

Excerpts
from
Letters from Home
Thoughts to Carry with You upon Leaving the Nest

View a few chosen words from this inspirational journey to self awareness and personal growth. In his new book, David C. Deavours provides a glossary designed to guide the young adult through the alphabet of life. He also remind parents and mentors to share their own personal experiences with the young people in their lives.

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Accomplish: I believe that at some time in our lives, we all want to feel like we have accomplished something and contributed to the world. Otherwise, what are we doing here? Are we just taking up space and using resources? Figure out your interest and how you may contribute, and then set a goal. Set a realistic goal at first, something that is fairly easy to achieve. Perhaps there are a lot of homeless animals at the local shelter and volunteers are needed to exercise the dogs. Set a goal to participate in the volunteer program twice a month, and stick to your commitment. After accomplishing this goal, build on it when you can. The opportunities are endless. Your feeling of accomplishment is guaranteed to leave you wanting more. One of the reasons I am writing this book is that I feel the need to contribute more to my son's life. Even if he only remembers one thought or idea I have shared, then I have accomplished something.

Freedom: There are few things in this world on which humans literally cannot put a price tag - freedom is one of them. As Americans, I am afraid we often get caught up in our everyday lives, become seduced by the materialistic world, and forget why we have the freedoms we have today. We have these freedoms and choices (also see Choices, chapter 3) because thousands of fellow Americans, as well as foreign allies, paid the ultimate price for freedom - their lives. And in my opinion, the price of a human life is without measure, and by default, so are our freedoms. Remember this the next time you pass by an American flag and pause for a moment to pay homage to those who have given us our freedom. Let Freedom Ring in your heart, never take it for granted, and give freedom the value in your life that it deserves.

Jungle: It's true: the world is a jungle full of many wild and dangerous creatures and savages, quicksand pits, and high, hidden cliffs. Once you leave your tribe, it is so easy to get lost in the world. There are so many paths leading off to nowhere. The

world can often be dark and obscure with dangers lurking around every turn. Avoid those other travelers who would take advantage of your inexperience and youth, because there are many out there who will try. Steer clear of the dangerous jungle poisons the jungle people may offer to ease your jitters. These poisons are highly addictive and will cause you to fall into one of those hidden quicksand pits. Some poisons may even make you believe you can fly off one of those high cliffs. Look for a place to live with clean water and air, suitable for starting your own tribe—a place where the natives are friendly and trade can occur. Offer your skills in return for life's necessities, and build a future. If, at times, the adventures and challenges become overwhelming, pull out the ole tribal compass, because it always points toward home.

Love: It can make you weak in the knees and cause sudden episodes of dizziness. Some people have actually tripped over their tongues because of it, while others have suffered from severe eyestrain. It has also been known to produce large butterflies in the stomach area as well as shortness of breath. Some have been known to suffer from a loss of speech, while many others have lost all rational thought. It can increase your heart rate and cause loss of appetite. If you have most or all of these symptoms, you must be in love. Enjoy it!

Pocket: So you are out on your own now, and reality is starting to bite. After reading this far you already know how important I feel it is to control spending and make sound financial decisions, especially at an early age. A significant financial blunder when you are young can be a burden for years and perhaps prevent you from buying that first home, and it can generally ruin your credit. You probably feel that I am too serious about money management and need to lighten up. Perhaps, but I have learned too many financial lessons the hard way, and it has impacted my ability to enjoy some things as much as I should have up to this point in my life. But with you it is different; you can start practicing financial discipline earlier than I did. Here is one simple way to save for something you enjoy doing periodically or one of those once-in-a-lifetime events. For those little biannual events, like a ski trip or an unordinary purchase, such as a new couch or something, obtain a big jar and start filling it with your pocket change. Make this action a ritual. Every day when you come home from work or school, whatever the case may be, empty your pockets of change and drop those coins into the fun jar. You'll be very surprised how fast it adds up! In a few months you will have saved \$50 or more depending on how much change you typically generate. This is money you won't even miss in your budget, because most people don't like to carry around pocket change anyway. If, by chance, the plans you make for your pocket change are much more ambitious than a trip to the slopes or a nice Valentine's Day dinner, then open a savings account at the local credit union, and twice a year deposit that pocket change into your account. This is saving made simple; anybody can do it,

and it is what I like to call subliminal saving. Cha-ching! That is the sound that fun makes.

Respect: Although I discussed the term respect in Chapter 2 (see Bear), I believe it is one that cannot be emphasized enough, so here are some reminders. As a human, you should respect the earth and all of the creatures that roam upon it. Clean up after yourself, recycle, and try not to waste the resources available to you. As a neighbor, respect the privacy of others, their desire for peace and quiet, and their boundaries. As a coworker, respect diversity in the workplace, the values and beliefs of others, and the various personalities you will encounter. As a spouse or “significant other,” respect your partner’s need for space, respect their quirks or idiosyncrasies, and show appreciation for their contributions and values. And last, but certainly not least, respect yourself and the contributions you make as an individual.

Spirituality: You may have noticed that there is very little reference in this book to religion. Although I briefly mentioned praying in Chapter 16, I purposely avoided religion as a discussion topic because I did not want to appear as promoting any religion over another. After all, America was largely founded on the premise of religious freedom. This being said, most of us have a place where we feel close to our spiritual beliefs, whether that place is a house of worship (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue), a home, or somewhere of special significance. Although I grew up attending church regularly as a young person and religion has always been an integral part of my life, today I fulfill my spiritual needs outdoors for the most part. I often feel the need to get high into the mountains on top of a peak, where I feel closest to my god, others who have passed before me in life, and myself. The hike to my spiritual place serves as a cleansing process. While on the trail to my place of worship, I labor over miles of rough terrain, feel the weight of my pack on my shoulders, and perspire all of the worries that have plagued me the past several months. When I have finally reached my spiritual place, the place where my spiritual and physical beings bind and dance, I feel more alive than at any other time. And I look out upon all of what has been created and sense my place in this world, and I realize that I am such a small part of it. I encourage you to find your spiritual place, the place where you feel at peace, and visit as often as you need.

Think: Think before you speak. Think before you act. Think before you run, wild with the pack. Think before you end it. Think before you leave. Think before you’re all alone, crying on your sleeve. Think about your future. Think about your past. Think on how to spend your time, making memories that last. Think about your family. Think about your friends. Think about the life you lead, before it comes to end. ... Think.

Yellowstone: There is a place located in northwest Wyoming and south-central Montana that exhibits nature at its best, a place everyone needs to visit at least once. This place is Yellowstone National Park! Not only will you find yourself in awe of the geological energy of the area in the forms of bubbling goo and spouting geysers, but you will also witness a working ecosystem at its finest. This magical place, which also serves as an outdoor classroom, is a haven for many wildlife species that can no longer survive in most of the United States due to habitat alterations and loss. Nowhere else can you see wolves, grizzly bears, bison, moose, elk, and wild sheep, just to mention a few, living in an ancient volcano caldera with beautiful waterfalls, canyons, and geysers. Scientists refer to this type of volcano as a “super volcano,” and this one erupts approximately every 600,000 years. And guess what: it is overdue! Follow the next eagle you see to Yellowstone National Park, and you’ll discover a very different and unique world. The experience is unforgettable and one of those “must-dos” for your lifetime checklist. But don’t wait too long; the clock is ticking for this wonder of the world!