

## UNEXPECTED EVENTS

Sometimes we are **HERE:**  

### Marching Forth Includes Sitting Down & Getting Reoriented

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unparalleled upheaval into our lives. Concern for the health and livelihoods of our family, friends, community, and country is disorienting in wholly new ways. Disorientation is stressful and has far-reaching effects that continue to emerge as the pandemic continues. That **stress can make the very thought of Marching Forth feel ridiculous.**

But Marching Forth is not just about the enthusiasm of a bold new endeavor. It is also about finding gentle, effective ways to move through difficult things. Sometimes, in order to figure-out the next step, the best thing to do is sit down, rest, and reorient to the situation at hand.

When circumstances force us to pause unexpectedly, it's a good time to take a breath and get your bearings. Our brains need oxygen to think clearly, so **stop for a moment right now and practice.** Slowly inhale, gently exhale, and then repeat... (it's the "repeat" part that's the important bit ;)

Next, go back to your **Week One** worksheet and at your **Character Compass.** Your compass headings are what you are going reorient to the current circumstance and the qualities that will help you move through it.

*Use this worksheet anytime you are derailed or disoriented - not just in your marching Forth, but in any part of your life where you're dealing with an unanticipated crisis or roadblock.*

### Using your character to get reoriented

Example: with character compass headings of:

- |           |          |     |         |
|-----------|----------|-----|---------|
| Curiosity | Kindness | Joy | Courage |
|-----------|----------|-----|---------|

*you might have more or fewer headings*

When facing the stress of unexpected events along the March Forth path, **I pause and and take a deep breath.** Then I ask:

1. **"What are my compass headings?"**
  - Answering this question reorients you to your values and your character and makes unexpected stress less jarring.
2. **"What is my current situation?"**
  - Think of this like pulling off the road when your car is making a weird noise or you think you missed an exit.
3. Then, **"Which of my compass headings is easiest to use in this situation?"**
  - There's no need to make stressful circumstances harder by worrying which trait is "best" to use. The ones that are easier can give you the momentum you need to take a new step (*Example:* curiosity is sometimes easier to find than courage; being curious can eventually lead to finding courage.)
4. Next, **"What's ONE step I can take using this quality that will help me feel more at ease in this unexpected situation?"**
  - Just take that *one* step. Start there.
5. Then, **"What other compass heading can help this one step feel more solid?"**
  - This makes action easier. *Example:* curiosity is sometimes more effective when I can add a little joy and humor. Each of your compass headings can support the other.
6. Lastly, I ask, **"How will I feel if I use these well? What will I notice?"**
  - Write this down. It will help you recognize your progress as it happens.
7. Keep at it. Attend to who you are this time & place. One pause, one breath, one step, and one quality of character at a time.

#### Pausing is Useful

- Taking a moment to **figure out where you are in time and space** helps you stay clear-headed in unexpected circumstances AND in the day-to-day
- When you stop, breathe, and evaluate where you are - *physically, mentally, or emotionally* - you have more resources at hand to determine your next step

#### Start by stopping

- Stand or sit in one spot for a second and ask yourself to remember where you are, where you want to go, and how you want to feel. Examples:
  - *I'm in my home office, not being productive, and I want to feel like I can get back to the task at hand.*
  - *I'm in my car and I just want to have a moment of calm before I head back into work and face the day*
  - *I'm overwhelmed by all of the media and the uncertainty, and I want to have a clear thought and feel like myself for a few minutes*
- When you know where you are in **THIS** moment, you can use your character to move you toward the place you want to go.



### Pause and Reorient – Managing UNEXPECTED EVENTS

Ask yourself these questions to help get your bearings when things feel uncertain. **Your character will get you through.**

**1.** What are my compass headings? *(These are the qualities of character that are most important to you.)*

**2.** What is my current situation?

**3.** Which of my compass headings is easiest to use in this situation?

**4.** What's ONE step I can take using this quality that will help me feel more at ease?

**5.** What one other compass heading can help to support this step?

**6.** How will I feel if I use these well? What will I notice?

**7.** Keep at it.  
Attend to who you are in this time and place.  
One pause, one breath, one step, and one quality of character at a time.

*Use this page any time want to pause, take a break, and get your bearings. Marching forth happens in lots of wonderful, small ways – even when we're not "marching" at all.*