

# **5 KEYS TO STEPPING INTO A MORE EMPOWERED LIFE**



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# 5 Keys to Stepping Into a More Empowered Life

## Foreword

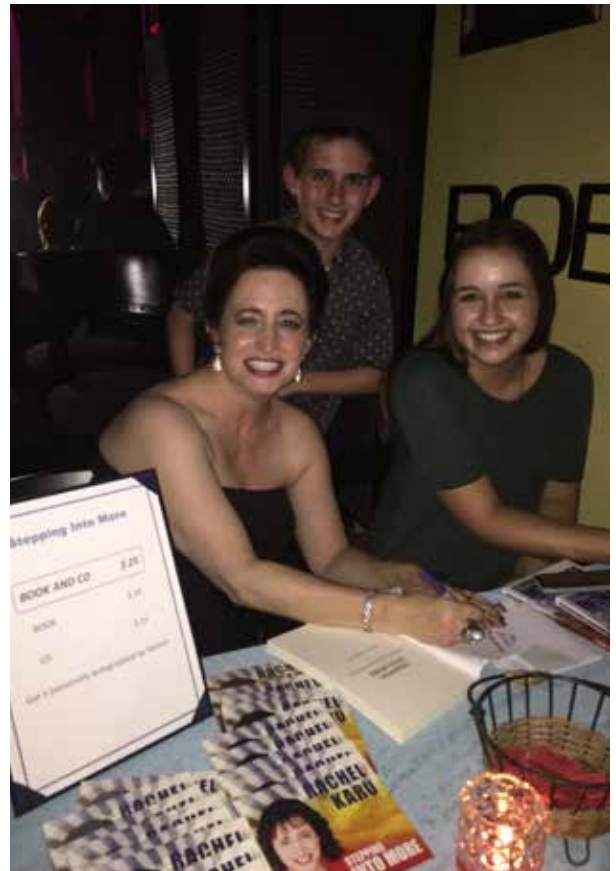
Thanks for downloading this guidebook. I am the proud Founder of the Stepping into More — A Professional and Personal Development Company. Before I can share the keys to stepping into a more empowered life, I need to share a bit about myself and my “stepping into more” journey. I have memories when I was four, sitting in the “way back” of our green station wagon singing “Bye bye miss American pie.” I had no idea what the words were and what they meant and yet I felt incredibly moved as I rocked back and forth while singing my heart out.

Singing has always been the gateway to my authentic self-expression.

I graduated high school a semester early and began my college education at 17, at the famous American Academy of Dramatic Arts. I was a full-fledged perfectionist when I received a rejection letter to the second year program. I interpreted that as a complete failure and decided to choose the route more commonly followed by getting a Bachelor’s of Science in Business and starting my career in Human Resources.

Sadly I allowed my perfectionism to be in the driver’s seat for over 20 years to the point where I physically could not sing. Any time I would attempt to sing my arms would be glued to my sides, numb and asleep. At one point I was the Manager of Human Resources at EMI Music Distribution that represented 10 record labels and nobody had a clue that I sang.

This changed about 9 years ago when a series of events occurred starting with a car accident. While in physical therapy following the accident I noticed a flyer for a workshop called “Joy of Singing.” I was inspired to attend this workshop which launched me back into performing and integrating singing into some of my training and speaking engagements. It also inspired me to write a book about my journey – [Stepping into More – Lessons from a Recovering Perfectionist](#), produce my first CD of songs: [Stepping into More](#), and re-brand my 15 year old professional and personal development company to Stepping into More. I was finally ready to STEP INTO MORE.



Words cannot express how much more alive, on-purpose, and fulfilled I feel since stepping into more. I have re-connected to my value of joyous self-expression and have started to integrate it into many aspects of my life.

I work with many people who are considered successful by our conventional definition, yet, they feel empty inside. I support many people who supposedly “have it all,” but feel like they have nothing.

Often times these high achieving individuals have been so focused on their careers and families but have lost touch with their values, strengths, passions, and dreams. They have forgotten about or given up on those foundational components of their lives that are the cornerstones to living a meaningful life.

Nothing brings me greater joy than to share the “Stepping into More” system with my clients so they can be empowered to live an intentional, joyous life.

The keys to empowerment lie in the 5 part Stepping into More Personal Development System:

1. Purpose
2. Passion
3. Clarity
4. Action
5. Integration

I will share highlights from this empowering system in this guidebook. At the end of each section I included a “Lock in the Learning” section for you to move into action immediately so you can instantly transfer the learning.

My intention is that this guidedbook will whet your appetite to want to step into a more empowered life. I invite you to peruse our website to learn about offerings to support you with your personal, transformational journey! I encourage you to live the life you desire and deserve NOW!

# Purpose

I have been a personal and professional development coach, speaker, and trainer for over 20 years. As a career coach, most of my clients fell into their current roles due to “happenstance.” They happened to know someone at a company or they received an offer early on in their careers. They said yes to those jobs because it was easy. Fast forward years later and they feel stuck and are not sure why they are miserable.

They are miserable because they didn't invest time to reflect on their purpose. They weren't clear on their values or strengths. They weren't making conscious choices about what types of career would match their unique selves.

The first key to empowerment is to truly know thyself. Two foundational ways to do this is to identify and leverage your values and strengths.

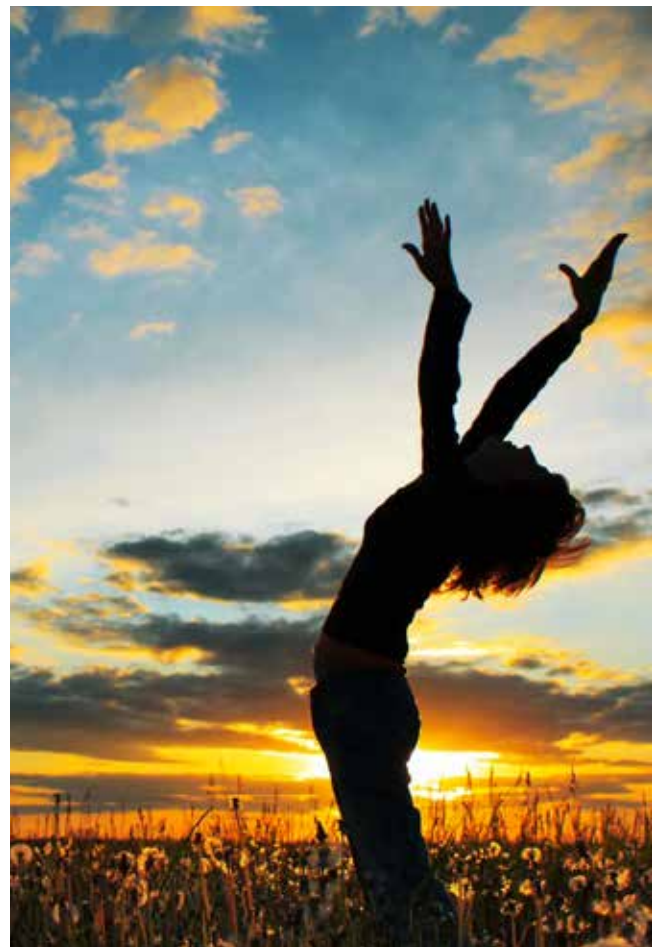
Values can be defined as:

1. “A principle, standard or quality regarded as desirable or worthwhile”
2. “An ideal accepted by some individual or group”
3. “That which belongs to the essential nature or constitution of a thing”

Values are intrinsic to who we are. They are not imposed by the outside world. They make us unique and when we don't honor them there are consequences. Generally we either feel disconnected and unhappy. Not honoring our values can also impact our attitude, morale, and productivity. When we don't honor our values it's almost like a piece of us dies.

Strengths are defined as an activity that strengthens and energizes you. Notice I do not define them as something you are good at. You can be quite good at something and hate it. For example, I am excellent with details and after about one hour working with details, I am grumpy and agitated.

As a coach I go through specific exercises and assessments to help clients increase their self-awareness to reconnect to their values and strengths. At the end of the process the client creates a prioritized values list and receives a detailed assessment report defining their top strengths. This foundational information is used as a compass to help you navigate your life.



## Lock in the Learning

Here is an exercise to help you begin identifying your purpose:

A great way to identify your values is by thinking of peak experiences in your life - moments when you felt on top of the world and completely yourself. You can unearth your values when you peel back the onion and search for the meaning and significance these peak experiences have for you. For example, if a peak experience was climbing a mountain, this may reflect the values of perseverance or being challenged. A time when you learned Spanish in Guatemala may reflect the values of diversity, communication or adventure.

One personal example is releasing my CD of Songs – Stepping into More. This was my dream of for over 20 years. When I reflected on the experience I realized that I was honoring the following values: Joyous self-expression, Creativity, Authenticity, Freedom, and Meaning and Purpose.

I invite you to reflect on a peak experience that represents a non-work-related time in your life (and there may be several events) when things were great – you were on top of your game, you felt powerful and strong and were truly thriving. It can be a point in time such as crossing a finish line or a period in time such as when you were in college. It can be when you were an adult or a child.

Your peak experience is a time that you felt so great, because this is a time when you were truly living or honoring your values – or being who you really are when you are your natural self.

Note that you can have work-related peak experiences, but there is always the risk that some “shoulds” creep in, so in order to make this more authentic, I ask you to focus on non-work related peak experiences.

Peak Experience

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Values You Were Honoring

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# Passion

Many of my clients are successful and supposedly “have it all” by the standard definition of success. Yet, something is missing in their lives. Often times they have disconnected from their passion.

Passion can be defined as...

1. “A strong and barely controllable emotion”
2. “An intense desire or enthusiasm for something”
3. “A thing arousing great enthusiasm”

All of these definitions include a strong emotional component. When we feel passion, we usually feel very present and alive.

A little earlier I shared with you that I disconnected from my passion of joyous self expression through song. The impact of this disconnection was profound and painful. I couldn't attend a musical theater performance or a concert without crying. I would imagine myself on stage – feeling like my dream of performing was buried alive at the tender age of 18. This disconnection also impacted my ability to self-express in other aspects of my life. For example, I struggled sharing my truth and asking for what I needed.



One way to know you are passionate about something is when you put more energy into something than is required. Passion is greater than mere enthusiasm. It is an ambition that is materialized into action by putting our hearts, mind, body, and soul into what we are doing.

Many of my clients have disconnected from their passion. There are various reasons – perhaps they felt like they weren't talented enough, or they got sucked in to the world of work or being a parent and stopped making time for their passion. They rationalized for many years why honoring their passion wasn't important or necessary. Perhaps they didn't think their passion was important unless they were earning money doing their passion. Yet their passion kept gnawing at them like an annoying gnat that wouldn't go away.

As a coach I partner with clients to identify their passions and what meaning they hold. I also get them to consider what has been stopping them from engaging in their passions whether it be fear, shame or judgment.

## Lock in the Learning

Here is an exercise to help you identify one of your passions:

Step 1:

1. When you were very young, what did you most love doing?

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2. When you were a teenager, what brought you the most joy and satisfaction - especially when things were challenging?

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3. What is something you have been passionate about for an extended period of time in your life (e.g., playing the violin, sailing, painting, etc.)?

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4. Please write the passion you identified:

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# Clarity

I hold my clients as being resourceful, creative, and whole. This means I see you as the expert on your life. My role is not to tell you what your lives “should” look like. We have plenty of friends and family who love to impose their agenda on us right? My role is to create a safe place for self-discovery so you can experience clarity. This clarity leads you into meaningful and intentional action.

Once you have reconnected to your purpose and passion, you are ready to delve deeper and understand how these two elements tie together and why they hold such great meaning for you.

For example, I came to understand that singing represents an important way that I live my value of joyous self-expression. I am miserable and out of sorts if I am not authentically self-expressing whether it be through song or other means. Having this awareness made me realize how important and vital singing is to my life. I no longer viewed it as a meaningless hobby that I could put away on the shelf. I no longer considered myself a failure for not being a professional performer. I came to realize that singing is an avenue to connect with an important aspect of my soul which is vital to my happiness and wellbeing. This is far more important than whether I earn money for performing.



## Lock in the Learning

I invite you to consider one of your passions that you identified earlier. How does this relate to one or more of your values that you identified in Step 1 – Purpose?

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When you engage in that passion, how do you feel? What meaning and significance does it hold for you? What is the impact when you neglect that passion?

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# Action

I am a big believer that the universe rewards action. Awareness is critical for behavior change. But awareness for awareness sake serves little purpose. Once we have awareness we need to move into action to begin manifesting our empowered lives.

I am also a big believer in baby steps. Often times, we bite off more than we can chew. For example, many clients tell me they want to get into shape so they create a ridiculous goal like working out in a gym 7 days a week for 2 hours each visit. They usually cannot keep this commitment for even one week. Without coaching, many people beat themselves up and quickly give up on the goal of getting into shape. As a coach, I get curious when people don't follow through on commitments to themselves. I begin asking questions like "what got in the way," and "what are your thoughts and feelings about going to the gym?"

Usually we discover that the client hates the gym. So I encourage him/her to consider a form of physical activity that he/she love whether it be tennis, walking, or paddle boarding. For example I love to dance. When I wake up in the morning to take my dance class, I feel like I "get to" dance, not that I "have to" dance.

I also encourage clients to identify a small, meaningful, and realistic goal. For example, I have set a goal of exercising at least one hour, 3 times a week. Notice my language of "at least." I know that 3 times a week is very doable for me. I also know that I sometimes can squeeze in 4 times a week. The "at least" sets me up for success feeling great about 3 times a week and even better if I can make 4 happen.

I usually take 1-2 dance classes, a TRX class and one Pilates class each week. I feel terrific and I actually enjoy what I am doing! My exercise regimen aligns with two of my values– Joyous self-expression and variety. When I dance, I am completely out of my head and instead in my body and in my heart. What a terrific opportunity to self- express. I also thrive on variety and therefore need to mix up classes and change up my schedule periodically or I will get bored and stop exercising.



## Lock in the Learning

Once you identify your purpose and passion and have increased clarity you are ready to move into action. I invite you to consider one baby step goal you can create in the next two weeks to honor the values, strengths and/or passions you identified. Be sure to make it small, doable, and meaningful.

Please choose something that is enjoyable. For example, if you love to paint but haven't done it for years and might be holding some judgment on your talent, please don't set a goal to suddenly paint and have your paintings displayed in an exhibit. Start small. Perhaps set aside 1 hour this week to give yourself the gift of painting whatever you desire. Perhaps you can sign up for a painting class. Perhaps you can find a "Color Me Mine" store where you can paint with a friend. Remember – the goal is for you to joyously reconnect to this passion without expectations. The intention is to focus on the journey versus a specific outcome. You get to set this up any way you like on your own terms for your own pleasure! This is NOT a work assignment.



What is your "baby step" goal to complete within the next two weeks?

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## Integration

It takes time and dedicated focus to change behavior, even if it is something we love. We might feel awkward or judge ourselves initially. When I first started singing again, I felt like I had to move quickly to make up for lost time. Upon further reflection, I recognized that everything was happening in its own time, the way it was meant to unfold.



I also didn't want to treat my passion like my work world – focusing on accomplishing an end goal quickly. Instead I decided to set an intention to enjoy the journey without having a specific outcome in mind. It would take as long as it would take and it would evolve as it was meant to evolve. This really came to life when I began producing my CD of songs – Stepping into More. At first, I was caught up in trying to complete the CD as soon as possible. I later made a conscious choice to ease into the process and stopped worrying about how long it would take. Instead I embraced the journey of creating the CD. I relished my recording sessions and savored every minute. I realized that this was my opportunity to honor my value of joyously self-expressing

through song in a way that I had dreamed of for years. What a wonderful gift I gave myself when I released expectations and flowed through the journey with grace and ease.

I started to get interesting ideas as I eased into singing again without having expectations as to what it needed to look like. I got the idea to produce cabaret shows. To date, I produced several sold out shows. I also received the idea to begin integrating singing into some of my speaking and training engagements. Suddenly my value of joyous self-expression was being integrated into all of my life. This brings me immense meaning and satisfaction.

By releasing expectation I was able to listen to my creative intuition. I also shifted my perspective about the fact that I had stopped singing for over 20 years. I no longer viewed that period as sad nor did I feel shame. I realized that this was supposed to be my journey and it has led me to where I am today. I am grateful for the insights and learning this journey has provided. It helped me really understand myself on a deeper level which enabled me to support my clients in a deep and meaningful way.

Each new behavior we engage in requires reflection in order to glean the lessons and build upon them. One of the joys of honoring your purpose and passions is beginning to integrate them more and more into your life.

### **Lock in the Learning**

Once you have made good on your baby step commitment to yourself that you created in the Action portion of the guidebook, I invite you to reflect on the lessons learned. Consider:

1. How did you feel when you accomplished your goal?

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2. If you did not accomplish your goal, what got in the way? How can you set yourself up for success with your next goal? Perhaps you need to be more realistic with your expectation or you need to modify the goal to make sure it is truly for you and not doing what you think you “should” be doing.

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3. Consider how to integrate your purpose and passion into other areas of your life. I was able to begin integrating singing into my work. How can you honor your values and passion more in your life? For example if you value creativity how can you be more creative at work or how you approach problem solving?

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# Conclusion

You now have the keys to live an empowered life:

1. Purpose
2. Passion
3. Clarity
4. Action
5. Integration

Alright – go out there and live the life you desire using the keys! Good luck to you!

Ha, ha. For some of you this might seem very doable. For most of us mortals we need support. Although you are the expert of your life, it is all too easy to put yourself on the back burner. It is especially easy to ignore our purpose and passion as it may seem frivolous or selfish.

The truth is there is great negative impact when we don't honor these foundational parts of ourselves. We may suffer psychologically and feel depressed, experience low morale and low engagement at work and in with our lives. Other times it affects us physically – ulcers, high stress levels, and increased risk for disease (dis-ease) because we are not in alignment with these core aspects of ourselves.

This is why many people need support in leading an empowered life. We are more inclined to follow through on our commitments to ourselves when we know someone will be following up with us. We also need help when we run into roadblocks. **WE are usually the biggest roadblock.** We start to fall back on old patterns of behavior; we begin to tell ourselves this is too difficult, it is more important to give to others versus honoring our purpose and passion. We convince ourselves that this isn't that important after all. I have seen this happen time and time again with hundreds of clients.

If this sounds at all like your experience I urge you to consider how Stepping into More's offerings can support you. Whether it be participating in coaching or attending a dynamic workshop, Stepping into More wants to support you to unleash your creative expression to lead a life filled with purpose and passion!

## Next Steps

If you are serious about Stepping into More:

Schedule a 30 minute complimentary coaching session with me today  
Email - [rachel@steppingintomore.com](mailto:rachel@steppingintomore.com)

## About Rachel Karu

Rachel Karu's purpose and passion for inspiring reflection and results led her to create Stepping into More – A professional and personal development company dedicated to supporting clients with their quest to unleash their Purpose and Passion in order to lead a Fulfilling and Empowered Life! Rachel primarily works with successful people who supposedly have it all and yet are feeling empty and burnt out. This is usually because they have spent many years supporting others either as a career person, spouse, parent, and son/or daughter and have lost connection with their purpose and passion.



Described by her clients as “a gifted coach, speaker, and facilitator who is both intuitive and pragmatic,” Rachel energizes her clients and creates an affirming environment for personal transformation. Prior to launching Stepping into More, Rachel served as Human Resources Manager at EMI Music Distribution and the Manager of Organization Development and Training at Easton Sports, Inc.

Rachel earned a Master's of Science in Counseling for Business, Industry and Government and a Bachelor of Science in Business with a specialization in Human Resources. She achieved her Coaching Credential through the International Coaching Federation and is a Certified Strengths Coach with the Marcus Buckingham Company.

Clients include: Facebook, Intel, EMC, CISCO, Raytheon, United States Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, Allergan, Philips, Braille Institute, Mattel, Viacom, and Disney/ABC Media.

Rachel serves on the Board of Directors for the International Coach Federation and as the Chairperson for the Association of Talent Development's Westside breakfast special interest group.

Rachel's personal journey as a Recovering Perfectionist inspired her to create Stepping into More. Rachel's perfectionism paralyzed her from pursuing her passion for singing for over 20 years until a car accident changed everything. This series of events led Rachel back into performing, publishing her autobiographical selfhelp book - [Stepping Into More – Lessons from a Recovering Perfectionist](#), and producing her CD of songs - [Stepping Into More](#).

Rachel is happily married for over 26 years and has two amazing children who continue to be her best teachers on a daily basis.



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