



STOP LIVING SMALL

Find your path and take the next step

BY SHALANE HOPKINS

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Published by Shalane Hopkins
www.shalanehopkins.com

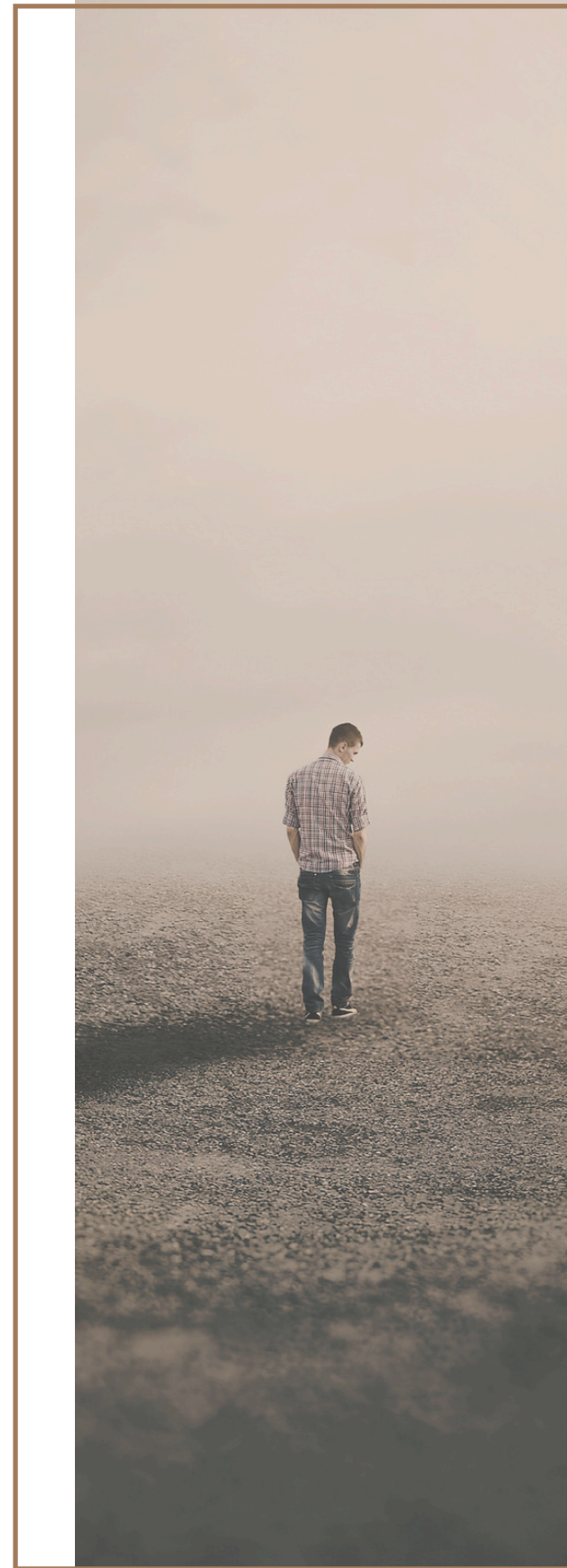
Cover, layout, and illustrations by Shalane Hopkins

Disclaimer:

This booklet is designed to guide and inspire your personal growth journey. While the exercises and strategies are designed to support meaningful progress, results may vary.

For personalised guidance and to achieve your best outcomes, working one-on-one with a professional — such as a coach — is recommended

FOR THOSE
WHO FEEL
STUCK,
OVERWHELMED,
OR LIKE THEY'RE
WALKING A
PATH THAT
ISN'T THEIRS —
AND ARE READY
TO RETURN TO
WHO THEY'VE
ALWAYS BEEN
AND TAKE THE
NEXT STEP
FORWARD.



THE WAKE-UP CALL

Most people think they're stuck.
Stuck in their goals.
Stuck in their life.

You're not stuck — you're disconnected from yourself.

If you've ever been around a toddler, — they are unapologetically themselves. Loud, curious, expressive, emotional, imaginative. They don't question whether they're "too much."

They are just themselves.

And then, slowly, that starts to change. Not out of malice — but conditioning.

"Be polite."

"Don't do that."

"That's not how we behave."

"Calm down."

Over time, we learn what is acceptable... and what isn't.

We learn which parts of us are welcomed — and what needs to be softened, hidden, or shut down altogether.

This is where people-pleasing begins.

Not as a personality trait — as a survival strategy.

When the people we rely on for safety, love, and belonging (intentionally or not) teach us that parts of who we are aren't okay — we adapt.

But in the process... we disconnect from our voice, instincts and what we were always born to be.

And that disconnection shows up everywhere:

- You might feel burnt out in a life that looks "fine" on paper.
- Your relationships might not fully see or hear you.
- You might abandon ideas, goals, or desires out of fear of rejection or failure.
- You might feel like you're walking through life in a fog — unsure which direction to go.

STOP LIVING SMALL

And it feels like being stuck.
But you're not stuck.

YOU'VE JUST BEEN
WALKING ON A
PATH THAT ISN'T
YOURS.

STOP LIVING SMALL

You already have the answers.
You always have.

But you can't hear them clearly when
you've spent years tuning into everyone
else.

To come back to the version of you that
existed before the noise.
Before the expectations.
Before you learned to shrink.

The version of you who knew who
they were — without needing
permission.



It's time to dust off the path that was
always yours.

And start walking it again.

WHERE IN YOUR LIFE
DO YOU FEEL THE
MOST INTERNAL
CONFLICT?

(Feeling burnt out, disconnected,
avoidant, or just going through
the motions.)

WHEN WAS THE LAST
TIME YOU FELT FULLY
LIKE YOURSELF?

Not performing. Not adjusting.
Just being.

WHEN WAS THE LAST
TIME YOU FELT FREE

— to laugh, to be silly, to express
yourself without hesitation?

These moments are clues.

They show you where you've created
space to be yourself —
and where you've been shrinking to fit.

WHERE YOU'VE BEEN SHRINKING

Take a moment to read through this list slowly.
Notice what resonates – not what sounds logical, but what feels true.

YOU MIGHT BE LIVING SMALL IF YOU FIND YOURSELF:

- Saying yes when you mean no
- Avoiding difficult conversations or agreeing just to keep the peace
- Not knowing what your boundaries are – or struggling to hold them
- Prioritising others' needs, opinions, or comfort over your own
- Feeling burnt out, overwhelmed, or constantly “on edge”
- Not seeing a clear path forward to make the change you need
- Thinking “I wish I could...” but never taking the step
- Seeking approval before making decisions
- Letting others talk you out of them
- Waiting for someone else to recognise your potential
- Feeling anxious at the thought of addressing issues directly
- Not feeling fully heard or seen in your relationships
- Building relationships where you feel small, dismissed, or powerless
- Feeling like you don't quite fit in the life you have

WHERE YOU'VE BEEN SHRINKING

- Changing your opinions depending on who you are talking to
- Speaking softly, holding back, or shrinking your presence
- Defaulting to “I don’t mind” or “it’s not a big deal”
- Becoming defensive when someone challenges your perspective
- Living or working in a way that doesn’t feel aligned
- Making choices based on what others expect you to do
- Neglecting your appearance, energy or self care
- Moving through life on autopilot – disconnected and numb
- Knowing there is more meant for you... but unable to claim it

What stood out to you?

Where are you shrinking to fit a life that doesn't fully feel like yours?

RETURN TO WHO YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN

For me, returning to myself
started with remembering.

In 2010, I walked Te Araroa.
It wasn't the logical choice.
Most didn't understand why.

But it was my path.

It was one of the few times in my life
where I listened fully to my own voice –
and followed it.

No overthinking.
No shrinking.
No asking for permission.

Just a deep knowing:
I'm meant to do this.

And so I did.

For months, I walked 3,000 kilometres
from Cape Reinga to Bluff – carrying
everything I needed on my back,
navigating uncertainty, discomfort, and
challenge every single day.

It wasn't easy.

But it was what I was meant to do.
It was what I needed to do.



STOP LIVING SMALL

And then when I finished, I slowly disconnected again.

I packed that version of me away and returned to what felt familiar. Acceptable. Normal.

I returned to patterns of people-pleasing. Shrinking. Quietening the voice within.

I built a life that looked fine — but didn't feel like mine.

It took me years to realise what had happened.

NOTES:



I hadn't lost myself.
I had just stopped choosing myself.

Everything changed when I decided to return to the version of me who walked Te Araroa.

The one who didn't shrink.
The one who chose a path because it felt right — not because it was expected.

The process was uncomfortable.
Confronting.
At times, incredibly painful.

But it was also freeing.

You don't need to walk 3,000 kilometres to do the same.

“

YOU JUST NEED TO
START LISTENING
TO THE VOICE
WITHIN. THE ONE
THAT HAS ALWAYS
KNOWN THE PATH
MEANT FOR YOU.



01

WHEN DID YOU LAST
FOLLOW YOUR INNER
VOICE?

02

WHAT WOULD BE
YOUR BEST LIFE
REGARDLESS IF OTHERS
AGREE?





CHOOSE YOUR DIRECTION

There was a day on Te Araroa the fog was so thick we could barely see 30 metres ahead.

No landmarks.

No clear path.

Just a series of waratah posts — each topped with a bright orange rubber cap.

They were the only thing visible through the fog, marking our direction forward.

We couldn't see the trail.

We could only see the next post.

STOP LIVING SMALL

And when we reached each one, we paused... squinted into the fog... and searched for the next marker.

Post by post.

That's how we found our way.

Life often feels the same.

Especially when you're stepping outside your comfort zone —
when you're choosing a path that isn't mapped out, predictable, or familiar.



You want certainty as you step forward.

But life doesn't work like that.

You don't get shown the entire path before you begin.

You get shown only what's right in front of you.

You don't need blind faith in everything working out perfectly — only trust that you can move forward and figure it out along the way.

Clarity doesn't come before action, it comes from it.

You only need to see the next step. And take it.

What is the next step for you, even if you can't see beyond it?

What action would you take if you trusted your inner voice more?

STOP LIVING SMALL

Clarity doesn't come before action,
It comes from it.

YOU ONLY NEED
TO SEE THE
NEXT STEP.
AND TAKE IT.

STOP LIVING SMALL

TAKE ONE STEP



You can understand everything you've just read... and still stay exactly where you are.

The difference between moving forward and remaining still is always the same thing:

Action.

Not perfect action.
Not big action.
Just one step.

Because momentum doesn't start on its own – it's created.

And once you start moving:
Clarity sharpens.
Energy returns.
Resistance softens.

It's time to make this real.

You don't need more time.
You don't need more clarity.
You don't need to feel ready.

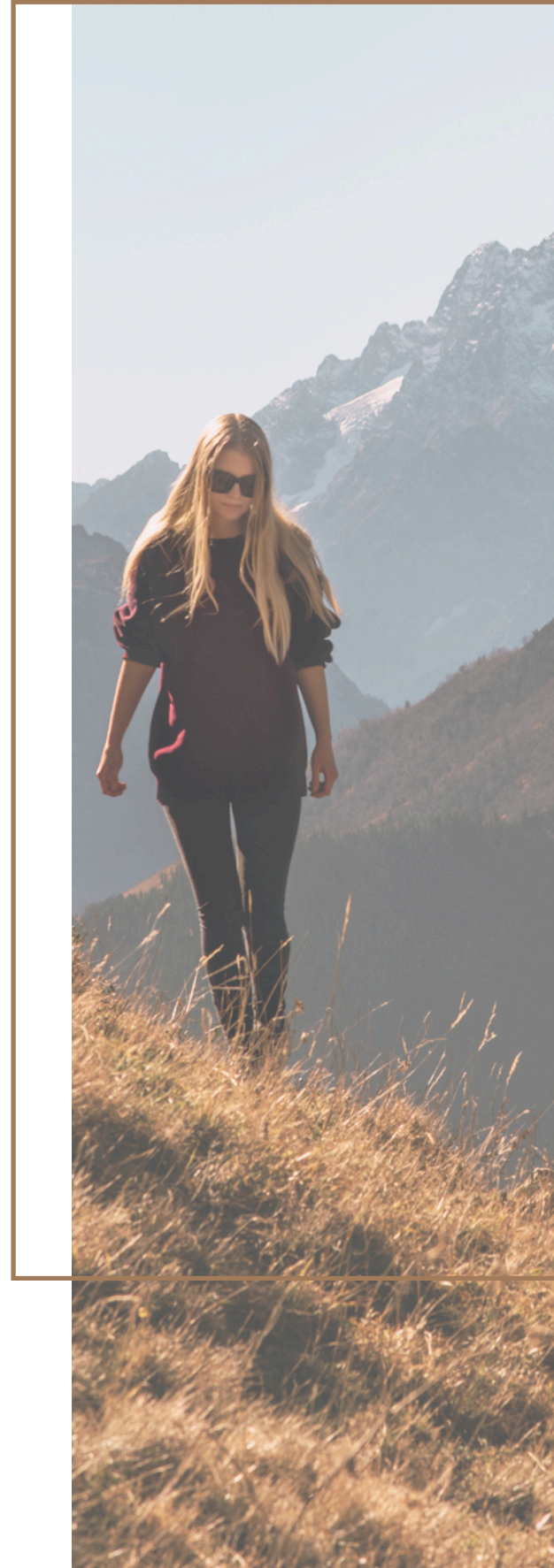
You need to move.

STOP LIVING SMALL

IF YOU DIDN'T
WORRY ABOUT
WHAT OTHERS
MIGHT THINK,
SAY, OR DO
WHAT WOULD
YOU DO NEXT?

Now commit to an
actionable step you can
take towards that.

And take it within the
next 24–48 hours.



KEEP WALKING

There is no such thing as
overnight transformation.

A single moment may spark the first step,
but change only happens in what you do
after that.

In the choices you repeat.
The inner work you do.
The steps you keep taking.

This is what growth really is.

Not a breakthrough.
A practice.

And what often happens is you take one
step...
and then life tries to pull you back into
old patterns.

Old habits.
Old thinking.
Old versions of you that feel safe or
familiar.

This is where most people give up.

Not because they don't care.

But because they don't have structure or
accountability to stick with it when things
get hard.

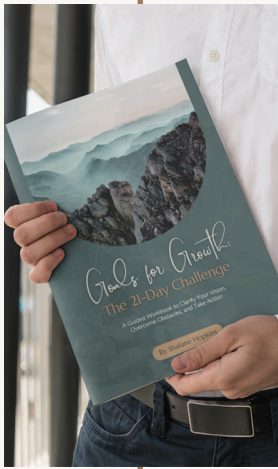
That's why I created tools to support this
process and to help you continue walking
your path.



STOP LIVING SMALL

TOOLS & RESOURCES

If you're ready for more – don't ignore that.
Lean into it. One step at a time.



GOALS FOR GROWTH WORKBOOK

A practical framework to help you:

- Get clear on where you are right now and where you want to go
- Break your vision into real, achievable steps
- Build support, strategies and structure
- Reflect, adjust, and stay in motion

This is what I use to realign, refocus, or rebuild momentum in my own life.

[GET IT HERE](#)



COACHING & SUPPORT

Having people in your corner to help navigate challenges and stay on path is crucial.

Sometimes you need someone objective who understands the journey you're undertaking.

That's the work I do as a coach.

I'm not here to "fix" you. I help you return to who you are – and create momentum on the path that's yours.

[START NOW](#)

STOP LIVING SMALL

THANK YOU!

Hi, I'm Shalane Hopkins – author, coach, and speaker.

In 2010, I walked Te Araroa – New Zealand's wild and untamed 3,000-kilometre trail. That journey tested my resilience, stripped me back to my core, and taught me that growth doesn't come from avoiding struggle, but from walking through it.

Today, I create tools and resources that support resilience, authenticity, and purposeful living – using the challenges I've faced to empower your own journey. My goal is to inspire you to walk your path with courage, grit, and grace.

Because every step forward – no matter how small – has the power to shape who we are.



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