



THE LINK

April 2026



A Note from our Founders...

April has arrived with a sense of momentum - and we can feel it!

With each gathering, something special is taking shape. What began as introductions is quickly becoming connection. We are seeing women greet one another like old friends, sharing genuine excitement when they reconnect-even if they first met just a few weeks ago. That sense of ease, of belonging, is exactly what we hoped to create...and it's happening.

As we move into spring, we're continuing to build on that energy with experiences that reflect what our members are looking for - like our **Next Chapter Book Club**, launching on May 7th.

This month, we're gathering with Next Chapter to see **Menopause the Musical** - an

*event that quickly sold out, and on April 20th, **Petals & Prosecco**, a floral design workshop, led by Lisa Raffaelli.*

This month's **Worth it!** interview features **Diane Smith**, a 36-year hospitality sales executive with global and property roles at Hyatt Hotels. In addition to her role with Hyatt Diane is a mother, a culinary enthusiast and a great friend to many. Her positive outlook on life shines through in whatever she does.

Diane shares her post-professional journey as she embraces her next chapter with purpose and joy.

It is incredibly gratifying for us to see this community come together so naturally.

We're so glad you're a part of it!

Anne & Mary Beth

Read On for...

Worth It!

Photo Gallery from NYC Urban Adventure & Cultivated By Caryn

Membership Update

Upcoming Events

Refer a Friend!

WORTH IT!

**AN INTERVIEW WITH NEXT
CHAPTER MEMBER, DIANE
SMITH**



THE PIVOT

What was happening in your life or career that made you realize it was time for a change - even if the path ahead wasn't yet clear?

I have always been a dreamer and a planner. Throughout my career, I was constantly thinking of what I would do when I left hotel sales . . . own a bakery, become a realtor, move to Cape Cod . . . It was fun and motivating to think of the what if, what next. That's what kept me moving forward while still enjoying what I did in the present.

But life can get in the way of those dreams: change the timeline and eventually the dream.

As time got closer to my 62nd birthday, I decided I was just going to retire and take more time to enjoy life. In January 2023 I announced that I would retire on my 36th Anniversary date with Hyatt - - September 8, 2023.

THE RESISTANCE

What fears, doubts, or practical concerns did you have to work through before taking that leap?

Once I had a date, I worked hard at my job to go out on a high while also working to set myself up for success in the next chapter. I was lucky to have nine months to plan out what retirement would look like for me.

You hear that people don't succeed in retirement at first, and I have friends that experienced that. Some didn't have the luxury of time to plan, and others didn't have as many non-work friends and hobbies. You've worked full time for over half your life; retirement is a major change in every way.

THE AHA

Was there a moment - big or small - when you knew you had made the right decision?

On September 8th I left the hotel and took a trip to Europe with my best friend from college. We travel on a few trips (road & air) each year and this just happened to coincide with my last day. It was the perfect way to celebrate the end of my career and kick off the next chapter! The best part was I did not have to read ONE work email on vacation (or ever again).

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

THE GROWTH

How has stepping into this new chapter changed how you see yourself--professionally, personally, and creatively?

It's funny, I am very good at closing doors and moving forward. I really don't believe in the rearview mirror (except when I'm driving) so the adjustment for me was pretty easy.

I stay busy looking for fun adventures to drag my friends to, volunteering with Person 2 Person, dog walking, exploring my new neighborhood (I moved to Fairfield from Stamford in 2025) and staying active. It is also great to be able to help my kids, friends and neighbors when they need an extra hand, which was harder to do working full time.



THE WORTH IT

Looking back now, what makes this pivot “worth it” and what would you say to a woman standing at the edge of her own next chapter?

I tell everyone that I am living my best life. Who knew retirement would be so much fun and allow you time to do all the things you said you would but never could. Remember the first time you signed up for your 401K payroll deduction and dreamed that one day you would be retired? It seems so long ago but that day finally came, and it was worth it!



Introducing Next Chapter's Book Club

We are excited to launch the Next Chapter Book Club, a small, conversational, monthly gathering for members who enjoy reading and lively discussion. Thank you to members **Anmarie Graham** and **Laura Aronstein** for spearheading this idea.

First Gathering

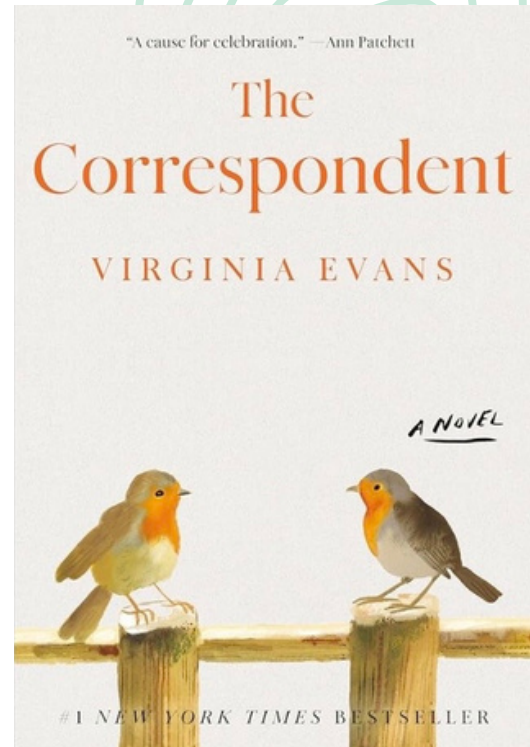
Thursday, May 7
Greenwich Boat Club
6:30 – 8:00 pm

Our first book selection is ***The Correspondent*** by Virginia Evans, chosen by Anmarie, who will guide the evening's discussion.

What To Expect

The evening will begin with time to mingle and enjoy light refreshments. At 7 pm we'll move into a relaxed group discussion about the book. While the atmosphere will be social and informal, members are asked to please read the book in advance so everyone can participate in the conversation.

To keep the discussion engaging, participation will be limited to eight members.



This is our pilot Book Club gathering and we will explore adding additional groups if there is strong interest.

This Book Club is one of several small interest groups we are testing as part of the Next Chapter community experience, alongside our larger gatherings and programs.

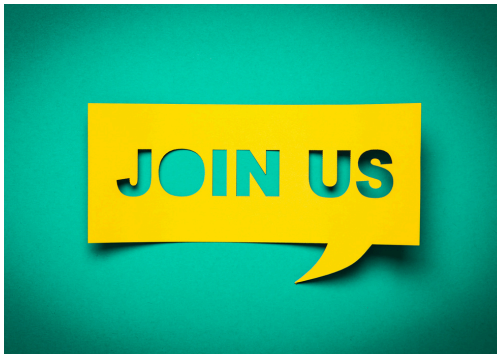
Interested In Joining?

Please reply to:
info@nextchapternetwork.net
by April 15th

We'll confirm the group shortly afterward so you have plenty of time to read the book.

Membership Update

Next Chapter is better and more fun with friends! Please continue to spread the word and help us expand our community!



All new members will electronically receive a New Member Welcome Packet.. You will be asked to complete a profile and include a headshot as well as provide contact information and fun facts to share with fellow members. The Membership Circle, our new member directory is being developed and will be live on our website in the coming months.



Upcoming Events

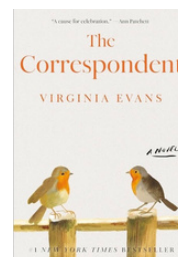
April 20th - Sign up for Petals & Prosecco

<https://tinyurl.com/PetalsandProsecco>



May 7th - Book Club Kick-Off

Greenwich Boat Club - 6:30pm



May 11th - Game Night Greenwich Boat Club - 6:30pm

Join us for an old fashioned game of charades & camaraderie!

Check out our photo gallery of recent events on the next page



Urban Adventure: NYC

March 8th



Cultivated by Caryl

March 30th



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