

## *Living Forward Life Plan Example*

# **Helena**

### *Outcomes*

How I want to be remembered by those closest to me:

- God: “Helena was faithful. She loved people well, sought growth and spiritual improvement. She used her gifts for My Kingdom and honored Me with her life. Well done, good and faithful servant.”
- Doug: “Helena was a source of never-wavering love, support and hope. She was the heart of our little family—my biggest fan, my best friend. Beautiful inside and out. She was strong, optimistic, hopeful and encouraging to the end. I will miss her.”
- Neal: “I always knew I was greatly loved by my mom. She encouraged my faith and supported my dreams and passions. Mom was always available—she listened and really heard me. She was wise—always ready to share her wisdom when I asked for it but also letting me make my own choices. I have never questioned that she loved me. She was the best.”
- Work: “Helena cared about people, not just the work we were doing. She spoke up for hurting people. She was supportive, encouraging, and positive. She brought energy and a smile to everything she did. She was solution-focused and flexible. She had a passion for our students and for connecting them with stories they would love and remember all their lives. She encouraged teachers both about reading and general work and life.”
- Family/Friends: “Helena was supportive and encouraging—a good listener. She was wise and insightful—a faithful friend, available to others. She was transparent and honest about her own journey. More interested in others than in talking about herself. She adored her family and was passionate about her students and about connecting readers to books. She was peaceful—grounded in her faith.”
- Students: “Ms. O. loved us—she was available to us, listened to us and really heard us. We felt known and valued. She loved books and taught me to love them too. She

introduced me to (book/author). She encouraged me to share my stories. She loved Jesus and she loved me. She made me feel special.”

### *Action Plans*

#### Account 1: God

Envisioned Future: I seek the Lord from the moment I wake up to the time I go to bed. I pray throughout the day—gratitude, praise—looking for God in my day and acknowledging Him when I see Him. I ask for His help for myself and others. When I am anxious, I seek Him. I spend time in His Word every day. I talk about God with family, colleagues and students in a very natural way because He is the core of my life. I use my gifts and thank Him for the opportunity to do so. I am comfortable with moments of silence, soaking in His Presence. I discern the leading of the Holy Spirit and respond. I am content with my life, home and possessions.

Purpose: My purpose is to be in relationship with God and to honor Him with my life and my choices.

#### Specific Commitments:

1. Read my Bible Monday through Thursday every week—underlining and writing in my journal as needed
2. Finish Galatians and move to Ephesians, Philippians and Timothy 1&2
3. Prayerfully approach each school day, looking for ways to integrate faith. Evaluate at the end of the day what worked and what didn't and where I could have done something different. Journal about results so I can go back and track progress.

#### Account 2: Self

Envisioned Future: I wake in the morning feeling well-rested and ready for the day. My body feels strong and healthy. I feel comfortable in my clothes. I move through my day without pain

or physical discomfort or fatigue. I eat for energy rather than for emotional reasons.

I feel connected to my emotions. I recognize signs of stress or anxiety and journal to process my thoughts and feelings as well as processing things out loud as I am able. I seek wise counsel and/or scriptural support and face circumstances in productive ways. I set realistic expectations for myself and for my time so I have time for recreation and stress-management.

I set aside time for reading for enjoyment and for learning. I take time for family, meeting with friends, and engaging in hobbies to balance the work portion of my life. I hold my time for reading scripture and journaling as essential for my day—not to be crowded out by other things. I make time for creative expression every week—singing, crafting, writing, etc. because that helps me feel energized and connected to myself.

Purpose: My purpose is to take care of myself physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually so I can care for my family and do the things God asks me to do.

Specific Commitments:

1. Get at least 8 hours of sleep every night, especially on school nights. Listen to my body and go to bed early when I need to.
2. Continue to use writing/journaling to process emotions and life events.
3. Re-commit to 500/100 eating plan to see if it works and is sustainable during the school year.
4. Schedule outings with friends at least once a month.

### Account 3: Doug

Envisioned Future: Doug and I regularly spend time together, just the two of us. We share hobbies and interests (but not all of our interests are shared). We cultivate friendships with other couples and spend time with those couples. We are each other's best friend—we seek each other out first for all things. We challenge and encourage one another. We look forward to being together every day.

Purpose: My purpose is to be a friend, partner and support as he pursues his purposes in life.

Specific Commitments:

1. Set aside time at least once a week just for us, whether that is to go out together or watch a TV show/movie together without other distractions (electronics, reading, etc.) or “real” conversation.
2. Continue seeking one another first before all others for sharing news and time together.
3. Talk to Doug about other things we can do to build our relationship.

#### Account 4: Neal

Envisioned Future: Neal is confident, willing to try new things and meet new people. He stands up for himself and is welcoming and friendly to others. He enjoys spending time with us but is independent in a developmentally appropriate way for his age. He shares his triumphs with us and seeks us out when he is struggling and wants feedback. He is confident that our love is constant no matter what. Neal has good personal boundaries and makes good choices. He has a regular devotional life and seeks the Lord daily. He has friends who encourage him in all areas of his life, including his spiritual growth. He is generous, thoughtful and kind.

Purpose: My purpose is to prepare my son for a life of faith, for independence, and for becoming a productive adult. I provide a nurturing, stable and secure home base for him to try, fail, learn and grow.

Specific Commitments:

1. Encourage his devotional reading—talking about what he is reading.
2. Keep up weekly TKD—maybe increase to twice a week.
3. Keep practicing social skills.
4. Watch Neal for cues of how he wants to be loved on as he gets older (hugs, kisses, fist bumps) so we can stay connected in a way that is satisfying for both of us/all of us.

### Account 5: Friends & Family

Envisioned Future: I am regularly in touch with my closest family and friends. I meet with the women in my Sunday school group weekly and practice listening and learning more than talking. My closest relationships are cultivated in ways outside social media. I feel supported by folks other than Doug and I have people to spend time with to provide balance to my life.

Purpose: My purpose is to love my extended family and build/maintain relationships with them and with friends. These relationships are important for my social, emotional and mental well-being.

Specific Commitments:

1. Once a week have a non-Facebook/Twitter interaction with an adult (besides Doug) that is about the other person—phone call, email, letter, face-to-face—and not about me.
2. Once a month, go to dinner/ lunch/coffee with Christine when she's back.
3. Make plans to connect with Lisa when she is home. See if that relationship can develop into something more in her new role.
4. Talk to Abbie at least 2x per month on the phone/Facetime/in person.

### Account 6: Career/School

Envisioned Future: My students enjoy visiting the library and looking for and reading books. They look forward to talking with me about what they are reading—and some talk about the stories they are writing. I have a teacher resource area in the library office, and teachers visit it regularly to find professional development support or inspiration. Teachers check books out of the library to read with their classes or to learn what students are reading. Teachers talk with students about what they read. I have a system for weeding, sharing and adding books to the library that is efficient and helps get new books to students fast. I have an instructional plan for each grade level that fits the reading and research needs of that grade. The library is a hub of student activity—reading, writing, etc. Students feel welcome and want to be there. Reading is a valued part of the culture of our school community and reading levels for students improve from

year to year.

Purpose: My purposes at work are (1) to encourage students to read by talking with them about books and by providing a variety of books in the library, (2) to advocate for reading/story in the larger school culture, and (3) to provide resources, including books, to teachers to help them as they do their work.

Specific Commitments:

1. Finish teacher resource section and fill in gaps—get with teachers to determine what they need. Make this the year when people get to experience the resource section so next year it is just part of everyone's routine.
2. Try a new instructional plan for this year—record books that are read, make notes of what works and what doesn't.
3. Review lesson plans I bought at the end of this last year for ideas.
4. Add quizzes for books throughout the year. Keep track of how many we can get done. Encourage teachers to help.

### Account 7: Resources

Envisioned Future: Our house is uncluttered and neat, and we open our home to friends regularly because we have space to do so. We are grateful for our home and happy to share it. We have six months income in savings and are regularly contributing to savings, retirement and college for Neal. We follow our budget and are conservative in our spending so we have money to share with charities that are important to us. A 10% tithe to Park Place off our gross pay is the foundation of our giving. We have money set aside to help when we hear of missions opportunities or emergencies. We share our time and talents with the church and community, including helping Neal find ways to give to others from his time and gifts as well as his money.

Purpose: Our resources are to be used to care for our family, care for the church, and care for others who have needs. Resources include our money, possessions, home, time, etc.

### Specific Commitments:

1. Use gift cards rather than credit for book shopping. Pick up e-books for new series to help with space issues. Reconnect with the LIBRARY for even less book-buying.
2. Track or eliminate credit spending—pay off from the checkbook rather than emergency savings unless it was actually an emergency.
3. Declutter the house. Set aside a month of weekends where everyone pitches in to do a thorough purge and clean. For the future, shop less on the weekends and use what we have.
4. Plan more game days and other activities rather than shopping.
5. Talk as a family about service opportunities—does LCS count? Worship Team? Communion servers?

### Account 8: Blog/Writing

Envisioned Future: I am reading and blogging about books each week as well as sharing on Goodreads/Amazon/Barnes & Noble. Friends and strangers ask for recommendations and enjoy the books I recommend. Publishers offer me review opportunities and I accept them and post a review in a timely manner. I process life on paper and submit pieces when opportunities present themselves. I work on fiction as well as personal/essay writing. I have a reputation for good follow through on book reviews and for quality reviews and recommendations. I encourage or challenge others with the things I write and share. People feel like my words express things they are thinking and feeling.

Purpose: I blog about books because I need a forum to tell people about the books I read. I blog about general things because writing helps me process life and sometimes I want to share it with someone—anyone. My “natural” writing is about life—what I’m thinking, feeling, learning. I don’t know if there is a greater purpose “out there” that’s yet to come.

### Specific Commitments:

1. Set review books as priority—now to get caught up and in the future so they are at the top of my reading pile.

2. Develop a system for tracking review requests and adding reviews to Amazon/B&N as well as Goodreads.
3. Spend a half hour a week working on fiction, starting with the story idea I got at ALA.  
Write the things that scare me so I can fight that fear.
4. Read Jon Acuff's *Start*.