

# THE GOLDEN SECOND

A *Cor Domum* WORKBOOK



Kathryn Trudeau

THE GOLDEN SECOND

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Quotes referenced in the book:

Fitzgerald, Francis Scott. "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and Other Jazz Age Tales*. Penguin Books. 1922.

Henry, Todd. *Die Empty: Unleash Your Best Work Every Day*. Print.

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## DEDICATION

To my husband for showing me the way.

To my boys: may you never waste your moments



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Dream BIG  
and  
dare to fail.

-Norman Vaughan



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

This workbook is part of the Cor Domum movement. This mini workbook is intended to help you evaluate how you engage each moment and what your strengths and weaknesses are. In learning to appreciate the Golden Second, you can truly experience life.

The mission of the Cor Domum movement is to help guide families as they navigate through life and parent with joy. Peace starts at home, and understanding what the Golden Second is a precursor to what Cor Domum stands for. When you appreciate and live in each moment, you are in the perfect place to make your home more joyful.

It's not always easy, but we are here for each other, to encourage each other, support each other, and to help each family on their journey.

Pax,

Katie



## INTRODUCTION

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! It's 5 am, and your alarm clock does not relent. What is your first thought? Are you happy to be awake, to be alive, to see the dawn of another day on this earth? Or do you sigh, slam the snooze button, and wish there was some other way to live your life? Are you stuck in a rut, sleep walking through life? Do you wish you had the freedom and time to do what you *want* to do?

You are not alone. No one can create a new life overnight, but you do have the power to change *how* you experience life. And what is life except for our experiencing of it?

## CHAPTER 1: FIVE WAYS TO EMBRACE THE GOLDEN SECOND AND FOUR MISTAKES THAT BLOCK YOUR PATH TO HAPPINESS

*Actions speak louder than words.* It's a saying we've all heard, and for the most part, it's safe to say that most believe it. But words do have power. Oh, so much power. Words can lift us up, inspire us, encourage us; but they can also cut us down, degrade us, deflate us, wound us, shake us, break us.

Eight years ago, I experienced both kinds of words in one day. I was upset by something a very close friend had said to me. Her words shocked me, wounded me, and set a rage of anger upon me. In an effort to console me, my husband said something to me that not only soothed my soul, but those words would later become the starting point of this book. As I sobbed into his chest, he cupped my cheeks with his hands and looked into my eyes: "Don't waste your moments. Don't waste your time being upset on something like this. *Live* your life. Don't waste your moments."

Don't waste your moments. It's a pretty simple sentence, but it puts a new perspective on how I was actually spending each moment. It's a way of thinking that causes you to categorize each moment as either wasted or lived. It highlights the fact that we only get so many moments to use, and how you use one tiny moment sets the tone for how you use the whole lot of your moments. In one year, you get 3,153,600 seconds. It's easy to think that there's

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an endless supply of seconds, especially when you're younger. Days seems to drag on, and you think you have all the time in the world. Until one day, you realize that you don't.

Your life is only "just" seconds, a whole bunch of moments strung together. If your life is a jeweled necklace, each second is a golden piece on the strand. Each golden charm may be small, but you would certainly notice if a charm was missing.

What's a golden second? It's not a certain time of day or a fancy secondhand on a watch; a golden second is just a regular ol' second.  $1/60$  of a minute.  $1/3600$  of an hour. So, why is it golden? It's golden because it's all we get. All we get in this life *is* seconds and so they become golden, valuable, irreplaceable.

When we learn to live so that we can recognize this, and truly see each moment as golden, then life can really, truly be lived. And when life is being experienced as it should be, you will experience a joyful life. That's not to say that you won't have your ups and downs, but living purposefully will allow you to encounter your obstacles much more efficiently.

Does this seem like a daunting task to you? To be aware of each second?

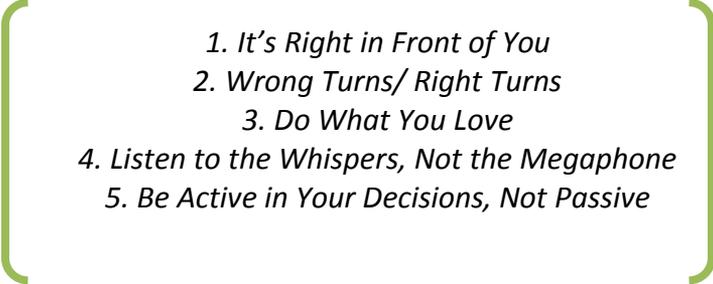
Living life to the fullest can be done, and it starts with a few minor changes to your way of thinking. There's plenty of lists out there focusing on "ways to be happy." Those lists are valuable explorations of what activities or actions could make you happy; getting out there and *doing* is definitely one way to experience life. What I'm proposing is more than just an activity. Of course, exercise will make you happy because of endorphins, but at the end of the day, that is just one activity that could make your day better.

So, why is it golden? It's golden because that's all we get. All we get in this life is seconds and so they become golden, valuable, irreplaceable.

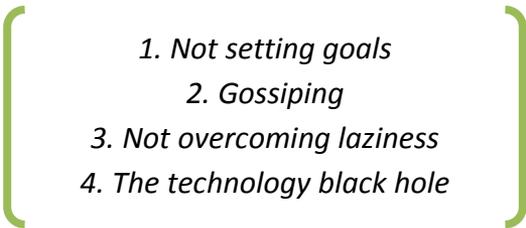
What I want you to take away from this book is that changing the way you view the world (particularly the way you embrace each golden second) is what will help you live the way life is intended. It's not an action per se; it's a whole new mindset.

I'll explore the five attitudes that will enable you to embrace the golden second and the three common mistakes that block your path to a joyful life.

Five mental shifts that enable you to embrace the golden second are simply these five secrets:

- 
- 1. It's Right in Front of You*
  - 2. Wrong Turns/ Right Turns*
  - 3. Do What You Love*
  - 4. Listen to the Whispers, Not the Megaphone*
  - 5. Be Active in Your Decisions, Not Passive*

And the three mistakes we make that prohibit you from living life to the fullest:

- 
- 1. Not setting goals*
  - 2. Gossiping*
  - 3. Not overcoming laziness*
  - 4. The technology black hole*

## CHAPTER 2: IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU

The first secret to embracing the golden second is “It’s Right in Front of You.” What exactly is right in front of you? Well, everything.

In general, most of what we need to see is right in front of our very eyes, but that is often one of the trickiest places to see something. Enjoying each second must begin by learning to see – really see- what is right in front of us. Learning to see what is in front of us is twofold. One, we are able to see what we have and learn to appreciate it. A grateful heart is the start to living in the golden second.

It is easy to lose sight of what is important in today’s society of keeping up with the Jones’. *The grass is greener on the other side.* Or so it appears to someone who is not really looking at what is front of them. Sure, the grass may look greener but they fail to see the “behind the scenes.” At what expense does that grass grow greener? You cannot judge your life (or even the literal grass in your yard) against a neighbor’s. You do not know the hidden costs of their choices; when you try to imitate someone else or lust after what they have, you unwillingly acquire the hidden costs of their choices, and that is when things begin to unravel. You cannot live fully when you are saddled with costs –literal and figurative costs- you did not choose and do not want.

Make your decisions for you, not because of the Jones. What is

right in front you? Be grateful for whatever that is. It doesn't matter if your neighbor has 2x, 3x, or even 100x more than you. Be thankful for what you have. Right now. Not what you might have in a year or two. Be present in this moment and be thankful for what you have.

Right now. Stop reading, and say to yourself, "I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ in my life."

The other side of "It's Right in Front of You" is the wisdom to see not only the positive things in which you should appreciate, but the negative things that you have the power to change. In every life, there will be obstacles and unpleasant situations. The answer is staring you in the face... you just have to open your eyes.

For example, a young single mother is working three jobs to support her young son. She can only afford a studio apartment in an unsafe neighborhood. She wants more than this life for her son, but with only one income and no support, what can she really do? The answer is staring her in her face. Work smarter, not harder. She studies to take a test, and applies for a state job. She works hard, and takes every opportunity to study more and move up the ranks. She now makes \$90,000 and is freed from the life she thought she was chained to. That story is not fiction. Use the tools and talents that are right in front of you. What can you do with what you have? Chances are, you are a lot more powerful than you think.

The lesson: Open your eyes and see what is front of you. Be thankful for whatever is there. What you need is within your grasp.

The challenge: Write a list of 10 things you are grateful for.

## CHAPTER 3: WHEN WRONG TURNS ARE RIGHT TURNS

The second attitude to embrace life is based on a very cliché saying: Everything happens for a reason. Why does this mindset help you live life to the fullest? We may not know the reason for why things happen but eventually we see how the "wrong" thing led to the "right" thing. When we accept that things happen for a reason, we help to cut out one of life's worst mood killers: the "what ifs". Without the regrets and the "what ifs" we are freed to appreciate the moment.

Sometimes we don't understand why we didn't get into the school we wanted. Or why our perfect boyfriend left us. The key is to know that there will be something good, even if we cannot see it right away.

My life is full of these "wrong turn being the right turns" stories. When I was 18, I made a "wrong turn" that I now see was exactly where I was supposed to be. As my acceptance letters to colleges piled up, I knew the decision wasn't going to be easy – not because choosing was hard. It was because of a boy. I wanted to go where he went, even though everyone I knew (and then some) told me to choose which college I wanted to attend.

*Don't chase a boy.*

I didn't listen. I chose a college that I didn't really want to attend because my boyfriend wanted to go there. The most painful

part of this story was that he broke up with me 6 weeks before we were supposed to start our fall semester. Amidst the heartbreak of breaking up, I was now stuck at a school I didn't want to attend. I thought I had made a wrong turn. I tried to transfer but fortuitous events prevented that. I was sad, lonely, and full of regrets.

Sophomore year, I decided to change my outlook on life, change every circumstance that I did not want, and really live my life. I was making every decision for me, with a new mentality that I will not live with regrets. I was a new person and I was in love with life.

I decided to move to Austria for a study abroad program in the spring. As the fates would have it, I met my husband the first day of that program. Wrong turn? I think not.

Every decision I made in life led me straight into the arms (literally) of the man I love. We met with a hug and have continued on this adventure of a life.

So, think you made a wrong turn? Don't derail your life. Turn the negative into a positive. Learn to embrace it. By doing so, you're living in the here and now. Living in a "could have been" world is a dangerous slope to living only in the past. Had I dwelled only on the pain of being alone and faraway in college, I would have not been able to see the moment in front of me and take advantage of it. I would have missed what wonderful adventure awaited for me.

I'm not saying heartbreak doesn't hurt – it most certainly does. This is the takeaway: when you find yourself in a wrong turn, look for the good.

The lesson: Find something to appreciate, however small it is, and this will ground you. Summon every bit of strength you have to find the good in a bad situation.

The challenge: Reflect on this thought from Buddah: "Every experience, no matter how bad it seems, holds within it a blessing of some kind. The goal is to find it."

## CHAPTER 4: DO WHAT YOU LOVE

*When I grow up, I want to be a doctor. A rockstar. The president.*

Five-year-olds often have lofty aspirations when their kindergarten teachers ask them what they want to be when they grow up. They are filled with hope and confidence that they can do whatever it is that they want. What happens to us? When do you lose sight of our goals and instead learn to “settle”?

It’s true that not everyone gets to play football for the NFL or be the star in a rock band for a living, but that doesn’t mean you can’t find something you love waking up in the morning for. Keep looking for it, and don’t give up until you find it. Life is too short to fear Monday mornings.

It’s not too late to be what you want. Follow step one: be aware of what is right in front of you. How can you use what is front of you to achieve your dreams and live the life you want? Then, accept secret #2: you might encounter a few “wrong turns” on your path. That’s okay, and sometimes those things we thought were stumbling blocks were the things that led us to what we really love. Real life example: When a young father got laid off from his job, he used his talents to start his own business. He now supports his family with this business. He used what is front of him, realized the good that came out of a bad situation, and does what he loves.

I know what you might say. “I’m too old to start something new.” Or “What will my family say if I completely change the

direction of my life.” Or “I can’t afford to change careers or do what I really love. My hobby doesn’t pay the bills.” Or even worse, “I’m just used to this routine now. I don’t like change.” Change is scary, no doubt about that. But without change, we cannot grow.

It’s not too late to be what you want, who want, and do what you love. What do you love? What’s stopping you from doing it? What are your dreams? Have you always wanted to try painting? Go take a class. Want to try your hand at cooking? Take some cooking classes downtown and if you like it, enroll in culinary school. Want to make a bucket list of reading book? Do it. Whether it’s a hobby or a goal or a job aspiration, work for it. Nothing is going to land on your doorstep, but that doesn’t mean that you cannot have something you enjoy. Oprah Winfrey got it right: “Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do.” I understand every bit of not being in the financial place to do X, Y, or Z immediately. But don’t give up on the dream (See Mistake #1). Use what is front of you (Secret #1) to build the plan to get to where you want to be. See how this is all coming together now?

Change is  
scary, no  
doubt  
about that.  
But  
without  
change, we  
cannot  
grow.

Do what you love. You’ll be happier, I promise.

The challenge: Reflect on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s line from *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*: “For what it’s worth: it’s never too late or, in my case, too early to be whoever you want to be. There’s no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same, there are no rules to this thing. We can make the best or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it. And I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you never felt before. I hope you meet people with a different point of view. I hope you live a life you’re proud of. If you find that you’re not, I hope you have the courage to start all over again.”

## CHAPTER 5: LISTENING TO THE WHISPERS, NOT THE MEGAPHONE

Three years ago, my family and I were on a retreat - not as participants but as leaders. During one small group exercise, we began to have a conversation about consciences. Although we talked about many things, the main idea kept coming back to one point: our consciences are not megaphones, but rather they are tiny little whispers coming from within. Of course, those little whispers are easy to ignore at first, but slowly and steadily, like *The Tell Tale Heart*, they become impossible to ignore.

That being said, I think I was there on that retreat for a reason. Like I said, I was there as a leader, not a participant, but I ended up getting answers to a question that had been nagging me for quite some time.

And I had the answer all along... I only had to listen in the silence. This is why so many people seek nature in times of stress or turmoil. Our daily lives can be so noisy and distracting that we fail to hear our own thoughts. How can we learn anything or make good decisions when we can't even think? Nature and silence allow our own thoughts to be heard. When we can hear those, we can hear our soul, our heart.

What answers are you looking for? Are you waiting for the megaphone or neon sign to illuminate your path? Maybe, like mine, your answer has been there all along... in the silence and calmness

of your heart.

Be aware of what you really want. When you don't know what you want, how are you living? If you waste years not even trying to figure it out, then what? You regret not acting sooner. Check in with yourself. Really know who you are and what you stand for. If you don't know what you stand for, you'll stand for nothing. The megaphones and noise of life do not usually give us the answers we seek in our hearts; wait for the whispers of your consciences. Listen to them.

The challenge: Use meditation or prayer to center yourself. When you are centered and calm, you can hear your own thoughts. Being in tune with yourself helps you to appreciate each moment. Find some time and escape outdoors. Perhaps take a picnic blanket on a hike or to a park, lay down and just be. Be at peace, be thoughtful. Be.

## CHAPTER 6: BEING AN ACTIVE – NOT PASSIVE- PARTICIPANT IN LIFE

When I was about 10 years old, my aunt and uncle took my sister and I out for the day. As we cruised through the countryside, my uncle asked my sister and I where we would like to eat for lunch. I didn't want to impose a restaurant on them they didn't like so I opted to say, "I don't care." I thought I was being polite. My uncle quickly retorted, "What do you mean you don't care? Pick something. What do you want?"

"I really don't care."

"You need to care. Have an opinion. Have a backbone." I did not understand at the time why he cared so much about my preference or lackthereof for where we ate lunch that day. (Which was Denny's in case you are wondering.) I thought I was being polite by letting him pick, but he had a more important agenda. He was teaching me a lesson. He was teaching me to be an active participant in my own life. I have never forgotten that conversation, and it pops into my head more often than not. *Have an opinion.*

Do not let decisions be made for you. Why is this so important? When you make the decisions about your life, you take the power. When you allow someone or something else to make your decisions, you are living passively. Do not let fear or complacency make your decisions for you. Actively and

purposefully choose what you do. You will find that you feel that your life is more stable and enjoyable once you take the reins.

The challenge: Today, think about your life. Are you actively or passively living? Is life being done to you or are you *doing* life? What is one small step you can take to take back the reins of your life?

## CHAPTER 7: THE THREE MISTAKES WE MAKE THAT PREVENT US FROM LIVING JOYFULLY

We are human and as the saying goes “To err is human.” Basically, you cannot escape making mistakes. However, part of growing in wisdom is learning from mistakes, whether our mistakes or the mistakes of others. I’ve made more mistakes than I care to recount, but the good thing from all those mistakes (Secret #3!! Look, I’m learning from the wrong turns!) is that now I am equipped with the knowledge to try to avoid those mistakes. The top three mistakes that block us from living purposefully are: not setting goals, gossiping, not overcoming laziness, and falling into the technology black hole.

When I sat down to write this book, I did not intend on writing a section on mistakes. Who wants to dwell on the mistakes? Well, nobody. But sometimes you have to. Sometimes you just want to shake people and scream, “This is gonna help you! You need to know this! This is a mistake you could’ve avoid if you just had this one piece of information!” And that’s the key: this little piece of information will help you. Learn from my mistakes. You are reading right now what people NEED to know.

### **Mistake #1: Not Setting Goals**

One of my favorite quotes is by Earl Nightingale: “Never give

up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.” What a poignant reminder that calls us to action. Some of the best things in life are worth waiting for, and to cut a dream short because it will take a while is to deprive yourself of some of life’s greatest gifts. My two greatest dreams took 280 days until I could hold them, and they were most certainly worth the wait.

Why is goal setting so important? Goal setting uses time to your advantage. You see, time is passing whether you acknowledge it or not, whether you use it wisely or squander it. It is passing. Tick tock. Tick tock. Setting goals help you master the clock and have it work for you. Setting goals help you get step by step closer to doing what you love (secret #3).

When people look back at the regrets they have concerning their life, most of the regrets are “not” – not applying for medical school, not telling someone you love them, not working harder for the promotion, not taking an opportunity when s/he had the chance. Setting goals is one way to help reduce these types of regrets. Life cannot just slip by passively if you take charge and set the goals you want. No one else is going to fill out your calendar for you. You do it. Take control and plan the steps you need in order to achieve your goals.

The challenge: Reflect on this quote from Todd Henry’s book *Die Empty*: “If you want to grow your mind, you have to plant seeds. The seeds of tomorrow’s brilliance are planted in the soil of today’s activity.” The future is not some distant thing that may or may catch up to you. It is now. All you have is the present.

### **Mistake #2: Gossiping**

Are you surprised to see gossiping as a mistake that blocks you from living in the moment?

I have never seen proverbial bridges burn faster than when lit by the fuel of gossip. Gossiping is one of those temptations that is so easy to fall into. You feel so good about yourself in the middle of a juicy gossip fest. You feel great... for a moment. Then, things start to unravel – maybe not right away, but they will eventually. You see, gossiping is one activity that quickly lands itself in the “wasted” moments

category. It was a moment where nothing was done to help inspire, build up, or help another person. Instead, we cut them down. Even if they never find out about it, you have wasted a moment in which you could have grown.

We need people. We cannot be at peace and living in each moment when we are burning bridges all around us. Live so that you inspire and help others, not to tear them down.

### **Mistake #3: Not overcoming laziness**

Do you have big goals and dreams? Do you stop short of taking steps to make changes because you'd rather watch TV? Do you quit after a few tries? A little procrastination here and there is natural, but if you look back year after year and don't see any changes, you probably need to work on overcoming your laziness. Falling victim to perpetual laziness forces you into a passive lifestyle, one in which you cannot do what you love. Everything in this book is tied together. If you want to do what you love and live fully present in each moment, start by setting a goal and telling yourself that you will do it. Be active. The reward will be worth it.

### **Mistake #4: Falling into the technology black hole**

Ahh, technology. Life-saving. Connecting. Making life better. Technology, like all forms of power, is just a tool that can be used for good or bad purposes. While technology is nothing short of a miracle in and of itself, do not let technology become a time suck.

How often has a quick Google search for a chicken stirfry recipe turned into an evening of watching music videos on Youtube? Guilty. How many times have you gone to a restaurant and witnessed entire tables of people with their heads stuck in a phone. Be present.

Be conscious of how you use technology. Make it work for you. Don't let it be a thief of your moments.

## CONCLUSION

*"Mama, please play with me. Please stop typing. Please play sand with me."*

Those sweet little words from a three year old revolutionized the way I view time. What am I doing with each second? I'm certainly not living in each moment the way a child does. He lives in each moment with reckless abandon; after all, the present moment is all he experiences. Children live in the present, the here and now.

His words made me stop. I froze. I thought about time and the way I use it. I want to be more like him.

Time.

It's one of the very few things that money cannot buy. You can't hurry it up, slow it up, get rid of it, or get more of it.

But you can waste it, squander it, cherish it, savor it, soak it in. You care in control of how you use it.

You cannot ignore time; our lives are set by it. We awake each day by a clock; a clock dictates our work day, our eating schedules; we make plans with a clock at the center. "I'll meet you at 6 at the pub." "Your doctor appointment is scheduled for 10:30 am." The clock rules our lives.

But only if you let it.

Why not... try something different. What if YOU controlled the clock? What if you told the clock how it would work for you, not the other way around? How, you say?

By never wasting one second. Time cannot be your enemy

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when it is your friend. And it all starts with a simple mind set change. Rather, than see time as a cruel master driving our day, what if you looked at time as a gift. A beautiful wonderful gift from God. And beautiful wonderful gifts are not enemies; we cherish those gifts and make sure no harm comes to them. The same goes for time.

It is a gift.

# Part II

## Reflection

### IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU

The lesson: Open your eyes and see what is front of you. Be thankful for whatever is there. What you need is within your grasp.  
The challenge: Write a list of 10 people or things in your life that you appreciate

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

More specifically, is there a problem that's been bothering you lately? Maybe you are a little short on cash for this month's expenses, or maybe you feel distant from a good friend. Brainstorm

























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### WHAT'S NEXT?

Congratulations! You finished the mini workbook!

How do you feel? Do you feel as if you are on target? Or do you feel like you have more questions than answers? Either way is fine. The good thing is that you were thinking about your life and how to make it even better, how to live more presently, and how to embrace each Golden Second.

Continue to live in the Golden Second. Join the community of Cor Domum at [www.katietrudeau.com](http://www.katietrudeau.com).

Hope to see you there!

Katie

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathryn Trudeau is a self-proclaimed book nerd who has a passion for natural parenting, writing, and illustrating children's books. As a homeschooling mother of two, Kathryn understands the educational and entertaining value of books and hopes to spread that love to others around the world.

Her mission is to provide a resource to empower you to live a joy filled life! She aims to do that through sharing stories and wisdom. We're big on family and empowering each other to be the best version of ourselves. We're building a community based on those principles.

Among many things, she is a proud supporter and promoter of reading, natural living practices, breastfeeding, babywearing, and attachment parenting.

She still believes her mission is to change the world, one person at a time.

## ABOUT COR DOMUM



"Cor Domum" means heart of the home, and we believe that the family is the heart of every home. Inspired by organic living practices and the principles of Attachment Parenting, it is our mission to guide families through life so that they can parent with joy.