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HAWAIIAN REBIRTH

YVES NAGER

**QUESTIONS, STORIES AND STRATEGIES TO
GUIDE YOU TO YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE**

Mapping Your Inner Landscape

When you start doing your inner work and have more clarity about the map of your life, the next question is discovering how you can fine tune your life map and share your gifts and talents with others. This section is about how you can map your inner landscape and start living your purpose, and how you can serve others.

One of things I'm most passionate about is a sport called orienteering. My intention in writing this section isn't to give you a full introduction to this amazing pursuit, but I believe a short explanation could be beneficial. Here's a summary of orienteering I found on the website for the Colorado-based Rocky Mountain Orienteering Club (RMOC: www.rmoc.org).

'You use a map and compass to locate a series of checkpoints shown on a specialized topographic map. You choose the route, either on- or off-trail, that will help you find all the checkpoints and get to the finish line in the shortest amount of time. Each checkpoint (or 'control') is a distinct, mapped feature such as a trail junction, a boulder, a hilltop, etc. The controls are marked with orange-and-white flags. Orienteering is often called 'the thinking sport' because it requires map reading, problem solving and quick decision-making skills in addition to athletic ability and general physical fitness.'

After moving from Switzerland to the United States, I made Denver my home base between 2014 and 2016 for 3 years. The main reason was that Eunjung had moved there from California in 2000. I find some similarities between Switzerland and Colorado, especially when I spend time outside in nature.

There are high mountains in Colorado—fifty-eight with an elevation of at least 14,000 feet (there are just twenty-four in Switzerland above 13,000 feet) and many lakes. Colorado is home to more than 2,000 natural lakes, reservoirs and enough rivers to keep any water-lover happy. Switzerland too boasts several thousand lakes.

After my move to Denver, Eunjung and I went for many hikes and excursions in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. From the beginning, I thought some of the areas I'd seen would provide excellent terrain and landscapes for orienteering and

imagined how wonderful it would be to create some maps here. I asked Urs, a friend from Switzerland, with whom I'd collaborated on several map projects, if he knew how I could find an orienteering club here and I also did some online research. That's how I found RMOC.

After my initial meeting with Doug, the president of the club, RMOC decided to go ahead and have me start creating some maps for them. I first mapped a 1,360-acre (5.5 km²) area called "White Ranch," an open-space park with thousands of rocks, boulders and small cliffs near Golden, Colorado. In autumn 2016 I finished another, even larger, map project entailing 2,340 acres (9.5 km²) and covering the area of Tahosa and Beaver Reservoir near Nederland, near Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

Orienteering maps are among the most detailed topographic maps available. Although they are somewhat similar to standard topographic or hiking trail maps, they are bigger (at a finer scale, usually 1:10,000 or 1:15,000), have more mapped features and are much more accurate and up-to-date. These maps take a substantial amount of time, sophisticated skills and extensive experience to make. They incorporate a standard symbology designed to be useful to anyone, regardless of their language.

In addition to indicating the topography of the terrain with contour lines, orienteering maps show an array of significant features such as forest density, water features, clearings, trails, roads, earthen banks, rock walls, ditches, wells, pits, fences, power lines, buildings and boulders. For a map to be reliable, accuracy is essential. It needs to be relevant to a competitor by showing the lay of the land with neither too much nor too little detail.

For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by maps. From a very early age, when I looked at a world map, I imagined how exciting it would be to travel to other countries and explore other parts of the world. So far, as noted, I've been to thirty-five countries, and I don't think there has been a single country I haven't looked at from the perspective of a mapper. When I later began studying geography at school, I spent many hours poring over an atlas and, most of all, kept looking at all those beautiful maps from all over the world.

My parents chose to live in a place close to nature with a nearby forest, so that my brother Alain and I could play outside in nature instead of watching too much TV or playing computer games. From a young age, I was an excellent runner, especially in longer distances, and was known as the youngest organizer of a running competition called "Studweidlauf" in Switzerland. What started with nineteen runners in the first race in 1985 grew into a large event, with about 300 kids running in 1994.

While I always found freedom when I went for a run, I felt a little bored just running on streets or on hiking trails. At age twelve, I discovered orienteering. I did my first orienteering competition together with Alain, without having had any proper training in how to read such a map. Before we started, I was convinced it would be no problem at all, because we were both fast runners and had already spent many years playing in forests.

The first experience was devastating: it took us more than an hour and a half to complete a short 3K course. We got lost many times—even though the course was in a forest with many trails and was designed for beginners—and we both fell into a swamp hole. When we finally reached the finish line, we were covered from head to toe with mud and the organizers were already dismantling the event facility.

It was late fall, so it got dark early. We were the last to arrive and, with our mother waiting for us at the finish with increasing concern, the organizers were just about to start searching for us. My ambition was triggered, though, and the following spring I decided to take a weeklong orienteering course to learn everything needed in order to have a better experience while out in the forest.



Shortly afterwards at the age of thirteen, I took my first steps in mapping. Again, at first I had no proper training and no introduction. I was working without a base map; I just used a blank piece of paper, a pencil and my compass. I first started to map our neighborhood and areas near my school, plus some tiny sections of forests near Spiez, my hometown in Switzerland.

My enthusiasm for mapping was noticed in the orienteering club (OLG Hondrich) I belonged to. In the summer of 1991, at fifteen, I joined Urs, a more experienced friend in drafting the first "official" map of the forest I'd always played in and explored with my brother.

At first, it took me more than sixty hours to map an area of about 123 acres (0.5 km²) whereas now, twenty-seven years later, depending on the level of detail and the complexity of the landscape, it takes me about thirty to forty hours to accomplish fieldwork for 250 acres (1 km²). My fascination to create such maps was born twenty-eight years ago.

Since then, I've mapped about twenty different terrains, culminating in my project at Tahosa, Colorado, which I finished in October 2016. This undertaking was extraordinary for many reasons. First, Tahosa lies at a high altitude. The area I mapped is located between 8,600 and 9,700 feet (between 2,600 and 2,950 meters) and is the most spectacular setting for mapping or orienteering I have undertaken. There is a lot of variety: mainly gorgeous and open mountain forest, some dense vegetation, some swampy areas and only a few hiking trails. The glaciated terrain is pristine and features magical areas with little mountain lakes.

One of the main reasons RMOC decided to go ahead with this map project is that it's located at the Tahosa High Adventure Alpine Base of the Boy Scouts of America. The facilities at Tahosa range from rustic campsites to buildings from the 1800's that have been renovated with modern conveniences.

The remote location provides a wilderness setting ideal for hiking, canoeing, mountain biking, fishing, stargazing and many other activities. For other mapping projects, I always had to drive to the terrain I was mapping and then drive home. This time, however, I could stay in one of the small cabins and just get out of the cabin each day and start mapping.

To accomplish this project (as noted, a 2,340-acre (9.5 km²) field survey), I was out in the wilderness for a total of 290 hours, divided by forty days and eleven stays. I had profound experiences while sharing the land with the regional wildlife, or more appropriately, while the wildlife shared their home with me.

Because the area is so remote and high up in the mountains, wildlife included animals like moose, elk, bears and mountain lions. Of course, I'd experienced many previous encounters with animals while mapping for other projects, but this was a more intense, higher-level situation. I'm grateful all went well for the duration of my fieldwork, although twice I had an encounter with a male elk ready to charge at me—terrifying in the middle of mating season.

I had another hair-raising encounter with a moose in one of the denser swampy areas. The day before my last day of fieldwork, I heard a loud sound—almost like a dinosaur roaring in one of the Jurassic Park movies! I had goosebumps all over my body. It was clear that this moose didn't like having me in its territory.

I did what I've been told to do in such situations: run away as fast as you can and look for a big tree or rock where you can hide. You don't do this in all animal encounters in wilderness, of course. For example, if you see a bear or mountain lion, you need to stand your ground and make yourself bigger. But in the case of moose, there's no chance you'll win by doing that. Happily, I lived to tell the tale!

On a lighter note, I also saw many smaller, cuter animals like birds, rabbits and squirrels. They were curious about what I was doing, and we became friends over time. Having these intimate interactions with wildlife and being surrounded by pristine, untouched wilderness and stunning landscapes are just a few of the many benefits of orienteering. I recommend it to anyone who has an outward-bound spirit!



The title of this section is "Mapping Your Inner Landscape." I think everyone who's spent an extended period of time alone in a remote wilderness setting would agree that you become raw and, one might say, naked. It's harder to have this type of experience when you're in a city, because there's so much distraction and so many others sharing the space.

While working on this Tahosa mapping project, I mapped what I thought would be useful to people who try to find their way through the mountainous terrain in

the future. As the mapping project progressed, I became more and more aware of my thoughts, emotions and physical sensations. With no one else around, I grew more conscious of both my outer and inner environment. As I mapped the outer landscape, it became obvious that I was simultaneously creating a map of *my own inner landscape*.

I mentioned earlier that orienteering maps show many details. In the same way, when we spend time in nature, we become increasingly aware of our surroundings and we can find, symbolically, similar aspects in what I like to call our "inner landscape." The experience of mapping is similar to a walking meditation. For example, say you are trying to accomplish a goal. Sometimes you must climb over (or find a way around) huge obstacles. Or, you may come to a crossroads on your path where you must decide where to go next. Or, you may meet others who have put fences around what they think is their territory.

In navigating unfamiliar terrain to reach your goal, you may discover new ditches, wells and other resources within yourself. When breaking a new trail on your life's journey, you can experience immense joy and gratitude as you find your way to clearings that open you up to a new awareness of who you are and where you are positioned in your life and in the world.

I recently came upon a quote by Rod Stryker, with whom I have had the good fortune to study yoga. In his book, *The Four Desires: Creating a Life of Purpose, Happiness, Prosperity, and Freedom*, Rod says:

'Our world is getting more and more complicated. And as it gets more complicated, we have fewer answers for the difficulties that we are going through. That's a beautiful thing because it's forcing us to look more deeply at what is truth and what is real. We are being forced to go deeper, and to ask the right questions ... about who we are, about what our nature with the world is, and how we can unveil this mystery of what it means to have a life, and to be a full person.'

Before you read on, I invite you to reflect for a moment on the following three questions inspired by the above Rod Stryker quote and my recent mapping project in the Rocky Mountains:

- How often (a day, a week, a year) do I stop my activities and become aware of what my inner landscape looks, sounds and feels like?
- How often do I stop to recognize both the immense beauty and the denser and swampier aspects of my inner landscape?
- How often do I truly recognize the inner landscape of someone I share a moment with, or walk with for a stretch of my life's journey?

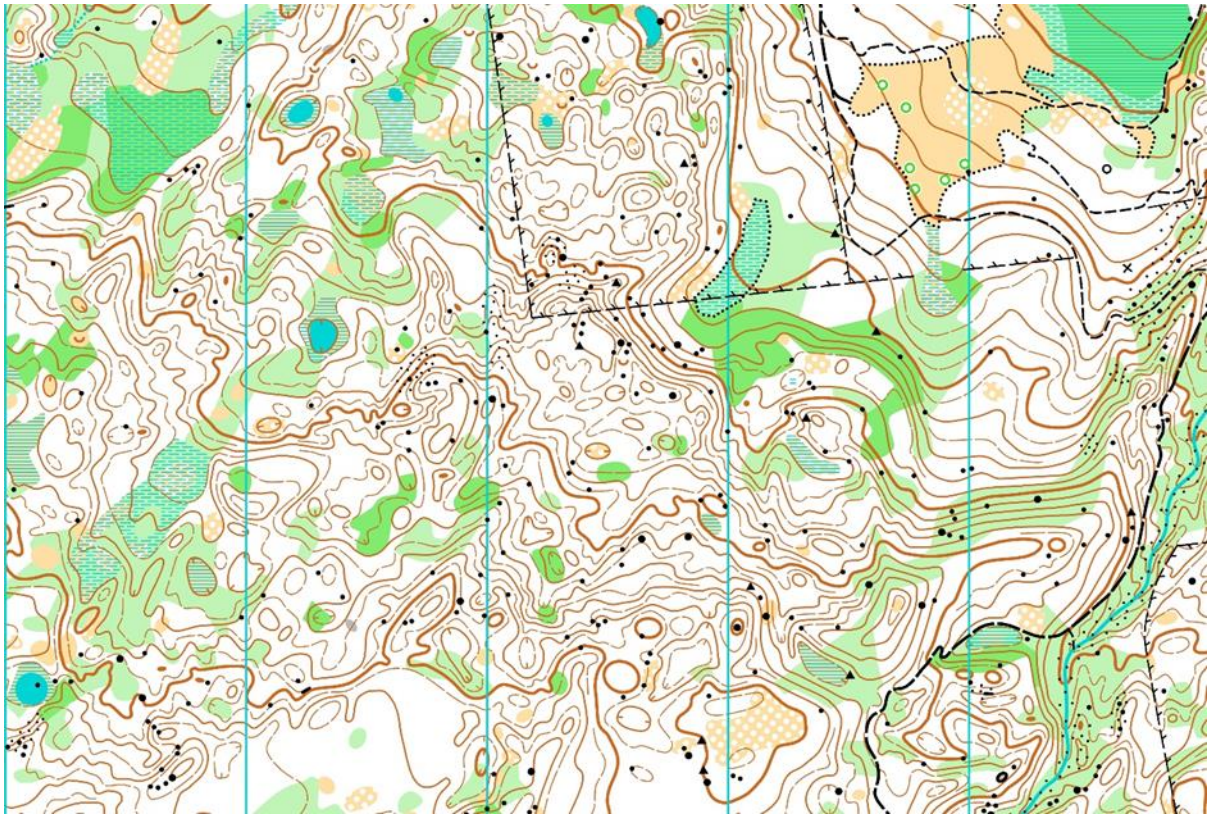
After you find some answers to these questions (and, ideally, write your answers in your journal) take time to reflect on these questions:

- What is true and real for me in my life?
- Where do I come from?
- Where do I choose to go?
- What paths are available to guide me to my goal?
- What kind of checkpoints (or controls) are on the path I choose?
- What kind of checkpoints do I want to leave for others?
- Where (and who) am I in this moment?

While I worked on the Tahosa mapping project, I got lost once, ending up in an entirely different section of forest than the area I had demarked on my base map. It took me quite a while to find my way out. After I tried unsuccessfully to find my way back to one of the small mountain lakes I had mapped just the day before, all I could do was take my compass and head north. I hit the next hiking trail about forty minutes later.

When I look at my inner landscape, I realize I've also gotten lost on my life's journey a few times, and it has taken me way longer than forty minutes to find my way back! This is one of the reasons I feel so passionate about creating orienteering maps to help others find their way through unknown terrain, and, through my work as a life coach, creating maps to help others navigate their inner landscapes. Are you ready to map yours?





Orienteering map, Tahosa, Colorado

So far, I've written about the first of the two main requirements to accomplish a map project. The first is fieldwork or land survey, the second is actual map design. When it comes to creating an orienteering map, I have an established process.

I start by scanning the extensive handwritten notes I've made in the forest. I then incorporate them into the design of an actual map, which I create with the help of a special program called OCAD. The company that creates the OCAD program was founded and is based in my homeland, Switzerland. Since I first worked with a much earlier version of the program in 1993, there have been many helpful updates to the software.

Whenever people ask me what fascinates me about creating these kind of maps, I always respond that creating a map is just like "putting nature into art." I spend probably more time on a nice design and layout than many other mappers, because I appreciate orienteering using a map with good readability. It also helps me trust the mapmaker more.

At this point, you may be wondering, “How does mapwork relate to my current life situation?” “How does orienteering map design relate to mapping my inner landscape?” Well, we’re all born with certain gifts and talents to share with the world, and they’re related to our life’s purpose. Once you start doing the inner work and get more clarity on your life map—which can be seen as a guide to your life’s purpose—the next question becomes, “How can I further refine and express my unique gifts and talents?”

Once you’ve mapped your inner landscape, it becomes an art to discover how best to communicate and express your gifts. As you put more time, energy and other resources into sharing them with the world, more opportunities calling for your unique contribution arise. Whatever your passions are, you can share them with the world through creative and artistic expression.

Sometimes I marvel at how, during the Tahosa project, I managed to map for eight to nine hours a day, up to seven days in a row. All the while, I was working at an extremely high altitude. I knew it was important to keep myself fit and that began with staying hydrated. I drank up to six liters of water a day. Meanwhile, I was being nourished by the energy I received from the unspoiled setting—it was teeming with plants and animals. It was as if I was being bathed by the pure, nurturing energy of the forest.

This idea of communing with nature is called “eco-therapy” or “forest bathing.” Forest bathing—which is basically just being in the presence of trees—became part of a national public health program in Japan thirty-seven years ago and is scientifically proven to improve health. Compelling evidence shows that it lowers heart rate and blood pressure, reduces stress hormone production, boosts the immune system and improves overall feelings of wellbeing. If you’re interested, you can read the entire article about it at <http://qz.com/804022/health-benefits-japanese-forest-bathing/>.

At the end of the article, there’s a description of a great practice I’ve tried a couple times and have taught some of my clients to do. I’d like to take this opportunity to share it with you. Here’s how it works:

At the beginning of your next nature walk, simply pick up a rock, put a problem in the rock and drop it. If you believe that you can’t drop your problem so easily,

you can always pick up your troubles again on your way back. However, after spending some time in nature, people rarely do.

To start mapping your own inner landscape and unveil the mystery of what it means to be alive, take time to connect with nature. Ask yourself the questions noted above, write your answers down and share your experiences and insights with others.



Tumblesom Lake, Colorado

