

## Q & A



### ***Hinge Moments*** *Making the Most of Life's Transitions*

April 27, 2021 | \$22, 184 pages, hardcover | 978-0-8308-4179-0

*"There are particular moments in life which are very much like a hinge on a door. Sometimes we call them pivotal, but what we really mean is that whatever follows will hinge on the decisions made in these opportune times. Such moments are axial by nature."*

-D. Michael Lindsay, from *Hinge Moments*

## From the Author of *Faith in the Halls of Power*

What experiences led you to write *Hinge Moments*?

**Michael Lindsay:** As a college president, I offer remarks and counsel to young people and their families dozens of times each year as they embark on new journeys at the end of high school or college. On hundreds of occasions I have been asked for recommendations of a book that might be suitable as a graduation gift for Christian families, and remarkably, there are very few good options. Aside from William McRaven's *Make Your Bed* and Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture*, there are virtually no recent works that strike the right balance between thoughtful advice and inspired storytelling. It is my intention for *Hinge Moments* to fill that gap.

Who is *Hinge Moments* written for?

**Lindsay:** For all of us there is only one thing that remains the same—the fact that nothing does. Through compelling stories and practical advice pulled directly from personal interviews with the greatest leaders of our time, *Hinge Moments* offers insights for those facing a major change on how to proceed with integrity and wisdom.

What makes *Hinge Moments* distinct from other books on changes in life?

**Lindsay:** *Hinge Moments* is distinctive in that it strikes the right balance between inspired storytelling and thoughtful advice sought by students and seasoned professionals alike. This book opens the door for readers to see inside some of the most pivotal and vulnerable moments of world-renowned leaders while also sharing tangible advice they can implement immediately. It is this unique combination, strengthened by biblical wisdom and insights from social science, that allows readers to tap into the advice and lessons learned by the world's top leaders.

What lessons or insights do you hope readers take away from this book?

**Lindsay:**

- The importance of preparation and self-reflection when experiencing transition.
- How to be at peace throughout the decision-making process, especially in its aftermath.
- An understanding of how to integrate well into a new environment.
- An understanding of the seven stages of transition—discernment, anticipation, intersection, landing, integration, inspiration, and realization.
- Handling transition is an essential element of your life that helps build your confidence



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## President of Taylor University Pens *Hinge Moments*

D. Michael Lindsay is president of Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, having recently ended his term as the eighth president of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. His tenure at Gordon coincided with record years of opportunity and growth for the campus. Since his appointment in 2011, Gordon experienced banner years in terms of fundraising, campus diversity, sponsored research, athletic success, and faith expression on campus.

Prior to arriving at Gordon, Lindsay was a member of the sociology faculty at Rice University, where he won multiple awards both for his teaching and his scholarly research. The author of two dozen scholarly publications, Dr. Lindsay's *Faith in the Halls of Power* was nominated for the nonfiction Pulitzer Prize in 2007. His most recent book, *View from the Top*, won two awards and has been translated into Chinese and Japanese.

As a scholar and educational leader, Lindsay has lectured on six continents and works tirelessly to create opportunities worldwide for Gordon students, faculty, and staff. He earned his PhD in sociology from Princeton University and graduate theological degrees from Wycliffe Hall at Oxford University and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Baylor University, where he has been named Outstanding Young Alumnus.

Lindsay has been married for twenty-five years to Rebecca, a writer and speaker. They are the proud parents of three daughters.



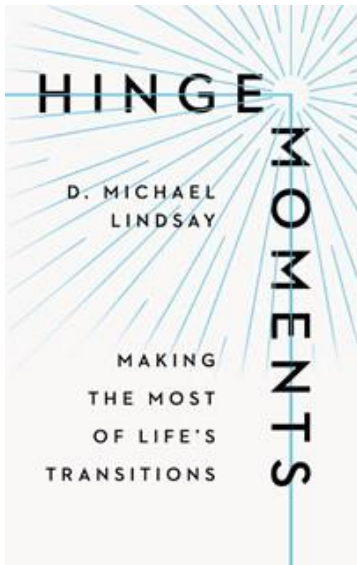
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*"We live in a world where the only constant seems to be change. Michael Lindsay identifies key factors that will help you navigate transition points in your life, personally and professionally. It will help you not only survive but thrive the sea of uncertainty."*

—Mark Batterson, author of *The Circle Maker* and lead pastor of National Community Church

## Navigating Life's Present and Future Transitions from COVID-19

By the time they have turned eighteen, most Americans will have moved at least twice. Most thirty-year-olds will have moved six times. By the end of our lives, most of us will have pushed that number up to eleven. This highly mobile way of life is mirrored in our career habits as well. The average American worker holds ten different jobs before the age of forty, and this job transience is only expected to increase in the years ahead. Add to these the slew of major life changes such as college or vocational training, marriage, and having children, and it becomes clear how many different phases our lives actually have. For all of us there is only one thing that remains the same—the fact that nothing does.

All these major decisions, though different in nature, are the same in that they determine our future trajectory. There are no neutral choices here—no loitering on the threshold of destiny. Each of these moments will either help or hurt us, depending on how we handle the transition between one space and the next. And we're talking about when things are *normal*.

The coronavirus pandemic of 2019 and 2020 turned the lives of millions of people around the world upside down. At one point, the unemployment rate in the U.S. neared 15 percent. That is higher than the peak unemployment of the Great Recession, and the largest recorded unemployment in American history since the Great Depression. Couple this with the fact that there are tens of millions more who are wondering if COVID-19 will lay waste to their own careers, and it becomes clear that this crisis could produce more hinge moments than this country has seen in generations. It is difficult to overstate just how much is changing. Companies are rethinking how they do business. Workers are looking for new places and ways to work. Families are postponing having children. Universities are rapidly coming to terms with what it means to be an institution with no students on campus. As a result of all of this, tens of millions of people in this country are undergoing major transitions, both voluntary and otherwise.

Most of the things that happen over the course of our lives can be readily characterized as "good" or "bad." Winning an award, getting married, or enrolling in your dream school: good. Losing a loved one or getting the virus: bad. Periods of transition are different; even the best and most welcome transitions are still the results of *change*, and that is universally unsettling. This is what sets transitions apart from the other barriers and blessings in life. Typically, when the good and

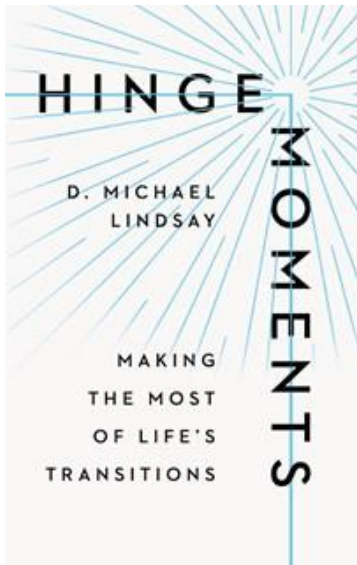


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*"This book is a must-read for anyone navigating life's transitions. Hinge Moments teaches us how to honor God through the chaos of change, embrace life's decision moments, and come out stronger on the other side."*

—Kay C. James, former director of the US Office of Personnel Management, former Virginia secretary of health and human resources

the bad come knocking at our door, we have roots and community to laugh or cry with us. The problem with hinge moments is that they have to be managed in the disorienting space between communities, in the time between the uprooting of the old and the planting of the new.

#### HOW TRANSITIONS SHAPE US

Nearly a decade ago, I moved from what I thought was my dream job teaching sociology at Rice University in Texas to become the president of Gordon, a Christian liberal arts college on Boston's North Shore. It was initially not a move I was looking to make. My family and I were very happy in Houston.

It all began when I answered the phone one morning and was asked if I might be interested in applying to become Gordon's next president. I thought it might be an honor to serve as a college president someday, "but not now," I told the recruiter. "Maybe in ten to fifteen years."

Several weeks following that phone call, our family encountered an unexpected hinge moment. One rainy morning in early November, my thirty-two-year-old cousin was driving to work when he saw the car of a highway patrol officer hydroplane off the wet pavement. My cousin pulled over to make sure the driver was okay. As he approached the patrol car, a tractor-trailer driver behind him slammed on his brakes, causing the rig to jackknife, swing around, and strike my cousin, killing him instantly. I still cannot believe he is gone. He left behind a wife and three young children.

In the days that followed, I came to realize that we are not promised tomorrow, that my plans for what I might do in ten to fifteen years might not always be possible. I woke up to the fact that doors don't stay open forever. The next week, I called the recruiter and asked if they were still accepting applications.

In truth, I never thought I would be selected. But I had been studying leadership for many years, and now I wondered what it might be like to step into such a meaningful leadership role myself. I ended up being selected for the Gordon presidency. Looking back, I can see exactly how the change that would move our family from Texas to Massachusetts all began in that hinge moment on that rainy November morning. The challenge with life is that we have to live it moving forward, but we 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.

#### THE PLATINUM LEADERS AND THEIR TRANSITIONS

That move turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life, but it certainly had some lessons to teach me. I have come to understand that to study leadership is to study the science of transitions. I dedicated ten years of my life to

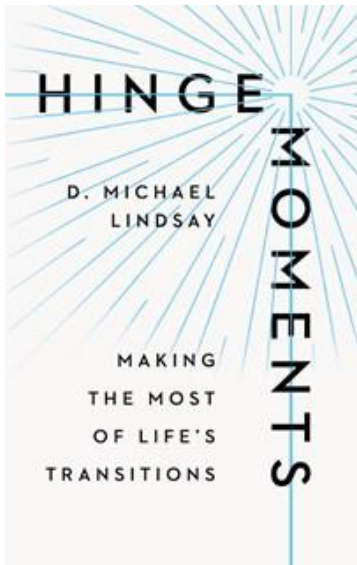


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*"The changes we face in life are always unique and personal, but Michael Lindsay brings comfort and confidence in the understanding that these individual experiences also reflect the universal human condition. A delightful treasury of stories, science, and wisdom, Hinge Moments will enlighten and encourage you in whatever momentous transition might come your way."*

-Karen Swallow Prior, author of *On Reading Well: Finding the Good Life through Great Books*

conducting the PLATINUM study, the largest empirical study of American leaders in history. I conducted full-length interviews, and my team and I performed analyses on 550 of America's top figures, including presidents Carter and Bush alongside leaders of hundreds of Fortune 500 firms and their nonprofit equivalents. It was through this project that I came to interview Francis Collins and learn his story. The core leadership findings from that study are detailed in my previous work, *A View from the Top*. The most extraordinary leaders—those I called "platinum leaders"—were the ones who demonstrated remarkable resilience and resourcefulness.

As helpful as that book has been, however, it overlooked an important topic: how to handle well the hinge moments life presents us, whether we planned for them or not. As I have reflected on the research and interviews in recent years, it has become clear to me that like each of us, those platinum-level leaders had numerous opportunities for transition and change in their lives. Sometimes it was something they made happen themselves. Sometimes the changes were forced on them. Sometimes it was being fired, or the death of a loved one. Other times it was a sense of restlessness that called them to some new thing. For these platinum leaders, moments of change were almost always converted into moments of opportunity that propelled them upward. I am convinced that what made the difference in their lives was how they managed times of change, how they responded to their hinge moments.

—From the introduction



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