

Next Big Thing

Making the most of the transition from
high school to whatever is next



If you miss a day, don't sweat it. Just move on to the next
and start again.

The point of this book is not to be perfect by filling in every line, but to build excellence into your life by capturing your daily progress and summarizing your very best thoughts.

I believe...

We grow the most when we think about a subject deeply enough to write it out, and when we understand it well enough to teach it to someone else.

Next Big Thing is designed to give you a place to practice the first, and to prepare for the second.

Senior Year Workbook Version 1.1

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With highest regards to Honor and Olivia. Team better! You handled another test with grace.

And Eden for being proactive with all the little things, while editing and designing and all.

And Jacob, thanks for your ongoing graphics work. Well done!

And Braden, once again, big thanks for helping us bring it all together. Your cheerfulness and calm efficiency are inspiring.

And East Allen Courier. We brought you some challenges this time. You excelled. Thank you!

And most of all, to Heidi. Thank you for your editing, encouragement, and constant support.

Launch Leadership Development



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Next Big Thing Introduction

Seniors face a unique set of challenges.

If you're a senior, you're about to wrap up your final year of high-school, plunge into summer, and embark on your "Next Big Thing!" Which means lots of decisions, lots of expenses, and lots of preparations.

Here are a few of the weighty matters looming in front of you.

- Changes in friend and family relationships. Are you prepared? Are they prepared?
- Your finances. You're going to need to pay for a lot of things. Do you have enough? Can you earn enough?
- Decisions on what to do next, which career to pursue, where to live. Each of these is huge.
- The full weight of responsibility for your own decisions landing on your shoulders.
- The evidence of "plane crashes" and "train wrecks" all around you as you observe friends who struggled in their Next Big Thing.
- Expectations from others piling upon your plate.
- And...so many questions coming at you from all directions! Big questions, like "what are you going to do with the rest of your life?"

If this seems overwhelming, you're not alone.

Over the past thirty years, we've employed hundreds of young people in our businesses, and I've coached hundreds more. Furthermore, my wife and I were involved in youth ministry for much of that time.

We had a lot of "what happened?" moments when sweet-natured seniors began to distance themselves, or even become outright jerks. We watched young adults withdraw, stress, lash out, ignore it all and pretend the change wasn't coming.

We've watched as some mistook "blind excitement" for "well-informed excitement. You know, the kind of excitement that knows how to use a calculator and can develop a good plan.

And we've seen many who have handled the change with grace.

Impending change, financial concerns, full responsibility for decisions...all these burdens and more build a mountain of stress that is unique to high school seniors.

Some people want to underplay the pressure. But let's look at it in perspective. Let's quantify the weight of the decisions upon high school seniors.

The weight of the coming decisions.

From the ages of 0-15, you made a lot of decisions, but most were small and short-lived and of the “less than \$5,” or the “what should I wear today” variety.

Over the next few years, you’ll need to make thousands upon thousands of decisions, and many of these coming decisions will have long-lasting ramifications. The shape of the questions facing you will grow quickly from \$5 to \$10,000. From \$10,000 to \$25,000. From \$25,000 to \$250,000 and more. Whoa!

And this decision-making crescendo will happen in your finances, as well as in your career, your car, where to live, your friendships, IF to marry, WHOM to marry, and...so much more. So many big decisions! It's not just a big jump. It's a whole series of big jumps! How can anyone ever be ready for it all?

No fear! No blindness.

You don't have to be afraid of the Next Big Thing. You don't have to distance yourself from important people, or stress yourself out and become a jerk, or pretend changes aren't coming, or succumb to the overwrought intoxication of “blind excitement.”

Knowing the shape of these looming changes will allow you to prepare for each coming challenge. And, being informed, you can turn and face all the coming changes, study them well, make a good plan, and give yourself time to learn, think, and prepare.

The design of this workbook.

This workbook is designed to help you do just that. There is just the right amount of recording space for your final semester and the coming summer. In addition to recording space, there are some important articles about “The Big 11,” which are worth pondering, and loads of encouragements to shake of bondage and grow in your financial, intellectual, vocational, emotional, and spiritual freedom.

Think of this workbook as a bridge from high school into the next stage of life. Our intention is to give you a place where you can capture your best real-life lessons and prepare you for whatever adventure is next.

Why we use a guided journal format?

High performers use journals to process thoughts, capture lessons, and sketch out ideas. They're proven to help us grow faster and perform better. We want you to experience the power of this simple habit.

Every aspect of these journals is intentional. I won't go into all the details, but here are two small examples:

1. The simple “Did, Did Well, and Could Do Better” slots on the daily report reflect one of the most important methods by which we develop young managers within our business.

2. The process of capturing your best lessons each week, condensing them to the best each month, and eventually selecting the best lessons of the year, provides a concise record you can return to later, and, more importantly, allows you to re-teach yourself the great material you've encountered.

We've sought to make every aspect of the workbook intentional, and for your good.

Our intentions with this workbook.

- We want to provide a little journaling space, introducing you to the right questions and encouragements at the right time.
- We want to give you a place to collect all those good thoughts, something you can return to, open, read, and remember for years to come.
- We want you to finish strong, to say goodbye well, to do your own math, and to prepare in all the necessary ways.

And we want you to look forward with a "well-informed excitement" to your Next Big Thing!

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How to use the workbook

This workbook is set up to enable easy recording during your senior year. Aim to record daily and be faithful in filling out these worksheets. This is how you capture those valuable life lessons as you learn them, and by recording them well you can look back upon them for years to come.

However, if you miss recording one day, one week, or even more, don't sweat it. Simply start again. Today. Get that ball rolling! The goal is to build the habit of consistency, not perfection.

Tips for daily recording:

The daily worksheet is a simple review of the day. Don't overthink it. Each day's report should only require 5-10 minutes. Write quick notes on the following:

- What you did
- Something that you did well
- Something that you could do better at.

Tips for using the habit tracker:

The daily worksheet also has a habit tracker built in. There is a power in recording the habits we want to build or break, and this feature is meant to be an easy place for you to record your daily efforts.

Start simple. Come up with an initial, or symbol for each habit, and when you fill out your worksheet add the symbol or initial to one of the boxes to show that you accomplished the habit for the day. In our example below, the student has tracked their goal of reading (R), their goal of 25 reps of push-ups, and their goal of setting up a weekly meeting with a friend (*).

R	*
25	

This is a great practice to carry throughout your life, so build a good cadence of evaluating yourself and tracking your habits.

A quick note about those quotes and encouragements:

We've packed the workbook with little tips and encouragements. These are meant to give you good food for thought each week to help you confront bad excuses and excel in your daily life.

Daily Report

Week of _____

	<u>Did</u>	<u>Did Well</u>	<u>Could Do Better</u>	<u>Habit Tracker</u>				
Monday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Tuesday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Wednesday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Thursday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Friday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Saturday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Sunday	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				

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Never be afraid of hard work. Hard work builds something of great strength inside us, something that can stand the test of time, and can't be taken away from us. Hard work has great value!

Weekly Report

Week of _____

Meeting

Who: _____

What I learned: _____

Who: _____

What I learned: _____

Book

Book: _____ Chapter: _____

What I learned: _____

Book: _____ Chapter: _____

What I learned: _____

Podcast, Videos, or Other Lessons

Title: _____

What I learned: _____

Title: _____

What I learned: _____

Freedom Focus: Financial Freedom

If it seems like a lot of these encouragements focus on Financial Freedom...well, it's true.

This is because your finances are becoming...your very own.

You've lived in the shelter of others financially, and you're about to step out from under their umbrella. Your financial position in five years will be totally your own responsibility, and it will be caused by the decisions you make now, next year, and over the next five years.

Financial skill requires practice.

Don't stick your head in the sand and pretend it will all work out. Take charge. Plan ahead. Play good offense. Work and earn. Play great defense. Save. Play such great defense that you save enough for the next stage.

Finances

Income Job 1

Income Job 2

Expenses

Margin

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

Monthly Report

Month of: _____

Best Meeting: _____

How it inspired or changed me: _____

Best Book: _____

Something that stood out, compelled me: _____

Best Podcast, Videos, or Other Lessons: _____

The most impactful thing I learned: _____

Your ability to save today will determine what you can afford to do tomorrow.

Finances

Income this Month	Expenses this Month	Margin Saved this Month
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

My Financial Progress

Savings & Investments	\$ _____
· Savings	\$ _____
· Car Value	\$ _____
· Investments	\$ _____
Debts (if this is 0, it's worth celebrating!)	\$ _____
Net Worth (what you own minus what you owe)	\$ _____

Are you happy with where you're at? Do you need to adjust your habits?

Did you progress or regress ?

Do you find your career? or Does your career find you?

We ask this question every month because finding your life's work is the primary objective of this workbook.

Which do you think? Why?

List a few skills that you are good at in your job or at school.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

It's been said, "Do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." I love this sentiment, but I disagree.

I love what I do. My work is meaningful. It's satisfying. It interests me. But there are days when the work in front of me is just a hard grind.

It's ok that sometimes we don't love what we do. Deep joy often follows difficult work. And it's ok that it's hard, and that we have to push harder than we ever imagined. So, get your mind right and gather your strength and push through.

You can do this!

Out of these skills, which would most benefit other people?

Which did you enjoy the most?

- Write down one action I can take in the coming month to move one step closer to the work I love! _____
- Name a topic I would like to study: _____
- What book or podcast or video could help me learn more about the things that interest me? _____
- Can I ask my supervisor at work how I can take on more of the tasks I enjoy?
- How can I benefit the people around me in the coming month?