What is a NEXT Step?

A NEXT Step is just that, the next step you feel ready to take based on a goal you set, inspired by what you learned by reading the reflections, and any whispers you may be hearing. After reading each reflection, you may or may not feel the need to create a NEXT Step. You know better than anyone what you and your family need. We are simply offering an invitation to make a change if you feel the need to do so.

A NEXT Step is based on an acronym that stands for *Needed*, *EXcited*, and *Time-specific*.

Needed means that you have a felt need to take this step. It relates to something you have wanted to do, something you know would be good for you and your family. **Excited** means that you are positively motivated to take this step—you want to take this step, as opposed to being motivated by a feeling that you "should" or "have to" take this step. **Time-specific** means that you will take your step right away or within the next several days. It's the difference between saying, "Someday I'm going to get our morning routines more organized," and "Starting tomorrow, I'm going to get up fifteen minutes earlier than usual and prepare a simple breakfast before the kids get up."

Needed...

... means the step addresses a felt need that you have.

For example: "For several months now I have been feeling the need to set a screen curfew on in our house, a time each school night when all screens are to be turned off."

EX EXcited...

... means the motivation for doing the step is positive—I "want" to do this rather than I "should" or "have to."

For example: "I am looking forward to our having more time to connect as a family, and also everyone getting to bed earlier."

Time-specific . . .

... means I will do my NEXT Step at this time, or within a specific time frame.

For example: "I am going to start the conversation about a nightly screen curfew tonight. We will discuss reasons and work out the details and for this new rule over the next several nights and then we will start the screen curfew Monday."

Sharing your NEXT Steps with one another is a great idea: another parent, a family member, or a friend. If you are reading this book with a group, share your NEXT Steps with each other. You will inspire and learn from each other as you do this, plus you will become a built-in support system for each other as you put your NEXT Steps into practice.

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How Do I Create a NEXT Step?

Your journey toward enhanced wellness as a parent, and as a family, happens one step at a time. Research shows that in order to maximize your chances for making positive healthy changes, you need to set a *Goal* for the change you wish to make, and then break down that goal into small, concrete steps. Sharing those concrete steps with, and receiving support from, others is an important element in making and sustaining positive change. This process also involves exploring and identifying both the potential *Obstacles* that could get in your way, and possible *Solutions* that will bring you closer to your goal.

The *NEXT Step* process will help you identify those small, next steps you and/or your family are ready to take to help you reach your goals. Creating a NEXT Step is especially valuable when you are feeling frustrated because it can help you avoid feeling overwhelmed or daunted by the challenge you are facing. Instead, this process allows you to simply focus on the NEXT Step. By taking one step at a time, step-by-step, you will be able to create the change you want.

NEXT Step Worksheet

Area of Wellness: Organization

Parent Wellness COMPASS

Reflection: Do We Manage Our Schedules or Do Our Schedules Manage Us?

Date: 8/14/17

Goal: Desire to free up more time together as a family.

Needed: We rarely get to share a meal together because of everyone's schedules.

Excited: We all have been saying how much we enjoyed, and miss, the dinners we used to have.

Time-specific: For the summer, each person can choose one activity to be involved in.

Obstacles: I'll need to get everyone on board. Possible resistance to this suggestion.

Solutions: Have family meetings to discuss ahead of time.

NEXT Step: Schedule a family meeting this weekend to ask everyone in the family to select one activity to be involved in this summer.

 $(Download\ additional\ blank\ copies\ of\ NEXT\ Step\ worksheets\ at\ parent wellness compass. or g,\ or\ use\ the\ Companion\ Journal.)$

Parent Wellness Compass

NEXT Step Worksheet	Area of Wellness:			COMPASS
Reflection:			Date:	
Goal:				
Needed:				
EXcited:				
Time-specific:				
Obstacles:		Solutions:		
NEXT Step:				
				Parent Wallness
NEXT Step Worksheet	Area of Wellness:			Parent Wellness COMPASS
Reflection:			Date:	
Goal:				
Needed:				
EXcited:				
Time-specific:				
Obstacles:		Solutions:		
NEXT Step:				