

Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

The Law of Sacrifice A Leader Must Give Up to Go Up

“If a man hasn’t discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Application Guide

The Chrysler story, from the 20's to the 60's was one largely of success. I remember well the Plymouth Road Runner, Dodge Daytona and of course the Barracuda! By the 1970's, the company was declining rapidly. In 1978, its market share dropped from 25% to 11%, a staggering decline. Things were getting worse. The corporation was headed for bankruptcy.

In November of 1978, Chrysler brought in Lee Iacocca as their new leader. A leader who would soon prove he understood the *Law of Sacrifice*. He was a seasoned car man who had worked his way up through the ranks at Ford. He was the leader of the teams who created the elegant Lincoln Continental Mark III and the legendary Mustang. By 1970 he was the president of Ford Motor Company. Iacocca worked for Ford for 32 years. At 54 years of age, even though he received a separation package from Ford that ensured he would never have to work again, he wanted to contribute to a success of another company, rather than retire and relax.

John Riccardo was the chairman and CEO of Chrysler when Iacocca came aboard. He was willing to sacrifice himself and move aside for the good of the company. The road of sacrifice had just begun. The first was a salary that was just a little over half what he had earned as president of Ford. The next sacrifice came in his family life. At Ford, Iacocca was proud of the time he committed to his family, but the Chrysler turn-around required an all consuming effort that included nights and weekends. The next sacrifice was on an organizational level, Chrysler was spiraling downward, had low morale, customer loyalty was terrible, and the company continued to lose money.

Iacocca knew that one cut of sacrifices, even though large, would not be enough to do the job. To turn the company around required an attitude of sacrifice to be maintained. They must be willing to do whatever it takes to achieve the goal. One of the first things Iacocca did was fire 33 of the 35 vice presidents during a three-year period. Things still got worse. He cut every expense he could, but Chrysler was still headed for bankruptcy.

Lee Iacocca did not have a favorable reputation with the government because of his views on government involvement in business. This made things difficult when he went to the government for help. Iacocca sacrificed his pride to ask for money, not an easy thing to do. He also reduced his salary to \$1 a year. This set the example for his executives to take a 10% pay cut. He knew everyone would have to sacrifice if they were to succeed. And succeed they did! By 1982, Chrysler generated an operating profit of \$925 million, the best in their history.

What was true for Lee Iacocca is true for any leader. You have to give up to go up. This is the *Law of Sacrifice*.

I. Assessment

The following questions will give you insight as to how well you are living the *Law of Sacrifice*.

- A. Do you have a track record of looking for the “easiest and fastest” route to get things done?
- B. Do you have a track record that indicates you are willing to do whatever it takes, including sacrifice, in order to move your team to the next level?
- C. What are you not willing to sacrifice to move to the next level? Settle this issue now. Do not wait until you are faced with a pressure decision and no time to process it.
- D. Who do you know that you respect as a sacrificial leader? Make an appointment for lunch, and ask questions to learn what makes them tick.
- E. What is the greatest sacrifice you have ever made? Why did you do it? Would you do it again?
- F. What sacrifice have you avoided, that if you “bit the bullet” you could launch to the next level? What prevents you from doing it? Team up with someone who can partner with you and help you.
- G. Are the key personnel around you willing to sacrifice whatever is needed for the organization to reach its full potential?

II. Application

★ You can have anything you want, but you can not have everything you want. All of life is a trade. You must choose what you will sacrifice for a greater or more desirable good. If you hold onto that which is small you will never hold that which is large.

Sacrifice comes in a variety of price tags.

Everyone has a price they will not exceed. How about you? Which of the following sacrifices are you willing / not willing to endure for the sake of successful leadership? It is good for you to think this through ahead of time. I call this the “Taxi-Cab” principle . . . count the cost before you get in. There is no right or wrong here, it is personal to you. If you check more “not willing” than “willing” you may not experience the benefits of the *Law of Sacrifice*.

<u>Sacrifice</u>	<u>Willing</u>	<u>Not Willing</u>
Pressure and stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Personal health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of power / prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long hours — exhaustion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infringement on family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making difficult decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being criticized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of popularity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little to no personal time (hobbies, interests etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A. Coming to grips with the *Law of Sacrifice*

The *Law of Sacrifice* is not a complicated law but it is a costly one. It is one of the simplest to understand, and one of the most difficult to put into practice. The bottom line is your desire and willingness.

1. You must be willing to let go of what you have for the potential to do something

It is said that all you need to catch a monkey in Africa is a glass jar and some fruit and nuts. The jar is filled half way with fruit and nuts and buried in the ground so that it cannot be pulled up without being dug up. The opening of the jar is near the surface of the ground. The monkey must open its hand to grasp the food, but when a fist is made in order to pull the food out, it cannot get its hand back out of the jar. The hunter can literally walk right up to the monkey and capture it in a cage or with a tranquilizer dart because the monkey is not willing to let go of the food. Too close to human! Some people are not willing to let go of what they have even if the consequences are great. In this case, the consequences may be the decline of a business or the loss of an opportunity to go to another business. What are you holding onto?

The *Law of Sacrifice* demands that leaders let go. Like a trapeze artist, if you do not let go of the bar, you will never perform to your potential.

Chairman and CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, understands the *Law of Sacrifice*. Schultz knew he wanted to join Starbucks' founders, Gerald Baldwin, Gordon Bowker and Zev Siegl, as a part of their organization. In April 1971 when Jerry, Gordon and Zev first opened the doors of the first Starbucks, in Seattle, Washington. They did not yet sell coffee by the cup, they sold it only by the bag. It was one little store and three guys with

a dream to educate the American public about gourmet coffee, but what a business it became. In 1982 Schultz got that chance and joined the Starbucks team. His partnership did not come without a price tag. First, he took a lower salary; he lost the prestige, the car, and the co-op — all for a tiny company with only 5 stores. Second, his wife Sheri had to sacrifice her career in Interior Design in New York City, to Seattle, not exactly known as a design center. Third, Howard had just discovered that his dad had lung cancer and taking the job moved him 3,000 miles away from his dad and his mom, a huge sacrifice. The rest of the story is fascinating and told in Schultz new book, *Pour Your Heart Into It*, the proceeds of which go to the Starbucks Foundation to support literacy programs. You can see the success of the story all around the country . . . just *try* to find a place *without* a Starbucks — and without a bunch of people waiting in line for a cup of the best coffee around!

2. You must be willing to risk _____ for the cause you believe in.

Think about someone like Martin Luther King, Jr. The majority of his adult life was lived with some form of sacrifice. He was stoned, stabbed and physically attacked. His house was bombed and his family threatened. The ultimate sacrifice, he gave his life for the cause of freedom. Over 30 years later, our hearts are still stirred by his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. Even more importantly, we have a little less hate and prejudice in this country because of his sacrifice.

3. You must truly believe in what you sacrifice for or you are likely to _____ and _____.

Your heart must hold tight or your hand will let go. Soldiers who do not believe in the war, do not make good soldiers. If you do not believe in your dream enough to fight for it, you will soon lose your dream. No dream worth having comes without a fight. The way to keep yourself in the ring with your gloves on is to believe in the dream.

I am so proud of the people of Skyline Church near San Diego, California. They have sacrificed and never given up, for well over a decade, in pursuit of the dream of relocating their church. Many churches would have long since given up, but not this group! What has held them? They believe in the mission!

B. Principles of Sacrifice

1. Leaders embrace the idea of _____ gratification.

We have several families with young kids on the INJOY team. It is fun watching the kids and remembering when even my own had trouble with the concept of delayed gratification. Kids want everything and they want it now. Waiting a day or two is an eternity for

a toddler, and waiting a week or a month for a young teen is almost unbearable. We can excuse this in kids, but not in grown adults, at least not in leaders. Leaders must possess the self-discipline that allows them to postpone the immediate results and desires for the best results in the long run.

This requires not only self-discipline, but the ability to see the "big picture", as well as making decisions for the good of the organization over yourself.

2. Leaders accept sacrifice with _____ and a _____.

All leaders should adopt the personal motto of "no whining." Personally, I would like to print bumper stickers and give them away by the millions to see if that would help — I have low tolerance for whiners! When the leader makes a sacrifice, he/she or she is not to announce it continually from the mountain tops and tell how rough things are. You just do it.

There was a period of a few years where the Skyline pastoral staff received no raises as a sacrifice for the relocation process. When this was discussed, it took about two minutes for all of them to accept and embrace this decision, and never once did any of them complain.

3. Leaders understand and accept that the greater the cause and the greater the responsibility — the greater the _____.

The higher you go the greater the responsibility. I can always tell in my leadership conferences who the novices are by some of their comments and questions. Do not misunderstand, I love the questions, but they are revealing. When a young leader or non-leader speaks of a great leader's status and all the perks and privileges that "must come along with it," I know I am speaking to a novice leader, if a leader at all. For me personally, all my life, the higher I have risen, the less freedom and greater responsibilities I have. I accept this cheerfully and gratefully, but it is none-the-less true. Sometimes novice leaders mistake visible rewards or "the fruit of one's labor" as perks and privileges, but if they knew the price that was paid, they would soon see that the responsibility far outweighs any privileges.

4. Leaders are able to draw others to join them in sacrifice.

The mark of a true leader is one who has the influence to rally others to the cause. Whether the sacrifice is modest or dramatic does not matter, because in the context of those making the sacrifice, all sacrifices seem large. It is like surgery. There is no such thing as "minor surgery" if it is on you!

Whether it is a salary freeze, giving up personal time, or moving across the country, a strong leader will rally others to follow him or her including accepting the sacrifices that need to be made. Every scenario is a little different, but there is one universal component, the leader must sacrifice first, and sacrifice significantly.

5. Leaders are willing to maintain a sacrificial lifestyle for long periods of time.

A leader who is "in" for the right motives, is willing to continue the necessary sacrifice until the mission, or project is fulfilled.

III. Action Assignment

Take a couple hours (maybe with a fresh Starbucks brew!) and reflect on the sacrifices you have made or "dodged" in your leadership. Have you made the right decisions? What are you facing right now that may call for a sacrifice, that if you did sacrifice, you and your organization could go to the next level? Journal your thoughts.