



TIMELESS EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit

FREE LEARNING RESOURCE

PATHFINDER MINI COURSE

A complete introductory learning experience for identity, decision making, capability, and personal direction

timelessempowerment.org



WELCOME TO THE FREE MINI COURSE

Learning objective: Explain the purpose, limits, and expected result of this free Pathfinder experience.

The Pathfinder Mini Course is a complete introductory experience. It helps participants develop a fuller view of identity, recognize transferable capability, pause before important decisions, communicate clear requests, assess practical readiness, and build a thirty day pathway plan.

This is not the paid full course under another title. The free mini course contains six focused lessons and one capstone plan. The expanded Pathfinder Program provides additional tools, guided practice, facilitator support options, a participant journal, a progress passport, deeper education and career work, financial capability activities, and longer implementation support.

Participants choose what to write and share. Personal disclosure is never required. Current or imagined examples may be used throughout the course.

KEY IDEAS

- Complete the six lessons in order when possible.
- Use the worked examples before starting each activity.
- Check understanding before moving forward.
- Keep the final capability snapshot and pathway plan.
- Seek qualified guidance before major education, career, financial, health, or legal decisions.

Remember: The mini course should produce a usable next step, not pressure for a permanent answer.



THE FOUR STAGE LEARNING PATH

Learning objective: Describe how the six lessons connect across the four Pathfinder stages.

Stage 1, Discover Who You Are, begins with identity and evidence. Participants examine values, strengths, interests, roles, responsibilities, and transferable capability.

Stage 2, Strengthen How You Move Forward, develops the pause and clear communication. Participants practice gathering information, identifying options, making requests, and protecting future choices.

Stage 3, Build Real World Capability, reviews education, work, money, routines, support, and access.

Stage 4, Create Your Personal Pathway, uses that information to compare routes and create a thirty day plan.

KEY IDEAS

- Identity provides direction.
- Evidence builds an accurate capability picture.
- The pause improves decision quality.
- Clear requests connect participants with information and support.
- Capability review identifies assets, gaps, and barriers.
- Pathway planning converts learning into dated action.

Remember: Each stage supplies information needed by the next stage.



GUIDED PRACTICE

STARTING POINT AND COURSE GOAL

Answer briefly. These responses create a baseline for the completion review.

What I hope to understand more clearly
A direction or question I want to explore
Strengths I already recognize
Practical areas that need attention
People or resources that may support me
What a useful result from this mini course would look like



STAGE 1: DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE

LESSON 1: IDENTITY BEYOND LABELS

Learning objective: Describe identity through values, strengths, interests, roles, experiences, and chosen direction rather than through a single label.

Identity answers more than the question, What has happened to me? It also includes what you value, what you are learning, how you contribute, which communities matter to you, and what direction you want to choose. Roles and labels can provide useful information, but they should not erase the rest of the person.

A value is a principle you want your choices to reflect, such as honesty, responsibility, creativity, faith, family, service, learning, courage, or stability. A strength is a quality or skill you can use. An interest is something that draws your attention and may point toward future learning or work.

Identity is both received and developed. Culture, family, community, and experience shape perspective. Choice and practice also matter. You can respect where you come from while intentionally developing who you are becoming.

KEY IDEAS

- Labels describe only part of a person.
- Values guide choices.
- Strengths can be developed through practice.
- Interests provide information worth exploring.
- Identity can grow without denying history or community.

Remember: Labels describe only part of a person.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 1: IDENTITY BEYOND LABELS

SCENARIO

Chris describes himself only as someone who has made mistakes. During a group project, however, Chris notices conflict early, organizes tasks fairly, and helps two members communicate.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Which label is limiting Chris's view?
- 2 What strengths are visible in the project?
- 3 Which values may be present?
- 4 How could Chris describe himself more accurately?

MODEL RESPONSE

Chris can acknowledge past mistakes without making them the complete identity. Evidence from the project shows awareness, organization, fairness, and communication. A fuller statement is: I have made choices I want to change, and I am also someone who can organize, repair conflict, and contribute to a team.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 1: IDENTITY BEYOND LABELS

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

Roles I currently hold
Values I want my actions to reflect
Strengths supported by specific evidence
Interests I want to explore
Communities and traditions that matter to me
One sentence that describes who I am becoming



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 1: IDENTITY BEYOND LABELS

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why is a label an incomplete identity?
- 2 What is the difference between a value and a strength?
- 3 How can evidence make a self description more accurate?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A strong answer describes identity as multidimensional, distinguishes guiding principles from abilities, and uses specific evidence rather than a global judgment.



LESSON 2: READ YOUR EVIDENCE

Learning objective: Identify transferable skills and strengths from responsibilities, learning, service, work, and recovery.

Experience teaches skills even when it does not come with a title or certificate. Caring for a family member may involve planning, reliability, communication, and patience. Completing a difficult course may show persistence, help seeking, and time management. Community service may demonstrate teamwork and responsibility.

A transferable skill can be used in more than one setting. Communication, organization, problem solving, digital skills, conflict management, leadership, and learning strategies may transfer from home or community experiences into education and work.

Evidence should be specific. Use the pattern Situation, Action, Result, Learning. Describe the situation, the action you took, what resulted, and what you learned. This produces material that can later support applications, interviews, plans, and confidence.

KEY IDEAS

- Responsibilities contain evidence of capability.
- Transferable skills move across settings.
- Specific examples are stronger than general claims.
- Learning from an imperfect result still counts as evidence.

Remember: Responsibilities contain evidence of capability.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 2: READ YOUR EVIDENCE

SCENARIO

Samira has never held a paid job and believes there is nothing to place on an application. She regularly coordinates transportation for younger siblings, tracks appointments, helps with homework, and communicates schedule changes.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Which skills are present?
- 2 Which skills could transfer to work or education?
- 3 What result shows reliability?
- 4 How could one experience be described using Situation, Action, Result, Learning?

MODEL RESPONSE

Samira identifies scheduling, communication, problem solving, tutoring, and responsibility. She describes coordinating three weekly appointments, updating family members when transportation changed, and creating a shared calendar. She learned to confirm details early and prepare an alternate plan.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 2: READ YOUR EVIDENCE

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

A responsibility I have handled
The action I took
The result
What I learned
Transferable skills shown
Where else these skills could be useful



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 2: READ YOUR EVIDENCE

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What makes a skill transferable?
- 2 Name the four parts of the evidence pattern.
- 3 Why can unpaid experience still provide meaningful evidence?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A complete answer identifies a skill that applies in more than one setting and supports it with a specific situation, action, result, and learning point.



LESSON 3: THE PAUSE CREATES OPTIONS

Learning objective: Use a structured pause to identify options and choose a response consistent with safety, values, and goals.

Fast reactions may be useful in an emergency, but many important decisions improve when there is time to notice, name, and compare options. A pause can be ten seconds, a written draft, a walk, a conversation with a trusted person, or a scheduled return to the issue.

Use five questions: What is happening? What am I feeling or needing? What facts do I know? What options are available? Which option best protects safety, values, responsibilities, and future choices?

The pause does not guarantee an easy answer. It improves the quality of the decision by bringing more information into view. When safety is threatened, the best option may be leaving, contacting help, or involving a responsible adult or professional.

KEY IDEAS

- Strong feelings contain information but do not have to make the final decision.
- Facts and assumptions should be separated.
- More than one option should be identified.
- Likely short term and long term effects should be considered.
- Safety takes priority.

Remember: Strong feelings contain information but do not have to make the final decision.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 3: THE PAUSE CREATES OPTIONS

SCENARIO

Dev receives criticism during a team meeting and wants to quit immediately. The comment felt unfair, but Dev has not asked what standard was used or whether the concern can be corrected.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What feeling and need may be present?
- 2 What facts are known?
- 3 What information is missing?
- 4 What options protect dignity and future choices?

MODEL RESPONSE

Dev pauses before resigning, writes down the exact feedback, and requests a private conversation. Dev asks which expectation was not met and what correction is possible. After receiving information, Dev can decide whether to improve the work, request support, address disrespect, or leave through a planned process.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 3: THE PAUSE CREATES OPTIONS

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

The situation stated as facts
Feelings or needs I notice
Information I still need
At least three options
Likely effects of each option
The option that best supports safety, values, and goals



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 3: THE PAUSE CREATES OPTIONS

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What five questions guide the pause?
- 2 Why should more than one option be named?
- 3 When should outside help become the immediate next step?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A strong answer gathers facts, includes several options, considers consequences, and places safety above preserving the original plan.



STAGE 2: STRENGTHEN HOW YOU MOVE FORWARD

LESSON 4: COMMUNICATE A CLEAR REQUEST

Learning objective: Describe a situation, state a need, and make a specific respectful request with an alternate next step.

A vague request such as I need help may be honest but difficult to answer. A clear request explains the goal, the barrier, and the action that would be useful. It also leaves room for the other person to respond honestly.

Use this structure: I am working toward a result. I am experiencing a specific barrier. Would you be willing to take a specific action by a specific time? If that is not possible, can we identify another option?

Communication is not only about speaking. It includes listening, asking clarifying questions, checking understanding, and documenting important agreements when appropriate. A respectful request can still be firm.

KEY IDEAS

- Name the intended result.
- Describe the barrier without unnecessary blame.
- Request an observable action.
- Include timing when it matters.
- Prepare an alternate option or follow up.

Remember: Name the intended result.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 4: COMMUNICATE A CLEAR REQUEST

SCENARIO

Luis is falling behind in a course because the online instructions are difficult to follow. He has repeatedly told friends that the class is confusing but has not contacted the instructor or learning center.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What result is Luis trying to achieve?
- 2 How can the barrier be described specifically?
- 3 Which person or service can respond?
- 4 What request is concrete enough to answer?

MODEL RESPONSE

Luis writes: I want to complete the next assignment correctly. I understand the topic, but I am not sure how to use the submission system. Could we review the upload steps for ten minutes before Thursday, or can you direct me to the correct learning center appointment?



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 4: COMMUNICATE A CLEAR REQUEST

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

The result I want
The specific barrier
The person or service with relevant knowledge
My clear request
The timing that matters
My alternate option or follow up



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 4: COMMUNICATE A CLEAR REQUEST

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What three kinds of information make a request clearer?
- 2 Why should the requested action be observable?
- 3 What can you do when the first person cannot help?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A complete request links a goal, a specific barrier, and a concrete action. An alternate option keeps the pathway open when the first request cannot be met.



STAGE 3: BUILD REAL WORLD CAPABILITY

LESSON 5: BUILD REAL WORLD CAPABILITY

Learning objective: Complete an honest capability snapshot across education, work, money, daily routines, support, and access.

Capability is the combination of knowledge, skills, habits, tools, relationships, access, and practice that makes responsible action possible. It is not a fixed measure of worth. A snapshot helps you decide what to use now and what to strengthen next.

Review six areas: education and training, work and career exposure, money habits and decision skills, daily life routines, communication and support, and access needs. In each area identify current assets, missing information, barriers, and a next learning step.

Financial capability includes planning ahead, focusing attention, practicing self control, developing habits and norms, and making informed decisions. Career capability includes self exploration, career exploration, communication, decision making, education planning, and understanding pathways into work.

KEY IDEAS

- Assets are skills, knowledge, relationships, tools, and access already available.
- A gap is information or capability that can be learned or obtained.
- A barrier requires a response, support, or alternate route.
- A next learning step should be specific and observable.

Remember: Assets are skills, knowledge, relationships, tools, and access already available.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 5: BUILD REAL WORLD CAPABILITY

SCENARIO

Aaliyah wants to enter health care but is unsure whether to begin with a certificate, community college, or another route. She has strong science grades and volunteer experience but does not know program costs, admission requirements, or transportation options.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Which assets are already present?
- 2 Which information gaps prevent a decision?
- 3 Which barriers should be investigated early?
- 4 What are three next learning steps?

MODEL RESPONSE

Aaliyah lists science preparation and volunteer experience as assets. She compares three local programs, records prerequisites and total estimated costs, schedules a financial aid conversation, and maps transportation. She then speaks with one professional about daily work before choosing the next application step.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 5: BUILD REAL WORLD CAPABILITY

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

Education and training assets, gaps, and next step
Work and career assets, gaps, and next step
Money habits and decision skills to strengthen
Daily routines that support responsibility
Communication and support resources
Access needs, barriers, and possible responses



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 5: BUILD REAL WORLD CAPABILITY

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why is capability different from personal worth?
- 2 What four categories belong in a capability snapshot?
- 3 Name two parts of financial or career capability.

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A strong snapshot identifies assets, information gaps, barriers, and a specific next learning step. It does not reduce the participant to what is missing.



STAGE 4: CREATE YOUR PERSONAL PATHWAY

LESSON 6: CREATE A PERSONAL PATHWAY

Learning objective: Choose a direction, compare possible routes, and create a thirty day action plan with evidence and review points.

A pathway is a connected sequence of learning, support, decisions, and action. It does not need to predict an entire life. It should make the next direction clear enough to test.

Begin with a direction rather than one rigid outcome. Research at least two routes. Compare requirements, time, cost, access, likely benefits, risks, and alignment with values. Speak with reliable sources before making commitments that involve significant money or time.

Turn the selected route into a thirty day plan. Include actions, dates, support, evidence of completion, and a review point. The review asks whether the direction still fits, what new information has appeared, and what should change.

KEY IDEAS

- A direction can be tested before it becomes a long term commitment.
- More than one route should be researched.
- Time, cost, access, values, and likely results should be compared.
- Reliable information matters before major commitments.
- A review point allows informed revision.

Remember: A direction can be tested before it becomes a long term commitment.



WORKED EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE 6: CREATE A PERSONAL PATHWAY

SCENARIO

Malik wants stable work involving technology. He is considering a short certificate, an apprenticeship, and a two year degree. Each route has different costs, timing, entry requirements, and work opportunities.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What information should Malik collect for every route?
- 2 Which values and responsibilities may affect the choice?
- 3 Who can provide reliable information?
- 4 What could Malik complete in the next thirty days without making a final commitment?

MODEL RESPONSE

Malik records admission requirements, total cost, schedule, transportation, completion rates when available, credentials earned, and typical work outcomes. He meets with an advisor, contacts an apprenticeship program, and interviews one worker. His thirty day outcome is a completed comparison and one prepared application, not an irreversible decision.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 6: CREATE A PERSONAL PATHWAY

Complete the activity with enough detail to support a real decision or conversation.

The direction I want to explore
Why it matters and which values it supports
Route one requirements, benefits, costs, and barriers
Route two requirements, benefits, costs, and barriers
Reliable people or sources I will consult
My thirty day outcome
My first three dated actions



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 6: CREATE A PERSONAL PATHWAY

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why begin with a direction rather than a permanent decision?
- 2 What should be compared across routes?
- 3 What is the purpose of a review point?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where this skill applies in my life

One action I will complete

The evidence that will show completion

Answer guidance: A complete pathway compares more than one route using reliable information and turns the preferred direction into dated actions that can be reviewed and revised.



GUIDED PRACTICE

CAPSTONE: MY PATHFINDER SNAPSHOT

Bring the strongest evidence from the course into a one page view of your current position.

Values and direction
Strengths and transferable skills
Education and career assets
Money and daily life capability
Support and access resources
Information or capability gaps
Barriers that require a response



GUIDED PRACTICE

CAPSTONE: MY THIRTY DAY PATHWAY

Choose a realistic outcome that creates information, preparation, or forward movement.

My thirty day outcome
Why it matters
Week one actions
Week two actions
Week three actions
Week four actions
Support and information I will use
Evidence I will collect
My review date and questions



PROGRESS CHECK

COURSE COMPLETION REVIEW

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 How has my understanding of identity changed?
- 2 Which transferable skill can I now support with evidence?
- 3 How will I use the pause in a real decision?
- 4 What makes a support request clear?
- 5 Which capability area needs the next learning step?
- 6 What is the first dated action in my pathway?

APPLY THE SKILL

The lesson that was most useful

A skill I will continue practicing

A person or resource I will contact

My next review date

Answer guidance: Completion means the participant can explain the six core ideas and has produced a capability snapshot and a thirty day pathway.



FREE MINI COURSE AND EXPANDED PROGRAM

Learning objective: Distinguish the completed free experience from the additional value of the expanded Pathfinder Program.

The free mini course delivers six lessons, worked examples, guided practice, progress checks, a capability snapshot, and a thirty day pathway. Participants may use the result independently without purchasing another product.

The expanded program is designed for participants who want more depth and implementation support. It extends each stage through additional tools, a longer participant journal, progress documentation, education and career exploration, financial capability practice, communication tools, and structured review.

Access options, current pricing, facilitator availability, and scholarship information should be reviewed on the official Foundation website before enrollment.

KEY IDEAS

- The free course is a complete introduction.
- The expanded program provides greater depth, practice, and support.
- The two products must remain clearly labeled and should not be marketed as identical experiences.
- No participant should be pressured to purchase in order to understand or use the free course result.

Remember: Clear product separation protects participant trust.



EVIDENCE, RESOURCES, AND FOUNDATION INFORMATION

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Building Blocks of Financial Capability. consumerfinance.gov

United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. Career Preparation and Work Based Learning Experiences. dol.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Mental Health and Connectedness. cdc.gov

Timeless Empowerment Foundation is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. This course provides general education and does not replace qualified financial, legal, medical, mental health, career, or academic advice.

Visit timelessempowerment.org for official program information.

