



Are you feeling
like you're being
led through life
instead of
leading it?

This is for you.

I Don't Know What I Want, But It's Not This

5 Truths for Women in Transition

By Lynnelle Wilson

After listening to women from around the world share their stories, I heard the same thing over and over:

"I don't know what I want, but I know it's not this."

If that line stopped you cold, you're in the right place. These aren't the struggles you read about in magazines. These are the real, raw truths women tell me when no one else is listening.

You're not broken.

You're not behind.

You're just done being led instead of leading.

TRUTH #1

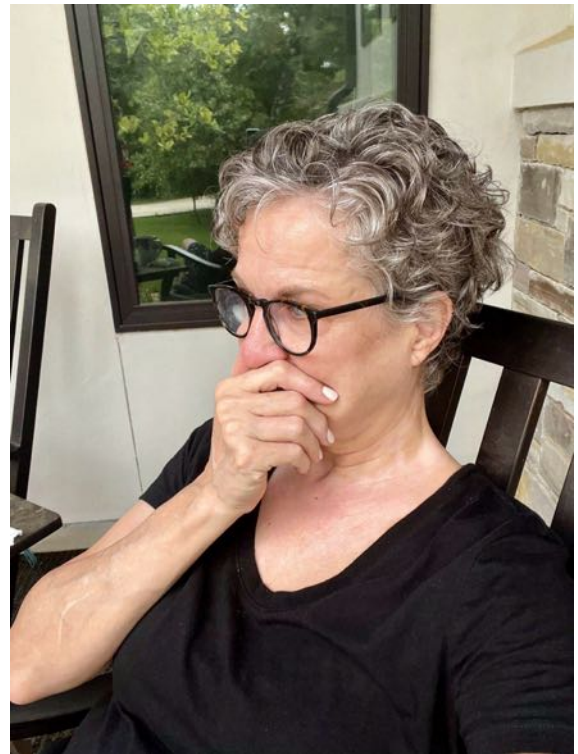
“I don't know what I want, but I know it's not this”

The Reality

You're not lost — you're done living by someone else's blueprint. That restless feeling isn't confusion; it's clarity trying to break through.

For years, you followed the rules. You built the career, raised the kids, took care of everyone else, checked all the boxes. And now? Now you're standing in a life that looks successful from the outside but feels hollow on the inside.

That nagging voice saying "this isn't it" isn't a problem to solve — it's wisdom trying to get your attention.





What This Really Means

Your old life doesn't fit anymore (and that's normal).

Just like you outgrew clothes that once made you feel amazing, you've outgrown roles and routines that once served you. It doesn't mean there was anything wrong with them — or with you.

Knowing what you DON'T want is actually the first step to clarity.

You don't need to have all the answers. You just need to start honoring what's no longer true for you.

You don't need a complete plan to take the next step.

Clarity comes through movement, not meditation. Trust that you can figure it out as you go.

Practice

The "Not This" List

Time needed: 10 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pen (or your phone)



The Process:

1. Set a timer for 5 minutes
2. Write "NOT THIS:" at the top of your page
3. List everything that feels wrong, heavy, or draining in your current life. Don't filter — just dump it all out. Examples:
 - "Not this endless people-pleasing"
 - "Not this feeling invisible"
 - "Not this pretending I'm fine when I'm not"
4. When the timer goes off, take a breath
5. Set the timer for another 5 minutes
6. Write "WHAT IF:" at the top of a new page
7. For each "not this," write one small "what if" possibility:
 - "Not this people-pleasing" ▶ "What if I said no to one thing this week?"
 - "Not this feeling invisible" ▶ "What if I shared one true thing about how I'm feeling?"

Remember: The point isn't to solve everything — it's to start moving toward what feels more true.

TRUTH #2

“Everyone's telling me what to do, and none of them get it.”

The Reality

Your compass isn't broken—the noise around you is just LOUD. Well-meaning advice from people who haven't walked your path can make you doubt your own knowing.

"You should date again." "You need to stay busy. Get another dog."
"You're so lucky you don't have to work anymore."



Sound familiar? Everyone has an opinion about what you should do next, and most of it comes from people who've never stood where you're standing. The worst part? You start wondering if maybe they're right and you're wrong for not feeling grateful, happy, or ready to follow their suggestions.

Here's the truth: they mean well, but they don't get it. And their advice says more about their fears than your reality.

What This Really Means

Other people's timelines don't apply to your life.

Just because your friend remarried six months after her divorce doesn't mean you're "behind" for not even wanting to date yet. Your pace is your pace.

You don't owe anyone explanations for your choices.

"I'm not ready" is a complete sentence. "I'm still figuring it out" is a valid life stage, not a character flaw.

Your inner voice knows things your mind hasn't figured out yet.

That gut feeling that says "not now" or "not that" is worth more than a dozen well-meaning suggestions from people on the outside.



Practice

Noise vs. Voice

Time needed: 10 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pen



The Process:

1. Think of one piece of advice you keep getting that doesn't feel right
2. Write it at the top of your page: "Everyone says I should..."
3. Identify the Noise: Write down:
 - Who keeps giving you this advice?
 - What might they be afraid of for you (or themselves)?
 - How does your body feel when you hear this advice? (tense, tired, resistant?)
4. Find Your Voice: Now write:
 - What does your gut say about this advice?
 - If you trusted yourself completely, what would you do instead?
 - What would feel most honest for you right now?
5. Create Your Response: Write one simple sentence you can use the next time someone gives you this advice:
 - "I appreciate your concern, but I'm taking my time with this."
 - "That might work for some people, but it's not right for me right now."
 - "I'm still figuring out what feels right for me."

Remember: You're not being difficult. You're being discerning.

TRUTH #3

“I'm grieving things no one recognizes as loss”

The Reality

You can grieve the loss of your old identity, routines, or imagined future — even when the change was your choice. This invisible grief is real and deserves to be honored.

Nobody sends casseroles when you retire. There's no funeral for the version of yourself who knew exactly what Tuesday mornings were for. No one acknowledges the death of the future you thought you were building—the one where your marriage lasted, your kids stayed close, your body didn't change, your parents didn't age.

But you feel it. The heaviness. The sense that something important has ended, even if you can't name what it is. Even if everyone around you thinks you should be celebrating.

If you've also recently lost someone you love—a spouse, parent, or close friend—you're dealing with compound grief. The loss of that person deserves its own process and support. But on top of that profound loss, you're also grieving all the invisible things: your identity as their partner or caregiver, the routines you shared, the future you planned together. This layering of grief can make everything feel more intense and confusing. You're not just mourning a person—you're mourning an entire way of life.

This isn't depression. This isn't being ungrateful. This is grief—and it's completely normal.



What This Really Means

Transition always involves loss, even positive ones.

Retirement means losing structure and identity. Kids leaving home means losing your daily purpose. Even choosing to move or end a relationship involves mourning what was, even if what's coming is better.

You can be grateful AND sad at the same time.

You can appreciate your freedom while missing your routine. You can be proud of your grown children while mourning the end of active mothering. Feelings don't have to make logical sense.

Grief doesn't follow a timeline.

There's no "should be over this by now." Some days you feel fine, other days the loss hits you sideways. That's not regression—that's how grief works.

Practice

Hidden Grief Inventory

Time needed: 15 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pen, somewhere private



The Process:

1. Acknowledge what's ended. Write down:
 - What role or identity have I lost or left behind?
 - What routines or structures are no longer part of my life?
 - What future did I imagine that won't happen now?
2. Name what you miss. For each loss, write:
 - What specifically do I miss about this?
 - What did this give me that I valued? (purpose, connection, security, etc.)
3. Honor the loss. Choose one thing from your list and write:
 - "I'm sad that I lost..."
 - "It's okay that I miss..."
 - "Thank you for what you gave me..."
4. Create a small ritual. This could be:
 - Lighting a candle for what you're letting go
 - Writing a goodbye letter (you don't have to send it)
 - Taking a walk and mentally saying farewell
 - Simply sitting with the sadness for a few minutes without trying to fix it

Remember: Honoring what was doesn't mean you're stuck in the past. It means you're making space for what's next.

TRUTH #4

“I want connection, not correction”

The Reality

You don't need another self-help guru telling you how to fix yourself. You need someone to sit in the dark with you for a minute and remind you that you're not alone.

The self-help industry wants you to believe that if you just follow the right steps, read the right book, or implement the right strategy, you'll feel better. But here's what they don't tell you: sometimes the most healing thing isn't advice — it's someone saying, "Yeah, this is hard. You're not crazy for feeling this way."

You've probably tried the solutions. You've read the articles about "10 Ways to Reinvent Yourself After 50." You've listened to podcasts about finding your passion. You've maybe even hired a coach or therapist who kept asking what you wanted to do instead of how you were feeling.

And while all of that has its place, what you're really craving is simpler and harder to find: someone who gets it. Someone who's been where you are and can say, "I see you. This is real. You're going to be okay."

What This Really Means

Being witnessed is more powerful than being advised.

When someone truly sees your struggle without immediately trying to solve it, something shifts. You stop feeling broken and start feeling human.

You're not a problem to be solved.

You're a person in transition, and transition is messy and uncomfortable and normal. The goal isn't to fast-track through it — it's to move through it with support.

Community matters more than strategies.

One conversation with someone who truly understands can do more for you than a dozen action plans from people who've never walked your path.



Practice

Find Your Witnesses

Time needed: 15 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pen



The Process

1. Identify what you need to be witnessed. Write down:
 - What part of your experience feels most lonely or misunderstood?
 - What do you wish someone would acknowledge about what you're going through?
 - What would it feel like to have someone say, "Me too" to your struggle?
2. Map your current support. Look at the people in your life and ask:
 - Who listens without immediately trying to fix me?
 - Who has walked a similar path and might understand?
 - Who makes me feel seen rather than judged?
3. Notice the advice-givers vs. the witnesses. Write down:
 - Who always has suggestions for what I should do?
 - Who asks how I'm feeling instead of what I'm planning?
 - Where do I feel most comfortable being honest about my struggles?
4. Take one small step toward connection. Choose one action:
 - Reach out to someone who listens well and share one real thing
 - Join a group or community where people understand your situation
 - Set a boundary with someone who gives unwanted advice
 - Simply notice when you need witnessing vs. when you need solutions
5. Practice being a witness for yourself. Write:
 - "What I'm going through is real."
 - "It makes sense that I feel this way."
 - "I don't have to have it all figured out right now."

Remember: You don't need to be fixed. You need to be seen. And once you feel truly witnessed, the path forward often becomes clearer on its own.

TRUTH #5

“I don't need permission to want more”

The Reality

You're allowed to want things that don't make sense to others, as long as they make sense to you. Wanting more—different, better, or new — doesn't make you selfish, ungrateful, or unrealistic.

Somewhere along the way, you learned to apologize for your desires. To minimize what you want. To justify why you deserve it or explain why it's practical. You've been trained to believe that wanting more than what you have makes you greedy, that dreaming big at this stage makes you delusional, that prioritizing your own needs makes you selfish.

Bullshit.

You don't need anyone's permission to want what you want. You don't need to prove you're worthy of more. You don't need to justify your dreams or make them smaller so others feel comfortable.

The woman who raised the kids, built the career, took care of everyone else? She's earned the right to want something for herself. And the woman you're becoming? She gets to decide what that something is.



What This Really Means

Wanting more doesn't make you ungrateful.

You can appreciate what you've had while recognizing you're ready for something different. Gratitude and desire aren't mutually exclusive.

Your desires don't need to make sense to anyone else.

If you want to start a business at 65, move across the country, go back to school, or completely change directions—that's between you and your life, not you and the committee of other people's opinions.

"Realistic" is often code for "small."

When someone tells you to be realistic, they're usually telling you to want less. But you get to decide what's possible for your life, not them.

Practice

Values vs Roles Clarification

Time needed: 20 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pen



The Process

1. Name what you want without justification. Write:
 - What do I want that I've been afraid to say out loud?
 - What desire have I been minimizing or apologizing for?
 - What would I want if I didn't have to explain it to anyone?
2. Identify the permission-seekers. Notice:
 - Whose approval am I waiting for?
 - What voices in my head tell me my wants are too much, too late, or too selfish?
 - Where did I learn that I need permission to want what I want?
3. Reframe "selfish" as "self-honoring." For each desire, write:
 - "Wanting this doesn't make me selfish—it makes me human."
 - "I don't need to justify my desires to anyone."
 - "My wants matter because I matter."
4. Practice permission-free language. Replace these phrases:
 - "I probably shouldn't want this, but..." ▶ "I want this."
 - "I know it sounds crazy, but..." ▶ "I'm considering..."
 - "I don't know if I deserve this, but..." ▶ "I'm working toward..."
5. Take one permission-free action this week. Choose something small:
 - Share a desire without apologizing for it
 - Research something you want without justifying why
 - Say "I want this" instead of "I think I might want this"
 - Stop explaining your choices to people who didn't ask

Remember: You're not asking for permission anymore. You're informing the people important to you of your needs and intentions, and asking for their support. The people not important to you? You don't owe them anything.

WHAT'S NEXT

You're not lost, you're wayfinding

If you've made it this far, something inside you is shifting. You've acknowledged the truths that most people won't say out loud. You've recognized that feeling lost isn't the same as being lost. And you've started to trust that you don't need permission to want what you want.

Here's what I know about you: You're not broken. You're not behind. You're not doing it wrong.

You're Wayfinding.

Wayfinding is the ancient art of navigation without a map or compass — using the stars, the wind, the feel of the water to find your way. It requires trusting your instincts, paying attention to subtle signs, and believing you have what you need to reach your destination, even when you can't see it yet.

That's exactly where you are now. You're learning to navigate by your inner compass instead of someone else's map. You're discovering that the "not this" feeling is actually your internal GPS recalibrating. You're remembering that you have permission to want what you want—no justification required.