

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE RESOURCES

for

Foreword by JON KRAKAUER

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *INTO THE WILD*

Had I made the right decision not to allow Jon to write the whole truth? The constant misconceptions about my brother made me want to cry out the real reasons why walking into the wild was far from crazy, but the sanest thing Chris could have done.



THE
Wild Truth



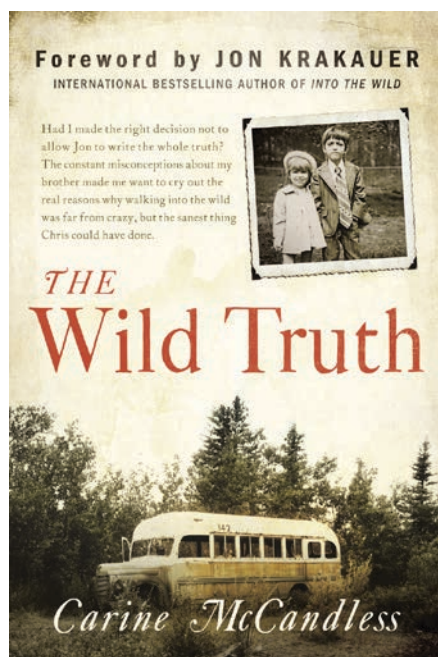
Carine McCandless



HarperFirstYear.hc.com
CarineMcCandless.com

Table of Contents

A Note From the Author	3
<i>The Wild Truth</i> FYE Teaching Schedules	4
Summer Read (Condensed) Schedule:	4
Complete Semester (14 week) Schedule:	5
“What’s in YOUR backpack?” Project Instructions	7
“Into Your Wild” Project Instructions	8
About the Authors	9



Available in hardcover, large print, and audio editions.

Paperback coming soon!



HarperFirstYear.hc.com

CarineMcCandless.com

For more information about the full-range of teaching materials for *The Wild Truth*, please contact Carine McCandless (carine@carinemccandless.com) or Dr. Douglas Kennedy (dkennedy@vwc.edu).

If you are interested in using *The Wild Truth* in your classroom, please let us know: academic@harpercollins.com

A Note From the Author

The powerful story of my brother, Chris McCandless, who gave away his savings, hitchhiked across North America, walked into the wilderness of Alaska and starved to death in 1992, fascinated not only author Jon Krakauer, but readers around the world. Krakauer's 1996 book, *Into the Wild*, became an international bestseller translated into thirty-one languages. In 2007, Sean Penn's compelling film by the same name furthered the global reach of Chris's story and deepened the mystery behind his legend. As a consultant to both Jon and Sean, I knew it was important that they understood the deep-rooted reasons why Chris disappeared. But I wasn't ready to share with the rest of the world what had driven my brother to such extremes, and both Jon and Sean honored my request to limit what they revealed. Throughout the twenty plus years since Chris's death, I have wrestled with what remained unspoken.

I wasn't prepared for the messages I would receive every day from such diverse people throughout the United States and various countries around the world. These accounts of how they'd been affected by Chris's story were as different as they were similar, and reading them was both joyous and heart wrenching, because they served as constant reminders that I'd done a disservice to Chris through my unwillingness to share his entire story. Our story.

We had grown up in the same troubled household, sharing the secret reality that was our dysfunctional and violent family dynamic. I knew why Chris had embraced the harsh wilderness of Alaska, and why he had done it alone. I'd learned from my own private journey into a life without my brother and best friend, that the greatest inspiration comes only from that which Chris valued above all else—what he referred to often in the margins of his beloved books and in the letters he wrote to me before embarking on his great adventures: TRUTH.

In *The Wild Truth*, I tell my own story while filling in the blanks of his. During the past two decades, I often felt that I was living for the two of us as I found my own path: as a daughter, as a sister and the youngest of eight siblings, as I made mistakes in personal relationships and created success as an entrepreneur, and most importantly in the priorities I realized as a mother.

To my great joy, *The Wild Truth* is already drawing interest from educators as a common book for First-Year Experience programs. In the many years I have worked with students, I have witnessed the powerful impact of truly reaching them during this age of opportunity, when they are deciding who they want to be, and laying the foundation for who they will become. I have worked with Dr. Douglas Kennedy, a Professor and Department Coordinator at Virginia Wesleyan College, to create a full-range of teaching materials to help students understand the importance of self-awareness and encourage them to find their own true path rather than simply following one that was laid out for them. Faculty and students have already used these materials, and the results have been overwhelmingly positive. You'll find samples of these materials in the following pages.

—Carine McCandless

The Wild Truth FYE Teaching Schedules

© Carine McCandless & Dr. Doug Kennedy

SUMMER READ (CONDENSED) SCHEDULE:

SESSION 1: GETTING STARTED

Discuss: Introduction

Topics

- Reading for pleasure versus reading for purpose. How can we do both and why does it matter?
- The backstory: Chris McCandless.
- Houses and homes, our outward and inward selves: The difference between what we see on the outside and what happens on the inside.

Exercise: *College and Chris McCandless: Reality and Fiction.*

SESSION 2: WORTH

Discuss: Chapters 1-6

- What's so traditional about the "traditional" family, and what does that mean to you?
- The quest for the "perfect" family.
- Divorce impacts.
- Leaving the nest.
- Double standards: Tolerance of family versus others.
- Independence: Myths versus realities.
- Rose-colored glasses and truth in the Facebook Era.
- Is it still a mistake if we learn from it?
- Can we understand parents until we become one?
- Are the best things in life "things?"

Exercise: *Writing to Reflect.*

SESSION 3: STRENGTH

Discuss: Chapters 7-12

Listen: Supertramp "Long Way Home"

Topics

- What's your passion?
- Dealing with adversity: Being strong in a weak world and how to find your strength.
- Relationships and Friendships: What's your ship?
- Solitude and introspection.
- Money: Power and possibilities.
- Finding your true self.

Exercise: *What's in your backpack?*

SESSION 4: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Discuss: Chapters 13-14

- The power of love and selflessness.
- The three truths.
- Security versus freedom: What we keep, give away and get.

Exercise: *What's the price of happiness? Does it have to cost us?*

SESSION 5: TRUTH

Movie: *Into the Wild*

(Note: This also makes a great “Movie Night” before the sessions begin, providing some backstory as well as an opportunity for social engagement. If not viewed pre-session, the movie should be viewed prior to the following discussions.)

Discuss: Chapters 15-Epilogue

- Movie truth versus *The Wild Truth*.
- Knowing the truth and letting go: Giving up what we must.
- Selfishness versus self-awareness.
- Epilogue and parents revisited: Is hindsight always 20-20?
- Legacy: How will your story end?

Exercise: *You 2.0*

Capstone Experience: *Into YOUR Wild*

COMPLETE SEMESTER (14 WEEK) SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1

Discuss: Introduction

Topics

- Reading for pleasure versus reading for purpose. How can we do both?
- The backstory. Chris McCandless.

Exercise: *Chris McCandless: A life on-line*.

Movie: *Into the Wild* (Option – The movie can be utilized either here in the beginning of the semester or as part of the end discussions, as noted in WEEK 14.)

WEEK 2

Discuss: Introduction

- Houses and homes, our outward and inward selves: The difference between what we see on the outside and what happens on the inside.

Exercise: *How is the college experience different than what you expected?*

WEEK 3

Discuss: Chapters 1-2

Topics

- What’s so traditional about the “traditional” family?
- The quest for the “perfect” family.
- Divorce realities.

Exercise: *Who’s your family now?*

WEEK 4

Discuss: Chapter 4

- Leaving the nest: Preparation and reality.
- Double-standards: Tolerance of family versus others.
- Independence: Myths versus realities.
- Rose-colored glasses and truth in the Facebook Era.

Exercise: *The pri\$e of Independen\$e*.

WEEK 5

Discuss: Chapter 5

- Is it still a mistake if we learn from it?
- Can we understand parents until we become one?

Exercise: *MY parents, THEIR mistakes*.

WEEK 6

Discuss: Chapter 6

- Are the best things in life “things?”

Exercise: *What’s in YOUR backpack?*

WEEK 7

Discuss: Chapter 7

Listen: Supertramp “Long Way Home”

- Following your passion.

Exercise: *What makes you YOU?*

WEEK 8

Discuss: Chapters 8-9

- Dealing with adversity: Being strong in a weak world and how to find your strength.
- Those we leave behind: Saying goodbye versus forgetting.
- Relationships: True and False.

Exercise: *When the going gets tough, the tough....*

WEEK 9

Discuss: Chapter 10

- Friendship: Can we really have 649 friends?

Exercise: *Your “Circle of Trust.”*

WEEK 10

Discuss: Chapter 11

- Solitude: When others let us down.

Exercise: *What’s so “great” about The Great Outdoors?*

WEEK 11

Discuss: Chapter 12

- Money: Power and possibilities.
- Finding your true self.

Exercise: *Your last \$100.*

WEEK 12

Discuss: Chapter 13

- The power of love and selflessness.
- The three truths.

Exercise: *What’s love got to do with it?*

WEEK 13

Discuss Chapter 14

- Security versus freedom: What we keep, give away and get.

Exercise: *Anchors and wings.*

WEEK 14

Movie: *Into the Wild* (see WEEK 1)

Discuss: Chapters 15-Epilogue

- Movie truth versus *The Wild Truth*.
- Knowing the truth and letting go: Giving up what we must.
- Selfishness versus self-awareness.
- Epilogue of a parent: Is hindsight always 20-20?

Exercise: *How will your story end?*

Capstone Experience: *Into YOUR Wild*

The Wild Truth FYE: "What's in YOUR backpack?" Project Instructions

© Dr. Doug Kennedy & Carine McCandless

In chapter six of *The Wild Truth*, Carine McCandless confronts the loss of her prized car but also receives the gift from her brother of his worn leather jacket. While the loss of one thing could someday be replaced, the jacket was irreplaceable and truly special. As you'll see in Chapters 8 and 15, Carine and Chris McCandless carried backpacks that meant much to them and carried important items that reflected their lives. Odds are that you have a backpack, too. Maybe it's a traditional backpack that carries your books. Or maybe it's a string bag where you throw a few things. But, if that backpack reflected your life and WHO you are, what would be in it?

So that's your task. Next class bring your backpack and in it a MAXIMUM of 10 items. These items must reflect WHO you are. Be creative! You can put anything in your backpack you want but each item should say something about you. Consider who you were when you were growing up, who you are now, and who you want to be in the future. What things are important to you? What things have you given up or lost, for better or worse? Your backpack tells YOUR story.

Along with this, please write a three-page paper discussing for each item:

1. What is the item and why is it important?
2. Does the item represent your past, present, and/or future?
3. Do most of your items represent just one time of your life from #2?
4. What item(s) won't be found in your backpack that you wish were there?

Be original and be honest with yourself. Your backpack is YOUR OWN. You're being asked to bring it to class, and we'll share what's in our backpacks, but you ONLY have to share the things you're comfortable sharing with others in class.

The Wild Truth FYE: "Into Your Wild" Project Instructions

© Dr. Doug Kennedy & Carine McCandless

The purpose of this project is to have your own "Chris McCandless" experience and learn a little more about yourself while you learn about our area. To do this you're being asked to participate in a NEW experience in the outdoors. We all bring a history with the outdoors to college. For some that means experience camping and participating in a variety of outdoor activities. For others, their history might be limited to walking the dog around the block. The point of this is to embrace YOUR history and then push it a little to experience something new, learn about yourself, and increase your independence. So.....you will complete a project, and submit a paper, that covers the following:

1. What's your history with the outdoors?
2. What are three things in the outdoors you would like to do that you've never done?
3. Which ONE would be mostly new AND push you out of your comfort zone? Why?
4. How will this experience allow you to reflect on #3, either during or after?
5. You are encouraged to do this experience alone. But, if you must have another person(s) present, why is this necessary and how will it still allow you to reflect while it's going on?
6. What do you EXPECT to get out of the experience?
7. What are your SPECIFIC plans for completing your experience? Please include specific dates, times, destinations, costs, equipment, and anything else you need to prepare ahead of time.
8. How will this activity make you broaden your understanding of yourself, the area, and increase your independence?
9. What do you think may go wrong?
10. What MUST happen for this experience to be a success?

The above MUST be completed and submitted to the instructor for approval BEFORE (DATE). Please do not complete your experience before you've received approval.

Then....when your experience is completed, please complete a paper that includes the information above you submitted (do not change it) and the following:

11. What did you experience that was NEW? Focus not only on the activity but also your feelings.
12. How did your experience push you out of your comfort zone?
13. When did you reflect on the experience?
14. How did this experience broaden your understanding of yourself?
15. How did this experience broaden your understanding of the area?
16. How did this experience increase your independence?
17. Which of your plans from #7 above worked out and which didn't?
18. Did the things you thought might go wrong, go wrong? Which and why?
19. Did the things that needed to go right, go right? Which and Why?
20. What's honestly preventing you from having more "Into YOUR Wild" experiences in the future?

This must be submitted on (DATE – we recommend 2 weeks from the due date for #1-10) along with FIVE images of yourself during your experience. Reflect, be honest, and share pictures that capture the essence of your experience.

Have fun!!

About the Authors

Carine McCandless, Author, *The Wild Truth*

Dr. Douglas Kennedy, CPRP



Carine McCandless is an entrepreneur, activist, avid hiker and devoted mother of two daughters. She has been successfully self-employed since she started her first business at the age of nineteen. As a public speaker her presentations are featured in education and corporate venues across the United States. Carine consulted closely with author Jon Krakauer while he wrote his international bestseller *Into the Wild*, a harrowing yet inspirational account of the life and death of her brother, Chris McCandless, published in 1996. She also worked as a direct advisor and script contributor to Sean Penn for his film adaptation of the book. *Into the Wild* has been utilized in education as required reading for high school and college students for almost two decades, a time in which Carine struggled with all that remained unsaid. In her memoir, *The Wild Truth*, Carine tells the rest of Chris's story while sharing her own remarkable journey, leaving behind a tumultuous childhood to find a new life without her brother and best friend.

Several years ago, Carine began working with students and their teachers at all education levels as they delved into the timeless lessons derived from the pages of *Into the Wild*. She immediately noticed that students were missing much of the information necessary to take their experience with the text from just another assignment up to a level of understanding and value that could remain with them beyond the classroom. After working with Carine, students grasped the importance of self-awareness and of taking on the responsibility to find their own true path rather than simply following one that was laid out for them. Dr. Douglas Kennedy, a Professor and Department Coordinator at Virginia Wesleyan College with more than twenty years of teaching experience, noticed the extraordinary connection Carine made with students during her first presentation at the college, and they started working together to develop programs that enabled students to enhance their own academic and personal success. Annually, Dr. Kennedy directs a popular first-year seminar titled "Into Your Wild" combining Krakauer's text with Carine's unique personal insight to explore ways in which students can embrace what he has termed "Progressive Independence". Seeing the positive impact the full story had on others, Carine decided to write her memoir. *The Wild Truth* is already drawing interest from educators around the country as a candidate for adoption into FYE (First-Year Experience) programs and OOP (Outdoor Orientation) programs, as well as comprehensive semester coursework. With the release of Carine's book, the partners are working together to further expand the reach of the curriculum.



Dr. Douglas Kennedy has worked with first-year students his entire career. Also a published author, he has given more than one hundred presentations both nationally and internationally. He has led delegations to central Asia to work with teachers, and has taught travel courses with over two hundred participating students. Beyond his teaching experience, he has served as an Associate Dean for Campus Recreation and a Student Activities Coordinator. Dr. Kennedy focuses on high performance management, team building, and leadership by also directing his school's Outdoor Achievement Center—including use of its low and high ropes courses and Alpine Tower. He has chaired his discipline's national accreditation council and served as an accreditation visitor. In his spare time Dr. Kennedy is a nationally ranked triathlete, a mountaineer who enjoys the outdoors and can often be found there with his wife Betsy and two teenage sons. Known as "Doug" to his students, he has received his college's highest teaching award—voted upon by students—an unprecedented three times.

For more information about the full-range of teaching materials for *The Wild Truth*, please contact Carine McCandless (carine@carinemccandless.com) or Dr. Douglas Kennedy (dkennedy@wvc.edu).

If you are interested in using *The Wild Truth* in your classroom, please let us know: academic@harpercollins.com