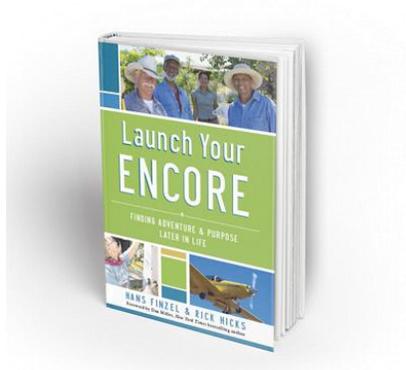


Launch Your Encore Personal Workbook

By Hans Finzel and Rick Hicks
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This material is designed for used in conjunction with chapters 19 and 20 of *Launch Your Encore*.

There is only one solution if old age is not to be an absurd parody of our former life, and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence meaning— devotion to individuals, to groups or to causes, social, political, intellectual, or creative work. . . . One’s life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, compassion. – Simone de Beauvoir

Options to Consider In Your Encore Mentoring

In Chapter 19 we listed nineteen possible pursuits for an encore. Before we move toward your action plan, take some time to go through this list. Most of these won’t appeal to you, but some will. Ask yourself, “What am I drawn to? What fuels me? Where do I see some hope and a big challenge? What fits me?”

*Instructions:*Go down this list. Skip the places where you have no interest. But under the topics that do interest you, make note of that and write down some ideas of how you could pursue this. Also write down questions you would have for moving in that direction.

Mentoring. Help those who come after us in a wide variety of roles in a workplace, church, or community. Mentoring can be with peers, those younger, and even those who are older. There is mentoring for leadership, parenting, career development, spiritual growth, marriage, and many more things than you can imagine.

Continuing to work. Keep at the job you love or find that next full- or part-time job that could use all of your life's experiences. How about being a starter at the local golf course? How about working at Trader Joe's? It is crazy for us to even begin to list all the ways you can keep working later in life. For many of us, we not only see this as an option but a necessity due to our finances. Let's try to find work in a field that really fulfills us and even gives back.

Starting another career. More than just taking the next job, try shifting to fulfilling a lifelong dream of a very different career. Hans's father went from a career in the aerospace industry to becoming a travel agent in his retirement years because he loved to travel the world.

Enjoying a rolling retirement. Dip in and out of your old career as you need to and want to. We told you the great story of Tom the firefighter, who embodies this option.

Consulting. This is a great avenue for many people in later life to capitalize on their expertise learned through a life of work.

Volunteering. There is a mother lode of opportunities in your community and your church. As with some of our other categories, it is hard to even begin a list. Go online and check out your surrounding community. Just this week our local community paper featured a big article on a new website they have set up to help people get matched with volunteering needs. If you are involved in a local church, that is a great place to start. Another concrete idea that might be useful is becoming a surrogate grandparent for children who no longer have grandparents. Not everyone has their own family later in life. In fact, increasingly, fewer people do. Some other ideas that we have seen work well are taking short-term mission trips, moving overseas for a few years, running a Christian hospitality house, helping with after-school homework assignments, tutoring children, or providing food for the homeless at your local rescue mission or food pantry.

Serving on boards. Nonprofit boards are desperate for active members and need wisdom and work in their organizations.

Intensely active grandparenting. We see some grandparents helping to raise their grandchildren. There is great joy in shaping our grandchildren's generation and pouring our values into them. Camp Grandparent is a great way to take your grandchildren on summer retreats that will greatly impact their lives.

Building a social media platform. Begin a new career on the Internet where you can create a market for your products or services from the comfort of your home. This may require some ongoing education, as well as pursuing experts who can help launch this encore option with you.

Pursuing a meaningful hobby. Pour yourself into art or music or whatever brings you joy and satisfaction. We know several men who are pursuing their jazz talents and creating new bands. Then there was the lady in San Jose who discovered in her seventies that she had an amazing skill at painting. She became an accomplished artist and built a thriving business selling her artwork.

Continuing to learn. Lifelong learning keeps your mind sharp and helps you keep those faculties that you might easily lose if too much time is spent on the golf course or by the pool. Nola Ochs, the oldest known person to earn a master's degree, at age ninety-eight, went on to write a book at one hundred and certainly models this well. 6 With her example, few of us will get away with the excuse that we are just too old. Why not dig in and pursue that degree that you were always too busy to pursue, and stay engaged and inspired by signing up for a university course!

Writing or Blogging. There are many ways to leave a legacy. It could be "letters to my son," where you dispense the wisdom that you have accumulated over the years, an autobiography, or anything that you feel might be a good vehicle for making a contribution to future generations. Or try your hand at fiction!

Caring and caregiving. Try preparing meals, visiting lonely people in hospitals or prisons, or accompanying immigrants or older people to do some necessary paperwork. We have a friend who decided to volunteer at a local Alzheimer's care home that she drove by for years on her way to work. After retirement, she actually pulled in to the parking lot and found out that they had a desperate need for people to just come and visit with the residents.

Teaching or tutoring. Teaching English as a second language (and facing the challenge of getting a TEFL accreditation) or tutoring younger people with learning difficulties are just two ways you can pass on some of your skills and invest in younger people. Many people find that being generous with your own life carries the surprise element of receiving back far more than you had given. If your community is like most in America, it includes a steady stream of immigrants who have come to our country to seek refuge and a better life. They often feel lonely, afraid, and confused about how to make the simplest things work in their newly adopted homeland.

Relating to international students. Many foreign nationals come to America to study and then return home. While they are here they are lonely and very interested in learning more about America and our culture. We have heard it said that less than 5 percent of those international students ever get invited into an American home. What an opportunity to learn and to give to others.

Tackling a new challenge. For you to stay motivated and engaged, you might need another mountain to climb, something ahead of you that forces you to stay engaged, stretched to your limits, and feeling alive! It may be running a marathon, literally climbing a mountain, or walking “El Camino de Santiago” — something that gives you a clear focus and goal but could also be used as a fund-raising opportunity where you find others to sponsor you. How about signing up to be a participant on The Amazing Race?

Get politically active. One way of contributing to society and shaping the future is by getting involved in politics. What political party do you subscribe to? What do they stand for? How can you be part of furthering their mandate? If you believe in what they are doing, they will want your help!

Advocacy. What are the causes that stir your passion? Whether it is advocating about protecting the lives of unborn children, political prisoners, human trafficking, climate change, religious freedom, animal rights, or the conservation of the environment— you can leave a legacy for future generations by becoming an active advocate.

Intergenerational/ multigenerational engagement. It is easy to live life from a position of blame and bitterness. The young accuse the old of taking away their resources, and the old attack the young for being disrespectful and inconsiderate. One way of contributing to the well-being of the changing landscape within society is to participate and further synergetic intergenerational dialogue.

The Assignment

Write Your Personal Encore Plan

In Chapter 20, we lay out the roadmap for making your encore plan. These following pages will help you do just that.

Here is the map for these following pages of the workbook:

1. Listening to the voices of your past.
2. Completing the “me at my best” exercise.
3. Identifying your temperament.
4. Facing your fears.
5. Clarifying your dreams.
6. Defining your finances.
7. Prioritizing your time commitments.
8. Brainstorming specific options.
9. Envisioning the future.

1. Listening to the Voices of Your Past

Your life-mapping exercise (and if you haven't completed this, we suggest you return to chapter 8 and do this before you proceed) will have given you a significant chunk of material to work with. In light of your past life reflections, complete the questions below to identify what it is that you specifically have to offer. If you are serious about making a plan, you must go back and start with that life map. Really. It will be fun, we promise.

What DO you have to offer?

Strengths. Anyone starting a business will begin by assessing what they bring into the new venture. What personal strengths do you bring?

For example: good listener, creative mind, relational warmth, business savvy.

Exercise: On a separate piece of paper, list a minimum of fifteen strengths (character, experience, skills) that you bring as assets into your new venture. A helpful tool for a more formalized assessment of your strengths that can complement your own brainstorming is to take a StrengthsFinder assessment. (See chapter 17 and Resources.)

Principles. What principles do you live by? How do you approach things and why?

For example: I will not give up in the face of opposition.

Exercise: List five life principles that run through your whole life.

Past mistakes. What mistakes did you make and what lessons did you learn from them that you can pass on to others? Where have you failed and what lessons have you

learned from your failures that you can pass on to others? It is not wise to dwell on the mistakes of your past, but it is a good idea to use them as teaching points for your future.

For example: I neglected my family in pursuit of my career, and now my relationship with my children is not as close as I would like it to be.

Exercise: Think of three mistakes that you have made. What advice can you pass on to someone who might be in danger of repeating those mistakes? Write down both the mistakes and the advice!

Weaknesses. What weaknesses have limited your contribution in the past? How have you developed ways to manage those weaknesses to minimize their effect?

For example: procrastination, indecisiveness, avoidance of conflicts.

Exercise: List five weaknesses that could hinder your pursuit of your new life venture. What strategies can you employ to minimize their impact on your future?

Skills. What transferrable skills are in the toolbox of your life? What are you naturally good at? Where have you consistently seen good results from your work and contribution? What jobs do you gravitate to, and which ones do you habitually procrastinate on?

For example: problem solving, negotiating, motivating people, research skills.

Exercise: List at least ten transferrable skills that come out of your previous life experience. Once you have completed your own list, find a former colleague and a friend and ask them both to complete your list with ten skills more each.

Values. What is really important to you? How do you currently spend your time, money, and energy— and what are the underlying values your choices are serving? What makes you angry or frustrates you about others? What do you fight for?

For example: generosity, inclusiveness, equal opportunities, security, adventure.

Exercise: Elicit ten of your core values— the drivers and intrinsic motivators that determine where you put your time, energy, and money. Once you have extracted the values, translate them into behavioral choices. For example: I value adventure, therefore I choose to take opportunities to discover new territory and take risks along the way.

Character. Why do people like (or dislike) you? In what ways can people count on you? What qualities within you have been a blessing to others?

For example: Reliable, fun, honest, efficient, precise, optimistic.

Exercise: Consult three people who know you well and who you know to be honest with you. Ask them for feedback about your character and look for themes that are evident in all three results. Now you can add your own perception of your character traits.

Fear has been a constant and familiar travel companion throughout many of our lives— unwanted and uninvited but stubbornly consistent. Nothing we have done that has had any significance has been done in the absence of fear. Take Eleanor Roosevelt’s advice to heart: “If the fear doesn’t go away— go and do it afraid.” Fear can sabotage your future from within like nothing else. It lives subtly in your heart, posing as reality and intimidating you! The best way to combat fear is to drag it into the cold light of day, name it, and fight it. Whenever you allow fear to win, your realms of choices will shrink. Growing older brings its own set of limitations, so allowing fear to shrink your options further would be foolish.

Exercise: Can you list your fears here that you know you have to deal with in your encore planning?

5. Clarifying Your Dreams

Oliver Wendell Holmes puts it so well that we have to quote him once more: “Alas for those that never sing, but die with all their music in them.” Those songs are our dreams. God has planted dreams in all of our hearts. The Bible reminds us that God will give us the desires of our hearts— and often he has been the one who has planted those dreams deep within us.

What have you always dreamed of doing? Accomplishing? Disappointments in life can erode those dreams and create an obstacle to dreaming again. Courage to dream again is built when we remember the many dreams that have become a reality in our lives. To enable yourself to dream new dreams, take a few minutes and remember some things that have materialized that started as a dream in your heart.

List ten dreams that have become a reality for you that you are very proud of and satisfy you as you look back over your life.

Here are the four questions we first listed for you in chapter 7

Current situation: What are you doing right now to fill your time? Make a list of all the things that seem to be filling your calendar. Then next to each item, on a scale of 1 to 10, put a number by the level of passion/ satisfaction that you get out of that activity. One means no passion, ten means there’s nothing you’d rather be doing. For example, “I take care of my grandkids every Wednesday.” I have a dear friend who does that every week, and he just smiles and comes alive when he tells me about it. The first step in any assessment is to take a look at what you are doing now.

6. Defining Your Finances

While dreams matter and serve as a driving force to motivate and inspire us, there are also harsh financial realities at times. What financial obligations limit your choices? What new sources of income can you identify? What financial needs can you anticipate in the future? We discussed finances in depth in chapter 6; you might want to go back to that chapter and see those notes again.

Exercise: Make a budget of your anticipated living costs. What will be required to cover health insurance; household costs; and financial obligations to friends, family, and organizations you are supporting? How much money will you need to live on, and what money is available to be spent on new enterprises? If you use a spreadsheet, just make three columns. The first is what income you anticipate. The second column is what you have to pay each month—“must pay.” Then the third column is “want to’s” if there is enough money left. Then monitor your budget each month to see how you’re doing.

(You probably want to do this on a spread sheet or a separate paper) _____

7. Prioritizing Your Time Commitments

How much time do you want to devote to your new ventures? How much time do you have available in light of other obligations and commitments you also want to keep?

Exercise: Write down a list of your main time commitments you envision for the future and a % by each one.... Just to get an estimate of your commitments. (i.e. time with grandkids, travel, working, exercise, volunteering, etc.)

8. Brainstorming Specific Options – Getting Specific

In light of what you have identified so far, what are some concrete options that are emerging for you? If you need some help getting started, go back and look at our lists of options and generative activities in chapter 19. Is there a specific segment of society you want to contribute to? Which specific organizations, institutions, or networks are catching your attention? What specific skills would you like to be able to use?

9. Envisioning the Future - The Final Step

Clarity defines reality. Being crystal clear on the future life you want will release within you the motivation, courage, and drive to actually pursue what you know you want. However, many people struggle, and countless times we hear people say, “Argh! I’m just not the visionary type.” Well, do not despair. There is a way even those who are not natural visionaries have found helpful to access some of their hopes, dreams, passions, and desires for the future. We have already talked about dreaming about your future; now we are taking it just a bit further.

Letter to yourself exercise: Take a blank sheet of paper, your journal, or our worksheet space below, and imagine that you have been fast-forwarded into the future by nine years. So, if you’re sixty-one now, you are writing this on your seventieth birthday.

This is a letter from your seventy-year-old self to your sixty-one-year-old self, describing in great detail what your life looks like now. Where do you live? Who is sharing your life? How are you spending your days? What has happened in between? What are your dreams for your friends and family? Where would you like to be financially when you are seventy? What do you need to consider in terms of health and fitness if you want to live your newly composed life well?

Allow yourself to dream and not to let reality interfere with your thoughts too early—let thoughts and ideas flow and write from your heart. Many of our workshop participants have been amazed at how this simple exercise helped them unlock a much clearer and vivid picture of the future, which they then felt compelled to pursue!

Another interesting little statistic: the likelihood of your dreams and hopes becoming reality increases by more than 50 percent if you actually formulate and write them down, since it brings them to a level of awareness where you then become far more intentional about pursuing them. Read the letter out loud to yourself— and if you are married, to your spouse (after they have completed their own letter, of course). Discuss what you have to set in motion today to be able to live your envisioned life tomorrow! Be concrete, adding action steps, deadlines, and real commitments.

Pulling It All Together

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible,” according to Tony Robbins.

By now you will have a much clearer idea about the design of your future life, the various components you need to incorporate, what matters most, and what a meaningful outlet could look like. Hopefully you have come up with a very cool plan for your encore. Now it is time to get moving. You have planned the life, now live the plan.

Stephen Covey is the author of the bestselling book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, which has sold more than fifteen million copies around the world since it was first published in 1989. He is fond of saying, “The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

In order to move from insight into action, take some concrete steps to pursue your plans.

- *Explore*. What organizations, groups, or initiatives are involved in doing something you would like to be part of? Research what the actual options for involvement for you could look like.

- *Exposure*. Get your hands dirty! Plan concrete steps to get a taste of what you consider getting involved in.

- *Evaluate.* As you try out new things, take time to reflect on your experiences. What do you like about what you are doing, and what differs from your expectations?

- *Enlist support.* Consult with wise owls, trusted friends, companions and spouses that know you well. What are they telling you?

OK, we admit, we have given you a lot of work. Take a stab at it and let us know how it goes. You can contact us and ask questions at www.launchyourencore.com.

As you compose the new chapters of your future life, keep a reflective journal. Record your thoughts, feelings, and adventures as you go along. I, Hans, ended up writing over 150 pages of reflections in the year after I left my main career and transitioned into my encore! Your new life is like a pair of unfamiliar shoes— maybe slightly uncomfortable as you start walking in them, but increasingly “yours” as you continue.

You’ve done it! You have arrived at composing the blueprint of your future life. Now go and do it! Carpe diem! Take courage. You can! The future belongs to those who dare to create it. *“Glory belongs to God, whose power is at work in us. By this power he can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.”* (Eph. 3:20)