

# Getting Unstuck

## How to Break Out of a Rut



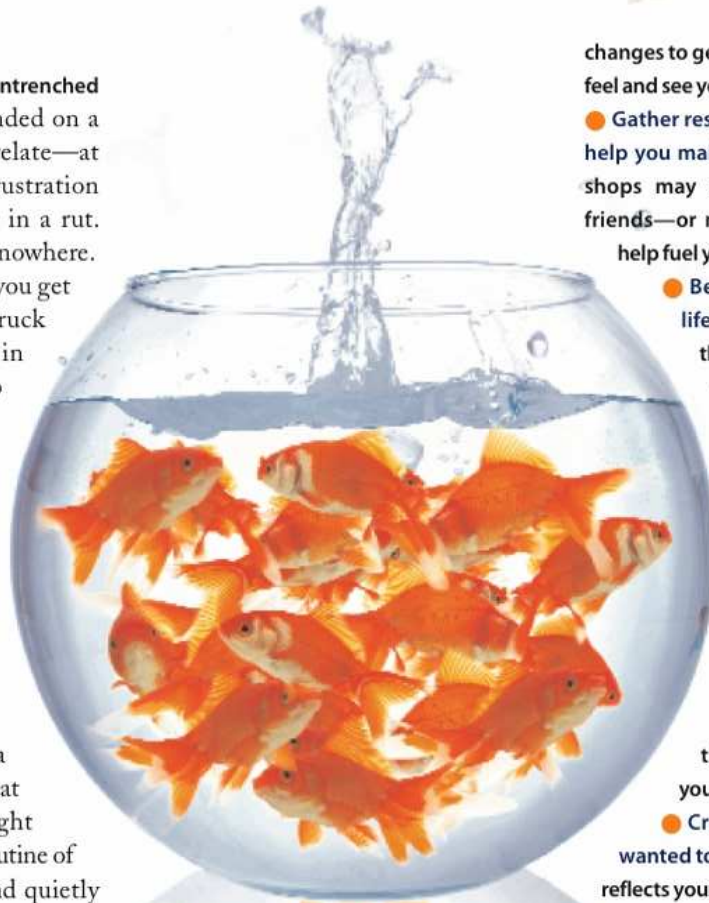
Breaking free from your old school routine can make you feel like you're flying!

by janelle harris

**I**f you've ever gotten your car entrenched in a patch of mud or stranded on a mound of snow, you can relate—at least physically—to the frustration and helplessness of being in a rut. Spin tires forward and you go nowhere. Thrust gears into reverse and you get the same result. Until a tow truck plays cavalry to your damsel in distress, there's plenty of time to reflect on how you wound up in the present predicament. In our much more complex and much less metaphoric lives, however, getting out of a stuck place isn't as swift. Life, unlike a broken down car, won't always give us obvious indicators that it's in need of repair. You just stall.

Identifying that we're in a rut takes self-reflection time that may not be built into the tight schedules we balance. So the routine of just getting by can quickly and quietly become second nature. "Most women fall into ruts because we embrace more than we probably should be taking on," says Nashawn Turner, founder of Uniquely Designed Coaching LLC, a Virginia-based life coaching business. "So when we get overwhelmed, we find ourselves trying to do whatever's easiest and move in the direction that causes us to develop bad habits." The robotic motions of commuting to work, coming home, cooking dinner, helping with homework and going to bed just to do it all over again the next day may seem harmless albeit humdrum. In actuality, it traps sisters into joyless existences with lack of purpose and passion.

Standing in neutral is one thing; shifting gears to move out of a perpetually stuck place is another. Turner suggests implementing these six steps for rocking out of a rut and re-engaging in life.



### Ask yourself:

- **Is this what you thought your life would be like? Visualize living free from your regular routine. Understand that it's your life and you can choose how you want to experience it.**
- **Contemplate what caused you to get in the rut in the first place and then find out what's causing you to stay stuck. "There's a familiar saying: What you resist will persist," Turner says. Deal with issues that have kept you in a stale, unsatisfying and predictable life, and affirm that you will no longer miss out on enjoying it. "I tell all of my clients change begins with a decision," Turner says. "Only you can say when enough is enough of the same old-same old." Write a list of things you want to add or subtract from your life. Establish little**

changes to get immediate results so you can feel and see you're moving forward.

- **Gather resources to nurture change and help you maintain focus. Books and workshops may assist you. Rally family and friends—or make new acquaintances—to help fuel your change.**

- **Be conscious and move through life awake. "Pay attention to your thoughts, words and actions because these are what establish your behaviors and routine," Turner says. "We get into ruts based on how we think about things. We keep speaking and thinking those things, and our actions are manifested in that way." When you find yourself falling into old habits, ask why you're doing it. That thoughtful moment will enable you to make an alternative choice.**

- **Create a list of things you always wanted to do or draft a vision board that reflects your new way of life with empowering pictures and phrases, and then post it where you can see it every day. Before bed, Turner says, "write down what you did differently and ask yourself how close you actually got to living out your change."**

Initiating a new routine is rarely easy. But after a while, operating from a stuck place isn't so effortless, either. It can take a while to dig into a rut, so expecting an overnight turnaround is surely a setup for disappointment. Being active in the process of change and recognizing that a new day is another opportunity to make it happen is better than beating yourself up for not accomplishing the goals you set the day before. Sometimes just starting the car and putting your foot on the accelerator is all the catalyst you need. ♥

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