



DOING HARD THINGS
RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE

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with **Elisa Stanford**

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

One of the great things God is doing through the Rebelution is uniting young people to do hard things together. We've found that linking arms with like-minded friends is one of the best ways to figure out what hard things God is calling us to do. It's also one of the best ways to become more like Christ in our actions and attitudes. And as you may have already discovered, working with others to do hard things—or simply to get encouragement and ideas for your own project—can be a lot of fun.

So as you start (or continue) doing hard things, we encourage you to get together with a group of friends and talk about what it looks like to do hard things right where God has placed you. You can use the following questions as a personal study guide, but they have been designed especially for group discussion. We've tried to come up with questions that will help you revisit the big ideas of each chapter as well as talk about how they apply to you and your group of fellow rebelutionaries.

Want some advice for making the conversation really worthwhile? Here you go: Pray and invite Jesus to be at the center of your group. Be as honest as you can with each other. Look it up in the Bible when you've got a question. Treat your time together as a launching pad for action in doing hard things.

The group of disciples who surrounded Jesus went on to turn the world upside down. We can't wait to hear what you and your friends are going to do!

Your fellow rebelutionaries,

Alex and Brett Harris

Chapter 1

You Are Here: Opening the Door to Your Own Rebellion

This book is about taking the next step in your personal *rebellion* against society's low expectations for teens. As young people around the world have discovered, doing hard things is the most satisfying—and exciting—way to live. *Start Here* will help you get started right where you are.

1. How do you respond to the idea of “a teenage rebellion against low expectations” (page 2)?
2. If you have read *Do Hard Things*, how has it changed your perspective on the teen years? Has it changed the way you think or act in any way? If so, how?
3. What is your biggest hope for what you get out of this book? What do you hope for as you begin, or continue, to do hard things?
4. If you were writing a question for this book, what would it be?

Chapter 2

Getting Started: What That First Step Looks Like

Doing hard things to glorify God knocks selfishness out of the picture. We can follow God's calling without worrying about whether we get noticed for it. Being a leader or being a follower, doing small hard things or doing big hard things, accomplishing something big right now or preparing for the future—all this is secondary to having an attitude that is open to God's direction and purpose.

Keeping this in mind will help you answer the question we

all ask at some point: *Where do I start?* This chapter offers ideas about how to move forward for the right reasons.

1. How does our attitude toward doing something change when we do it to glorify God? Why?
2. Do you know what hard thing God is calling you to do? If you do, what is it and why is it important to you? If you don't, what do you think is the next step in figuring it out?
3. What small hard things is God calling you to do before (or while) you do big hard things?
4. When has someone else's willingness to do a small hard thing made a difference in your life?
5. Go back and look over the stories of Elisabeth, Charity, Matthew, Hannah, and Ian. Which of these people do you identify with most? Why?
6. What's the *one* biggest thing that's keeping you from moving ahead and doing something hard? If God were sitting beside you, what do you think He would tell you about this problem? If you are in a group, what can the other group members do to help you take the next step?

Chapter 3

When You Have a Great Idea: Practical Help for Making It Work

Making a plan. Getting people on your side. Raising money. These are some of the practical issues that have to be considered when you're starting a big project. This chapter offers tips that have helped teens get their projects underway.

1. Where would you say you are right now in getting your project going? Clear on your goal but not sure how to go for it? Moving along nicely? Some progress but feeling stuck?
2. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you get started:
 - What are my limits?
 - What do I bring to the table? What can others contribute?
 - What are others already doing? What can I learn from them?
 - Who knows more than I do about this?
 - What can I read about this topic?
 - What is my goal?
 - What do I need to do first to move from planning to doing?
3. Which is the most relevant question for where you are at right now? How would you answer that question?
4. What are the practical realities you're facing as you get started on your project?
5. How do your parents feel about your project? Your friends?
6. What comes to mind when you think of telling people about your project? Do you think it will be easier to approach people you know or to approach strangers? Why?
7. How much money is your project going to cost? What ideas do you have about coming up with that money? (Fund-raising ideas can be fun to brainstorm as a group.)

**Chapter 4: Side Effects May Occur:
Handling the Changes That Come
with Doing Hard Things**

Doing hard things will bring challenges that you never expected. The good news is that God invites you to grow closer to Him as you deal with the effects of doing hard things. The changes you go through as a person are part of what God has called you to—and they're part of doing hard things.

1. Briefly describe a time when you received affirmation for doing hard things. How did you respond? How did the affirmation make you feel?
2. What are some ways that rebelutionaries can use the attention they receive to glorify God? How does an accomplishment like Zac Sunderland's bring glory to God (see pages 49–51)?
3. How have you struggled with pride as you've done hard things?
4. In this chapter *busyness* is defined as having a lot to do and *fruitfulness* as accomplishing something of eternal significance. How have you seen the difference between busyness and fruitfulness in your own life?
5. What changes could you make in your day (take today or yesterday, for example) that would give you more time to be fruitful rather than just busy?
6. If anyone has asked you for an interview about something hard you've done, how did that go? What can you do to prepare for that possibility in the future? Do you think doing interviews is something that will come easily for you? Why or why not?

Chapter 5

Matters of First Importance: Keeping God in Focus

Every Step of the Way

There's something more important than doing hard things for God. It's knowing Him. It's enjoying Him. It's loving Him. It's being with Him. This isn't to discourage you from doing hard things—not at all! It's to encourage you to do hard things while keeping your relationship with God your highest priority. As you draw closer to God, you'll have the strength and wisdom to do even more hard things for His glory.

1. Has doing hard things been good or bad for your relationship with God? Explain.
2. If someone looked at your thoughts and activities yesterday, would he or she say that it appeared God was the center of your life? Why or why not?
3. "Putting God at the center of our lives is not a vague act of obedience. It is the only sensible response—to Someone we need and long to know more" (page 67). Would you say your obedience to God comes more from a vague sense of guilt or a desire for relationship? Why?
4. Think about your motives for doing hard things. To what extent are they about glorifying God? To what extent are they about glorifying you? How do you handle these mixed motivations?
5. Grace from Maryland says, "It's a battle of heart attitude, for if my heart isn't in the right place before God, my actions are worthless. It's a battle to...follow His plans for my life, especially when they don't make sense" (page 72). How do you relate to these words?

6. What, if anything, needs to change about the way you are approaching hard things so that you can keep growing in your relationship with God?

Chapter 6

When the Doing Gets Tough: Keeping On in the Middle of Hard Things

One of the myths about teenagers is that teens don't have the toughness to stick with something when it gets difficult. But this is one of the myths we have to bust if we want to do something for God—and change society's perception of teenagers.

Problems *will* come as we do hard things. Instead of being surprised by them, we can know that persistence in the middle of hard things is a key to achieving our goal.

1. Think back to when you first had the idea for your big project. In what ways are you even more excited now about what you're doing? In what ways are you more discouraged?
2. "Overcoming discouragement requires that we continually remind ourselves that growth is worth the pain" (page 77). Do you agree with this statement? Why?
3. Describe a time when you tried to do something hard for God and it didn't work out the way you planned. As you look back now, in what ways can you see God's work in that situation?
4. Picture a line that takes you from the beginning of your project to right now. The higher the line is, the better you feel about your project. The lower it is, the more discouraged you are. Describe and/or draw the course

- of this line. What do you think God would say to you at your highest point? at your lowest point?
5. How are you feeling about the changes *in yourself* as a result of doing hard things? Are you surprised? disappointed? finding that you haven't really thought about it?
 6. At the outset, what were your expectations—personally, spiritually, and relationally—for doing hard things? In what ways have your expectations been helpful to you? In what ways might they have hurt you?

Chapter 7

The Guts Factor: How to Move Against the Crowd— and Why

If you dare to attempt hard things for God, some of the people in your life might think you're great. Others might think you're crazy. One thing is sure: doing hard things is going to have an effect on your relationships. Do you have the guts to stick with what God is calling you to?

1. Since you started doing hard things, has anyone criticized you for missing out on "normal" teenage life? If so, what was said? How did you respond?
2. Would you say that now you are having more fun, less fun, or the same amount of fun as you had before doing hard things? How has your view of "fun" changed, if at all?
3. How has doing hard things changed your friendships with, or your reputation among, other young people?
4. Erika (see page 97) describes the harsh reaction she got

from teachers and students for promoting a pro-life position. When has persecution affected you?

5. “Our goal as Christians is not to avoid getting into trouble. It’s also not to *try* to get into trouble. Our goal is to get into the *right kind* of trouble” (page 99). How can you tell the difference between the “right kind of trouble” and the wrong kind?
6. Describe a book, movie, song, or website that you’re not sure is a good influence on you. Get advice from others in the group about whether they think it will bring you closer to God or push you away from Him—and about practical steps you can take about it.

Chapter 8

Now What? When Doing Is Done

Whew! When you’re done with a big hard thing, you might feel proud, let down, tired, or incredibly energized. What are you going to do with those feelings? What are you going to do next? Finishing one hard thing and moving on to another reminds us that being a rebelutionary is not just about what happens while you’re a teen. It’s also about preparing for an entire lifetime of loving and glorifying God.

1. When have you seen “godly excitement over doing a hard thing” lead not to pride but to humility—either in your life or in someone else’s life?
2. When you’ve come to the end of a big project, have you ever had a problem with selfish pride? If so, describe it.
3. Describe a time you fell back into a bad habit after doing something hard. Did you get out of it again? If so, how?

4. Andrew filled a bag with stuff from his room he wanted to get rid of. Kristin stopped sitting with her old crowd at lunch. Justin confessed to his boss about stealing books. Think about one way you want to move beyond your old ways of thinking and acting. What practical action could you take to make a permanent change in your life?
5. Think about the time when you finish the project you are currently working on. How are you going to celebrate? How are you going to rest up? Do you have an idea of what hard thing you're going to do next?
6. Has doing hard things ever made you excited about tackling an even bigger challenge? Talk about it.

Chapter 9

Putting It All Together: Two Stories

That Will Answer All Your Questions

(or at Least Give You Some Great Ideas)

Ana Zimmerman raised more than six thousand dollars to help end the injustice of abortion. John Moore wrote, produced, and directed his own film, going on to win the grand prize at the San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival. In this chapter, Ana and John provide a step-by-step look at their projects and how God used those hard things for His glory.

1. What part of Ana's story do you identify with the most? Why?
2. What part of John's story do you identify with the most? Why?
3. Ana points out that it's not enough to have high expectations—we need to have high expectations

for the right reasons (page 128). What does this mean?

4. John tells us he was able to accept criticism because he knew that his first film was not his main goal: “If our goal was growth, we could love criticism” (page 130). How have you found that statement to be true in your own life?
5. John reminds us that “it’s easy to confuse ‘do hard things’ with the idea of ‘do big things.’ A push-up isn’t a big thing. Winning a championship is. But doing push-ups when you don’t feel like it is what it takes to win in a championship fight” (page 135). Would you say you’re doing push-ups right now, or are you in the middle of a championship fight? Why? When have you confused doing hard things with doing big things?
6. What are some practical ideas you got out of Ana’s and John’s stories?

Chapter 10

Making It Rain

Start Here wraps up with the image of thousands of young people making it rain—indoors! After all, when individuals offer their gifts to God, anything can happen.

1. What story in the book was most challenging to you? Why?
2. Has the message of doing hard things inspired you to believe that one young person can make a difference in a generation? Why or why not?
3. *Start Here* gives ideas and stories featuring the beginning, middle, and end of hard projects. What are some

of the practical things you learned about each of those stages?

4. What is one question you would add to this book? How would you (or your group) answer it?
5. A friend asks you at lunch: "So how do you start doing hard things?" What do you say?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alex and Brett Harris launched TheRebellion.com at sixteen years old and wrote their first book, *Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations*, three years later. Natives of the Pacific Northwest, they are currently finishing up their second year at Patrick Henry College in northeast Virginia, where Alex lives with his wife, Courtney.

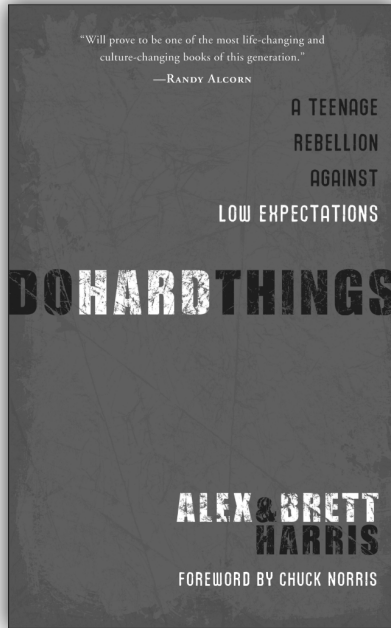
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For hundreds of articles by Alex and Brett and the ability to connect with other rebellionaries around the world, visit TheRebellion.com. You'll also find event news and schedules, DVDs, T-shirts, e-mail updates, and more.



Elisa Stanford (elisastanford.com) is the author of *Ordinary Losses: Naming the Graces That Shape Us*. A writer and editor, Elisa lives with her husband and two daughters in Colorado.

The Book That Started a Revolutionary Teen Movement



Written as teens, Alex and Brett Harris challenged their peers to rebel against low expectations and rediscover the true purpose and potential of the teen years. In *Do Hard Things*, the Harrisers map out five powerful ways teens can take action for personal and social change by choosing to “do hard things” for the glory of God. Packed with inspiring stories and real-life application, this book shows readers how to join a new movement—a “rebelution”—of teens who are determined to change their world, starting today.



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