

THIS Chapter
of Your Life

by

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Dedication

For Beverly Boyd Long

Known as Aunt Bevie, she is my inspiration for writing this book. She often said, “This too will pass. It is only one chapter of your story.” She was always there with love and deep awareness, which were a comfort to her family whenever they experienced life’s ups and downs.



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Part 1: Plotting Your Future

Chapter 1: The Many Chapters of Your Life

Looking back on all the events and experiences you've gathered and endured since birth would make a fabulous read if it were written as a book. There would be chapters that grip the reader's interest, and perhaps inspire them to take similar actions to create the results they desire in their own lives. There would be chapters that would be thrilling, some filled with romance, some boring, and some so sad, tears would roll. Your life would make a fabulous book with many chapters, charting growth, success, and accomplishment. There is enough material there that your book could be made into a movie, or even a miniseries for television. Of all the chapters of your life that you've experienced and lived through, THIS chapter is the one you can make your best ever, and it can count the most. For THIS chapter, using your collection of experiences and knowledge, is the chapter you have the most power over, and you can make it your best.

It's important for you to realize that you're more capable and more aware than you've been at any other time in your life. You have more knowledge, and your collection of resources is greater than it has ever been in your lifetime. When you consider and evaluate your

accumulation of experiences, both successes and failures, you'll see that you have the power to create the life you want now. Accepting and appreciating where you are at this time in your life empowers you to create THIS chapter with exceptional results.

Once you put aside excuses and stop blaming yourself or others for a lack of progress, and you accept responsibility for who you are and what you've become, you're in a position to decide where you want your life to go and who you want to be. Too often, we get tangled in the past by telling ourselves stories about what happened. Those stories can limit us from living in the present moment and establishing what we want moving forward. Accepting responsibility is the launching pad for the creation of the next chapter of your life.

Once you assess your treasure chest—a lifetime collection of acquired skills and qualities that will help and empower you to make THIS chapter your best—you'll see that you really are capable of doing the work that needs to be done. Seeing how enabled you are will give you a new sense of power. You will also have a feeling of being smarter than you usually give yourself credit for. You'll realize that at this time in your life, you can make the decision to use your accumulated experience to benefit your future.

A word of caution ...

With a sense of smartness and capability comes the capacity to use these qualities to make excuses and rationalize why moving forward isn't desired, or can be postponed. That same accumulation of experiences leaves you smart enough to figure out ways to avoid the invitation and the opportunity to create the life you want. I urge you not to make this choice. This path of procrastinating can lead to feelings of despair and anger that are held within your self-esteem. Knowing you could do better, and choosing to do less, would be a great way to shoot yourself in the foot.

Now that you've entertained the idea of making THIS chapter of your life your best chapter yet, making it the turning point that will lead you into the future you desire and are capable of manifesting, can and will stimulate the best in you to proceed forward.

The pages that follow contain suggestions and guidelines to help you establish and become the person you want to be in your next chapter, and the chapters that follow. Are you reinventing yourself? Or are you manifesting a more appropriate, mature, and responsible you? Regardless of your answer, an important key is your belief that the results you create will motivate you, inspire you, and give you greater confidence. The aim of this book is to be your guide and workbook. The mission statements, like the one ending this chapter, are intended for your self-affirmation or self-talk. Following these steps will surely give you the power to make THIS chapter and all the chapters that follow more fulfilling than any of your previous chapters. Let's get started!

Your mission statement for making THIS chapter of your life your best:

THIS chapter of my life will be an outstanding turning point.

Chapter 2: Just Who is Writing THIS Chapter of Your Life?

It's important to identify yourself as the capable author you'll need to be to create THIS chapter. The capabilities and experiences you have to draw from will support you in this task. There are two ways people can choose to manage their lives. One way is to think you can come up with whatever it takes to control, create, and develop the results you desire. The other way is to think that outer circumstances determine your outcomes. For instance, a person could be born poor, but that person still has two ways to decide to manage his life. He can say, "I'll pull myself out of this because I have the power and I'm in control," or he can say, "There's no way out, I'm stuck here because of being born poor." Results are determined by where you locate your place of control. The formal term for this action is "locus of control."

Let's take a look at your locus of control. In personality psychology, one area in the field of mental health, locus of control is the phrase used to identify the degree to which a person believes *they* control the outcome of events in their lives—internally—as opposed to those who believe *external* forces (forces beyond their control) determine the outcome of events in their lives. People with a strong locus of external control blame or praise *external* factors for their

experience, such as the teacher or the exam when they fail (or pass) a class or test. They tend to give the credit (or the blame) to things or events other than themselves. They let the horoscope in the newspaper determine the kind of day they're going to have, for example. Or they dread Friday the 13th, and they stay out of the pathways of black cats.

The principle of locus of control originated with Julian Rotter in 1954. It considers the tendency of people to believe that control resides internally, within them, or externally, with others or a situation. This concept refers to how strongly people *believe* they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives. Where is your locus of control? Does your locus of control reside internally, within you, or externally, with others or the situation? You can choose to create the best results in your life by managing and directing your thoughts and beliefs yourself, rather than leave your outcomes to others or fate and luck.

Your locus of control has a major impact on your life, from how you cope with stress to your motivation to take charge of your life. In many cases, having an internal locus of control can be a good thing. It means you believe that your own actions have an impact. Findings show that children with a more internal locus of control behave more healthily as adults, because they have greater confidence in their ability to influence outcomes through their own actions. They might also have higher self-esteem.

People with an internal locus of control are confident they can be successful. They tend to be leaders. They exhibit more control over their own behavior, they seek to learn as much as they can, they take personal responsibility for their actions, and they deal with challenge and stress better. Your choice to read this book probably indicates that you're at a place where you intend to take charge of your life and become more responsible. Right where you are is the best place to start. You are the author of your life. You've written the past by living it, and you can write the