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What It Feels Like to Be Stuck — And How to Get Unstuck

With a few small steps, you can break free and live the life you want.

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The feeling of being stuck is common. I define the term *stuck* as being at odds with your desired life circumstances. You don't live up to your expectations for yourself—whether that means in your job, love life, health, and more.

There are some kinds of stuck that, well, don't stick with you. A short-term kind of stuck. A dip in the road that can be easily overcome. Sometimes you might be having a bad day, week, or month where nothing is going right. An important meeting at work dropped off of your calendar, and you missed it. You were supposed to bring snacks to your kid's classroom and forgot. The cute dress you planned to wear to your high school reunion is too tight, and you didn't pack any other options. It can be completely out of your hands, like running into a major car pileup on the highway that causes you to miss a job interview.

None of these scenarios are ideal, but they will not derail you on a permanent basis. The funk quickly passes. You wake up one morning with the answer to a problem that has been bothering you or take a step to get out of a situation that no longer works. After a relatively short amount of time, you resume your intended course once more.

What we're going to focus on in this book is when stuckness becomes a chronic state of being. You've been living with it for a while, and even when you try to shake it off, that feeling of being trapped inevitably comes back. You've been in a stuck place for some time and are aware that there's a problem. But you might not be able to identify the cause specifically, and certainly don't know where to start when it comes to addressing it.

Not sure if you're chronically stuck or only stuck in the short term? In my experience, the sensation of being chronically stuck can take many forms:

You're wading through quicksand. You want to take a step forward or make a change but feel mired in place. You aren't really moving anywhere except downward into a spiral of more sand that is determined to wring the life out of

you—and there isn't a spunky protagonist waiting to pull you out or a conveniently placed tree branch for you to grab. You're sinking down, down, down, and resisting just makes it worse.

It feels like you can't fully breathe. That's because you've gotten used to being in a state of fight, flight, or fear so long that you've been figuratively or literally holding your breath. You try to let air in, opening your mouth wide in an attempt to breathe deeply. It's not coming easily, though.

No matter what you do, it feels useless. Whatever actions you take feel ineffective. It seems as if you're doomed to repeat mistakes and missteps, never making a dent in the problematic situation. You can relate to the tragic figure of Sisyphus from Greek mythology, cursed for eternity to roll a huge boulder up a hill only to have it come rebounding backward when he approaches the top. It's a never-ending Groundhog Day of yuck, without the comedic movie patter.

You feel that you're out of options. You simply don't know what to do next, and it's terrifying. Making a single decision feels like it could have disastrous results. You feel helpless.

You experience constant disappointment. You aren't clinically depressed, but a cloud of disappointment is always hovering nearby. The college you dreamed about attending rejected you. That date you were excited about bombed. Your teenagers go out of their way to avoid spending time with you. After taking a new job on the basis of its supposedly great work culture, you found out a few days after starting that this wasn't the case at all. Nothing quite happens the way you want it to. Even when things go as planned, they don't provide the fulfillment you desire.

You're incapacitated by stress. Ever hear the phrase "Easy, peasy, lemon squeezey"? The counter to that is "Stressed, depressed, lemon zest." In this state, your stress levels are so high that it feels paralyzing. Anxiety is your constant companion. The stress is taking a toll on your wellness. You can't sleep. It's hard to concentrate. With your stomach tied in knots, your appetite disappears, or you overeat everything in sight. There may be a constant

temptation to self-medicate through an abundance of alcohol, cigarettes or weed, prescription drugs, or illegal substances—all because you feel so overwhelmed and are desperately seeking a break.

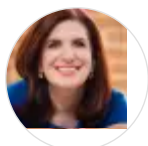
That sense of being stuck can extend to all parts of your life. Whether it's a dull sensation of being "off" or a pressing issue, you know when something isn't right. The problem is that most people don't know what to do about it. Then, something happens. It might feel awkward, surprising, awful, or wonderful—or even a combination of all those factors. The desire to tackle it, to live differently, is born. According to a December 2020 article in *Time* magazine, the COVID-19 pandemic "caused a widespread existential crisis." Myriad challenges prompted people to reassess their lives and realize that another way was possible. I call this moment the "tipping point."





Excerpt from *Free and Clear: Get Unstuck and Live the Life You Want*, written by two-time TEDx speaker, certified professional coach, and Chief Communications Officer Shira Miller, CPCC. Visit shiramiller.com to learn more.

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Shira Miller, **Chief Communications Officer, TEDx Speaker, Executive Coach, Author**

[Shira Miller](#), CPCC, is a two-time TEDx speaker, Author, Certified Professional Co-Active Coach and Chief Communications Officer of a \$2 billion corporation. Her new book, *[Free and Clear: Get Unstuck and Live the Life You Want](#)*, features a step-by-step process for getting unstuck and staying that way for good. Getting unstuck is her superpower, and Shira is passionate about teaching people how to do the same for themselves. Over the past few decades, she has transitioned from financial ruin to prosperity, chronic health challenges to a constant state of wellness, obesity to sustaining a healthy weight, divorce to lasting love, and an unfulfilling career to a purpose-driven life. Visit shiramiller.com to learn more.

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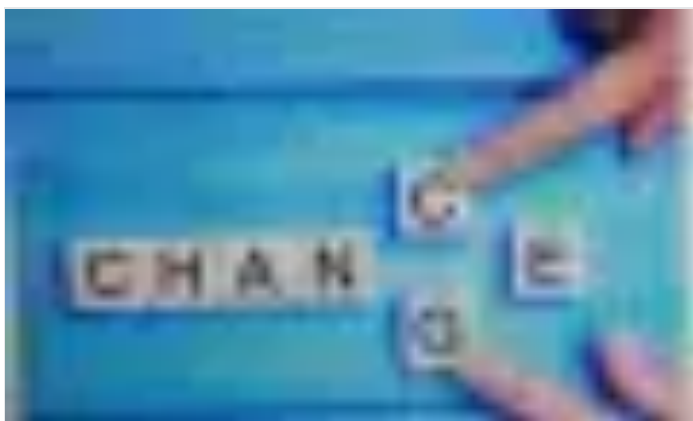
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