



DARE TO MATTER

BOOK COMPANION

WORKBOOK

Choosing an Unstuck and Unapologetic Life of
Significance

PETE SMITH

Read. Reflect. Put it into practice.

YOUR NAME

How to use this workbook

A companion to Dare to Matter

Read a chapter, then work through its exercises here. Use your own life as the material. Specific answers will serve you better than answers that merely sound good.

Work at a useful pace

You do not need to complete this in one sitting. Read, write, act, and return. If an answer changes as you learn, revise it. That is part of the work.

Keep the book close

The chapter references use the printed page numbers in the supplied book, not the page count shown by a PDF viewer. Your Core Stand belongs within Rooted in Identity; your Circle of Influence belongs within Poke the Lion.

Make room for the work

Type into the shaded fields or print and write by hand. Save a copy before you begin, then save after each session. If a PDF viewer does not retain entries, use a PDF reader that supports forms. Keep personal answers somewhere private.

A note on this edition

This workbook follows the chapters and concepts of the book. The prompts and follow-up exercises have been revised and expanded. It can be used independently of any presentation.

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Where are you now?

Introduction, pp. 1-4 | Chapters 1-2, pp. 5-20

The book asks you to look at your life through a lens of significance. Begin with your life as it is today, rather than the version you hope other people see.

What would make this work worth doing?

Name one thing you want to approach differently by the time you finish. What would someone see you doing differently?

Where does success feel incomplete?

Is there an area where things look good from the outside but feel unfulfilling to you? What seems to be missing?

What matters enough to act on?

After reading the opening chapters, what person, possibility, or responsibility deserves more of your attention? Why?

Always a Choice

Read pp. 21-36 | Exercise 1 of 2

You do not have to like your options to own your next move. Choose one situation you have been avoiding, complaining about, or waiting for someone else to fix.

1. Where do you feel stuck?

Describe what is happening and how it affects you. Keep the facts separate from what you assume about other people.

2. What have you been telling yourself?

Finish: "I do not have a choice because..." Which parts are facts? Which parts are assumptions or consequences you do not want to face?

3. What options are actually available?

List at least three possibilities, including continuing as you are. For each, name a possible benefit and a cost. What information or help might reveal another option?

Own your next move

Always a Choice | Exercise 2 of 2

The chapter distinguishes responsibility from fault. You may not have caused a situation. You can still decide how to respond to it.

4. What is yours to take responsibility for?

What did you contribute, if anything? What can you do now? Name what is outside your control so you can direct your effort toward what is available to you.

5. What are you choosing?

Finish: "Given my options, I choose to... I understand this may require..." If you are choosing to stay where you are for now, what will you do while you are there?

6. Put the choice into action

Name one action and a date within the next seven days. What might you avoid, and how will you respond? After acting, return here: What happened? What is your next choice?

Rooted in Identity

Read pp. 37-70 | Exercise 1 of 3

The book invites you to begin with identity, then choose actions consistent with it, rather than waiting for your feelings to lead. Start by examining the identities you already carry.

1. How do you identify yourself?

List up to ten statements beginning with "I am..." Consider family, work, beliefs, interests, experiences, and labels you have accepted from others.

2. What do those identities mean to you?

Choose three identities from your list. For each, describe what you believe a person with that identity does, values, or is expected to be.

3. Which meanings deserve another look?

Which beliefs help you live as you choose? Which restrict you or excuse behavior you want to change? What meaning would you choose instead?

Your three core words

Rooted in Identity | Exercise 2 of 3

Choose words that describe who you are at your best. Give those words enough meaning that they can guide your behavior when life gets inconvenient.

4. When have you been at your best?

Recall two specific moments. What did you do? What qualities did you demonstrate? Use those moments to choose your three core words.

5. What do your words require of you?

Write each word, your definition, and one observable behavior that expresses it. Example: "Present: I give someone my attention without checking my phone."

6. Where will you practice?

Choose an upcoming situation where your feelings could pull you away from your words. Who do you choose to be? What action would express that identity? When will you do it?

Your Core Stand

Rooted in Identity | Exercise 3 of 3

In the book, purpose is something you choose and create. Your stand gives direction to what you want your life to be about. It does not need to impress anyone.

7. What do you want your life to be about?

What do you bring to others? When does your effort feel meaningful? How would you like to be remembered? Look for a common thread in your answers.

8. Choose your stand

Choose one or two words and explain their meaning in your own language. Finish: "I stand for... To me, this means..." Where is that stand already evident?

9. Close one gap

Where does your behavior contradict your stand? What will you no longer accept within your own behavior? Choose one change, a date to begin, and a way to recognize follow-through.

Poke the Lion

Read pp. 71-100 | Exercise 1 of 3

Fear can show up as avoidance, perfectionism, overcommitting, or silence. Work with one recurring fear and examine what you do to protect yourself from it.

1. Name the fear beneath the concern

Choose something you are hesitating to do. What are you afraid will happen? If it happened, what would you make it mean about you?

2. How do you compensate?

What do you do to avoid that feeling or judgment? Be specific. Example: fearing disappointment, you agree to requests you do not have time to fulfill.

3. What do you gain, and what does it cost?

What immediate protection does this behavior offer? What does it cost over time in relationships, opportunity, time, or self-respect?

Practice in smaller moments

Poke the Lion | Exercise 2 of 3

The chapter describes the same fear appearing in different situations. Smaller moments give you opportunities to practice before the stakes get bigger.

4. Where else does this fear appear?

Identify two other situations where you recognize the same fear. What pattern do you notice in your response?

5. Choose a small act of courage

What manageable action would support your stand while asking you to tolerate discomfort? Name the action, when you will take it, and someone who can support you.

6. Compare your prediction with your experience

Before acting, write what you expect to happen. Return afterward: What actually happened? What did you learn? What slightly harder action are you willing to try next?

Your Circle of Influence

Poke the Lion | Exercise 3 of 3

The book asks you to examine the people who influence you, the needs those relationships meet, and the gaps you recognize. This is an invitation to be deliberate about relationships.

7. Who influences you most?

List five people who currently influence your choices or outlook. Beside each name, identify what they provide: perspective, encouragement, challenge, knowledge, belonging, or something else.

8. What is missing?

Where could you use a perspective or kind of support you do not currently receive? Who might offer it? Name a specific conversation or introduction you will pursue and when.

9. What do you contribute?

If someone named you as an important influence, what would they say you bring? Where could you listen, challenge, encourage, or show up more consistently? Choose one person and action.

Letting It Go

Read pp. 101-124 | Exercise 1 of 3

The chapter uses the image of a monkey holding rice to explore what keeps us stuck. What are you holding onto even as holding it takes something from you?

1. What is your "rice"?

Name a resentment, expectation, regret, need to be right, or familiar story you keep carrying. Describe a specific situation rather than judging yourself.

2. What are you holding onto it for?

What does keeping it offer you: justification, protection, loyalty, certainty, or something else? What feels difficult about releasing it?

3. What is holding on costing you?

How does it affect your attention, behavior, relationships, or opportunities? Where is the past influencing a choice you are making today?

Say what needs saying

Letting It Go | Exercise 2 of 3

Use this page to put the situation into words. This is private writing, not a message you need to send. Be honest without worrying about producing a polished answer.

4. What do you wish you could say?

Write about what happened, what bothered you, and what you have struggled to express. Choose the level of detail that is useful to you.

5. What is beneath your reaction?

What expectation was broken? What did you make the event mean about yourself, the other person, or your future? What do you know, and what have you assumed?

6. What still needs addressing?

Is there a conversation, repair, decision, or boundary that needs your attention? What part can you take responsibility for without taking responsibility for someone else's behavior?

Choose what comes next

Letting It Go | Exercise 3 of 3

Releasing a burden does not require pretending an event was acceptable. Consider what forgiveness or letting go would mean in this particular situation, and what action remains necessary.

7. What are you willing to release?

Name a demand, repeated argument, self-judgment, or expectation you are ready to loosen. What would releasing it allow you to give attention to instead?

8. What would moving forward look like?

Describe a change in your behavior. If forgiveness is part of that for you, what would it mean? What boundaries or unresolved responsibilities would remain?

9. Choose a response you can practice

What will you do when the old thought or resentment returns? Name your next constructive action and a date to take it. Set a date to check your progress rather than a deadline to stop feeling.

Embrace the Crazy

Read pp. 125-152 | Exercise 1 of 3

Choose something you say you want but have not meaningfully pursued. Examine the distance between what you say and what you do.

1. What have you been postponing?

Name the goal, change, or possibility. Why does it matter to you? How does it connect to your core words and stand?

2. What is your "winning strategy"?

The chapter uses this phrase for the explanations that protect us when we fall short. What explanation do you repeatedly give? What does it let you avoid admitting or doing?

3. What needs solving, and what needs owning?

Which obstacles are practical constraints requiring a plan? Where have you used an obstacle as permission to stop? What could you do with the resources you have?

From interest to investment

Embrace the Crazy | Exercise 2 of 3

The chapter challenges you to examine commitment, including your time, money, energy, and focus. Choose an investment that serves something meaningful to you.

4. Where are you still dabbling?

How do your calendar, spending, and attention compare with the importance you say this has? What would committed effort look like in your present circumstances?

5. What are your "ships"?

What fallback, habit, or escape route keeps making retreat easy? What would removing it mean? Distinguish an excuse that keeps you stuck from a safeguard that protects responsibilities you value.

6. Choose your investment

What time, money, attention, or effort will you commit? What will you stop or reduce to make room? Who else is affected, and what conversation do you need to have?

Why not?

Embrace the Crazy | Exercise 3 of 3

The book closes this chapter with a choice between "Why bother?" and "Why not?" You will not know every outcome before you begin. Decide what you are willing to move toward.

7. What becomes possible if you act?

Describe a meaningful possibility. Then describe the cost of continuing as you are. Avoid assuming either action or inaction comes without risk.

8. What risk are you willing to take?

Name the uncertainty, a possible downside, and what you can do to prepare. What do you need to learn before acting? What are you merely hoping to know with certainty?

9. Make the commitment concrete

What is your first meaningful action, and by what date? What support do you need? Set a review date. After acting: What did you learn, and what will you adjust?

Not About You

Read pp. 153-169 | Exercise 1 of 2

The chapter distinguishes giving to others from giving of yourself. Examine both the resources you share and the way you show up in the lives of other people.

1. Where are you giving now?

How do you give your time, money, attention, knowledge, or effort? Where are you personally present, and where might you be contributing at a distance?

2. What have you learned about money?

Finish: "Money is..." and "Money means to me..." How do those meanings influence what you pursue, protect, share, or avoid?

3. Where could your contribution fit better?

Which current contributions express your stand? Where are you giving mainly from habit, guilt, or a desire for approval? What would you choose more deliberately?

Give of yourself

Not About You | Exercise 2 of 2

You have experiences and abilities that someone else could benefit from. Begin with a real person and a useful contribution, without making their response a measure of your worth.

4. What can you offer?

What have you learned that could help someone else? Consider what you can teach, demonstrate, explain, listen to, or help someone work through.

5. Who could benefit?

Name a person or group. What do you know about their needs? What should you ask before deciding how to help?

6. Make a specific offer

Write the offer you will make and the date you will make it. What can you realistically sustain? How will you learn whether it was useful to the person receiving it?

See Your Significance

Read pp. 171-175

The closing story asks you to step back and see more than what is immediately in front of you. Return to your own life with that wider view.

1. What do you see differently now?

Revisit your opening answers. What have you noticed about your choices, identity, fears, commitments, or contribution that you were overlooking?

2. Where have you already mattered?

Identify specific moments when your presence or actions helped someone. Include ordinary moments. What do these experiences reveal about the contribution you can make?

3. What deserves your attention now?

Where have you been focused on an argument, result, or achievement while losing sight of the relationship or impact? What would a wider view change about your next action?

Your next 30 days

Bring the book into everyday choices

Choose a small number of commitments you are prepared to keep. Use the work you have already done rather than creating a fresh list of everything you think you should improve.

1. Choose your focus

Review your answers. Which one change would make the most meaningful difference now? Why this change? Which chapter will you revisit for guidance?

2. Choose up to three commitments

For each, name the action, when or how often you will do it, and what completed follow-through will look like. Make the commitments specific enough to review.

3. Plan for the difficult moments

What is likely to interrupt your follow-through? How will you respond? Who will you ask for support, and what will you ask them to do? Enter your start date and a review date 30 days later.

Pause. Review. Choose again.

Return to this page during your 30 days

Review what you actually did. A missed commitment gives you something to examine and address. An insight becomes useful when it changes how you respond.

Week 1 | What have you begun?

What did you do? What did you avoid? What is one adjustment you will make during the coming week? Date your entry.

Week 2 | What pattern is emerging?

Where do your actions support your core words and stand? Where are old patterns returning? What will you practice next? Date your entry.

Week 3 | What needs attention?

What is working? What needs a different approach, a conversation, or additional support? Choose your next action and date it.

Keep choosing significance

Your 30-day review

Return to the question that opened the book: would you know that you mattered? Consider how your choices are shaping your answer.

1. What changed?

Compare your actions with your opening assessment. What did you follow through on? What evidence of change can you identify? What remains unresolved?

2. What have you learned?

What did you learn about who you choose to be, what gets in your way, and what you can contribute? Who, if anyone, experienced a difference because of your actions?

3. What will you continue?

Choose one practice to keep, one adjustment to make, and your next review date. Finish: "The next way I will put significance into practice is..."