

Living Into Your Next Season

Moving Forward After the Crisis of 2020

Book Club Discussion Guide



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BOOK CLUB: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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CHAPTER 1 – Our Lives, Interrupted

Leslie discusses the many ways that this pandemic has interrupted our lives. What are the obvious and not-so-obvious ways that your life has been interrupted since the arrival of Covid-19?

“As a behavioral scientist, I dare report there is no going back to the way we were before this. The “normal” of our past is gone. The world has changed; we have changed; and what a blessing it will be if we allow this pandemic to change us for good.”

In what ways has the COVID-19 disruption affected things that needed to change?

“Will we retain our hearts of gratitude and willingness to innovate simply to help others? Will our ‘because we can, we do’ attitude take on a new definition: helping and giving to others (versus fueling our individualistic drive for more)?”

Reflect on these questions amongst the group.

CHAPTER 2 – Leadership Through Times of Crisis

From whatever chair you occupy, whatever roles you fill: how has your leadership been impacted through this pandemic?

Peter gives a definition for ‘great leadership’:

“Great leadership is the art of creating a strategic clear path forward for an organization, while managing and motivating its people – individually and collectively – to believe in and achieve the organization’s common goal or mission, even against obstacles or established thinking.”

When have you witnessed great leadership in your life? Whose leadership have you relied in during this crisis? Why?

Peter shares 7 characteristics of a Pioneering Leader. He states that a Pioneering Leader must:

1. Communicate well and often
2. Create a culture of collaboration
3. Go beyond innovation
4. Be visionary and decisive
5. Master the art of public speaking
6. Engage, connect, inspire
7. Lead with integrity

Whatever your role right now (Parent, manager, leader, college graduate, unemployed), you are a leader in some way, shape or form at work, or in your family, in your community, or in life. Which of the 7 characteristics do you feel already apply to you and which jump out as opportunities for improvement?

Where do the everyday leaders in your life—make a difference that is helpful to you/your family? How can you ensure they know how appreciated they are?

CHAPTER 3 – How the Crisis of 2020 Made Me a Better Leader, Husband, and Father

Austin stressed how hard the “uncertainty” surrounding this pandemic was for him to navigate. He shared how he was stressed by the possible bad things that might happen. How do you navigate “uncertainty”? Do worrisome thoughts dominate your thinking or are you able to navigate “uncertainty” without much stress. Why?

Austin shared his intentions and success in developing *personally, relationally, physically* and *spiritually* during the pandemic, and his personal commitment to carry forward new/improved practices post-crisis. Which of these have been areas of development for you during the COVID-19 crisis? How do you plan to carry forward improved practices refined during the stay-at-home order?

CHAPTER 4 – Life Upended

Looking back before early March 2020, how would you describe your life? What things were you looking forward to? Has any of that changed?

Marty shared her six key learnings from the COVID-19 season that are etched in her experience.

What is your list?

Marty mentions feeling frustration, concern and mourning. Have you seen these emotions manifest themselves in you or those around you in the early months of COVID-19? How about more recently?

This chapter features stories of a variety of hardships that have surfaced in this crisis. Which story did you relate to the most? If you could add another story to this collection to further showcase the ramifications of this pandemic, what would you add? What losses/changes/unexpected gifts would you highlight?

CHAPTER 5 – Faith in the Face of Adversity

Has this pandemic challenged your beliefs or values in any way? If so, how? How have you experienced *hope* during this unprecedented time?

“It’s freeing ourselves from the trappings of influence, power, control, and drive that we thought defined us, that we discover who we were meant to be.”

Take a step back and reflect on life pre and post Covid-19. What “trappings” have you used to define yourself?

As Margaret asks on page 52, “How are you using this time of upheaval to figure out what is really important to you, and what you treasure most?”

CHAPTER 6 – Choosing Your Next Season

In what ways has your “current season” been impacted by the COVID-19 season? In what ways has COVID-19 altered your thoughts/preferences for your current/future seasons?

Leslie provides a framework with questions to ponder to help guide your thinking about your future areas of life focus. Share your answers with one another.

- What matters to you (now)?
- Who needs what you have to offer?
- How and where can you make a difference?
- What do you want your legacy to be?

CHAPTER 7 – Reflections as You Prepare for Your Next Season

How have your priorities been impacted by COVID-19?

As you pause and reflect, Mark offers some questions to aid in this process:

- What are the “silver linings” that you have experienced?
- What did you not like about this time?
- What did you miss during this time?
- What would you like life to look like after the transition?

Mark and the My Next Season organization identify three essentials for the journey of transitioning to a new “next season”:

1. Companionship
2. Health
3. Openness to a newly defined purpose

Companionship—to ensure you have someone to walk the journey with. Health because it’s the rate limiter for all that we do in life. And an openness to a newly defined purpose—so we can look at ourselves and our futures in new ways.

Where are you on the journey of transitioning to a next season? Do you have the three essentials? How can this group be helpful in any of these three areas?

CHAPTER 8 – **Moving into Your Next Season**

Complete the Personal Preferences Inventory (PPI) on your own, referenced in the chapter and placed for your convenience at the back of this study guide.

Did anything surprise you? If so, what? Share your PPIs with one another and discuss any areas that were “ah-has” for you.

Think about your value proposition and how it informs your personal brand. Ask others in the group to speak to your value position and to fill any “holes” that you may have missed. Often others see us better than we see ourselves!

Considering the question above, are there topics about which you are a thought leader? How could your voice help others?

CHAPTER 9 – **Resilience, Gratitude, and Grace**

How have you experienced or witnessed resilience, gratitude and grace during this season?

“Like so many things in life, it is through the cracks that the light shines through. Without the cracks, and sometimes the total brokenness, we would not see the light – and have otherwise darkened areas become illuminated.”

Where have you seen light shine that you would have missed had it not been for this pandemic? Discuss what it feels like to move into this next season and how the group members can support one another in their next season.

Personal Preferences Inventory

Here are sample questions for your Personal Preferences Inventory, as referenced in *Living Into Your Next Season*, pages 96-97.

Section 1—Parameters

1. Geography

- Do you have any commitments that constrain you geographically?
- What are your early thoughts about where you'd like to live all or some of the time?

2. Financial

Are there financial concerns or considerations that impact how you want to spend your Next Season?

3. Medical

- Are there any personal or family medical concerns or constraints that impact your plans?
- Are there any personal objectives you have for yourself physically that will impact your time/priorities after your transition?

4. Commitments You Bring with You

- Are there any groups, organizations, or people to whom you feel a strong commitment that you see yourself needing to honor in this Next Season?
- Who might those be?
- Approximately how much time does fulfilling these require?

5. Time

As you consider how you might spend time after you leave your current job, list things you have always imagined yourself possibly doing (for example, playing golf, speaking to audiences on favorite topics, reading three newspapers every morning, volunteering, reading novels, joining a gym, traveling, writing a book, taking classes, learning a language, working, spending time with grandchildren).

6. Your Definition of Success

- Sitting here today, describe what "success" looks like to you on the other side of this transition out of your organization.
- Describe any particular concerns you have about the transition.

7. Caring for Others

Do you have obligations or caregiving responsibilities that impact how or where you will spend your Next Season?

Section 2—The Highlights

Please complete the following sentences.

1. I love

2. I am happiest when

3. The following things have been the highlights of my life

- My past year
- My past decade
- My most recent job
- My career
- My marriage/partnership
- My children/grandchildren
- My friendships

4. Work accomplishments I am the most proud of:

5. Non-work accomplishments I am the most proud of:

6. A good day for me is one in which (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a schedule for the day | <input type="checkbox"/> I win in golf, tennis, or some other sporting event | <input type="checkbox"/> I do nothing too strenuous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am highly productive | <input type="checkbox"/> I have no schedule for the day | <input type="checkbox"/> I can work on my own things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I organize something | <input type="checkbox"/> I can relax and not feel guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> I engage in familiar tasks/activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can be creative | <input type="checkbox"/> I am invited and just have to show up | <input type="checkbox"/> I am at home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am intellectually stimulated | <input type="checkbox"/> I can accomplish something | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not burdened with problems/issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I socialize with people | <input type="checkbox"/> I do things that don't require me to think too much | <input type="checkbox"/> I can enjoy discrete visits with my children/grandchildren |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> I am alone or in the company of my spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy time with friends playing golf, tennis, or some other sporting event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I volunteer/help others | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I see/do new things | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I travel | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I solve problems | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have extended time with children/grandchildren | | |

Section 3—The Lowlights

Create your personal "What Bugs Me" list.

1. What have been the lowlights of:

- a. My past year
- b. My most recent job
- c. My career
- d. My community life
- e. My marriage/partnership

Section 4—Legacy Matters

1. Let's say your old college friend is reading an update on graduates prior to attending your 50th college reunion. He is now reading what the reporter wrote about you. Complete your story beginning with the sentence . . .

After leaving a highly successful career at X company, <your name> _____ ...

During that time, <your name> also _____...

A close friend of <your name> said _____ about him/her...

You will most often find <your name> doing _____...

2. What "things" would you most like to impact in your lifetime?

- a. Are there any "causes" that you feel especially drawn to?
- b. Are there any not-for-profit organizations you would like to become more active with?
- c. Is there anything on your "What Bugs Me" list that you would be excited to tackle/change/fix?

3. How do you wish your children/grandchildren to remember you? How will they come to know your life stories, experiences, accomplishments?

Section 5—Things You Hope to Do Post-Transition

Check all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have more leisure time | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor/tutor young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint/draw |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work out regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> Be outdoors more | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook (more often) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend (more) time with children/ grandchildren |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf/tennis/other sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertain friends (more often) | <input type="checkbox"/> Coach/train |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in extreme physical adventures | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn new language | <input type="checkbox"/> Write |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer (please indicate if you have specific ideas about with whom) | <input type="checkbox"/> Board service <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Publicly traded companyo Small/mid-size but establishedo Startupo Not-for-profito Private Equity/VC | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continue with a corporate career | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-Profit <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Board Membero Managemento Volunteero Special Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Master new skill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Start own company | | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with my hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consult/advise | | <input type="checkbox"/> Be a caregiver to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take classes, earn degree | | <input type="checkbox"/> Church/synagogue work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach | | <input type="checkbox"/> Deepen my faith |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture/speaking opportunities | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other.. |