

PERMISSION GRANTED

A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a light blue sleeveless dress, is captured in a joyful spin on a sandy beach. Her hair and dress are in motion, suggesting a breeze. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean. In the foreground, there are some beach plants and a wooden post. The overall mood is bright and happy.

Companion
Workbook

JUDITH PRATT-JEFFERIES

A Companion Workbook for

Permission Granted

*How to Find and Follow a Path to a Life True to
Your Self*

Judith Pratt-Jefferies

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How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is a companion guide to the book, **PERMISSION GRANTED: How to Find and Follow a Path to a Life True to Your Self.**

Use it as a guide to help you remember who you really are, how to identify the life you would like to be living, and design and plan a way to have it all. It is highly recommended that you read the book first and benefit by the real life story of how one woman did just that.

This workbook is divided into sections of exercises for you to do. Each section will build on the one before. To get maximum benefit from the exercises, do not skip sections or do out of sequence. Does this sound like a huge project? Yes, it is, but it will be the most important one you ever assign yourself. Let your creative juices flow, have fun, allow your imagination to prompt your most joyful thoughts, and let the vision you design be the blueprint for the best possible life you can have.

Be generous with yourself. Do not let the provided spaces for writing responses limit what you want to express. Keep extra paper or a plain lined notebook at hand for additional thoughts and any sketches you may want to do.

Section One

Who Are YOU?

Tap into your memories. For most people, early memories only go back to about age 3 to 5. If a memory can be tapped in these early years, it can give a glimpse of what one started out being relative to what one became in later years.

Go back to your first memories. What incidents come clearly into focus when you think of your early years, at about 4 or 5 years old? Describe these, using your memories of how things looked, what you were feeling, at the time.

Do you have a photo of yourself at this same age? Paste the photo here. Look at it and write down what you see. Can you, in your mind's eye, see yourself moving? Describe how you moved. Can you suggest in your mind how you sounded then? Does this tell you something about your personality then?

Take an imaginary walk with yourself as a child and try to hear what you would have been saying, how did your voice sound, how were you moving?

Think of your early teenage years a few years later, as a pre-teen, or in early teen age years? Write about the first vivid image that comes to mind.

Write about 2 other incidents or images that come to mind.

If you have a photo of yourself at this age, paste it here. Describe what you see as if you were describing someone else.

Can you remember anyone talking about how you were in these years? Was it something your parents or siblings said or another person in your life, a favourite aunt, a teacher?

Look at the descriptions on the 2 previous pages. What differences do you see? Were you living truly to the self of the earliest child, or were you meeting the expectations of others?

Go through the same process with two or three other time landmarks in your life. Stop at who you are right now.

1)

2)

3)

Look at the final description of how you are now. Is the true self hidden from immediate view? Do you want to be more like the true self of early years?

What are the predominate characteristics that you want to revive or recapture? It's kind of like asking, "Who is the ME I am missing?"

Write a letter to that person telling why you are missing that ME and why you want to be that ME again.

Section Two

Who Sets the RULES?

Until a child reaches school age rules for life are learned from their parents or other caregivers. During the next stage of influence; children learn more rules from their teachers, and from their peers. As the years go by expectations of others continue to define rules for an individual's behaviour. The society a person is part of also exerts pressures to behave in certain ways and to conform to a perceived norm.

In this section you will examine the rules that have dominated your life and where they came from.

Answer the following questions to help identify what rules were the most significant in directing your early life and then in the following years:

Who were the primary rule makers in your early life?

How did you handle following the rules then?

At what point did you start to question rules? When you did, was it because of your realization that rules were not always valid, especially when they seemed to go against your own desires that seemed reasonable wishes? Describe an incident that comes to mind.

Can you now understand that there were times when you were reaching out for some independent thought? And did you allow yourself to have those thoughts?

Did you begin to question the validity of the rules society seemed to require you to follow? Describe the incident, or something you read, or a person you met which sparked a new way of thinking about rules.

Do you always feel you have to put the brakes on when you feel a creative spark?
Awareness is the first step in any change one wants to make in life. Knowing how your inner censor affects your decisions can help you control the effect of your inner rules.

Section Three

Mindset

Mindset is a powerful influence on how we make our choices in life. What is it? How does it get set and does it change? What can influence it to change?

A person who has a fixed mindset grows in mental perspective until a certain point, and then maintains this perspective without further growth. He or she is said to have a closed mind about new ideas and learning. A person who has a growth mindset continues to grow in mental perspective and is said to have an open mind about new ideas and learning.

Mindset is a simple idea discovered by Carol Dweck, world-renowned Stanford University psychologist. She wrote the book *Mindset* as a result of her decades of research on achievement and success.

It stands to reason that a person with a growth mindset has opportunity to gain quality and success in their life, while having a mindset that is fixed will prevent a person from having these opportunities. All of us have fixed mindsets about some things and growth mindsets about others. How we are in that regard depends on our experience and whether learning new ideas was encouraged by our caregivers or not, and also on the models we have in our lives as we grow. Mindset can also change depending on our life experiences.

Are you a learner still, or have you become stuck in your perspectives about life? How can you jumpstart a change in this?

How open are you to change? Here are some simple suggestions to help you reflect on this question. They also might jumpstart a new growth curve in your mindset.

Think about the daily routines you have and pick one or two to consider altering. Is this difficult? Why?

Take a different route on your daily walk, if you do this kind of exercise. What new observations do you make?

Are you studying something new? Are you changing anything in your life because of what you are learning?

Really being open to change will help your creative mind draw the picture of the life you want in the next section.

Section Four

Creating a Picture, a Design

Now it is time to design the life you want, in which you can be the real YOU. What does your desired life look like? You will need all your imagination skills here. Close your eyes. Let your imagination fly free and try to see in your mind's eye the environment of your dreams. Let it scroll in your mind's eye as a video that you are watching.

Write what you are seeing. Do not second guess yourself as you go along. Write freely, all the while imagining where you would be, the people you would be with, the climate, the topography, the smells, the sounds, how you would feel.

Let the following questions guide you in your writing:

What do you see around you? Include the landscape, the colours, the shapes of things, and the topography.

How does it feel? Include the temperature, the presence or absence of wind or breeze, is the air soft or hard?

How do things smell? Identify whether there are pleasant aromas, industrial odours, food smells, clean air smells, animal smells.

What do you hear? Include bird songs, frog chirps, traffic hums, ocean roars, lake ripples, children playing, singing, and laughing, animal sounds, and machine noises.

Who do you see around you? Describe the kind of people they are. Include partner, close family, friends, and neighbours.

What is a typical day for you? You can describe a work day, then a leisure day. Are they different? Or are they the same? Who is there? Are you moving from place to place? How?

Try to write in a few sentences a summary of how your desired life would be. In the next section you will set some priorities and the picture will come into focus more clearly.

Section Five

Drafting a Plan

So how do you get from dream to reality? In Section Four you documented a lot of data which can provide you with all the elements to describe the life you really want to have. Now it is time to establish priorities within those elements and move on to actually design plans to accomplish the changes you want and need to make in your life.

Carefully examine your Vision of the Life You Want and Your Perfect Day. See if you can set some priorities.

For example, if you have identified that your desired life needs to take place in another environment, and if it is more important on your list than anything else, then that is the first priority for your planning thoughts.

Review your data and prioritize the elements in order of highest to lowest, # 1 being the most desired.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Planning Tools

Mind Mapping

A mind map is a tool to help you capture all the ideas you can think of to accomplish a goal, solve a problem, and/or discover creative directions to take.

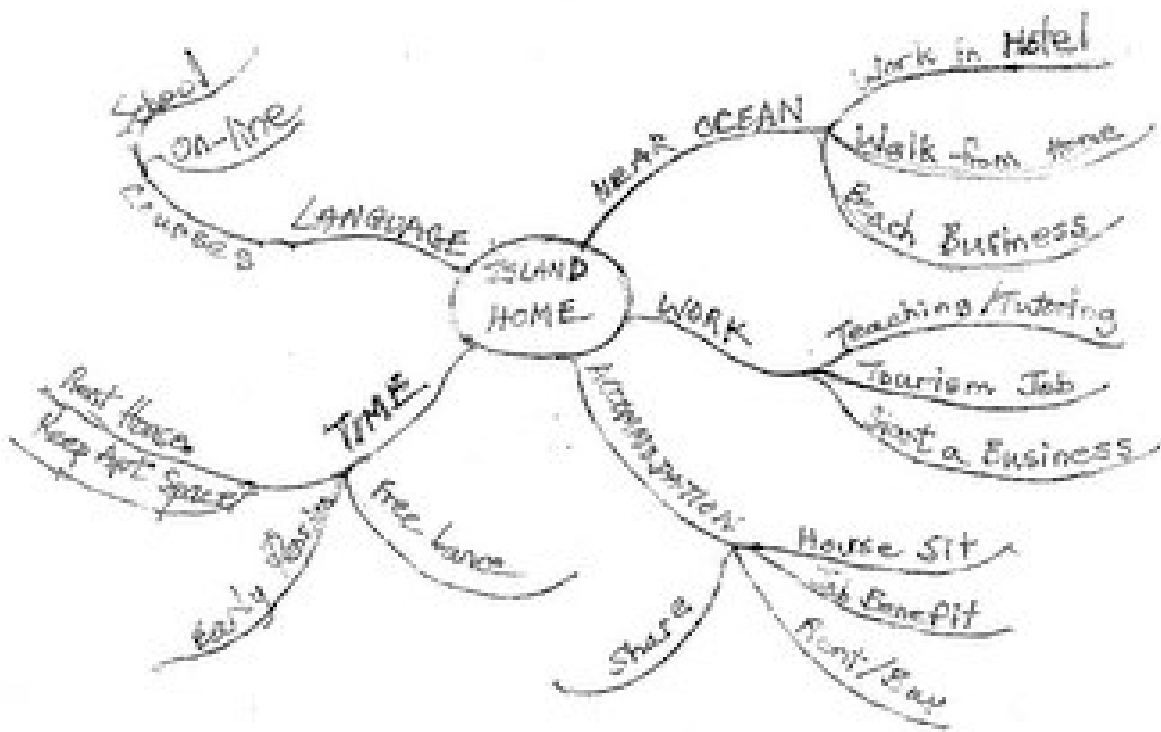
It is best to work freely on a large space, paper or other canvas, even a wall with post it notes as your tools. Never allow your censor to limit what you choose to put on the map. All ideas are worthy of consideration. No matter how wild they might seem, crazy ideas can lead to other ideas and creatively guide you in the process.

Here are two examples:



Mind map by Tony Buzan

For more how to information go to: www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping

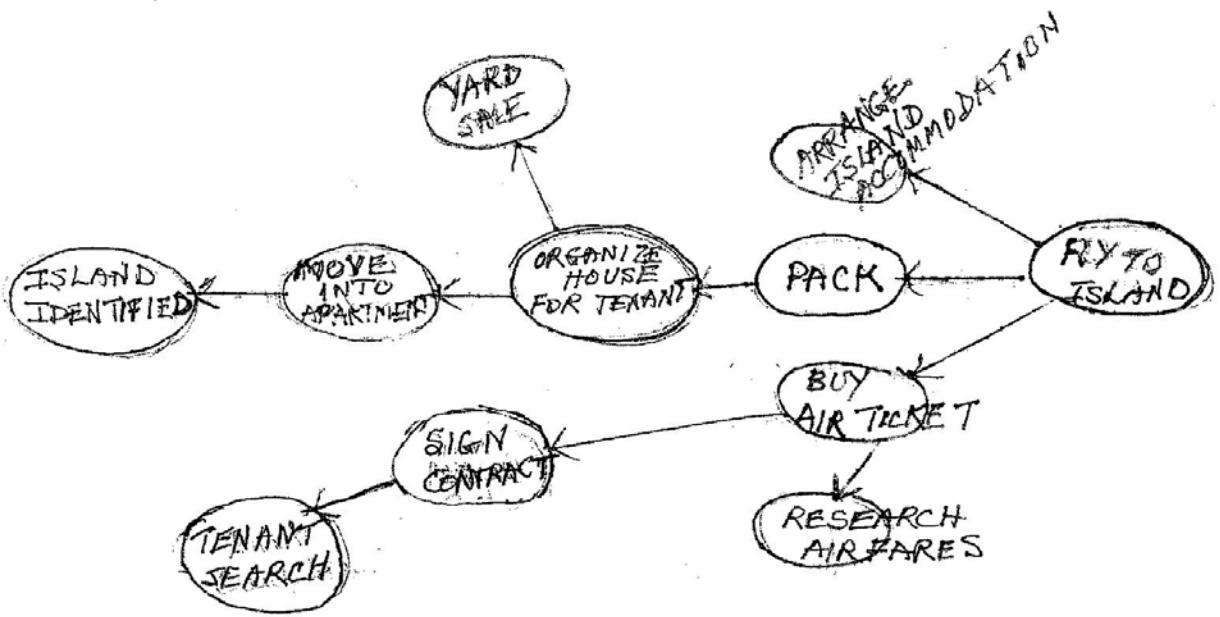


Flow Diagrams

A Backwards Flow Diagram is another tool to set up a plan to move toward your goals which have been identified from the ideas you have generated. Start with a goal and work backwards to determine what steps you need to take to reach that goal.

For example: The location goal must be in a warm climate, preferably a Caribbean island. The needed activity just before this is to get on a plane, and before that, buy a ticket, and before that, pack, and before that, decide what to take. Before that, rent the house, and before that, find a tenant, and so on all the way back to the first step of picking an island.

Here is a model:



Section Six

Overcoming Challenges

Sometimes one has to take baby steps but sometimes opportunities come up and are not recognized as having big leap potential. How can you recognize these? How can this knowledge help you the next time an opportunity comes up?

Of course, your first reaction is going to be, “But I can’t do that, I have a job even if I don’t like it, I have a house, and I can’t just up and move.” You’re right, you can’t, BUT you can start *planning* a move. MONEY will suddenly loom large as you explore your dream. Do not let this become a barrier that makes you feel stuck. Specifics can wait for now. Wait until your dream is beginning to look unbeatable, totally desirous, and sending a “have to have” message to your brain, and letting you know it cannot be denied.

Focusing on what we do not have always prompts us to think negatively and worry that we cannot afford to do something. Thinking that we might just have “enough” can switch our thinking to a positive note and help us be creative in how we solve money problems.

Think back to a time you almost made a big change and did not. What held you back? Was your reason based on fear? Perhaps you thought, "There are lots of reasons why I cannot do this." But did you ask the question, “Why not?”

Remember that list of barriers you wrote and hid away when you started this workbook? Find it and look at it now. You will see lots of reasons why you thought you could not have the life you really want. Now read this list again and for each barrier on the list, ask the question, “Why not?” Since you have now determined who the real YOU is and have a good picture of what kind of life you want to have, the Why Not question will help you overcome the barriers on that list.

Cross off those no longer a concern. Use mind mapping to brainstorm solutions to each of the problems remaining.

Say to yourself, "This is doable! I just have to find creative solutions. Where can I go for help?"

Help is on its way in the next Section!!!

Section Seven

Finding a Support System

Find or form a support success team. These will be the people who are committed to being positive and supportive and dedicated to holding you true to your goals. Let them assist you in the process by giving encouragement, ideas to help you along, and high fives as you reach accomplishment steps in your progress to your goals.

The term Success Team is a Barbara Sher trademark. Her book, Teamworks is a valuable reference for you. Barbara defines a success team as a small group of people who have goals to pursue and agree to work together to help each other reach those goals. They meet on a regular basis, conduct their meetings in a manner to give each member time to report on their own progress followed by the same amount of time for the other group members to offer ideas.

This is a business meeting and does not allow time for socializing which can be done before or after the meeting itself. Only positive feedback is given; negativity is not allowed.

Choose others wisely and ask them to keep your confidence until you are ready to be more public with your plans.

You may be vulnerable at this point, and others can be critical or negative. Family and friends will second guess you because they will worry about you. You do not need this cautionary advice, even though caring in intention. Keep your goals to yourself for now, and do not share until you are well on your way in the planning stages.

Your Success Team

Make a possible list of people to include.

The team should be small, 3 or 4 members beside yourself.

The team can meet locally or on-line

Members must be committed to the process over an agreed upon period of time

My list of possible members whom I will contact:

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

Further study about forming and using a success team can be found in Barbara Sher's book, *Teamworks: Building Support Groups That Guarantee Success!*, Warner Books, 1989 ISBN 978-0-446-51461-3.

Give Yourself Permission

You've done it!

- You have finished all the research, the remembering, and the identification, of who YOU are.
- You have a design, and a plan to get the Life you Want

Time to pat yourself on the back and do a happy dance!!

NOW give yourself your personal seal of approval...



About the Author

For Judith, it still comes as a surprise that she can go out her front door and, in a 5 minute walk, be on the beach. Has it really been 21 years since she made the decision to make this island her home? As a teacher of children for almost all of that time in a culture drastically different from the one she grew up in, she has learned, lived, and found joy in ways she never knew before. Imagine the healing power of the sun's warmth every month of the year! As she walks, the smiles of those she meets match the warmth of the sun. Never tiring of looking at the ocean, for Judith this activity is a meditation.

Writing is a third career for Judith; she has been a successful educator, teacher, and leaning coach, and before that a clinical dietitian and food service director. Although she has always written in some form all her life, dedicating serious time to her dream of being a writer has only just begun. There is a novel waiting to be revisited, and many short stories she wants to bring to life.

This first published book is the story of how she travelled from a cold life in the north to a place where life would be warm and one in which she could finally be true to her Self. Judith hopes, that by sharing this memoir, her experiences and discoveries will help others to also find and follow a path to a life of real joy at last.

Judith lives with her husband and two comical and much loved chihuahuas in a small community on the north coast of the Dominican Republic.