

# Living Into Your Next Season

Moving Forward After the Crisis of 2020

## Family Discussion Guide Questions



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## FAMILY GUIDE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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## Moving Forward After the Crisis of 2020

Families have been at the center of the COVID-19 crisis. Adult children moving home. Parents working from home full-time for an extended period. Students doing school from home. Distance from other family members; restrictions from visiting sick/elderly relatives. This season has presented different challenges for each member and generation within the family. This guide was created to enable families to process, discuss, and transition well together.

### CHAPTER 1 – Our Lives, Interrupted

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Leslie discusses the many ways that this pandemic has interrupted our lives. What are the obvious and not-so-obvious ways the patterns of your family were altered by Covid-19?

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Share with each other—your top 10 personal things that were “interrupted” by COVID-19.

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*“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.”*

What are the changes that have occurred within the family that you would most like to keep?

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What will you miss most as life returns to nearly normal?

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## CHAPTER 2 – Leadership Through Times of Crisis

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 in and outside the family (parent, child, student, manager, leader, college graduate, unemployed), you are a leader in some way, shape or form. Which of the characteristics apply to you and which are opportunities for improvement? What positive leadership characteristics did you observe in each other during this time?

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How do the everyday leaders in your life make a difference that is helpful to you/your family? How well do you do at ensuring they know how much you appreciate them?

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

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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. What were the scariest parts of the pandemic for you personally? How did you navigate the “uncertainty”?

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How does your family unit navigate “uncertainty”? Discuss the level of stress you feel/have felt during this unique time in life and how you support each other best.

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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. What would be your areas of growth from this pandemic? What do you hope to carry forward individually?

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### CHAPTER 4 – Life Upended

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

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

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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?

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## CHAPTER 5 – Faith in the Face of Adversity

How have you experienced *hope* during this unprecedented time?

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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?”

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## CHAPTER 6 – Choosing Your Next Season

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In what ways has your “current season” been impacted by the COVID-19 season?

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In what ways has COVID-19 altered your thoughts/preferences for your work and life?

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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?

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## CHAPTER 7 – Reflections as You Prepare for Your Next Season

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As you pause and reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on your life and work, Mark offers some questions to aid in this process. Share your answers with one another.

- 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?

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

1. Companionship (family)
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.

As you reflect on how your family navigated this transition, how would you rate each of these elements for you. Did you benefit from family connectivity/companionship—or would anything different have been helpful?

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How was your health during this time? How did your family navigate the health threats or issues faced? Are there ways you would hope it would be different/even better in the future?

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Did you find the family embracing of a new way of being family during this time? If so, how? If not, are there ways the family could have worked better together to navigate this stressful period?

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## CHAPTER 8 – Moving into Your Next Season

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You are invited to 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.

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Discuss how you can be supportive of each other’s next season goals.

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Are there any areas where you see each other as a thought leader? Share how their voice/life experiences/perspective could be helpful to others.

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## CHAPTER 9 – Resilience, Gratitude, and Grace

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Each family member experienced highs and lows during this pandemic. It required each of us to be resilient in the face of adversity, feel gratitude for the good things in our lives—and to show grace during the messiness that crises create.

In what ways do you feel more resilient in the face of adversity during this crisis?

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What are things you feel grateful for now—that you may have taken for granted before?

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*“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?

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Discuss what it feels like to move into this next season and how you can support one another.

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Create a list of your family’s top 10 “aha” moments from this pandemic—the funny and the serious.

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## 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.*

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|---|--|---|
| <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"><li>o Publicly traded company</li><li>o Small/mid-size but established</li><li>o Startup</li><li>o Not-for-profit</li><li>o Private Equity/VC</li></ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continue with a corporate career                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-Profit <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Board Member</li><li>o Management</li><li>o Volunteer</li><li>o Special Projects</li></ul>   | <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..  |