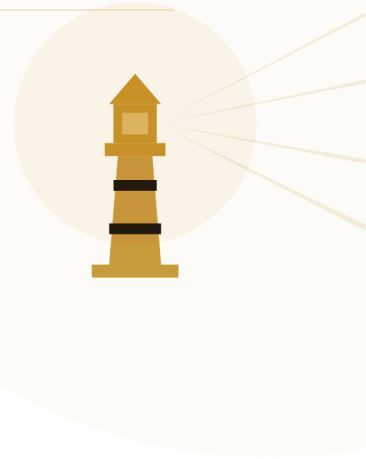


Surviving *the Drain*



8 ways to protect yourself when you're stuck
in a workplace that's sucking your soul dry
— and leaving isn't an option yet

You are still showing up. Still performing. Still giving everything to something that has decided what you're worth. This guide is for you — the woman who can't leave yet but cannot keep surviving like this.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 01 Stop giving loyalty to something that isn't giving it back
- 02 Name what's actually happening
- 03 Separate your worth from their assessment of it
- 04 Create a physical anchor in your environment
- 05 Protect your breathing room
- 06 You are not trapped
- 07 Start building your exit — even if just in your head
- 08 Find one person who gets it

*You are not running out
of strength.*

You are running out of tolerance

for less than you deserve.

There's a difference.



You are allowed to be exhausted

by something you once loved.

That exhaustion is not weakness.

It is wisdom telling you

it's time.



01



Stop giving loyalty to something that isn't giving it back

You can do your job well without emotionally investing in an institution that has shown you – repeatedly – that it doesn't value you the way you deserve.

Professional. Present. Protective of your energy. Give your best work because it reflects your standards – not because you're hoping they'll finally notice.

That's not checking out. That's self-preservation. You are allowed to do excellent work while simultaneously knowing that this place is not your forever.

Loyalty is earned. You've been giving yours to something that stopped earning it a long time ago.

02



Name what's actually happening

Not "I'm stressed" or "work is hard right now." Get specific. Write it down somewhere private where only you can see it.

"I was passed over again with no explanation." "My idea was dismissed and then credited to someone else." "I was told to be grateful I still have a paycheque."

Naming it clearly is not complaining. It is the first act of refusing to be gaslit by a system that benefits from your silence. You are not imagining it. It happened.

What you can name, you can stop internalizing as a truth about your worth.

03



Separate your worth from their assessment of it

The pay gap is not a measure of your value. The passed-over promotion is not a measure of your capability. The way this system sees you is not the truth about you.

A broken measuring stick doesn't mean you're the wrong size. It means the tool is broken.

Your worth exists completely independently of what this institution has decided to offer you. Those are two entirely separate things — and one of the most important acts of survival is refusing to let them become the same thing.

You are not running out of strength. You are running out of tolerance for less than you deserve. There's a difference.

04



Create a physical anchor in your environment

Something that has absolutely nothing to do with the job. A photo of someone who loves you unconditionally. A bunch of fresh flowers you bought for yourself – because you deserve beauty even in hard places.

A screensaver with a quote that reminds you who you actually are. A small object that connects you to something bigger than this office, this role, this version of your life.

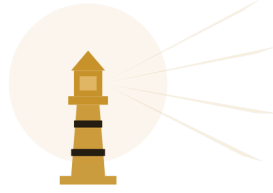
And when the day gets heavy – put your earbuds in. Your favourite music is not an escape. It is a lifeline back to yourself. Let it play. Close your eyes for sixty seconds. Take three slow, deliberate breaths.

Then open your eyes and name five things around you something you can see, hear, feel, smell, touch. Not because it's a technique. Because it pulls you back into your body and out of the noise in your head.

On the hardest days, this anchor is not decoration. It is the thing that gets you through the next hour.

You are more than this place. Keep something nearby that proves it.

05



Protect your breathing room

Two weeks off at Christmas sounds generous until you're back at your desk in January with eleven months stretching out in front of you with nothing to look forward to.

Your vacation days are not a reward for surviving. They are medicine. Use them like it.

Look at your calendar right now and book one long weekend every single month. Not a big trip. Not a production. Just a day – or two – that belongs entirely to you.

The research is clear on this: having something to look forward to reduces stress hormones and creates psychological distance from the thing that's draining you. You don't need to go anywhere. You just need to know it's coming.

And when that day arrives – do one thing that lights you up. Not errands. Not catching up on sleep out of exhaustion. Something that reminds you that you have a self outside of that building. A walk somewhere beautiful. A meal you love. A morning with no schedule. Something **just for you**.

Your nervous system needs proof that life exists beyond that workplace. Give it that proof regularly.

06



You are not trapped

I hear you. It cannot logistically happen right now. The mortgage, the geography, the family, the timing—it's real. You are not being dramatic and you are not weak for staying. But here is what I want you to know: not being able to leave today is not the same as being trapped forever. Those are two very different things and your nervous system needs to understand the difference.

Start thinking creatively — not about leaving, but about options. Could you reduce your hours before fully going? Could remote work break the geographic constraint? Could you upskill quietly on the side while building a financial runway? Could you explore an internal move away from the toxic team while you prepare?

You don't have to burn it down. You just have to start building the door.

A strategic exit that feels safe is not a fantasy. It is a plan. And a plan — even an unfinished one — gives you back the one thing a toxic system systematically takes: the knowledge that you have a choice.

You don't have to leap. You just have to start building somewhere to land.

This is exactly the work we do together — building your exit before it's built for you.

07



Start building your exit — even if it's just in your head

You don't have to leave tomorrow. You don't have to have the whole plan figured out. But knowing you could leave changes everything about how you show up today.

Update your resume. Research your options. Talk to someone you trust. Give yourself permission to imagine what's on the other side of this — in detail, with colour.

Hope is a survival tool. And a quiet exit plan, even an unfinished one, gives you back something a toxic environment systematically takes away: the knowledge that you have a choice.

You are not trapped. You are in a temporary situation with more options than they want you to believe.

08



Find one person who gets it

Not to vent endlessly—that keeps you stuck in the story. But to be witnessed. To have someone say "what you're experiencing is real and it's not okay."

That validation is not a luxury. After long enough inside a system that minimises you, you start to doubt your own reality. One person who sees clearly what you're living through is an anchor.

That person might be a friend, a former colleague, a coach someone who has been through their own version of this and came out the other side. Find her. Let her see you.

You were never meant to carry this alone. White-knuckling it in silence is not strength. It's just isolation dressed up as resilience.

You don't have to *white-knuckle this alone.*

I'm Kristine — a certified Life and Health Coach and the founder of Her Soul Compass Coaching. I came back from my own collapse to be the lighthouse I never had.

I work with women 35+ who've been pushed out or worn down by careers that never fully valued them — helping them rebuild who they are and step boldly into what comes next.

Book a Free 30-Minute Clarity Call
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