

By Annette Argabright

Start: June 2021

Complete: April 2023

Framework: EMBARK

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**E**valuate the elements or situation

**M**otivation

**B**oundaries

**A**ctions or approach

**R**evue the reality

**K**eep the plan





My goal for this diploma design presentation is that it would convey the story of my journey of “**stepping into the unknown**” with flow, clarity, respect, and engagement.

I want you, the reader, to feel the ups and downs of the journey, and for it to resonate in your own life. I would love for it to encourage next steps in “**discovering abundance**”, and finding your own gate journey.

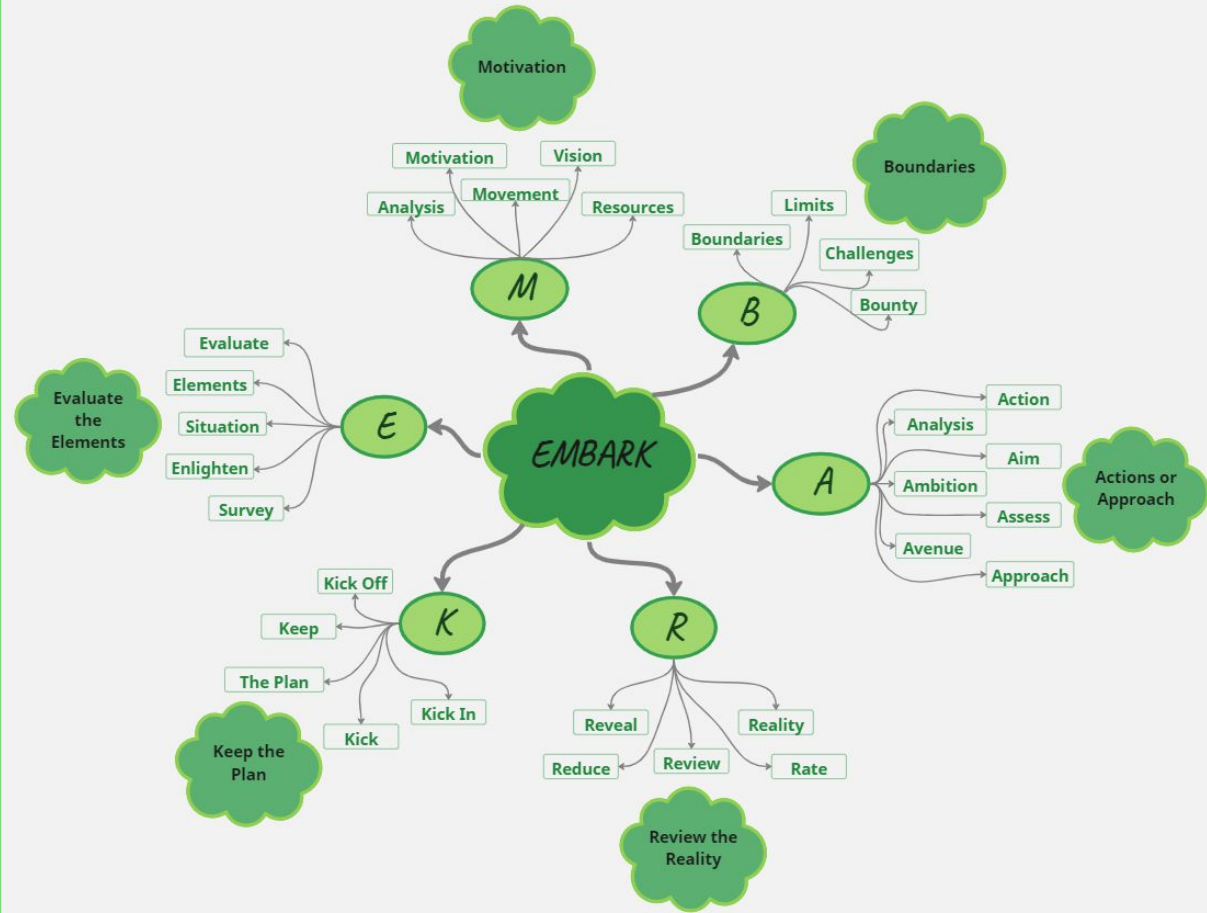
Annette



# Framework

EMBARC emerged after a conversation with Cecelia, at my first diploma gathering. We were talking about our designs and where we were stuck. Embark, Embrace, Ease had become life transformative and difficult to formulate into a presentation. She inspired me to create my own framework.

I created EMBARK for the framework of this design and used the Design Web as an invaluable and informative tool. Laying out notes and thoughts, and slowly forming them into a story using a personal framework lended extra support to what became the most challenging design I have done.



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Life on the Road, Take 1

No Job! Now What?

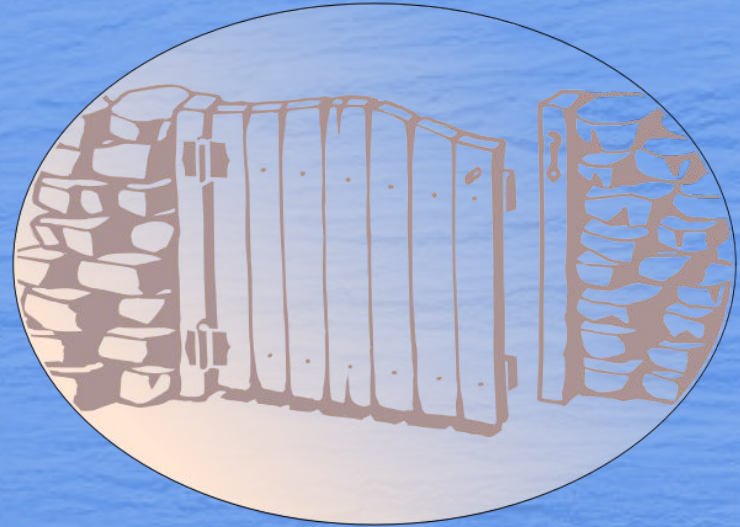
Life on the Road, Take 2

Eureka Springs

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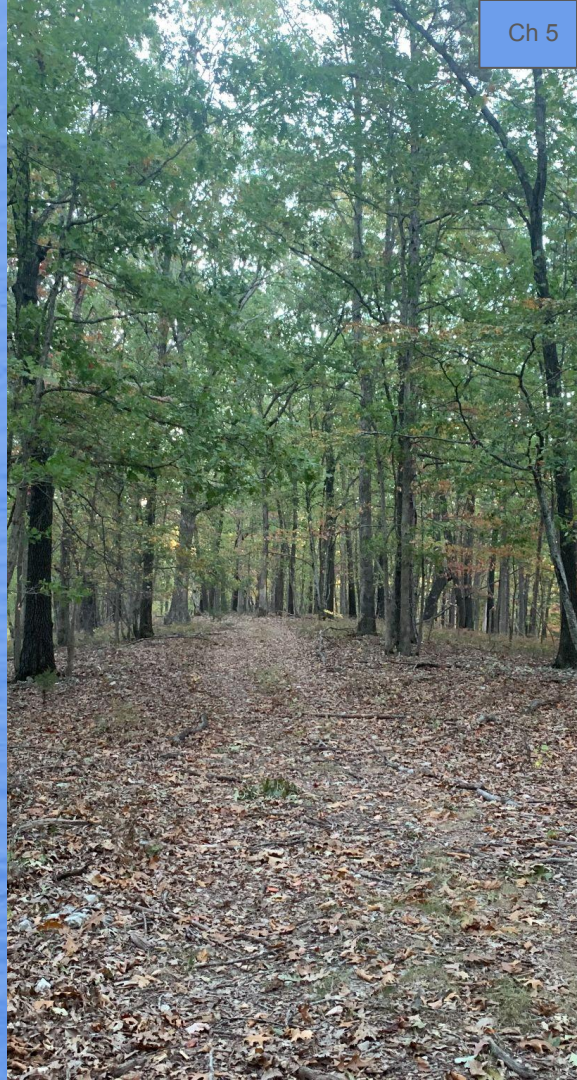


# Eureka Springs Story

I made plans to seek the help from a realtor in Eureka Springs, again **“stepping into the unknown”**. Despite finding a couple properties that would be perfect, I did not have funding and only my little trailer to live in. It was not ideal, but I needed to try something for myself.

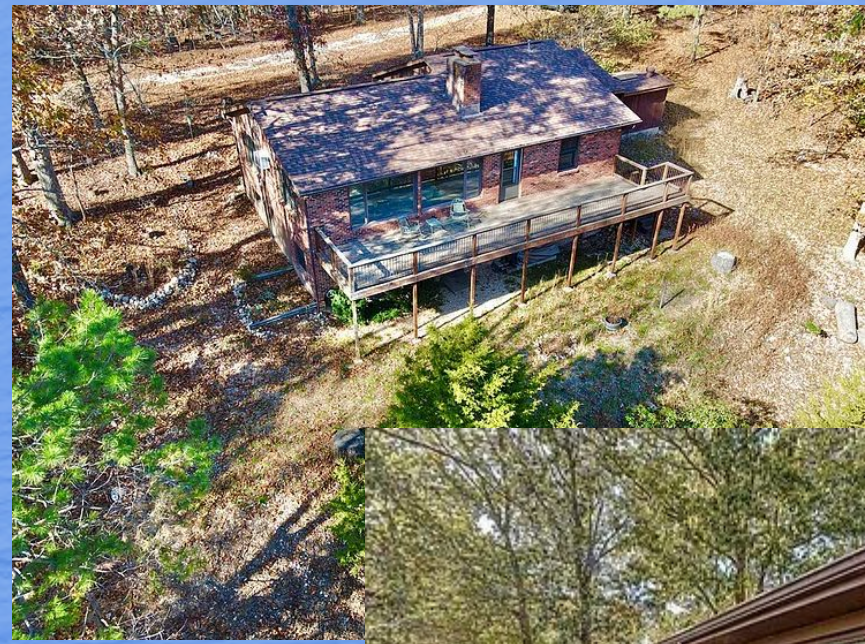
While I was in Eureka Springs, there was a crisis at home in Texas. Upon my return home my husband decided he wanted to join me in Eureka Springs after all, and we went back a week later to look at property with a home. I was cautious not to hope, but it was nice to consider the possibilities and **“allow for the seemingly impossible”**.

We found 3 acres outside of town overlooking a forest and a clear blue river. The house had more space for us, a forest to care for, silence, and places for many hammocks and gardens.





# Eureka Springs House





# Eureka Springs

## Boundaries

Juggling 2 mortgages  
for awhile

I hesitated embracing the property for awhile. It has become learned behavior to hold hope at arm's length. But when it seemed like a reality I did let go to **“allow for the seemingly impossible”** and embrace the idea of a larger kitchen space, real closet space, an art room, a forest to care for, a private swimming hole at the river, and silence. Community was already being built in town and I found a forest school for the boys.

Separation from our  
daughter

Self doubts, to hope,  
to self doubts

And then, two weeks prior to closing, my husband's company changed their minds on how remote he could work. With one phone call, it all came crumbling down. I had said when he came back to Eureka Springs with me, “Please do not let my hopes crumble. I do not think I can recover from it if they do.”

Lack of  
Communication

Health (Adrenals,  
Energy)

Unfinished House

Husband's Job/\$\$

Husband's Fear



# Eureka Springs

## Actions and Reality

The reality for me was that I was not moving. I was not leaving the city. I felt stuck and powerless and very angry. I was back to where I had started. Again. One of my favorite principles is, “**use edges and value the marginal**”. I always say there is magic in the edges. In this moment of my life I had found an edge that there was no magic in. It was an unpleasant edge to discover.

With the loss of hope and feeling crushed, my health faltered. I felt it coming for about a year, which gave this plan somewhat of a deadline. I struggle with adrenal issues and they crashed; my energy was gone. Once that happens it can take months for it to come back.

For the next several weeks, despite my loss of energy, I made lists of what I needed to do to love my little house again. I've dearly loved our little lake cabin since we bought it in 2016, but it is tight with five of us. And I can hear the city noise. Allowing my hopes to include more space and land was hard to fit back into the box I had them in for so long.



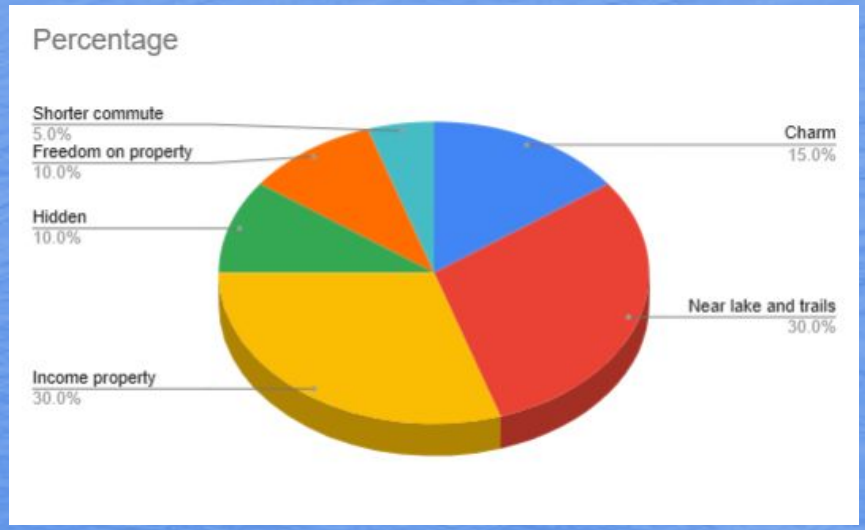


# Eureka Springs

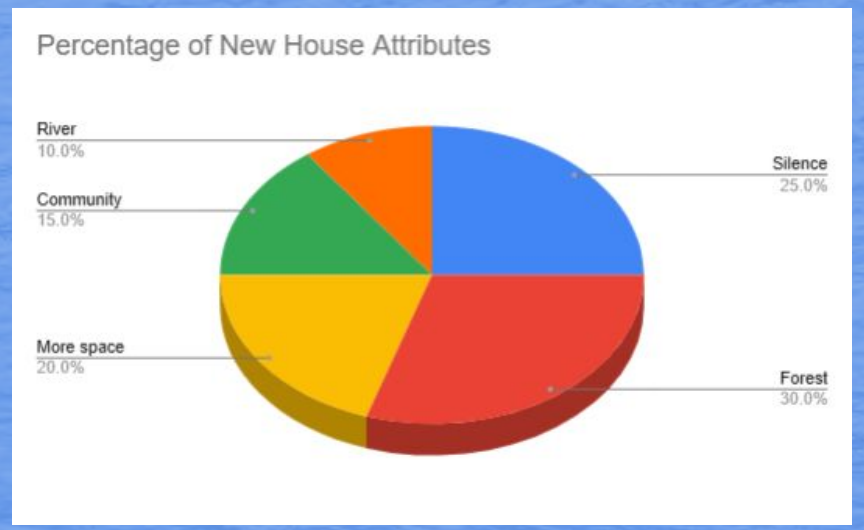
## Actions and Reality

(Percentages are self rated)

Favorite Things About the Lake House



Favorite Things About the New House

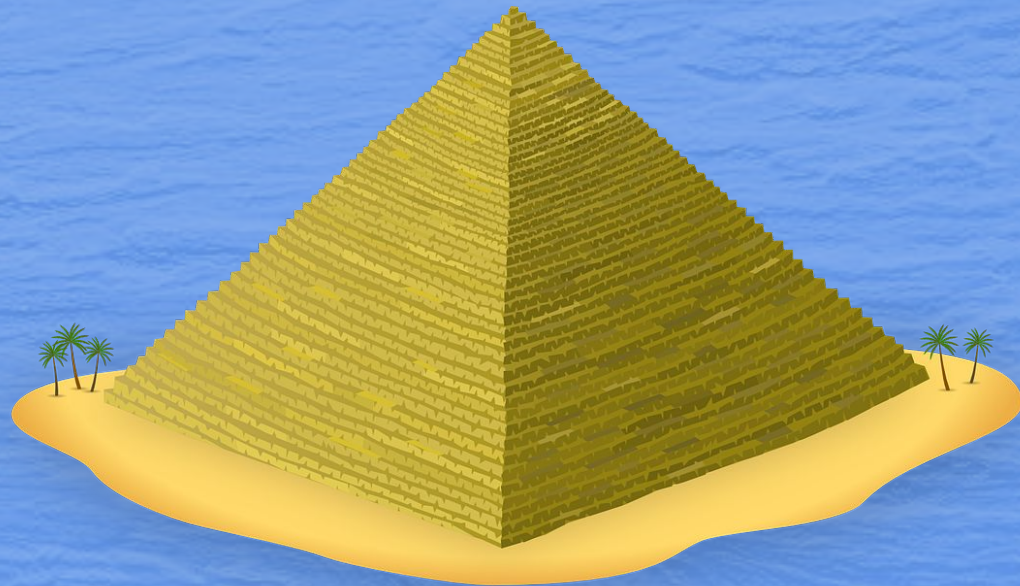




# Review the Reality

Adam Taubenfligel, author of *Setting an Intention*, tells the story of a Pyramid. He talks about imagining that we live at the base of it for a long time and are content. But slowly we become aware of the top of the pyramid and start to wonder what it is like at the top. Eventually we become fully engaged in discovering a way there, but on our climb we keep getting stuck.

Despite seeing other people climb up, you realize that you “can’t ascend in groups, as our journeys are inherently ours and ours alone.” Even though it should be a simple climb, you become aware that “the instant you set your sights on the top of the pyramid, you already sent your energy there”, much like my gate.

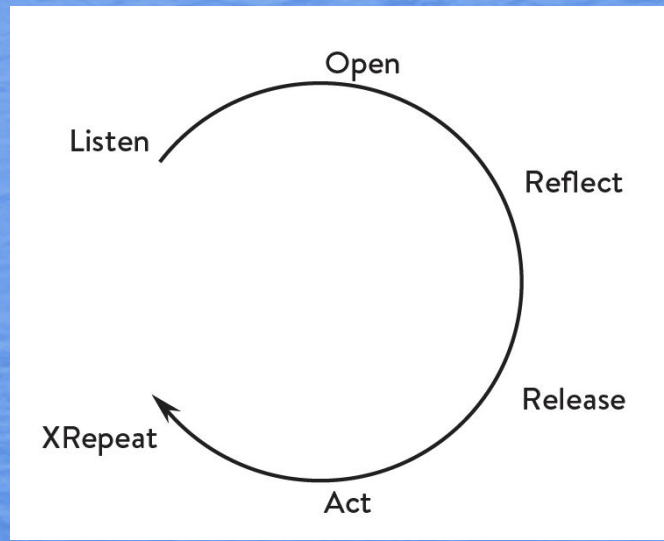




# Review the Reality

There has been a large dose of reality throughout each of these journeys. Never have I attempted to move forward so hard with so many obstacles. In trying to come to grips with being back to where I started, I also read Living In Flow: The Science of Synchronicity by Sky Nelson-Isaacs. I read about the LORRAX Process which reiterated the Design Web’s principles and gave me comfort and maybe a glimmer of hope.

- I need to LISTEN to my spirit, **“honor the wisdom within”**
- I need to be OPEN to where I am being led, **“synchronise with natural patterns”**
- I need to REFLECT on what I am presented with **“leave space for emergence”**
- I need to RELEASE the past, my defeating patterns, and expectations, **“allow for the seemingly impossible”**
- I need to ACT on open doors and circumstances **“step into the unknown”**
- I need to REPEAT these steps daily, **“discover abundance”**





# Keep the Plan

One thing on the list for my house was to take out a favorite tree. The tree was hollow and in danger of falling. Without the tree to block the sunlight, there was a large space for a new garden. We asked for one of the lower trunk pieces as it was the size of a bench. This **“yield”** became my healing bench, where I sat allowing the future garden to speak to me, heal me, and **“leave space for emergence”**.

While sitting on the healing bench, it slowly became clear. My desperate need to find solace in my next chapter past the gate blinded me to the beauty of learning and opportunities for me in the path that is in front of the gate. The next chapter is coming and the gate is real, but in order to find my way through the gate, I must find my way to the gate. I say it again...to myself...in order to find my way through the gate, I must find my way to the gate. It is about **“synchronising with the natural patterns”**.

It might have been quite obvious to others, but for me it took all of these gates closing to bring awareness about the shift that needs to take place in that space before the gate to prepare for the chapter past the gate. (**“synchronise with natural patterns”, “step into the unknown”, “leave space for emergence”, “allow for the seemingly impossible”, and “discover abundance”**)





# Keep the Plan

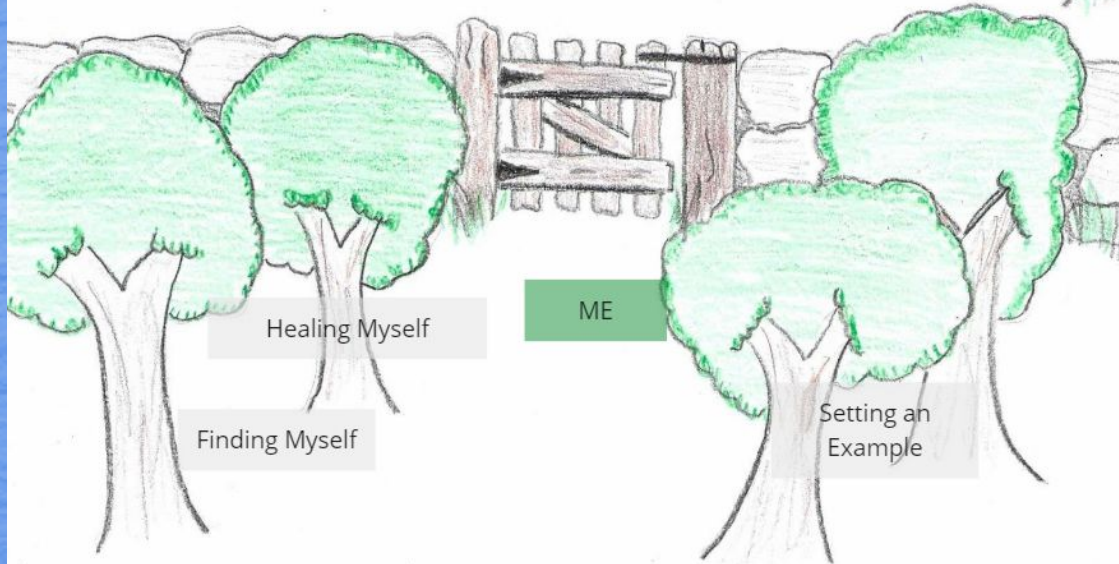
The plan isn't about healing my family. It isn't about healing my marriage. The plan is about:

- Healing myself
- Finding myself
- Setting an example, or “**being a good ancestor**” of living a full and joyful life

If I give myself permission to live, dream, and invite more life in (“**allowing for the seemingly impossible**”), like Glennon Doyle from the podcast, We Can Do Hard Things suggests, maybe some of the other healing just might take place (“**discover abundance**) (people care, earth care, fair share).



Future Chapter



ME

Healing Myself

Finding Myself

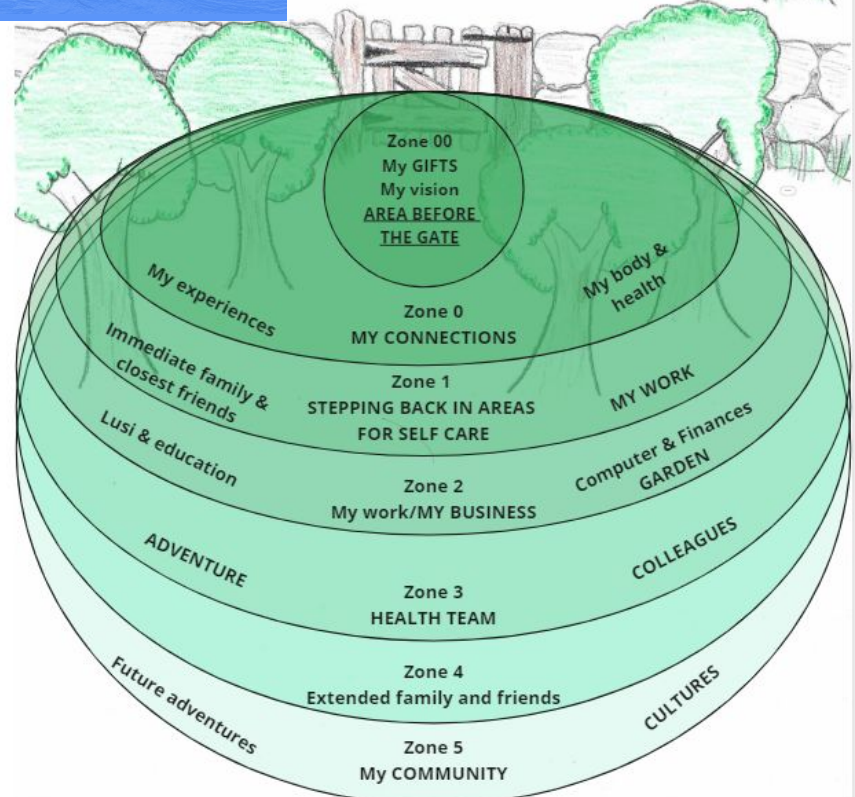
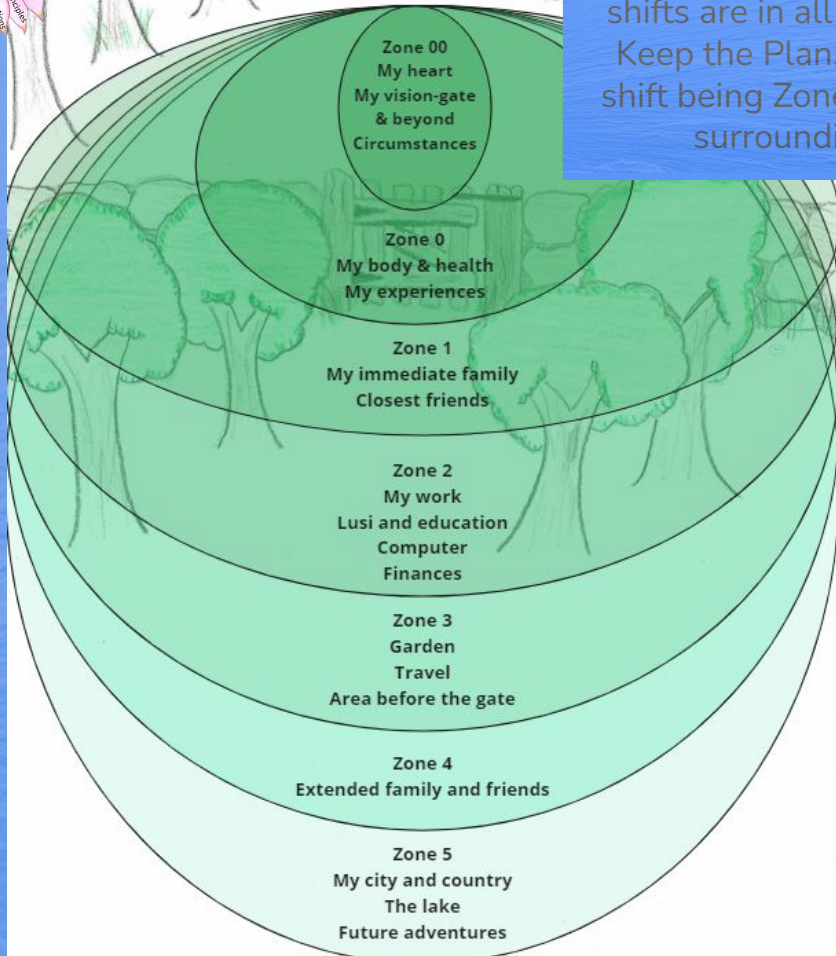
Setting an Example



# Zone Map

The zone map reveals the subtle, but critical, shift in this design. The shifts are in all caps in Zone Map Keep the Plan, with the biggest shift being Zone 00 and the focus surrounding the gate.

# Zone Map Keep the Plan





# Keep the Plan Healing Myself

To begin healing myself, I found a medical team and focused on functional medicine. I started on “**small and slow solutions**” of supplements, tweaked my diet, and met with a health coach.

I’ve been forced to rest and be still. I will continue to work on my diet, yoga, and begin to walk longer distances again. Sit spots and the hammock need to be a regular part of my day. I want to learn from the trees that I crave to be near. I need to gain the energy of a much younger woman and I need to “**design to include, not exclude**” the chronic nature of this adrenal issue.



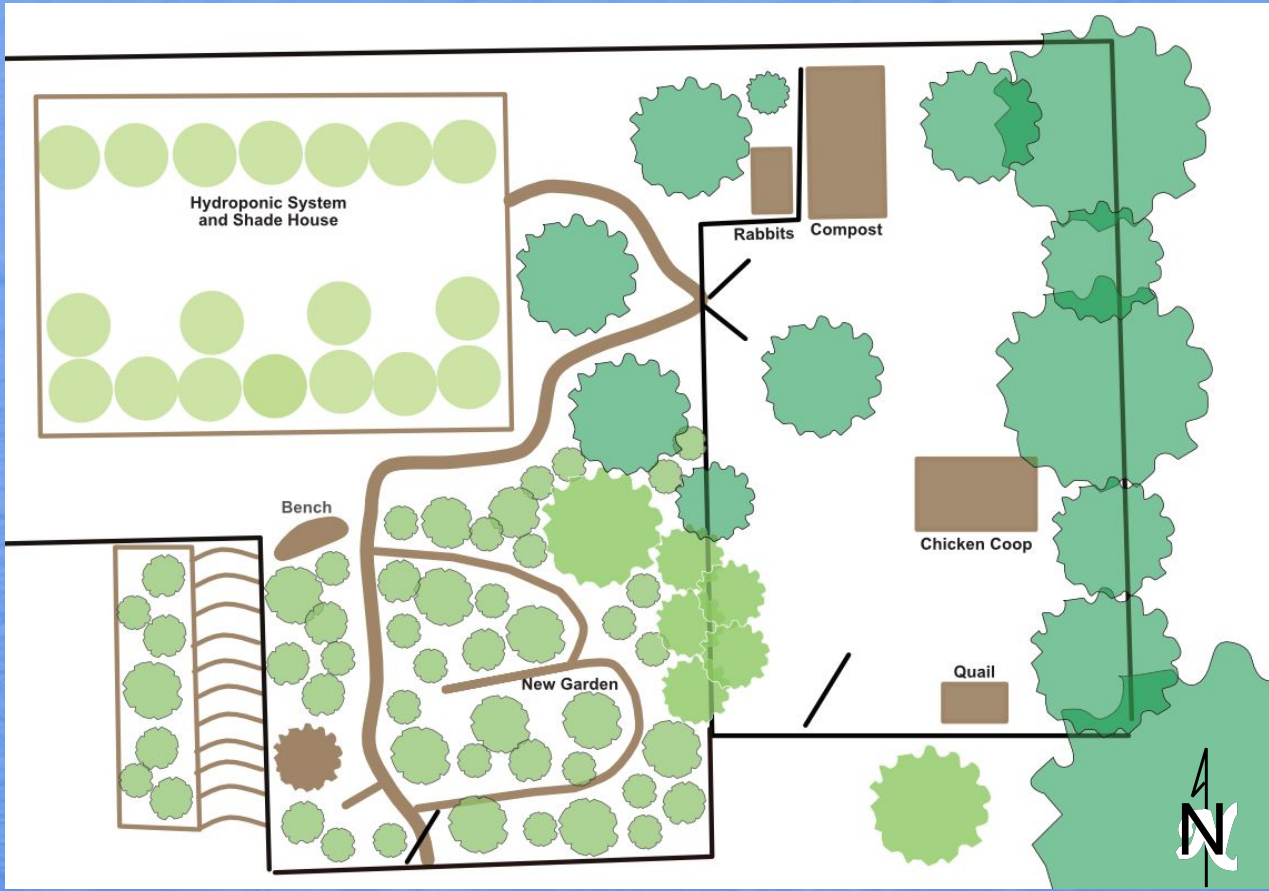


# The Garden

By Annette Argabright,  
Family Permaculture  
Story written for a blog

When I think of “**Obtain a Yield**”, I think of a garden harvest. What do you think of? There are so many yields that can be obtained and so many paths we could talk about, but I want to share a story of a recent yield in my life.

I have always felt most alive and connected in a forest. I yearn to be among the trees. Recently we had the incredible blessing of purchasing a property with a beautiful forest. While waiting for closing, I dreamt of the paths we would create, the hammock that I would spend time in, the foraging, and how we would care for our forest. Waking up to the forest outside my windows every morning filled me with peace and hope.







# The Garden

One morning, shortly before the closing date arrived, we were informed of a technicality that was beyond our control. The funding was all in place, most of the paperwork had been signed, everything was agreed upon. But because of this one technicality, we lost the property. I lost my forest. I lost my hope. And I was crushed.

One way that I worked through it was to redo part of my existing property. The hard work did me good and was healing. The chicken coop was moved, the compost relocated, and a large old tree was removed. It was a favorite tree but it was dying and becoming dangerous. One yield that emerged was a beautiful new garden space with good sunlight.

The old tree will become a bench and some hollowed out trunk pieces will become growing places in the garden. This garden is not the forest that I was dreaming about. But it is the yield, the inspiration, from a painful experience and a lost forest. It will be my mini forest for now, and I will allow myself to “Obtain a Yield” of peace and healing.

What other “Obtain a Yield” stories need to be told? Either heart yields or physical yields?





# Keep the Plan

## Finding Myself

I find fulfillment in permaculture design and will continue to use that towards finding myself. I am eager to continue growing Family Permaculture with my business partners, Allan and Chanel. I am grateful for our journey together the past few years and look forward to the families we connect with in the future. And eager to continue designing, writing curriculum for homeschool co-ops, and teaching PDC's and other classes with Food Forest Abundance. It allows me to design internationally with teams and on my own, making connections with people all over the world.

I intend to allow myself to enjoy a balance of camping trips with my boys, and trips for just me. I've always wanted to hike the Grand Canyon and explore new tide pools and forests. So I'm going to, eventually. Some will require airplane travel, but the car will suffice for most.





# Keep the Plan Setting an Example

I am realizing that much of my energy has gone to maintaining broken relationships. One of the hardest steps towards allowing myself to emerge is stepping back a little where necessary. Sometimes those steps back allow the other person the freedom to give to the relationship in a restorative way. And sometimes those steps back reveal unpleasant truths and adjustments need to be made.

My relationship with the boys is solid and I want to continue to build on that as well as continue homeschooling them as “**simply**” as I can and with nature connection the priority. I would like to use my smaller business, Oliver’s Gardens, as a way to include my grands with a small native tree and plant nursery so we can help others start their own forest.

I want to focus more energy in the relationship with each of my daughters. With one I need to restore and build connection. And the other I need to travel to see more often. Building our long distance, adult relationship is of utmost importance.





# Evaluation of the Process & Framework

In the beginning of this process, I honestly thought it would be a quick and simple design. I anticipated it would be a good short story with visuals of a lush meadow, garden, and forest through the “gate”, and a reality of a fabulous life changing new chapter where all the ethics could be featured. When that outcome was not the case, I chose to take several months off and focused on another design.

Taking time off of the design brought what I thought were answers, but each one proved frustrating. The journey from that unresolved point has been extremely challenging, and often heartbreaking. However, I’m not sure I could have processed this difficult pathway without the design process, the ethics, principles, or using my own framework, EMBARK. They were all like friends and helped me sort through the mess, allowed me to see more clearly, and showed me answers whether I liked them or not.

I would use EMBARK again, especially in a situation where multiple paths are being considered.

**E**valuate the elements or situation

**M**ission Statement

**B**oundaries

**A**ctions or approach

**R**eview the reality

**K**eep the final plan



# Reflect on the Process

I have restarted this presentation a few times, and have spent countless hours putting it together. It struggled to flow, probably because I had not worked through all of my own struggles. When I determined to finish this design, I laid out paper to help me organize details until I found my flow in **“designing from patterns to details”**, which was invaluable. Even then it was hard to find a way to tell the story including all the attempted pathways.

Once I found a flow, I moved the papers to my desk area and hung them on the windows around me. From there I could work on the document while glancing at my windows for guidance. I also had a folder filled with notes from books, and photos in my phone to draw from. It became the daily exercise of going through the document to clean it up and weave in notes from each source. This was definitely a most challenging design.





# Reflect on the Process

## Review the ethics and principles used

**Earth Care** came in the form of making deeper connections with the nature around me as well as listening to my land to create a garden space to grow food. The **Earth Care** in itself created **People Care** in many healing ways.

This story is rich in **People Care**, both to discover myself and care for my family. The process created **Fair Share** along the way by exploring the edge of relationships and establishing boundaries, as well as finding the **simplest solutions** for building relationships. The new garden will create a yield of food to nourish myself, family, and community.

**Honour the wisdom within** by Looby Macnamara (LM) - I invited, listened and found wisdom within to honor.

**Synchronise with natural patterns** by LM - synchronicity works through us when we allow flow to come from connection with nature. I found this in the hammock and on the healing bench.

**Step into the unknown** by LM - have the courage to say yes which is something I did with every journey forward. I am continuing that with building my career and with moving forward alone.

**Leave space for emergence** by LM - make space for what I authentically want in my schedule and life.

**Allow for the seemingly impossible** by LM - by resting, I am preparing for the seemingly impossible.

**Discover abundance** by LM - I have abundance around me and will discover the abundance I am seeking when the seemingly impossible emerges.

**The problem is the solution** by Bill Mollison - in this case the problem has forced me to stop and listen to myself and my needs. I think the solution will emerge later in the journey.

**Obtain a yield** by David Holmgren (DH) - I am choosing to obtain a yield in my garden, with my family, with my health, and in my career.



# Reflect on the Process

## Review the principles used

**Catch and Store Energy** by DH - I can store the energy of allowing myself to live life, live my dreams, and creating an example for those around me. I can physically store energy in my body and in my garden.

**Use edges and value the marginal** by DH - more about working through the complicated edges of the gate than is on the other side. I found edges all throughout this process in myself, relationships, finances, and at the gate.

**Design from patterns to details** by DH - this process has continued to be following the patterns and weaving in the details. Several principles stacked to accomplish this.

**Use small and slow solutions** by DH - my health journey will be slow and I'll need to take small steps daily to recover, which means my overall journey to the next chapter will be slow but steady.

**Be a good ancestor** by Think Like a Tree - by modeling living life to the fullest and giving myself permission to dream for my children and grandchildren.

**Reframing the belief** by Think Like a Tree - I have spent many years as an adult unlearning much of what I learned from society growing up. This journey requires more of that.

**Design to include not exclude** by Annette Argabright - I can thrive even when what caused damage is still there. Excluding it does not make it go away. This came from life experience.

**Do what you know** by Annette Argabright - Do what you know and more answers will reveal themselves. I lived by this through my 23+ years of homeschooling. It helps to clear away what you know and what is simple so you can see what is left.



# Review the Process Gratitudes

I am grateful for the design process, the Design Web, and for the tools used that empower me

I am grateful for the connections of colleagues from around the world

I am grateful for those that have mentored, educated, and encouraged me

I am grateful that I continue to strive for more and think extravagantly

I am grateful for my family, despite our challenges

I am grateful for the powerful guidance and ancient wisdom of permaculture, the ethics, and the principles that help lead me through design and through life

I am grateful for my garden, the lake, and other places I have access to for adventure

I am grateful for my anger. I found myself in it and it propelled me forward. I just cannot stay in it.





# Reflect on the Process

## 8 Forms of Capital

Prior to this diploma, I completed a self-directed diploma in September of 2020 with the guidance of my mentor, Bright Sky. From her teaching on the 8 Forms of Capital, I was able to use this tool to see the wealth that I have to access to. Thinking of each category as a form of currency, I rated the level of wealth I think I have. Educational and connection opportunities were highest.



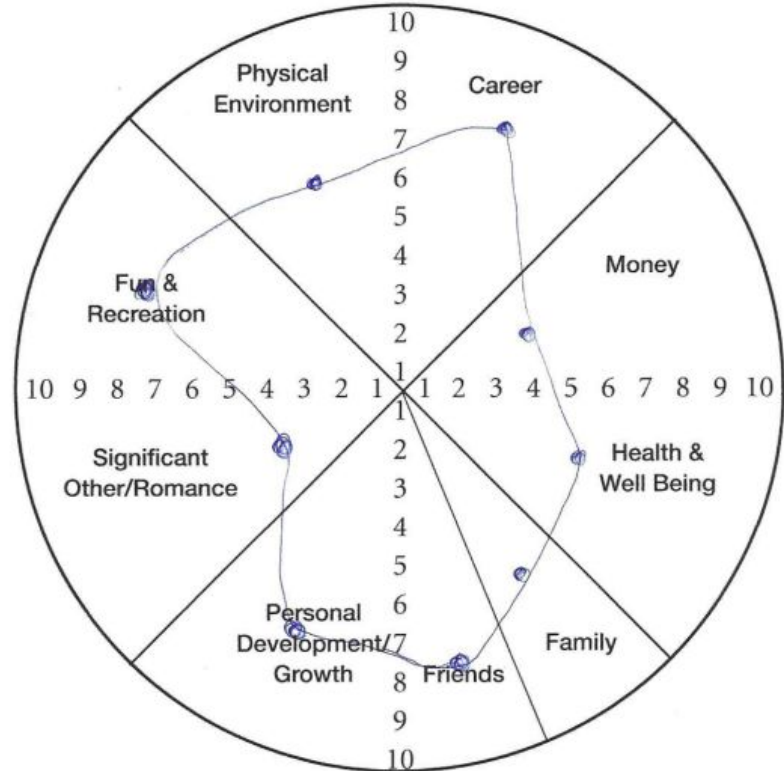


# Reflect on the Process Wheel of Life

With the guidance of my health coach, I was able to use this Wheel of Life tool to measure the level of satisfaction of each of these nine areas of life. Areas of career and adventure ranked highest on this chart.

## The Wheel of Life in Coaching

Rank your level of satisfaction in each area of your life. The closer you are to 10 the more fulfilled you feel. Once you have marked your number in each area, connect each number forming a new outside perimeter for your circle.

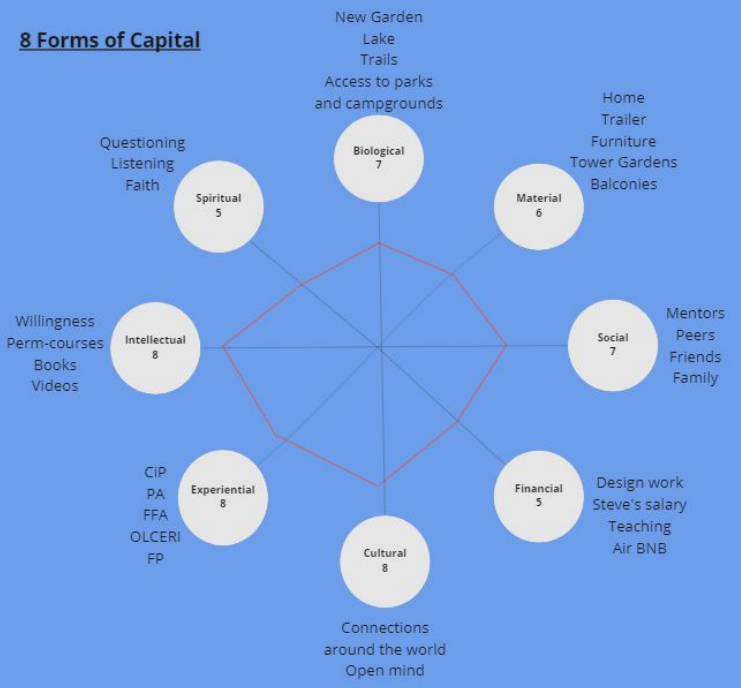




# Reflect on the Process

## Finding Gratitude

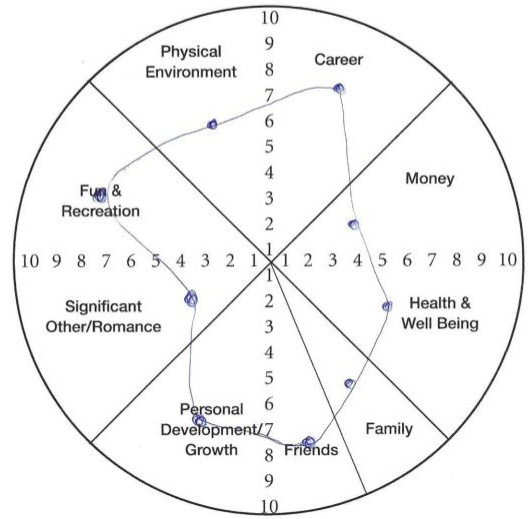
### 8 Forms of Capital



These measuring tools allowed me to see areas of plenty as well as areas of struggle. While I was aware of most, looking at them through different lenses allowed me to find more gratitude.

### The Wheel of Life in Coaching

Rank your level of satisfaction in each area of your life. The closer you are to 10 the more fulfilled you feel. Once you have marked your number in each area, connect each number forming a new outside perimeter for your circle.





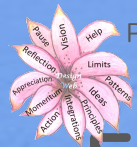
# Sharing the story with nature

As I neared the completion of this design, I found it challenging to weave the story together balancing emotion with flow. The class, Empowered Storytelling, suggested sharing stories with nature.

I chose a circle of rocks at a nearby park. I felt nervous about it, but it wasn't because I thought someone might hear me. I felt vulnerable like I was sharing my story with my friends, which I was. I told the trees that their presence was appreciated and asked if I could share my story. They sent back a resounding yes in their peaceful energy.

I did not get through the whole story, but I did learn that sharing it with them gave the story a different weight. I heard what was missing more than reading it out loud at the computer. The trees made for a captive audience and I **“obtained a yield”** that I never expected from the trees.





# Evaluation-Closing

Here I am at the end of this design, but the story is not finished. I am still stuck and my health is still struggling. I am also feeling stronger; a strength the comes from within. Maybe it is a deep wisdom that is rising to the surface. This path has ended up in a place that I did not want to go, but I think I will be prepared to Embark on wherever it takes me.



“Without the plan I perhaps would not have so willingly started on the journey... and if I had stuck to the plan I would have missed a good part of the journey...” Lee



# Evaluation

## Continuing the story (updates)-Quarterly

Date	Healing Myself, Finding Myself, Setting an Example Update
April 2023	<p>On a Monday I submitted this design for approval, or I should say gave it the completed stamp of approval in my mind. On Tuesday, I had a meeting where my next step was waiting. I was offered a job promotion as a design team lead with 12-15 designers, and a project manager. This one call gave me financial security and propelled me up to or through the gate. The synchronicity is not lost on me, blows me away, and moves me beyond what I can say. It needs to be part of this story.</p> <p>Comments from trusted friends/mentors:</p> <p>“Not just synchronicity, but as if you manifested the next step for yourself. Attracted it. Told the world or universe that you were ready and it responded immediately. So cool. Lean into this momentum and pattern.” Chris</p> <p>“This gives me chills! Your design took you to the gate! And the gate opened! It's like the design allowed you to let go and the letting go created the space. Wow, wow, wow!” Allan</p>
May 2023	<p>Someone asked me how something in my life has shifted in the last few months. I referred to the “gate” and how my perspective shifted to what was just before the gate and how that opened new opportunities. I realized that those opportunities very likely opened a whole new gate further down the wall that was hidden by the trees.</p>



# Evaluation

## Continuing the story (updates)-Quarterly

Date	Healing Myself, Finding Myself, Setting an Example Update
Aug 2023	The garden was magical until July and then a heat wave took everything. There were dozens of volunteer plants that filled the garden and gave us a harvest such as pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, greens, herbs, and sunflowers.
Dec 2023	My job took over in August and I became the Head of Installation. This will give me financial freedoms, but also limits my time in the new garden. Still not through the gate, but gaining insight into the journey ahead.
Feb 2024	Somehow the “gate” has become a tool of measurement, the bar to rate other experiences along my path. I teach using the “gate”. Recently I was asked if the gate exists or if it a misaligned truth in my mind, a fear of sorts, that hold me back. After spending a couple hours walking and talking this out to myself, I realized that the gate is real. There are limits that hold me there, but perhaps each plank represents something different and some of the planks could be removed. It will be interesting to continue contemplating this idea.

*All who wander are not lost* By J.R.R. Tolkien

