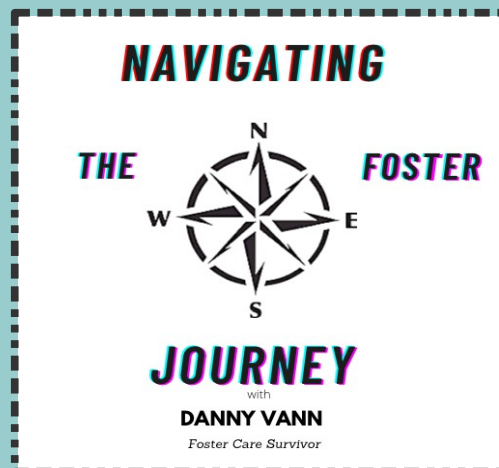


Foster Youth Survivor Basics: *Strive to Thrive*



Danny Vann, FCs



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A thousand mile journey begins with the first step.....

“The wounds cut deep and the scars may last a lifetime, but we can help each other to move on and make the best of what we have around us right now. We can cry for each other – We can pray for each other – Most of all we can overcome and be an example to one another. With God's help we can get BETTER and NOT just turn BITTER...” (Danny Vann)

In this pamphlet I want to help YOU learn how to be an over-comer! You are not alone. Each year there are nearly 20,000 youth that age out of foster care. Too many of us are left on our own and have to “figure out” what to do with the rest of our lives. Ready or not – OUR JOURNEY BEGINS.....We ARE ON OUR OWN!

As a foster care survivor myself, I know the pain and struggles – the doubts and fears you are probably going through. I prayed that somebody would be there to help me along – and at times, I was able to get some help. But it was still lonely and hard to figure out. I made mistakes, but I learned from them and I kept going. I just had to survive. I wasn't going to go back or become a homeless statistic. If you feel that way, I am here to help.

You already know that you are a SURVIVOR – you made it this far in spite of all the chaos you have been through. Now I want to help you take the NEXT STEP along your journey. And if you know of anyone else that needs this information – feel free to pass it on!

Let's start with the basics – on the compass there is only one TRUE North! If you go even slightly to the left or right of true North – you will miss it. Life is a lot like that too. If we stay on the straight path – and don't stray from the law and follow the rules – we will be able to hit our mark and achieve our goals. So the first basic step I highly suggest is to:

SEEK the TRUTH...I used the Bible as my source of truth and was able to avoid & resist many fake people and bad situations because of the words of wisdom it contains. The Bible (God's Word) is even defined as the Truth in John 17:17. . .you should already know this next one:

NEVER GIVE UP...if it gets too tough, take a TIME OUT.....then get a fresh start! This is the formula for success.

Here's one for the road....take the high road (it means to do what's right) and travel with good people.

You REALLY do become like the people you hang out with....“They who walk with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”
*That's a saying from the wisest man that ever lived – King Solomon – **Proverbs 13:20.***

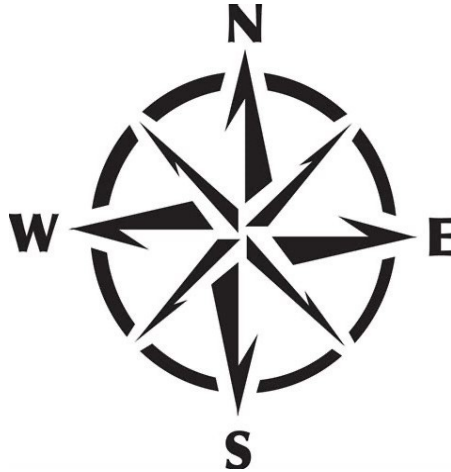
There is SO much more in my book, **“My Journey in the Shadow of “The King”** which is where most of the information comes from.

- Danny Vann
Foster Care Survivor



Chapter One

Start From Where You Are



Moving on? It can be confusing to be standing at the door of the foster home, bags in hand and saying goodbye to people that have cared for you when your parents weren't able to. NOW what do you do?

Don't panic....life is a journey and this is just the next step. Whether you are reading this after you left Foster Care or as a high school student with only a few months to go – the most important thing you can do is to **take charge of YOU and YOUR LIFE NOW!** In the end, you will become a legal adult, then your life and all it's decisions will be YOURS!

So where do you go from here? Well, THIS TIME, that's up to YOU. Where do you WANT to go? How do you plan to get there? What about all the things THEY did to you? Why didn't your parents help more? It's not fair! If you still don't know what to do, consider these questions:

Do you have a dream? Do you have a goal for your life? What do you LOVE to do? What do you WANT to be “when you grow up?”

If you haven't figured that out yet, that's a pretty good place to start. I didn't have much of a plan, but I had a dream and I had faith that God would help me through (and HE did!)

What about you? It's time to take that first step to making the rest of your life solid and secure.

Here is an article I wrote about choosing a career. There are many helpful ideas and some links to people who want to help you out.

Goals: Follow Your Passion into your Career

We'll cover several places where you can go to get help sorting all that out in the **Plan Your Trip** chapter of this brochure. But first, let's get rid of some OLD BAGGAGE so you don't carry all that old junk around with you on your journey.

For more ideas and resources to help you on your journey, visit: DannyVann.com

Chapter Two

Can't Change the Choices Others Made ==> *Move Forward*



No matter what has happened to you up until this point in your life, IT IS ALREADY DONE! Nothing can change what decisions have already been made by others.

You didn't choose your parents. You didn't choose to leave your bio family. You didn't choose the various places you had to move to all these years.

BUT – NOW it is YOUR TURN to choose what happens in your life. You can choose to be angry and fight everybody around you because of all the pain and suffering others have put you through. OR – you can choose to step up and **MOVE FORWARD** and start taking steps to make your life better than ever!

It won't be easy. You might not have any idea how to do it.....but, once you age out of Foster Care – YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN!

I was there and chose to leave at 17 years old and become an emancipated minor. I found a family willing to take me in while I finished high school. (YES I finished high school because I knew it was going to help my future) It was scary, but it was better than staying in the nightmare I was living through at the time.



Start looking forward to your future. Where would you like to live? What do you want your life to look like? What do you want to do when you get there?

Get yourself ready to take the next step on your journey.

Are You a Foster Parent or Foster Care Organization?

If you are a foster parent or part of a foster care organization, you can help your aging out youth with this:
Foster Parent Youth Transition TOOL KIT

First Star Academies partners with students in foster care ***while still in high school***. There is a great organization ready to help provide professional, certified tutors called ***CogniTutor.com***. They will work with you to customize a solution and many states provide them free or they will create a pricing plan to fit any challenge you are facing. According to CogniTutor, their mission is: *“to help students learn in a smarter way. This means students become educationally independent and don’t need a tutor’s help in the future! Instead of merely providing material to students, we help them learn to think critically, comprehend what they are reading, learn memory strategies, strengthen their test taking skills, and improve their weaknesses.”*

Chapter Three

Plan Your Trip



In order to have the BEST JOURNEY possible, before you leave on a trip or a vacation, you have to decide WHERE YOU WANT TO GO. In this case, you need to examine yourself, your goals and your options. Even if you don't know ALL the answers, you can still start your journey if you have some ideas on where you want to go.

It is NEVER TOO LATE (or Too Early) to start. Do some research. Get some help from others. There are professionals who offer assistance to foster youth and former foster youth.

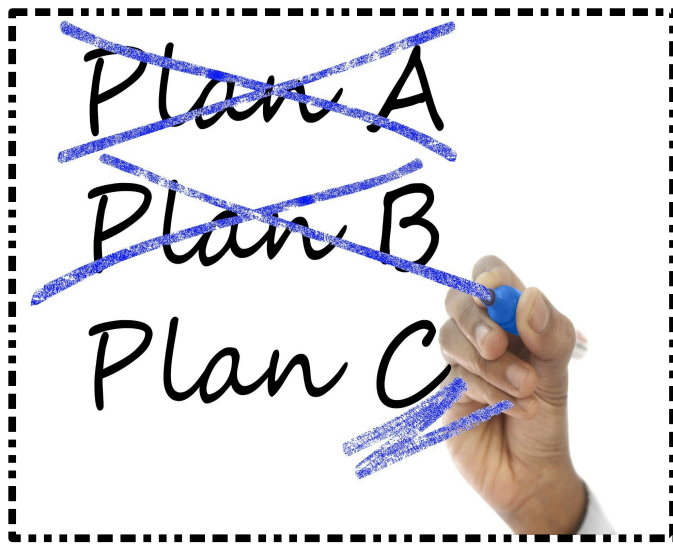
You can search the internet for more specific examples to fit your situation. Here are some key sites:

[iFoster- GET HELP](#) - They have a LOT of resources listed

FREE Counseling - Don't be shy – counseling HELPS!

[Career Planning Beginners](#) - Easy 5-min test

[Advanced Career Planning](#) - 4-separate detailed test options



Once you have a general idea of where you want to go – **WRITE IT DOWN!** This is your Vision – people fail without a vision of the final goal. Keep this with you and look at it often.

See yourself in that job or career. Set up some detailed goals for your self. How long will it take you to get the basic training? Are there people in your network available to help you get there? Are there groups online you can connect with about that career? LinkedIn or Facebook? Make it your whole focus to get there no matter what. **Don't stop trying. You can do it!**

GET SOME HELP. Find people in the field and seek their advice. Look for beginner jobs or volunteer to help. If you are still in school, try to get a coop job or internship position in the area you are interested in.

Chapter Four



Get Counsel
Get Wisdom
Get Help
Get a Co-pilot



It's always better to go on a trip with others. Someone to help you follow the GPS or help with the driving, or help carry the luggage. Well life is like that too. Maybe you have felt ALONE all this time, but now it's time to change the things that have held you down. **Get a co-pilot** for your journey. When I was in High School, my counselor taught me how to build my own “advisory team.” It should be made up of 2-3 trusted and successful adults who know your abilities. Take your ideas and problems to them, get their thoughts for you – then YOU decide if and how to apply them.

If you're still in school and you are struggling with some subjects, get some help NOW. There are people out there who WANT TO HELP YOU! (Like CogniTutor – STAR Academies – National Foster Youth Institute – see References Page)

Don't forget to reach out to God! He is the Master Planner of all things and all time. If you have been angry with Him, don't worry, He understands your frustrations and doubts. But, I can tell you from personal experience that HE REALLY CARES ABOUT YOU. He will help you if you reach out to Him.

Chapter Five

Take Action

It's one thing to talk about your life and to dream about the future.....but in order to make dreams come true, YOU MUST **TAKE ACTION!** You have to reach out and start doing things for yourself – RIGHT NOW. Nobody can do it for you. If you think THEY OWE YOU something because you were abused, neglected or abandoned – you will have a big surprise when you become a full-fledged adult.

People mostly care about themselves. You might get some help along the way, but if you don't try to HELP YOURSELF and show that you are trying to get better, it will NOT end well for you.



Decide to **take action now**. It may be scary. It may be hard – but hey, let's face it, life has NOT been easy up to this point either. Has it?

If you **will age out of foster care WITHIN TWO YEARS**- you need to start planning NOW – check out this link to a group called PAL – **Preparation for Adult Living**. Also go to FosterClub and study the **2-year Aging Out Checklist**.

If you **have already aged out** – don't panic, you can get HELP by calling 211 or visiting **211-Essential Needs Help Line**.

Next we'll cover some action steps you can take to start your journey to a BETTER FUTURE.

Experience has shown that one of the BEST STEPS is to WRITE IT DOWN....



Write down your dream. Write down the steps you plan to take. Write down the things you need to do now. If you don't know what to do next, write down the questions you still have and share them with your advisory group – or a mentor. Here's a site to help *Find a Mentor*.

The more details you can fill in the better the plan. Don't worry if you don't have ALL the answers. The MAIN focus should be on the final GOAL. Then start to figure out what you can do NOW to start walking toward your goal.

Make notes – voice memos are okay – but writing things down is FAR BETTER because then you can SEE IT! Seeing it in writing sends a message to your brain. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Visit my website at *www.DannyVann.com* for updated resources. Join my newsletter. Send ME questions you can't find answers for and I will do my best to help guide you along the way.

Don't get discouraged! If you need some real-life examples of problems and solutions, get a copy of my book – *My Journey in the Shadow of "The King"*.

To help get you started on YOUR Journey I've compiled a list of resources on the next page.

Remember, God loves you – and so do I.

Chapter Six

*Resources to Help You Find a Way **

Encouragement:

16 Wildly successful people that overcame major obstacles in life
FREE suitcase for your Journey
Encouraging WORDS from Foster Focus Magazine
Feeling ALL Alone? My original song: I Hear an Angel Whispering

Planning Ahead: (last 5 include Healthcare info)

- My article on [Following Your Passion Into Your Career](#)
- Mentoring - [Life Coach-Mentoring](#)
- Organize - [7-Habits-of-Highly-Effective-Teens-Lesson-Plans](#)
- Aging Out Checklist – [2-year Aging Out Checklist](#)
- PAL – [Preparation for Adult Living](#)
- Counseling - [ahomewithin.org](#)
- CASA – [Court Appointed Special Advocate](#)
- [Independent-Transitional-living-Skills](#) - YouthNet
- US Gov - [Foster Parent](#) - Youth Transition TOOL KIT

Housing:

- [National Foster Youth Initiative](#)

[Housing Assistance for Youth Who Have Aged Out of Foster Care](#)

Car Buying:

- [Cars for Kids](#)

Education:

- [From Foster Care to College Scholarship](#)
- [First Star -Long Term College Readiness Program](#)
- [iFoster - Foster Care College Grants](#)
- US Gov - [Educational Assistance - Information Gateway](#)
- [FosterCare-2-Success Scholarships and Grants](#)

Finances:

- [Financial Aid for Foster Care and Adopted Children](#)
- [Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace Jr.](#)
- [21 Awesome Budgeting Printable Forms](#) - Dave Ramsey
- [Teaching Kids About Money](#) - Mint.com

Phone Program:

- [iFoster-Phone-Program-Wait-List-Flyer-1.pdf](#)

Legal Fees:

- [American Bar Association title-iv-e-funds](#)

MORE Resources to Help You *

FREE Stuff:

- Free Stuff for Foster Parents & Foster Parent Discounts
- Foster to Adopt - Freebies and Discounts
- Foster Parent Printables Pack - from The Holy Mess

Healthcare:

- See Planning section – or use 211 Essential Needs Help Line

National Websites that offer assistance to foster youth:

- National Foster Youth Action Network
 - National Foster Youth Institute
 - iFoster Life Changing Resources
 - Christian Alliance for Orphans –by State
 - 211-Essential Needs Help Line
-

Conclusion

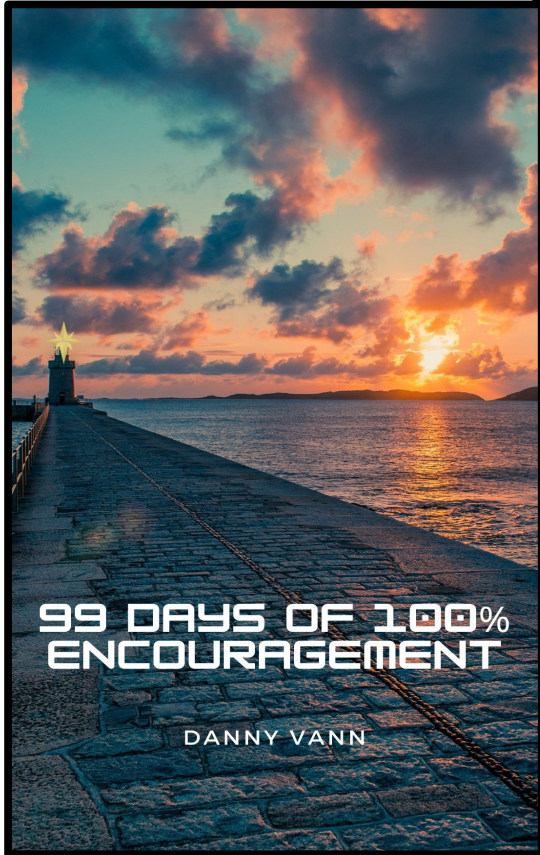
I hope this ebook has been a help to you. **YOU** are the **only person** that can make you into a **thriving survivor**. Thank you for letting me be part of your foster journey.

If you did like it, here's what I want you to do for me:

1. Send me an email at DVannigel@dannyvann.com and let me know your thoughts about this ebook. Email me if you want to be added to my mailing list.
2. Say hello to me on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or [LinkedIn](#) at DannyVann FosterCareSurvivor. Let me know where you are in your journey and what steps you are taking now.
3. Share this ebook with your friends and with those you think might benefit from it.
4. Check out my website at DannyVann.com.

**** Note: Links may change over time.
Use link keywords to search for additional links.***

For Daily Encouragement or to get *more insights* from my personal journey, click a book and get your own copy of **99 Days of 100% Encouragement** or **My Journey in the Shadow of "The King"** both on Amazon or go to DannyVann.com.



Remember God's 9-1-1 – Psalm 91:11
Listen to my new song - *I Hear an Angel Whispering*