



PEOPLE IN MOTION

Change the Route

*A short guide to telling a bad
patch from the wrong road.*

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DISCLAIMER

This guide gives general information about habit, behaviour and motivation. It is not medical, psychological, financial or legal advice, and it isn't a substitute for advice from someone qualified to give it.

If you have a health condition, a diagnosed mental health condition, or any doubt about whether a change is safe for you, talk to a doctor or another qualified professional before you act on anything here.

Nothing in this guide guarantees a particular result. What works varies by person and circumstance, and the responsibility for what you do next is yours.

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BEFORE WE START

Setbacks are one thing. This is different. This is about the moment nothing's necessarily gone wrong yet, but the plan you built isn't quite getting you there either, and you have to decide whether to push through or change course.

That decision gets made badly more often than almost any other in this whole process. Push on when you should have turned, or turn when you should have pushed on, and either mistake costs years. Getting it right isn't about willpower. It's about telling the two situations apart.

The destination hasn't moved. The question is only ever about the route.

Two people can be in the exact same stuck position. One needs to grit their teeth through an ordinary hard patch. The other needs to admit the road they're on stopped leading anywhere months ago. From the outside they look the same. Knowing which one you actually are is most of what this guide is for.

Change the route. Not the destination.



CHAPTER ONE

Persistence and stubbornness look the same from outside

From a distance, someone who's about to break through and someone who's about to waste another year look identical. Same repeated effort, same refusal to stop, same story they'll tell either way about not giving up.

The difference isn't visible from outside, and it usually isn't visible from inside either, which is what makes this genuinely hard.

Persistence serves the destination. Stubbornness serves the plan, or the ego attached to it, or the discomfort of admitting the first route was wrong. Only one of those is actually about getting there.

Nobody sets out to be stubborn. It arrives disguised as commitment, and it's nearly always the last thing anyone suspects about themselves.



CHAPTER TWO

The destination is fixed. The route never was.

Somewhere in the planning, the route quietly gets promoted to the same status as the destination, treated as though changing it means abandoning the whole thing. It doesn't. It was never meant to hold that much weight.

A route is a best guess made with the information available at the time. New information arrives constantly. Treating the original guess as a promise you have to keep, regardless of what you've since learned, confuses a plan with a vow. Nobody signed anything. The plan was always allowed to be wrong about the how.

Only one part of this was ever meant to be fixed. It isn't the route.



CHAPTER THREE

Signs the plan isn't working

Not every hard week is a sign to change course. But there are real signals worth taking seriously, and most people either ignore them for too long or panic at the first one.

The same failure repeating in the same way, despite genuine effort, is a signal. No new information changing the outcome, attempt after attempt, is a signal. The cost, in time or money or the rest of your life, quietly outweighing what's being gained, is a signal. One of these on its own might be a rough patch. Two or three together are the plan trying to tell you something.

The signal isn't difficulty. It's difficulty that isn't teaching you anything and isn't going anywhere. A route that's working usually leaves some trace of progress even in the hard weeks, some small thing that's genuinely different from last month. A route that's failed tends to feel identical to how it felt three months ago, just with more effort poured into it.



CHAPTER FOUR

The years already spent don't get a vote

The years already spent don't come back either way, whether you continue or change course tomorrow. That fact should make the decision easier. For most people it does the opposite.

The instinct is to protect what's already been invested by investing more, as though enough additional effort will retroactively justify what's already gone. It won't. The two years spent are the same two years spent whether year three continues the same route or a different one. The only question that matters is which route serves the next two years, and the past two have no vote in that.

Ask what you'd choose today, knowing what you know now, with no history to defend. That answer is more honest than the one that's protecting a decision already made.



CHAPTER FIVE

The middle is supposed to feel like this

The opposite mistake is just as common and just as expensive.

Mistaking ordinary difficulty for a sign the whole route is broken, and abandoning something that was actually working, just slowly, right before it would have paid off.

Most things worth reaching have a long unglamorous middle where nothing visibly moves and everything feels harder than the plan implied. That middle isn't a signal. It's just what the middle is like, for almost everyone, on almost every real pursuit. Confusing that with evidence of a wrong turn is how people restart from scratch, again and again, always at the exact point where the previous route was closest to working.

Before changing course because it's hard, check whether it's hard in the specific way described in the last chapter, or just hard in the ordinary way the middle always is.



CHAPTER SIX

Still going. Different way.

Quitting means abandoning the destination. Changing the route means keeping it and finding a better way there. The two get treated as the same thing constantly, and that confusion alone keeps a lot of people on routes that stopped working years ago.

Nobody would call a driver who takes a different road after finding the bridge closed a quitter. They'd call that obvious. The same logic somehow stops applying the moment the closed bridge is a career path, a business model, or a relationship approach instead of an actual road, even though the underlying situation is identical.

Say it plainly, to yourself if nobody else. Still going. Different way.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Test before you commit to the new way

Swapping one full plan for another, on a hunch, carries its own risk, the same one it's meant to solve. A new route deserves the same scepticism the old one should have gotten before you built a life around it.

Where possible, test the new route at a small scale before committing everything to it. A trial, a conversation, a version small enough to fail cheaply if it's wrong. This isn't caution for its own sake. It's the difference between changing route based on evidence and changing route based on the same optimism that built the last one.

The new route earns full commitment the same way the old one should have. By surviving contact with a small test first.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Ask what changed, not just what's hard

Before switching, ask a more precise question than is this working. Ask what's actually different now from when the route was chosen. New information. A changed market. A skill that turned out to matter more, or less, than expected.

If nothing has genuinely changed and the only new development is that it's harder than hoped, that's usually chapter five talking, not a real signal. If something has changed in the facts rather than the mood, that's usually a real reason to adjust. The question sorts real signals from a bad week faster than almost anything else here.



CHAPTER NINE

When the plan stalls, do this

Sit down with the plan in front of you, literally if you can, and work through this in order.

Name what's actually happening. The same failure repeating, or an ordinary hard middle. Be specific, not just tired.

Check the sunk cost. Would you choose this route today, knowing what you know now, with no history to protect.

Ask what's genuinely changed since the route was chosen. Facts, not mood.

If the route needs to change, test the new one small before committing fully.

Whatever you decide, keep the destination exactly where it was.



ONE MORE THING

Nobody gets the route right on the first attempt every time. The people who arrive somewhere worth being usually changed route more than once along the way, quietly, without treating each change as a failure of the plan before it.

The destination never needed you to be right about the road. It only needed you to keep walking towards it, by whichever road actually got you there.

Change the route. Not the destination.



**Everything that grows, moves.
Make your move.**

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