

Your first next season

Executives in transition — carefully stepping from their primary career into an eagerly anticipated Next Season — may find themselves in a mindset much like high school seniors who are deciding which college to attend. They may feel there is a “right choice” with far-reaching implications that will control their future happiness/fulfillment. And they may feel a near-paralyzing pressure to “choose correctly.”

As part of this experience, executives may struggle with the question “What should I do?” (and imagine that “for the rest of my life” is whispered next).

Remember in high school, when friends asked at every turn, “Where are you going to college?” “What will you major in?” “What do you want to do for the rest of your life?” It can feel like that same drill again when an executive is transitioning.

Associates seem to abandon conventions of politeness and privacy, and share their “expert” opinions on what you should do. It’s a perfect storm, and it can overwhelm many executives in transition.

You have choices; don’t jump too quickly

Thankfully, here is the reality: your transition is to your *first* next season—not to your *only* next season. Your decision, really, is: Where to start? Which thing to do first? And rarely are there binding consequences for your initial choice.

It’s a fact that most executives need a detox period after decades of a hard-charging, demanding, productivity-oriented lifestyle in service to an employer.

The detox priorities are new, and these include sleep, spending (overdue) time with family/friends, and focusing on personal health and wellness. Many executives feel spent and need to recharge their batteries before summoning the energy to contemplate the next move.

Executives are accustomed to being decisive and having a plan, with a ready answer to questions about what’s next. Thus, a common mistake is to say yes prematurely to the first board offer, the first work opportunity, or the first chance to join/be part of something. Some executives jump at the first-available, convincing

themselves (incorrectly) that it may be the one and only opportunity, or that they must have a fully baked plan on day one.

Take your time

The change from corporate executive life to the next phase is a real paradigm shift, from a scarcity mentality (no time for anything) to an abundance mentality (suddenly, time to do things). The typical executive career is filled with a sense of scarcity, but post-transition this flips, and the executive re-enters a world where “what to do” and “how to spend your time” are limited only by imagination and physical stamina.

At My Next Season®, we stress the importance of pausing — taking time to reflect on what you like and dislike, what brings you joy, and what you want your legacy to be. This will all help to identify your longer-term aspirational objectives.

During your career, you have amassed many gifts, talents, experiences, and dreams, so now you have the luxury of being thoughtful in how to spend your first Next Season, and all the others to follow.

Again, your first Next Season is not your final one! A bountiful world of options and opportunities is spread before you. So give yourself permission to take your time as you dream, explore, network, and contemplate future possibilities. You have many next seasons to live into!



LESLIE W. BRAKSICK, Ph.D.

Co-Founder & Senior Partner, leslie.braksick@mynextseason.com

My Next Season: changing the way executives transition from long-standing corporate careers to their next phases of life.