

# CREATIVE TRAILS GUIDE

when we take something difficult and dull and make it playful and cool we start to experience meaningful things in an unpredictable and spirited way.

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THE MONEY TRAIL  
THE SCENT OF A TRAIL  
THE NATURE TRAIL  
THE STORY TRAIL  
HAPPY TRAILS  
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**Go ahead and choose your own adventure.**

WHAT TO PACK: A curious mind, a willing heart, and the ability to re-make the assignment.

WARNING: Happiness may be a side effect.

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This short guide is a way to put wandering on your formal agenda. A way to pursue curiosity from all possible angles.

You can go in order. Skip. Pick one. Pick another. Read it all at once. Stop. Rest. Ponder and play.

# THE MONEY

THE TRIP THAT'S MOST OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD

# TRAIL

## — IT'S ON THE HOUSE —


Add a ton of value and a lot more than people expect and you'll make all that you need.

Value comes in all shapes and sizes and the high touch garden variety—like handwritten notes, early-on-time arrival, and super friendly, quick turnaround makes a big impression.

Or just do something stupendously special. Whatever you're serving up, whether its customer care, or a 30-second monologue, make it insanely great.

In the end, adding value puts people way ahead of riches and results, always.

So why not pick up the tab for the coffee drinker in line behind you.



"Remember that acts of kindness often have such ripple or pay it forward effects. One act can set in motion a series of kind acts."

—Sonja Lyubomirsky

## FROM GOOD ENOUGH TO ALL KINDS OF AWESOME

**Squeaking by the deadline** Handing it over 48 hours early

**Delivering 80%** Giving it your all

**Advice-driven** Solution-focused

**A cycle of stops + starts** Momentum-powered

**Ho-hum + business as usual** Pretty damn cool + definitely subversive

**Enjoying great service** Writing a five star review on YELP

**Getting by on excuses** Doing what you can, where you are, with what you have

## LOOK LIKE A MILLION BUCKS (ON A TIGHT BUDGET) AND YOU'LL FEEL LIKE A MILLION BUCKS

- » Women are skipping the lavish salon visits and hitting up the local barbershop - for super cute buzz to bobs.
- » Gents are upgrading the basics with a handsome belt and great pair of shades.
- » Anyone can kill it with the classic white shirt in all its manifestations. Dress it up—dress it down—it goes anywhere with everything minus the sticker shock.
- » Pamper yourself on a budget and draw a sumptuous bath of milk + honey. How? Pour 1–2 cups of milk and 1/2 cup honey under running warm water. Swish, mix and hop in.
- » Sign up for a student massage, support the educational process, and enjoy the beautifying benefits of discounted bodywork + deep relaxation.
- » Rescue your wardrobe. Mix + match prints with dots + stripes and tops + bottoms that complement but aren't too matchy-matchy. Oh, that? It looks really cute.

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COCO CHANNEL CLAIMED THAT FASHION WAS IN THE SKY, IN THE STREET, AND THAT IT HAD TO DO WITH IDEAS, THE WAY WE LIVE, AND WHAT WAS HAPPENING AROUND US.

**THE MONEY TRAIL**  
**THE TRIP THAT'S MOST OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD**

**DO**

Instead of throwing tons of money at it—use what you already have or take it to the streets and come up with 3 radically fun and low-priced lifestyle solutions that make you look and feel like a million bucks.

**WATCH**

The documentary film Bill Cunningham New York where 80-(plus)-year-old Schwinn-riding cultural anthropologist Bill Cunningham has been obsessively and inventively chronicling high and low fashion trends from the streets for the New York Times.

**A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS**

Small talk is anything but dull and meaningless. According to the National Academy of Sciences USA, chatting with a neighbor or a bus driver could extend a person's life. In other words, small talk is life-giving—and who doesn't love gossiping about movie stars, steamy books, hot weather, the old neighborhood, and the latest score.

**Test your small talk talents by matching the conversation starters with different styles of banter.**

- 1 Considerate  
~~~~~
- 2 Inappropriate  
~~~~~
- 3 Flirtatious + sounds like a line from the movies  
~~~~~
- 4 Friendly  
~~~~~
- 5 Something Kanye West would say  
~~~~~

- A Are you financially stable?
- B Can i help you with that?
- C I'm so credible and so influential and so relevant that I will change the world.
- D You have such a pretty face it Should be on a christmas card.
- E where ya' headed?



**For the really open-minded...**

Take small talk to the next level by knowing the books of Toni Morrison, the ways of Buddha, the politics of Ukraine, and the best place to get Cronuts - actually, anything goes - but a good rule of thumb is to keep your finger in the pie. Oh, and make it lighthearted.

# THE SCENT OF A TRAIL

TRUST YOUR SENSES ON THIS ONE

## — FOLLOW YOUR NOSE —

Rumination distorts thoughts, zaps creativity, and increases negativity.  
Plain and simple, overthinking makes things worse.

Next time you're tangled up in thought, go out and get distracted.  
Wander around on your bike, escape to the beach, or get lost at the magazine rack.

The goal is to jump off the rumination train, focus on something else,  
come back refreshed and viola, problem solved.



## — If you only have 5 minutes —

... (step away from the problem) and smile, yes, smile because it's the gesture that is  
rated with the highest positive emotional content and nine times out  
of ten the smile will do the trick.



## — If you have 15 minutes —

... go outside and eat up your surroundings with your eyes, nose, and ears. Slow down  
your pace and savor consciously. Re-appreciating the things you take for granted  
is one of the most important ingredients in cultivating happiness ...

... or send a postcard with an inspired note to a friend or a relative who  
might really appreciate a little creative encouragement.



### If you have more time, try getting lost here...

**Vintage Boutique + Secondhand Clothing Store** Pick your era (60's, 70's, 80's) make an outfit, try it on

**Historical Site** Take a walk back in time

**The Zoo** Capture a shot of your wild side

**A Used Bookshop** Grab an old favorite, grab two and give one to a friend.

**Record Stores** Drop dime and have a listen.

**Farmers Markets** Eat up the flowers, fresh fruit, seasonal veggies, home baked goods, jams + lots of local flair.

**A Green Space or Park** Soak in the birds, the people, and some quiet time

**A Museum** Pick a collection, a place of wonder, or an object of art

**A Foreign Movie** Slip away without having to pack a thing

**A Musical** The Great American Escape

**A Softball Game** Make it an exercise in community spirit

**A Pool Hall** Give it a shot—aiming, shot control, speed control, draw shot, break shot + jump shot.

**SCENT OF A TRAIL**  
**TRUST YOUR SENSES ON THIS ONE**

— **A SINGLE NOTE** —

Apparently there are 5 scents in the world that every culture goes bonkers over. That's good news for us because they all have properties that can positively influence the way we feel.



|                                                                                                    | Physical Healing                                   | Emotional Healing                                                                      | Aroma                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ORANGE...</b><br>conquers fears of letting go. It brings happiness to the heavyhearted.         | calmative, sedative, antiseptic                    | to encourage creativity<br>creativity, self-confidence, regeneration, lightheartedness | fresh, fruity, tangy, sweet                        |
| <b>GRAPEFRUIT...</b><br>rouses the human spirit and awakens the mind.                              | digestive, restorative, antiseptic                 | to encourage joy, positivity, alertness, generosity, confidence                        | warm sweet, fresh citrus                           |
| <b>BERGAMOT...</b><br>is an amplifier of light and energy. Use whenever a clear pathway is needed. | calmative, antiseptic, antidepressant              | to encourage concentration, balance, strength, joy                                     | sweet, fruity, citrus with spicy floral undertones |
| <b>LEMON...</b><br>clarifies through upliftment and focus                                          | stimulant, antiseptic, diuretic, antidepressant    | to encourage clarity, direction awareness, concentration and liveliness                | light, fresh, citrus                               |
| <b>PEPPERMINT...</b><br>raises the spirit. Stimulates, soothes, uplifts and calms.                 | anti-infectious, digestive, expectorant, stimulant | to encourage regeneration, self-acceptance, concentration, vitality and vibrancy       | minty, fresh                                       |

— **DO** —

Breathe deeply and inhale the scents of citrus fruit or peppermint candy. Or explore simple ways that you can introduce a single scent aroma into your life.

| USE NATURE'S ELEMENTS | AROMA                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fire                  | Candles                           |
| Earth                 | Herbs + cooking spices            |
| Air                   | Plants+ flowers                   |
| Water                 | Tea + natural household cleansers |

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"As we become curators of our own contentment on the simple abundance path... we learn to savor the small with a grateful heart."

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—Sarah Ban Breathnach

# THE STORY

LONG STORY SHORT

# TRAIL

I just saw a photo of Macaulay Culkin wearing a T-shirt of a photo of Ryan Gosling wearing a T-shirt of Macaulay Culkin.

Then I read that John Turturro was sketching some ideas. He blabbed it to the barber and the barber actually shared it with Woody Allen. Allen loved it. He told the barber to give Turturro his number and the rest is (Fading Gigolo) history.

Going down this path can get very meta.

Anyway, everybody has one—a story that is—and some of the best come from those that came before us—or have been passed on by a barber who heard it from an actor, who learned it from a preacher, who was inspired by an incident on the road...

Do you know of a story trail? If so, how can you connect the dots, add your bit of story, and then pass it on?



## CONNECT THE DOTS

**Connect the Story/Play to the Film Adaptation.**

| MOVIE                 | <input type="radio"/> | ..... | <input type="radio"/> | SHORT STORY                          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Apocalypse Now        | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Rope Burns                           |
| Rear Window           | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Dream Story                          |
| Brokeback Mountain    | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Happy Dan, the Whistling Dog         |
| Million Dollar Baby   | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | It Had to Be Murder                  |
| Eyes Wide Shut        | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | The Greatest Gift                    |
| Total Recall          | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Close Range: Wyoming Stories         |
| The Lady + The Tramp  | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | We Can Remember It for You Wholesale |
| It's a Wonderful Life | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Heart of Darkness                    |
| Lion King             | <input type="radio"/> |       | <input type="radio"/> | Hamlet                               |



## — DO —

### THE TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

Ask someone much older than your self what their full name is and who they're named after—and behold as the most curious story unfolds.

**Take a play, a piece of poetry, a TV episode or movie script and...**

- » Rewrite the ending
- » Kill off a character
- » Add a love scene

### THAT'S MY STORY AND I'M STICKING TO IT

Pick out and buy your all time favorite book from a local indie bookstore. Inscribe a personal message. Send it from the US Post to a friend, a family member, or a co-worker. Consider this your karmic story line.

### FOR THE REALLY OPEN-MINDED...

Take a goal or a project and

- » Rewrite the ending
- » Kill off an obstacle
- » Romance a task or responsibility

# THE NATURE NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM TRAIL

Sometimes we need to drop the lame goal, the relationship, or the job search and start all over again.

The void is a place where things are born. Where things begin. If there's a gap, something eventually will fill its place.

**Pick 3 things you'd LOVE to unleash + let go of.**

**Lay it all down here.**

**1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Good job. Now, let's boast for awesomeness.)

— DO —

## HIT THE TRAIL

Sitting is the new smoking with similar health risks.

So getting off our bum is more important than ever.

Walking is easy—and ambling off a beaten path is twice the fun with unexpected advantages + curiosities at every turn.

Walk slowly. Much slower than normally. Not to arrive but just to walk. Breathe. Enjoy each step. When you see something beautiful—a rock, a flower, a bird, or a cloud—stop and recognize it.

— READ —

Carsick: John Waters Hitchhikes Across America

Wild (From Lost to Found on The Pacific Crest Trail) by Cheryl Strayed (SHE is also the anonymous advice columnist Dear Sugar @ Rumpus.net with both books being made into major motion pictures... story trail!)

**FOR THE REALLY  
OPEN-MINDED...**

Expand on the journey and turn your walk into a curiosity mind map.

## HOW TO MAKE A CURIOSITY MIND MAP

- » Create a central image.
- » Use angled and curved lines.
- » Used colored pens.
- » One word per line.
- » Explore the sounds, smells, thoughts, fantasies, and ideas that came from your walk.
- » Let everything radiate from your central icon + theme.

# HAPPY SHINE ON TRAILS

In closing, let's celebrate happy hour in Dalai Llama style , who wrote The Art Of Happiness in ONE year by giving it ONE hour a week.

Hell yeahs! Can you imagine how much happier your life could be if you devoted ONE hour a week to building a happier you?

## In one hour, you could...

1. Write a letter and connect to a long lost friend + boost your feelings of optimism
2. Play a board game and improve your memory and concentration skills
3. Enjoy an out loud laugh and activate your good feeling endorphins
4. Study the stars and heavenly bodies and understand how the galaxies evolved
5. Brush up on a foreign language because life is richer for those who know more than one.
6. Make your way through a favorite cookbook, experience new tastes, new ingredients, start a blog, share it with others and make it into a major motion picture.
7. Expand your body + mind to its limits (grow baby, grow.)
8. Commit to a side project (because side projects rule)
9. Organize, clean, mend, sort, build, craft, love, create ... the bounty never ends.

## — DO —

Make a list of 100 things that makes you ridiculously happy. And when you're done, post it somewhere visible or share it with a friend.

"The purpose  
of our lives  
is to be happy."

—Dalai Lama



# WHEN I FEEL STUCK OR CREATIVELY DRAINED, I TAKE A FIELD TRIP.

It opens my heart, and brings a wild rush of ideas into my brain.

And whenever I take a field trip —to a museum, to a garden, to a forest or even a movie— I take a few field notes. And report back.

If you'd like to receive a few Notes From The Trail, just add your name to the list. <http://successissweetest.com/contact/>

Sometimes, I include a story, a photo, and a spontaneous assignment ... for you.



***With endless gratitude,***

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## HELLO

I'm certified! in Positive Psychology and as a Master life Coach. i help artists, actors, makers + seekers start and finish amazing projects and world premiere them face to face.

[www.successissweetest.com](http://www.successissweetest.com)

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