



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S E R I E S

# THE NUTSHELL OF HINGE MOMENTS

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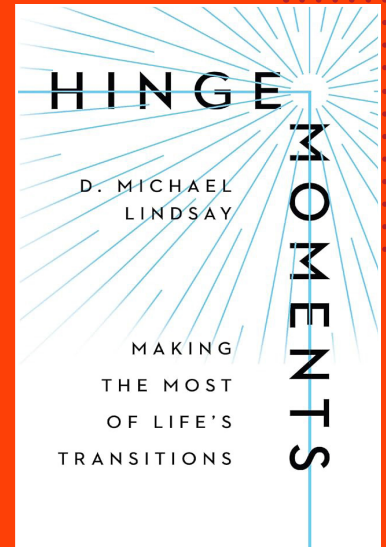
## Introduction

There are particular moments in our own lives when we realize, in a flash, that something has to change—is going to change—whether we like it or not. What follows these instances will depend intrinsically on the decisions we make and the actions we take. These are *hinge moments*—opportunities to open (or to close) doors to various pathways of our lives. The challenge with life is that we have to live it moving forward, but really only understand it looking back. Every day offers the promise of preparing us to best respond to the next hinge moment of our lives.

## 1. Approaching the Doors in Our Lives

### *Considering a Change*

There are at least three kinds of changes we face: those we wouldn't choose but can see coming, those we choose ourselves, and those that flood our homes at two in the morning. The first two offer us some choice about how and when we pack our bags; the third offers us none. It does not matter how successful, wealthy, or good you are at your job; a major life change is never more than a phone



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call away. Because of their unpredictability, unexpected changes are often the most difficult to handle.

## 2. Standing Outside

### *Why Change Hurts Your Head*

By nature, we humans are risk averse. The unknown makes us wary. A moderate dose of caution is healthy as a survival mechanism, but too much can keep us from successfully passing through open doors. The reason why change hurts your head is because the option to relax a little and fall back on default actions is not available, because in transitions there are no default actions yet—not until we establish our new patterns and ways of life. To succeed in your transitions, you have to look before you leap. This means doing your due reconnaissance, scouting out the area's institutions and organizations. Yet watch out for fear and anxiety, which will creep in to steal your future or at least cause such distrust that you are not able to move to the next phase, which is found only at the meeting place of your old life and your new, of your past and your future.

## 3. Straddling the Threshold

### *The Space Between Spaces*

A peer who gives good advice might be a great assist, but mentors are even more important when crossing a threshold. Indeed, they may be the most important resources in this phase of our lives. Mentors, by definition, have already walked where you are about to step, and they've had time to process the lessons they learned along the way. True mentors can be invaluable sources of advice and direction when you need them, taking some of the edge off the hard decision-making early on in a new "space" because you can lean on their expertise where yours may be lacking.

## 4. The Welcome Mat

### *Landing in Your New Space*

You should give as much thought and preparation to your first days in the new space as you gave to the deliberation process prior to the transition. *There is absolutely no substitute for a good first impression.* First days are for learning about the culture of your new space while you are still a guest. First days are for first impressions. And first impressions are springboards for second and third impressions, which, if you work hard enough, might just change you and your new space for better as you land well.

## 5. The Deadbolt

### *Earning the Key Through Trust*

True happiness and satisfaction in life come from belonging. Being needed means that you have a role, an important purpose, and that people are relying on you, confident that you can and will carry it out. Being needed means, simply put, that you belong. The difficulty of transition is always in that liminal space between spaces, where the new trust and membership you need in order to succeed is there potentially but not yet actually. Trust—more than talent, temperament, or even tenacity—is the key to your long-term success.

## 6. The Hinge

### *The Virtue of Affixed Flexibility*

Pivoting well requires firm and unshakeable hinges in your life. These are the constants that keep you steady and stable when you have to make changes. Historically, philosophers and the fathers of the faith called these life hinges the cardinal virtues. The four virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and jus-

tice have been a mainstay of both sacred and secular Western ethical thought for thousands of years.

7. Passages

*Growing Through Major Life Changes*

Research suggests that our fear of losing things is roughly twice as strong as our desire to gain them. Losing a sum of money hurts twice as badly as the happiness we get from gaining that same sum. Fear of loss can include fear of failure, which can keep us from grabbing hold of a great opportunity because we are scared that we aren't qualified or won't be impressive. I do not know exactly just how many transitions you will have in your life. But all of us, no matter our station, are given opportunities, and I am certain you will fail in some of them. But risking failure is the only way to have a shot at any of the big breaks that can end up being as meaningful.

Conclusion

The way we respond to change is largely about the choices we make through the various stages of transition. We may not have control over much, but the way we respond to whatever occurs is one major way that we can embody virtue. Remarkably, it is through stages of transition that we develop the maturity and wisdom to handle changes as they come, and with each successive journey through the seven stages of transition, we emerge stronger and better.