约瑟夫·坎贝尔

# The Second Chapter of Success

## 成功的第二章

In 2019, Gallup surveyed Americans about success. In response to the question, “How do you personally define success?”, 97% agreed with the following statement: *A person is successful if they have followed their own interests and talents to become the best they can be at what they care about most.* In response to the question, “How do you think others define success?”, only 8% gave the same answer. Instead, 92% felt that other people defined success as follows: *A person is successful if they are rich, have a high-profile career, or are well-known.*<sup>100</sup>

2019年，盖洛普对美国人进行了关于成功的调查。对于问题“你个人如何定义成功？”，97%的人同意以下观点：如果一个人按照自己的兴趣和才能追求并成为他们最关心的事情中最好的，那么他们就是成功的。对于问题“你认为别人如何定义成功？”，只有8%的人给出了相同的答案。相反，92%的人认为其他人将成功定义为以下几点：一个人如果富有、拥有高知名度的职业或者出名，那么他们就是成功的。

Why the disconnect between how people define success and how we think others define it? Just as when we talk about taking leaps and picking life paths, we simplify the messiness of human nature down to simple stories. When we talk about our goals, we disguise our intentions, especially if we think they demonstrate greed, envy, or pride. We tell only the stories that we think will be seen as acceptable. Everyone knows that we do this, but the result is costly. No one has a clue about others’ motivations and we all end up like contestants on *The Bachelor*, convincing ourselves that everyone is striving for success for “the wrong reasons.”

为什么人们对成功的定义与我们认为别人对成功的定义存在脱节？就像我们谈论迈出跨越和选择人生道路时，我们将人性的混乱简化为简单的故事。当我们谈论我们的目标时，我们掩饰我们的意图，特别是

如果我们认为它们展示了贪婪、嫉妒或骄傲。我们只讲那些我们认为会被视为可接受的故事。每个人都知道我们这样做，但结果是昂贵的。没有人知道别人的动机，我们最终都像《单身汉的诱惑》的参赛者一样，自欺欺人地认为每个人都为了“错误的原因”而追求成功。

Young people pay the highest costs here because they have not yet fully experienced the ups and downs of their own paths and don't have a good understanding of how others are making decisions years ahead of them. They default to "the heuristic of respecting the people who other people respect," as doctor and writer Scott Alexander has noted. In today's world, he says, the most attention and respect goes to people with money, fame, degrees, and power.<sup>101</sup>

年轻人在这里付出最高的代价，因为他们还没有完全经历过自己道路的起伏，也不了解其他人如何提前数年做出决策。正如医生和作家斯科特·亚历山大所指出的，他们默认采用“尊重其他人尊重的人的启发式”。他说，在当今世界，最受关注和尊重的是拥有金钱、名声、学位和权力的人。

In college, I dreamed of working in consulting and getting an MBA from a top-ranked school. I remember looking at the salary reports of graduates from these programs and knowing with every bone in my body that a six-figure salary was what I wanted. At the age of 27, I had miraculously achieved this goal and because I felt so grateful, I hid the fact that I was feeling increasingly lost. The more people I've talked to over the years, the more I've realized that my case is closer to the norm and the people that are on the path they are meant to be on are more the exception than the rule. 在大学时，我梦想着从事咨询工作，并在一所排名靠前的学校获得MBA学位。我记得看过这些项目毕业生的薪资报告，深知自己内心渴望的是六位数的薪水。在27岁时，我奇迹般地实现了这个目标，因为我感到非常感激，所以我隐藏了自己越来越迷茫的事实。多年来，我与越来越多的人交谈后，我意识到我的情况更接近于常态，而那些走在正确道路上的人更是例外而非规律。

Many people realize they are on the wrong path after achieving impressive milestones. This is what happened to Kevin Durant, a professional basketball player. In 2015, he left his team after nine years to join the best team in the league. In the NBA, players like Durant are judged in part based on whether their team wins a championship. His former team had not. Some players are mocked mercilessly, even after they retire, for failing to achieve this goal. As a result, young players like Durant change teams much more than in the past, doing everything in their power to increase their odds of winning.

许多人在取得了令人印象深刻的里程碑后意识到他们走错了道路。这就是发生在凯文·杜兰特身上的事情，他是一名职业篮球运动员。2015年，他离开了自己效力了九年的球队，加入了联盟中最好的球队。在NBA中，像杜兰特这样的球员在一定程度上会根据他们所在的球队是否赢得冠军来评判。他之前的球队没有赢得过冠军。一些球员甚至在退役后仍然会被无情地嘲笑，因为他们未能实现这个目标。因此，像杜兰特这样的年轻球员比过去更频繁地换队，尽一切努力增加他们获胜的机会。

The flaw, as Agnes Callard might tell us, is that Durant already knew what he valued and thus, no larger transformation was at stake. It won't surprise us then to find that twelve months later when his team won the championship he was not satisfied. His friend Steve Nash reflected on Durant's confusing emotions that summer: "He didn't have a great summer...He was searching for what it all meant. He thought a championship would change everything and found out it doesn't. He was not fulfilled."<sup>102</sup>

缺陷是，正如Agnes Callard可能会告诉我们的那样，杜兰特已经知道他所重视的东西，因此，并没有什么更大的转变在危机中。因此，当他的团队在十二个月后赢得冠军时，我们不会感到惊讶他并不满足。他的朋友史蒂夫·纳什在那个夏天反思了杜兰特困惑的情绪：“他度过了一个不太好的夏天...他在寻找一切的意义。他以为冠军会改变一切，结果发现并没有。他感到不满足。”



Many people face such a feeling when they finally land a job, a promotion, or even find themselves at a certain phase of life they always desired. As author Ryan Holiday wrote, “You know deep down that accomplishing things won’t make you happy, but I think I always fantasized that it would at least feel really good. I was so wrong. Hitting #1 for the first time as an author felt like...nothing. Being a ‘millionaire’...nothing. It’s a trick of evolution that drives us, and no one is immune from making this mistake.”<sup>103</sup> This is what Harvard professor Dr. Ben-Shahar calls the arrival fallacy, the idea that when we reach a certain milestone we will reach a state of lasting happiness.<sup>104</sup>

很多人在最终找到工作、晋升，甚至实现自己一直渴望的生活阶段时，都会面临这样的感觉。正如作家瑞安·霍利迪所写：“你心底深处知道，完成事情并不能让你快乐，但我一直以为至少会感觉很好。我错了。第一次成为畅销书作者的排名第一，感觉就像.....什么都没有。成为‘百万富翁’.....什么都没有。这是进化的把戏，驱使着我们，没有人能免于犯这个错误。”这就是哈佛大学教授本-沙哈尔博士所说的“到达幻觉”，即当我们达到某个里程碑时，我们将达到持久幸福的状态。

When we realize that this isn’t the case, we find ourselves feeling empty, and the easiest way to deal with this is to ignore the feeling and ratchet up the goal. More money, a bigger house, a new car, a higher salary, an executive position at a company, or a larger retirement nest egg. I once asked a partner at my consulting firm about his dream job. He told me he wanted his boss’s position. “At the same company?” I asked. “Then what?” He shrugged and moved on to something else. Something tells me that when the partner achieves his goal, he’s not going to feel satisfied.

当我们意识到这不是事实时，我们会感到空虚，最简单的应对方式就是忽视这种感觉并提高目标。更多的钱，更大的房子，一辆新车，更高的薪水，公司的高管职位，或者更大的退休金。我曾经问过我咨询公司的合伙人关于他的梦想工作。他告诉我他想要他老板的职位。“在

同一家公司？”我问。“然后呢？”他耸了耸肩，转而谈论其他事情。有一种感觉告诉我，当这位合伙人实现他的目标时，他不会感到满足。

Eleanor Roosevelt once argued that “when you adopt the standards and the values of someone else or a community... you surrender your own integrity. You become, to the extent of your surrender, less of a human being.”<sup>105</sup> I learned this slowly, jumping from job to job doing the same thing that Durant was doing, trying to achieve someone else’s goals. For years I believed that once I had achieved an imaginary future leadership position, I would then finally be able to be myself. This is an obvious delusion, but one many people tell themselves.

埃莉诺·罗斯福曾经争论道：“当你采纳别人或一个社群的标准和价值观时.....你放弃了自己的正直。你在放弃的程度上，变得更加不像一个人。”我慢慢地学到了这一点，从一份工作跳到另一份工作，做着杜兰特在做的同样的事情，试图实现别人的目标。多年来，我相信一旦我实现了一个虚构的未来领导职位，我就能最终做回自己。这是一个明显的错觉，但很多人都会对自己说这样的话。

It was incredibly painful for me to realize that if I truly cared about living in a different way, I might need to leave the business world. The journey towards the pathless path often starts at this moment, with a willingness to investigate your disappointment and to wonder if there is a better way of defining success.

对我来说，意识到如果我真的在乎以不同的方式生活，我可能需要离开商业世界，这是非常痛苦的。走向无路之路的旅程通常从这一刻开始，愿意调查你的失望，并思考是否有更好的定义成功的方式。

The better way is what I call the “second chapter of success” in which you shift your mindset from what you lack to what you have to offer, from ambition to aspiration, and from hoping that joy will result from a specific

outcome to experiencing it as a byproduct of your journey.

更好的方式是我所称之为“成功的第二章”，在这一章中，你将思维方式从你所缺乏的转变为你所能提供的，从野心转变为渴望，从希望快乐来自特定结果转变为将其作为旅程的副产品来体验。

People are reluctant to flip the page to the second chapter of success because it requires rejecting paths that are not only more accepted but also promise money, respect, and admiration. However, if we are to believe the results of the Gallup survey, where 97% of people said that their personal definition of success included being “the best they can be at what they care about most,” most people desire a path that aligns with what matters uniquely to them. The biggest hurdle then is learning as early as possible the lesson that Kevin Durant learned when he reached the heights of success, and that as Henry David Thoreau once reflected, “the life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind.”<sup>106</sup>

人们不愿意翻到成功的第二章，因为这需要拒绝那些不仅更受认可，而且承诺金钱、尊重和赞赏的道路。然而，如果我们相信盖洛普调查的结果，其中97%的人表示他们对成功的个人定义包括“在他们最关心的事情上做到最好”，大多数人渴望一条与他们独特关心的事情相一致的道路。最大的障碍是尽早学会凯文·杜兰特在成功的巅峰时学到的教训，正如亨利·大卫·梭罗曾经反思的那样，“人们称赞和认为成功的生活只是一种。”

The pathless path is a define-your-own-success adventure. In the first couple years, it felt silly to tell people how I defined success: feeling alive, helping people, and meeting my needs. Over time, I realized that the real benefit of this orientation towards success was that I wasn't competing with anyone. This meant that the odds of success were incredibly high and the benefits of staying on the pathless path would only compound and increase over time.

无路之路是一种自定义成功的冒险。在最初的几年里，告诉别人我如何定义成功感觉很傻：感受生活、帮助他人和满足自己的需求。随着

时间的推移，我意识到这种对成功的取向的真正好处在于我不与任何人竞争。这意味着成功的机会非常高，而且无路之路的好处只会随着时间的推移不断增加。

## Prestige and “Bad Tests” 声望和“糟糕的测试”

My first week at McKinsey did not feel like work. Instead, it felt like I had gained access to the most interesting club in the world. I thought, “How did I pull this off?” Although most people in my life had no idea what McKinsey was, the friends who did were impressed. Economist Adam Smith once wrote that people desire “not only to be loved, but to be lovely.”<sup>107</sup> As soon as I landed the job at McKinsey, I felt lovely, drunk on prestige.

我在麦肯锡的第一个星期并不觉得像是在工作。相反，我感觉自己获得了进入世界上最有趣的俱乐部的机会。我想：“我是怎么做到的？”虽然我生活中的大多数人都不知道麦肯锡是什么，但那些了解的朋友们对此印象深刻。经济学家亚当·斯密曾经写道，人们渴望“不仅被爱，还要变得可爱。”一旦我在麦肯锡找到了工作，我就感觉自己变得可爱了，沉醉在声望之中。

Author Kevin Simler defines prestige as “the kind of status we get from doing impressive things or having impressive traits or skills.”<sup>108</sup> In some domains, like sports, this works well. Those we pay the most attention to, like Tom Brady or LeBron James, are also the most skilled. In the business world, however, talent is harder to assess and we tend to use proxies like credentials to determine quality and prestige.

作者Kevin Simler将威望定义为“通过做出令人印象深刻的事情或拥有令人印象深刻的特质或技能而获得的一种地位。”在某些领域，比如体育，这种定义很适用。我们最关注的人，比如汤姆·布雷迪或勒布朗·詹

姆斯，也是最有技能的人。然而，在商业世界中，才能更难评估，我们倾向于使用类似资格证书的替代指标来确定质量和威望。

This can be a good way for a company to make talent decisions at scale, but it also motivates many people to seek credentials rather than finding work they enjoy. In my first few weeks at McKinsey, a recruiter from Google connected with me to explain a special program that hired consultants from McKinsey after they had spent two years at the company. If I decided to apply, I'd have a good chance of getting hired. This felt weird. Only a few months earlier, I was desperate to work at either of these companies and now, only a few weeks after adding the McKinsey logo to my LinkedIn profile, I was being granted special status in a “prestige economy” that, as the writer Sarah Kendzior argues, places “money over merit, brand over skill.”<sup>109</sup>

这对公司来说是一种在规模上做人才决策的好方法，但也激励许多人去追求证书而不是找到他们喜欢的工作。在我在麦肯锡的头几周，一位来自谷歌的招聘人员联系我，解释了一个特殊的计划，该计划在麦肯锡工作两年后雇佣顾问。如果我决定申请，我有很大的机会被录用。这感觉很奇怪。就在几个月前，我迫切希望在这两家公司中的任何一家工作，现在，在将麦肯锡的标志添加到我的领英个人资料后的几周内，我被授予了“声望经济”中的特殊地位，正如作家萨拉·肯兹尔所说的，这种经济体系将“金钱置于能力之上，品牌置于技能之上”。

This kind of status was not something I shied away from, but deep down I knew that the underlying skill I was being rewarded for was my ability to hack the system. Almost everyone who works in these fields understands that passing these “bad tests” is how things work but no one, including me, at first, imagines there is another option.

这种地位并不是我回避的东西，但我心里明白，我所受到奖赏的潜在技能是我能够入侵系统的能力。几乎所有在这些领域工作的人都明白通过这些“不好的测试”是事情的运作方式，但一开始，包括我在内，没有人想象到还有其他选择。

Paul Graham, the investor and startup mentor, argues that far too many young people believe learning how to hack bad tests is a necessary part of success. In his work with entrepreneurs, he struggles to convince them that they don't need to play these games. He shares a common back-and-forth he has with founders about the factors that lead to success:

保罗·格雷厄姆，投资者和初创企业导师，认为太多年轻人相信学会如何破解糟糕的考试是成功的必要部分。在与创业者的工作中，他努力说服他们不需要玩这些游戏。他与创始人之间关于成功因素的常见争论。

How does one get lots of users? They had all kinds of ideas about that. They needed to do a big launch that would get them 'exposure.' They needed influential people to talk about them. They even knew they needed to launch on a Tuesday, because that's when one gets the most attention. No, I would explain, that is not how to get lots of users. The way you get lots of users is to make the product really great.<sup>110</sup>

如何获得大量用户？他们对此有各种各样的想法。他们需要进行一次大规模的发布，以获得“曝光”。他们需要有影响力的人谈论他们。他们甚至知道他们需要在星期二发布，因为那是能够获得最多关注的时候。不，我会解释，那不是获得大量用户的方法。获得大量用户的方法是使产品真正优秀。

When you've spent your entire life studying for the test and compiling long lists of achievements it can be hard to believe that true success is that simple. In the consulting industry, bad tests were prevalent. While the quality of your work was important, other tests like getting senior partners to like me, taking any work given to me, dressing the right way, and learning to speak in a certain way were much more important in getting promoted, getting a raise, and continuing on an impressive career trajectory. 当你一生都在为考试而学习，并编制了长长的成就清单时，很难相信真正的成功是如此简单。在咨询行业中，糟糕的考试很常见。虽然你的工作质量很重要，但其他考试，如让高级合伙人喜欢我，接受任何分配给我的工作，穿着得体，学会以某种方式说话，对于晋升、加薪和继续令人印象深刻的职业发展更为重要。



I don't think I realized how much I hated this until I became self-employed and immediately stopped spending any time hacking tests. With freelancing, I was competing on the quality of my ideas and my ability to do good work for clients. A lot of former consultants who become freelancers are surprised at how much less time it takes to do the same work. This is not because it's any easier. In fact, it's a lot harder without the support of an entire firm's resources. It's just that there are no longer hundreds of different people you need to impress.

我不认为我意识到我有多讨厌这个，直到我成为自雇人士并立即停止花时间破解测试。在自由职业中，我是通过我的想法质量和为客户提供优质工作的能力来竞争。很多以前的顾问成为自由职业者后都会惊讶地发现完成同样的工作所需的时间要少得多。这并不是因为它更容易。事实上，没有整个公司资源的支持，这要困难得多。只是你不再需要给成百上千的不同人留下深刻印象了。

Working on my own, I'm no longer in Kendzior's prestige economy where brand is more important than skill. I'm in an indie economy, where over the long-term I'm competing on learning, developing skills, and my reputation. This is a lot harder but also a lot more rewarding. Despite this, it's interesting to see how people map their own understanding of how they think the world works onto my current path. Many people say things like, "you can do this because you worked at McKinsey and went to MIT." They assume that my credentials are what matter most. I wish this were the case! While having impressive credentials can open doors, it hasn't translated into a high income, especially with some of the more creative things I've done like writing or online courses.

在独立经济中，我不再处于肯兹奥尔的声望经济中，品牌比技能更重要的地方。我在一个独立经济中，长期竞争的是学习、发展技能和声誉。这很困难，但也更有回报。尽管如此，有趣的是看到人们如何将他们对世界运作方式的理解映射到我的当前道路上。很多人会说，“你能做到这一点是因为你在麦肯锡工作过，还上过麻省理工学院。”他们认为我的资历最重要。我希望是这样！虽然令人印象深刻的资历可以

打开大门，但对于我写作或在线课程等一些更有创意的事情来说，并没有转化为高收入。

It took a long time for me to realize that I was not stuck hacking bad tests for the rest of my life. While I was at MIT, I read William Deresiewicz's essay, "The Disadvantages of An Elite Education." His argument that elite schools often incentivize behaviors that undermine living a meaningful life excited me, but I had no idea what to do about it. People are very aware of the absurdity of much of what you have to do to succeed in different companies and institutions, but still often gaslight themselves by starting off their own complaints with, "I know I should be grateful, but..."

我花了很长时间才意识到我并不会一辈子被困在为糟糕的考试而努力的境地。在麻省理工学院期间，我读了威廉·德雷西维奇的文章《精英教育的劣势》。他认为精英学校常常激励那些破坏有意义生活的行为，这让我感到兴奋，但我不知道该怎么办。人们对于在不同公司和机构取得成功所需做的许多荒谬之处非常清楚，但他们往往通过以“我知道我应该感激，但是...”开头来否定自己的抱怨。

With more possibilities to work independently and become an entrepreneur, I'm here to tell you to take your own doubts seriously and demand better! It is no longer true that to succeed, you need to hack bad tests. I agree with Graham when he says, "It used to be true. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the economy was composed of oligopolies, the only way to the top was by playing their game."<sup>111</sup>

随着更多独立工作和创业的可能性，我在这里告诉你要认真对待自己的疑虑，并要求更好！不再是真实的，要成功，你需要通过作弊来突破困境。我同意格雷厄姆的观点，他说：“过去是真的。在20世纪中叶，当经济由寡头垄断组成时，唯一的成功之道就是玩他们的游戏。”



The world is changing and the pathless path is just one way to exit the world of bad tests. As more and more people decide that these tests are silly, we can create new and better games. Ones that aren't optimized for how employers like to see the world, but rather align with how we are motivated to learn and grow through our lives. I think this really matters and I agree with Graham's assessment: "This is not just a lesson for individuals to unlearn, but one for society to unlearn, and we'll be amazed at the energy that's liberated when we do."<sup>112</sup>

世界正在变化，无路可走的道路只是摆脱糟糕考试的一种方式。随着越来越多的人决定这些考试是愚蠢的，我们可以创造新的、更好的游戏。这些游戏不是为了迎合雇主们喜欢看到的世界而优化的，而是与我们在生活中的学习和成长动机相一致。我认为这真的很重要，我同意格雷厄姆的评估：“这不仅是个人需要忘记的一课，也是社会需要忘记的一课，当我们做到时，我们将会惊讶于所释放出的能量。”

## Find Your Tribe

## 找到你的部落

The internet has made my new life and career on the pathless path possible. In my last full-time job, I started writing short articles about my thoughts on the future of work. I was writing on my own and not with the permission of my company. This was scary because at my company, only senior executives were encouraged to share their thoughts on social media.

互联网使我在无路径的道路上实现了新的生活和职业。在我上一份全职工作中，我开始写一些关于我对未来工作的思考的短文。我是自己写的，并没有得到公司的许可。这让我感到害怕，因为在我的公司里，只有高级主管被鼓励在社交媒体上分享他们的想法。

My fears subsided as I started to make friends through writing. After posting one article, I received a message from someone who was a Chief Talent Officer at a company in New York City. He was enthusiastic about

my curiosity and proposed we meet up for coffee. We had a lively discussion, the kind that leaves you with more energy than when you arrived. I wanted more of that, which motivated me to keep writing. This also exposed me to a new kind of prestige that I wasn't allergic to – recognition from other people who are passionate about ideas.

当我通过写作结交朋友时，我的恐惧逐渐消退。在发布一篇文章后，我收到了一位纽约市一家公司的首席人才官的留言。他对我的好奇心感到热情，并提议我们见面喝咖啡。我们进行了一场热烈的讨论，这种讨论让你离开时比来时更有活力。我想要更多这样的经历，这激励我继续写作。这也让我接触到了一种新的声望，我对此并不排斥——来自其他对思想充满热情的人的认可。

Increasingly, the internet is supporting the emergence of many micro-communities that provide people with attention and prestige in unique ways. For example, I participate in an evolving “creator economy” ecosystem that has developed on Twitter, in private groups and online courses, and through real-life meetups. One way to earn prestige in this world is to give generously and share everything you know. People like Nat Eliason, Anne-Laure Le Cunff, Pieter Levels, and Tiago Forte have earned status not only because of their extrinsic success but also their willingness to support others and share in extensive detail how they make money and how they think about their lives.

越来越多的互联网支持着许多微型社区的出现，以独特的方式为人们提供关注和声望。例如，我参与了一个在Twitter、私人群组和在线课程以及现实生活中的聚会上发展起来的“创作者经济”生态系统。在这个世界中，赢得声望的一种方式 is 慷慨地给予并分享你所知道的一切。像Nat Eliason、Anne-Laure Le Cunff、Pieter Levels和Tiago Forte这样的人不仅因为他们的外在成功而获得地位，而且因为他们愿意支持他人，并详细分享他们如何赚钱以及他们如何思考生活。

The concept of prestige is shifting quickly. As our connections to local communities have broken down, we are paying more attention than ever to

people who are successful in the traditional sense, through money, status, or fame. But below this flashy surface, many people are seeking out smaller and quieter communities where they can earn prestige in a way that suits their lives.

声望的概念正在迅速转变。随着我们与当地社区的联系断裂，我们比以往更加关注那些在传统意义上通过金钱、地位或名声取得成功的人。但在这个华丽的表面之下，许多人正在寻找更小、更安静的社区，在那里他们可以以适合自己生活方式的方式获得声望。

These communities, many of which have emerged online, have been a welcome companion to me on the pathless path. I've been surprised at how many people across the globe resonate with my story and are searching for a different game to play than hacking the "bad tests" that Paul Graham writes about. Now it's easier than ever to open your computer and opt-in to a community that defines prestige, status, and success in a way that matches how you want to design your life.

这些社群，其中许多是在网上形成的，对我在无路可寻的道路上来说是一个受欢迎的伴侣。我对全球有多少人与我的故事产生共鸣，并正在寻找一种不同的游戏来玩，而不是像保罗·格雷厄姆所写的“破解坏测试”这样的游戏感到惊讶。现在，打开电脑并选择加入一个以你想要设计生活方式的方式来定义声望、地位和成功的社群比以往任何时候都更容易。

The internet does enable negative groups to form, but we pay far too much attention to these communities and not enough to the positive connections and life options made possible all over the world for people who are online. If the default path is the story of the industrial world, then the pathless path is the natural story for a digital-native world in which nothing can stop us from finding others who share our desires, ideas, and questions.

互联网确实使得负面群体得以形成，但我们过于关注这些社群，而忽视了在线世界为人们提供的积极联系和生活选择。如果默认路径是工业世界的故事，那么无路径之路就是数字原住民世界的自然故事，其

中没有任何东西能阻止我们找到与我们分享欲望、想法和问题的其他人。

When I took a break from freelancing in the first year of my self-employment journey, I decided to spend more time writing online, launching my podcast, and building an online course. In 2018, this was not an obvious path to success. I worked on those things for more than eighteen months before I made more than \$1,000. Why would I keep working on these things? Because I had found a small group of people that saw value in what I was doing and encouraged me to keep going.

在我自雇的第一年里，当我从自由职业中休息时，我决定花更多时间在网上写作、推出我的播客和建立在线课程。在2018年，这不是一条明显的成功之路。在我赚到1000美元之前，我花了超过十八个月的时间来做这些事情。为什么我要继续做这些事情呢？因为我找到了一小群人，他们看到了我所做的价值，并鼓励我继续前进。

It's hard to overstate how powerful this force has been in my life. Seth Godin argues that humans are wired “to become a member in good standing of the tribe” and on the default path this means we will tend to conform.<sup>113</sup> On the pathless path, powered by digital communities, we can surround ourselves with people that inspire us and push us to improve in the ways we care about. The longer I've stayed on this path and the more effort I've put into connecting with people heading in similar directions, the better my life has become.

这股力量在我的生活中具有巨大的影响力，难以言喻。塞思·高汀认为，人类天生“渴望成为部落中的正式成员”，在默认的道路上，这意味着我们往往会趋于顺从。在没有路径的道路上，通过数字社区的力量，我们可以与那些激励我们并推动我们在我们关心的方面取得进步的人们团结在一起。我越是坚持这条道路，越是努力与那些朝着相似方向前进的人们建立联系，我的生活就变得越好。

This is why I'm fond of the advice angel investor Naval Ravikant offers, "play long-term games with long-term people." Ever since making that first friend from my writing, I haven't stopped writing publicly for more than five years, mostly driven by the fact that I continue to meet great people. One example is my friend Saloni Miglani in India, who quit her job and became a remote worker. In a note she sent to me, she told me that "your writing showed me how I could be a happier, calmer, and more creative human being." Little does she know that I learn just as much from her, and others like her every week.

这就是为什么我喜欢天使投资人纳瓦尔·拉维坎特提供的建议：“与长期的人一起玩长期的游戏。”自从与我写作的第一个朋友交上之后，我已经连续五年以上公开写作，主要是因为我不断遇到了很棒的人。一个例子是我在印度的朋友Saloni Miglani，她辞去了工作成为了一名远程工作者。在她给我发的一封信中，她告诉我“你的写作向我展示了如何成为一个更快乐、更冷静、更有创造力的人。”她并不知道我每周都从她和其他人身上学到了同样多的东西。

Early on, it was clear that if I continued to share over a long enough period of time, it might radically improve my life. As I'm writing this book, I can say without a doubt that my hunch was correct.

早期，很明显，如果我继续分享足够长的时间，可能会极大地改善我的生活。当我写这本书的时候，毫无疑问地说，我的直觉是正确的。

## You Are a Bad Egg

### 你是个坏蛋

In his book *Seeing Like a State*, James Scott argues that "legibility" made modernity possible. By legibility, he means "arranging the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion."<sup>114</sup>

在他的书《像国家一样看待》中，詹姆斯·斯科特认为“可辨识度”使现

代化成为可能。通过可辨识性，他指的是“以简化经典国家职能（如征税、征兵和防止叛乱）的方式来安排人口。”

One example of this standardization is Germany's invention of “scientific forestry.” By using the output of paper as a measurement for a specific volume of trees, forests could be quantified and trees could be planted to optimize output. This method worked well in the short term, but within a couple of generations, it resulted in costs such as the loss of important local species and soil degradation. It turns out that Mother Nature's approach was wiser than the scientists understood.

这种标准化的一个例子是德国发明的“科学林业”。通过以纸张产量作为衡量特定体积树木的标准，森林可以被量化，树木可以被种植以优化产出。这种方法在短期内效果不错，但几代人之后，却导致了一些成本，如重要的本地物种丧失和土壤退化。事实证明，大自然的方法比科学家所理解的更明智。

This kind of quantification has now been applied to many parts of society. In terms of work, the fundamental organizing unit of the economy is the “job.” This is why so much attention is paid to unemployment rates, also called the “jobs numbers.” The former academic turned writer and financial advisor Ben Hunt has argued that for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such standardization was “industrially necessary” and vital to the success of the modern economy, state, and world.<sup>[115](#)</sup>

这种量化方法现在已经应用到社会的许多方面。在工作方面，经济的基本组织单位是“工作岗位”。这就是为什么对失业率，也称为“就业数据”，如此关注。前学者转行为作家和财务顾问的本·亨特认为，在20世纪的大部分时间里，这种标准化是“工业上必要的”，对现代经济、国家和世界的成功至关重要。

However, he continues, over the last 50 years the need for people to be “legible” and fit into a standard model of work has merely become “industrially preferable.” This puts government and institutional leaders in a position where they are incentivized to convince people that following rigid paths in their institutions is the correct path for everyone. Hunt uses the example of the “industrially necessary egg,” to make his point. “Good” eggs are those that meet specifications, are perfectly clean, and can legally be sold in a supermarket.

然而，他继续说，过去50年来，人们需要“可辨认”并符合标准工作模式的需求仅仅成为“工业上可取的”。这使得政府和机构领导者处于一种被激励说服人们遵循机构中严格路径的正确道路的位置。亨特用“工业上必需的鸡蛋”作为例子来支持他的观点。“好”的鸡蛋是符合规格、完全干净并且可以合法在超市销售的鸡蛋。

Any farmer knows, however, there are other good eggs, such as the ones from Hunt’s farm, which are often dirty, come in various shapes, and don’t need to be refrigerated. Many people see these as bad eggs, but Hunt knows the truth, that they are “one of the best things in life.”<sup>116</sup>

然而，任何农民都知道，还有其他好的鸡蛋，比如来自亨特农场的鸡蛋，它们经常很脏，形状各异，不需要冷藏。很多人认为这些是坏鸡蛋，但亨特知道真相，它们是“生活中最好的事情之一”。

Hunt’s eggs provide a good metaphor for thinking about the pathless path. On the default path, you are automatically a “good egg.” On the pathless path, people default to seeing you as a “bad egg.” Even if it was never spoken, when I left the default path I felt as if I had immediately crossed an imaginary boundary where I was some sort of rebel that needed to defend my recklessness.

亨特的鸡蛋为我们思考无路可寻的道路提供了一个很好的隐喻。在默认的道路上，你自动成为一个“好蛋”。在无路可寻的道路上，人们默认将你视为一个“坏蛋”。即使从未有人明说，当我离开默认的道路

时，我感觉自己立刻越过了一个想象中的界限，成为了某种需要为自己的鲁莽行为辩护的叛逆者。

The belief that full-time work is normal, however, doesn't match with reality. In 2013, Gallup found that the global payroll to population rate, or the percentage of people working full-time, to be 26%.<sup>117</sup> If only a quarter of the population has “good egg” jobs, maybe the prevailing story that tells us how we should think about work and the economy is not the best one. At a minimum, we should be a little more suspicious of anyone who seems to think there is one true way of working.

全职工作是正常的信念与现实不符。2013年，盖洛普发现全球的全职就业率，即全职工作人口的百分比，为26%。如果只有四分之一的人口拥有“好蛋”工作，也许告诉我们如何思考工作和经济的主流故事并不是最好的选择。至少，我们应该对那些似乎认为只有一种正确工作方式的人持有更多怀疑态度。

Yet this is the world we live in. This means embracing the pathless path requires grappling with the feeling of being a “bad egg.” This often drives people who leave the default path to eagerly embrace new identities that are still recognizable as legible to the “traditional” economy. They gravitate to titles like a startup founder, entrepreneur, freelance consultant, or even the newly emerging “creator.”

然而，这就是我们生活的世界。这意味着拥抱无路可走的道路需要应对成为“坏蛋”的感觉。这经常驱使那些离开传统道路的人热衷于接受仍然被“传统”经济认可的新身份。他们倾向于拥有像创业者、企业家、自由职业顾问甚至是新兴的“创作者”等头衔。

For example, when Khe Hy first left his job on Wall Street, he shared that his initial plan was, “to become a venture-backed entrepreneur.” He wanted to start a company and raise capital from investors. As he reflected later, “it



sounds so lame, but to me a big portion of success was other people thinking I was successful.”<sup>118</sup>

例如，当 Khe Hy 第一次离开华尔街的工作时，他分享了他最初的计划是“成为一名风险投资支持的企业家”。他想要创办一家公司，并从投资者那里筹集资金。后来他反思道，“听起来很糟糕，但对我来说，成功的一大部分是其他人认为我成功。”

Embracing a new identity can be a useful way to enter the uncertain world of the pathless path. At a minimum, it gives you an answer when people inevitably start asking about your plans. However, many people quickly realize that they've created the same conditions that they sought to escape. Luckily, Khe figured this out, and before he got started, he said that he “had just enough separation” from his old life that he knew he wanted something much different than founding a company, at least in the first couple years of his journey.

拥抱新的身份可以是进入无路可寻的世界的一种有用方式。至少，当人们不可避免地开始询问你的计划时，它可以给你一个答案。然而，许多人很快意识到他们创造了他们试图逃避的相同条件。幸运的是，Khe意识到了这一点，在开始之前，他说他“与旧生活有足够的分离”，他知道他想要的东西与创办一家公司大不相同，至少在他的旅程的最初几年里。

The pathless path is about ignoring the pull of needing to be a “good egg” and learning what truly enables you to thrive. What this really means is developing an appreciation for discomfort. Howard Gray, a consultant and storyteller, and veteran of the pathless path, sees the uncertainty of his path as a positive thing. When his life “stops moving and it calcifies or solidifies, that’s a bad thing” and he’s on the right track when it’s a “formless, evolving thing.”<sup>119</sup>

无路之路是关于忽略需要成为一个“好人”的诱惑，学习真正能让你茁壮成长的东西。这实际上意味着培养对不适的欣赏。霍华德·格雷，一位顾问和讲故事者，以及无路之路的老手，将他的道路的不确定性视

为了一件积极的事情。当他的生活“停止运动并变得僵化或凝固时，那是一件坏事”，而当它是一个“无形的、不断发展的东西”时，他就走在正确的轨道上。

The comfort we feel when we do what is expected keeps us from developing the skills we need to face uncertainty. Noah Lowry, a pitcher for the San Francisco Giants, dedicated his childhood and early adulthood to baseball. But injuries forced him to retire when he was just 26, early for a professional athlete. This experience rocked Lowry's world; he described it as “disorienting and chaotic.” Later he recounted, “In a moment, my identity crumbled, who I thought I was, the man my wife thought she had married, fell apart.”<sup>120</sup> Lowry had reached the heights of success in his field, but when that was taken away, he realized he did not have the skills needed to embark on a new path.

当我们按照预期行事时所感受到的舒适感，阻止了我们培养面对不确定性所需的技能。旧金山巨人队的投手诺亚·洛瑞，童年和早年都致力于棒球。但是由于受伤，他在只有26岁时就不得不退役，对于一名职业运动员来说，这个年龄还算早。这次经历震撼了洛瑞的世界；他将其描述为“迷失和混乱”。后来他回忆道：“一瞬间，我的身份崩溃了，我以为自己是谁，我妻子以为自己嫁给了谁的男人，都崩塌了。”洛瑞在自己的领域取得了巨大的成功，但当这一切被夺走时，他意识到自己没有迈向新道路所需的技能。

Chauncey Billups came to the same realization after retiring from professional basketball at the age of 37. Even though his career wasn't shortened by injury as Lowry's was, he was still rattled: “You go from being a very old dude at 37...to being a young dude with no real experience anywhere else. You can become lost.”<sup>121</sup>

肖恩西·比卢普斯在37岁退役后也有同样的领悟。尽管他的职业生涯没有像洛瑞那样因伤缩短，但他仍然感到不安：“你从37岁的老人变成一个没有任何其他真实经验的年轻人。你可能会迷失自己。”

This reminds me of Rebecca Solnit's insight about getting lost in *A Field Guide To Getting Lost*. She says that, "losing things is about the familiar falling away," but "getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing."<sup>122</sup> Billups was losing his career at the same time he was becoming lost, heading in a new direction. If a professional athlete like him was not prepared, even after earning more than \$100 million in his career, this tells us that learning how to deal with uncertainty is not a natural thing, or at minimum is something that can't be "solved" with more money.

这让我想起了丽贝卡·索尔尼特在《迷失指南》中的洞见。她说，“失去东西意味着熟悉的东西消失了”，但“迷失则是陌生的东西出现了”。比卢普斯在他迷失的同时失去了自己的职业生涯，朝着新的方向前进。如果像他这样的职业运动员即使在职业生涯中赚了一亿美元以上，却没有做好准备，这告诉我们学会如何应对不确定性并不是一件自然的事情，或者至少不能仅仅通过更多的金钱来“解决”。

Part of the promise of being a "good egg" is that we will not feel lost. But the "bad eggs" on the pathless path eventually realize there is wisdom in being lost. This doesn't mean it will be easy. Like Billups, you will sense that you are doing something wrong, or at minimum, don't know what you are doing. Simple questions from others like "what do you do?" will expose your own uncertainty and can feel like a death blow to the soul.

成为一个“好蛋”的承诺之一就是我们不会感到迷失。但是在没有路径的道路上，那些“坏蛋”最终会意识到迷失中蕴含着智慧。这并不意味着会很容易。就像比卢普斯一样，你会感觉自己在做错事，或者至少不知道自己在做什么。他人简单的问题，比如“你做什么工作？”会暴露出你自己的不确定性，感觉就像对灵魂的致命一击。

We can weaken the impact of these kinds of questions by knowing that there is no way to avoid being seen as a "bad egg." The only way forward is to eventually get to a point when you realize that, in fact, there are no good

eggs or bad eggs at all. The pathless path is about releasing yourself from this way of seeing the world and realizing that the number of career paths worth following is infinite.

我们可以通过知道无法避免被视为“坏蛋”来减弱这类问题的影响。前进的唯一方法是最终认识到，实际上根本没有好蛋或坏蛋。无路可循的道路是关于从这种看世界的方式中解放自己，并意识到值得追求的职业道路是无限的。

As Thoreau once wrote at Walden Pond, “Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.”<sup>123</sup>

正如梭罗曾在瓦尔登湖写道：“直到我们迷失了自己，换句话说，直到我们失去了这个世界，我们才开始找到自己，意识到我们所处的位置以及我们关系的无限广阔。”

## Find Your “Enough” 找到你的“足够”

Are you helping people? Are they happy? Are you happy? Are you profitable? Isn't that enough? – *Derek Sivers*

你在帮助人们吗？他们快乐吗？你快乐吗？你有盈利吗？这不够吗？- 德里克·西弗斯

Paul Jarvis, a designer and entrepreneur, wrote *Company of One*, which details his efforts to build a sustainable business and life. At many stages along his journey, people urged him to grow his business, hire employees, and earn more money. But at every opportunity, he chose to keep working alone. Over time he built a path that he was excited to stay on and realized that “a large part of choosing your path is figuring out which values will determine your worth.” Once he had a good understanding of those values, it was easier for him to decide where to focus.<sup>124</sup>

保罗·贾维斯是一位设计师和企业家，他写了《一个人的公司》，详细描述了他努力建立可持续的事业和生活的经历。在他的旅程中的许多阶段，人们都敦促他扩大业务、雇佣员工并赚更多的钱。但在每一个机会中，他选择继续独自工作。随着时间的推移，他建立了一条他很高兴坚持的道路，并意识到“选择自己的道路的一个重要部分是找出哪些价值观将决定你的价值。”一旦他对这些价值观有了很好的理解，他就更容易决定要把重点放在哪里。

Coming to this understanding requires a lot of reflection and experimentation, but surprisingly, this is often much easier on the pathless path than the default path. Because I work for myself, I spend zero minutes a year blaming other people for my circumstances. It forces me to take complete ownership of my life and continue to experiment, reflect, and try again. In six months I can experiment with my life in many more ways than I did in the ten years I spent on the default path, allowing me to learn much more quickly.

来到这个理解需要大量的反思和实验，但令人惊讶的是，在无路径的道路上，这通常比默认路径更容易。因为我为自己工作，每年我都不会花一分钟去责怪别人造成我的处境。这迫使我完全拥有自己的生活，并继续实验、反思和再次尝试。在六个月内，我可以以更多的方式实验我的生活，比我在默认路径上花了十年的时间更快地学到更多。

Over time, you start to understand what matters, and more importantly, when to say “no.” To engage with these issues, Jarvis wrote a personal definition of “enough.” Notice how detailed it is:

随着时间的推移，你开始明白什么是重要的，更重要的是，什么时候该说“不”。为了参与这些问题，贾维斯写了一个关于“足够”的个人定义。请注意它是多么详细。

Enough is the antithesis of unchecked growth because growth encourages mindless consumption and enough requires constant

questioning and awareness. Enough is when we reach the upper bound of what's required. Enough revenue means our business is profitable and can support however many employees/freelancers we have, even if it's just one person. Enough income means we can live our lives with a bit of financial ease, and put something away for later. Enough means our families are fed, have roofs over their heads and their futures are considered. Enough stuff means we have what we need to live our lives without excess.<sup>125</sup>

足够是无限增长的对立面，因为增长鼓励盲目消费，而足够需要不断质疑和意识。足够是我们达到所需的上限。足够的收入意味着我们的业务盈利，并且可以支持我们有多少员工/自由职业者，即使只有一个人。足够的收入意味着我们可以过上稍微轻松的生活，并为将来存一些钱。足够意味着我们的家人有饭吃，有房子住，他们的未来得到考虑。足够的东西意味着我们拥有生活所需，没有多余的东西。

Jarvis knows and can articulate what matters to him and he is not afraid to share it. For many in full-time jobs, this kind of reflection can be hard, if not impossible. For example, very few people would ever consider walking into their manager's office in September and declaring, "I've made enough money for this year. See you in January!" Instead, it is easier to accept the economic logic of profit-seeking organizations, that "more is better," and apply it to our own lives.

贾维斯知道并能够表达对他来说重要的事情，他不怕分享。对于许多全职工作的人来说，这种反思可能很难，甚至不可能。例如，很少有人会考虑在九月走进他们经理的办公室，宣布：“我已经赚够今年的钱了。明年一月见！”相反，更容易接受以盈利为目标的组织的经济逻辑，即“越多越好”，并将其应用到我们自己的生活中。

This approach can work for some, but it drives many towards burnout. Writer Jocelyn Gleib, who worked at a startup, noted, "After being at a startup for four years and getting the chance to make tons of cool stuff, I was intoxicated with my own productivity. I got wildly ambitious and decided to 3x my workload, adding multiple massive new projects (of my

own devising!) to an already intensive work schedule.” It was hard for her to see what was happening because she liked the work so much. However, “by the end of that year, I had produced a ton of incredible things, but I was a burnt-out husk of a person.” She calls this her “busyness breakdown.” After work she had no energy left to invest in relationships, health, and other things that mattered to her. She realized that when “the way we work today and the way we work tomorrow becomes the status quo,” it quickly becomes “the new normal,” and that crafting a new approach to living your life becomes really hard. She was incredibly productive, but for her, it was not enough. [126](#)

这种方法对一些人可能有效，但会让很多人走向精疲力尽。作家乔斯琳·格莱在一家初创公司工作时注意到：“在一家初创公司工作了四年，有机会做很多很酷的事情，我对自己的工作效率感到非常兴奋。我变得非常雄心勃勃，决定将我的工作量增加到原来的三倍，给已经紧张的工作日程添加了多个庞大的新项目（都是我自己想出来的！）。”她很难意识到正在发生的事情，因为她非常喜欢这份工作。然而，“那一年结束时，我创作了很多令人难以置信的东西，但我已经成为一个精疲力尽的人。”她称之为“忙碌崩溃”。工作结束后，她没有精力去投入到人际关系、健康和其他对她来说重要的事情中。她意识到，当“我们今天的工作方式和明天的工作方式成为常态”时，很快就会成为“新常态”，而制定一种新的生活方式变得非常困难。她非常高效，但对她来说，这还不够。

As I developed a better relationship with money and stopped acting from a mindset of scarcity and fear, I started to work out my own perspective on “enough”:

随着我与金钱建立了更好的关系，并停止了从匮乏和恐惧的心态行事，我开始形成了自己对于“足够”的看法

Enough is knowing that no amount in my bank account will ever satisfy my deepest fears. It’s knowing that I have enough friends that would gladly open their door and share a meal if I was ever in need. It’s the feeling that I’ve been able to spend my time over an extended stretch of time working on projects that are meaningful to me, helping



people with a spirit of generosity, and having enough space and time in my life to stay energized to keep doing this over the long-term.

Enough is seeing a clear opportunity that will increase my earnings in the short-term, but knowing that saying “no” will open me up to things that might be even more valuable in ways that are hard to understand.

Enough is knowing that the clothes, fancy meal, or latest gadget will not make me happier, but also that buying such things won’t mean I’m going to end up broke. Enough is having meaningful conversations with people that inspire me, people that I love, or people that support me.

足够是知道我的银行账户里的任何金额都无法满足我最深的恐惧。足够是知道我有足够多的朋友，如果我需要，他们会乐意打开门与我共进晚餐。足够是感觉到我能够在一段时间内专注于对我有意义的项目上，以慷慨的精神帮助他人，并在生活中有足够的空间和时间来保持精力充沛，以便长期坚持这样做。足够是看到一个明确的机会，可以在短期内增加我的收入，但知道说“不”会让我有机会获得更有价值的东西，尽管这种价值很难理解。足够是知道衣服、奢侈的餐食或最新的小工具不会让我更幸福，但也知道购买这些东西不会让我陷入贫困。足够是与激励我、我爱的人或支持我的人进行有意义的对话。

On the pathless path, knowing you have enough is what gives you the freedom to say “no” to clear financial opportunities and say “yes” to something that might bring you alive and might even pay off much more over the long term.

在无路可寻的道路上，知道自己拥有足够的东西，才能让你有自由地对明显的财务机会说“不”，并对可能让你活得更意义、甚至在长期内带来更多回报的事情说“是”。

When I launched a podcast, people assumed it was a massive project and that I wanted to compete with Gimlet and NPR. They didn’t know that I considered it an experiment and wasn’t aiming toward monetary success or fame. From this perspective, it made sense to create a podcast cover in 20 minutes in PowerPoint, spend less than an hour editing the audio, and



publish without much of a following. There was nothing else to gain because I was operating from the feeling of enough.

当我开始制作播客时，人们认为这是一个庞大的项目，而且我想与Gimlet和NPR竞争。他们不知道我把它当作一个实验，不追求经济上的成功或名声。从这个角度来看，用PowerPoint在20分钟内制作一个播客封面，花不到一个小时编辑音频，并且没有太多的追随者就发布，这是有道理的。因为我已经满足于现状，没有其他可以获得的東西。

If we don't define "enough," we default to *more*, which makes it impossible to understand when to say *no*.

如果我们不定义“足够”，我们会默认选择更多，这样就很难理解何时说不。

When I wrote this section, I emailed Jarvis and asked him to expand on his "Enough" essay, but I got an automated response, "Please note, this email address is no longer active or monitored."

当我写这一部分时，我给贾维斯发了电子邮件，要求他对他的“足够”文章进行扩展，但我收到了一封自动回复：“请注意，此电子邮件地址已不再使用或监控。”

It seems Jarvis knows when enough is enough.

看起来贾维斯知道什么时候足够了。

## Beyond Scarcity Mindset

### 超越稀缺心态

The problem is that our culture has engaged in a Faustian bargain, in which we trade our genius and artistry for apparent stability. – *Seth Godin*

问题在于我们的文化已经进行了一场浮士德式的交易，我们用天赋和艺术换取了表面上的稳定。 - 赛斯·高汀

My mother credits the health crisis I faced in my 20s for putting me on my current path. “It changed you,” she says.

我母亲认为我20多岁时面临的健康危机让我走上了现在的道路。她说：“这改变了你。”

While I don’t think it was the sole reason I left the default path, my illness did change my relationship to uncertainty. While I was sick, I went several months without a paycheck, spent thousands on healthcare, and watched my savings dwindle down to less than three months of living expenses. Three years later, I had saved up five times the amount I had in savings. So the prospect of leaving without an income didn’t seem so scary.

虽然我不认为这是我离开常规道路的唯一原因，但我的疾病确实改变了我对不确定性的态度。在我生病期间，我几个月没有收入，花费了数千美元用于医疗保健，并看着我的储蓄减少到不到三个月的生活费用。三年后，我的储蓄增加了五倍。所以没有收入离开似乎并不那么可怕。

Without my health crisis, I probably wouldn’t have been so comfortable leaving my job without any clear plan for making money. This seems crazy now, but it didn’t occur to me to radically cut my spending until *after* I left my job. A trained consultant and former financial analyst who had spent hundreds of hours building models for companies and I had never bothered to create a detailed model of my own spending. What was I thinking?

没有我的健康危机，我可能不会如此放心地辞去工作，而没有任何明确的赚钱计划。现在看来这似乎很疯狂，但在我辞职之后，我才想到要彻底削减开支。作为一名经过培训的顾问和前金融分析师，我曾花

费数百小时为公司建立模型，但从未费心创建自己的详细开支模型。我当时在想什么呢？

This is not how most people approach quitting their job. What I've discovered in conversations is that no matter how much money people have, they will go to enormous lengths to avoid any discomfort related to their financial situation. This is what makes quitting full-time employment seem terrifying and a steady paycheck so addictive.

这不是大多数人辞职的方式。通过对话我发现，无论人们有多少钱，他们都会不惜一切代价避免与财务状况有关的任何不适。这就是为什么辞去全职工作似乎令人恐惧，而稳定的薪水如此令人上瘾的原因。

Economist Daniel Kahneman found that “the importance that people attached to income at age 18 also anticipated their satisfaction with their income as adults.”<sup>127</sup> While on the default path, I was always surrounded by people that cared more about money and it was easy to convince myself that I placed very little importance on money. When I quit my job, I realized my assessment was wrong.

经济学家丹尼尔·卡尼曼发现，“人们在18岁时对收入的重视程度也预示着他们成年后对收入的满意程度。”在默认的道路上，我总是被那些更关注金钱的人所包围，很容易让自己相信我对金钱的重视程度很低。当我辞职后，我意识到我的评估是错误的。

Though I had gone several months without a paycheck while sick, the months after leaving my job were a completely different experience. Money went from a background consideration to one of the most important things in my life. I was experiencing what psychologists call, “scarcity mindset.” 虽然我生病期间几个月没有领到工资，但离职后的几个月完全不同。钱从一个背景考虑变成了我生活中最重要的事情之一。我正在经历心理学家所称的“匮乏心态”。

Some of the first research into this state of mind was done in 1944. Worries about food shortages due to the war led to research about how people react to going without food.<sup>128</sup> Researchers at the University of Minnesota recruited 36 participants for a study that involved long stretches without eating. In addition to the expected biological reactions, the men became obsessed with food. They talked about opening restaurants and switching careers to work in food service, shared recipes, and compared food prices across various newspapers. The researchers concluded that when we feel we lack something, we tend to obsess over it.

这种心态的一些最早的研究是在1944年进行的。对于由于战争导致的食物短缺的担忧促使人们开始研究人们在没有食物的情况下的反应。明尼苏达大学的研究人员招募了36名参与者进行一项涉及长时间不吃东西的研究。除了预期的生物反应外，这些男性变得对食物着迷。他们谈论着开餐馆，转行从事餐饮服务行业，分享食谱，并比较各家报纸上的食物价格。研究人员得出结论，当我们感觉缺少某样东西时，我们往往会对其着迷。

When I first left my job I was similarly “starved” of my paycheck. This inspired my cost-cutting move to Boston and drove me to go all-in on finding freelance projects. This calmed the feelings of scarcity for a while but distracted me from getting to the root of my insecurities.

当我第一次离开工作时，我也同样“渴望”我的薪水。这激发了我削减开支的决心，搬到波士顿，并全力寻找自由职业项目。这一段时间内，这缓解了我对稀缺感的情绪，但也让我分散了注意力，无法解决我内心不安的根源。

When I moved to Taiwan, I intended to seek out freelancing work but was pulled in by both the magic of non-doing and the excitement of a new relationship. Without money coming in, I shifted my attention to cutting expenses even further. With the assistance of a spending tracking app, I

scrutinized every purchase like a seasoned accountant and was able to lower my cost of living to less than \$1,000 per month. Again, this lessened the pressure to make money but it kicked a deeper reckoning with my feelings down the road.

当我搬到台湾时，我本打算寻找自由职业工作，但却被无所事事的魔力和新恋情的激动所吸引。没有收入进账，我将注意力转向进一步削减开支。借助一款消费追踪应用，我像一名经验丰富的会计师一样仔细审查每一笔购买，并成功将生活成本降低到每月不到1000美元。这再次减轻了赚钱的压力，但也引发了我对内心感受的更深层次的反思。

When I started to make plans with Angie to stay in Asia, I started to worry about making money again. This led me to accept a freelance project with a small consulting firm. It paid \$7,500, which would fund my life for several months, but when I started working on the project, I realized I had talked myself into the project in order to calm my fears rather than as something I was excited to work on. I committed to not making the same mistake again. 当我开始与安吉一起计划在亚洲生活时，我开始担心再次赚钱的问题。这导致我接受了一个小咨询公司的自由职业项目。它支付了7500美元，可以维持我的生活几个月，但当我开始着手这个项目时，我意识到我是为了安抚自己的恐惧而说服自己接受这个项目，而不是因为我对它感到兴奋。我决定不再犯同样的错误。

American anthropologist Ernest Becker was convinced that most of our actions in life are driven by a fear of death. Behind my money fears was a longing to feel that my life mattered. I suspect this is the same for many, and money is one shortcut we use to “prove” our worth. Yet in my experience, no amount of money ever seems to satisfy. Becker argues that the only way to transcend these existential fears is to live a life that feels heroic. He argues that “if everyone honestly admitted his urge to be a hero it would be a devastating release of truth.”<sup>129</sup>

美国人类学家欧内斯特·贝克尔坚信，我们生活中的大部分行为都是由

对死亡的恐惧驱使的。在我对金钱的恐惧背后，是一种渴望感到自己的生命有意义的愿望。我怀疑这对许多人来说也是一样的，而金钱是我们用来“证明”自己价值的捷径之一。然而根据我的经验，任何数量的金钱似乎都无法满足。贝克尔认为，超越这些存在主义的恐惧的唯一途径是过一种让人感到英勇的生活。他认为，“如果每个人都真诚地承认自己渴望成为英雄的冲动，那将是一个毁灭性的真相释放。”

What he means by heroic is less about saving the world and closer to the pathless path: a journey of finding yourself, grappling with your insecurities, and daring to seek out a life that is uniquely yours. Becker argues that prescribed paths of the modern world can trap people into conforming to the expectations of others instead of taking steps to create their own unique path.

他所说的英雄主义并不是指拯救世界，而更接近于无路可寻的道路：一段寻找自我的旅程，与自己的不安抗争，并勇敢地追求一种独特的生活。贝克尔认为，现代社会规定的道路可能会让人们陷入迎合他人期望的困境，而不是采取行动创造自己独特的道路。

On the pathless path, the pressure of conformity is not a major concern, but that does not mean an ideal life will emerge automatically. You need to take steps to create it, and in those months in Asia, I started to realize that I needed to graduate from my role as accountant. Minimizing spending is a useful step in lowering the pressure of making money, but it's not a lifestyle. While it gave me the confidence to make drastic changes without sacrificing my happiness, it kept me in a mindset of scarcity instead of leaning into possibility.

在无路可寻的道路上，符合规范的压力并不是一个主要问题，但这并不意味着理想的生活会自动出现。你需要采取措施来创造它，在那几个月的亚洲之旅中，我开始意识到我需要从会计师的角色中毕业。减少开支是降低赚钱压力的有用步骤，但这并不是一种生活方式。虽然它给了我在不牺牲幸福的情况下做出重大改变的信心，但它让我陷入了一种稀缺的心态，而不是追求可能性。

Do I still worry about money? Yes. But now I'm hyper-aware of how my financial insecurities might distract me from efforts that will help me stay energized and motivated on this path. Instead of playing to not lose, I'm playing to win.

我还担心钱吗？是的。但现在我非常清楚，我的财务不安可能会分散我的注意力，让我无法保持活力和动力。我不再为了不输而玩，而是为了赢而玩。

Behind our money fears are existential fears, like the fear of death or the fear of not being loved, respected, and admired. These fears are likely not solvable but we can learn to coexist with them. This is also why financial worries can be infinite and people can chase more and more their entire lives. The flip side of this is that if we can learn to coexist with our financial insecurities, we can turn them into a secondary concern. This opens you up to the real secret: the opportunities of the pathless path are infinite too.

我们的金钱恐惧背后是存在性的恐惧，比如对死亡的恐惧或对不被爱、尊重和钦佩的恐惧。这些恐惧可能无法解决，但我们可以学会与它们共存。这也是为什么财务担忧可以是无限的，人们可以一生追逐更多的原因。另一方面，如果我们能学会与我们的财务不安全感共存，我们可以将其变成次要的关注点。这使你能够真正揭示秘密：无路之路的机会也是无限的。

# 9

## The Real Work of Your Life 你生命中真正的工作

There's so much more to who you are than you know right now. You are, indeed, something mysterious and someone magnificent. You hold within you – secreted for safekeeping in your heart – a great gift for this world. Although you might sometimes feel like a cog in a huge machine, that you don't really matter in the great scheme of things, the truth is that you are fully eligible for a meaningful life, a mystical life, a life of the greatest fulfillment and service. – *Bill Plotkin*

你现在所知道的关于自己的只是冰山一角。你确实是一个神秘而伟大的存在。你心中隐藏着一个伟大的礼物，为了保护它而将其深藏心底。尽管有时你可能感觉自己只是巨大机器中的一个齿轮，觉得自己在宏大的计划中并不重要，但事实是，你完全有资格过上有意义、神秘、充实而有所贡献的生活。

## Finding Your Conversation 找到你的对话

I've been inspired by the poet David Whyte's way of interpreting the world, which he calls the "conversational nature of reality." He believes all of us have an ongoing "conversation" with the world. While this may play in literal conversations with others or ourselves, it can also be metaphorical. What I've taken it to mean is that we all have things we are meant to find out about ourselves and the only way to discover them is to open ourselves up to the world.

我受到诗人大卫·怀特对世界的解读方式的启发，他称之为“现实的对话”。



话性”。他认为我们每个人都与世界有着持续的“对话”。虽然这可能与他人或自己的字面对话中发生，但它也可以是隐喻性的。我理解的意思是，我们每个人都有自己应该发现的事情，而唯一的发现方式就是向世界敞开心扉。

One of the best ways to discover your conversation is to start asking questions driven by your curiosity. For me, some of my favorite questions include:

发现你的对话的最佳方式之一是通过你的好奇心提出问题。对我来说，一些我最喜欢的问题包括：

- What matters?  
什么重要？
- Why do we work?  
为什么我们工作？
- What is the “good life”?  
什么是“美好的生活”？
- What holds people back from change?  
是什么阻碍了人们的改变？
- How do we find work that brings us alive?  
我们如何找到让我们充满活力的工作？

These are not simple, but when I learned to be guided by my curiosity and pay attention, I started noticing that answers would spontaneously emerge as a byproduct of living my life. It's also when you know you've found a “real conversation” which as Whyte describes, “is one that, no matter how slowly, helps you make sense of the world around you.”<sup>[130](#)</sup>

这些并不简单，但当我学会以好奇心为导向并且专注时，我开始注意到答案会自然地在我生活中出现。这也是当你知道你找到了一个“真正的对话”的时候，正如Whyte所描述的那样，“无论多慢，它都能帮助你理解周围的世界。”

The conversational nature of reality is most apparent when you are willing to exist at “the frontier” of your current reality. As Whyte reflects, “It’s astonishing how much time human beings spend away from that frontier.” The default path keeps people from this frontier but the pathless path pushes you towards it. To Whyte, the cost of not moving towards the frontier is profound, as we often risk missing out on a “deeper, broader, and wider possible future that’s waiting.”<sup>131</sup>

现实的对话性质在你愿意存在于当前现实的“边界”时最为明显。正如Whyte所反思的那样，“人类花费在远离边界的时间是令人惊讶的。”默认的道路使人们远离这个边界，但无路可走的道路将推动你朝它前进。对Whyte来说，不朝边界前进的代价是深远的，因为我们常常冒着错过“等待着的更深、更广、更宽广的可能未来”的风险。

I was first forced towards the edge of my reality the first week after quitting my job. I set out to wander around New York and ended up at a park called the Cloisters, at the literal frontier of New York, a city that I had failed to fully explore in the two and a half years that I had been there. I wandered through the park overlooking the Hudson. I felt lost, but not in a way that I could do anything about. If you had asked me where I was headed, I wouldn’t have had an answer. If you suggested I might move to Boston in a few months, I might have believed you. But if you said I’d end up in Asia, married, a little over two years later? I wouldn’t have even known what to do with that information. Being at the frontier of your current reality is disorienting. Deep down you might have a sense that you should keep going in a certain direction, but you never know why.

我在辞职后的第一个星期被迫走向现实的边缘。我开始四处游荡纽约，最后来到了一个叫做克洛伊斯特的公园，它位于纽约的边界，这个城市我在两年半的时间里未能完全探索。我漫步在俯瞰哈德逊河的公园里。我感到迷失，但又无法做任何事情来解决。如果你问我要去哪里，我会没有答案。如果你建议我几个月后搬到波士顿，我可能会相信你。但如果你说我会两年多后来亚洲结婚，我甚至都不知道该怎么处理这个信息。处于当前现实的边界是令人迷失的。内心深

处，你可能有一种感觉，应该朝着某个方向继续前进，但你永远不知道为什么。

This is what Whyte means when he writes about the conversational nature of reality. It's an acknowledgment that there are deeper forces at play in the world and we are a tiny little part of all that magic. It's about existing within that magic and still daring to ask questions about what matters or where you fit in. Much of my previous life had been scripted into a routine and I spent almost all my time knowing where I was supposed to be. This short-circuited my curiosity for years and kept me from seeing that there was a "conversation" with the world to be had at all.

这就是为什么怀特在谈到现实的对话性时的意思。这是承认世界上有更深层的力量在起作用，而我们只是其中微小的一部分。它是关于存在于这种魔力之中，仍然敢于问关于重要的事情或者你在其中的位置的问题。我以前的生活大部分都被安排成例行公事，几乎所有的时间都知道自己应该在哪里。这让我的好奇心短路了多年，让我无法看到与世界之间存在着一种“对话”。

When you step off the default path, you will be thrust towards the frontier. Almost immediately, clues about your conversation will emerge from what captures your attention and questions will appear that gives you a better understanding of what you're really after. This will be a confusing time. You may feel the urge to tell everyone about your new insights, questions, and curiosities, but this can be a mistake. Your ideas may make others uncomfortable and any doubt, skepticism, or criticism they express could convince you to run away from the frontier.

当你迈出常规的道路时，你将被推向前沿。几乎立即，你的注意力所吸引的事物将透露出关于你对话的线索，问题也会出现，让你更好地理解自己真正追求的是什么。这将是一个令人困惑的时期。你可能会冲动告诉每个人你的新见解、问题和好奇心，但这可能是一个错误。你的想法可能会让其他人感到不舒服，他们表达的任何怀疑、怀疑或批评都可能让你逃离前沿。

My own conversation has evolved slowly. At first, it was a solo conversation with broad, ambiguous questions ignited by losing my grandfather and losing my identity during my health crisis. This morphed into a more complex conversation over time, one that involved realizations from my life as well as from other people I was meeting through my writing. These connections were vital to staying at the frontier and exploring. In my favorite essay, “Solitude and Leadership,” William Deresiewicz highlights the importance of searching for wisdom in real conversations with close friends:

我的对话逐渐演变。起初，它是一个独自进行的对话，由失去祖父和在健康危机中失去身份引发的广泛而模糊的问题。随着时间的推移，这种对话变得更加复杂，涉及到我生活中的领悟，以及通过写作结识的其他人的领悟。这些联系对于保持在前沿并进行探索至关重要。在我最喜欢的文章《孤独与领导力》中，威廉·德雷西维奇强调了在与亲密朋友进行真实对话中寻找智慧的重要性。

Introspection means talking to yourself, and one of the best ways of talking to yourself is by talking to another person. One other person you can trust, one other person to whom you can unfold your soul. One other person you feel safe enough with to allow you to acknowledge things—to acknowledge things to yourself—that you otherwise can’t. Doubts you aren’t supposed to have, questions you aren’t supposed to ask. Feelings or opinions that would get you laughed at by the group or reprimanded by the authorities.<sup>[132](#)</sup>

反省意味着与自己对话，而与另一个人对话是与自己对话的最佳方式之一。你可以信任的另一个人，一个可以展开你的灵魂的人。一个你感到足够安全的人，让你能够承认一些事情-承认给自己的事情-否则你无法承认。你不应该有的疑虑，你不应该问的问题。会让你被群体嘲笑或当局责备的感受或观点。

While the pathless path is a solo journey, it is important that you have at least one close friend with whom you can have these kinds of intimate conversations. They will help you remain aware of your own emerging conversation with the world.

虽然无路可寻的道路是一段独自的旅程，但重要的是你至少有一个亲密的朋友，与他们可以进行这种亲密的对话。他们将帮助你保持对自己与世界的新兴对话的意识。

I've been lucky to find many people willing to have those conversations with me that have helped me be comfortable exploring my own frontier. The benefits of this have been profound. While I don't have perfect answers yet for the questions I keep asking, my conversation has somehow turned into a full life, one filled with people, ideas, curiosities, and work that will keep me engaged for many years to come.

我很幸运能够找到许多愿意与我进行对话的人，这些对话帮助我感到舒适，探索自己的前沿。这带来了深远的好处。虽然我对我一直在问的问题还没有完美的答案，但我的对话不知怎么地变成了一个充实的生活，充满了人、思想、好奇心和工作，这将使我在未来的许多年里保持参与。

## Design for Liking Work

### 喜欢工作的设计

We are always falling in love or quarreling, looking for jobs or fearing to lose them, getting ill and recovering, following public affairs. If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work. The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come. – C.S. Lewis

我们总是陷入爱情或争吵，寻找工作或担心失去它们，生病和康复，关注公共事务。如果我们让自己，我们将永远在等待某种分心的结束，然后才能真正开始工作。只有那些非常渴望知识，以至于在条件不利的情况下仍然追求它的人才能取得很多成就。有利的条件永远不会到来。 - C.S. Lewis

John O’Nolan set a goal for himself to build a \$1 million company by the time he turned 30. After several failed attempts, he decided to reevaluate. He realized that if he stuck to this goal, he might achieve it, but he might build a company he didn’t want to be part of.

约翰·奥诺兰给自己设定了一个目标，希望在他30岁之前建立一家价值100万美元的公司。经过几次失败的尝试后，他决定重新评估。他意识到，如果他坚持这个目标，他可能会实现它，但他可能会建立一家他不想参与的公司。

He shifted his approach towards building a business that he wanted to be “stuck with” and revisited an idea that he had sidelined: building a new blogging platform. His idea seemed silly. Everyone used dominant platforms like WordPress or Blogger. Who was he to try to compete in that space? Nevertheless, he decided to go for it and founded a new blogging platform named Ghost.

他改变了自己的方法，开始建立一个他希望“与之绑定”的业务，并重新考虑了一个他曾经搁置的想法：建立一个新的博客平台。他的想法似乎很愚蠢。每个人都使用像WordPress或Blogger这样的主流平台。他有什么资格去竞争那个领域呢？尽管如此，他决定去尝试，并创立了一个名为Ghost的新博客平台。

To ensure that he was taking a long-term approach, John made decisions that differed radically from those that are made in a traditional startup. For example, he wouldn’t control the shares and he would not be able to sell the company. In an interview with Ali Abdaal, he said, “I don’t own Ghost. I am a trustee of Ghost, which means I can steer it as an owner would, but if I ever get sick of it, I can’t sell it. I don’t own any shares.”<sup>133</sup> This is opposed to how almost everyone in the technology industry operates, but it makes sense if you’re planning on sticking with the company you’re building.

为了确保他采取了长期的方法，约翰做出了与传统创业公司截然不同的决策。例如，他不会控制股份，也不能出售公司。在接受Ali Abdaal的采访时，他说：“我不拥有Ghost。我是Ghost的受托人，这意味着我

可以像拥有者一样引导它，但如果我对它厌倦了，我不能卖掉它。我没有任何股份。”这与科技行业几乎所有人的操作方式相反，但如果你计划坚持自己建立的公司，这是有道理的。

Instead of optimizing for a future “exit,” or a sale of the company, he built a company he wanted to keep working at and all his decisions continue to be based on this goal. As his platform grew, corporations started asking the company to do customized installations for them. John decided he didn’t want to deal with these high-maintenance customers and turned them down. Despite this obvious opportunity, Ghost still does not employ a single employee that works with enterprise customers. John learned the same lesson I had in taking the client that had drained my energy. No money is worth it if it undermines your desire to stay on the journey.

他没有为了未来的“退出”或公司的出售而进行优化，而是建立了一家他想要继续工作的公司，他所有的决策都基于这个目标。随着他的平台的发展，一些公司开始要求该公司为他们进行定制安装。约翰决定不想与这些高维护的客户打交道，所以拒绝了他们。尽管有这个明显的机会，Ghost仍然没有雇佣任何一名与企业客户合作的员工。约翰学到了我在接受那个耗尽我的精力的客户时所学到的同样的教训。如果这损害了你继续前进的愿望，那么没有任何金钱是值得的。

Many stumble upon the work they enjoy doing by saying “no” to obvious opportunities. John reflected, “As soon as I let go of this notion of huge success, that’s when success started coming to me.” I don’t think this is a random occurrence. Saying no to something requires that we know what we stand for. When I decided to say no to future freelance projects, I knew that it was time to take my writing, my online business aspirations, and my other ideas seriously.

许多人通过拒绝明显的机会来找到他们喜欢做的工作。约翰反思道：“当我放下对巨大成功的追求时，成功就开始向我走来。”我认为这不是偶然的。拒绝某事需要我们知道自己的立场。当我决定拒绝未来的

自由职业项目时，我知道是时候认真对待我的写作、在线业务愿景和其他想法了。

On the pathless path, the goal is not to find a job, make money, build a business, or achieve any other metric. It's to actively and consciously search for the work that you want to keep doing.

在无路可寻的道路上，目标不是找到一份工作、赚钱、建立一个企业或实现任何其他指标。而是积极有意识地寻找你想要继续做的工作。

This is one of the most important secrets of the pathless path.  
这是无路之路中最重要的秘密之一。

With this approach, it doesn't make sense to chase any financial opportunity if you can't be sure that you will like the work. What does make sense is experimenting with different kinds of work, and once you find something worth doing, working backward to build a life around being able to keep doing it.

采用这种方法，如果你不能确定自己会喜欢这份工作，那么追逐任何财务机会就没有意义。有意义的是尝试不同类型的工作，一旦找到值得做的事情，就向后努力构建一个能够持续从事这项工作的生活。

It's a shift from the mindset that work sucks towards the idea that you can design a life around liking work. I didn't realize how profound this shift is until I sat down to write this book.

这是一种从工作讨厌的心态转变为围绕喜欢工作设计生活的理念。直到我坐下来写这本书，我才意识到这种转变有多么深远。



When I first left my job I was running away and wanted to escape. This desire drove me to design my life around flexibility, which I achieved to a remarkable degree. I went from having to be in an office more than 2,000 hours per year to having to spend less than a couple of days each month in any physical location.

当我第一次离开工作时，我是在逃避和想要逃离。这种愿望驱使我将我的生活设计得非常灵活，我也成功地实现了这一点。我从每年需要在办公室待超过2,000个小时，变成每个月只需要在任何实际位置待几天。

Unfortunately, this life was built around freelancing and my heart was never in it. I still enjoy working on some consulting projects, but it's not what drives me. The work that I want to keep doing is writing, sharing stories, helping people, and doing other experiments online. When I started my podcast and blog it felt silly to like this kind of work. Now I know that this is the real work that matters.

不幸的是，这个生活是围绕自由职业建立的，而我的内心从未投入其中。我仍然喜欢参与一些咨询项目，但这并不是驱使我前进的动力。我想继续做的工作是写作、分享故事、帮助人们，并在网上进行其他实验。当我开始做播客和写博客时，觉得自己喜欢这种工作有些傻。现在我知道这才是真正重要的工作。

Finding work you want to keep doing, says author Stephen Cope, is “the great work of your life.” Cope’s biggest fear is that he might “die without having lived fully.”<sup>134</sup> This impulse drove his curiosity as he sought out wisdom in books, reading upwards of three hours a day. Eventually, he wrote *The Great Work of Your Life* to explore the unique qualities of people who search for the things that bring them alive. His exploration was inspired by a passage he read in the Gospel of Thomas:

寻找你想要一直从事的工作，作者斯蒂芬·科普说，这是“你一生中伟大的工作”。科普最大的恐惧是可能“在没有充分生活的情况下死去”。这种冲动驱使他的好奇心，他在书籍中寻找智慧，每天阅读超过三个

小时。最终，他写了《你一生中伟大的工作》这本书，探索那些寻找能让他们活着的事物的人的独特品质。他的探索受到他在托马斯福音中读到的一段话的启发。

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.<sup>135</sup>

如果你展现出你内心的东西，你所展现出的将拯救你。如果你不展现出你内心的东西，你所不展现出的将毁灭你。

He researched the lives of Susan B. Anthony, Robert Frost, John Keats, Harriet Tubman, and Henry David Thoreau and found that the common trait they shared was seriously attempting to bring forth what was inside of them. This didn't come easy to any of them and they all faced challenges, rejection, and criticism. Yet at every key point in their lives, they either kept looking for what brought them alive or protected their time so that they could work on what mattered. In the words of Thoreau, the game they played and that we should play is to “be resolutely and faithfully what you are.”<sup>136</sup>

他研究了苏珊·B·安东尼、罗伯特·弗罗斯特、约翰·济慈、哈里特·塔布曼和亨利·大卫·梭罗的生活，并发现他们共同的特点是认真地努力展现内心的东西。这对他们来说并不容易，他们都面临着挑战、拒绝和批评。然而，在他们生活的每个关键时刻，他们要么继续寻找让他们活跃起来的东西，要么保护自己的时间，以便能够从事重要的工作。用梭罗的话来说，他们玩的游戏，也是我们应该玩的游戏，就是“坚定而忠诚地成为你自己”。

When I think about the people that “bring forth what is inside of them,” I think about my mother. She got a job at my university while I was in my second year, and she quickly became the go-to person not only for solving financial aid problems but, for many of my friends, as someone to talk to. She was a mentor and friend to the students that worked for her. In our extended family, she is the planner who makes sure that everyone comes together. In our small town, she lends a hand when people fall ill, raises

money for the needy, and plays an active role in improving the school. In every role she steps into, she finds a way to bring give all that she has to offer.

当我想到那些“展现内在的人”时，我想到了我的母亲。她在我大二的时候在我的大学找到了一份工作，很快成为了不仅解决助学金问题的人，而且对于我的许多朋友来说，她也是一个可以倾诉的人。她是我们的学生们的导师和朋友。在我们的大家庭中，她是一个确保每个人团聚的策划者。在我们的小镇上，她在人们生病时伸出援手，为有需要的人筹款，并积极参与学校的改进。在她扮演的每个角色中，她都找到了一种方式来付出自己所能提供的一切。

However, she also consistently urges me to take a “comfortable state job,” no matter how happy I am or how much success I’ve found on my new path. She’s usually half-joking but the suggestion fascinates me. Where does the impulse to find a comfortable job, no matter the personal cost, come from? I think it is partly due to our narrow conception of work as only a full-time job with a salary and benefits. Like Cope, however, I have embraced a broader conception of work and agree with him that the search for work worth doing is the real work and one of the most important pursuits in life.

然而，她也一直敦促我去找一份“舒适的国家工作”，无论我有多幸福或者在新的道路上取得了多大的成功。她通常是半开玩笑的，但这个建议让我着迷。不管个人代价如何，寻找一份舒适的工作的冲动从何而来？我认为这部分是由于我们对工作的狭隘理解，将其仅仅视为一份带薪水和福利的全职工作。然而，像科普一样，我已经接受了更广泛的工作观念，并同意他的观点，即寻找值得做的工作才是真正的工作，也是生活中最重要的追求之一。

It’s hard to understate how much the narrow conception of work constrains us and this has become obvious to me observing my wife explore various art projects such as watercolor and acrylic painting, drawing and sketching, rock painting, Zentangle, and others. Her work impresses and inspires me.

It is work worth doing and it will crush me if she loses her passion for it. Yet when she shares her work, especially with people in the United States, they always suggest that she monetize: “You should offer painting classes!” “Are you going to sell those?” “You could make a lot of money!” The assumption is that making money or finding a way to turn a passion into a job is one of the most important things. While money is important on the pathless path, using it as a filter for finding the work worth doing, especially at first, is a mistake.

很难低估狭隘的工作观念对我们的限制，通过观察妻子尝试各种艺术项目，如水彩和丙烯画、素描、岩石绘画、禅绕画等，我意识到这一点。她的作品给我留下了深刻的印象，也给我带来了灵感。这是值得做的工作，如果她失去了对此的热情，我会感到非常沮丧。然而，当她分享自己的作品，尤其是与美国人分享时，他们总是建议她将其商业化：“你应该开设绘画课程！”“你打算卖这些吗？”“你可以赚很多钱！”这种假设是赚钱或将激情变成工作是最重要的事情之一。虽然金钱在无路可走的道路上很重要，但将其作为找到值得做的工作的过滤器，尤其是在最初阶段，是一个错误。

More important is the realization that finding something worth doing indefinitely is more powerful and exciting than any type of security, comfort, stability, or respect a job might offer. Fighting for the opportunity to do this work is what matters, whether or not you make money from it in the short term.

更重要的是认识到找到一件值得无限期从事的事情比工作所提供的任何安全、舒适、稳定或尊重都更有力量和激动人心。争取有机会从事这项工作才是最重要的，无论你是否在短期内从中获利。

I was slow to realize this, but I know it now. The work I get paid for may shift over time, and it may or may not involve the things that I want to keep doing. But what I want to keep doing, such as mentoring young people, writing, teaching, sharing ideas, connecting people, and having meaningful conversations, is worth fighting for.

我很慢才意识到这一点，但现在我明白了。我得到报酬的工作可能会随着时间的推移发生变化，可能涉及我想要继续做的事情，也可能不涉及。但我想要继续做的事情，比如指导年轻人、写作、教学、分享思想、联系人们和进行有意义的对话，是值得为之奋斗的。

I am consciously pursuing a life designed around doing work I like and I'm lucky to have someone to look up to like my mother, whose life has embodied this principle, whether she set out to do this on purpose or not. She can find a role or a place for herself in many environments. I struggled to find my place on my previous path, so now I'm taking a different one. I hope I can convince those of you who are like me that searching for work you like and want to keep doing is worthwhile.

我有意识地追求一种以我喜欢的工作为中心的生活，并且很幸运有像我妈妈这样的榜样，她的生活体现了这个原则，无论她是否有意识地这样做。她可以在许多环境中找到适合自己的角色或位置。我在之前的道路上努力寻找自己的位置，所以现在我选择了一条不同的道路。我希望我能说服那些和我一样的人，寻找自己喜欢并愿意继续做下去的工作是值得的。

Most of all, I yearn for a world where more people can live like my mother. 我最渴望的是更多的人能够像我母亲一样生活的世界。

## **We Want To Be Useful**

### **我们希望有所用处**

Usefulness, whatever form it may take, is the price we should pay for the air we breathe and the food we eat and the privilege of being alive. And it is its own reward, as well, for it is the beginning of happiness, just as self-pity and withdrawal from the battle are the beginning of misery. – Eleanor Roosevelt

无论以何种形式出现，有用性都是我们为呼吸空气、吃饭和活着的特权所应付出的代价。而且它本身就是一种回报，因为它是幸福的开始，而自怜和逃避战斗则是痛苦的开始。-埃莉诺·罗斯福

According to Robert Kegan, a psychologist at Harvard, we are shifting away from a world where we need to fit in towards one where we must develop the skill of “self-authoring.”<sup>137</sup> Instead of looking to external cues to learn how to live, we need to have a coherent internal narrative about why we are living a certain way. This is the ethos of the pathless path and if you don’t know or understand your own story, you will struggle.

根据哈佛大学心理学家罗伯特·基根的说法，我们正在从一个需要适应的世界转变为一个必须培养“自我创作”技能的世界。与其依赖外部线索来学习如何生活，我们需要拥有一个内在的连贯叙述，解释为什么我们以某种方式生活。这是无路可循的道路的精神，如果你不了解或理解自己的故事，你将会面临困难。

One of the hardest questions people face when they think of their own story, however, is “what should I do?”

当人们思考自己的故事时，其中一个最困难的问题是“我应该做什么？”

A significant barrier to figuring out what we really want to do is the voice in our head that warns us to stop when we consider or start doing things that are not broadly seen as “normal.” Professor and author Brene Brown’s clarification of shame and guilt helped me understand what’s really going on when we struggle to pay attention to our intuitions and desires. She defines shame as “the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.” She believes that most people give too much power to this emotion when making life choices.”<sup>138</sup>

找出我们真正想做的事情的一个重要障碍是我们内心的声音，当我们考虑或开始做一些不被广泛视为“正常”的事情时，它会警告我们停下

来。教授和作家布伦·布朗对羞耻和内疚的澄清帮助我理解了当我们努力关注直觉和欲望时，实际上正在发生什么。她将羞耻定义为“相信我们有缺陷，因此不值得被爱和归属感的强烈痛苦感或经历。”她认为大多数人在做人生选择时给予了这种情绪过多的权力。

She doesn't think we can "solve" shame and suggest that people pay attention to a slightly different emotion, guilt. She defines guilt as "holding something we've done or failed to do up against our values and feeling psychological discomfort."<sup>139</sup> In contrast to shame, guilt is actionable. The disconnect between what we claim to care about and what we do (or don't do) points out what matters to us.

她认为我们无法“解决”羞耻，并建议人们关注一种稍微不同的情绪，即内疚。她将内疚定义为“将我们所做或未做的事情与我们的价值观对比，并感到心理上的不适。”与羞耻相比，内疚是可以采取行动的。我们声称关心的事情与我们所做（或不做）的事情之间的脱节指出了对我们来说重要的事情。

Guilt drives many people to work, and this is a normal reaction to this uncomfortable emotion. Most people want to contribute, help, and engage with the world. However, sometimes this impulse gets hacked by our shame and we follow paths that aren't ours because we feel like the world's love depends on us doing a certain thing. We are afraid that if we step away or make a change, we might be cast out of our family or community. This is one of life's most terrifying feelings and keeps many from making changes. Yet if we learn to recognize this reaction, we can quiet the voice of shame and use our guilt in a healthy manner to guide us towards things we claim to care about.

罪恶感驱使许多人工作，这是对这种不舒服情绪的正常反应。大多数人希望贡献、帮助并与世界互动。然而，有时候我们的羞耻感会干扰这种冲动，我们会追随不属于我们的道路，因为我们觉得世界的爱取决于我们做某件特定的事情。我们害怕如果我们离开或做出改变，我们可能会被家人或社区排斥。这是生活中最可怕的感觉之一，让许多

人不敢做出改变。然而，如果我们学会认识到这种反应，我们可以平息羞耻感的声音，并以健康的方式利用罪恶感来引导我们朝着我们声称关心的事物前进。

In my travels around the world, meeting a diverse range of people that have left the default path, nothing has been more consistent than the reality that most people want to engage with the world and to be useful. Despite many people thinking that their ideal life would be living out the rest of their life on a beach, when given the option of following that path, few people take it. 在我周游世界、结识各种离开常规生活轨迹的人的过程中，最为一致的现实是大多数人都希望与世界互动并发挥自己的作用。尽管很多人认为理想的生活是在海滩上度过余生，但当给予选择时，很少有人选择这条路。

Author Sebastian Junger, in his book about soldiers who had returned from war, found a similar thing. Despite dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, many of the soldiers wanted to return to dangerous warzones. Why? Because at war, they felt part of something, deeply connected to the men and women they were serving with. Junger reflected, “humans don’t mind hardship, in fact, they thrive on it; what they mind is not feeling necessary.”<sup>140</sup> Junger argues that “modern society has perfected the art of making people not feel necessary.”

作者塞巴斯蒂安·容格在他关于从战争归来的士兵的书中发现了一个类似的情况。尽管他们正在处理创伤后应激障碍，但许多士兵仍然希望返回危险的战区。为什么呢？因为在战争中，他们感到自己是一部分，与他们一起服役的男女们有着深厚的联系。容格反思道：“人类并不介意艰辛，事实上，他们在艰辛中茁壮成长；他们介意的是感觉不到自己的必要性。”容格认为，“现代社会已经完善了让人们感觉不到自己的必要性的艺术。”



The need to feel useful is a powerful one. This is the hidden upside of the pathless path and a reason why finding work that aligns with what matters to you and makes you feel useful is so important. When you find the conversations you want to take part in and the work you want to keep doing, you start to feel necessary and the whole world opens up.

感觉有用是一种强大的需求。这是无路可走的路径的隐藏优势，也是找到与自己关心的事情相一致并让自己感到有用的工作如此重要的原因。当你找到想要参与的对话和想要继续做的工作时，你开始感到必要，整个世界都会展现在你面前。

## Remembering What You Forgot 记住你忘记的东西

The initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew.

最初的喜悦在于惊讶地记起了我不知道自己知道的事情。

– Robert Frost

罗伯特·弗罗斯特

As a kid, I spent as much time as I could on the computer. After school, I ran in the door at home and sat down at the computer. I clicked the America Online logo and waited for the phone line to dial a random number somewhere in the United States. Then came the funny noises and I was in! With the World Wide Web in front of me, it was time to play.

作为一个孩子，我尽可能多地在电脑上度过时间。放学后，我跑进家门，坐在电脑前。我点击美国在线的标志，等待电话线拨号到美国的某个随机号码。然后传来一些有趣的声音，我就进入了！有了全球网络在我面前，是时候玩耍了。

I remember the day my father brought home a copy of *DOS for Dummies*. We opened the book at the computer and entered some of the commands.

What a thrill! By typing in a few words, I could control the computer. I was hooked. For years afterward, I participated in a wide variety of online activities. I taught myself how to build websites and code in HTML, I joined wrestling role-playing leagues, ran a basketball simulation league, pirated music, traded beanie babies, and sold website templates, and made my first money on the internet. I followed my curiosity wherever it took me.

我记得那天我父亲带回了一本《DOS入门指南》。我们打开书，在电脑上输入了一些命令。多么令人兴奋！通过输入几个词，我就能控制电脑。我上瘾了。在接下来的几年里，我参与了各种各样的在线活动。我自学了如何建立网站和编写HTML代码，加入了摔跤角色扮演联盟，运营了一个篮球模拟联盟，盗版音乐，交换玩具熊，出售网站模板，并在互联网上赚到了第一笔钱。我追随我的好奇心，无论它带我去哪里。

As I got older I made a natural transition to working with technology and computers. Oh, wait... that's not what happened. Instead, I followed the default path, seeking out traditional paths to success. This route went through giant companies, where cutting-edge technology and ideas could only be used after a multi-year planning and proposal process. I never saw my interest in technology as something worth following in and of itself; it was always just an advantage for doing great work on my traditional path. 随着年龄的增长，我自然而然地转向了科技和计算机工作。哦，等等...事实并非如此。相反，我选择了默认的道路，寻求传统的成功之路。这条路经过了大公司，只有在经过数年的规划和提案过程后才能使用尖端技术和创意。我从未将自己对科技的兴趣视为值得追随的事情；它总是我在传统道路上做出出色工作的优势。

Looking back, I'm a bit embarrassed about ignoring my consistent curiosity towards technology. In high school, I built a weather site where I would predict snow days for my friends, called "Paul Says it Will." In college, where I started to desire a prestigious career, I nevertheless spent my free

time making DJ mixes under the name “DJ PoPo Shizzle, ran a blog with friends called S4, and learned how to code. These experiences, which were not part of the default path, clearly foreshadowed my current self-employment in which I coach, consult, build products, and experiment online. Choosing or creating a career working with technology seems obvious now, but due to the forces shaping my desires, I couldn’t see it back then.

回顾过去，我有点尴尬地忽视了我对科技的持续好奇心。在高中时，我建立了一个天气网站，可以预测我朋友们的放假日，叫做“Paul Says it Will”。在大学里，虽然我开始渴望一个声望很高的职业，但我仍然把空闲时间用来以“DJ PoPo Shizzle”的名义制作DJ混音，和朋友们一起经营一个名为S4的博客，并学习编程。这些经历并不是默认的道路的一部分，却清楚地预示了我目前的自由职业，我在其中担任教练、顾问、产品开发者，并在网上进行实验。现在选择或创造一个与科技相关的职业似乎是显而易见的，但由于塑造我欲望的力量，我当时无法看到这一点。

About two years into my self-employment journey, I realized that most of the activities that excite me involve a computer. When I build websites, launch a podcast, create online courses, use marketing tools, and hang out with friends on Twitter, I am a kid again, sitting in front of that first computer.

大约在自我就业的旅程中的两年时间里，我意识到我最感兴趣的大部分活动都与电脑有关。当我建立网站、推出播客、创建在线课程、使用营销工具以及在Twitter上与朋友们交流时，我就像一个孩子一样，坐在那台第一台电脑前。

My friend Jonny Miller argues that “human existence is an infinitely unfolding process of remembering, forgetting, and remembering again.”<sup>141</sup> 我的朋友乔尼·米勒认为，“人类存在是一个无限展开的过程，涉及记忆、遗忘和再次记忆。”

To thrive on the pathless path, we must ignore the shiny objects and distractions and strip away the stories that are not our own to remember who we are. One of the biggest concerns people have when they talk to me about quitting their job is how to make money. That is certainly important, but a more interesting path is possible if you start with what brought you alive in the past. Injecting the energy from these pursuits can lead you in a different direction and can help you figure out what to work on while taking the first steps toward creating a life you truly enjoy.

在无路可循的道路上蓬勃发展，我们必须忽略那些闪亮的物体和干扰，剥离那些不属于我们自己的故事，以便记住我们是谁。当人们向我谈论辞职时，最大的担忧之一就是如何赚钱。这当然很重要，但如果你从过去让你感到活力的事物开始，可能会有一条更有趣的道路。注入这些追求的能量可以引导你走向不同的方向，并帮助你找到在迈出创造真正享受的生活的第一步时应该做什么。

## You Are Creative 你很有创造力

Here's the truth you have to wrestle with: the reason that art (writing, engaging, leading, all of it) is valuable is precisely why I can't tell you how to do it. If there were a map, there'd be no art, because art is the act of navigating without a map. Don't you hate that? I love that there's no map. – *Seth Godin*

这是你必须面对的真相：艺术（写作、交流、领导，所有这些）有价值的原因正是我无法告诉你如何做的原因。如果有一张地图，就不会有艺术，因为艺术就是在没有地图的情况下导航的行为。你不讨厌这一点吗？我喜欢没有地图的情况。- Seth Godin

You are not creative. At least this is what you tell me. But I don't buy it. I just think you've been duped. We've lost track of our basic human creativity, convincing ourselves that only people who use certain tools or work in advertising or other artistic areas are creative.

你不具备创造力。至少这是你告诉我的。但我不相信。我只是认为你被愚弄了。我们已经失去了基本的人类创造力，自欺欺人地认为只有使用特定工具或从事广告或其他艺术领域的人才具有创造力。

Nonsense.  
胡说八道。

We are all creative. Navigating the bureaucracy of any institution takes a certain kind of creativity. Figuring out which emotion an emoji is expressing requires creativity. Parenting is probably one of the most creative human activities. Learning how to use technology takes creativity. As does hosting a dinner party or organizing a trip with friends, not to mention planning a wedding. If you think planning a modern-day wedding isn't creative, I don't know what to tell you. Detach yourself from conventional notions of what creativity means, and you'll see it everywhere.

我们都是具有创造力的。在任何机构中航行官僚主义需要一种特定的创造力。弄清楚一个表情符号表达的情感需要创造力。育儿可能是最具创造力的人类活动之一。学习如何使用技术需要创造力。举办晚宴或组织与朋友的旅行，更不用说策划婚礼了。如果你认为策划现代婚礼不需要创造力，我不知道该告诉你什么。摆脱对创造力的传统观念，你会发现它无处不在。

Another reason we struggle to see the potential for channeling creativity is that until very recently if you wanted to share your work with the world, you needed permission. You needed access to audiences or distribution channels via gatekeepers, whose sole job was to limit access.

我们难以看到发挥创造力的潜力的另一个原因是，直到最近，如果你想与世界分享你的作品，你需要获得许可。你需要通过门卫获得观众或分发渠道的访问权限，他们的唯一工作就是限制访问。

We still haven't fully realized how dramatically this state of affairs has changed. The internet has made it possible for people from anywhere in the world with access to the internet to create and share their ideas, stories, and creations without permission. Seth Godin puts it bluntly: "The world just gave you control over the means of production. Not to master them is a sin."<sup>142</sup>

我们仍然没有完全意识到这种情况的变化有多大。互联网使得全世界任何地方只要有网络接入，就能够自由地创造和分享他们的想法、故事和作品，无需获得许可。塞思·高汀直言不讳地说：“世界刚刚把生产手段交给你。不去掌握它们是一种罪过。”

This book you are reading did not require anyone's permission to be published. I just decided to do it. I wrote it myself, hired editors and designers to help me, and put my name on it as the publisher. You can do this too.

这本书你正在阅读的出版并不需要任何人的许可。我只是决定这样做。我亲自写了这本书，雇了编辑和设计师来帮助我，并将我的名字放在上面作为出版商。你也可以这样做。

Modes of creative expression that used to require the approval of gatekeepers include publishing books or songs, selling your artwork, starting a radio show, and selling crafts to a mass market, among many others.

以前需要门户人员批准的创造性表达方式包括出版书籍或歌曲、销售艺术品、开办广播节目以及向大众市场销售手工艺品，等等。

If you still want permission, though, **I'm granting it. Go for it.**  
如果你仍然想要许可，我会给予。去吧。

Many people struggle to start making a living from their creative endeavors because they are still operating within the logic of the default path. On the default path, you have to get the job before you can do the work. On the pathless path, you simply do the work first and then decide if you want to continue. For example, I wrote online for several years, and after several people asked if I planned to write a book, I decided to raise the stakes and take that next step. It would have been easy to say that I couldn't get published and not bother, but I knew I was capable of writing something worth reading. Just two decades ago, I wouldn't have been able to reach a wide audience. Consider that Stephen King was rejected by 30 publishers before someone agreed to publish his first book. It pains me to think about all the great writers worth reading that gave up before King did.

许多人在从创意努力中谋生时感到困难，因为他们仍然在默认路径的逻辑中运作。在默认路径上，你必须先找到工作，然后才能开始工作。在无路径的路径上，你只需先做工作，然后再决定是否要继续。例如，我在网上写了几年，之后有几个人问我是否打算写一本书，我决定提高赌注，迈出下一步。我本可以轻易地说我无法出版，然后不再费心，但我知道我有能力写出值得一读的东西。仅仅二十年前，我无法触及广大读者。想想看，斯蒂芬·金在有人同意出版他的第一本书之前被30家出版商拒绝。想到在金之前放弃的那些值得一读的伟大作家，我感到痛心。

We tend to think of creativity as a predetermined ability, like someone who might have a genetic advantage to run faster. Instead, I think creativity is more of an active choice and the removal of gatekeepers means that for the first time it might take more energy to deny your own creative expression than exploring it.

我们倾向于将创造力视为一种预定的能力，就像某人可能具有遗传优势来跑得更快一样。相反，我认为创造力更多是一种积极的选择，而去除门槛意味着首次否定自己的创造表达可能需要更多的精力，而不是去探索它。

A difficulty that remains, however, is figuring out how to get started. This is where people get stuck. A voice in their head asks, “What will people say?” 然而，仍然存在一个困难，那就是如何开始。这是人们陷入困境的地方。他们脑海中有一个声音问道：“人们会说什么？”

This is valid. It’s scary to share with the world, and if you do it over a long enough period, criticism is inevitable. At first, however, most people run into a different challenge: not having an audience at all. This can be a good thing because it enables you to experiment while building up your confidence slowly.

这是有效的。与世界分享是令人害怕的，如果你持续一段足够长的时间，批评是不可避免的。然而，最初，大多数人面临的挑战是没有观众。这可能是件好事，因为它让你能够在逐渐建立自信的同时进行实验。

A deeper fear that’s harder to grapple with is the shadow of the gatekeeper system itself, which paired access to an audience with a subtle hostility towards those without the right taste, credentials, or status. While this is fading, you still see examples of this sentiment in popular media. For example, an article published in 2019 in the New York Times titled “Have we hit peak podcasts?” addressed the issue of publication without gatekeepers or restrictions: “...the frequency with which podcasts start... has produced a degree of cultural exhaustion. We’re not necessarily sick of listening to interesting programs; but we’re definitely tired of hearing from every friend, relative and co-worker who thinks they’re just an iPhone recording away from creating the next ‘Serial.’”

更难以应对的深层恐惧是守门人系统本身的阴影，它将观众的接触与对那些没有正确品味、资格或地位的人的微妙敌意联系在一起。虽然这种情绪正在消退，但在流行媒体中仍然可以看到这种情绪的例子。例如，2019年《纽约时报》发表的一篇文章标题为“我们达到了播客的



巅峰吗？”讨论了没有守门人或限制的出版问题：“.....播客的频繁启动.....已经产生了一种文化疲劳。我们并不一定厌倦听有趣的节目；但我们肯定厌倦了每个朋友、亲戚和同事都认为他们只需要一部iPhone就能创造出下一个《Serial》。”

The message is loud and clear. Podcasts are for serious professionals with the right credentials, and if you don't have them, please don't think of starting one.

信息清晰明了。播客是为具备适当资质的专业人士而设，如果你没有这些资质，请不要考虑开始一个。

We should reject this stance.  
我们应该拒绝这种立场。

While the article makes a valid point about the challenges of making money, it ignores that someone might create something for the sake of it or as a way to learn, connect and feel alive rather than trying to get ahead or get paid.

虽然这篇文章对于赚钱的挑战提出了一个合理的观点，但它忽略了有人可能创造某物是为了自己的兴趣，或者作为学习、交流和感受生活的一种方式，而不是为了取得进步或获得报酬。

Creative output is fuel for the pathless path. While my writing hasn't made me famous or rich, it has been vital for staying energized and being able to connect with people that share my curiosities. Growing up, I didn't think I was a creative person. Nor did I think I had permission to share with the world. Luckily, I stopped believing those lies and started to see that there are deeper and more important reasons to create and share. Which brings us to an important question...

创造性的产出是无路可寻的道路的燃料。虽然我的写作没有让我成名或富有，但它对于保持活力和能够与分享我的好奇心的人联系起来至关重要。在成长过程中，我并不认为自己是一个有创造力的人。我也不认为我有权利与世界分享。幸运的是，我停止相信那些谎言，并开始意识到创造和分享的更深层次和更重要的原因。这带我们来到一个重要的问题...

## Who Do You Serve? 你为谁服务？

In my first few years of writing online, I let a couple of critical comments get to me. These readers thought that my criticism of the default path was too harsh. Their disapproval stayed in my head and my writing became too safe. But eventually, I realized I wasn't writing for them. I was writing for people like me: those struggling on the default path who want to dream bigger. When I focused on these readers, my writing improved, and I gained a broader audience.

在我开始写作在线的头几年里，我曾让一些批评的评论影响到我。这些读者认为我对默认路径的批评过于严厉。他们的不赞同一直在我脑海中挥之不去，我的写作变得过于保守。但最终，我意识到我并不是为他们而写。我是为像我一样的人而写：那些在默认路径上挣扎的人，他们想要有更大的梦想。当我专注于这些读者时，我的写作得到了改善，并且我获得了更广泛的读者群体。

It took me a while to figure out why this was the case but it clicked when I heard a story from Seth Godin about his friend David Chang, who owns the Momofuku Restaurant Group. When Chang first opened one of his first restaurants, Godin stopped by and ordered a vegetarian version of a popular dish. Godin returned several times and enjoyed the dish until one day Chang told him, "we only serve it as-is." Godin was sad about not being able to eat the dish but excited for his friend. The reason? Godin knew a

secret: once you figure out who you intend to serve, you can go all-in and focus on what it takes to become great.<sup>143</sup>

我花了一些时间才弄清楚为什么会这样，但当我听到塞思·戈丁关于他的朋友大卫·张（David Chang）的故事时，我恍然大悟。张是 Momofuku 餐厅集团的老板。当张第一次开了他的第一家餐厅时，戈丁去光顾并点了一道受欢迎的菜的素食版本。戈丁多次回去并享受这道菜，直到有一天张告诉他，“我们只提供原样。”戈丁对不能吃这道菜感到难过，但为他的朋友感到兴奋。原因是什么呢？戈丁知道一个秘密：一旦你弄清楚你想要为谁服务，你就可以全力以赴，专注于成为优秀所需的一切。

Thinking we have to serve a mass audience is default path thinking. An industrial, “bigger is better” mindset assumes that everyone is competing in a mass market. In the digital world, it’s easy to envision that this mass market is the only competition for the same audiences and attention. However, even if my podcast might sit right next to NPR’s *This American Life* in the podcast app, what I am doing is completely different. I am a solo interviewer, editor, graphic designer, and distributor and spend less than \$100 per year. NPR has more than 25 people working on that show alone. We have different goals, different audiences, and different reasons for existing.

认为我们必须服务于大众是默认的思维路径。工业化的“越大越好”的心态假设每个人都在竞争一个大众市场。在数字世界中，很容易想象这个大众市场是唯一的竞争对手，争夺同样的受众和关注。然而，即使我的播客可能就在NPR的《这个美国生活》旁边，但我所做的完全不同。我是一个独立的采访者、编辑、平面设计师和分发者，每年的开销不到100美元。NPR有超过25人仅在那个节目上工作。我们有不同的目标、不同的受众和存在的不同原因。

Figuring out who you want to serve is an important element of the pathless path. On the default path, your job often provides recognition and praise. When you are on your own, without a specific job or colleagues, you may

miss that kind of support. This is why it's so important to know what kind of people you want to work with and who you want to serve. Finding the right people, those who might offer support and encouragement along the way can have an outsized effect on your confidence and courage to keep going.

找出你想要服务的人是无路可寻的道路中的重要元素。在默认的道路上，你的工作通常会提供认可和赞扬。当你独自一人，没有特定的工作或同事时，你可能会错过那种支持。这就是为什么知道你想要与什么样的人一起工作和为谁服务如此重要。找到合适的人，那些可能在路上提供支持和鼓励的人，对你的信心和勇气继续前进会产生巨大的影响。

I have benefited from this sort of kindness on my journey, especially early on from my aunt Debbie, Noel, Cam, Jordan, and many others. Tyler Cowen has argued that one of “the most valuable things you can do with your time and with your life” is to believe in people.<sup>144</sup> Being a recipient of this encouragement has inspired me to create a rule for myself: any time I consume something from an individual that inspires me, I have to send them a note to let them know. Creating and sharing in public takes an incredible amount of courage and I remember how awkward and scared I was at the beginning of my journey. It's easy to tell people what they got wrong but much harder to say “I love what you are doing. I hope you keep going and let me know if I can help.”

我在旅途中受益匪浅，尤其是在早期受到了我的姑姑黛比、诺埃尔、卡姆、乔丹和许多其他人的善意帮助。泰勒·考温曾经说过，“你可以用你的时间和生命做的最有价值的事情之一就是相信人。”作为这种鼓励的受益者，我为自己制定了一个规则：每当我从一个激励我的人那里获得了一些东西，我就必须给他们发一封信告诉他们。在公开创作和分享中需要极大的勇气，我记得在旅程开始时我是多么的尴尬和害怕。告诉别人他们做错了很容易，但要说“我喜欢你正在做的事情，希望你继续下去，如果需要帮助，请告诉我。”却要困难得多。

As I've continued to create, share and connect people, I've tapped into a hidden form of motivation, one that is invisible to others. On the default path, promotions, job changes, and raises serve as visible markers of success. However, my proof of success is hidden, coming in the form of messages I receive in my email or conversations with people who are inspired by my work. Lacking a way to "prove" that you are successful can be hard. However, the people that reach out have become my friends, my supporters, and my inspiration, and the reward is far greater than any visible metric of success from my previous path.

随着我不断创作、分享和连接人们，我触及到了一种隐藏的动力形式，这对他人来说是看不见的。在默认的道路上，晋升、工作变动和加薪作为成功的可见标志。然而，我的成功证明是隐藏的，以我在电子邮件中收到的信息或与受到我的工作启发的人的对话形式出现。缺乏一种“证明”自己成功的方式可能很困难。然而，那些与我联系的人已经成为我的朋友、支持者和灵感来源，这种回报远远超过我之前道路上任何可见的成功指标。

These are the people I've decided to serve and it makes my continued journey on the pathless path worth it.

这些是我决定为之服务的人，这使得我在无路可循的道路上继续前行变得值得。

## The World Is Waiting 世界正在等待

Creativity by nature is an act of boldness and rebellion. – *Robert Greene*

创造力本质上是一种大胆和反叛的行为。 - 罗伯特·格林

Maybe I've convinced you that you are creative and that you should ignore the voices that tell you that you should not create. However, you still have some concerns, especially if you are thinking about sharing online. Isn't the

internet just filled with scammers or people that want attention?

也许我已经说服你相信自己是具有创造力的，而且你应该忽略那些告诉你不要创作的声音。然而，你可能仍然有一些担忧，特别是如果你考虑在网上分享。互联网不是充满了骗子或者那些只想引起注意的人吗？

The fact that those people make you feel uneasy is a good sign. Because the people creating those posts probably don't feel uneasy at all. And this is why I want to urge you to consider sharing with the world. You care. You want to do things in good faith. You want to help people, to listen, and connect with others who share your passions. This doesn't mean you need to build an audience or a business, but what might emerge if you dare to share your writing, painting, dancing, crafts, or other acts of creativity with others? What friends might you meet? What opportunities could you pursue? What communities could you join?

那些人让你感到不安是一个好的迹象。因为发布这些帖子的人可能一点也不感到不安。这就是为什么我想敦促你考虑与世界分享。你关心。你想以善意的方式做事。你想帮助人们，倾听，并与其他分享你的激情的人建立联系。这并不意味着你需要建立一个观众或一个业务，但如果你敢于与他人分享你的写作、绘画、舞蹈、手工艺品或其他创造性的行为，可能会出现什么？你可能会遇到什么朋友？你可以追求什么机会？你可以加入哪些社群？

The positive side of earning a living by creating and sharing online or building an online business is often obscured by the logic of the default path, in which the worthiest endeavor is a full-time job. Consider two different people: a mid-level financial analyst at Wells Fargo and someone building a yoga business through Instagram. What's your honest reaction to both people? If you're like I was before I started working on my own, you'd probably be slightly judgmental of the Instagram influencer. Now, I've softened my stance. I've realized the yoga influencer puts their entire reputation at risk and succeeds or fails based on their decisions. As this kind

of work becomes more prevalent, our norms will shift and we will question why we are more skeptical of an entrepreneur than the employee at Wells Fargo, a place that has been cited more than 200 times in the last 20 years for fraud, mortgage abuse, and violating investor rights.<sup>145</sup>

通过在线创作和分享或建立在线业务谋生的积极方面往往被默认路径的逻辑所掩盖，其中最有价值的努力是全职工作。考虑两个不同的人：富国银行的中级金融分析师和通过Instagram建立瑜伽业务的人。对于这两个人，你的真实反应是什么？如果你像我在开始自己的工作之前那样，你可能会对Instagram的影响者有些带有偏见。现在，我已经改变了我的立场。我意识到瑜伽影响者将他们整个声誉置于风险之中，并根据他们的决策成功或失败。随着这种工作方式越来越普遍，我们的规范将发生变化，我们将质疑为什么我们对企业家比富国银行的员工更加怀疑，后者在过去20年中因欺诈、抵押滥用和侵犯投资者权益而被引用了200多次。

Let's recall Ben Hunt's argument that these conventional, full-time paths are no longer industrially necessary, but simply industrially preferable. If we continue to anchor our imagination to default path stories about work, we will continue to ignore the possible paths for our lives.

让我们回想一下本·亨特的论点，即这些传统的全职路径不再是工业上必要的，而只是工业上更可取的。如果我们继续将我们的想象力锚定在关于工作的默认路径故事上，我们将继续忽视我们生活中可能的路径。

Even if you do decide that sharing your real work with the world is worthwhile, it's nearly impossible to overcome the sense that you may embarrass yourself. Here it's helpful to remember the "spirit of the fool" and also consider that many people around the world might be waiting for what you have to share.

即使你决定与世界分享你的真实工作，克服可能会让自己尴尬的感觉

几乎是不可能的。在这里，记住“愚者的精神”是有帮助的，同时也要考虑到世界各地可能有很多人在等待你要分享的内容。

My public writing journey started on an app called Quora, where I answered users' questions across a wide range of topics. For years I answered the occasional question, mostly on topics I knew a lot about. As I started to enjoy writing more, I created a challenge for myself, answering at least one question at the start of every workday. I expanded the range of topics I wrote about and finally shared a lengthy reflection on my previous health challenges. It was the most vulnerable piece I had ever shared publicly.<sup>146</sup> It had been sitting in a document on my computer for more than two years. I had been scared to share it, convinced that no one would want to read it and that people might make fun of me. But the post reached half a million people and I got countless messages and comments thanking me for sharing:

我的公共写作之旅始于一个叫做Quora的应用程序，在那里我回答用户关于各种话题的问题。多年来，我偶尔回答一些问题，主要是我对的了解很多的话题。随着我对写作的喜爱越来越深，我给自己设定了一个挑战，每个工作日开始时至少回答一个问题。我扩大了我写作的话题范围，最终分享了我之前健康挑战的详细反思。这是我公开分享的最脆弱的作品。它在我电脑上的文件中放了两年多。我一直害怕分享它，担心没有人愿意阅读，担心人们可能嘲笑我。但这篇帖子吸引了五十万人，并且我收到了无数的信息和评论感谢我分享：

What an inspirational account. Write a book!!! Thank you so much for sharing, this was truly an enriching read.

多么鼓舞人心的故事。写一本书吧！非常感谢你的分享，这真是一次充实的阅读。

It's one of the most amazing and thoughtful answers I've read in a while. Thank you for having the courage of sharing it and I wish you the best.



这是我最近读到的最令人惊叹和深思的回答之一。谢谢你勇敢地分享，祝你一切顺利。

Just commenting to say that this was an excellent answer/post, and thanks for writing it.

只是评论一下，这是一个很好的回答/帖子，谢谢你写下它。

I'm not sick, but I really needed to read this. Wonderful! All the best in your career. I wish I could meet more people in person like you!

我没有生病，但我真的很需要读到这篇文章。太棒了！祝你在事业上一切顺利。希望能够像你这样亲自见到更多的人！

Real heroes are ordinary people who had to face extraordinary problems but never gave up and survived. This is you, Paul. Bless you, my friend.

真正的英雄是普通人，他们不得不面对非凡的问题，但从未放弃并幸存下来。这就是你，保罗。祝福你，我的朋友。

As I read the comments, I realized many people around the world see courage in creation and sharing, and these are the people I now write for. 当我阅读评论时，我意识到世界各地的许多人都认为创造和分享是勇气，而这些人就是我现在写作的对象。

And this group is diverse. As I've explored a broader range of topics such as self-employment, freelancing, our relationship with work, and building an online business, I've met people from 13 to 75 years old, from the United States to New Zealand to Pakistan to China. As increasing numbers of people all around the world are tapping into the opportunities created by the internet, they are also looking for people like them. There has never

been a better and easier time to find and connect with people in a positive way.

这个群体非常多样化。在探索更广泛的主题，如自雇、自由职业、我们与工作的关系以及建立在线业务等方面，我遇到了来自13岁到75岁的人，来自美国、新西兰、巴基斯坦和中国。随着全世界越来越多的人利用互联网所创造的机会，他们也在寻找与他们相似的人。现在是找到并积极地与人们联系的最好、最容易的时代。

So maybe I've convinced you that it's worth sharing, but you don't want to launch a social media brand, start writing online, or publish a book. That's fine too. You can start small or do something in your local community. Host a dinner party in your city or town, start a book club, share a poem or essay you've written with a couple of close friends, or even join a local art class. It doesn't matter how you start but that you start. Once people enter this new, creative mode, they realize that they've been holding back a part of themselves for most of their lives. Deep inside, we all have a desire to engage with the world in creative ways and don't worry, I'm here to cheer you on.

也许我已经说服你觉得值得分享，但你不想创建一个社交媒体品牌，开始在网上写作，或者出版一本书。那也没关系。你可以从小事做起，或者在你所在的社区做些事情。在你所在的城市或镇上举办一个晚宴，开办一个读书俱乐部，与几个亲密的朋友分享你写的一首诗或一篇文章，甚至参加一个本地的艺术班。重要的不是你如何开始，而是你开始了。一旦人们进入这种新的创造模式，他们就会意识到自己在大部分生活中一直在压抑自己的一部分。在内心深处，我们都有一种渴望以创造性的方式与世界互动的欲望，不用担心，我会在这里为你加油的。

## **Virtuous Meaning Cycles**

### **善德意义循环**

Maria Popova, who writes the popular site The Marginalian (formerly Brain Pickings), spends her days reading old books and essays. She's passionate about finding ideas, beauty, and wisdom in these texts and then connecting them in her own unique conversation with the world.

玛丽亚·波波娃 (Maria Popova) 是一位撰写知名网站《边缘人》(前身为《脑洞》) 的作者, 她的日常工作是阅读古老的书籍和文章。她热衷于在这些文本中寻找思想、美感和智慧, 然后以自己独特的方式与世界进行对话。

Her reflections on the connection between critical thinking and hope in an interview with Krista Tippett on the On Being podcast helped me transform how I wanted to engage with the world. She argued, “critical thinking without hope is cynicism. But hope without critical thinking is naïveté.”<sup>147</sup> I hit rewind and listened to this several times. I knew she was talking to me. 她在与克里斯塔·蒂佩特进行的On Being播客采访中对批判性思维和希望之间的联系思考, 帮助我改变了我想要与世界互动的方式。她认为, “没有希望的批判性思维是愤世嫉俗, 但没有批判性思维的希望是天真。”我按下倒带键, 反复听了几次。我知道她在和我说话。

When I first started on my path and began writing, I was driven by frustration. I saw problems with the way we think about work and our lives everywhere, and I wanted everyone to see things like I did. I wanted to be right. My essays and articles were convincing, but they were not inspiring. 当我开始走上自己的道路并开始写作时, 我被挫折驱使着。我看到我们对工作和生活的思考方式存在问题, 我希望每个人都能像我一样看清事物。我想要证明自己是正确的。我的文章和论文很有说服力, 但却缺乏启发性。

It was critical thinking without hope.  
这是没有希望的批判性思维。

This desire for intellectual exploration with others has been a big theme on my journey. But not until I added hope to my critical thinking and embraced a more expansive view of the world did I attract the kind of people I wanted to welcome into my conversation. In my first couple of months in Taiwan, I read a book on writing by William Zinsser. He urged me to “believe in your own identity and your own opinions. Writing is an act of ego, and you might as well admit it. Use its energy to keep yourself going.”<sup>148</sup>

这种与他人一起进行智力探索的渴望一直是我旅程中的一个重要主题。但直到我将希望融入到我的批判性思维中，并拥抱了更广阔的世界观，我才吸引到我想要欢迎进入对话的人。我在台湾的头几个月里，我读了一本由威廉·辛瑟写的关于写作的书。他敦促我“相信自己的身份和观点。写作是一种自我行为，你不妨承认它。利用它的能量来保持自己前进。”

In that single moment, I stopped hedging my bets. I would no longer fear what people might think, but I would also leave my cynical edge behind. After reading Zinsser, I put my heart into my writing and made my case. This was the way out of cynicism. I became more optimistic not because I started to write better or was right, but because I stopped hiding. I led with my curiosity, vulnerability, and passion and it immediately attracted the kind of people I wanted to meet.

在那一刹那，我停止了犹豫不决。我不再害怕别人的看法，也不再保留我的愤世嫉俗。在读完辛瑟尔的书后，我全心投入到写作中并表达了我的观点。这是摆脱愤世嫉俗的方法。我变得更加乐观，不是因为我开始写得更好或者是正确的，而是因为我不再隐藏自己。我以好奇心、脆弱和激情为先导，立刻吸引到了我想要结识的人。

In the early 1900s, professor and writer Bertrand Russell noted that “any person who visits the Universities of the Western world is liable to be struck by the fact that the intelligent young of the present day are cynical to a far

greater extent than was the case formerly.”<sup>149</sup>

在20世纪初，教授和作家伯特兰·罗素指出，“任何访问西方世界大学的人都会被一个事实所震撼，即现今的年轻人比以前更加愤世嫉俗。”

He argued that developing a cynical stance was necessary in a world in which much of what authorities and leaders claim directly contrasts with what is true. The cure for such cynicism, he said, would “only come when intellectuals can find a career that embodies their creative impulses.”<sup>150</sup>

他认为，在当今世界上，许多权威和领导者声称的与事实相反，因此发展一种愤世嫉俗的立场是必要的。他说，对于这种愤世嫉俗的治愈只有在知识分子能够找到一个能体现他们创造力的职业时才会出现。

This is possible on the pathless path. You can experiment with your work and your life until you stumble into a virtuous cycle that helps you continue to move in a positive direction. By a virtuous cycle, I mean being able to do work that you enjoy that naturally leads to opportunities and people that help make your life better.

这在无路可寻的道路上是可能的。你可以尝试着去探索你的工作和生活，直到你偶然发现一个有益循环，帮助你继续朝着积极的方向前进。所谓有益循环，是指能够从事你喜欢的工作，自然而然地带来机会和人际关系，从而改善你的生活。

The biggest challenge to creating your virtuous cycle and one of the most dangerous failure modes of the pathless path is cynicism. Many people who leave the default path do so because they’ve become cynical and are driven by a desire to escape. But escaping is only the first step of leaving a certain path behind. In order to create a sustainable journey and path, it requires finding ways of orienting to the world that leave space for hope.

创造你的善循环的最大挑战，也是无路可循的道路中最危险的失败模式之一，就是愤世嫉俗。许多离开常规道路的人之所以这样做，是因

为他们变得愤世嫉俗，并且被逃避的欲望驱使。但逃避只是离开某条特定道路的第一步。为了创造一个可持续的旅程和道路，需要找到一种面向世界的方式，给希望留下空间。

At the beginning of my journey, I wanted to prove people wrong and that my way of living life was good and right. My writing was cynical because I couldn't express why I cared about those ideas. I was depending more on facts than the songs singing in my soul. When I was brave enough to open my heart, I got more support and that led not only to a better path but a more exciting future.

在我的旅程开始时，我想证明别人是错的，我过着的生活方式是好的和正确的。我的写作很愤世嫉俗，因为我无法表达我为什么关心那些观念。我更多地依赖事实，而不是我灵魂中唱歌的歌曲。当我勇敢地打开心扉时，我得到了更多的支持，这不仅带来了更好的道路，也带来了更令人兴奋的未来。

# 10

## Playing the Long Game 玩长远的游戏

When I quit the New York Times to be a full-time mother, the voices of the world said that I was nuts. When I quit it again to be a full-time novelist, they said I was nuts again. But I am not nuts. I am happy. I am successful on my own terms. Because if your success is not on your own terms, if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart, it is not success at all. – *Anna Quindlen*

当我辞去《纽约时报》成为一名全职母亲时，世界的声音说我疯了。当我再次辞去成为一名全职小说家时，他们又说我疯了。但我并不疯狂。我很快乐。我以自己的方式取得了成功。因为如果你的成功不是按照自己的标准来的，如果它在外界看起来很好，但在你的内心感觉不好，那根本就不是成功。- 安娜·昆德伦

## Working Backward 逆向思维

One of the goals of the pathless path is to make commitments: to a type of work, ways of living, creative projects, or a “conversation” with the world. A challenge here, however, is that the possibilities are so vast. Which raises a question: how do you begin to figure out what you want to do when there are not many limits?

无路之路的目标之一是做出承诺：对某种工作、生活方式、创意项目或与世界的“对话”。然而，这里面的可能性是如此广阔，这就引发了一个问题：当没有太多限制时，你如何开始弄清楚自己想要做什么？

On the default path, the kinds of work you can do and the resulting kinds of lives that are possible are limited, helping to simplify this issue. I never realized how much I was constraining my imagination when I was only considering paths or jobs that already existed. Embracing the pathless path enabled me to see the possibilities for my life. This was exciting but also overwhelming. I often have the sense that I'd need multiple lifetimes to truly test and explore my options.

在默认路径上，你可以做的工作种类和可能的生活方式是有限的，这有助于简化这个问题。我从未意识到当我只考虑已经存在的路径或工作时，我是如何限制了我的想象力。拥抱无路径的道路使我能够看到我生活的可能性。这令人兴奋但也令人不知所措。我经常有一种感觉，我需要多个生命来真正测试和探索我的选择。

Instead of embarking on an endless search, I've taken a different approach: working backward. Instead of thinking about what I want to do and how I want to live, I start instead with what I don't want to be doing and what failure looks like. By looking at what might go wrong with our lives, we can avoid obvious traps, creating more space for things to go right.

与其进行无休止的搜索，我采取了一种不同的方法：逆向思考。与其考虑我想做什么和我想过怎样的生活，我反而从我不想做的事情和失败的样子开始。通过看看我们的生活可能出现什么问题，我们可以避免明显的陷阱，为事情朝着正确的方向发展创造更多空间。

One useful mental model for thinking about this is the principle of inversion, popularized by German mathematician Carl Jacobi. He told his students to “invert, always invert,” encouraging them to approach difficult problems by inverting the equation to gain a new perspective.<sup>151</sup> We can also apply this principle to our lives. For example, instead of asking what makes up an amazing life, we first define the worst-case scenario and then work backward. What does a miserable life entail? What actions would



make achieving such a life more likely? Then figure out how you can avoid these things from becoming true.

一个有用的思维模型是反转原则，由德国数学家卡尔·雅可比推广。他告诉学生们“反转，总是反转”，鼓励他们通过反转方程来解决困难问题，以获得新的视角。我们也可以将这个原则应用到我们的生活中。例如，我们可以先定义最糟糕的情况，然后逆向思考。一个悲惨的生活包括什么？哪些行为会使得实现这样的生活更有可能？然后找出如何避免这些事情成为现实。

During my time on the default path, I often imagined a future version of myself that I knew I didn't want to be: an overweight guy in his 50s who barely tolerates the people in his life, hates his job, spends his days in a windowless cubicle farm, and isn't very happy. If you had known me then, you would have said I would never have ended up like that. However, by the time I left my job I was much closer to that person than when I started. 在我走上默认的道路时，我经常想象一个未来的自己，我知道我不想成为那样的人：一个五十多岁的超重男人，勉强忍受他生活中的人，讨厌他的工作，在没有窗户的小隔间里度过他的日子，不是很快乐。如果你当时认识我，你会说我永远不会变成那样的人。然而，当我离开工作时，我离那个人比起开始时更接近了。

On the pathless path, I take this exercise much more seriously. While the grumpy guy in the cubicle is even harder to imagine now, there are still aspects of him that I want to avoid. Here is my current sketch of the person I don't want to be ten years from now:

在这条无路可寻的道路上，我更加认真地进行这个练习。虽然现在很难想象那个脾气暴躁的人坐在隔间里，但我仍然想要避免成为他的某些方面。以下是我对十年后不想成为的人的当前草图：

Paul is still committed to the pathless path, a fact that still draws skepticism from other people. He has a couple of kids, but is barely making ends meet and is ashamed of this fact. He goes a few months

every year without income and is filled with insecurity about his finances almost all the time. He's too stubborn to take a full-time job and instead of admitting he might be wrong about his approach to life, he angrily tweets about how stupid everyone is working in traditional jobs. This is all complicated by ongoing health issues which limit his energy and sometimes leave him semi-bedridden for weeks at a time. 保罗仍然坚守着无路可寻的道路，这一事实仍然引起其他人的怀疑。他有几个孩子，但勉强维持生计，对此感到羞愧。他每年有几个月没有收入，几乎一直对自己的财务状况感到不安。他太固执，不愿意接受全职工作，而是愤怒地发推文，嘲笑那些从事传统工作的人有多愚蠢。这一切都被持续的健康问题所复杂化，这些问题限制了他的精力，有时会让他卧床数周。

The negative future version of me is financially insecure, does not have a predictable income, and is cynical and stubborn. I could become “negative me” by doing the following: spending time with negative and cynical people, not finding supportive friends, not staying open to all kinds of paid work (including full-time employment), obsessing over divisive media and politics, working on things I resent, and not being honest about my own motivations. Inverting helps you identify traps that could derail your efforts to keep your journey alive.

我未来的负面版本在经济上不安全，没有可预测的收入，而且愤世嫉俗、固执。我可能变成“负面的我”通过以下方式：与消极和愤世嫉俗的人在一起，没有找到支持性的朋友，不对各种有偿工作保持开放（包括全职就业），沉迷于具有分裂性的媒体和政治，从事我厌恶的事情，不诚实地对待自己的动机。反转有助于你识别可能破坏你保持旅程活力的陷阱。

I encourage everyone to write a description of the person you don't want to be, then brainstorm actions that might create that outcome. This exercise may be uncomfortable because undoubtedly you will see traces of the person you imagine in your present life. These traces are clues about what to change in your life right now.

我鼓励每个人写下一个你不想成为的人的描述，然后集思广益，想出

可能导致这种结果的行动。这个练习可能会让人感到不舒服，因为无疑地你会在现实生活中看到你想象中的那个人的痕迹。这些痕迹是关于你现在应该改变生活的线索。

In addition to identifying who we don't want to become, we should seek to identify ways of working and living that might add unnecessary risk to our path. Early in my journey, I identified being a freelancer and having a single type of income as a key risk. This motivated me to try to make money in as many ways as possible, even if it meant sacrificing short-term income to do so.

除了确定我们不想成为的人之外，我们还应该寻找可能给我们的工作和生活带来不必要风险的方式。在我旅程的早期，我确定作为自由职业者和只有一种收入来源是一个重要的风险。这激励我尽可能多地寻找赚钱的方式，即使这意味着为此牺牲短期收入。

I was inadvertently embracing a principle that professor Nassim Taleb calls "antifragility." Antifragility is a well-documented natural phenomenon in which things gain strength through disorder. For example, cities are antifragile. While individual businesses in a city may fail in an individual year, the city thrives over the long-term, fueled by new residents, buildings, and businesses.

我无意中拥抱了一种纳西姆·塔勒布教授称之为“反脆弱性”的原则。反脆弱性是一种被充分记录的自然现象，即事物通过混乱而变得更强大。例如，城市具有反脆弱性。虽然城市中的个别企业可能在某一年失败，但城市在长期内蓬勃发展，得益于新居民、建筑和企业。

Like a city with many industries, I want to be resilient to changes in income, shifts in the economy, and rule changes from various platforms that I use. For this reason, in addition to freelancing work, I've built things that allow me to generate income without selling my time and that target

different audiences. The first two years after shifting away from freelancing with this approach, my overall income declined substantially. However, a few years later, I now have between eight and ten different ways of making money where I consistently earn at least \$200 a month. While the risks of any one of these disappearing is high, the odds that all of them disappear at once is low.

像一个拥有许多行业的城市一样，我希望能够对收入变化、经济转变和各种平台的规则变化具有弹性。因此，除了自由职业工作外，我还建立了一些可以在不出售我的时间的情况下产生收入并针对不同受众的事物。在采用这种方法转变自由职业工作后的头两年，我的总收入大幅下降。然而，几年后，我现在有八到十种不同的赚钱方式，每个月至少能稳定地赚到200美元。虽然其中任何一种消失的风险很高，但它们同时全部消失的可能性很低。

Early on in my journey, I realized that my entire goal was to stay on the pathless path indefinitely. This is what author James Carse calls the “infinite game”: “A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play.”<sup>152</sup> By working backward, I realized that the biggest risks for me are spending my time doing things that undermine my ability to stay optimistic and energized, and obviously, running out of money. This is why I’ve spent so much time focusing on creating the conditions for success and lowering my risk of failure, rather than aiming at success itself.

在旅程的早期，我意识到我的整个目标是无限期地保持在无路径的道路上。这就是作家詹姆斯·卡斯所称的“无限游戏”：“有限游戏是为了赢而玩的，无限游戏是为了继续游戏而玩的。”通过倒推，我意识到对我来说最大的风险是浪费时间做那些削弱我保持乐观和充满活力能力的事情，当然还有钱不够用。这就是为什么我花了这么多时间专注于创造成功的条件和降低失败的风险，而不是追求成功本身。

Almost everyone that stays on the pathless path eventually adopts a similar approach. The reason? The longer you stay on the path, the higher your

odds you'll be able to sustain it over the long term. People come to realize that the challenge is not to find work to pay the bills but instead to have time to keep taking chances and exploring opportunities to find the things worth committing to over the long-term.

几乎每个坚持无路径之路的人最终都采取了类似的方法。原因是什么？你在这条路上停留的时间越长，你能够长期维持下去的机会就越高。人们开始意识到，挑战不在于找到能支付账单的工作，而是有时继续冒险和探索机会，找到值得长期投入的事物。

## The Positive Side of Freedom

### 自由的积极面

In the paycheck world, there used to be a saying: dress for the job you want, not the job you have. The analogous idea in the free agent world is: learn to exercise the freedoms you might acquire, not just the freedoms you have. – Venkatesh Rao

在薪水世界中，曾经有一句话：穿着适合你想要的工作，而不是你目前的工作。在自由职业者的世界中，类似的观念是：学会行使你可能获得的自由，而不仅仅是你现在拥有的自由。 - Venkatesh Rao

Beyond money, the second most common concern people have about working less or building a life less centered around work is what they will do with their time. On the default path, we may not realize how much energy it requires to simply go through the motions and stay on the path, so it's easy to mistake our lack of energy outside of work for a lack of interest in anything else. As a result, we don't know what we'll do when we're no longer "working."

除了金钱之外，人们对于减少工作时间或过上一个不那么以工作为中心的生活的第二大担忧是如何利用他们的时间。在默认的道路上，我们可能没有意识到仅仅按部就班并保持在这条道路上需要多少精力，所以很容易把我们在工作之外缺乏精力误认为对其他事情没有兴趣。因此，我们不知道当我们不再“工作”时该做什么。

The problem of what to do once you have freedom is something that fascinated writer Erich Fromm. In his book *Escape from Freedom*, he explores how millions across the world struggled to adapt to the newfound freedom they had in their lives in the 1930s.

一旦获得自由后该做什么的问题，是作家埃里希·弗洛姆着迷的一个问题。在他的书《逃离自由》中，他探讨了上世纪30年代全球数百万人如何努力适应他们生活中的新获得的自由。

At this time, people were experiencing greater freedom as the control of religious authorities diminished, workweeks became shorter, and increased prosperity provided new options for living. Many believed that the end of World War I had concluded the struggle for freedom and the only problem left was what to do with it.

此时，随着宗教当局的控制减弱，人们体验到了更大的自由，工作时间变短，繁荣的增长为生活提供了新的选择。许多人相信，第一次世界大战的结束标志着对自由的斗争已经结束，唯一剩下的问题是如何处理这种自由。

Well-educated elites and business owners liberated from the rules of rigid institutions were thrilled, but many others were frustrated. Fromm noticed that many people felt “isolated, powerless, and an instrument of purposes outside of [themselves], alienated from [themselves] and others.”<sup>153</sup> To political leaders like Hitler and Stalin, this was great news. They could increase their own power by manipulating the masses with stories that helped them make sense of their lives.

受过良好教育的精英和企业主摆脱了严格机构的规定，感到非常兴奋，但许多其他人感到沮丧。弗洛姆注意到许多人感到“孤立、无力，成为自己以外目的的工具，与自己 and 他人疏离。”对于希特勒和斯大林等政治领导人来说，这是个好消息。他们可以通过操纵群众的故事来增加自己的权力，帮助他们理解自己的生活。

Why would so many people trade some of their newfound freedom to join these authoritarian movements? Fromm argued that the reason lied behind two different types of freedom. First was negative freedom or “freedom from” outside control. Second was positive freedom or the “freedom to” engage with the world in a way that is true to yourself.” Fromm’s positive version of freedom was much more than the freedom to act. He described it as “the full realization of the individual’s potential, together with his ability to live actively and spontaneously.” Fromm argued that those freed from oppression but unable to develop a positive version of freedom were destined to be filled with feelings of separateness and anxiety.<sup>154</sup>

为什么会有这么多人放弃他们新获得的自由来加入这些专制运动呢？弗洛姆认为，原因在于两种不同类型的自由。第一种是消极自由或“摆脱”外部控制的自由。第二种是积极自由或“能够”以符合自己真实本性的方式与世界互动的自由。”弗洛姆对自由的积极版本远不止行动自由。他将其描述为“个体潜力的充分实现，以及他能够积极主动地生活和自发地行动的能力。”弗洛姆认为，那些从压迫中解放出来却无法发展积极自由的人注定会充满分离感和焦虑。

People are willing to compromise a lot to suppress these feelings. The stories Nazism offered the masses in the 1930s relieved people of their responsibility to grapple with “freedom to” and make their own decisions. In exchange, the autocratic leaders gave them a script for how to live. Fromm, who was writing at the beginning of World War II, thought this a terrible mistake, even at the time: “because we have freed ourselves of the older overt forms of authority, we do not see that we have become the prey of a new kind of authority.”<sup>155</sup> Abdicating our responsibility to live our own lives can have dire consequences.

人们愿意做出很多妥协来压抑这些感受。纳粹主义在上世纪30年代向大众提供的故事减轻了人们对“自由去做”的责任和做出自己决策的压力。作为交换，独裁领导者给予他们一个生活脚本。弗洛姆在二战初期写道，这是一个可怕的错误：“因为我们已经摆脱了旧的明显形式的

权威，我们没有意识到我们已经成为新型权威的猎物。”放弃我们自己生活的责任可能会带来严重的后果。

Over the last 100 years, the number of ways you can engage with life has exploded beyond imagination. Now, not only political leaders offer narratives for interacting with the world, but also employers, companies, media outlets, and other institutions. Everyone gives you roadmaps for living life and becoming free. You just have to buy their products, embrace their story, or join their company, and instead of having to develop your own agency, the respective institution will make you part of their special group. In his post-World War II writing, Fromm demonstrated that, surprisingly, the urge to conform in this way was most powerful not in Communist societies, but in the West.

在过去的100年里，你与生活互动的方式已经爆炸式增长，超出了想象。现在，不仅政治领导人提供与世界互动的叙述，还有雇主、公司、媒体机构和其他机构。每个人都为你提供生活和自由的路线图。你只需要购买他们的产品、接受他们的故事或加入他们的公司，而不是自己发展能力，相应的机构将使你成为他们特殊群体的一部分。在二战后的写作中，弗洛姆表明，令人惊讶的是，这种顺从的冲动在共产主义社会中并不是最强烈的，而是在西方。

The problem with conformity, Fromm argued, is that it leads to an existence that is too rigid, routine, and predictable. This undermines the space for spontaneity and active engagement that might help one discover what matters at a deeper level. David Foster Wallace once argued that this is the whole point of a liberal arts education in perhaps the best defense of this tradition:

从弗洛姆的观点来看，顺从的问题在于它导致了一种过于僵化、例行公事和可预测的存在。这削弱了自发性和积极参与的空间，而这些可能有助于人们在更深层次上发现重要的事物。大卫·福斯特·华莱士曾经辩称，这正是自由艺术教育的全部意义，也许是对这一传统最好的辩护。



I submit that this is what the real, no-bullshit value of your liberal arts education is supposed to be about: how to keep from going through your comfortable, prosperous, respectable adult life dead, unconscious, a slave to your head and to your natural default setting of being uniquely, completely, imperially alone day in and day out. [156](#)

我认为这就是你的文科教育真正、不废话的价值所在：如何在舒适、繁荣、体面的成年生活中变得死气沉沉、无意识，成为你头脑和天生的默认模式的奴隶，日复一日地独自一人

Wallace's point is that doing what almost everyone else is doing is the natural thing in life. If we are serious about other approaches, it will take work.

华莱士的观点是，做几乎每个人都在做的事情是生活中的自然之道。如果我们认真对待其他方法，那就需要付出努力。

In his own writing, Fromm continued to explore the topic of freedom for several decades after World War II. In his book *The Art of Loving*, he argued that the root of a positive version of freedom is a deep sense of connectedness with the world. A path to achieve this state was through “creative activity.” He offered examples: “whether a carpenter makes a table, or a goldsmith a piece of jewelry, whether the peasant grows his corn or the painter paints a picture, in all types of creative work the worker and his object become one, man unites himself with the world in the process of creation.” As he said, in a world where we are pushed to “regard our personal qualities and the result of our efforts as commodities that can be sold for money, prestige, and power,” engaging in a creative endeavor allows us to find value in the act itself. [157](#)

在二战后的几十年里，弗洛姆在自己的著作中继续探索自由的主题。在他的书《爱的艺术》中，他认为积极自由的根源是与世界的深刻联系感。实现这种状态的途径是通过“创造性活动”。他举了一些例子：“无论是木匠制作一张桌子，还是金匠制作一件珠宝，无论是农民种植庄稼还是画家绘画一幅画作，在所有类型的创造性工作中，工作者和他的作品融为一体，人在创造的过程中与世界融合。”正如他所说，在一个我们被迫“将个人品质和努力的结果视为可以用金钱、声望和权力

来出售的商品”的世界中，从事创造性的努力使我们能够在行为本身中找到价值。

I've already made a case for you to find a way to create, either publicly or privately. However, Fromm presents another deeper reason. In addition to doing something challenging, “finding the others,” or discovering a different kind of work you enjoy, you might also find a mode of being that opens you up to a deeper relationship with the world and yourself. In this way, the creative act is one of the most sacred things in the world and should be taken seriously in itself and not with any expected outcome.

我已经为你提出了一个理由，让你找到一种创造的方式，无论是公开还是私下。然而，弗洛姆提出了另一个更深层次的原因。除了做一些具有挑战性的事情，“找到其他人”，或者发现一种不同类型的工作让你享受，你还可能找到一种打开你与世界和自己更深层次关系的存在方式。这样，创造性的行为是世界上最神圣的事情之一，应该本身被认真对待，而不是期望任何结果。

Before I left my job, I was exploring my creativity but did not feel the deeper connectedness that Fromm wrote about. I was convinced that escaping my job was the most important thing I had to do. However, soon after achieving the “freedom from” traditional employment, I discovered the vastness and challenge of developing a positive side of freedom.

在我离开工作之前，我正在探索我的创造力，但并没有感受到弗洛姆所写的更深层次的联系。我相信逃离工作是我必须做的最重要的事情。然而，就在实现“摆脱”传统就业的自由之后不久，我发现了发展积极自由的广阔和挑战。

Ultimately, figuring out what to do with freedom once we have it is one of the biggest challenges of the pathless path. Writer Simon Sarris argues that we can only do this by increasing our capacity for agency, or our ability to

take deliberate action in the world. He argues, “the secret of the world is that it is a very malleable place, we must be sure that people learn this, and never forget the order: Learning is naturally the consequence of doing.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, only by taking action do we learn and only by learning do we discover what we want. Without this, we will struggle to take advantage of the freedom that the pathless path offers. We are ultimately the ones that determine our fate, and without expressing agency, we struggle to be free. 最终，弄清楚我们拥有自由后该如何处理自由是无路之路上最大的挑战之一。作家西蒙·萨里斯认为，我们只能通过增加我们的能动性，或者说我们在世界上采取有意识行动的能力来做到这一点。他认为，“世界的秘密在于它是一个非常可塑的地方，我们必须确保人们学会这一点，并永远不要忘记这个顺序：学习自然是行动的结果。”换句话说，只有通过行动，我们才能学习，只有通过学习，我们才能发现我们想要什么。如果没有这一点，我们将难以利用无路之路所提供的自由。我们最终是决定我们命运的人，如果不表达能动性，我们将难以自由。

In the arc of history, the freedom to explore the possibilities of our lives is a relatively recent phenomenon. For the amount of attention that the idea of freedom receives, there is still relatively little expression of it at the individual level. The default path has given us the freedom to earn money and spend it as we please, work in different fields, and have some control over our lives, but keeps many trapped in a pseudo-freedom where one is free from absolute oppression but not free enough to act with a high degree of agency.

在历史的长河中，探索生活可能性的自由是一个相对较新的现象。尽管自由的概念受到了很多关注，但在个人层面上，对自由的表达仍然相对较少。默认的路径赋予了我们赚钱和随心所欲地花钱的自由，可以在不同领域工作，并对生活有一定的控制权，但却让许多人陷入了一种伪自由的状态，即摆脱了绝对压迫，但没有足够的自由去行动。

The pathless path is the deliberate pursuit of a positive version of freedom. Revisiting Fromm's definition, "the full realization of the individual's potential, together with his ability to live actively and spontaneously," we see that developing our own sense of agency is vital.<sup>159</sup> Thus, figuring out what to do with your time is a real concern.

无路之路是有意追求积极自由的行动。重新审视弗洛姆的定义，“个体潜力的充分实现，以及他积极自发地生活能力”，我们可以看到发展自己的主动性是至关重要的。因此，弄清楚如何利用时间是一个真正的关注点。

For this, I've found no better advice than the following from Dolly Parton: "Find out who you are and do it on purpose."<sup>160</sup>

为此，我找不到比Dolly Parton的以下建议更好的了：“找出你是谁，并有目的地去做。”

## Reinventing Who You Are 重新发明你自己

Imagine it's 1980. You are 22 years old, freshly graduated from college. You take a job at General Motors, one of the biggest companies in the world. On your first day, you walk into your office and see a flat metal desk with an electronic typewriter, a rotary phone, and a physical inbox with two slots, one for incoming memos and the other for outgoing.

想象一下，现在是1980年。你22岁，刚刚大学毕业。你在通用汽车公司找到了一份工作，这是世界上最大的公司之一。第一天上班，你走进办公室，看到一张平板金属桌子，上面放着一台电子打字机、一个旋转电话和一个物理收件箱，有两个插槽，一个用来收取备忘录，另一个用来发出去。

You spend the next 20 years at General Motors and receive several promotions. When computers are introduced, you volunteer to be an early adopter and do your best to stay up to date with the latest technology. Despite this, you get laid off in the 2001 recession and spend the next ten years jumping between different automotive parts suppliers. In 2010, you join a startup that builds driverless cars because they're looking for someone with industry connections. You feel like you're operating at the edge of your competence, but you manage to get by. In 2015, your career comes full circle when you re-join General Motors to help your old manager with a new product line.

你在接下来的20年里在通用汽车公司工作，并获得了几次晋升。当计算机被引入时，你自愿成为早期采用者，并尽力跟上最新技术的发展。尽管如此，你在2001年的经济衰退中被解雇，接下来的十年里你在不同的汽车零部件供应商之间跳槽。2010年，你加入了一家建造无人驾驶汽车的初创公司，因为他们正在寻找有行业关系的人。你觉得自己在能力的边缘工作，但你设法应付过去。2015年，你的职业生涯又回到了起点，重新加入通用汽车公司，帮助你的老经理开展新的产品线。

In 2020, your entire team starts working remotely. You learn how to use Zoom and Slack, and you seem to know what you're doing on both your computer and mobile phone. You are shocked at how quickly the younger team members adapt to this new normal. You can keep up, but you find it all exhausting. You sense it might be time to hang it up and decide that at the end of 2020, you will retire.

在2020年，你的整个团队开始远程工作。你学会了如何使用Zoom和Slack，并且似乎对电脑和手机上的操作都很熟悉。你对年轻的团队成员如此迅速适应这种新常态感到震惊。你能跟上，但你觉得这一切都很累人。你感觉到可能是时候退休了，并决定在2020年底退休。

Here's a question for you: do you think the next forty years will see more or less change?

这是一个问题：你认为接下来的四十年会有更多还是更少的变化？

When we think about the future, we tend to underestimate how much things will change, especially for ourselves. Researchers call this the “end of history illusion.” Across all age groups, people indicate that they have experienced profound change in the past but when they forecast their future, they don’t see the trend continuing. People believe that “the pace of personal change has slowed to a crawl and that they have recently become the people they will remain.”<sup>161</sup>

当我们思考未来时，我们往往低估事物的变化程度，尤其是对于自己而言。研究人员称之为“历史终结幻觉”。无论是哪个年龄段的人，他们都表示自己在过去经历了深刻的变化，但当他们预测自己的未来时，他们并没有看到这种趋势会继续下去。人们相信“个人变化的速度已经减缓到了爬行的程度，并且他们最近已经成为了他们将会保持的人。”

What can we do with this knowledge? For me, it’s made me more enthusiastic about embracing the pathless path because if I’m going to change more than I can expect, I might as well attempt to shape those changes. This is an alternative to how many people deal with change: by denying, delaying, or rejecting it. As we age we do become more mentally rigid and minor challenges to our routines can be landmines threatening to blow up our weeks, and suggestions that we live in new ways are treated as acts of war.

我们可以用这个知识做什么？对我来说，这让我更加热衷于接受无路可循的道路，因为如果我要改变超出我的预期，我不妨试图塑造这些变化。这是与许多人处理变化的方式不同的选择：否认、延迟或拒绝。随着年龄的增长，我们变得更加心理僵化，对我们日常生活的微小挑战可能成为威胁，可能会炸毁我们的一周，而对我们以新的方式生活的建议则被视为战争行为。

Moving abroad, running my own business, and living in more than 20 places in only a few years have made me much more resilient to change and more aware of my own default to become rigid in my thinking. I've become more capable of proactively embracing change, but I'd be lying if I said I am excited about every new shift in my environment, schedule, and work. Nonetheless, I've come to see reinvention as one of the most valuable meta-skills worth developing, and on the other side of these experiments, I am often much more relaxed and confident than before.

移居国外，经营自己的生意，仅仅几年就在20多个地方居住过，这让我对变化更加有韧性，更加意识到自己在思维上变得僵化的倾向。我变得更有能力主动接受变化，但如果我说我对环境、日程和工作的每一个新变化都感到兴奋，那是在撒谎。尽管如此，我已经开始将重塑自我视为最有价值的元技能之一，并且在这些实验的另一面，我通常比以前更加放松和自信。

Professor and author Yuval Harari argued that “in order to keep up with the world of 2050, you will need not merely to invent new ideas and products, but above all to reinvent yourself again and again.”<sup>162</sup> Nothing has helped me improve this skill more than living in other countries. People often ask me how to prepare for living abroad. My response? You can't, and when you leave the place you know, you will inevitably face challenges. From forgetting my passport on the other side of Italy to a stray dog biting me in Taiwan and a parasite infection in Mexico, I've dealt with scary uncertainty head-on. I wouldn't encourage you to seek out these experiences, but it does raise a question: if coping with these challenges increased my confidence, is comfort overrated?

教授和作家尤瓦尔·哈拉利认为，“为了跟上2050年的世界，你需要不仅仅是发明新的想法和产品，而且要不断地重新发明自己。”没有什么比在其他国家生活更能帮助我提高这个技能了。人们经常问我如何准备在国外生活。我的回答是：你无法准备好，当你离开你熟悉的地方时，你必然会面临挑战。从在意大利的另一边忘记护照，到在台湾被一只流浪狗咬伤，再到在墨西哥感染寄生虫，我都直面了可怕的不确

定性。我不鼓励你去寻找这些经历，但这确实引发了一个问题：如果应对这些挑战增加了我的自信，那么舒适是否被高估了呢？

As more people invent new paths and enter new environments, communities, and online worlds, many will be forced out of their comfort zone. The sooner this happens the better because the era of living your entire life in a small, local, and familiar community is over.

随着越来越多的人创造新的道路并进入新的环境、社区和在线世界，许多人将被迫走出自己的舒适区。这种情况发生得越早越好，因为在一个小而熟悉的社区中度过一生的时代已经结束了。

Whether we want to or not, we'll have to keep reinventing ourselves. 无论我们是否愿意，我们都必须不断重塑自己。

## Embracing Abundance

### 拥抱丰盛

My cousin has a saying that has always stuck with me: “it will even out when we are dead.” More than fatalism, this is an invitation to a relationship built on generosity, one that’s deeper than keeping a balance of accounts. Developing such a spirit of generosity and a mindset of abundance is increasingly a challenge in today’s world, where much of what we do is filtered by how much things cost and how we “spend” our time.

我表弟有一句话一直深深地影响着我：“我们死了以后，一切都会平衡。”这不仅仅是一种宿命论，更是一种建立在慷慨之上的关系的邀请，一种比保持账目平衡更深层次的关系。在当今世界，我们所做的很多事情都受到成本和我们如何“花费”时间的影响，因此培养这种慷慨的精神和丰盈的心态越来越具有挑战性。



This way of seeing the world is the result of a slow but steady transformation of how we relate to both time and the economy. Until the 1600s when clocks became ubiquitous, people rarely thought about time. English historian E.P. Thompson noted that instead, people thought in terms of activities. In Madagascar, a half-hour was a “rice cooking,” and a brief moment was “frying a locust.” When they had clocks, people increasingly thought about time as something related to money. Thompson noted that “time is now currency, it is not passed but spent.”<sup>163</sup>

这种看待世界的方式是对我们如何与时间和经济的关系进行缓慢但稳定的转变的结果。直到17世纪时钟普及之前，人们很少考虑时间。英国历史学家E.P.汤普森指出，相反，人们以活动为单位思考。在马达加斯加，半小时是“煮饭的时间”，短暂的一刻是“炸蝗虫的时间”。当人们拥有了时钟，他们越来越多地将时间视为与金钱相关的东西。汤普森指出，“时间现在是货币，它不是流逝而是花费。”

Today we think about how we “spend” time, if we are getting “our money’s worth,” if we are getting or giving value, and the “cost” of our actions. By equating time with money, we can make trade-offs, calculations, and coordinate global meetings, but we also decrease any sense of abundance. This shift has coincided with incredible advancements in our economy and its ability to deploy almost anything we want across the world, but at the same time has undermined our own security. In the 1970s, academic turned farmer Wendell Berry wrote about how economic success includes the hidden cost of depriving people “of any independent access to the staples of life: clothing, shelter, food, even water.”<sup>164</sup> What was once the riches of self-reliance have become things with a price.

今天我们思考如何“花费”时间，是否物有所值，是否获得或提供价值，以及我们行动的“代价”。通过将时间与金钱等同起来，我们可以进行权衡、计算和协调全球会议，但同时也减少了丰富感。这种转变与我们经济的令人难以置信的进步及其能力几乎可以在世界范围内部署任何我们想要的东西同时发生，但同时也破坏了我们自身的安全。在20世纪70年代，从学者转行为农民的温德尔·贝里写道，经济成功包

括剥夺人们“独立获得生活必需品：衣物、住所、食物，甚至水”的隐藏成本。曾经是自力更生的财富现在变成了有价之物。

Figuring out how to escape these patterns of thinking is vital to keeping the pathless path journey alive. I've done this over the past few years by looking at generosity as not merely a trait, but a skill that needs to be practiced. Practicing this skill has opened me up to a hidden side of life, filled not only with abundance, but also meaningful connection.

找出如何摆脱这些思维模式对于保持无路可寻的旅程至关重要。在过去的几年里，我通过将慷慨视为一种需要练习的技能，来实现这一点。练习这种技能使我开启了生活的隐藏面，不仅充满丰富，而且还有意义的连接。

I realized that this skill is worth practicing when I read a book called *Sacred Economics* by Charles Eisenstein. In it, he introduces the idea of a gift economy which he argues has been with humans for ages. He compares it to our default economic mindset:

当我读到查尔斯·艾森斯坦的《神圣经济学》这本书时，我意识到这个技能是值得练习的。在书中，他介绍了一个他认为人类已经拥有了很久的礼物经济的概念。他将其与我们默认的经济思维进行了比较。

Whereas money today embodies the principle, “More for me is less for you,” in a gift economy, more for you is also more for me because those who have, give to those who need it. Gifts cement the mystical realization of participation in something greater than oneself which, yet, is not separate from oneself. The axioms of rational self-interest change because the self has expanded to include something of the other.<sup>165</sup>

在礼物经济中，今天的金钱体现了“对我来说越多，对你来说越少”的原则，而在礼物经济中，对你来说越多也意味着对我来说越多，因为那些拥有的人会给予那些需要的人。礼物巩固了对参与某种超越自我的神秘体验，然而，这种超越并不与自我分离。理

性自利的公理发生了变化，因为自我已经扩展到包括他人的一部分。

Most of us have experienced this type of gift-giving in our families. As children, very little is asked of us in the economic realm. Even as we grow into adulthood, it would be odd for our parents to keep meticulous track of what we owe them. Similarly, among close friends, there is often an unspoken acknowledgment that aiming for absolute fairness is never the goal. Like my cousin, for whom “it will even out when we are dead,” we see the wisdom in supporting deeper relationships.

我们大多数人在家庭中都经历过这种类型的礼物赠送。作为孩子，我们在经济领域很少被要求做出贡献。即使我们长大成人，我们的父母也不会精确地追踪我们欠他们的东西，这是很奇怪的。同样，在亲密的朋友之间，通常有一种无声的认可，追求绝对公平从来不是目标。就像我的表兄弟说的那样，“等我们死了，一切都会平衡的”，我们看到了支持更深层次关系的智慧。

However, operating in the spirit of a gift economy outside of our close connections is uncomfortable and it's probably not something we should embrace in the broadest sense. If we had to form deep, meaningful relationships with everyone we interacted with within the economy, it would grind to a halt. However, the opposite is also true. When we look to the market to solve all our needs, it leaves us feeling empty. Professor Tim Wu made this point in a widely read essay titled “The Tyranny of Convenience,” where he argues that convenience, “with its promise of smooth, effortless efficiency...threatens to erase the sort of struggles and challenges that help give meaning to life.”<sup>166</sup>

然而，在我们紧密联系之外以礼物经济的精神运作是令人不舒服的，从广义上讲，这可能不是我们应该接受的东西。如果我们必须与我们在经济中互动的每个人建立深入而有意义的关系，那么经济将停滞不前。然而，相反的也是真的。当我们寻求市场来满足我们所有的需求时，我们会感到空虚。蒂姆·吴教授在一篇广为人知的名为《便利的暴

政》的文章中提出了这一观点，他认为便利“以其平稳、轻松高效的承诺...威胁着抹去那些帮助赋予生活意义的挣扎和挑战。”

Wu argues that many see convenience as a form of liberation. People aim for “financial independence” only to realize when they achieve it that they’re only independent in the narrow sense of being able to pay for everything. Realizing the flaws in this kind of economic thinking and inspired by writers like Eisenstein and Berry, I decided to experiment with the gift economy in my work. Based on Eisenstein’s book, I embraced three guiding principles:

吴认为，许多人将便利视为一种解放形式。人们追求“经济独立”，只有当他们实现了这一目标后才意识到他们只是在狭义上能够支付一切而已。意识到这种经济思维的缺陷，并受到艾森斯坦和贝里等作家的启发，我决定在我的工作中尝试礼物经济。根据艾森斯坦的书籍，我采纳了三个指导原则：

1. Find ways to give without expectation of anything in return.  
找到无条件给予的方式。
2. Be willing to receive gifts in any form and on any timeline.  
愿意接受以任何形式和在任何时间线上的礼物。
3. Be open to being wrong about all of this and adjust my approach as necessary.  
对于所有这些事情，保持开放态度，并根据需要调整我的方法。

With this in mind, I looked for places to give what I had to offer. My first practical experiment with the gift economy involved a spontaneous decision at the end of a coffee conversation with a stranger I met through the Couchsurfing app in Boston. She shared that she was running out of money and had been making a living working on various projects and relying on the kindness of strangers as she traveled around the United States. As we were about to part ways, I asked her, “Would you be comfortable receiving a cash gift from me?” A bit shocked, she said yes. I sent her \$100 via a payment app and walked away.

考虑到这一点，我寻找了可以提供我的地方。我在与一个我通过

Couchsurfing应用在波士顿认识的陌生人的咖啡谈话结束时做出了对礼物经济的第一个实际实验。她分享说她的钱快用完了，一直靠在各种项目上工作并依靠陌生人的善意在美国各地旅行。就在我们即将分别的时候，我问她：“你接受我给你的现金礼物会感到舒服吗？”她有点震惊，但说了句“是的”。我通过一个支付应用给她发送了100美元，然后离开了。

When the thought first popped into my head, I noticed inner voices that told me it was a bad idea: “What if she wastes the money?” “Won’t this make her too lazy to take a job that might help her?” “She doesn’t deserve it.” Until that moment, I had always listened to those voices and leaned away from discomfort. However, this is the whole point of embracing the gift mindset and practicing generosity. It exposes our default scripts about how we think the world should work and opens us up to new possibilities. 当这个想法第一次冒进我的脑海时，我注意到内心的声音告诉我这是个坏主意：“如果她浪费了这笔钱怎么办？”“这会不会让她变得太懒，不愿意去找一份可能帮助她的工作？”“她不值得。”直到那一刻，我一直听从那些声音，远离不适。然而，这正是拥抱赠予心态和实践慷慨的全部意义所在。它揭示了我们对世界应该如何运作的默认脚本，并为我们打开了新的可能性。

A couple weeks later I received an unprompted message. She told me that she had used the money to become a member on HomeAway, a site where hosts offer free lodging and food in exchange for work, typically no more than 4-5 hours per day, in places like farms, restaurants, and hotels. She had found a place that would host her for a couple of months and she was pretty excited about it.

几周后，我收到了一条自发的消息。她告诉我她用这笔钱成为了HomeAway的会员，这是一个网站，主人提供免费住宿和食物，以换取工作，通常每天不超过4-5个小时，在农场、餐厅和酒店等地方。她找到了一个可以让她住上几个月的地方，对此感到非常兴奋。

Partly because in today's world most people donate to formal charities, giving directly feels weird. Many charitable organizations are set up like businesses and use the same marketing tactics. Giving \$100 to a charity online feels normal and comfortable. Handing over a \$100 bill to a stranger feels reckless. "What if they\_\_\_\_\_?" Fill in the blank with your preferred worry. While I've never fully overcome these voices, giving to strangers over and over again has shown me that our default assumptions often stop us from doing things that are not only good and meaningful but might even make our lives better.

部分原因是因为在当今世界，大多数人都捐赠给正式的慈善机构，直接给予感觉很奇怪。许多慈善组织都像企业一样设立，并使用相同的营销策略。在网上向慈善机构捐赠100美元感觉正常和舒适。将100美元纸币交给陌生人感觉不负责任。"如果他们\_\_\_\_\_呢？"请用你喜欢的担忧来填空。虽然我从未完全克服这些声音，但一次又一次地给陌生人捐赠已经向我展示，我们默认为的假设常常阻止我们做一些不仅是好的和有意义的的事情，甚至可能让我们的生活变得更好。

Eisenstein argues that in a gift economy, "gifts flow toward the greatest need," and in learning to deal with the discomfort of a gifting mindset, I've been able to more clearly see those who might need some help while also being on the receiving end of unexpected offers of generosity from people from around the world.

艾森斯坦认为，在礼物经济中，“礼物流向最需要的地方”，通过学会应对赠与心态的不适，我能够更清楚地看到那些可能需要帮助的人，同时也收到了来自世界各地的意外慷慨之举。

I've also embraced the spirit of a gift economy in my work. I run an online course that's priced for knowledge workers based in the Western economy. For many of the people taking the course, the price is much less than a day's salary. Yet for people in other countries, it can be more than a month's

salary. From the beginning, I integrated a gift economy approach into my course. In my first iteration, I included an option to “click here if you can’t afford this and I’ll send you a free version of the course.” As you might expect, no one purchased the course and requests flowed in steadily.

Unfortunately, no one ever opened the course either.

我在我的工作中也接受了礼物经济的精神。我经营着一个在线课程，面向西方经济体中的知识工作者定价。对于许多参加课程的人来说，价格远低于一天的工资。然而对于其他国家的人来说，这可能是一个月的工资。从一开始，我就将礼物经济的方法融入到我的课程中。在第一次尝试中，我提供了一个选项：“如果你买不起这个课程，请点击这里，我会给你发送一个免费版本的课程。”正如你所预料的，没有人购买了课程，请求却源源不断地涌入。不幸的是，也没有人打开这门课程。

To design a better approach, I applied what I had learned in my interactions with philosopher Andrew Taggart.<sup>167</sup> I introduced language saying that I wanted anyone motivated to learn to be able to access the course. I created an online exercise that shared my own goals (“to support my life doing this kind of teaching and creative work”) and included questions about their motivation and their plan for finishing the course as well as space to share their financial challenges if they wished. At the end of the exercise, I asked them three questions:

为了设计一个更好的方法，我运用了我在与哲学家安德鲁·塔加特的互动中所学到的知识。我引入了一种语言，表明我希望任何有动力学习的人都能够接触到这门课程。我创建了一个在线练习，分享了我自己的目标（“支持我从事这种教学和创作工作的生活”），并提出了关于他们的动机和完成课程计划的问题，同时也给他们留下了分享他们的财务困难的空间，如果他们愿意的话。在练习的最后，我向他们提出了三个问题：

1. What is the low range of a price you would be willing to offer for an online course?

您愿意为一门在线课程提供的价格下限是多少？

2. What is the high range of a price you would be willing to offer for an online course?

您愿意为一门在线课程提供的最高价格是多少？

3. What is a gift that “feels right” for this course that you are able to give wholeheartedly?

你能全心全意地给予的这门课程中“感觉合适”的礼物是什么？

In contrast to my free offer, which ended up being a quick transaction that didn't help anyone, this version enabled people to get to know me on a deeper level and share a bit about themselves. It was an invitation to a deeper relationship. In the past few years, I've received nearly 500 submissions and the applications never cease to amaze me.

与我免费提供的那个快速交易不同，这个版本让人们能够更深入地了解我，并分享一些关于自己的事情。这是一个建立更深层次关系的邀请。在过去的几年里，我收到了近500份申请，这些申请让我惊叹不已。

One person from Vietnam said that the course costs more than their monthly salary. Impressed with my generosity, however, this person detailed a plan to repay me over the coming years. The response explained how the course would further the person's career and increase their salary. In such cases, I try to give them the course for free or in exchange for small gifts. Yet the amount of generosity that exists in the world always blows me away. All you have to do is open yourself up to this mode of being.

有一位来自越南的人说，这门课程的费用超过了他们的月薪。然而，对于我的慷慨，这个人详细说明了未来几年内偿还我的计划。回应中解释了这门课程将如何促进他们的职业发展并增加他们的薪水。在这种情况下，我会尽量免费提供课程，或者以小礼物作为交换。然而，世界上存在的慷慨总是让我感到震撼。你只需要敞开心扉，接受这种方式。



Seth Godin reminds us that the internet has “lowered the marginal cost of generosity” and I’m not sure most people realize the potential of this development. In the near future, people will have public digital wallets, and transmitting cash to someone we know or just met will be an ordinary event. This is why thinking about generosity as a skill and looking for opportunities to practice is important.

塞斯·戈丁提醒我们，互联网“降低了慷慨的边际成本”，我不确定大多数人是否意识到这一发展的潜力。在不久的将来，人们将拥有公共数字钱包，向我们认识或刚认识的人传输现金将成为一件普通的事情。这就是为什么将慷慨视为一种技能并寻找练习机会的重要性。

To understand the power of a gift, you must first open yourself up to receive. This is easier said than done. Opening yourself to generosity often means grappling with your own insecurities about not feeling responsible. When I first started writing publicly, I created a Patreon, which allows people to make micro-donations to support someone’s work. I announced this in the context of my plan to embrace the gift economy. Within hours of sending this first email, two friends, Jordan and Noel, immediately supported me for \$3 a month. Their support wasn’t going to secure my future, but the effects were profound. A feeling of gratitude filled my heart. Their small vote of confidence increased mine as well. I also felt like I needed to pay them back, not monetarily but with my courage to keep going on my path.

要理解礼物的力量，你必须首先敞开心扉去接受。这说起来容易做起来难。敞开自己接受慷慨往往意味着要面对自己对不負責任的不安全感。当我开始公开写作时，我创建了一个Patreon账户，让人们可以进行微小的捐赠来支持我的工作。我在计划中宣布了这一点，以拥抱礼物经济。在发送了第一封电子邮件几个小时后，两位朋友乔丹和诺埃尔立即每月以3美元的价格支持了我。他们的支持并不能确保我的未来，但影响深远。一种感激之情充满了我的心。他们对我的小小信任也增加了我的信心。我也觉得我需要回报他们，不是以金钱的方式，而是用我继续走自己道路的勇气。

Eisenstein also realized the significance of relationships within the gift economy:

艾森斯坦也意识到了礼物经济中关系的重要性

One thing that gifts do is that they create ties among people — which is different from a financial transaction. If I buy something from you, I give you the money and you give me the thing, and we have no more relationship after that. I don't owe you anything, you don't owe me anything. The transaction is finished. But if you give me something, that's different because now I kind of feel like I owe you one. It could be a feeling of obligation, or you could say it's a feeling of gratitude.

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礼物的作用之一是在人与人之间建立联系，这与金钱交易不同。如果我从你这里购买东西，我给你钱，你给我东西，之后我们就没有任何关系了。我不欠你任何东西，你也不欠我任何东西。交易结束了。但是如果你送我东西，那就不同了，因为现在我感觉我欠你一个人情。这可能是一种义务感，或者你可以说是一种感激之情。

The benefits of embracing the spirit of a gift economy are invisible to the people who ask me how I plan to monetize, scale, and grow my business. I'm not in the business of being a business. I'm embracing the work of building a life and all of the connections that will make that meaningful. 拥抱礼物经济的好处对于那些问我如何将我的业务货币化、扩展和发展的人来说是看不见的。我不是在经营一家企业。我正在努力建立一种有意义的生活，并与之相关的所有联系。

When you find the work you want to keep doing, what makes it meaningful is that you are drawn to do it for its own sake. Seth Godin says that each of us carries an artist inside for whom it is imperative that we find the work we want to keep doing. Godin claims that this work is about more than getting paid: "You cannot create a piece of art merely for money. Doing it as part of commerce so denudes art of wonder that it ceases to be art."[169](#)

当你找到想要继续从事的工作时，使其有意义的是你出于自身的原因

而被吸引去做它。塞思·高汀说，我们每个人内心都有一个艺术家，对于他们来说，找到想要继续从事的工作是至关重要的。高汀声称，这项工作不仅仅是为了赚钱：“你不能仅仅为了钱而创作一件艺术品。将其作为商业的一部分，使艺术失去了神奇感，它也就不再是艺术。”

Beyond appreciating the work you want to do, embracing the spirit of a gift economy is a way to transcend our modern default assumptions about our value in the world to allow wonder, creativity, and connection to emerge and plant seeds inside us and the people around us. Through experiments over the past five years, I've realized that not only is generosity a skill worth practicing, but it has compounding benefits over time.

超越对你想要做的工作的赞赏，拥抱礼物经济的精神是一种超越我们现代默认的关于自身价值的假设的方式，它允许奇迹、创造力和联系在我们内心和周围的人中萌芽和播种。通过过去五年的实验，我意识到慷慨不仅是一种值得练习的技能，而且随着时间的推移，它还具有复利效益。

I agree with what Eisenstein noted in his study of gift economies “it's the generous person who is the wealthiest.”<sup>170</sup> The world may not fully agree, but at least in my little corner of the world, I can pretend it's true and have a little more fun.

我同意艾森斯坦在他对礼物经济的研究中所指出的“最富有的是慷慨的人”。虽然世界可能不完全同意，但至少在我的小世界里，我可以假装这是真的，多一些乐趣。

## **Coming Alive Over Getting Ahead 活出自我胜过追求成功**

The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action passed by, as a loss of power.

真正的学者对每一个错过的行动机会都感到遗憾，因为他们认为这是力量的损失。

– *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

拉尔夫·沃尔多·爱默生

Everyone on the pathless path eventually needs to develop a strategy for approaching their journey. On the pathless path, once you open yourself up to possibilities and start experimenting with different ways of working and living, the biggest problem is the paradox of choice. There are too many interesting things worth doing and too many places to visit. To prioritize, developing a set of principles to help you make decisions is essential.

每个走在无路之路上的人最终都需要制定一种接近旅程的策略。在无路之路上，一旦你敞开心扉，开始尝试不同的工作和生活方式，最大的问题就是选择的悖论。有太多值得做的有趣事情和值得参观的地方。为了优先考虑，制定一套原则来帮助你做决策是必不可少的。

My personal principles are sprinkled throughout this book. These ideas, principles, questions, and mental models for how I think about everything from money to relationships to work are always evolving and shifting.

我的个人原则贯穿于这本书中。这些思想、原则、问题和心智模型，涵盖了我对从金钱到人际关系再到工作的一切思考，它们始终在不断演变和转变。

One of my most important is the mantra “coming alive over getting ahead.” I embraced this fundamental shift when I left my previous path, and the mantra reminds me that I don’t want to create another job for myself.

我最重要的信条之一是“活在当下胜过追求成功”。当我离开之前的道路时，我接受了这个根本性的转变，这个信条提醒我，我不想为自己创造另一份工作。

When I see an opportunity to make money, scale something, charge more money, or move faster, this phrase reminds me to explore all possibilities first, including doing nothing.

当我看到赚钱的机会、扩大规模、提高收费或加快速度时，这句话提醒我首先要探索所有可能性，包括什么都不做。

In April of 2020, the online consulting skills course I created 18 months earlier started making more money, driven by the widespread adoption of remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic. I had been tinkering with the course for a couple of years at that point but never expected it to be anything more than a minor side project. Yet for almost all of 2020, the course generated an average of \$5,000 per month, giving me a clear signal that it was more sustainable than I thought.

2020年4月，我在18个月前创建的在线咨询技能课程开始赚更多的钱，这是由于Covid-19大流行期间远程工作的广泛采用。在那时，我一直在调整这门课程，但从未预料到它会成为一个重要的副业项目。然而，在2020年的几乎整个时间里，这门课程每月平均创造5000美元的收入，给我一个明确的信号，它比我想象的更具可持续性。

As someone with more than ten years of experience in the business world, every bone in my body was telling me to think about how to grow it further. At the end of the year, I was invited to join an intensive course and coaching group for people generating consistent income through online courses. The leaders felt that I had an opportunity to make a lot more money by taking a different approach with my course. I agreed with their assessment, but something was holding me back.

作为一个在商业界有十多年经验的人，我全身上下都在告诉我要考虑如何进一步发展。年底时，我被邀请参加一个为通过在线课程持续产生收入的人提供密集培训和辅导的团体。领导们认为我通过采取不同

的方式来开设课程有机会赚更多的钱。我同意他们的评估，但有些事情让我犹豫不决。

Before committing, I spent a couple of days reflecting on the decision, asking myself, “What would I end up doing with the increased earnings?” I decided I would use the time to write. Then I realized that there was nothing stopping me from doing that at that moment. So I decided that instead of scaling my course, I would write this book.

在做出决定之前，我花了几天时间反思，问自己：“我会用增加的收入做什么？”我决定利用这段时间写作。然后我意识到，没有什么能阻止我此刻就开始写作。所以我决定不扩大我的课程，而是写这本书。

Coming alive over getting ahead.  
活出自己而不是追求成功。

After my initial frenzied efforts to land freelance projects, I reflexively said “no” to many paths to making more money. This meant more financial insecurity, but I was doing it because I didn’t want to fall into the trap of creating another “job” for myself. This ultimately paid off as the space I created enabled me to be creative, become more resilient, and find a positive way to engage with my work and the world.

在我最初疯狂地努力争取自由职业项目之后，我本能地拒绝了许多赚更多钱的机会。这意味着更多的经济不安全，但我这样做是因为我不想陷入为自己创造另一个“工作”的陷阱。最终，这种做法得到了回报，因为我创造的空间使我能够更有创造力，更有韧性，并找到了一种积极的方式来与我的工作和世界互动。

At many steps along the journey, when I see an opportunity to make more money or pursue something that would require me to scale beyond a

“company of one,” I pause. I spent ten years on a path where making numbers go up was always the way forward. Now I’m on a path where that is one option of many, and as I’ve experienced the beauty and aliveness of opening myself up to different modes of life such as creating, non-doing, and connecting with others, I now understand clearly the value of doing things outside of work.

在旅程的许多阶段，当我看到一个赚更多钱或追求需要我扩大规模的机会时，我会停下来。我花了十年的时间走上一条使数字不断增长的道路。现在我走上了一条有许多选择的道路，而且当我体验到打开自己去创造、不做事和与他人联系等不同生活方式的美丽和活力时，我现在清楚地明白了在工作之外做事的价值。

This is one thing I think people get wrong about keeping options open. On the default path, optionality can be a trap. This is because you are trapped within your own career narrative. On the pathless path, however, optionality can pay consistent dividends because you are not holding out for another job but leaving space for a little more life.

这是我认为人们在保持选择的问题上犯错的一件事。在默认路径上，选择性可能是一个陷阱。这是因为你被困在自己的职业故事中。然而，在没有路径的路径上，选择性可以带来持续的回报，因为你不是在等待另一份工作，而是给自己留出了一点更多的生活空间。

## Create Your Own Culture

## 创造你自己的文化

Why am I doing all this? Why does it matter so much?  
为什么我要做这一切？为什么它如此重要？

I have bold aspirations. They may not be legible, measurable, or understandable to you, but they give my life a direction and a purpose.

我有大胆的抱负。它们可能对你来说不可读、不可衡量或不可理解，但它们给予了我的生活方向和目标。

In sum, the goal of being on this path is:  
总之，走上这条道路的目标是：

**Being able to get to a state of being where I can spend almost all my time helping, supporting, and inspiring others to do great things with their lives.**

**能够达到一个状态，我可以几乎所有的时间都用来帮助、支持和激励他人在生活中做出伟大的事情。**

This is why *Tuesdays with Morrie* makes me cry every time I read it. Because I think Professor Morrie Schwartz pulled it off.  
这就是为什么每次我读《与摩里相伴的星期二》时都会哭的原因。因为我认为莫里·施瓦茨教授做到了。

When writer Mitch Albom saw his old professor on TV, he was shocked to see someone who had left a strong impression on him many years earlier but had drifted out of his life.

当作家米奇·阿尔博姆在电视上看到他的老教授时，他震惊地看到了一个多年前给他留下深刻印象但已经渐渐离开他生活的人。

Morrie was on NBC's program *Nightline* sharing the lessons he had learned since being diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, associated with a steady decline and eventual death. Albom wondered how sixteen years had passed since they had last seen each other. He knew he had to see Morrie as soon



as possible.

莫里在NBC的节目《夜线》上分享了自从被诊断出患有与逐渐衰退和最终死亡相关的路易·格里格病以来所学到的教训。阿尔伯姆想知道自从他们上次见面已经过去了十六年。他知道自己必须尽快去见莫里。

During those sixteen years, Albom had become a successful sportswriter and entertainer. He had a column at the Detroit Free Press, had written multiple books, and even made appearances on radio and television shows. Work was his life:

在那十六年里，阿尔伯姆成为了一名成功的体育记者和娱乐人士。他在底特律自由新闻报有专栏，写了多本书，甚至还在广播和电视节目中露面。工作是他的生活。

*I stopped renting. I started buying. I bought a house on a hill. I bought cars. I invested in stocks and built a portfolio. I was cranked to a fifth gear, and everything I did, I did on a deadline. I exercised like a demon. I drove my car at breakneck speed. I made more money than I had ever figured to see. I met a dark-haired woman named Janine who somehow loved me despite my schedule and the constant absences. We married after a seven-year courtship. I was back to work a week after the wedding. I told her – and myself – that we would one day start a family, something she wanted very much. But that day never came.*

我停止了租房。我开始购买。我买了一座山上的房子。我买了车。我投资股票，建立了一个投资组合。我像个疯子一样加速，我所做的一切都有截止日期。我像恶魔一样锻炼身体。我以极高的速度驾驶汽车。我赚了比我想象中多得多的钱。我遇到了一个名叫珍妮的黑发女人，尽管我总是忙于工作而常常不在家，她还是爱着我。我们经过七年的追求后结婚了。婚礼后的一周我就回到了工作岗位。我告诉她 - 也告诉自己 - 我们总有一天会组建一个家庭，这是她非常想要的。但那一天从未到来。

*Instead, I buried myself in accomplishments, because with accomplishments, I believed I could control things, I could squeeze in every last piece of happiness before I got sick and died, like my uncle before me, which I figured was my natural fate.*<sup>171</sup>

相反，我沉浸在成就中，因为我相信通过成就，我可以掌控一切，可以在我生病和死亡之前挤入每一丝幸福，就像我之前的叔叔一样，我认为这是我的自然命运。

Albom was succeeding on the default path. Yet seeing Morrie on the screen ignited a personal crisis. He reflected on his dreams of becoming a musician, joining the Peace Corps, and living in beautiful places: “I traded lots of dreams for a bigger paycheck, and I never even realized I was doing it.”<sup>172</sup>

阿尔伯姆在默认的道路上取得了成功。然而，看到莫里在屏幕上引发了个人危机。他反思了自己成为音乐家、加入和平队和生活在美丽地方的梦想：“我为了更高的薪水放弃了很多梦想，甚至都没有意识到我在这样做。”

Drawn perhaps by his own yearning to ask deeper questions about his life, or by a hunch that there was something more to find, or that his own emerging conversation with the world might lead to wisdom, he headed to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to talk with Morrie.

或许是被他自己对生活提出更深层次问题的渴望所吸引，或者是因为他有一种直觉，觉得还有更多东西等待发现，或者是因为他与世界的对话逐渐变得有智慧，他前往马萨诸塞州的剑桥与莫里谈话。

Albom planned one visit, but Morrie insisted he come back. Their conversations, held over a period of several weeks, would turn into a book called *Tuesdays with Morrie*, with millions of copies sold worldwide. The book is powerful not only because of Morrie’s passion for life, but also Albom’s own transformation. He and Morrie discussed the same challenges and questions that I dealt with over the past several years that I’ve explored

in this book.

阿尔伯姆计划进行一次访问，但莫里坚持让他回来。他们的对话持续了几个星期，最终成为了一本名为《星期二与莫里》的书，在全球销售了数百万册。这本书之所以有力量，不仅因为莫里对生活的热情，还因为阿尔伯姆自己的转变。他和莫里讨论了我过去几年中处理过的相同挑战和问题，这些问题也在我探索这本书中提到过。

In one significant quote, Morrie reflects on the difference between living and dying:

在一句重要的引语中，莫里反思了生与死之间的区别

“Dying,” Morrie suddenly said, “is only one thing to be sad over, Mitch. Living unhappily is something else. So many of the people who come to visit me are unhappy.” Why? “Well, for one thing, the culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves. We’re teaching the wrong things. And you have to be strong enough to say if the culture doesn’t work, don’t buy it. Create your own.”<sup>173</sup>

“死亡，”莫里突然说道，“只是一件让人伤心的事情，米奇。不快乐地活着是另一回事。来看望我的很多人都不快乐。”为什么？

“嗯，首先，我们的文化让人们对自己感到不好。我们教错了东西。你必须足够坚强，如果文化不起作用，就不要接受它。创造属于自己的文化。”

If the culture doesn’t work, don’t buy it. Create your own.

如果这种文化不起作用，就不要去接受它。创造属于自己的文化。

This is what the pathless path is all about. It’s having the courage to walk away from an identity that seems to make sense in the context of the default path in order to aspire towards things you don’t understand. It’s to experiment in new ways, to remix your own path, to develop your own personal definition of freedom, and to dare to have faith that it will be okay, no matter how much skepticism, insecurity, or fear you face.

这就是无路可寻的道路所代表的。它是勇敢地远离那个在默认路径中似乎合理的身份，去追求你不理解的事物。它是以新的方式进行实验，重新调整你自己的道路，发展你自己对自由的个人定义，并敢于相信，无论你面对多少怀疑、不安或恐惧，一切都会好起来。

Morrie pulled it off too. He created his own culture. A Brandeis professor on the surface with the spirit of the pathless path underneath. Here is how Albom described Morrie's world:

莫里也成功地做到了。他创造了自己的文化。在表面上是一位布兰迪斯大学教授，但内心却有着无路可寻的精神。以下是阿尔伯姆描述莫里世界的方式：

Morrie, true to these words, had developed his own culture – long before he got sick. Discussion groups, walks with friends, dancing to his music in the Harvard Square church. He started a project called Greenhouse, where poor people could receive mental health services. He read books to find new ideas for his classes, visited with colleagues, kept up with old students, wrote letters to distant friends. He took more time eating and looking at nature and wasted no time in front of TV sitcoms or “Movies of the Week.” He had created a cocoon of human activities – conversation, interaction, affection – and it filled his life like an overflowing soup bowl.<sup>174</sup>

莫里，忠于这些话，早在他生病之前就已经发展出了自己的文化。讨论小组，与朋友散步，在哈佛广场教堂跳舞。他发起了一个名为“温室”的项目，让贫困人群可以接受心理健康服务。他阅读书籍以寻找新的课堂思路，与同事交流，与老学生保持联系，给远方的朋友写信。他花更多时间用餐和欣赏大自然，不浪费时间看电视情景喜剧或“每周电影”。他创造了一个人类活动的茧，包括对话、互动、情感，它像一碗溢满的汤一样充实了他的生活。

Morrie lived life to its fullest. He didn't have any regrets when he lost the ability to sing, dance, swim, and walk. He told Albom, “I may be dying, but I am surrounded by loving, caring souls. How many people can say

that?”<sup>175</sup> These conversations affected Albom profoundly, convincing him to change his mindset completely:

莫里过着充实的生活。当他失去了唱歌、跳舞、游泳和行走的能力时，他没有任何遗憾。他告诉阿尔伯姆：“我可能正在临终，但我被爱和关怀的灵魂所包围。有多少人能说到这一点呢？”这些对话深深地影响了阿尔伯姆，使他完全改变了自己的思维方式。

And you know, you can either choose to just see the world as all gloom, but I think I learned from Morrie early on that, you know, he was dying from Lou Gehrig's disease and...he couldn't move, he couldn't – he had to be lifted out of a chair. He had to have someone wipe his rear end. And he was eminently upbeat and positive and still looking to his dying day to the – to the positivity of people and the goodness of people. And I thought if he could do that in a chair where he can't move...then certainly with health and so many blessings, I can certainly be optimistic and try to be inspiring to people, too.<sup>176</sup>

而且你知道，你可以选择只看到世界的黑暗面，但我从莫里早期就学到了，你知道，他正在死于渐冻症...他无法移动，他无法-他必须被人扶起来离开椅子。他必须有人擦拭他的屁股。尽管如此，他一直保持乐观和积极，一直到他临终的那一天，他仍然相信人们的积极性和善良。我想，如果他能在无法移动的椅子上做到这一点...那么我作为一个健康并拥有如此多祝福的人，我当然可以保持乐观，并试图激励他人。

After Morrie passed, Albom created more space in his life for activities not centered around work and dedicated himself to broadening the circle of people he sought to help. He started multiple charities to support disadvantaged children, volunteered with organizations that assist the homeless, and helped start an orphanage in Haiti. While he never had kids himself, in 2013 Albom adopted one of the residents of the orphanage in Haiti after she was diagnosed with brain cancer. She came to live with him and his wife in the United States. Although she lost her life, this pushed Albom to continue sharing the wisdom of the people who have come into his life and to be an inspiration to others.

莫里去世后，阿尔伯姆在生活中创造了更多的空间，不再以工作为中

心，致力于扩大他希望帮助的人群。他创办了多个慈善机构，支持贫困儿童，参与了帮助无家可归者的组织，并帮助在海地建立了一个孤儿院。虽然他自己从未有过孩子，但在2013年，阿尔伯姆在海地的孤儿院中收养了一名被诊断患有脑癌的居民。她来到美国与他和他的妻子一起生活。尽管她失去了生命，但这促使阿尔伯姆继续分享那些进入他生活的人的智慧，并成为他人的灵感。

He was following Morrie's advice: Create your own culture.  
他正在遵循莫里的建议：创造自己的文化。

Those words have stuck with me. When I was working as a consultant, I researched organizational culture. While often misunderstood in the business world, the concept of culture is pretty straightforward. It consists of an evolving set of assumptions that people use to make decisions. And the result of those actions is what shapes the culture.

这些话一直留在我心里。当我还是一名顾问时，我研究了组织文化。尽管在商业界经常被误解，但文化的概念其实很简单。它由人们用来做决策的一系列不断演变的假设组成。而这些行动的结果就是塑造了文化。

To create your own culture on the pathless path you must identify the assumptions you make in your approach to life. Here are some of my assumptions, many of which have been sprinkled throughout this book: 要在无路可循的道路上创造自己的文化，你必须识别你在生活方式上所做的假设。以下是我所做的一些假设，其中许多已经在本书中提到过：

- Many people are capable of more than they believe.  
许多人能力超出他们所相信的。

- Creativity is a real path to optimism, meaning, and connection.  
创造力是通往乐观、意义和联系的真正路径。
- We don't need permission to engage with the world and people around us.  
我们不需要获得许可来与世界和周围的人交往。
- We are all creative, and it takes some people longer to figure that out.  
我们都是有创造力的，只是有些人需要更长的时间来认识到这一点。
- Leisure, or active contemplation, is one of the most important things in life,  
休闲或积极思考是生活中最重要的事情之一
- There are many ways to make money, and when an obvious path emerges, there is often a more interesting path not showing itself.  
赚钱的方法有很多，当一个明显的道路出现时，往往会有一个更有趣的道路没有展现出来。
- Finding the work that matters to us is the real work of our lives.  
找到对我们来说有意义的工作是我们生活中真正的工作。

Could I be wrong about these things? Definitely. But the pathless path is not about being right. It's about finding ideas and principles worth committing to and seeing where you end up. Without doing this, you are accepting the logic of the default path.

我对这些事情可能错了吗？肯定可能。但无路之路并不在于是否正确。它在于找到值得承诺的思想和原则，并看看你最终会走到哪里。如果不这样做，你就接受了默认路径的逻辑。

Unfortunately, embracing the pathless path means accepting that you might not know what you are doing and you might look like a fool. This is exactly how I felt in those first few months. But luckily many people have gone before me. I was guided by people like Morrie and Mitch Albom, and others, like Rebecca Solnit, who showed me that getting lost was simply the understanding that “the world has become larger than your knowledge of it.”<sup>177</sup>

不幸的是，拥抱无路之路意味着接受你可能不知道自己在做什么，可

能会显得愚蠢。在最初的几个月里，我就是这样感觉的。但幸运的是，有很多人在我之前走过这条路。我得到了像莫里和米奇·阿尔博姆这样的人的指导，还有像丽贝卡·索尔尼特这样的人，他们告诉我迷失只是理解到“世界已经超出了你对它的了解”。

The pathless path is about opening yourself up to this emergence. It's about growing up and letting go. It's about realizing that if I claim to care about something, I need to be willing to act, and also be willing to be wrong. I must let go of my ego and my need to be seen as a “successful” person. I still feel lost in the sense that I don't know what form my path will take in the future and what publishing this book means for my life. Those thoughts are scary and exciting.

无路之路是关于向这种出现敞开自己。它是关于成长和放手。它是关于意识到如果我声称关心某事，我需要愿意行动，也需要愿意犯错。我必须放下我的自我和我被视为“成功”人的需求。我仍然感到迷失，因为我不知道我的道路将来会采取什么形式，出版这本书对我的生活意味着什么。这些想法既可怕又令人兴奋。

I wouldn't have it any other way.  
我不会有其他选择。

My life won't look exactly like Morrie's, but I hope that I can channel the spirit of his wisdom. It's rare to find someone at the end of their life that is still so energized and excited about life. I hope I can make it there in that state too.

我的生活不会完全像莫里的，但我希望能传达他智慧的精神。很少能找到一个在生命尽头仍然如此充满活力和对生活充满激情的人。我希望我也能以那种状态走到那里。



But the real question is this – are you coming with me?  
但真正的问题是 - 你会跟我一起来吗？

# Go Find Out 去找出来

I didn't write this book to provide you with a set of how-to instructions for embracing the pathless path. Instead, I want to inspire you to dream a little bit bigger, add some nuance to how you think about life decisions, and give you models and ideas that might enable you to embrace the spirit of the pathless path.

我写这本书不是为了给你提供一套如何接纳无路之路的指导。相反，我希望激发你更大的梦想，为你的生活决策增添一些细微差别，并给你一些模型和思想，可能让你能够拥抱无路之路的精神。

After reading this book, you should no longer be able to look at your current path and think, “this is definitely the only way.” Instead, I hope you are able to shift to a place where you know that you have more freedom than you think, and your path can become something you choose again every day.

阅读完这本书后，你应该不再只能看着你当前的道路并想着，“这绝对是唯一的方式。”相反，我希望你能够转变到一个地方，你知道你拥有比你想象的更多的自由，你的道路可以再次成为你每天选择的东西。

We are living in a time when it's possible for more and more people to design a life in which they can thrive. Yet many look at that possibility and say, “no thanks,” because it means discomfort, uncertainty, and a higher risk of failure. I shared my story because I want to show you that even though you may experience all of those things on the pathless path, the journey can still be worth it.

我们生活在一个越来越多人可以设计一个能够茁壮成长的生活的时代。然而，许多人看到这种可能性却说：“不，谢谢”，因为这意味着不适、不确定性和更高的失败风险。我分享我的故事是因为我想向你展示，即使你在没有路径的道路上经历所有这些，旅程仍然是值得的。

And it might be the only sensible option left.  
这可能是唯一明智的选择。

We invent the stories we use to guide our lives, and these stories will continue to evolve. Due to many factors, many of our current cultural scripts and stories have calcified over several generations and have stopped working as reliably as they have in the past. This has left large numbers of people around the world confused and frustrated with their relationship to work.

我们创造了用来指导生活的故事，而这些故事将继续演变。由于许多因素，我们当前的许多文化脚本和故事已经在几代人中变得僵化，并且不再像过去那样可靠。这导致全球许多人对工作的关系感到困惑和沮丧。

In the first year of leaving my job, everything I thought I knew about the world crumbled as though it had always been an obvious illusion. This was hard to deal with, but I had a lot of support from my friends Stephen Warley and Nita Baum, who had been on their own pathless paths for many years. I often asked them, “Is everyone blind to this, or am I the crazy one?” The answer, I realized, was a bit of both. You must be a little crazy to go against the grain of what most people think. Yet we should remind ourselves that these “experiments in living” as John Stuart Mill called them, are vital to pushing culture forward.

在离职的第一年，我所认为的关于世界的一切都像显而易见的幻觉一

样崩塌了。这很难处理，但我得到了我的朋友斯蒂芬·沃利和妮塔·鲍姆的大力支持，他们已经在他们自己的无路可走的道路上走了很多年。我经常问他们：“是每个人都对此视而不见，还是只有我是疯子？”我意识到，答案有点两者兼而有之。要违背大多数人的想法，你必须有点疯狂。然而，我们应该提醒自己，正如约翰·斯图尔特·密尔所说的，“生活的实验”对推动文化进步至关重要。

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people around the world were forced to work remotely. Suddenly what I had been writing about for years became poignant for many people. Sitting at home, knocked out of their daily rhythms, people confessed to me that they were shocked at how much of their identity was wrapped up in work and how lost they had become in their own lives. They wanted to find a new way forward.

在新冠疫情大流行期间，全球许多人被迫远程工作。突然间，我多年来所写的内容对许多人来说变得切中要害。坐在家里，被打乱了日常节奏，人们向我坦白说，他们对自己的身份有多么依赖于工作，以及他们在自己的生活中变得多么迷失。他们希望找到一种新的前进方式。

This book is my proposal for a new way forward.  
这本书是我对一种新的前进方式的提议。

Which means things are in your hands now. To help you on your journey, I've put together a list of ten things. This is both a summary of many of the lessons from this book as well as a challenge for you as you embrace the spirit of the pathless path.

这意味着现在一切都掌握在你手中。为了帮助你在旅途中，我整理了一个十个事项的清单。这既是对本书许多教训的总结，也是对你在拥抱无路之路精神时的挑战。

First, **question the default**. For many years, I stuck with a story about how I thought my life should go. I assumed there was only one option for structuring my life, around full-time work. I tried to be a “good egg” but ultimately, found myself unhappy with the direction my life was headed. I stumbled into a pathless path and slowly realized that a rigid version of the default path that existed in my mind was only one option of many.

首先，质疑默认选择。多年来，我一直坚持着一个关于我认为生活应该如何进行的故事。我假设只有一种选择来构建我的生活，那就是全职工作。我试图成为一个“好人”，但最终发现自己对生活的方向感到不满意。我偶然走上了一条没有路径的道路，并慢慢意识到，在我心中存在的那种僵化的默认路径只是众多选择中的一种。

Second, **reflect**. When I started reflecting on my true self, I was able to start building a life around the things I valued. Most of us run on autopilot through life but we can break out of this mode by considering even the simplest reflection exercises. For me creating a daily reminder of four priorities that mattered to me and revisiting the leadership principles I aspired to in grad school helped me see that the gap between what I claimed to care about and how I was living was larger than I wanted. Through reflection, I was able to see that there was a larger “conversation” I was meant to have with the world.

其次，反思。当我开始反思自己的真实面貌时，我能够开始围绕我所重视的事物建立生活。我们大多数人都在生活中自动驾驶，但我们可以通过考虑即使是最简单的反思练习来摆脱这种模式。对我来说，每天创建一个提醒我四个重要事项，并重新审视我在研究生院所追求的领导原则，帮助我看到我所声称关心的事物与我实际生活之间的差距比我想的要大。通过反思，我能够看到我与世界之间有一个更大的“对话”等待展开。

Third, **figure out what you have to offer**. In our desire to be successful, we forget to notice how we are having an impact on others. One of the easiest ways to begin this exploration is to send a message to a few close friends, asking them, “when have you seen me at my best self?” Their responses may surprise you and, perhaps, delight you. We all have stories about who we think we are and why we must be that way but often, others have a better perspective on what makes us stand out.

第三，弄清楚你能提供什么。在我们渴望成功的过程中，我们忽略了自己对他人的影响。开始探索的最简单方法之一是给几个亲密的朋友发送一条信息，询问他们：“你们何时见过我最好的一面？”他们的回答可能会让你感到惊讶，甚至让你高兴。我们都有关于自己是谁以及为什么必须成为那样的故事，但往往别人对我们的突出之处有更好的观点。

Fourth, **pause and disconnect**. To improve your relationship with work, I believe it is necessary to disconnect. Unfortunately, a typical one or two-week vacation isn’t going to cut it. I believe that the minimum effective dose is at least a month away from work. While this may seem impossible or terrifying, this intervention has a near-universal approval rating and can have a profound effect on your confidence about the future. If a month is scary, I suggest blocking off a random Tuesday afternoon, or another day in the workweek. Don’t tell anyone what you are doing and go wander. Go for a long walk, a bike ride, or sit by a river. Pay attention to the feelings that come up and see what they are telling you.

第四，暂停并断开连接。为了改善与工作的关系，我认为断开连接是必要的。不幸的是，一两周的典型假期是不够的。我认为最小有效剂量是至少一个月远离工作。虽然这可能看起来不可能或可怕，但这种干预几乎普遍获得认可，并且对你对未来的信心有深远影响。如果一个月让人害怕，我建议在一个随机的周二下午或工作日的另一天安排时间。不要告诉任何人你在做什么，去漫步。去散步，骑自行车，或者坐在河边。注意一下涌上心头的感受，看看它们在告诉你什么。

Fifth, **go make a friend.** Venture out of your existing bubble and reach out to someone who has taken an interesting path. Ask them how they got started, what motivates them, and how they think about navigating their life. Most people are much more enthusiastic about sharing what they've learned in their lives than we expect. To embrace the pathless path, you need friends and all you need at the start is one person. Over time, designing your work in a way that will help you naturally “find the others,” can be one of the most rewarding things of being on the pathless path and one of the most valuable things you can do in life.

第五，去交个朋友。走出你现有的圈子，接触一些走过有趣道路的人。问问他们是如何开始的，是什么激励着他们，以及他们如何思考人生的航行。大多数人对分享他们在生活中学到的东西比我们预期的要热情得多。要拥抱无路可循的道路，你需要朋友，而一开始你只需要一个人。随着时间的推移，设计你的工作方式，让它能够自然地“找到其他人”，可能是在无路可循的道路上最有回报的事情之一，也是你在生活中能做的最有价值的事情之一。

Sixth, **go make something.** Remember, you are creative! Almost everyone has a desire to create something and to put their energy into the world in a positive way. It's just that the legacy of the default path has convinced people that they need permission. But you know this is not true anymore. Find a way to create. Host a dinner party, organize a volunteer event, write a blog post, start journaling in the morning, paint a picture, or host a cooking class for your friends. It doesn't matter what you do, but the sooner you figure out a way to create and share with the world, the faster you'll be able to move closer to finding the activities you want to continue doing throughout your life.

第六，去创造一些东西。记住，你是有创造力的！几乎每个人都有创造某些东西并以积极的方式将他们的能量投入世界的愿望。只是默认路径的遗产让人们相信他们需要得到许可。但你知道这不再是真的。找到一种创造的方式。举办一次晚宴，组织一次志愿者活动，写一篇博客文章，早上开始写日记，画一幅画，或者为朋友们举办一堂烹饪课。你做什么并不重要，但你越早找到一种创造和与世界分享的方式，你就越能更快地接近找到你想要在一生中继续做的活动。

Seventh, **give generously**. Generosity is not only an amount of money, it is a skill we need to practice. It is a way of orienting towards the world that will help you start to understand your own definition of “enough,” grapple with your hidden money scripts, and enable you to decouple your belief that security and money are perfectly linked. You don’t need to embrace the gift economy completely. Instead, you just need to pay attention and start making offers to share or give when the opportunity emerges. If you don’t have an idea, I’ll give you an easy way out: you can gift this book to someone that might enjoy it. Ultimately giving is a superpower on the pathless path and will enable you to transcend feelings of separateness and connect more deeply to the people around you.

第七点，慷慨给予。慷慨不仅仅是一笔钱的数量，它是一种我们需要实践的技能。这是一种面向世界的方式，将帮助你开始理解自己对“足够”的定义，与你隐藏的金钱信念进行斗争，并使你能够解开安全和金钱完美关联的信念。你不需要完全接受礼物经济。相反，你只需要注意并在机会出现时开始提供分享或给予的机会。如果你没有主意，我可以给你一个简单的出路：你可以把这本书送给可能会喜欢它的人。最终，给予是一种超能力，它将使你超越分离感，更深入地与周围的人联系起来。

Eighth, **experiment**. The default path does not leave much space for experimenting with different ways of structuring your life. On the pathless path, you can prototype a change, work in different ways, take extended breaks, live in different countries, test your money beliefs, embrace unique fixed-point goals, and create things you never thought were possible. Remember, the goal is not to get rich but always to figure out what to do next.

第八，实验。默认路径并不留下太多空间来尝试不同的生活结构方式。在无路径的路径上，你可以尝试改变，以不同的方式工作，休息更长时间，居住在不同的国家，测试你对金钱的信念，接受独特的固定目标，并创造出你从未想过的事物。记住，目标不是变得富有，而是始终找到下一步该做什么。

Ninth, **commit**. Many people falsely think that escaping work is something worth aiming towards. I thought this at first but realized I had only thought about work as the things you do within a job. What I really wanted was the opportunity to feel useful and to do things that challenged me to grow. This is why I believe that the “real work of your life” is searching for the things you want to commit to and that make your life meaningful. Once you find them, you can dedicate your time to creating the environment to make those things happen.

第九点，承诺。许多人错误地认为逃避工作是值得追求的事情。起初我也这样认为，但后来意识到我只是把工作看作是在工作中做的事情。我真正想要的是有机会感到有用，并做一些能够挑战我成长的事情。这就是为什么我相信“你生命中真正的工作”是寻找你想要承诺并使你的生活有意义的事情。一旦你找到它们，你可以把时间投入到创造环境来实现这些事情。

Finally, **be patient**. In a famous letter to his friend Hume, Hunter S. Thompson argued that searching for the right path in life was important, even if it required many attempts. He told Hume that if he tried eight different paths and failed, that he must keep searching: “you must find a ninth path.”<sup>178</sup> Embracing the pathless path can be a slow and frustrating journey, one that happens at a different speed for everyone. It took me years to build up the courage to quit my job and then several more years to find a mix of work, people, and a way of orienting in the world that felt like it was a path I was meant to be on. Don’t rush things. Remember: nothing good gets away, as long as you create the space to let it emerge.

最后，要有耐心。亨特·S·汤普森在给他的朋友休谟的一封著名信中认为，在生活中寻找正确的道路是重要的，即使需要尝试很多次也是如此。他告诉休谟，如果他尝试了八条不同的道路并失败了，他必须继续寻找：“你必须找到第九条道路。”接受无路可寻的道路可能是一段缓慢而令人沮丧的旅程，每个人的速度都不同。我花了多年的时间建立勇气辞去工作，然后又花了几年时间找到一种工作、人际关系和在



世界中定位的方式，感觉这是我应该走的道路。不要急于求成。记住：只要你创造出让它出现的空间，没有什么好东西会逃走。

The only thing left to do? Go and see what might happen if you dare to seek out, as the Poet Mary Oliver has called your “one wild and precious life.”[179](#)  
唯一剩下的事情是什么？去看看如果你敢追寻，就像诗人玛丽·奥利弗所说的那样，你的“一生中的狂野而珍贵的事物”会发生什么。

I hope you do because I’m always looking for more friends to join me along the way.

我希望你能加入，因为我一直在寻找更多的朋友与我一同前行。

# Acknowledgements

## 致谢

Writing this book has been a good opportunity to reflect on my life. One of the things that is clear out is how lucky I've been. I've been surrounded by so many good influences that it seems a bit unfair.

写这本书是一个很好的机会来反思我的生活。其中一件清楚的事情是我有多么幸运。我被那么多好的影响所包围，这似乎有点不公平。

I owe the biggest thanks to my parents, Nancy and Bob, for giving me a childhood where I was loved and encouraged. This enabled me to become a confident adult, find success on the default path, and eventually have the courage to carve my own. In addition, I need to thank almost everyone in my extended family. I grew up surrounded by loving siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins, on both sides of my family, all of which have made silent appearances in this book through their inspiration on my life.

我最感谢的是我的父母南希和鲍勃，他们给了我一个充满爱和鼓励的童年。这使我成为了一个自信的成年人，在默认的道路上取得了成功，并最终有勇气开创自己的道路。此外，我还需要感谢我所有的亲戚。我在一个充满爱的兄弟姐妹、姑姑舅舅、祖父母和表兄弟姐妹的环境中长大，他们都通过对我的生活的启发在这本书中默默地出现过。

Next, I want to thank my wife, Angie. She's been my biggest supporter since we've met. While she's not literally in every chapter of this book, her spirit flows throughout the entire thing. When I told her about the "pathless path" idea from David Whyte's book early on in our relationship she loved it too. When we got married she created a journal for us with the words "The Pathless Path" on the cover as something we could use to reflect on

our travels and life. She hates taking credit for anything but meeting her was a big impetus for me being able to shift away from a state of scarcity, wanting to escape life and work, and towards one where I wanted to commit more deeply to building an online business, writing, and owning my own unique path (with her, of course).

接下来，我想感谢我的妻子安吉。自从我们相识以来，她一直是我最大的支持者。虽然她并不真正出现在这本书的每一章中，但她的精神贯穿整个故事。当我早在我们的关系初期告诉她关于大卫·怀特的书中“无路之路”理念时，她也很喜欢。当我们结婚时，她为我们创建了一本日记，封面上写着“无路之路”，作为我们反思旅行和生活的工具。她不喜欢为任何事情接受赞誉，但与她相识对我能够从一种匮乏状态、想要逃避生活和工作的状态转变为更深入地致力于建立在线业务、写作和拥有自己独特道路的状态起到了重要的推动作用（当然，与她一起）。

I've been lucky to have had many great mentors in school and at work. In college, Dr. Lease-Butts was one of the first, challenging me to do things that were hard. Even though I took her classes as part of my “hoop-jumping” attempts to get “easy A's,” I probably learned more about my potential in those classes than any others. In consulting, I was lucky to have several great managers. Christine, Omeed, Peter, and Yvonne were managers that treated me as a person first, worker second, while still pushing me to grow.

我在学校和工作中有很多优秀的导师，真是幸运。在大学里，利斯-巴茨博士是其中之一，她挑战我去做一些困难的事情。尽管我上她的课只是为了轻松拿高分，但我可能在那些课程中学到了更多关于我的潜力。在咨询工作中，我很幸运有几位优秀的经理。克里斯汀、奥米德、彼得和伊冯是那些把我当作人而不是工人的经理，同时还推动我成长的人。

After quitting my job, I somehow attracted a small group of enthusiastic supporters. Aunt Debbie, Noel, Cam, Jordan, and Jeremy all had an absurd

level of belief in my ability to figure things out and always encouraged me to “keep going.” Nita, Stephen, and Jonny were my greatest friends and co-conspirators who were deeply on their own pathless paths. I’m grateful for their wisdom, friendship, and companionship. I’m also especially thankful that Jonny handed me that David Whyte book in the summer of 2018. It changed my life and led to this book.

辞去工作后，我不知怎么地吸引了一小群热情的支持者。黛比阿姨、诺埃尔、卡姆、乔丹和杰里米都对我解决问题的能力有着荒谬的信任，并且总是鼓励我“继续前进”。尼塔、斯蒂芬和乔尼是我最好的朋友和同谋者，他们都在各自的无路可循的道路上深入探索。我对他们的智慧、友谊和陪伴心怀感激。我也特别感谢乔尼在2018年夏天给我那本大卫·怀特的书。它改变了我的生活，也引导我写下了这本书。

Along the way, I’ve been inspired by many people on their own pathless paths, and have learned many things from fellow pathless path participants like Andrew, Michael, Kyle, Tom, Robbie, Jacqueline, Venkatesh, Lydia, Khe, Oshan, Jay, Erv, Matthew, Darren, Travis, Howard, Nemo, Janet, Damien, and Kris not to mention many others. I also want to thank Amy McMillen for writing about her own experiences after leaving her job in *Reclaiming Control*. The existence of her book convinced me that I needed to share my own journey too.

一路上，我受到了许多人的启发，他们都在自己的无路可走之路上前行，我也从像安德鲁、迈克尔、凯尔、汤姆、罗比、杰奎琳、文卡特什、莉迪娅、凯、奥尚、杰伊、厄尔、马修、达伦、特拉维斯、霍华德、尼莫、珍妮特、达米安和克里斯等无路可走之路的同伴身上学到了很多，更不用说其他许多人了。我还要感谢艾米·麦克米伦在《重新掌控》一书中写下了她离职后的经历。她的书的存在让我相信我也需要分享自己的旅程。

When I started this book, I thought I was a decent writer. Thirteen months later, I now sense I’m still just getting started. John Adamus, Ranjit Saimbi, Paula Trucks-Pape, and Sasha Chapin all helped improve my writing in

substantially different but equally powerful ways. In addition, I'd love to thank Thomas Hollands, Stephen Laskowski, Valerie Zhang, Maria Mercedes Otero, Oshan Jarow, and Antoine Buteau for reading various drafts of my book and encouraging me to keep going every step of the way. Finally, thank you to Jon, Lauren, Zakk, and Sadie for offering great vibes and hospitality during the final intensive week of editing at Creator Cabins. 当我开始写这本书的时候，我以为自己是一个不错的作家。十三个月后，我现在感觉自己还只是刚刚开始。John Adamus、Ranjit Saimbi、Paula Trucks-Pape和Sasha Chapin以截然不同但同样有力的方式帮助我改善了写作。此外，我还要感谢Thomas Hollands、Stephen Laskowski、Valerie Zhang、Maria Mercedes Otero、Oshan Jarow和Antoine Buteau阅读了我书的各个版本，并在每一步鼓励我继续前进。最后，感谢Jon、Lauren、Zakk和Sadie在最后一周的编辑工作中提供了良好的氛围和款待。

# Notes

## 笔记

## Introduction

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## **Work, Work, Work**

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## About the Author

## 关于作者

Paul Millerd is an independent writer, freelancer, coach, and digital creator. He has written online for many years and has built a growing audience of curious humans from around the world. He spent several years working in strategy consulting before deciding to walk away and embrace a pathless

path. He is fascinated about how our relationship to work is shifting and how more people can live lives where they can thrive.

保罗·米勒德是一位独立作家、自由职业者、教练和数字创作者。多年来，他在网上写作，并吸引了来自世界各地的好奇读者。在决定离开并拥抱一条无路之路之前，他在战略咨询领域工作了几年。他对我们与工作的关系如何转变以及更多人如何过上充实的生活感到着迷。

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