

MEDIA KIT

UNSTUCK

FIND CLARITY, BREAK FREE, AND TAKE ACTION

NORM GUSTAFSON



CURRENT WORDS PUBLISHING

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OVERVIEW

Title: *Unstuck: Find Clarity, Break Free, and Take Action*

Author: Norm Gustafson

Hook: A practical guide for anyone ready to recognize the patterns keeping them stuck, reclaim their choices, and begin building a more intentional life.

Short Description: Feeling stuck can happen to anyone. Whether it's a career, a relationship, a goal, or just the day-to-day routine, it can be hard to see a way forward. In *Unstuck*, Norm Gustafson offers practical insights, real-world examples, and proven strategies to help you identify what's keeping you in place—and take meaningful steps toward a more intentional life.

Drawing on decades of experience as an educator, trainer, consultant, speaker, and student of human potential, Norm shows how to quiet mental roadblocks, tap into your strengths, and create lasting change. *Unstuck* is a roadmap for anyone ready to find clarity, break free from limiting patterns, and take action toward a brighter future.

Genre: Self-Help / Personal Growth

Audience: Readers interested in personal growth, career and life transitions, purpose, resilience, mindfulness, and meaningful change.

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“[H]ighly recommended reading for anyone who feels boxed in, trapped, or stuck in their life trajectory or options...”

— MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW

SUMMARY

Are you working toward the life you want—or simply meeting everyone else’s expectations?

It’s easy to become stuck. A demanding job consumes your energy. Financial obligations narrow your choices. Relationships, routines, and long-held beliefs can quietly become boxes that seem impossible to escape. Somewhere along the way, the dreams and ambitions that once mattered to you get pushed aside.

In *Unstuck: Find Clarity, Break Free, and Take Action*, educator and organizational-development professional Norm Gustafson draws on more than four decades of experience helping people recognize the forces that limit them—and discover the choices still available to them.

Using a practical framework inspired by Buddhism’s Four Noble Truths, Gustafson examines how we become trapped, the beliefs and perceptions that keep us there, and the changes that can help us regain a sense of direction and purpose. He challenges readers to look beyond conventional definitions of career, success, security, and happiness and ask a more important question: What do you want your life to become?

Blending personal experience, reflection, practical exercises, and lessons drawn from pioneers and innovators, *Unstuck* explores how to:

- Recognize the work, relationship, financial, and personal “boxes” limiting your choices
- Identify beliefs and assumptions that keep you from making meaningful changes
- Clarify your values, purpose, and vision for the future
- Redefine your relationship with work and career
- Develop greater freedom, self-direction, and resilience
- Turn reflection into purposeful action

You don’t have to change everything overnight. But you do have to recognize where you’re stuck—and decide what you’re going to do about it.

***Unstuck* is an invitation to stop living by default, reclaim your choices, and begin building a life that is more meaningful, intentional, and your own.**

AUTHOR



NORM GUSTAFSON

Norm Gustafson is a retired economics teacher, having taught for thirty-four years at Sanger High School in California. While working as an educator, Norm felt he had more he could and wanted to do.

He has extensive experience in training and development, business planning, grant writing, and nonprofit boards. He has taught business classes at Fresno City College, directed a teacher training institute at Fresno Pacific University, conducted corporate consulting, and published training articles.

He is married and has three children and five grandchildren.

PRESS RELEASE

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CURRENT WORDS PUBLISHING ANNOUNCES *UNSTUCK: FIND CLARITY, BREAK FREE, AND TAKE ACTION*

Author Norm Gustafson Offers a Practical Roadmap for Breaking Free from the Patterns That Keep Us Stuck

LOS ANGELES, CA — October 27, 2026 — Current Words Publishing announces the release of *Unstuck: Find Clarity, Break Free, and Take Action*, a new personal-growth book by educator, coach, and longtime student of human potential Norm Gustafson.

Feeling stuck can happen to anyone. A career that once seemed promising becomes a source of frustration. Financial obligations narrow our choices. Relationships, routines, expectations, and long-held beliefs can gradually become boxes that seem impossible to escape. In *Unstuck*, Gustafson asks readers to identify the forces keeping them in place—and consider what it would take to begin moving toward a more intentional life.

Drawing on decades of experience in education, training and development, consulting, and coaching, Gustafson combines personal reflection, practical exercises, and real-world examples to explore why people become stuck and how they can begin to change. The book examines work and career, relationships, money, goals, beliefs, identity, and the dreams that often get pushed aside as the demands of everyday life take over.

“Norm has written a book for anyone who has ever looked at their life and wondered, How did I end up here and, more importantly, what can I do about it?” said Dianne Pearce, publisher of Current Words Publishing. “What makes *Unstuck* so compelling is that Norm doesn’t pretend meaningful change happens overnight. He gives readers a thoughtful, practical way to recognize the patterns that are holding them back, reconsider the assumptions they’ve been living by, and begin taking steps toward a life that reflects what truly matters to them.”

The book has already earned praise from Midwest Book Review, which calls it “[h]ighly recommended reading for anyone who feels boxed in, trapped, or stuck in their life trajectory or options.”

About the Book

Using a practical framework inspired by Buddhism’s Four Noble Truths, *Unstuck* examines how people become trapped by circumstances, beliefs, and perceptions; how those forces shape the choices they believe are available to them; and how awareness and reflection can become the first steps toward change.

Rather than prescribing a single definition of success, Gustafson encourages readers to examine their own values, goals, and sense of purpose. From questioning whether we spend our lives pursuing our own dreams or fulfilling everyone else’s expectations to confronting the personal and professional “boxes” that limit our choices, *Unstuck* challenges readers to stop living by default and begin deciding what they want their lives to become.

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About Norm Gustafson

Norm Gustafson is a retired economics teacher who completed thirty-four years at Sanger High School. His experience extends well beyond the classroom and includes training and development, business planning, grant writing, nonprofit board service, and corporate consulting. He has taught business courses at Fresno City College, directed a teacher-training institute at Fresno Pacific University, conducted corporate consulting, and published articles on training and development.

About Current Words Publishing

Current Words Publishing, LLC is an independent publisher based in Los Angeles, California. Through its publishing programs and imprints, Current Words Publishing works with authors across fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short-form literature, providing editorial, design, production, and publishing support from manuscript development through publication and distribution.

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SUGGESTED INTERVIEW TOPICS

Norm Gustafson can speak to themes explored throughout *Unstuck*, including:

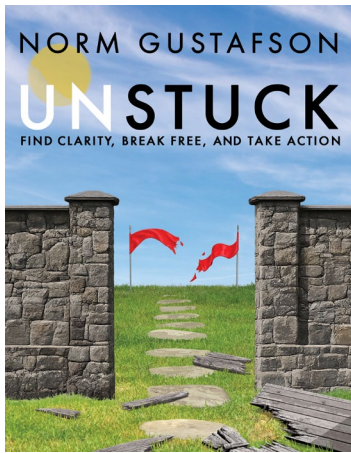
- Why We Feel Stuck — and why recognizing the problem is the first step toward change
- The “Boxes” That Limit Our Choices — work, money, relationships, obligations, beliefs, and identity
- Who Are You Working For? — what happens when our energy goes toward everyone’s goals but our own
- Lost Dreams and Life Purpose — reconnecting with ambitions that have been pushed aside
- Redefining Career, Success, Security, and Happiness
- How Beliefs and Assumptions Narrow the Choices We Think We Have
- Awareness, Reflection, and Action — moving from recognizing a problem to doing something about it
- Lessons from Decades in Education, Training, Consulting, and Meditation Practice

POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What does it actually mean to be “stuck”?
- Why do people often remain in situations they know are making them unhappy?
- How can someone tell the difference between a temporary frustration and a life that needs to change?
- What do you mean when you ask readers, “Who are you working for?”
- Why are our beliefs about security and success sometimes part of the problem?
- What role do awareness and reflection play in creating meaningful change?
- How has your background in economics and education shaped the way you think about work and purpose?
- What is one small action someone who feels stuck can take today?

EXCERPT

The following chapter is excerpted from *Unstuck: Find Clarity, Break Free, and Take Action* by Norm Gustafson.



Chapter 1: Who Are You Working For?

Nature's Food Chain

Imagine a mother sea turtle on a warm, white-sand beach, basking in the sun. She has dug a burrow and laid dozens of eggs. She flips sand over those eggs and then abandons them, flapping across the sand to the ocean. Most of those eggs hatch. The babies excavate themselves from the sand, their soft shells glistening in the sun. Flailing their tiny legs across the wet sand, many get picked off by sea birds. Of those that do make it to the water, most of those are eaten as well.

In the natural world, many offspring are produced in vast numbers, but most don't make it to a reproducing age. (This "survivorship curve" is especially true with plants, invertebrates, and lower vertebrate life-forms.) The late UCLA Professor Raymond

Cowles identified these "excess" critters as superfluous reproduction because they aren't needed to maintain the species population. (In today's parlance, they are disposable "non-essentials.")

Cowles named this animal overproduction the Biokrene, meaning "well of life." Instead of a well, call it a drain, because that's where all the devoured are going—down the drain! These teeming numbers of small fry are not essential to their own species but to the food chain. The main purpose of these anonymous individuals is to feed other species.

Yes, you heard that right.

The mother turtle is partly working for the food chain! Many of her babies are merely food for larger, hungry animals. These tidbits will not contribute to the future of their own species. As the excess numbers are picked off for dinner, only the fitter (and luckier) representatives of the species survive to reproduce and express their genetic information.

Now consider this:

You and the Economic Food Chain

What does the food chain in nature have to do with people? Many people toil away in obscurity, barely subsisting, like so many anonymous animals. They *enrich others* with their purchases and bill payments! Their income is simply "food" for economic "predators" needing a tasty meal of cash (in exchange for satisfying needs and wants). Aren't you simply creating other people's income when you spend your money?

Is your sole purpose to make others rich? Is your life really about paying bills? In doing so, you enrich other companies, banks, and utilities. (You have already enriched the college or university if you attended.) Now you run to the gas station and grocery store—money for them. You run to the big box stores—*money for them*. You click through an online shopping cart—*Venmo for them*.

- Every purchase, obligation, debt, or bill you pay is an expense or a liability to you.
- At the same time, you represent an asset on a business's financial statement!

Your Life Devoured?

Are you mostly living "paycheck to paycheck?" If so, you're an economic prey. Your income is food in the economic chain. Most months you pay *everybody else*, and there's little or *nothing* left for you. Any emergency expenditures are disastrous.

- Worse, you spend little time, money, or effort to pursue your dreams.

- Like the animal's devoured offspring, you've made little *impact* on society.
- You are *unknown* to the world: except to family, friends, and (maybe) the businesses that consume your income.

Realizing Their Dreams, Not Yours

Let's pick a more "fun" topic. People spend considerable income on entertainment. People pay *lots* of money (and do crazy things) not to be bored! They spend time, attention, and energy consuming and viewing entertainment.

So you're a fan of actors, musicians, vocalists, or "personalities?" That makes those stars wealthy and famous.

You're paying them to realize their dreams and perfect *their* craft. Those famous folks lump you into their anonymous platform, following, or fan base. Like the baby turtles, you are *nameless*. The artist "farms" this fan base for recurring cash flow: a new movie, a new song, a new book.

Are you spending the same time and money on your dreams?

You ... a Modern-day Sharecropper?

So, are you spending most of your paycheck making other people wealthy? Are you merely their servant? Are you merely a modern-day sharecropper? Will that be your only life purpose? And are you raising children to play the same role?

Don't get the idea that this book merely addresses economic servitude. It just happens to be the most common indicator that you're working for others instead of yourself. You can just as easily be trapped, boxed-in, or stuck for many nonfinancial reasons. We'll examine them in the next chapter.

Your Life's Purpose

You might protest:

"Oh, No! I'm not a food source for stores!" Really? How much money do you save for yourself? "Besides, everyone has needs and wants." That's true, but meeting your basic needs shouldn't be your only purpose.

Making Everybody Else Rich but Killing Your Own Dreams

While you toil away for others, you're not building your goals. You are worn out. If you have goals, you don't work on them. You've given up your dreams for other people.

Ill-Defined Goals

You might protest: "But I do have goals in life." Okay, when will you know you succeeded?

People claim they have goals. But their goals are so vague they won't know when (or if) they're successful. Simply "living life" is terminated at your death! If you are just living life, then what is your "success"?

Perhaps you want "security" or "happiness." Or maybe you want to raise a great family, help people, make a contribution to the world? However, your chances of success are not that high unless you create benchmarks for your goal.

- Can you measure your goal?
- How do you specify or define it?
- How will you know if (or when) you'll achieve it?
- Does your answer depend on your current job or family status, age, etc.?

So what's the problem with a goal like happiness? Happiness isn't a tangible goal, such as losing 10 pounds, which you can measure. Losing 10 pounds looks the same for every person who loses 10 pounds, but happiness is different for every single person and can change from moment to moment. Plus happiness can be affected by things beyond our control. You may find happiness skiing, but what if no snow falls the week you book to go skiing? How would that impact your happiness?

Lost Dreams

Think about your dreams of youth, you know, those idealistic fantasies you had about making a difference in the world. Remember those ideas of being a world traveler? Or perhaps they were dreams of writing, singing, or dancing—expressing your creative spirit. How does it feel knowing you’ve abandoned those dreams? **You’ve made compromises your whole life, and now your life feels “compromised.”** In fact, you’re not even sure where you put your dreams, or if you ever had them. The dreams of your life have been stuffed so far down the list they feel unattainable.

You are painfully aware that you live far below your dreams. You know something is missing in your life. You feel trapped in mere “existing.” There must be more to life than the endlessly repeating cycle of fighting the commute, working, buying, consuming, and paying bills. The entertainment you chase is not always satisfying. Your life seems to drift, and that’s deeply frustrating.

- You’re not sure of your ultimate life’s purpose.
- But you know neither your life nor your job is the best it could be!

For some people, having a job provides them with an “identity.” This “label” becomes their purpose. Perhaps that’s enough for some but not for you.

- You want to achieve a noble purpose.
- What if you could work toward a higher purpose, and a new life, or a better career?

What is the ultimate waste of your time on this earth?

- Living to enrich the businesses where you shop and work.
- Not having a purpose for living
- Living your life anonymously
- Depleting your energy doing things that don’t matter.
- Living your life in meaningless misery.
- Regretting the things you “thought” about doing—but gave up.

Do you want to realize late in life that you could have had a better life, or helped more people, or achieved a greater purpose? If you had only known, your life would have been much better. Are you doomed to that deep regret?

A voice is telling you something is amiss. But that voice doesn’t need to be a passive witness. Later in the book, we’ll awaken that voice.

As we have seen, every life has a purpose. Even the little turtles that are eaten are noble: They help other species survive. But your contribution doesn’t have to stop at feeding others. Your life purpose could be working to enrich other people. Your life could also represent something more than mere servitude: You could work on your dreams.

The Facets of Being Stuck

We’ve examined the hallmarks of a meaningless life. As we’ve seen in this chapter, work is a common way of being stuck. You can be stuck economically as a consumer (and nonsaver). But being stuck can include other aspects. You could be emotionally stuck, unwilling to leave a toxic relationship. Your life could be dominated by your perceived obligations to family or a significant other. You may be unable to get started working toward a personal goal. No matter how you’re stuck, you put your needs last, and you neglect your goals.

But there’s a problem. You *believe* you’re stuck, and you’re a long way from your dreams. How do you get out of these boxes? How can you ever move beyond them? You are stumped. Next, we’ll examine how we get “boxed-in.” Why do we feel we have no options? Is that really true? What’s the key to escape? Is there a key?

Conclusion

Yes, there is a way out of the box. It starts with awareness and reflection. Have you paused in your reading for a moment and reflected on your situation? Have you realized where you're not working for your benefit? Did you remember the dreams you've given up? Then you've taken the first step.

But you need to know more about the ways you get stuck. Then, together, we'll help you find your escape.

MEDIA ASSETS

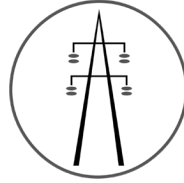
The following files are available for download via Google Docs and can be accessed [here](#).

- Author headshot
- Cover (front / full wrap / composite)
- Chapter 1 excerpt — designed PDF

High-resolution files and review materials are available on request from Current Words Publishing by contacting David Yurkovich: david@currentwords.com.

PUBLISHER

Founded in 2021, Current Words Publishing, LLC is an independent publisher based in Los Angeles, California. The company works with authors across fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short-form literature, providing editorial, design, production, and publishing support from manuscript development through publication and distribution.



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