

January 2021 Issue 6

The We Turned Out Okay Playbook

by Karen Lock Kolp, M.Ed.

Living and thriving no matter the circumstances...

You can do this. Let's get started!

Messages from the past

Welcome to Issue 6 of the *We Turned Out Okay Playbook*!

In 2015, I desperately needed some direction. I was in a difficult place both physically and mentally, though I had already come far enough in my journey of wellness to understand that I brought some strengths to my search for direction: first, an ability to see connections that others miss. Second, the ability to connect seemingly disparate things, to create something bigger than the sum of its parts.

As a result I searched for direction in a peculiar way, building the future by looking for messages from the past.

I was reading Sarah Ban Breathnach's book *Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*. Sarah's daily entries included bite-size ideas, stuff to think on and/or an action to take, every single day of the year. In *Simple Abundance* Sarah advises readers to find their direction by creating a kind of visionary Journal. A place where you can keep track of images that appeal to you, and a place where you can look back and ponder why they might appeal.

When I started to look around for a place to keep track of images and ideas that appealed to me, I found an empty sketchbook. It was from my grad school days when I did some sketching, mostly to prove that I could sketch to please myself despite the drawing instructor I had in college who despised my work.

The sketchbook wasn't quite empty, though. When I pulled it out of the back of a cupboard, thinking it might work as a journal, two things fell out:

1. A sketch of a quilt I was planning to make (and did eventually make.) It's of the 2000-year-old bristlecone pines I visited with my family, when my parents first moved out to Colorado back in 1999. Not only does it show the twisted, stunted, yet majestic bristlecones themselves, it also gave me the chance to sketch one of my favorite flowers, Indian Paintbrush.

2

Eureka! I instantly knew this sketch would be perfect as the cover of my new journal. So I used glue stick and shipping tape to make it so.

Way down in the corner I wrote the words: "This journal is full of stuff I like."

2. A picture of my parents in the Colorado mountains in an area called McCullough Gulch, also circa 1999. My folks stand timberline with a small lake and lovely, stony mountains in the background, in a close embrace. The setting, my parents' joy in each other, and the high we all had after hiking all the way up to a place like McCullough Gulch – which Google informs me is at nearly 12,000 feet above sea level – made me feel sure that, after the cover, here was my first journal entry!

So, I wasn't even going to need to purchase a journal. One had fallen into my lap! It even had some precious images in it that I was unaware I still had in my possession. It felt like an auspicious beginning.

What role does serendipity play in your life?

The start of my journal felt extremely serendipitous. What are the odds of saying to myself “I’d love to start a journal,” and having the perfect volume right at my fingertips – one that had been waiting around for 15 years?

At the time I had extremely limited use of my hands and forearms. It was a real effort to start working on my journal, which I called “The Journal of Stuff I Like.” So whenever I wanted a quote placed in my journal, I hit up other people to do the writing. As a result I’ve got the handwriting of many dear people in it now, from my husband and my kids to the closest friends who I knew wouldn’t mind giving me brain food, in their handwriting.

Over the years the Journal of Stuff I Like has grown into two very full volumes. In fact soon I’ll be looking around for a third!

Volumes 1 and 2 contain:

- Comics
- Images of the out-of-doors including mountains, lakes, fossils, snowscapes, and birds
- Mini-biographies of people that admire
- Images I have hand-drawn
- The signatures and messages of some of my heroes, like Jessica Lahey and Biz and Theresa of *One Bad Mother*.

My Journal also contains quotes. Many, many inspirational quotes. Here’s a sampling:

- “To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to keep your soul alive.” – Robert Louis Stevenson
- “There are times in life to swim and times to float.” Life of Fred: Jelly Beans
- “Really, Hagrid, if you are holding out for universal popularity, I’m afraid you will be in this cabin for a very long time.” – Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore
- “To fly as fast as thought, to be anywhere there is, you must first begin by knowing that you have already arrived.” – Richard Bach, author of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*
- “Poverty is always experienced in the soul before it is felt in the pocketbook.” – Sarah Ban Breathnach
- “Oh, mother... You’re getting so *able*.” My son Jason at 10 years old in 2015
- “It’s never too late to have a happy childhood.” – Gloria Steinem

When I started this Journal, I had no idea what a resource I was creating. I now have literally years of inspiration to go back and enjoy.

It is, perhaps, messier than I would wish. (Asking young boys to paste images or write in their childish best contributed to this for sure.) But looking back it is all the dearer because of the mess. Kind of like life itself.

I want this month's *Playbook* to be a resource for you. I hope it will spark the inspiration to create your own Journal of Stuff You Like.

So, I'm changing the format in favor of something a little more flexible. I hope you'll think of it as a place to collect images and text that is inspiring to you. I also hope you'll think of it as "Volume 1" of your Journal. If you find that you enjoy curating messages from the past to build your future, perhaps come February you'll open a cupboard one day, an old sketchbook will fall out, and you will say "Eureka!"

But that's for the future. For right now, we'll focus on the present.

Let's dive in!

4

Additional items you might want to gather for use with this month's Playbook:

- Periodicals or books that you can cut images out of
- Images printed off the Internet
- Scissors, a glue stick, and/or tape

January 2020 At-a-Glance & Calendar Expansion

A new calendar year is an opportunity, and one you get to take advantage of this month! January's *Playbook* helps you lay out a vision, an intention, for January and the weeks and months beyond. Best of all you'll do it with small, simple – yet powerful – steps you will take each and every day. So you're building your future without fear but instead with a sense of purpose, control over your destiny, and love.

Each week, this *Playbook* encourages you to choose:

- A word or phrase to focus on
- Images or text around that word
- Inspiration from that word

Throughout these January Calendar Pages you'll create:

- Inspiration and simple tools, which build upon each other as the week and month progress
- Inspiration through your own thoughts, questions, and ideas
- Your own unique way forward through January, and beyond

“Success is the freedom to be yourself.” – Dr. Manuel Astruc

I hope you'll take inspiration from this quote and use this month's Calendar Pages to get a sense of who you are! That's how you will know how to move forward <3

Turn the page for your January 2020 At-a-Glance Calendar!

6

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
3. Week 1 Word of the Week	4. A quote or thought about this word.	5. Another quote or thought about this word.	6. An image or drawing about this word...
10. Week 2 Word of the Week	11. A quote or thought about this word.	12. Another quote or thought about this word.	13. An image or drawing about this word...
17. Week 3 Word of the Week	18. A quote or thought about this word.	19. Another quote or thought about this word.	20. An image or drawing about this word...
24. Week 4 Word of the Week	25. A quote or thought about this word.	26. Another quote or thought about this word.	27. An image or drawing about this word...
31. Looking forward...			

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Ideas
	<p>1. Yay! You made it to 2021!</p>	<p>2. Tell a positive story about the future.</p>	
<p>7. Another image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>8. One more image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>9. Reflecting back on this week's word...</p>	
<p>14. Another image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>15. One more image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>16. Reflecting back on this week's word...</p>	
<p>21. Another image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>22. One more image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>23. Reflecting back on this week's word...</p>	
<p>28. Another image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>29. One more image or drawing about this word.</p>	<p>30. Reflecting back on this week's word...</p>	

Let's jump into January 2021!

January 1: Yay! You made it to 2021!!

Today, take some time to intentionally relax. Even if it's just for a few moments, bring some positive thoughts into your mind and feel your body relax as you think them.

Doodle, write, or draw these positive thoughts in this space:

January 2: Tell a positive story about the future. As thinking people, we often telescope out into the future. We'll conclude, looking at a frightening or upsetting event happening today, "this will only get worse." Change that situation up today, by telling a positive story about the future! Begin by envisioning one small, good thing that happens sometime in 2021. Tell this story in the box below:

Once upon a time in 2021...

Word of the Week – Week 1

January 3: Each week of January you'll choose one word to focus on. It will become your Word of the Week, and everything you do to create your vision for 2021 will reflect back on these words.

But there is no pressure here. Instead, there's a lightness and an ease. Combined with the knowledge that whatever word you settle on is the *correct* word – and if you'd prefer a different one, there is always next week – let your instincts guide you to choose your word each week.

What will your word be for the first week of January? Write or draw about it just below:

January 4: Today, find a quote that incorporates your word of the week. Use Google, or a favorite book of quotes you've got at home, or a quote that you have heard from a loved one. Share this quote just below:

9

January 5: Find another quote today referencing your word of the week. Share here:

January 6: Today, go through magazines, draw, or print an image online, about your quote. Tape or glue or paste it onto the following page:

January 7: Find, print, or draw another image that depicts your word of the week.
Place it just below:

10

January 8: Find, print, or draw one more image depicting your word of the week.
Place it just below:

Week 1 Check-In

January 9: Reflect back on your word this week!

How did this week's word... Make you feel? Impact your week? How will it be useful going forward?

Word of the Week – Week 2

11

January 10: Like last week, let your instincts guide you to choose your word this week.

What will your word be for the second week of January? Write or draw about it here:

January 11: Today, find a quote that incorporates your word of the week. Use Google, or a favorite book of quotes you've got at home, or a quote that you have heard from a loved one. Share this quote in this space:

January 12: Find another quote today referencing your word of the week. Share here:

January 13: Today, go through magazines, draw, or print an image online, about your quote. Tape or glue or paste it in this space:

12

January 14: Find, print, or draw another image that illustrates your word of the week. Place it just below:

January 15: Find, print, or draw one more image depicting your word of the week. Place it here:

Week 2 Check-In

January 16: Reflecting back on this week's word!

How did this week's word... Make you feel? Impact your week? How will it be useful going forward?

13

Word of the Week – Week 3

January 17: Just as in the previous weeks, let your instincts guide you to choose your word this week.

What will your word be for the third week of January? Write or draw about it on the following page:

January 18: Today, find a quote that incorporates your word of the week. Use Google, or a favorite book of quotes you've got at home, or a quote that you have heard from a loved one. Share this quote just below:

January 19: Find another quote today referencing your word of the week. Share here:

January 20: Today, go through magazines, draw, or print an image online about your quote. Tape or glue or paste it in this space:

14

January 21: Find, print, or draw another image, that depicts your word of the week. Place it just below:

January 22: Find, print, or draw one more image depicting your word of the week. Place it just below:

Week 3 Check-In

January 23: Reflecting back on this week's word!

How did this week's word... Make you feel? Impact your week? How will it be useful going forward?

15

Word of the Week – Week 4

January 24: As ever, let your instincts guide you to choose your word this week.

What will your word be for this last week of January? Write or draw about it here:

January 25: Today, find a quote that incorporates your word of the week. Use Google, or a favorite book of quotes you've got at home, or a quote that you have heard from a loved one. Share this quote just below:

January 26: Find another quote today referencing your word of the week. Share here:

January 27: Today, go through magazines, draw, or print an image online about your quote. Tape or glue or paste it in this space:

16

January 28: Find, print, or draw another image illustrating your word of the week. Place it just below:

January 29: Find, print, or draw one more image depicting your word of the week. Place it here:

Week 4 Check-In

January 30: Reflecting back on this week's word!

How did this week's word... Make you feel? Impact your week? How will it be useful going forward?

17

January 31: Looking forward! **What will you use and remember, from this epic month of parenting?** Share your thoughts here:

I will use and remember...

And get ready for February's *Playbook*! It's going to be a great month!

Playsheets

There's just one Playsheet this month: High/Low/Hero!

In each issue of the *Playbook* we play this family game, where everyone shares about the best thing that happened to them that day, the toughest thing about that day, and who was a kindness hero for them that day.

We play this game each and every month so you can enjoy looking back on your child's highs, lows, and heroes over your *Playbook* subscription! This gives you a record over time so you can see how they change and grow.

Play multiple times this month, or over more than one day; this edition of High/Low/Hero isn't tied to a specific day of January. Enjoy!!

(The Playsheet continues on the next page :)

18

Family Member	High	Low	Hero

Family Member	High	Low	Hero

Ask the ~~Child Development Expert~~ Life Quester

Something different this month: I am bringing you one of the most important questions I was ever asked, and my answer to it. Here goes:

“What’s the most difficult thing you’ve ever encountered, and what did you learn from it?” – My coach, in an exercise to empower me as I build my future

Definitely my tendon disorder. When overused, my tendons develop scar tissue like lightning compared to a typical person's. (This was likely because of an antibiotic I took the first time I developed diverticulitis nine years ago.) From summer 2011 and into summer 2012, I could not walk more than a few steps and needed a wheelchair whenever I left the house. Not only that, it often fell to my then 11-year-old (he's now 20) to set it up for me and then push me in it. That was pretty rough, but the worst was when I lost the use of my hands and forearms because my thumb tendons developed scar tissue. Imagine not being able to pour coffee, twirl spaghetti, wash your hair; for most of 2014 I had about 5% use of my hands. I felt like an incredible burden on my husband and family, and there were times during that year where I didn't really want to keep living.

From the experience of living with the tendon disorder I learned two things:

1. Far from being a burden, just because I didn't have the use of my hands didn't mean I wasn't a needed and necessary part of my family! They needed me to (as my youngest often said at the time) to "be the brains." In case you're interested I am dropping the link to the documentary that a neighbor made about that time in our lives: <https://youtu.be/ahUvtqSLA9g>

2. I had a real desire to contribute and be helpful using my voice, my head, and my heart. Somewhere in 2014 a friend said to me "well, all the usual things that a stay-at-home mom does are off the table for you, and that sucks. But what CAN you do?"

I began taking steps - sometimes extremely tiny ones - toward what would eventually become my podcast, website, and coaching business.

Along the way I discovered how crucial human relationships and connections are to me. I discovered that we really are so much more than our physical body. From

those incredible lows have come highs that I could never have imagined. Because of my tendon disorder I have an extremely close-knit family, and awesome relationships with my husband and our two sons. I'm building a fun and helpful coaching practice and as a result get to work with some of the most amazing people in the world. Also, I truly understand the value of saying no, in order to only say yes to what is most important to me.

This experience has been so profound that I liken it to the metamorphosis of "caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly." I may not be able to use my body in the same way as a typical person, but my life is wonderful and extraordinary. And it wouldn't be this way without the tendon disorder.

Thank you for reading! Now, I'm asking you.

What's the most difficult thing you've ever encountered, and what did you learn from it? It takes guts to answer this question truthfully, but in my experience it's so worth it.

Write, draw, or doodle your response here:

21

And now, enjoy the calm and comfort of a trip to the Dream HQ. Cheers! - K

Hello from The Dream HQ

The column where each month we visit a wonderful place for mindfulness and relaxation: Karen's Dream Headquarters.

We step into the glade of the Dream HQ, and we take in the view:

It's just after dusk and the stars are becoming visible... in the northern sky, above the Apple Orchard, they spell out "Everything's going to be okay." Looking toward the southern sky, over the Big House, the stars spell out "All shall be well."

The Big House is lit up beautifully tonight, drawing our attention. The entryway looks warm and inviting, and so we step up to the big green door, and inside.

We decide it's a great night for the Cookies & Books room, and so we climb the stairs and follow the helpful (and adorable) signs along the upper gallery until we come to this room that is part library, part restful and meditative space.

When we open the door we are so thrilled to see all the usual elements in the Cookies & Books room: cozy chairs and window seats, little tables with those green library-lamps, and shelves and shelves of the coolest and most interesting books.

We are drawn to one particular table which has on it a lovely silver tea set, with our favorite kind of hot beverage, as well as cookies and scones.

But that's not all.

The table has on it a book we've not seen before, very big and luxuriously covered with lovely, soft velvet in the most beautiful color we can imagine.

It's bound with silver, and the silver clasp is undone, as if the book is just waiting for us to open it.

We notice the title: *The Book of You*.

Opening it, we see scenes from our life.

We see the joy in our loved ones' eyes as we sit up on our own for the first time, as a baby. We see them cheer for us as we begin to crawl, and then as we toddle along on newly-walking legs.

We see the scene as it was when we said our first word, and the conversation that our loved ones had with us in that moment.

We see ourselves running and playing with friends. Snuggled in with a loved one to read a book. Deep in conversation with our favorite friends during our teen years, and into our 20s.

We see ourselves in the moment of accomplishing something that we'd always wanted to, in a sporting capacity, or professionally, or in our private life. (Or all three.)

We see ourselves as new parents, but from outside ourselves. Our view now is objective instead of subjective. We see all the joy of this new little being, we see our connection to them as it truly is – filled with grace and wonder.

As we turn towards the middle of the book, we see not so much history of what has happened, but instead we see our own hopes for what is to come. Turning these pages we see ourselves smiling, marveling, and laughing with our loved ones.

We see our children grow up into the best versions of themselves. We see the trust and love that they have for us, and in us. We see hope and joy.

We see lots of wonderful possibilities. And threading through them is the pathway that will make them real.

Best of all we see the first step on that path. It's a tiny one, but that's okay. Every great journey begins with a single step, as the saying goes.

We realize something cool as well: this step is not the *only* first step, but one of many first steps that we may take. We'll see different first steps each time we look at *The Book of You*.

We know this book will endure. We know we can return to it anytime we wish, both for inspiration and direction. This book – the book of us – is always here in the Cookies & Books room for us to come back to, whenever we want.

All we need to do is close our eyes and step into the Dream HQ.

What's coming up in the February *Playbook*?

Have you ever noticed kids' ability to ask questions? Maybe it's something that has plagued you – or alternatively, delighted you – but unmistakably children have a true talent for bringing curiosity into any situation.

In February we tap into that for the upcoming issue of the *We Turned Out Okay Playbook*!

We'll get curious. We'll think on little questions and big ones. We'll learn about ourselves and our wants, our needs, our joys. Questions are super important. We will dive in with the next *Playbook* issue!

Coming soon, right into your mailbox!

Have a great January and we will see you next month!

24



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