



IT IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT

Creating Something Great
from What You've Been Given

JUSTIN McROBERTS

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

It Is What You Make of It

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ONE

Mr. Ross Sets the Tone

What Do You Make of This?

1. First, grab a journal or notebook. I'd love it to be a journal or notebook specifically used to capture and process what happens in you while you read this book and plan for what you'll do about it. If not, use what you've got on hand. If it's the same notebook you use to track meal plans and dinner recipes, that's fine. Just know I hate beets.
2. Now, take a few minutes to think about some ways you have given in to "it is what it is" thinking. What do you wish was different but don't think ever will be? What do you think *needs* to be different but don't have the hope it can be? Take your time and write it all down. Give your heart and mind a chance to sift through a few things that aren't as important to you so you can get to the bigger stuff.
3. When you feel you are finished, dog-ear that page or put a bookmark in it; we'll get back to it later. Just be sure that if there is a beet recipe in that same notebook, you put at least one blank page between the beets and me.

TWO

Frank Tate and Humble Beginnings

What Do You Make of This?

1. Can you imagine what your life and work might look like fifteen years from now? What would you like to be true of you then professionally? Personally?
2. What current project or job are you concerned about possibly defining you? Or what past project or job is still defining you? What can you do to change the definition?
3. What hopes and dreams do you have for someone? Would you consider telling them about the potential you see in them, and the person you can imagine them becoming?

THREE

Missing LEGOs

What Do You Make of This?

1. What plan has gone sideways or maybe not even made it off the ground, and how can allowing disappointment, sadness, and frustration actually help you move on?
2. Once the dust settles and you've been able to grieve, what needs to happen next before you are able to take a realistic and thankful look at what you have on hand and start working from there?
3. What plans need to change, or what dream might have to die (at least in part), in order for you to change and become completely the person God designed you to be?

FOUR

Friends and Money and Starting Over

What Do You Make of This?

1. What fault or failure of someone else's have you allowed to define the way you see them? What would it take to see them as more than their mistakes?
2. What fault or failure of yours have you allowed to define you? Did you hurt someone? Did you take advantage of them? Did you drop the ball and not come through the way you promised?
3. Did you lose a relationship or a project you just can't imagine putting back together? What happens if you start thinking of making something new from it? What could that look like? What parts of it are still worth building with?

FIVE

Everybody Hurts, Everybody Matters

What Do You Make of This?

1. When have you felt used by someone? What was that like? How did you handle it?
2. What people in your “system” have you overlooked regularly? How can you change that?
3. When you think about your legacy and what you’ll leave behind, do you think more about projects to accomplish than the people you work alongside? What will it take to make the shift to valuing people over projects?

SIX

They're Not Here to See You Fail

What Do You Make of This?

1. Where or when have you blown it professionally? How did you move forward from that moment? Or why are you holding on to that memory like some weird trophy?
2. Who on your team is going to be there no matter what? How can you ensure they're witness to what you're doing now? And how can you ensure they are witnesses to what you do next?
3. Who around you is afraid of their own failure? How can you help them? What do you have in your pocket that might open the door to solidarity?

SEVEN

KISS Army and Becoming Something Beautiful

What Do You Make of This?

1. What kind of work *actually* inspires you? (I'm not asking about what entertains you or distracts you.) What takes your breath away or gets you fired up? What makes you want to be a different or better person? Make a list of those things.
2. What do you think it says about you that you're moved by such work? What does it say about who you want to be or become?
3. What would it take to regularly expose yourself to that work? Instead of simply waiting for inspiring works to show up, what if you made a practice of that inspiration?

EIGHT

Loving Shakespeare

What Do You Make of This?

1. What can you honestly say you love doing? Not just what makes you feel good, but what makes you feel like you're a part of something bigger than yourself?
2. When have your strengths and gifts and talents drowned out the voices of others in the places you've worked or served? In the future, which of your gifts and talents could you add to (not take over) a project that isn't yours?
3. Maybe you've been quiet too often when you should have spoken up about something you love doing. What is worth standing up for and being louder about? And how can you work with egotistical loudmouths like Adolescent McRoberts?

NINE

Follow Your Noes

What Do You Make of This?

1. Recall a time when you received the beautiful gift of no. What did you learn from it?
2. Where are you hearing no right now? Have you asked the person giving it why you got it? What about you does that no call into question?
3. Where and why have you handed out a helpful no? Or where are you withholding a no that needs to be shared with someone close to you?

TEN

Tow Trucks, Trailers, and Best Final Shows

What Do You Make of This?

1. What does it look like for your work to be an act of love—not sentimental feeling, but service and care and attention toward other humans?
2. What work have you done that did not communicate love? Why did that happen?
3. Where and when have you felt cared for because of the way someone did their job? What made you feel that way? How did it motivate you to do your work?

ELEVEN

Lacrosse, Bloody Noses, and Loving My Work

What Do You Make of This?

1. What kinds of things in your past (relationships, work, faith) have been worth the pain? And what kinds of things have *not* been worth the pain?
2. Where are you experiencing that kind of pain now? What metrics are you using to decide if the project or relationship will be worth the struggle in the end?
3. What would it look like for you to take interpersonal or professional injuries seriously while *not* taking them personally?

TWELVE

Injuries and Great Audiences

What Do You Make of This?

1. Remember to *actually* thank people. Given the opportunity, take an extra moment to search your heart for the part this person played. Then, when you shake their hand or high-five them or whatever, look them in the eye and use the words *thank you* to let them know you see them; let them know they matter.
2. Create a list of people who, in the past month or two, made your personal and professional moments richer, easier, or even possible. Take your time. Maybe look through your text messages and calendar to remember. Let it sink in that you're surrounded by folks who are essential rather than circumstantial.
3. Then, looking into your next week or month, plan a way (dinner party? cards?) to let those folks know they're gifts to you.

THIRTEEN

Oh, Canada

What Do You Make of This?

1. What big plans and dreams do you have? And what do those big plans and dreams actually say about who you are now and who you will be if they happen? What other paths can you take to get those same results and to become the person you want to be?
2. When have you been disappointed in the way something went? What do those feelings of disappointment tell you about the hopes and expectations you have for yourself?
3. When has personal happiness been part of your metric for success? What would your life look like if personal happiness was part of it more often?

FOURTEEN

Broken Bridges

What Do You Make of This?

1. Can you think of a time when something you made or something you loved was destroyed? What happened? How did that make you feel?
2. What things in your life need to be rebuilt? What about something you rebuilt once but needs to be rebuilt again?
3. Do you believe things will ultimately turn out well? Why or why not? If you believed things would turn out well, how might that affect your work?