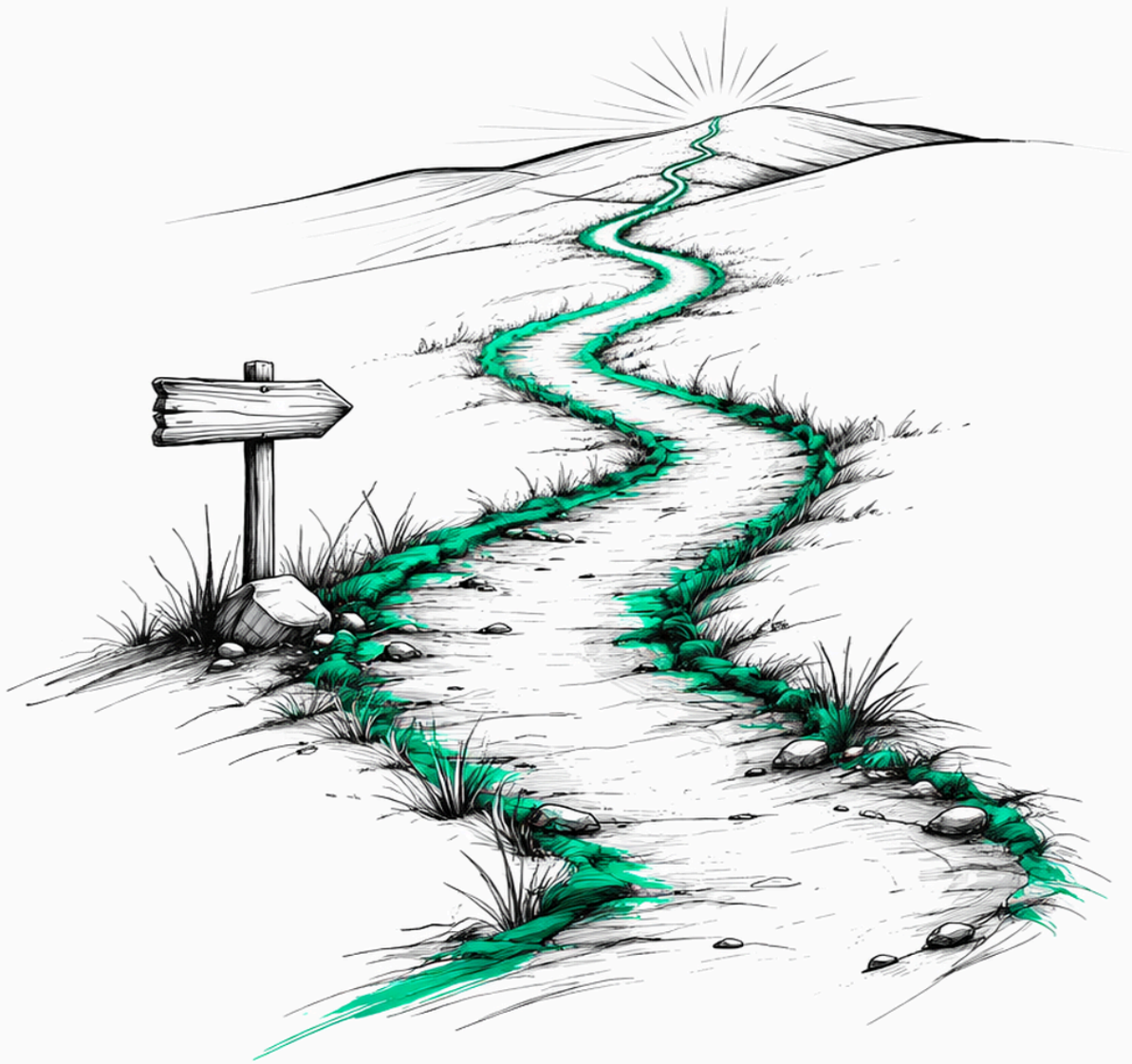


Escaping Survival Mode

By Damian Johnson | Four Mile Coaching



Where This Began

This didn't begin as a business idea. It began as a breaking point. There was a moment in my life where everything felt out of alignment—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I didn't have the language for it at the time, but looking back, I can see it clearly. It was a wake-up call. A shift that forced me to confront where I really was.

That day, I went to Freedom Park and decided to run four miles. Not because I had a structured plan. Not because I was training for anything, but because something inside me needed movement.

As I started running, I realized quickly that this wasn't just physical. Each mile felt like more than exercise. It felt like I was being guided—like God was walking with me, speaking to me in a way I couldn't fully explain. I don't remember the exact words, but I remember the feeling. It stayed with me.

From the beginning, I made a decision: No matter what happens, I'm finishing this run. It didn't matter how it looked. Running, walking, crawling—it didn't matter. I was going to give everything I had—100% effort.

When I finally reached the end, I was exhausted. But something had shifted in me. I wasn't the same person who had started that run. Then something unexpected happened. As I walked back toward my car, my keys slipped out of my pocket. When I reached a fork in the road, I stopped. One path led back to my car. The other led to a dead end.

Logically, there was no reason to go to the dead end. But something in me said, "Go." So I did. When I reached the end of that path, I stood there and looked around. There was nowhere else to go. No next step. No option forward. And in that moment, I said to myself: This is not how my life ends. I didn't just understand it—I felt it.

I understood what it meant to reach the end of the road with no options left. To feel stuck. To feel like there was nowhere else to go. And I made a decision right there: I will never accept this again. That moment changed me.

What happened that day wasn't just a run. It became a framework—a way to understand transformation, not just physically, but mentally, spiritually, and stages. One financially. Four miles. Four processes. That process became what I now call the Four Mile Framework. This isn't just about money. It's about getting out of survival mode and becoming the kind of person who doesn't return to it.

Mile I: Evaluate Your Now



Every transformation begins with the same step: facing reality. The first mile of that run was uncertain. I didn't know if I had the endurance to finish. I didn't feel fully prepared. But I started anyway.

That's where most people struggle financially. Not because they lack intelligence. Not because they lack opportunity, but because they avoid looking directly at where they are.

It's uncomfortable to sit down and look at your numbers. To see the debt. The spending habits. The gaps. The inconsistencies. Avoidance feels easier in the moment. But avoidance keeps you stuck. Clarity, on the other hand, gives you control.

You cannot build a different financial future without first understanding your current position. You need to know what's coming in, what's going out, what you owe, and what you actually have.

This step is not about judgment. It's about awareness.

Just like that first mile, you don't need to have everything figured out. You just need to start moving with honesty. Because once you see things clearly, you can finally begin to change them.

Mile II: Mourn Your Losses



The second mile was where the resistance showed up. My body started to feel heavy. My breathing became more difficult. And a voice in my head started offering an easier option: stop.

That same dynamic shows up in your financial life—but in a different form. This is where you are forced to confront your past. The mistakes. The missed opportunities. The decisions you wish you could take back. The patterns that kept repeating.

Most people try to skip this step. They want solutions without reflection. Progress without accountability, but unresolved weight doesn't disappear. It carries forward.

There is a necessary process here: you have to acknowledge what happened. Not to stay there, but to release it. You may need to sit with the reality of your past decisions. To admit where you fell short. To confront the beliefs that shaped those decisions.

This is where many people realize they've been telling themselves the same story for years: "I'm not good with money." "I always mess this up." "This is just how it is for me." Those beliefs have to be challenged.

You don't move forward by ignoring your past. You move forward by processing it and choosing something different. The second mile teaches you that discomfort is part of progress. You don't avoid it—you move through it.



Mile III: Change Your Identity

By the third mile, something changed. The physical difficulty was still there, but my mindset shifted. I stopped questioning whether I would finish and started operating like someone who already had decided. That distinction matters. Because lasting change doesn't come from temporary effort. It comes from identity.

Most financial strategies fail not because they are ineffective, but because they are built on top of an identity that hasn't changed. If you still see yourself as someone who struggles with money, your actions will eventually align with that belief. Identity drives behavior.

So the question becomes: who are you becoming? Not who you were. Not who you hope to be someday, but who you are choosing to be right now. This is where you begin to redefine yourself. You move from: "I'm trying to get better with money" to: "I am disciplined with money." From: "I hope I can figure this out" to: "I follow through."

This shift is not just language. It's ownership. And once you claim that identity, your actions begin to reinforce it. That day, I didn't just complete a run. I became someone who finishes what he starts. That identity stayed.



Mile IV: Live Your Purpose

The final mile required everything I had left. There was no extra energy. No second wind. Just a decision that had already been made: I was finishing. That's what purpose looks like. It's not driven by emotion. It's driven by commitment.

After I finished the run, I thought the lesson was over. But it wasn't. The moment at the fork in the road—the decision to walk toward the dead end—that was the final piece. That experience showed me something clearly: A life without direction leads to a dead end.

Survival mode feels like movement, but it's not progress. It keeps you busy, but not building. Living with purpose changes that. When your financial life is aligned with your purpose: Your decisions have direction. Your money has intention. Your effort builds something meaningful. You are no longer just maintaining your life—you are designing it.

The dead end represents what happens when you don't choose a direction. The finish line represents what's possible when you do. And the choice between the two is made daily.

The Framework That Changes Everything

That day at Freedom Park gave me more than a personal experience. It gave me a structure for transformation. Four miles. Four stages: Evaluate Your Now — Face reality. Mourn Your Losses — Release the past. Change Your Identity — Become someone new. Live Your Purpose — Build with intention. This is the foundation of Four Mile Coaching.

It is not theory. It is not motivation. It is a process that was lived before it was ever taught. No matter where you are right now—whether you feel like you're behind, stuck, or just starting—you are not at the end. The dead end is not your destination. But the finish line requires a decision. You have to choose to keep moving. You have to choose

to face the truth. You have to choose to become someone different. And you have to choose it again tomorrow.

Where are you right now—honestly? Not where you want to be. Not where you say you are. Where are you actually? **Start there. Because every mile that follows depends on that answer.**