

YOUTH LEAD NOW!



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

Pushing Beyond Resilience

A Conversation with Music Industry Pioneer &
Entrepreneur Troy Carter

Next Step Curriculum



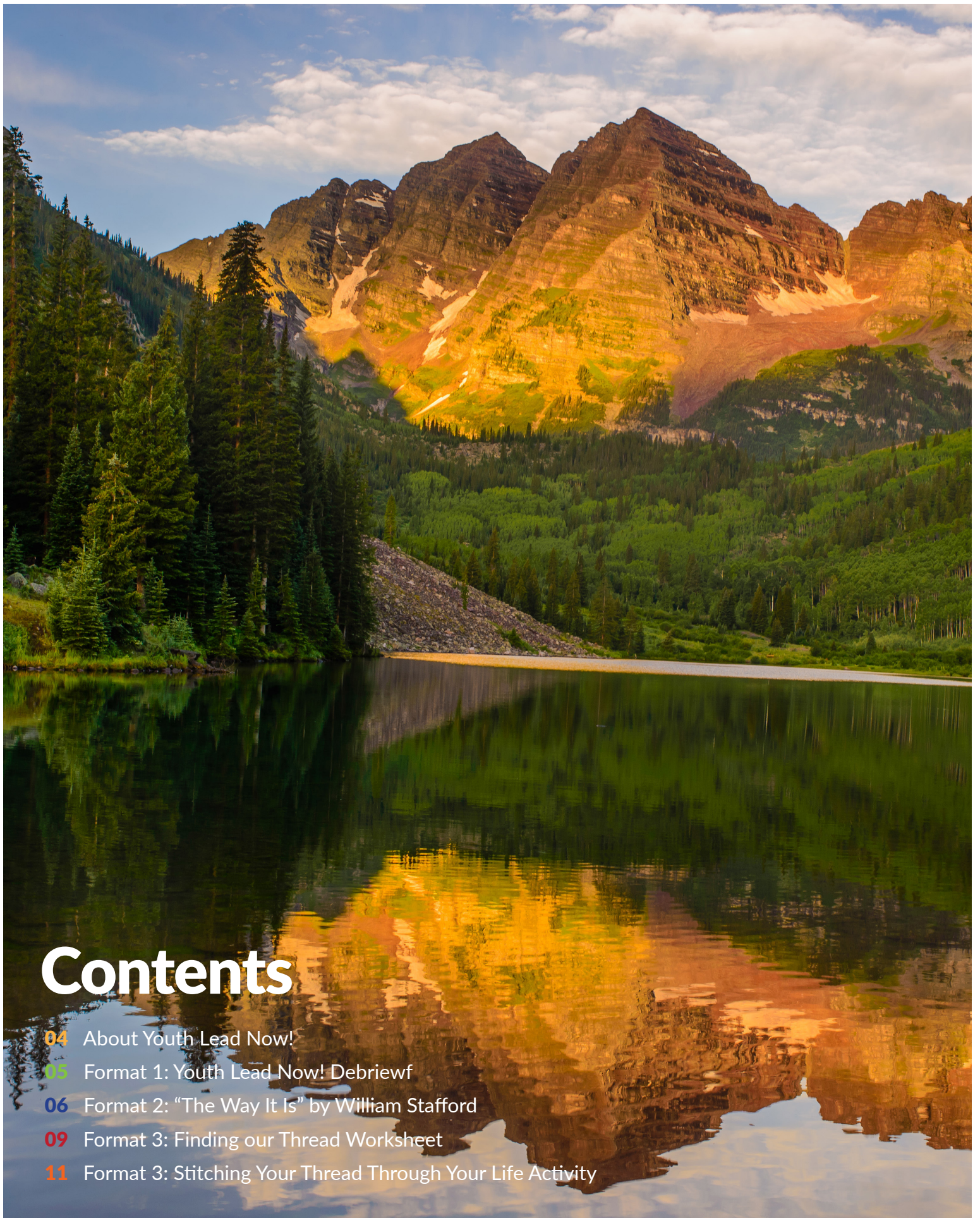
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The Aspen CHALLENGE



A Special Thanks to our Partners:





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Youth Lead Now! Next Step Curriculum is a professionally developed curriculum that can be paired with the Youth Lead Now! event. Our goal is to provide you with the resources to maximize the benefits of Youth Lead Now! in your own organizations and families.

This **Next Step Curriculum** can be utilized in a wide variety of contexts from an in-class lesson or training program to a family dialogue or personal reflection. We provide three varying formats below that can be easily adapted to fit your needs and continue the learning process started in the original webinar.

The formats work as follows:

Format 1: The “Next Step Curriculum” provides a curated list of potential debrief questions that can help a group or individual make deeper meaning of the Youth Lead Now! conversation. We encourage you to host an “after party” immediately following the main event or soon after viewing. Our team is happy to share guides for setting up and participating in experiences on the Zoom platform. Reflection questions offer a starting point for individual and/or group reflection on the themes of a given webinar. Our goal is to make extending the learning as easy as possible for you.

Format 2: The “Text-Based Dialogue” builds on the Aspen Institute’s 70-year history of engaging in deeper conversations using “texts” (e.g., literature, poetry, spoken word, art) as a starting point for conversation. This format introduces new content that can be used to drill down on the themes of the webinar to extend learning. It is a catalyst piece for continuing conversation. Although we cannot -recreate the magic of an Aspen seminar, these materials provide a framing for on-going learning that you can lead with your constituents.

Format 3: “From Thought to Action” represent experiential learning or guided reflection activities designed to move people from ideas to action as it relates to a particular webinar theme. While we never know quite where things will go with featured guests, these activities build on the theme of a particular session. These activities can be used in part or whole adapting content for your particular audience.

Format 1: Youth Lead Now! Debrief

Set the stage for the participants' group dialogue by explaining (in your own words):

Group dialogue differs from traditional debriefs in several key ways:

- The focus is on participants' lived experiences
- The goal is more dialogic with participants asking and engaging one another to understand
- There is a focus not just on what is said but on the process (or how) the dialogue unfolds as well.
- Acknowledge that for some participants, this form of dialogue may seem intimidating as it can be more personal. That is okay. Again, the Youth Lead Now! Next Step Curriculum is designed to help develop all learning muscles including those that participants may not be fond of or use often.

If you are debriefing in a group, lay out ground rules for your debrief such as;

- We create space for all voices to be heard in the room,
- We position disagreement as opportunities for learning,
- We challenge ideas not people or their inherent worth,
- Any other guidelines the group would like or needs to follow.

Remember, the role of the moderator is not to walk through the prompt questions like a script. These are just suggestions. The goal is to serve as a conductor drawing out conversation, framing ideas, and pushing for depth.

The Talk

- *What resonated in what Troy Carter shared and why?*
- *How does that connect to your own experiences?*
- *What didn't land well or what are you curious about and why? How do these reflect your own experiences?*

Your Experience

- *How have your identities shaped the ways in which you have struggled, persevered, and/or overcome barriers? What lessons might you learn from Troy that can inform your approach to this in the future?*
- *What role does innovation play in perseverance for you?*
- *How can we incorporate lessons from this experience into our pursuit of perseverance?*

Closing may feel abrupt or as if it is cutting off conversation. Remind participants this debrief is designed to open up conversations - not complete them. Encourage the participants to continue exploring these themes, questions, and lessons for as long as they need to.

Format 2: “The Way It Is” by William Stafford Text-Based Dialogue

Instructions

For participants in the Bonus Feature, this may be their first text-based dialogue. It may be helpful to quickly set the stage for this process and how it is different from a traditional dialogue.

The Aspen Method focuses on using texts as a vehicle to explore what it means to be human, our values, and society. Texts become an in-road to personal reflection, deep dialogue, and the contemplation of values.

We want participants to consider what the text stimulates for them and why.

- What feelings does a text elicit for a person?
- What are the author(s)' primary arguments, messages, or themes? To what extent does it resonate for a fellow and why?
- What can we learn from considering the text in a contemporary context?

Remind participants of ground rules.

- We create space for all voices to be heard in the room.
- We position disagreement as opportunities for learning.
- We challenge ideas not people or their inherent worth.

Aspen text based dialogues usually take 45 minutes to dig fully into a reading. Utilizing the Bonus Features, you should feel free to adjust timing based on your circumstances. We recommend you spend no less than 20 minutes on any text; anything less will not be conducive of a productive dialogue.

Open the dialogue by asking participants to reference the reading on the following page. We want participants to have the written text in front of them.

Explain that we will spend a set amount of time on the “text.” The conversation won’t be finished when we end, and that is part of the process.

Begin the process by asking a participant to read the poem aloud for the group. Due to the length of the poem, it may be interesting to have multiple participants read aloud; take notes on the different inflections, pauses, or emphasis as it may add rich insight to the dialogue.

After the poem has been read, utilize the questions on the following page and/or ask your own!

Remind participants there is no right or wrong answers in a text-based dialogue.

Potential Themes

- How we can persevere in the face of adversity.
- Centering ourselves with our “thread”.
- The life long journey of learning.

The Text

- *When referring to the thread, what does the author mean by “It goes among things that change. But it doesn’t change”.*
- *Why would the author evoke the acts of aging and suffering in this poem?*
- *What emotions or feelings does this poem surface for you?*

Your Life

- *When have you let go of your thread in the past?*
- *What has guided you through adversity in the past?*
- *What suffering are you internalizing right now?*

The Lessons

- *What is your thread?*
- *How can you stitch your thread through the fabric of your life?*
- *To what extent does your thread play into your push towards perseverance?*


Closing this dialogue can move in a variety of directions. Closing may feel abrupt or as if it is cutting off conversation. Remind participants that text-based dialogues are designed to open up conversation not complete them. Encourage participants to continue exploring these themes after the dialogue.

No two facilitations of a text-based dialogue should be the same. The mosaic of people in the room and context should necessarily shape where the dialogue goes.

Remember, the role of the moderator is not to walk through the prompt questions like a script. These are just suggestions. The goal is to serve as a conductor drawing out conversation, framing ideas, and pushing for depth.

“The Way It Is”

by William Stafford



There's a thread you follow. It goes among
5 things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
10 Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

Format 3: Finding our Thread Worksheet

In Format 3, participants will turn their ideas into actions. In the first activity, participants will complete a guided worksheet to find their “thread”. The thread is something that one holds on to, no matter what, they will never lose their way. After determining what the participants thread is, we will stitch our thread through our hustle in pursuit of perseverance.

Activity #1- Finding our Thread Worksheet (~40 minutes)

Learning Objectives:

- Deepen self-awareness about personal “thread(s)”.
- Apply critical reflection techniques to the process
- Develop a “thread” in which participants can stitch throughout their goals.

Instructions:

Provide participants with the Finding Your Thread Worksheet.

Give participants 20 - 25 minutes to complete the worksheet. Stress to them to use the entire time and really push their thinking. We also want them to bring critical perspectives into the process in whatever way is meaningful to them.

If they are struggling to finish, encourage them to go with their heart. And remind them this is not set in stone, rather a reflection of where participants are in their lives right now.

Moderators should feel free to complete the worksheet themselves.

Play soft music if it will help the participants concentrate. Avoid letting the participants disperse in a way where you lose the ability to ensure that they are taking the necessary reflective time for the exercise.

When time is up, call the large group back together to debrief the activity. Possible prompts include:

- How did the process of completing the worksheet go?
- Were there parts that you struggled with? Which parts and why?
- What did you learn about yourself and your values?

To end, frame the importance of reflecting on our “thread” as we move forward. In your own words:

Ideally, participants are constantly evaluating and reflecting upon our “thread”. Different experiences, people, salient identities, current locations, family, and much more can influence our values at any given time. It is essential we continue to reflect on our values and how they have evolved. This task is even harder when we are leaders within our communities, because not only do we need to reflect on our own values, but the values of our community. We must always remember “You don’t ever let go of the thread”.

Feel free to frame the conclusion in any other way you wish.

Finding Your Thread

1. PINPOINT YOUR VALUES

To investigate what's truly important to you, answer the questions below. Take your time. Go from your gut. And write them down on the back.

1. What motivates me to get up in the morning?
2. What am I doing when I'm at my best?
3. Why am I bothered by what bothers me?
4. Why do I read and watch what I read and watch?
5. When am I happy?

2. CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

List your core 5 values based on your answers to #1. Core values are your foundational beliefs, ways to think and act that are more important to you than anything else.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List your passions
Think small as well as big or medium, personal as well as professional, dreams as well as realities.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. FIND YOUR THREAD

Now, connect each passion with as many or few core values as apply. You're looking for the passion that best matches your values.

After connecting your values to your passions, what have you decided is your Thread?

Format 3: Stitching Your Thread Through Your Life Activity

Activity #2- Stitching Your Thread through you Life (~30 minutes)

Learning Objectives:

- Create a personal goal to help move us into perseverance
- Examine how to never let go of the thread
- Explore how to stitch our thread throughout our lives

Instructions:

Utilizing everything participants have reflected upon in this Youth Lead Now! , participants will start the final activity by creating a goal they would like to achieve in the next ~30 days.

The goal must be something that, once accomplished, will help the participant move past resilience in our current global reality (the Covid19 Pandemic) into a state of perseverance.

This goal can be as small as reading one page from a book a night to as big as running a 5k (3.2 miles) race. The scope or difficulty is up to the participant, but it should be attainable within the ~30 day time constraint.

Push the participants to go deeper when reflecting on creating their goals.

Some questions that may help spark ideas are:

- What does a state of perseverance look like for me?
- How does my “thread” influence my perseverance?
- What do I need to reach this state of perseverance?
- What first step can I take right now to start the journey towards perseverance?
- How could I hold onto my “thread” as I complete this journey?

Participants can also apply the goal to their local communities if they would like to attempt to create progress towards perseverance with others.

After participants have created their goal, they should write the goal into the final box of the blank Youth Lead Now! calender.

- Working backwards from your goal, participants should start brainstorming “**Milestones**” they will have to reach in order to complete their goal.
- A Milestone is a short term goal participants will have to complete on the way to their larger goal.

Utilizing the example of running a 5k race, working backwards:

- A Milestone could be run 3 miles without stopping.
- The participant will then put that Milestone on the corresponding day they think they will need to achieve it.
- Another Milestone may then be run two miles without stopping, then one without a break.
- For each Milestone, participants will place it on the day they think they will need to achieve it on. Participants can have as many or few Milestones as they would like.

Finally, participants will fill in the remaining days with **“Stepping Stones”**.

- Stepping Stones are the small things participants will have to complete everyday to reach Milestones and eventually their goal.
- For every stepping stone, participants should be able to answer the question **“How does this help me hold onto my thread?”**
- Once completed, participants should hang their fully formed guide to their perseverance goals in a visible place (bedroom door, refrigerator, background of phone). This will help participants feel a commitment to their plan.

To close out the activity, in your own words; remind participants that this goal may take real “hustle” to accomplish, but that hustle will pay off if we are willing to commit. While we may tire from the hustle, remembering to never let go of the thread will help us to never lose our way.

EXAMPLE						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		Take a walk & Read about 5k races	Walk for 20 minutes	Run for 5 minutes	Run for 10 minutes	Run for 15 minutes
Run for 15 minutes	Run for 10 minutes & Read about running nutrition	Take a walk & Buy new running shoes	Run for 15 minutes	Run for 20 minutes	Run for 10 minutes	Run 1 mile without stopping
Take a walk & Stretch	Run for 15 minutes	Run for 15 minutes	Run for 30 minutes	Run for 20 minutes	Run for 15 minutes	Run 2 miles without stopping
Take a walk & invite a friend to run tomorrow	Run for 20 minutes	Run for 25 minutes	Run for 30 minutes	Run for 25 minutes & plan a race day outfit	Run for 20 minutes	Take a walk & Stretch
Run 3 miles without stopping	Take a walk & Stretch	Run for 30 minutes	Run for 20 minutes	Run for 15 minutes	Run for 5 minutes & Stretch	Run a 5k!!!

“You don’t ever let go of the thread.” - *William Stafford*

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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