



# What's Next?

A Reflection Guide for Your Next Chapter

*Life Beyond the Business*

Prepared for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*There are no wrong answers here. Just yours.*



## A Note Before You Begin

*Take a breath. This is the fun part.*

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Planning your post-business ownership life is empowering. Data show nearly 75% business owner have serious regrets in the first year of selling. Exiting a business seems overwhelming to many business owners. You've spent decades building a business, you've spent decades being asked: "What do you do?" Sooner or later, the answer to that question is going to change — and the truth is, that's a wide-open door, not a closing one.

The questions in this guide aren't a test. There's no right answer, no wrong answer, and absolutely nothing in here is about money. This is yours — completely private of you like — to fill in as openly or as briefly as you'd like. You never have to share a single word of it with anyone unless you want to. Think of it as a long, friendly conversation with yourself, the kind you might have on a porch with a cup of coffee and no clock in sight.

Some questions you'll breeze through. Some will make you pause. A few might surprise you. That's the whole point. Write as much or as little as you'd like, skip anything that doesn't speak to you, and feel free to come back to it over a few days. The best answers usually show up when you're not trying so hard.

*Ready? Go see what's in there.*



# 1. What Lights You Up

*The hobbies, pastimes, and simple pleasures that have always felt like “you.”*

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When you lose track of time — the good kind of losing track — what are you usually doing?

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Outside of work, what activities make you feel most like yourself?

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What hobbies or interests have you set aside over the years because the business simply didn't leave room for them?

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If a friend asked, “So what do you do for fun these days?” — what would you love your answer to be?

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What activities have you wanted to try but have not quite gotten around to yet?

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When you picture a perfect Saturday with no obligations, are you indoors or outdoors?  
Alone or with people? Quiet or noisy?

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What sport, game, or pastime from your younger years you'd love to pick back up?

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## 2. The “Someday” List

*The dreams, ideas, and curiosities you've quietly been saving for later.*

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What are some things you've quietly thought about doing “someday” for years now?

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What class, course, or an area of study that's always tugged at your curiosity?

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What creative pursuit — writing, painting, music, woodworking, restoring an old car, building something — that you'd love to give yourself permission to try?

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Name a new language you would like to learn ? Or new cuisine you would enjoy create? Or instrument you would like to lear?

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What's on your personal “before I'm 80” list?

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If you knew, with absolute certainty, that you couldn't fail — what would you do?

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Name one or more projects you've been dreaming about for so long it almost feels like a secret?

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### 3. The People in Your Life

*Family, friends, and the relationships that matter most.*

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Who are the people closest to you — spouse, partner, children, grandchildren, lifelong friends?

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If you have kids and grandkids, how often would you love to see them in this next chapter?

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What friendships you'd love to rekindle or simply spend more time with?

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**What** community — neighbors, church, club, gym, veterans group — would you enjoy connecting with more deeply?

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If you had a chance to mentor younger people, coach or share, what would you enjoy?

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Who has been on your mind lately that you wish you saw more often?

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If you and your spouse or partner imagined the perfect week together a year from now, what would it look like?

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## 4. Wanderlust

*Roads not yet taken — across town, across the country, or across the world.*

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If someone handed you a year of travel — plane tickets, lodging, the works — where would you go? Put a number to the highest priority.

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Name an parts of the United States you've always wanted to see but never made it to?  
(National parks, coastlines, small towns, big cities, where you grew up...)

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What about overseas? Name countries or regions that have always called to you?

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Big international trips or smaller weekend getaways — which one lights you up more?

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What's your travel style? Cruise, road trip, RV, train, all-inclusive resort, off-the-beaten-path, group tour, just-you-and-a-map?

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Is there a place from your past — a childhood hometown, a place you served, where you honeymooned, where your family came from — you'd love to revisit?

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Who would you most love to travel with? Anyone you'd happily travel solo to see?

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## 5. Your Superpowers

*The skills, gifts, and talents that come naturally to you — even if you've stopped noticing them.*

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What do people most often come to you for help with?

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What are you known for among your friends, family, or colleagues?

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What kinds of problems do you deeply enjoy solving?

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Of the skills you've used in your business life, which ones would you love to keep using in some new form?

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And which ones would you happily put down forever?

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If you taught a class — about anything at all — what would it be?

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Is there a talent of yours that you've never really gotten to fully use?

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## 6. How You're Wired

*A few easy questions about your rhythm and style — because the next chapter should fit how you actually live.*

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After a long day, do you feel more recharged by being around people, or by having time alone?

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Are you happiest with a packed calendar, a balanced one, or wide-open days?

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When something new comes across your desk, do you tend to dive in, plan it out first, or talk it through with someone?

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Routines and rituals — do you love them, tolerate them, or run from them?

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How important is it to you to have something you're building, producing, or accomplishing each week?

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Where do you do your best thinking? At a desk, on a walk, in the car, in a workshop, in conversation, in a chair on the porch?

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When you imagine your ideal pace of life, is it faster than now, slower than now, or about the same — just aimed differently?

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## 7. Meaning, Purpose, and That Big Question

*The deeper stuff — gently. Skip anything that doesn't speak to you.*

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When you imagine waking up one morning without a business to run, what's the first feeling that shows up?

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Is there a cause, a mission, or a group of people you've always wanted to do more for?

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What skills could you apply to volunteer work, board service, coaching, ministry, or community involvement?

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Some people feel a little empty or restless when the business is no longer the center of the day. What do you feel it will be like for you? What might fill that space?

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How do you wish for others will describe how you spent your next life chapter?

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Is faith, spirituality, or a personal philosophy part of how you want to live this next chapter?

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Beyond “business owner,” what other parts of your identity are you excited to lean into?

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When someone asks, “So what do you do?” — what would you love your answer to be a year from now?

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What's something you've always known about yourself that the busyness of running a company never really let you explore?

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## 8. A Day in Your Future Life

*Forget five-year plans for a minute. Just picture one perfectly ordinary day.*

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Picture an ordinary Tuesday one year from now. Where do you wake up?

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What time would you get up if no alarm went off?

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**w**Who do you have breakfast with — and what are you eating?

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What does the morning look like? An activity? A project? A workout? A book?

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What about the afternoon? Anyone you're seeing? Anywhere you're going?

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What are you reading, watching, or listening to these days in this version of your life?

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How does the evening unwind? Family, friends, neighbors, alone, out somewhere, on the couch?

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When you go to bed that night, what is it that makes this feel like a really good day?

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## 9. One Last Look

*Just a few closing questions — the kind that often surface the real gold.*

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In few words, describe how you want this next chapter to feel like, be like?

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What are you most looking forward to?

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What, if anything, are you a little nervous about? (Totally normal — anyone honest will admit to some of this.)

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What's something you'd never want to give up, no matter what this next chapter looks like?

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What's one thing you'd love to be doing six months from now that you're not doing today?

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Is there anyone in your life — spouse, friend, advisor, family member — you'd love to share these answers with?

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If you could leave yourself a short note to open on the morning after you sell the business, what would it say?

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## Thank You

*Whatever you wrote here, it matters.*

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Most business owners spend years getting the company ready to sell, and almost no time getting themselves ready for what comes after. The fact that you took a quiet hour (or two, or five) to sit with these questions already puts you ahead of most of the people who've ever sat in your chair.

There's no rush to do anything with these answers. Sit with them. Share them with the people you love — or don't. Let them quietly shape what you want this next chapter to look and feel like, in your own words, on your own terms.

*The business was a great chapter. There's no reason the next one can't be just as good — maybe even better.*

— End of Reflection Guide —