

## Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

### *The Law of Legacy* A Leader's Lasting Value is Measured by Succession

*“The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in other men  
the conviction and the will to carry on.”*

*—Walter Lippmann*

## Application Guide

The most common form of legacy to us all is our children. What you instill in your children is what lives on after you are gone. Legacy is not something that only famous or brilliant people leave, they simply receive more notoriety. We all leave a legacy, for some it has profound meaning and impact, for others, negative impact, and still others the opportunity to make a mark was largely wasted. Even that is a legacy, a legacy of waste.

The focus of *The Law of Legacy* is that of a leader's life. What will you leave behind that lives beyond you? Perhaps you are a pastor, what is the legacy you will leave behind in your church when you complete your ministry there? Or maybe you are a businessman, what will be your legacy in the companies you have served? What will live on of positive impact after you are gone? Roberto Goizueta was one of the finest businessmen ever to live. He died in 1997, but his legacy lives on, here is his story.

Roberto Goizueta was the chairman and Chief Executive of the Coca-Cola Company. Making Coca-Cola the best company in the world was Goizueta's life-long quest, one he was still pursuing diligently when he suddenly, unexpectedly died of lung cancer. Shortly before his death, Goizueta said in an interview with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that retirement was "not on my radar screen. As long as I am having the fun I am having, as long as I have the energy necessary, as long as I am not keeping people from their day in the sun, and as long as the board wants me to stay on, I will stay on." Just months after the interview, he was diagnosed with cancer. In six short weeks, he had died.

The legacy left to the company by Goizueta is incredible. When he took over Coca-Cola in 1981, the company's value was \$4 billion. Under Goizueta's leadership, it rose to \$150 billion! Many of Coke's stockholders became millionaires many times over. Emory University in Atlanta, whose portfolio contains a large block of Coca-Cola stock, now has an endowment comparable to that of Harvard.

Financial strength and stock value was not the greatest thing Goizueta gave to the Coca-Cola company. Instead it was the way he lived the *Law of Legacy*. When Roberto's death was announced, there was no panic among Coca-Cola stockholders. Paine Webber analyst Emanuel Goldman said that Goizueta "prepared the company for his not being there as well as any executive I have ever seen."

His legacy was also about the many lives he touched and impacted in a positive way. One such life was that of Douglas Ivester whom Goizueta prepared as his successor for the top position of leadership. Doug Ivester, an accountant by training, started his career with Coca-Cola in 1979 as the assistant controller. Four years later, he was named chief financial officer.

By 1989, Goizueta must have decided that Ivester had great potential, because he moved him out of his strictly financial role and sent him to Europe to get operating and international experience. A

year later, Goizueta brought him back and named him president of Coca-Cola USA, where he oversaw expenditures and marketing. From there he groomed Ivester, and in 1994, there could be no doubt that Ivester would follow Goizueta into the top position. Goizueta made him president and Chief Operating Officer.

A noteworthy part of this story is that Goizueta himself was a product of the *Law of Legacy*. Goizueta joined Coca-Cola in 1954 and by 1966 he had become vice president of technical research and development at the company's headquarters in Atlanta. In the early 1970's something important happened. Robert W. Woodruff, the patriarch of Coca-Cola, took Goizueta under his wing and began developing him. In 1975, Goizueta became the executive vice president of the company's technical division and took on other corporate responsibilities, such as overseeing legal affairs. In 1980, with Woodruff's blessing, Goizueta became president and Chief Operating Officer. One year later he was the chairman and chief executive. The reason Goizueta so confidently selected, developed, and groomed a successor is that he was building on the legacy that he had himself received.

## I. Assessment

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

- A. In what ways will your work live on beyond you?
- B. What is the impact your work has on others?
- C. How do others benefit by your efforts?
- D. Who are you investing your life into?
- E. Do you tend to view your work with a short view or a long view in mind?
- F. Are you more of a solo operator or a team-oriented person?
- G. Have you settled in your mind and heart the area in which you believe you will make a difference in the world?
- H. Do significant others around you who are close to you, affirm your choice of work and your effectiveness in it?
- I. Do you experience both productivity and happiness in your work?
- J. If you had the opportunity to retire and relax would you?

- K. If you had the opportunity to resign and do what you want to do, what would it be? If you have a passion building within you, what is stopping you from going for it?

## II. Application

I began by saying that a legacy is guaranteed, and that is still true. We all leave a legacy of *some* kind, that is guaranteed, but not automatic. In other words, the choices you make and the actions you take determine your legacy. However, if you desire a positive and impacting leadership legacy, it will require an intentional effort on your part. A positive leadership legacy is not automatic nor guaranteed. The following guidelines will help you leave a leadership legacy.

*Note: This material is geared to leadership in the professional arena. It is understood that there are other legacies of value, however, for our purpose, I am addressing leaving a legacy in your marketplace.*

### A. The Law of Legacy: Personal Issues

1. Look at life with a larger than me \_\_\_\_\_.

A leader begins to love a life of legacy when he/she looks at life beyond himself, cares about others in the future, and begins loving beyond his/her own immediate context. If life is to be "consumed" there is no reason for a legacy. If life is to be "improved" and progress is to be made for a better way of living, not only for yourself, but for others as well, then legacy is of ultimate importance and value.

My friend Vernon Armitage is a Pastor in Liberty, Missouri. He leads a very large church, but cares about the world with a larger than me perspective. He could easily focus only on his little corner of the world and invest only in the people of Pleasant Valley Baptist Church. Instead, Vernon wants to make a difference in the lives of other pastors across the country, and around the world. He does so by hosting leadership conferences, leading his own leadership conferences, and coaching pastors personally. Vernon does not need to do this, and could easily be justified with the heavy load of responsibility a pastor carries in a large church. Vernon does not do it for money. He does it for the value of a legacy. He does it to make a difference. The fact that hundreds, maybe thousands of pastors will be better leaders because of Vernon's vision is a legacy in the making. Long after Vernon is gone, thousands of people in local churches across America, Canada and beyond will benefit for decades to come because of his effort, concern, generosity, and his "life is larger than me" perspective.

2. Dedicate yourself to a legacy of \_\_\_\_\_.

My heart resonates with Vernon, because we are both dedicated to teaching leadership. You must select a legacy of your own, and dedicate yourself to it. There are many worthy legacies to pursue, but only you can choose what is unique according to your gifts, talents and experience.

Important questions to ask yourself are:

- ✓ What matters to you?
- ✓ What matters to those closest to you?
- ✓ What matters to others in the public marketplace?
- ✓ How do you define progress?
- ✓ What gets in the way of progress?
- ✓ What can you do to make the world a better place to live?

3. Invest yourself in returns that you may \_\_\_\_\_ personally realize.

This is the true commitment and often times sacrifice of legacy. It is interesting, however, that leaders who are committed to the principle of legacy do not see it as a sacrifice, they see it as a privilege. It is an honor to give yourself to a cause that you may not personally benefit by.

One of my favorite songs contains the phrase “May those who come behind us find us faithful.” This is about legacy. What are you doing today that benefits the generations of tomorrow?

4. Do not compromise your \_\_\_\_\_ to create a legacy.

When you compromise your personal values to create a legacy you end up with a hollow legacy. A “hollow legacy” is when you abandon or sacrifice what you believe to create a marketplace legacy. The most common place this is seen is among many politicians. They get elected, and reelected but at what price. This is not, however, reserved for the political scene. You may be a businessman, a pastor, a coach, or a social entrepreneur — whatever your situation — stay true to your heart and live with integrity.

#### B. The Law of Legacy: Organizational Issues

1. Do not keep your legacy a \_\_\_\_\_.

It is important to communicate the dream and motivation of your legacy. This is what draws others to you and helps you create a legacy. This is not about turning the lime-light on yourself, because as we have already discussed, a legacy of value is more about

others than about yourself. If your legacy is truly worthwhile, it is almost certain that it will involve more people than just yourself. This may sound to you like just another way of describing vision and vision casting — in part that is true, because legacy begins with vision. The difference is that many dreams that are accomplished do not live on for the benefit of others. The most common reasons are either that the dream was too self-focused, too small, or did not involve other people. People are the only way to carry on a legacy. Even books, if you write some, after time will lose their impact if someone does not promote and teach the ideas and principles within them. People carry legacies! This leads to the next point.

2. Select \_\_\_\_\_ to invest yourself into.

Since people are the carriers of legacy, you need to select key people to invest yourself into so they may “carry the torch.” Again, this is not about a vain attempt at personal mortality, but about making a difference so that others benefit in the future.

Communicate what your intentions are to those you have selected. Seek to inspire and motivate them, and tell them why you are headed in the direction you have chosen. Have them “walk” alongside you as much as possible.

See the *Law of Explosive Growth*, *The Law of the Inner Circle*, and *The Law of Reproduction* to know how to invest in others.

Have you identified the others around you, that by your personal investment into their lives, may go farther than you?

3. Lead as if you will live another \_\_\_\_\_ years.

In my book, I briefly describe this as “leading with the long view.” The average pastor in America stays at his/her church approximately 3 years, that is why so little legacy remains. It takes time to make an impact and develop the people around you. A pastor can do several things to artificially increase the attendance of his/her church, but as soon as he leaves, the people are gone. A businessman can create a short run success, even make a good “quick-profit”, but no one in the future benefits. There is no legacy. Lead as if you will be part of the company, community or planet for another 100 years and your perspective will change dramatically. This does not mean “pace” yourself! Live with passion and a sense of urgency, or no one will be attracted or interested in being part of the legacy you leave.

4. Let go of the reins when it is time, and walk away with dignity and integrity.

There will come a day, even if you do live another hundred years, that your time will be

done and you will need to hand the reins of leadership over to another. Do not hold on longer than you should. How do you know? Answer the question “what is in the best interest of the organization?” and, “what will make the greatest contribution that lives on into the future?” This is the *Law of Legacy*.

### III. Action Assignment

Take some time this month to reflect and journal how you will make a difference and leave a legacy of value to others.

Jot down your thoughts and evaluate whether or not the direction you are headed is what you want your “tombstone” to say when you are through.

If not, make the changes you need to make to begin traveling down the road that will leave the legacy you were meant to leave. Remember though, we think of legacy as what we contribute and “leave” for others to come. The key is to focus on how you live your life today and everyday. This is the stuff legacy is made of, not a last minute effort, but a day-to-day living example of what you want your legacy to be.

You have what you need within you, to be the leader you were meant to be, and to make a difference that will last beyond you. *Live the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* and they will help you reach your leadership potential and make the world a better place to live.

Keep your eyes on your vision, make people your priority, purpose to leave a profound legacy and take one step at a time. Soon you will see your dreams come true.