

FROM THE BOOK *THE WISDOM MAP*

Your Wisdom *Map*

Eleven questions about one part of your life, seen from eleven angles.

Choose one situation in your life that feels unsettled right now: your **live question**. Each Map page looks at it through one idea from *The Wisdom Map*, with two or three plain questions and an example answer. Read in order, your answers become your map. Fill it in by hand or on screen.

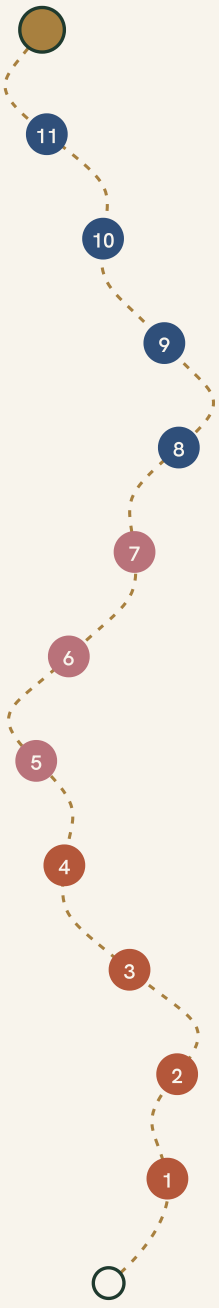
Under every page, three questions: What do I actually know? · What am I adding? · What could I learn next?

These are reflection pages, not a test or a diagnosis. wisdomwomenlibrary.com/map

THE MAP

The Wisdom *Map*

One situation in your life, seen from eleven angles. Each chapter adds one line to your map.



YOUR MAP
What I see more clearly now

11 — A loss, a value, or a life I'm imagining

10 — The cost of staying, the cost of changing

9 — Happy, meaningful, rich

8 — The goal and its promise

7 — A yes I chose, or a yes to keep the peace

6 — Hope and evidence

5 — Appreciated, or understood?

4 — What I do, what I bring, what I'd miss

3 — What happened, and what I added

2 — The value under the plan

1 — A role, or a rule?

START HERE
Your live question

PART III · MEANING

PART II · LOVE

PART I · SELF

YOUR MAP · START HERE

Your live question

Think of one situation in your life that feels unsettled right now. Not your whole life. One thing: a role you're tired of, a decision you keep postponing, a relationship you keep waiting on, a commitment you're no longer sure about.

FOR EXAMPLE

Whether to keep hosting every family holiday. I've done it for nine years. I'm tired, and I'm afraid of what it would mean to stop.

1 *What is it, in a few words?*

2 *Describe it in two sentences. What makes it feel unsettled?*

This is your live question. Every Map page comes back to it.

A role, or a rule?

Look at the live question you wrote down at the start. Somewhere inside it is a role you play: the one who handles it, pays for it, organizes it, keeps the peace, or knows the answer.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I'm the one who plans every family holiday. My mother asked me to host Thanksgiving once, nine years ago. Nobody has asked since; I just do it. If I stopped, I'm afraid it would look like I don't care."

1 *What do people count on you for in this situation?*

2 *Which of those expectations has someone actually said out loud, and which have you assumed?*

3 *If you stepped back from one part of it, what are you afraid it would say about you?*

Keep your answer. You'll come back to it.

The value under the plan

Go back to your live question, and to what you wrote on Map page 1 about the role you play in it.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I took this job for the salary and the stability after my divorce. Now I stay mostly for my team, and it asks for fifty-hour weeks. In five years I'd like to be able to work four days a week, and right now nothing in my life is set up for that."

1 *When this began, what did you hope it would give you?*

2 *What does it give you now, and what does it ask of you?*

3 *What would you want the woman you'll be in five years to be free to choose?*

What happened, and what I added

Think about your live question. Who else is part of it? Choose one person whose behavior in this situation stirs a strong reaction in you.

FOR EXAMPLE

"My brother never offers to help with Mom's appointments. What he actually said was, 'Let me know if you need anything.' I concluded he doesn't care. Another explanation: he has no idea what's involved. What I care about is being treated as a partner, not as staff."

1 *What did this person actually do or say, in words a camera could record?*

2 *What did you conclude about them, and what is one other explanation that fits the same facts?*

3 *What does your reaction tell you that you care about?*

What I do, what I bring, what I'd miss

Look at the role you named on Map page 1. Imagine it ended or changed sharply tomorrow.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I'd happily stop running the volunteer committee. I'd keep my organizing skills and my love for this neighborhood. What I'd miss is people calling me first. I could get that from mentoring one new volunteer instead of running everything."

1 *Which tasks would you be relieved to put down?*

2 *Which abilities and values would you carry with you no matter what?*

3 *What would you miss most: the work, the people, the recognition, or being needed? Where else could that live?*

Appreciated, or understood?

Think about your live question, and about one person close to you who is part of it, or who could be.

FOR EXAMPLE

"Since my divorce, my friends keep telling me how strong I am. They don't know how lonely Sunday nights are. I could tell my closest friend, 'Sundays are hard. Would you want to make Sunday dinner a regular thing?'"

1 *What do they thank you or praise you for in this situation?*

2 *What is true about how you feel right now that they don't know?*

3 *What could you say, in one or two sentences, that would let them see it?*

Hope and evidence

Look at your live question. Somewhere in it is something you're waiting for: a person to change, a situation to improve, a "soon" to arrive.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I'm hoping my manager will finally give me the lead role he keeps mentioning. In six months, nothing has changed except the promises. If it stayed like this, I'd start talking to other teams."

1 *What are you hoping will change, in concrete terms?*

2 *What has actually changed in the last six months?*

3 *If things stayed much as they are, what would you choose?*

A yes I chose, or a yes to keep the peace

Look at your live question, and at what you wrote on Map page 1 about what people count on you for.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I said yes to covering my coworker's Friday shifts again. I gave that yes because she goes cold when I say no. If I knew she'd take it well, I'd tell her, 'I can do one Friday a month, not every week.'"

1 *What have you said yes to in this situation in the last month?*

2 *Which of those yeses did you choose, and which did you give to avoid a reaction?*

3 *If you knew the other person would take it well, what would you say about one of them?*

The goal and its promise

Look at your live question. Somewhere inside it is a goal you worked toward, or are still working toward.

FOR EXAMPLE

"I wanted to make partner so I'd never worry about money again. I don't worry about money. I also haven't had a free Saturday in four years, and I haven't taken a real vacation with my husband since the kids were small."

1 *What was the goal, in a few words?*

2 *What did you believe reaching it would finally give you?*

3 *How much of that is it giving you today, and what is it asking of you in return?*

Happy, meaningful, rich

Look at the part of your life your live question is about.

FOR EXAMPLE

"My work with my clients is meaningful, and I enjoy most days. But I haven't learned anything new in years. I could sit in on the new graduate training program, just to listen."

1 *What in it brings you real enjoyment or ease?*

2 *What in it gives you a sense of meaning or purpose?*

3 *When did it last surprise you, teach you something, or change your mind? What is one small experience that might?*

The cost of staying, the cost of changing

Look at your live question as it stands today.

FOR EXAMPLE

"Keeping my weekly Sunday dinners with my in-laws gives my kids time with their grandparents and keeps the peace. Over three years it costs me every Sunday I'll never get back. I could suggest every other week for two months and see how it goes."

1 *What does keeping things exactly as they are give you? Be generous.*

2 *What would keeping things exactly as they are cost you over the next three years?*

3 *What is one small, reversible step that would show you more about the alternative?*

A loss, a value, or a life I'm imagining

Look at your live question and ask: which road not taken comes to mind when I think about this?

FOR EXAMPLE

"I turned down art school to take a steady job when my dad got sick. I imagine I'd be a working artist now, but I can't know that. What I still want is to make things with my hands. I could take a weekend printmaking workshop next month."

1 *What did you actually choose instead, and what did you know at the time?*

2 *What do you imagine that other life would have given you? Which parts can you know, and which are you imagining?*

3 *What value inside that road could still have a place in your life now?*

READING YOUR MAP

Your last Map page

Read your eleven answers one more time. Then finish these two sentences.

FOR EXAMPLE

"What I see more clearly now is that I don't hate my job; I hate being the only one who knows how everything works. One thing I could learn next is what happens if I train someone to cover for me for one week in March."

1 *What I see more clearly now is...*

2 *One thing I could learn next is...*