

**Leadership Orbit:
Infinite Leadership
Potential, Sustainable
Progress**

Matt Mathison

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Dedication

To Holly, Matthew, George, Mary and Francie. This book is dedicated to you. You have given me all of the strength, support and love I've needed in my own life's journey. Your unwavering belief in me has been my greatest leadership lesson.

Acknowledgment

I began writing this book's initial pages amid one of my most difficult business challenges. It was not an ordinary trial, instead it was while I was facing total and complete financial loss and staring into the abyss of the unknown. Initially, I wanted to capture the frenzied and impossibly true stories of this business episode, but eventually, I found myself thriving despite everything – the chaos, the failure, and the struggles and began a journey of reflection and growth. As I share my thoughts on leadership, I must first acknowledge that my understanding of this important subject is deeply rooted in my own experiences, which have been filled with ups and downs, trials, failures and mistakes. These challenges combined with my deep-rooted belief in our eternal purpose have been my greatest teachers, shaping my beliefs and guiding my steps.

To everyone who has been a part of this journey – whether you have walked me with as a friend, a family member, a stranger, or a completely unaware bystander in moments of struggle, desperation, triumph or success – I owe you a debt of gratitude. Your presence, insights, encouragement, and wisdom have been invaluable to me.

I have come to realize that leadership is not about a title, occupying a corner office, or wielding authority. It is about the choices we make daily – choices that reflect lasting value, our willingness to grow and progress, and our capacity to help others in need. This book is not a proclamation of perfection. I have made countless mistakes along the way. This is more a reflection of my ongoing journey toward becoming a better person, a better family member, a better friend, and a better neighbor (the broadest definition of neighbor applies). Ultimately, we all need each other to be better and that begins with the leaders within and among us all choosing to make the next step.

To those who read these pages, I offer my deepest gratitude. My hope is that this book and some of its lessons serve as a reminder that leadership is within reach for each of us, and that our potential is unlimited. My hope and optimism in the face of fear, doubt and pessimism continues to increase as I reflect upon these ideals.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	3
Acknowledgment.....	4
About the Author.....	13
Introduction.....	15
Chapter 1: The Leadership Lie	23
The Antidote	24
Why Am I Writing This Book Now?	33
Chapter 2: The Builder’s Mindset.....	41
Demolishing Your Mental Barriers: The Key to Constructing Your Leadership Launchpad	51
Action Steps: Igniting Your Builder’s Rocket	57
Chapter 3: Transparency and Truth Fuels Thrust and Trust	62
The Night the World Turned Upside Down: Rallying the Troops at NQ Mobile	67
In the Eye of the Storm: A Company Under Siege	70

The Power of Truth and Transparency: Fueling Your Leadership Orbit	77
A Night That Changed Everything: The Muddy Waters Bombshell	83
Action Steps: Igniting Your Leadership Rocket with Truth and Transparency	90
Chapter 4: Speed is a Superpower – Accelerating Your Leadership Ascent.....	94
The Discovery of Speed: Unleashing My Hidden Superpower	100
The Need for Speed: Decisiveness and Agility in Leadership	104
Three Obstacles to Speed	106
Blasting Off at Goldman Sachs	110
The Moment of Turning: Harnessing the Power of Decisive Action	114
Accelerating into Orbit: Harnessing Speed for Perpetual Leadership Momentum.....	120
Action Steps:	125

Chapter 5: Focus on Your Trajectory, Not Your Altitude	130
What Ladder Are You Climbing?	134
Breaking Free From The Cycle	136
The Destination Fallacy	138
Three Daily Wins	144
Eternal Hope and Optimism.....	148
The Pushup Challenge	154
Action Steps:	159
Chapter 6: Small Steps to Massive Momentum.....	163
The Compounding Effects of Micro-Habits.....	168
The Secret to Mastering Your Minutes: How to Turn Time from a Thief into an Ally	175
The Power of the Weekly Review: How One Simple Habit Can Unlock Exponential Growth.....	183
Unstoppable Momentum	189
Action steps:.....	190
Chapter 7: Victories Leave Footprints	194

The Tie That Binds: How Small Gestures Can Leave a Lasting Impact.....	199
The Power of Mentorship	206
The Insatiable Appetite of a True Leader: Constantly Consuming and Filtering New Ideas	211
The Secret to Spotting True Success: Look for the Systems, Not the Scoreboard.....	216
The Mentorship Flywheel: Unleashing the Power of Continuous Contribution	223
Action Steps:	228
Chapter 8: Change the World, One Leader at a Time ...	232
The Leadership Revolution: How Everyday Heroes Are Reshaping the Future.....	235
Igniting Your Leadership Journey: The Power of Intention and Direction	240
Chapter 9: Your Oxygen Is Your Responsibility	250
The Launch of My Hedge Fund – Stay The Course.....	253
The Perils of Short-Term Thinking: A Hedge Fund Manager’s Hard-Learned Lesson	256

The Qihoo Quandary: A Defining Moment in My Hedge Fund Journey.....	262
Guiding Light Through Darkness and Difficulties.....	269
Resist Victimhood and Blaming Others	276
Chapter 10: Your Leadership Flight Plan	283
Charting Your Course to Leadership Orbit	288
Crafting Your Leadership Orbit: A Day in the Life of Sustainable Success	294
Matt’s Daily Leadership Orbit:	296
Charting Your 90-Day Leadership Orbit Launch Plan....	299
Chapter 11: Building Sustainability: The Bedrock of Your Leadership Legacy	307
The Art of Consistent Excellence: Mastering Sustainable Value Creation in a World of Shiny Objects.....	318
Revolutionizing the Digital Landscape: How a Simple Idea Captured Hundreds of Millions of Users.....	321
From Vision to Reality: The Evolution of a Digital Powerhouse	325
The Evolution of Innovation: From Simple Needs to Media Revolution	329

Teaching the Next Generation About Value	332
Investing in Long-Term Visions	336
Chapter 12: Conclusion	342
Launching Your Leadership Orbit.....	342
Illuminating the Future: A World Transformed by Abundant Leadership.....	347
Navigating the Storm: Turning Turbulence into Triumph on Your Leadership Journey	351
The Roots of Resilience: How Family Legacy Shapes Leadership Orbit	355
From Scarcity to Abundance: A Mother’s Journey and Its Impact on Leadership.....	358
Igniting Your Legacy: Launching into Perpetual Impact	363
How Will You Be Remembered?	367

About the Author

Matt Mathison is a visionary leader, seasoned entrepreneur, and passionate investor with over 25 years of experience guiding companies through turbulence, turn-around, and scale. Known for his strategic brilliance and relentless drive, Matt has built, led, and transformed businesses across industries. His journey from Wall Street to boardrooms worldwide has shaped his unique philosophy on leadership: one rooted in radical transparency, resilience, and authentic service. Passionate about empowering others, Matt now dedicates his life to helping leaders unlock their full leadership potential and create lasting, positive impact in both business and life.

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Introduction

Many common beliefs you've been told about leadership are lies. The myth that's been perpetuated for generations is that leadership is reserved for an elite few – that it's a mantle you can only wear if you've got the right title, corner office, or set of inborn traits. We've been conditioned to see leadership as external, granted to us by gatekeepers and institutions. We've learned to look to others – bosses, gurus, public figures – to anoint us as leaders and light our path.

But the hard truth is, no one is coming to crown you with leadership. There is no magical moment when someone taps you on the shoulder and declares, “Now, you're in charge.” That's not how it works. Real leadership – the kind that transforms lives and leaves a legacy – can never be given. It can only be claimed through the quiet, courageous choices you make daily. I believe that each of us is anointed with this capacity and capability.

I've seen the insidious impact of the leadership lie firsthand. Over my decades as an entrepreneur, executive, and investor, I've witnessed countless individuals waiting in the wings of their own lives, convinced they lack what it takes to make a meaningful impact. They've bought into the fallacy

that influence is something you inherit rather than earn. So, they stay stuck on the sidelines, waiting for permission or perfection before they take the field.

The tragedy is this lie doesn't just limit individuals – it robs the world of much-needed change. When we believe that leadership belongs to a chosen few, we abdicate our power to shape our companies, communities, and collective future. We become passive spectators in a game we're all meant to play. We leave our greatest contributions locked inside us, waiting for an invitation that will never come.

I know the pain of this holding pattern intimately. For years, I succumbed to the myth that I needed external validation to make a difference. Despite my success by conventional metrics, I was still waiting for some authority figure to affirm my readiness to lead. I realize now that I was looking for leadership in all the wrong places. The call to greatness doesn't come from the corner office – it comes from the quiet knowing within.

Here's what I've come to understand: leadership isn't about rank, resume, or resources. It's about responsibility. It's about effort. It's about serving others. It's about the willingness to step up and own your impact, no matter your role or

circumstances. Leadership is a way of being, not a destination. It's something you practice, not a prize you pursue. And it starts the moment you decide to stop waiting for someone else to fix what's broken and start building something better. That decision generally begins with building yourself first.

The good news is that leadership is learnable and attainable. Contrary to what the leadership lie would have you believe, no gene preordains you for significance. History is littered with legends who started as average Joes and underdogs. What set them apart wasn't their pedigree – it was their *perspective*. Where others saw limitations, they saw possibilities. Where others made excuses, they made things happen. I deeply believe that everyone has more potential, worth, and goodness than is imaginable to our finite perspectives.

You already possess everything you need to be a powerful leader. You don't have to wait for a promotion, an election, or an invitation. You simply need to ignite the leader within – that inner knowing that you're here to contribute, that your voice matters, and that you have the power to shape your circumstances. When you reframe leadership as an inside job, not an outside endowment, you stop waiting for the world to anoint you and start anointing yourself.

This is your call to consciously shape your corner of the universe. Your invitation to assume the helm of your own hero's journey. Your permission slip to stop waiting and start building.

Will you heed it?

If so, welcome to Leadership Orbit – your practical and soulful guide to unlocking your highest potential and constructing a life of consequence. A life of purpose and meaning. A life of fulfillment despite circumstances. Over the coming chapters, I'll teach you how to escape the gravity of your limiting beliefs and launch yourself into a self-sustaining cycle of growth and impact. I'll show you how to assemble the mindsets, habits, and rituals that allow you to operate from a place of authentic power. And I'll equip you with a toolkit for rising above any circumstance and making every interaction a masterclass in influence.

This isn't your typical leadership manual. You won't find any superficial success formulas or professional posturing techniques. Instead, you'll discover a paradigm for living, working, and relating rooted in radical ownership. A way of moving through the world that allows you to stay anchored in purpose while still soaring in possibility.

Leadership Orbit is a way of being, not just doing. A path of personal mastery and service that leads to enduring significance. A journey without end because it's not about reaching a fixed pinnacle – it's about expanding your positive impact every day and in every domain.

No matter where you're starting from or what challenges you face, you can embark on this expedition. You already possess the raw materials to be an unstoppable force for good. You simply need a system for transmuting those ingredients into a sustaining and lasting orbit.

That's what you're holding in your hands. A treasure map for locating your inner leader and sculpting a legacy you'll be proud of. A blueprint for building a life and body of work that makes people point to the sky and say, "There – that's someone who I want to be around, I want to emulate, I want to be like because they lifted others along the way."

This is my heartfelt challenge to you: rebel against the leadership lie, defy the doubts that have kept you earthbound, activate your innate ability to author transformation, burn the permission slips, and write your own commission. Stake your rightful claim as the predominant creative force in your life.

The world desperately needs your flavor of leadership. Not ten years from now, not after one more credential, but today. We need leaders willing to disrupt dysfunction, speak truth to power, and be more devoted to truthful principles than to public opinion. We need trailblazers courageous enough to forsake well-worn roads and machete new paths. We need builders determined to assemble solutions in the rubble of stale systems.

And that leader is you. As you. Right this very moment.

The only question is, will you step up? Will you shed the false stories and sabotaging behaviors keeping you complicit in a culture of mediocrity? Will you do the inner excavation to unearth your true gifts and start offering them in service of something bigger than yourself? Will you be brave enough to reclaim your inborn power and resilient enough to wield it responsibly?

The choice is yours. But I know this: every hero must face the monster guarding their treasure. If you're feeling the fear, it means you're on the right track. The leadership lie has reigned long enough. It's time to expose it in your own being and exterminate it in the collective. Your quest is to strip away

every self-diminishing myth so you can finally see the leader staring back in the mirror.

Why fight this battle? Because on the other side of every vanquished lie is a reclaimed truth. A piece of your power is restored. And when you gather back those forsaken fragments of yourself, you become an integrated instrument of positive impact. A force of nature in your workplace, home, community, and beyond. Most importantly, you become unshakably loyal to your inner wisdom and well-being.

Here's what I know unequivocally: as you learn to lead yourself, you'll lift the world one person at a time, as within, so without. Every time you subvert a stifling story, you weaken its grip overall. Each instance you interrupt an ancestral pattern, you bust it open for all of us. Whenever you transmute pain into purpose, paralysis into progress, you remind us of what's possible. In those moments, you're not just building your own life – you're building our collective future. We are all in desperate search of more of this, more leadership and fewer leaders who are appointed by some title or role.

That's the real reward of this reclamation. When you deprogram the lie that's been dimming your light, you can't help but brighten everything around you. The people and

pursuits you touch become enchanted by your irrepressible energy. You find yourself on the receiving end of winks from the universe, as though the reality is thanking you for having the guts to revise it. Best of all, you get to savor the satisfaction of constructing a life you don't need to escape from.

I want you to wake up every day clear-eyed and purpose-fueled, eager to answer the call of leadership in ways large and small. I want you to navigate each obstacle and opportunity confident in your capacity to shape worlds with your choices. I want you to reach the end of your days knowing you emptied all your gifts and earned every inch of your expansion. I want you to tackle challenges with hope and optimism – and I want you to become a source of energy to those in your orbits of influence, big and small.

So, turn the page. Take my hand. Let's venture into uncharted territory and start staging a revolution.

Chapter 1: The Leadership Lie

Most people's beliefs about leadership are false. The biggest lie is that others will lead you to success and fulfillment. We've been conditioned to look outside ourselves for leaders – for them to guide us, save us, and show us the way. But the hard truth is, no one is coming to rescue you in a lasting way. Others may fill a void, extend a hand, or offer your needed support. However, those are fleeting and unsustainable. To reach your full potential and achieve lasting success, you must take the helm of your own life. You must ignite the leader within.

I'm not talking about becoming a leader in title or position. True leadership isn't about power, prestige, or corner offices. It's a way of being. An inner quality and presence that inspires and elevates others, regardless of your rank or role. We've all encountered people like this – individuals who radiate hope, possibility, and positive influence wherever they go. They seem to operate on a different wavelength, unperturbed by the chaos and negativity surrounding them. How do they do it? What's the source of their strength and resilience?

Over my 25-year career as an entrepreneur, operator, executive, and investor, I've worked with hundreds of organizations and leaders. I've built and led companies that

have deployed billions of dollars, counseled CEOs and boards, and invested in dozens of startups. I've had a front-row seat to study leadership in action across a wide range of industries, sizes, and situations. Through it all, one thing has become crystal clear: leadership is not what most people think. It's not an elite club or an innate quality reserved for the special few. It's a *choice*. A moment-to-moment decision to bring your highest self forward in service of others and the greater good.

Anyone can learn to embody authentic leadership. But to do so, you must be willing to relinquish outmoded beliefs, take complete responsibility for your circumstances, and begin the courageous work of leading yourself first.

The Antidote

The antidote to the leadership lie is the leadership truth: small, simple, consistent choices done over long periods of time generate miracles. If you can learn this truth, you can become more powerful than you realize. You don't need a title or crown to make a difference. Real leadership emerges from within, rooted in the courage to uncover your authentic voice, vision, and values. It's not about grand achievements but rather the alignment of your actions with your core principles. By consistently taking small steps true to yourself, you build not

just your own character but also your capacity to shape the world around you. Over time, these seemingly minor actions compound, leading to remarkably powerful outcomes that can transform both you and your environment.

If you're reading this, know that you were born to lead – not through titles, but through your authentic truth. Your unique perspective and talents are meant to ignite change, one person at a time. As you share your light and ideas, you create ripples of positive influence that touch individuals in ways only you can. This personal impact, multiplied across countless interactions, is how true transformation occurs. What starts as your singular symphony can grow into a powerful uprising, changing the world person by person. In the grand tapestry of history, you might seem like a small thread, but to those whose lives you touch, you're the pivotal plot twist that alters everything. Your leadership energy, when genuinely expressed, has the potential to create a groundswell of change that can become beautifully, unexpectedly huge.

But to claim this birthright, you must start seeing leadership in a radically new light – not as a mountaintop to scale, but as a mindset to embody moment by moment. You must break the spell of smallness that's kept you settling for less than your worth. You must conjure the conviction that your

contribution matters, even if you can't yet see how. Most of all, you must choose to author your own path instead of looking for someone to carve it for you.

That's what this book is about – awakening and unleashing the leader inside of you. What I call activating your Leadership Orbit. When you operate from this inner center of gravity, you become an unstoppable force for good. External conditions and events no longer control you – you begin to shape them and find increasing strength from overcoming them. You attract opportunities, resources, and people that rocket you toward your goals and dreams. Like a satellite breaking free of Earth's pull, you ascend to a higher trajectory and settle into a self-sustaining groove. You still face problems and challenges, but from an elevated vantage point that allows you to meet them with poise and purpose. Most importantly, you tap into an inexhaustible power source that replenishes you even in the darkest times: the deep conviction that your existence matters and that you're here to make a meaningful difference. This type of energy is inspiring, attractive, and sought after. It is what many people feel and want leaders to be.

But I won't sugarcoat it. Launching your Leadership Orbit is no easy feat. Like any mission to space, it demands commitment, perseverance, and hard work. You'll have to

confront your fears, limitations, and mental blocks. Take bold risks and leaps of faith. Push yourself beyond your current concept of what's possible.

Activating your inner leader requires deprogramming decades of conditioning and seeking the truth about yourself and others. To step into your true power, you must relinquish the limiting beliefs and behaviors keeping you small, grounded, or stuck. You must confront the fear of failure, judgment, and rejection that keeps you conforming to a broken status quo. You've got to rewrite the mental scripts telling you that you're not ready, qualified, or enough to create change.

The leadership lie's most insidious effect is how it severs our connection to our innate capacity for influence, pushing us into an inauthentic performance. We often chase external approval and societal praise, not realizing that these are frequently based on misguided ideals and falsehoods. This pursuit doesn't generate the optimistic, sustainable energy needed for true leadership. Instead, it traps us in a narrow mold of what we think a leader 'should' be, causing us to lose touch with our authentic selves and potential. We end up suppressing our originality and compromising our core principles, all for the sake of fitting into a prescribed role. The irony is that real, impactful leadership stems from embracing our unique qualities

and values, not from conforming to external expectations. It's by staying true to ourselves that we create a genuine, lasting positive influence.

Consider how leadership lies in organizations. The wrong people get promoted because they fit an outdated archetype, while unconventional talents get overlooked. Diversity of thought gets quashed as everyone contorts themselves to resemble the brass at the top. Would-be innovators and disruptors bite their tongues, unwilling to rock the boat. Best practices calcify into unchallenged dogma while new ideas wither on the vine. Truth is either ignored or hidden for fear of what it would expose - often about the people in the leadership roles. Therefore, organizations do not progress or improve - rather, they stagnate and falter.

Now, think of how this lie infects our civic life. Well-meaning citizens believe they lack the clout or credentials to drive progress, so they outsource their agency to a broken political machine. Grassroots movements lose steam as people doubt their capacity to effect large-scale change. The will of the many gets drowned out by the wallets of a privileged few. We self-segregate into polarized camps, convinced that compromise is surrender.

Worst of all, consider how the leadership lie corrodes your soul. When you internalize the false belief that you don't have what it takes to steer your own ship, you drift through life at the mercy of outside forces. You bury your deepest desires and settle for hand-me-down dreams. You marinate in resignation and resentment, never quite shaking the sense that you were meant for more. You sleepwalk through unlived days, numbing your restlessness with creature comforts. You starve yourself of hope and optimism in the face of difficulties and trials. You resign to remain stuck because you have yet to find a solution to a current problem.

The true cost of the leadership lie is profound and devastating: it strips you of agency over your irreplaceable, fleeting existence. It usurps your ability to script your own narrative, silencing your authentic voice and dimming the unique light you were meant to shine. This deception doesn't just affect your professional life; it infiltrates your very essence, stealing the pen with which you were meant to author your own extraordinary story. In succumbing to this falsehood, you forfeit the power to craft a life that resonates with your deepest truths and highest aspirations. But no more. Today, this toxic myth dies.

The rewards are more than worth it. When you're living a life that is centered on integrity and focused on continual progress, everything changes. Your work takes on greater meaning and impact. Your relationships become richer and more fulfilling. You experience more joy, gratitude, and peace of mind. You become an instrument of service, inspiration, and positive transformation. Just imagine what our families, organizations, and communities would look like if more people stepped up to lead in this way. What if we all shifted from looking for heroes to save the day to focusing on how we can each be the change we wish to see? How would our world be different if the majority, not the minority, embraced stewardship over self-interest? What if we became fulfilled by problem-solving and consistent process building over get-rich-quick or instant gratification schemes?

This is the vision and invitation I'm putting forth in Leadership Orbit. To help you awaken the leader within and join a rising movement of people dedicated to being a force for good. No matter where you are starting from or what challenges you currently face, you can learn to harness the principles and practices of authentic leadership to transform your life and lift up those around you. You already have everything you need.

It's time to clear away the interference and let your inner leader shine.

In the pages ahead, I'll take you behind the scenes of my own leadership journey and share hard-won lessons from my triumphs and failures. You'll discover the mindsets and habits that distinguish true leaders and how to begin cultivating them in your own life. We'll dive into topics like purpose, integrity, courage, empathy, resilience and more. I'll guide you through a proven process to create your personal Leadership Orbit blueprint and provide tools and exercises to put your learning into action. You'll hear inspiring examples and case studies of individuals who are modeling authentic leadership in all walks of life. My goal is to equip and empower you with a practical framework for leading yourself and others, at work and beyond.

If you're ready to activate your leadership potential, this book is your launch pad. But let me be clear – becoming the leader you were born to be is a lifelong journey that extends far beyond these pages. My aim is to ignite the spark within you and provide ongoing fuel for your flight. In the end, you are both the spacecraft and the astronaut of your own leadership mission. Only you can pilot your way to a meaningful destination. But it would be my honor to serve as mission

control, to offer guidance, support, and encouragement whenever you need it.

Together, let's erase every internalized lie and raise a new reality in its place. Let's compose a counternarrative of courage over convention, audacity over apathy. Let's commit to mastering this moment and assembling the future we know is possible.

It won't be easy. It can't be because ease is the enemy of evolution. The path of purposeful leadership demands more of you than the well-grooved road of conformity. There will be doubters to defy, demons to duel, and dark nights to endure. You'll be tempted to turn back at every twist in the trail.

But press on. Keep going. Don't stop. The world is starving for your authentic leadership. Now, more than ever, we need leaders like you to step into your rightful role as conscious co-creators. To stake your place in the lineage of ordinary humans who did extraordinary things because they had the courage to believe they could. To show us that influence isn't the birthright of a chosen few – it's the duty of the caring many.

Can you hear it? The call to lead from *exactly where you are with exactly what you have*? That's the sound of your soul rousing you to rise. To rip up the rulebook and write your own

revolution. To remember the singular truth that will set you free:

Leadership isn't something you achieve. It's something you become. Day by day. Choice by choice. Act by act. In every moment, you're casting a vote for the reality you wish to create – with your thoughts, words, and deeds.

If you want to lead, all you have to do is decide. Not once in a while, but continuously. Declare dominion over your domain and resolve to conduct yourself accordingly. Embrace extreme ownership and start bending your corner of the universe toward beauty.

The world will never hand you permission to be powerful – so grant it to yourself. Crown yourself as the chief architect of your fate. Anoint yourself as the creative engine behind everything you undertake – from your career trajectory to your community's culture.

Why Am I Writing This Book Now?

For years, the idea of writing a book had been percolating in the back of my mind, a persistent whisper that grew louder with each passing experience. The call to write came from a deep place – a burning desire to share the wild, exceptional, and

often unbelievable moments that had shaped my professional journey.

“Matt, you’ve got to get this down on paper,” my friends and colleagues would urge, their eyes wide with fascination and incredulity. “The things you’ve seen, the stories you have to tell – it’s the stuff of movies!”

And they were right. Over the years, I had accumulated a treasure trove of tales that defied belief. For the time, I found myself at the center of a Chinese public Company’s dramatic unraveling, complete with billionaires vanishing at the hands of the government and accusations of fraud flying faster than Kungfu kicks. It was a saga so surreal, so stranger-than-fiction, that even the most imaginative Hollywood scriptwriter would have been hard-pressed to dream it up.

But as tempting as it was to dive into the juicy details and spin a page-turner, something held me back. Sure, I could have cranked out a sensationalized account of corporate intrigue and international scandal, riding the morbid fascination that often accompanies such spectacles. But as I moved further away from those events and gained perspective, I realized that the real story – the one truly worth telling – was about something far more profound.

You see, in the aftermath of each dramatic business episode, once the dust had settled and the adrenaline had worn off, I found myself not just surviving but truly thriving. This realization became the catalyst for founding MBL Partners with my co-founder, James Lindsley. We recognized that these challenging moments in business weren't just obstacles to overcome but opportunities for transformative growth.

That's why we developed the THRIVE PLAYBOOK. It's more than just a tool; it's the culmination of our experiences and insights. When I reflect on those intense periods in my own career, I see how a structured approach could have accelerated my path from survival to success. Now, with the THRIVE PLAYBOOK, we're able to guide other businesses through their own dramatic episodes and beyond.

Our playbook addresses three critical questions I wish I had clear answers to earlier in my journey: Is this a good business, or can it be? Does the business have the right team and processes to grow and thrive? Crucially, does the business have sufficient cash and capital to execute and the right tools to track this going forward?

By leveraging the MBL Partners THRIVE PLAYBOOK, we help leaders standardize, operate, and execute excellently.

It's not just about weathering storms; it's about emerging stronger, more focused, and better equipped for long-term success. Through this approach, we're turning those adrenaline-fueled moments of crisis into launchpads for unprecedented growth and prosperity.

It was in those moments of guiding others – whether across a boardroom table or over a Coke Zero with an intern – that the purpose behind my unlikely path crystallized. The world didn't need another tell-all memoir or self-aggrandizing success manual. It needed a roadmap for harnessing the most precious and elusive resource: authentic, empowering leadership.

“Leadership, not just leaders,” I would find myself saying, almost like a mantra. “We're desperate for it, starved for it, aching for it in every corner of society. And yet so few truly understand what it means, let alone how to cultivate it.”

The more I reflected on my own journey and the struggles I witnessed in the businesses and the people I served, the more I became convinced that unlocking the secrets of genuine leadership was the key to not just individual fulfillment but collective flourishing. If I could distill the principles and practices that allowed some to not just ride out the storms but

harness them for growth, perhaps I could help spark a rising tide of resilience in a world increasingly defined by disruption.

And so, the book I had once envisioned as a Hollywood-ready chronicle of corporate capers morphed into something far more expansive and elemental. It became a quest to codify the mindsets, habits, and choices that elevate mere mortals into leaders – not just in title, but in truth. A blueprint for building the inner and outer muscles needed to meet any moment with grounded conviction and creative agility. An invitation to step into the eye of the hurricane and discover the calm clarity that lies at the core of chaos.

When I finally took the leap and launched my own firm last year, untethered from the golden handcuffs of the public or private equity prestige, I knew it was now or never. If I was going to be the change I wished to see, to embody the leadership I espoused, I had to take the first bold step and send my message out into the world.

“Let’s do this,” I declared excitedly to the small army of friends, family, and colleagues who had been cheering me on from the sidelines, waiting for me to make my move. “No more delay, no more doubt. The time is now.”

And so, here we are. Birthing this book not as some vanity project or promotional ploy but as an act of service and a leap of faith. Trusting that by vulnerably sharing the trials, triumphs, and hard-fought truths of my own unfinished odyssey, I might just make the path a little less daunting for those who follow.

This book is my attempt to pay forward the priceless education I've received at the hands of hardship, to translate the tests into testimonies and the messes into messages. To light the way for the leader in the making, the builder in the becoming, and the phoenix in the rising.

Because if there's one thing I know for sure, it's that the world doesn't need more shiny objects or celebrity CEOs. It needs more ordinary heroes with the guts to lead from exactly where they are, with exactly what they have. More humble students of their own unfolding story, more gentle sculptors of their own noble character. More heart-centered humans choose progress over perfection, contribution over competition, and courage over comfort. Every single day.

That's the real reason I'm finally putting pen to paper. Not to cement my own legacy but to convince you to start crafting yours. I want to share the tools, mindsets, and hard-fought

wisdom that have allowed me to alchemize adversity into advantage and show you how to do the same. To prove to you, through my own improbable journey, that leadership isn't about changing the world – it's about changing yourself so deeply that *you can't help but change the world one by one.*

So, no, this book isn't just a business memoir or a leadership manual. It's a call to adventure, a summons to service, a daring invitation to discover the leader within and bring it to life in the crucible of an increasingly uncertain world. It's a field guide for the quiet rebels and unlikely heroes, the unassuming underdogs and invisible giants. For anyone who's ever looked at the towering challenges of our time and wondered, "What can I do?"

The answer is everything. You can do everything. Not by yourself, not all at once, but choice by choice and deed by deed. You can build the inner alignment and outer alliance needed to rise to any occasion and meet any moment. You can lead yourself and others from the edge of your fear into the heart of your power. You can leave this world better than you found it, one fractured status quo at a time. You can lift your family, your friends, your teammates, your organization, your community, person by person.

That's the promise and the premise of this book: that you are already the leader you seek, that you have everything you need to get started, and that your voice – your vision, your values – matters more than you can possibly imagine. The only thing left to do is believe it, act like it, continually improve on it, and let the rest unfold.

If you're ready for that journey, if you're willing to trade the false safety of the sidelines for the exhilarating adventure of the arena, then consider this your personal invitation. To step up, stand out, and start writing a story others will be reading long after you're gone.

The world is waiting for your unique brand of leadership magic. Let's discover it together, one orbit at a time.

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Chapter 2: The Builder's Mindset

What separates those who dream from those who achieve? What's the difference between people who constantly struggle and those who seem to manifest their goals effortlessly? It's not skill, talent, connections, or even resources. It all comes down to one thing: mindset. How you perceive yourself and approach your challenges determines whether you reach escape velocity or get pulled back down by gravity.

Think of the most successful leaders you know or admire. Chances are they all have one trait in common: they are builders. No matter their field or focus, they see themselves as creators, not consumers. Problems are projects to be solved, not burdens to bear. Where others get stopped by obstacles, they get busy constructing a way forward. They don't wait around for perfect conditions to begin – they choose themselves and start with what they have and where they are. Adopting this builder's mindset is the first and most critical step to launching your own leadership orbit.

I first learned this lesson as a young baseball player. I wasn't the most naturally gifted athlete, but I had a secret

weapon: my dad taught me ways that I could build up skills and strength step by step. I would not just throw a baseball - I would practice my grip and my stride and then hit a precise target on a shirt - not just throw to the overall chest. I would not just go hit baseballs; I would do daily drills to strengthen my forearms and learn to have quick hands by doing various exercises each day. I learned that building was the key to outperforming my peers, not just raw talent. This was my Karate Kid enlightening, similar to when Miagi had Daniel waxed on and waxed off for weeks.

This experience taught me that all meaningful accomplishments are built, not bought. You have to assemble them with your own two hands, one piece at a time. There's no store where you can purchase a thriving business, loving relationship, or unshakeable self-confidence. These things don't just appear because you want them to – you have to erect them like a skyscraper, floor by floor, starting with a solid foundation. The same is true for authentic leadership. You don't just arrive one day as a visionary commander – you build yourself into one with every decision, action and habit.

When you shift into a builder's mindset, dormant forces awaken inside you. Passive resignation transforms into active responsibility. Inspiration ignites initiative. Vague notions

crystallize into concrete plans. You stop seeing dead ends and start constructing doorways. Building becomes your default mode, not some future fantasy – you realize leadership is something you practice, not a position you wait to be appointed to. You seize the reins of your own growth and take command of creating the life and impact you desire.

But here's the thing: we're not trained to be builders. Society conditions us to be mere occupants, passively waiting for someone else to give us directions and a destination. The education system grooms us to be obedient employees, not intrepid entrepreneurs. Pop culture sells us images of overnight success, not the long, unglamorous work of gradual progress. Even the self-help industry often peddles magic bullets and manifestation shortcuts, reinforcing the notion that results can be conjured through wishing rather than working. It's no wonder so many people feel stuck, stagnant and unfulfilled – they've been programmed to believe that leadership is reserved for the chosen few, not something to be claimed and constructed.

To launch your leadership orbit, you must rebel against this programming and reclaim your inherent power as a creator. You are not here to simply spectate and settle – you are designed to build and contribute. Everything you need to lead

already exists inside you, but it must be assembled through your daily choices and actions. You must summon the courage to bet on yourself, even when you can't see the whole staircase. You must cultivate the grit to persist through uncertainty, adversity, and failure. Most of all, you must ground yourself in the conviction that you are worthy and capable of bringing your unique gifts to the world.

A builder's mindset feels unnatural, but anyone who has had to recover from an injury learns that we are programmed to work this way. When you begin physical therapy after repairing a knee or hip, you must build up the muscles and the intellectual paths again to lift a leg up, rotate it, shift it, etc. You build things up one step at a time. This applies to everything, even things as natural as eating. Did you know in some food therapy schools for children who have difficulty eating or tolerating all of the sensory issues associated with eating that there are dozens of steps to eating that you must build up including creating certain connections in your brain? Most of the steps occur unconsciously, but those who have extreme eating challenges must go through each step along the path to actually eat enough food to thrive. We all must consciously construct this way of being. But once you master it, you realize it's the only way to fly. Victims make excuses –

builders make progress. Pessimists make complaints – builders make plans. Settlers make compromises – builders make history. When you commit to the path of building, you stop sleepwalking through a secondhand script and start authoring your own destiny. You trade a life of default and dependency for one of design and self-reliance. You wake up each day energized by the opportunity to discover what you're really made of and use your gifts in service of something greater.

The world desperately needs more builders, not of monuments to the ego, but of ladders for others to climb. We need leaders who construct platforms for shared prosperity, not pedestals for self-promotion. We need leaders who erect bridges across divides, not walls of exclusion. We need leaders who assemble movements that uplift the many, not machines that enrich the few. This all starts with you. As you learn to build yourself into a conscious creator and exemplar, you permit others to do the same. You provide the spark that ignites a chain reaction of leadership throughout your sphere of influence.

So, grab your gear. Put on your hard hat. Pick up your tools. It's time to go to work, building the leader you were born to be – brick by brick, choice by choice, day by day. As we begin this construction project together, let me share a quote by

author Robin Sharma: “All change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end.” The building process is rarely smooth or straightforward – expect a roller coaster, not a cakewalk. But if you commit to it and see it through, what you assemble will astound you. Piece by piece, you’ll build your leadership observatory – a higher perch from which to see what’s possible. And brick by brick, you’ll construct your launchpad to leadership orbit – the power to rise above any limitation or circumstance.

Let’s lay the first stone now.

Your Foundations Become Your Launchpad: Matt’s Journey to Becoming a BuilderMy journey to becoming a builder began on the baseball diamond. From the time I could hold a bat, my father was teaching me the power of consistent effort and the joy of honing your craft. He showed me that greatness isn’t just about natural talent – it’s something you construct through dedication and discipline.

I remember the hours we spent playing catch, with Dad challenging me to hit a precise target on his glove. At first, I could barely throw it to him with accuracy enough for him not to have to move his feet to catch the ball. But with each throw, my accuracy improved. And when I inevitably got frustrated,

Dad was always there with a smile and an encouraging word, reminding me that progress is a process.

On the days we couldn't practice together, Dad had me doing drills to build strength and muscle memory. I'd stand for hours in the backyard, chopping a bat up and down or working on my grip. At the time, it seemed monotonous. But as I grew older, I realized those small, daily actions were the secret sauce that set me apart from my peers.

By the time I was a teenager, I was outperforming kids with more natural talent, skill and strength. It wasn't because I was more talented. It was because, brick by brick, I had built a foundation of fundamental skills. That's when it hit me: everything meaningful in life, from relationships to careers, follows this same pattern. The most impressive feats aren't conjured overnight – they're assembled gradually through unglamorous daily effort.

This revelation became my North Star as I progressed through school and my early career. At Goldman Sachs, I watched my colleagues gunning for glory and focusing solely on big outcomes. But I put my head down and fell in love with the process. I was a research sales analyst who read each report, talked with the analysts, and ultimately derived a daily

summarized highlight list of the most actionable stock ideas shared among my senior colleagues and became a dependable source of ideas and value add. Piece by piece. Brick by brick. I built a reputation as someone who could be trusted to lay a solid groundwork and be a valuable source of ideas and information sharing that Goldman's customers would pay for.

When I ventured out to start my own companies, this builder's mindset was my secret weapon. In a world obsessed with flashy exits and fast growth, I focused on implementing the systems and habits to generate sustainable momentum. I measured success not by singular accomplishments but by continuous forward motion, no matter how small.

Even as I took on bigger roles, leading bigger businesses and high-stakes turnarounds, I never lost sight of what really mattered: building with intention. To me, leadership isn't about the title on your office door or the zeros in your bank account. It's about constructing a life of purpose and lifting those around you. It's about the legacy you assemble through service and stewardship.

Looking back, I'm grateful for every challenge and opportunity that shaped my journey. But most of all, I'm thankful for the people who helped me build a strong

foundation. From my father's wisdom to the mentors and partners who nurtured my growth, I'm a product of the village that raised me. Now, it's my privilege to pay it forward by empowering others to construct lives of significance.

Today, building isn't just what I do – it's who I am. It's the lens through which I view every aspect of my life, from my faith and family to my businesses and investments. With each new endeavor, I start from the ground up, patiently stacking the fundamentals and trusting that momentum will flow from there.

In a world fixated on shortcuts and overnight triumphs, I know this path can feel counterintuitive. But if there's one thing I've learned, nothing worth achieving comes easy. The good stuff – the relationships, experiences, and contributions that make life rich – must be earned the old-fashioned way.

So, to anyone feeling stuck or searching for meaning, my message is simple: *start building*. Identify the skills, habits, and values you want to assemble, and lay the first brick. Embrace the process, not just the prize. Fall in love with the feeling of getting better, day by day and deed by deed.

Because here's the thing about being a builder: the reward isn't some distant finish line. It's the incomparable sense of

ownership and autonomy you feel when you set your own foundation. It's the invincible power that comes from weathering adversity and emerging stronger. It's the unshakable peace of being true to your principles and inner voice.

This isn't just my story. It's a blueprint for anyone who wants to construct a life that counts. Whether you're leading a Company, raising a family, or seeking personal growth, the principles are the same. Start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can. Then, wake up tomorrow and lay another brick.

That's the beauty and the promise of the builder's journey. When you fall in love with the process, not just the outcome, an extraordinary thing happens, and you realize you've been flying all along. Brick by brick, choice by choice, you've assembled your wings. And now, it's time to soar.

Demolishing Your Mental Barriers: The Key to Constructing Your Leadership Launchpad

Every builder knows that before erecting a soaring tower, you must first clear the construction site of rubble and debris. The same is true for building your leadership potential. To lay a solid foundation for growth, you have to remove the mental obstacles blocking your progress. Insecurities, past failures, and limiting beliefs are the inner trash heaps that keep you playing small. They are the subconscious saboteurs that undermine your confidence, dull your ambition, and convince you to settle for less than you can. Left unchecked, they will chain you to a life of unrealized dreams and untapped potential.

But here's the good news: you have the power to demolish these barriers. Like a wrecking ball, you can smash through the walls of self-doubt and emerge victorious on the other side. You can't control the past or erase your failures, but you can choose how you interpret and respond to them. You can't prevent insecurities from arising, but you can develop the strength to overrule them. You can't avoid limiting beliefs, but you can

challenge and rewrite them. Transforming your inner landscape is the surest path to reinventing your outer reality.

The first step is awareness. You can't change what you don't acknowledge. Most of us are so identified with our mental chatter that we mistake it for truth. We assume our insecurities accurately reflect who we are rather than distorted fun-house mirrors. We believe our past failures define us instead of simply being lessons on the path to success. We accept our limiting beliefs as immutable laws, not realizing they are merely opinions we've put on repeat. Shining the spotlight of consciousness on your inner obstacles robs them of their power and exposes them as the imposters they are.

One of my favorite tools for building awareness is writing. I began writing a weekly letter home while I served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in South Korea from 1996-1998. I really have never given up that habit of writing a summary of the week since. Professionally, I am known for my regular email updates. They have evolved from a daily summary of actionable stock ideas while on the trading desk at Goldman Sachs to what is now a "weekend update" to all my partners on each of the various companies I'm currently operating. The purpose behind those different types of writing is the same. Getting your thoughts out of your head and onto

paper creates space between you and them. It allows you to observe your mental patterns with objectivity and distance rather than being swallowed by them. I encourage you to start writing your thoughts, highlights, and lowlights. Recap the week that just concluded or preview the upcoming week ahead. You could start by free writing about your insecurities, failures, and limiting beliefs. What are the doubts and fears that keep you up at night? What are the negative stories you tell yourself about your worth and capabilities? What are the assumptions and generalizations you've made based on past disappointments? Don't edit or judge what comes out – the goal is to empty your psychological closet so you can take inventory.

Once you've identified your inner obstacles, the next step is to interrogate them. Subject each thought to the scrutiny of your wiser self. Is this really true, or is it just a belief I've inherited? Is this an objective fact or an emotional scar from the past? What evidence do I have to support or refute this idea? Is this thought serving my growth or keeping me trapped in a box? Questions like these help you see through the smokescreens of your ego and reclaim your power of choice. You may not be able to silence your inner critic completely, but you can learn to answer back with a more compassionate and expansive perspective.

Another potent practice is reframing. Obstacles are opportunities in disguise. Within every barrier is a hidden invitation to grow beyond it. Insecurities can be reframed as signals that you're stretching outside your comfort zone, which is essential for building strength. Failures can be reinterpreted as stepping stones, valuable teachers that reveal the holes in your approach. Limiting beliefs can be recognized as outdated scripts that need to be rewritten to align with your authentic identity. Instead of beating yourself up for your imperfections, see them as the perfect training ground for your development.

As you push through your inner resistance, celebrate the courage it takes to confront yourself. Excavating your shadowy depths is not for the faint of heart – it requires radical honesty, relentless responsibility, and heroic humility. But as you clear away the dead weight of the past, you'll find buried treasure in its place. Underneath the layers of limitation, you'll uncover your true power, resilience, and boundless potential. In the fertile soil of your inner being, you'll discover the seeds of the leader you were born to become.

Uprooting your mental barriers is a lifelong process. Like weeds, they have a way of creeping back when you're not looking. But with consistent mindfulness and diligence, you can keep your inner landscape clean and clutter-free. As you master

your mind, you'll find it easier to trust yourself, take bold action, and bounce back from setbacks. You'll spend less time wrestling with ghosts and more time actualizing your grandest visions. You'll stop fixating on what you can't do and start marveling at how much you can. Most importantly, you'll learn to accept and love yourself unconditionally, knowing your worth is not defined by external validation, especially from insincere sources.

Building your leadership launchpad is an inside job. No one can bestow confidence or cast out doubt for you – you must do the inner excavation yourself. But as you neutralize the negativity within, you'll find the external blocks and barriers melting away, too, as within, so without. When you commit to your own liberation, the universe conspires to support you. Everything you need to fulfill your mission will start lining up like stepping stones on your path.

So, grab your hard hat and put on your steel-toed boots. Pick up your shovel and start digging. Rip up the rotten floorboards of fear and insecurity. Sledgehammer the walls of self-sabotage and shame. Bulldoze the boulders of limiting beliefs. Tear down the rusty scaffolding of your small self and build a palace for your highest potential. It will take blood, sweat, and tears – but it will be worth it. Once you clear the

debris, you'll have space to construct an unshakable inner citadel – one that can withstand any external earthquake or hurricane.

Remember, your past does not determine your future – only your present choices do. No matter how many times you've stumbled or how deep you've fallen, you have the power to get back up and try again. You are not defined by your failures but by the resilience you develop because of them. You are not a prisoner of your doubts but a pioneer of your destiny. The only limits that truly exist are the ones between your ears – and even those are made to be broken.

The world needs your unique leadership gift. It's time to stop hiding behind your mental blocks and step into your full stature. Summon the courage to face your inner demons head-on. Embrace the discomfort of shedding your old skin. Commit to your growth with unwavering dedication. Most of all, trust that as you do the work of building yourself, brick by brick, day by day, you are becoming the leader you are meant to be.

Now, let's roll up our sleeves and start clearing the way for your ascent. The journey to your highest potential starts now.

Action Steps: Igniting Your Builder's Rocket

As we conclude this chapter, it's time to put these powerful ideas into practice. To help you implement the key lessons and start building momentum, I've provided 5 actionable steps below. The beauty of this approach is its flexibility – you get to choose how many steps to tackle based on your current situation and ambition level. If you're just getting started, commit to 1-2 steps. For a moderate challenge, aim for 3-4. And if you're ready to fully ignite your leadership orbit, embrace all 5. The goal is to inspire you with options while ensuring you see tangible results from applying these concepts. As you start experiencing positive changes, you'll find yourself naturally motivated to keep pushing forward. Remember, every step you take, no matter how small, is progress on your leadership journey. So, let's dive in and start turning insight into action!

1. Conduct a “Personal Success Inventory”: Reflect on times in your life when you've successfully achieved a result you're proud of in both personal and professional spheres. Identify the specific mindsets and methods you used to overcome obstacles and reach your goals. Distill these winning strategies into a checklist that you can refer to for future endeavors. Recognize these traits as your unique

blend of attributes that will propel you to leadership excellence.

2. Initiate a “Project Breakdown Sequence”: Choose a goal or challenge you’ve been hesitant to tackle – one that feels slightly beyond your current capabilities. Break the project down into the smallest possible action steps. Commit to completing one small task each day to build momentum. Celebrate each milestone, recognizing that each small win brings you closer to your target. Embrace the builder’s ethos of gradual, consistent progress.
3. Engage in “Resilience Training”: Identify a recent setback or failure that’s been weighing on your mind. Instead of dwelling on the disappointment, conduct a thorough analysis to extract learning opportunities from the experience. Ask yourself: “What went wrong, and what could I do differently next time? What skills or mindsets do I need to develop to increase my chances of success? How can I use this lesson to fuel my growth?” Reframe the failure as a critical data point that will inform your future strategies.
4. Undertake an “Apprenticeship”: Seek out a mentor or role model who embodies the builder’s spirit – someone who has

consistently achieved meaningful results in the face of adversity. Request their guidance as you navigate your own leadership journey. Approach the relationship with specific questions and goals, demonstrating your commitment to learning and growth. Offer to assist them in their own projects as a way of expressing gratitude and solidifying your skills. Embrace the power of apprenticeship as a catalyst for your own development.

5. Join a “Builder’s Network”: Surround yourself with a community of like-minded leaders who are dedicated to creating positive change. Seek out mastermind groups, accountability partnerships, or collaborative projects that will challenge you to stretch and grow. Share your goals and support others in their own leadership journeys. Foster a spirit of camaraderie and mutual elevation, recognizing that we go further together than we ever could alone. Allow the collective energy of your network to fuel your progress.

As you implement these action steps, remember that your builder’s journey is an ongoing adventure with no predetermined endpoint. Each project completed and skill mastered is another milestone in the grand expanse of your potential. The true thrill lies not in reaching some final

destination but in continually discovering new horizons within yourself.

Whenever you feel lost in doubt, return to your core principles. Reconnect with your driving purpose, your guiding values, and your inner knowing that you are here to build something extraordinary. Let your vision be the guiding light that orientates you through any obstacle.

Keep in mind that even the most legendary leaders started as novices. They didn't wait for perfect conditions or a flawless plan to begin their journey. They simply started, powered by their commitment and determination.

The same spirit lives within you. Your builder's instinct will propel you to new heights. Your creativity will illuminate new pathways and possibilities.

So, prepare yourself, intrepid explorer. Your leadership journey awaits. Activate your resilience, resourcefulness, and resolve. Set your sights on your most audacious aspirations.

In the words of visionary Wernher von Braun, "I have learned to use the word 'impossible' with the greatest caution." As you embark on your building odyssey, let these words be your rallying cry. Let them remind you that the only

limitations that truly exist are the ones you place on your own imagination.

The vast potential within you is ready for you to take the lead. Begin your journey, courageous builder. It's time to construct your path to greatness.

Chapter 3: Transparency and Truth Fuels Thrust and Trust

“The degree to which a person can grow is directly proportional to the amount of truth they can accept about themselves without running away.” – Leland Val Van De Wall

The date was October 24, 2013, and I had just wrapped up a whirlwind week in Beijing. As the newly minted Vice President of Capital Markets at NQ Mobile, I had been thrust into the heart of one of the most exciting and fast-paced periods in the Company’s history. We were riding high on the back of record-breaking financial results, a new high in the stock, and corresponding record enterprise valuation, and we had just completed a massive \$172 million convertible bond raise with a strong balance sheet and a string of headline-grabbing big-name partnerships and initiatives, we had created a significant buzz in the global tech industry.

But for me, the real highlight of the trip was the chance to be on the ground for NQ’s 8th anniversary celebration. In China, the number eight is considered a powerful symbol of luck and prosperity, and there was a palpable sense of excitement

and anticipation in the air as we geared up for what promised an unforgettable event.

On the night of the 24th of October, I huddled in a hotel room with Omar Khan, NQ's charismatic co-CEO, who had just flown in from the States. Omar had asked me to debrief him on the week's meetings and prepare him for the grueling schedule of speeches, press conferences, and VIP schmoozing that lay ahead. For two straight hours, we pored over the details – the new business ideas, the cutting-edge technologies, the high-stakes acquisition targets. It was exhilarating and exhausting all at once.

As I finally made my way back to my own room just after 1 a.m., I couldn't help but marvel at the incredible journey that had brought me to this moment. Just three short months earlier, I had taken a leap of faith and joined NQ in a newfound role. It had been a whirlwind from day one – a nonstop blur of deals and decisions, victories and setbacks. But through it all, I had felt an unshakeable sense of purpose and conviction. I knew that NQ was on the cusp of something truly special, and I was thrilled to be a part of it.

Settling in at my desk, I decided to do one last check of my email before calling it a night. It was the middle of the trading

day back in the US, and I wanted to make sure there were no fires that needed putting out. But as I logged in and scanned my inbox, I felt a sudden sense of unease wash over me.

The first thing I noticed was the stock price. In the span of just a few seconds, NQ's shares had plummeted from \$22 to \$18 – a staggering drop that sent a shiver down my spine. Then came the flood of instant messages and emails, each one more urgent and alarming than the last. Investors, bankers, analysts—they were all clamoring for information, reassurance, and some kind of explanation.

And then, the phone calls started. Our media team, frantic investors, reporters from every major news outlet – the ringers just kept on coming, each one more insistent than the last. In that moment, it felt like the whole world was collapsing in on me. I couldn't catch my breath, couldn't form a coherent thought. All I could do was stare at the screen before me, my heart pounding in my chest as I tried to make sense of what was happening. I had spent my entire career before NQ in public equity on the sell-and-buy sides. I was used to volatility. But this was different – entirely different.

And then, amidst the chaos and the confusion, a single message caught my eye. It was from an investor I had worked

with closely in the past, someone whose opinion I trusted and respected. And it contained just nine words that would change everything:

“Matt – MW out with an 82-page report on NQ...82 FCKing pages!”

MW. Muddy Waters. The name alone was enough to send a chill through my veins. Muddy Waters was one of the most notorious short-selling firms in the world, known for its scathing reports and its ability to bring even the mightiest of companies to their knees. And now, they had NQ in their crosshairs.

In that instant, I felt a sense of dread wash over me. I knew that this was no ordinary short report. This was an all-out assault, a declaration of war. And I knew that the road ahead would be long and treacherous, filled with twists and turns that I couldn't even begin to imagine.

But I also knew something else. I knew that NQ was a Company that literally began its public debut when it seemed every Chinese Company was a short target. Prior to joining NQ, I also had researched and vetted NQ after several previous short selling campaigns and felt confident in what I learned. I fully believed that NQ was built on a foundation of innovation and

integrity. I knew that we had the talent, the technology, and the tenacity to weather any storm. And I knew that no matter what Muddy Waters or anyone else threw at us, we would find a way to fight back and come out stronger on the other side.

So, with a deep breath and a steely resolve, I picked up the phone and started dialing. There were fires to put out, messages to craft, and battles to be waged. And I was ready for all of it. Because I knew that this was more than just a job or a paycheck. This was a calling, a chance to be a part of something bigger than myself. And I was determined to see it through to the end, no matter the cost.

Little did I know then just how high that cost would be or how long and winding the road ahead would be. But in that moment, none of that mattered. All that mattered was the fight and the unwavering belief that we were on the right side of history.

The Night the World Turned Upside Down: Rallying the Troops at NQ Mobile

As the reality of the Muddy Waters report began to sink in, I knew I had to act fast. The first order of business was to alert the senior management team and get everyone on the same page. With trembling fingers, I fired off a message to Omar Khan, Henry Lin, Vincent Shi, and KB Teo – the core group of leaders who had built NQ Mobile into the rising star it had become.

“Guys, we have a situation,” I typed, my heart pounding in my chest. “Muddy Waters just published a report on the Company. It’s bad. Really bad. The stock is in free fall, and I haven’t even read the whole thing yet. But I will, and I’ll be back in touch with a plan of attack. We need to get in front of this and fast.”

I hit send and leaned back in my chair, taking a deep breath. Strangely, I didn’t feel fear or panic at that moment. Instead, I felt a rush of adrenaline, a sense of *déjà vu*. It was the same feeling I had experienced just a few months earlier when another notorious short-selling firm, J Capital, had taken aim

at NQ. We had weathered that storm through a combination of hard work, transparency, and sheer force of will. And I knew we could do it again.

But as I began to dig into the details of the Muddy Waters report, my confidence began to waver. This was no ordinary hit piece. The allegations were serious, complex, and far-reaching. Even with my deep knowledge of the Company and my years of experience in the world of finance, I struggled to wrap my head around the full scope of what was being alleged.

How on earth were we going to explain this to our shareholders, our customers, and the wider world? The timing couldn't have been worse. NQ's stock had been on an absolute tear in recent months, rising from around \$7 per share to over \$25. Our investors were sitting on massive gains, and the slightest hint of trouble could send them running for the exits.

And then there was the matter of the 8th anniversary celebration, set to kick off in just a few short hours. We had been planning this event for months – a grand showcase of NQ's achievements and a bold declaration of our ambitions for the future. Now, it felt like a cruel joke, a twisted irony. How could we stand up on stage and tout our successes while our stock was cratering and our reputation was in tatters?

I glanced at the clock. It was nearly 2 a.m., but I knew sleep was out of the question. We needed to act fast. I picked up my phone and dialed Vincent Shi's number. As one of NQ's co-founders and the Company's COO, Vincent was the one person I knew I could count on in a crisis. I had no idea that many years later, he would be the one who would ultimately bring the Company down for good. But, as I mentioned in the introduction, that will be another story for another day and forum.

"Vincent, it's Matt," I said, my voice tight with urgency. "We need to call an all-hands meeting tonight. It can't wait until morning."

There was a pause on the other end of the line, and then Vincent's voice, calm and measured as always. "I understand," he said. "I'll be there to pick you and Omar up in 15 minutes. We'll head to the office together."

True to his word, Vincent arrived at the hotel just a quarter of an hour later. Omar and I piled into the car, our faces grim and our minds racing. As we sped through the neon-lit streets of Beijing, I filled them in on the details of the report, the devastating blow it had dealt to our stock price and the long road ahead of us.

In the Eye of the Storm: A Company Under Siege

As Omar, Vincent, and I pulled up to NQ's headquarters in the pre-dawn hours of that fateful October morning, I steeled myself for the chaos and confusion that surely awaited us inside. What I found instead took my breath away. Internally, I had made the decision that I would battle on behalf of the Company so long as the management team, the board of directors and everyone involved acted with truth, transparency, expediency and trust. I felt empowered and emboldened by the response of the Company initially and that lasted for several years. The story of what happened 4 years later when it all changed will be for another time and place.

There, gathered in the Company's main conference room, was a veritable army of NQ's best and brightest. Senior managers, board members, and even mid-level employees – they had all answered the call to action, rallying around the Company they loved in its darkest hour.

I saw Henry Lin, our indomitable co-CEO, holding court at the head of the table. He had a reputation for burning the midnight oil, often sleeping in his office to squeeze a few more

hours out of each day. But this was no ordinary late-night session. The room was electric with tension and purpose, a palpable sense that history was unfolding before our very eyes.

As I surveyed the faces of my colleagues – some familiar, some less so – I felt a swell of emotion rising in my chest. Pride, certainly, at the incredible team we had assembled and the unbreakable bond we shared. But also humility and a profound sense of gratitude. These men and women had every right to be at home in their beds, blissfully unaware of the storm that was about to engulf us all. Instead, they had chosen to stand shoulder to shoulder with their fellow NQ warriors, ready to fight for the Company they believed in.

Make no mistake, this was an existential threat we were facing. In the span of just a few hours, Muddy Waters had unleashed a blistering assault on NQ's reputation and credibility. Their report, all 82 pages of it, was a masterclass in innuendo and accusation, a carefully crafted narrative designed to sow doubt and fear in the minds of investors and partners alike.

And it was working. When I left the hotel, NQ's stock had already plummeted from the low \$20s to the high single digits before rebounding slightly to hover around \$11-12. My phone

and laptop were practically smoking from the barrage of frantic messages and emails, each more urgent and desperate than the last.

In that brief moment of calm before the storm, I knew I had to reach out to the one person who mattered most – my wife, Holly. With shaking hands, I tapped out a quick text: “Hi, Holly. We were attacked by another short report. I’m headed into the office to deal with it. I’m fine, and everything is fine. Don’t worry. I’ll call you when I can come up for air. Love you.”

Little did I know then just how long it would be before I would come up for air again. The next three months would be a relentless onslaught of crisis management and firefighting, a 24/7 battle to save the Company we had all worked so hard to build. It would be two long years before I could truly catch my breath and start to put the pieces of my life back together. But that reprieve was shortlived as another crisis re-emerged that would ultimately bring the entire enterprise down with it.

But all of that was still to come. At that moment, standing in front of my embattled colleagues, I knew only one thing for certain: we were in for the fight of our lives.

Before I dive into the details of that fateful meeting and the rollercoaster of events that followed, it's important to take a step back and set the stage. How did I, a veteran Wall Streeter and hedge fund manager, find myself at the center of this maelstrom? What chain of events led me to NQ Mobile, and what forces were at play in the wider world that made us such an attractive target for the likes of Muddy Waters?

To answer those questions, we have to rewind the clock a bit. Back in a time when the mobile revolution was just beginning to gather steam, a little-known Chinese Company with big dreams was about to launch into mobile security for smartphones before smartphones were even really on anyone's mind, back to the moment when I first crossed paths with Henry Lin and his band of mobile mavericks and felt the irresistible pull of their vision for the future.

It's a story of serendipity and ambition, of geopolitical tensions and technological disruption. But most of all, it's a story of the incredible power of human connection and the unbreakable bonds forged in the crucible of adversity.

Someday, I will write an entire book about the highs and lows of one of the most turbulent chapters in the history of NQ Mobile. This journey would test the limits of my endurance, my

intellect, and my faith in people's fundamental goodness. It would forever change the course of my life and the lives of everyone who had the privilege (and the misfortune) of being along for the ride. That ride literally wiped me financially out from a career's worth of earnings up to that point, and a lot of people lost their investment entirely in the Company as well. At the conclusion of this chapter in my professional life, I found myself starting back over from zero. But that is a story for another time.

What I learned from that episode in my life transformed me forever. It brought forth the radical and profound realization that transparency isn't just a nice-to-have in business. It's an absolute necessity. It's the immune system that allows organizations to identify and eradicate disease before it takes hold. It's the navigation system that keeps companies on course, even in the face of stormy seas. It's the foundation upon which true, lasting success is built. Despite just how far NQ Mobile fell, it still could have and should have persevered and progressed. Even when there was no clear path forward, there was. And yet, because the board of directors refused to stare at the truth and transparently chose to move ahead - the company ultimately died in the public eyes, and all transparency was lost - extinguishing the orbit of advancement.

The way forward was unnecessarily halted to the detriment of everyone involved.

Without transparency, even the most promising Company will eventually crumble under the weight of its own dysfunction. Problems will multiply in the shadows, unchallenged and unresolved. Decisions will be made based on hidden agendas and half-truths rather than what's best for the business and its stakeholders. The cancer of corruption will take root and spread until the whole edifice comes tumbling down.

But with transparency, all things are possible. When leaders have the courage to shine a light into every corner of their organization, magic happens. Employees feel empowered to speak up when they see something amiss, knowing their voice will be heard. Investors can make informed decisions based on a clear understanding of a Company's true strengths and weaknesses. Customers can trust that they are getting what they paid for without any nasty surprises lurking in the fine print.

Of course, true transparency is easier said than done. It requires a level of vulnerability and self-awareness that can be deeply uncomfortable for many leaders. It means admitting when you're wrong, owning your mistakes, and being open to

feedback –even when it stings. It means prioritizing the long-term health of the organization over short-term expediency or personal gain. It sometimes means turning it all over to someone else who can take the baton forward without you.

But the alternative is far worse. As I sat in my hotel room that fateful night, watching everything we had built teetering on the brink of collapse, I realized that transparency and all that entails was either going to make or break us going forward. We had no reservoir of trust to draw upon, no goodwill to fall back on. We were exposed, naked and alone, in a storm of what would eventually be the Company’s directors’ own making.

In the coming weeks and months, as we fought to salvage our reputation and our business, I clung to the lesson of that dark night like a life raft. Transparency, radical transparency, would be my north star going forward. I would fight to have the Company open itself up to scrutiny, even when it hurt. I would fight to have the Company admit its faults and failures, even as we worked to overcome them. I would fight to be the change we wished to see in our industry – a shining example of what’s possible when leaders lead with honesty and integrity. This was the path I vigorously fought NQ to take from that moment forward. And I remained hopeful that the core decision-makers and, ultimately, the board of directors who hold those key

people accountable would agree. And they did, for a while, even years before they did not.

There would be plenty of sleepless nights and painful reckonings ahead. But as I looked out over the neon-soaked streets of Beijing, I knew in my bones that it was the only way forward. Transparency wouldn't just save NQ – it would be the key to unlocking our true potential. By shedding light on our darkest corners, we could emerge stronger, wiser, and more resilient than ever before.

The Power of Truth and Transparency: Fueling Your Leadership Orbit

In the previous chapter, we explored how adopting a builder's mindset is the catalytic converter that transforms the raw energy of your vision into tangible results. We discovered how approaching challenges with the spirit of an architect rather than a victim is the secret to constructing a launch pad of limitless possibility.

But as any pilot or driver will attest, a well-built vehicle is only half the equation. To reach your destination safely, you

need accurate and reliable information from your instruments – the data that will guide your journey and power your progress. In the realm of leadership, that critical information comes from transparency with those around you. And the only way to ensure this flow of accurate data is through a commitment to radical openness.

You see, transparency is the instrument panel that keeps your leadership grounded in reality. It's the essential feedback system that keeps people aligned with your vision and committed to the journey, even when turbulence hits. When you operate with transparency, you create a dashboard of trust that attracts the resources, relationships, and opportunities you need to move forward. Think of it this way: if your fuel gauge says full when you're actually running on empty, or if there's no warning light for a critical system failure, how can you possibly navigate effectively? In leadership, as in any journey, you need to trust your instruments to make informed decisions and avoid potential disasters.

But here's the thing: transparency isn't just about being honest in your dealings or keeping your promises, although those are certainly essential. It's about having the courage to be seen fully – flaws, failures, and all. It's about lowering your defenses and inviting others to witness your humanity, even if

messy or unpolished. I believe that truth and transparency are about a sincere desire to identify opportunities for improvement, fix problems, and progress forward. If you don't know there is a problem, how can you fix it? If you are not looking to make a part of the business better, how will it be?

In a world of curated images and glossy veneers, true transparency is a rare and precious commodity. It's the difference between a leader who hides behind a façade of invulnerability and one who dares to show up as their authentic self, even at the risk of judgment or rejection. The former may project an illusion of strength, but the latter is the one who truly inspires trust and loyalty.

Why is this level of transparency so crucial? When you have the audacity to be transparent about every aspect of your life – your personal struggles, your business challenges, your professional duties – you create a culture of openness that extends far beyond yourself. This radical honesty permits others to do the same, fostering an environment of authentic communication and mutual understanding. You create a safe space where real connection and collaboration can take root, not just in specific areas but across all domains of work and life. In this atmosphere of comprehensive transparency, people feel truly seen, heard, and valued for who they are in their entirety.

– not just for what they can contribute to a narrow set of goals. This holistic approach to openness cultivates a deeper sense of trust and engagement, as everyone feels empowered to bring their whole selves to the table, challenges and all.

When you lead transparently, you send a powerful message: “I trust you enough to show you my true self, and I trust in your ability to handle it with care.” That kind of vulnerability is the ultimate act of leadership courage – and it’s the key to unlocking the full potential of your team. You also make it clear that weaknesses, mistakes, or problems are not something to hide or avoid - they are present and a part of the journey. And rather than act like they are not an important part of progress - lean in and make it known that problems are simply opportunities to build, overcome, and improve. Let’s not shy away from the fact that we are all flawed. All businesses have issues. All leaders have shortcomings. The process of working together on overcoming those things is beautiful, inspiring, and actually what brings recurring energy and positive optimism.

But here’s the catch: transparency isn’t a one-way broadcast. It’s a two-way exchange that requires just as much skill in listening as it does in sharing. To truly harness the thrust of trust, you must create a culture of psychological safety where

everyone feels empowered to speak their truth without fear of retribution.

That means being willing to hear the hard stuff – the dissenting opinions, the constructive criticisms, the inconvenient truths that others might gloss over to protect your ego. It means actively seeking out diverse perspectives and welcoming them as fuel for your growth. It means having the humility to admit when you're wrong and the agility to course-correct when needed.

In the vacuum of space, even the smallest deviation from your intended trajectory can send you hurtling off course. The same is true in leadership: even the smallest breach of trust can erode your credibility and sabotage your success. That's why transparency must be more than a buzzword – it must be a daily practice, a sacred covenant you make with yourself and those you lead.

But when you commit to leading with transparency, something miraculous happens. Your vulnerability becomes your superpower. Your authenticity becomes your altitude. Your integrity becomes your escape velocity. Suddenly, you're not just building rockets – you're launching a revolution.

A revolution of trust, where leaders and followers alike are liberated from the tyranny of hidden agendas and political posturing. A revolution of connection, where the walls between “us” and “them” crumble, and true collaboration can flourish. A revolution of courage, where we dare to show up as our full, flawed, fabulous selves – and discover that our imperfections are the very things that make us human and whole.

This is the power of transparency. It’s the alchemical agent that transmutes the lead of fear into the gold of trust. It’s the starship that carries us beyond the bounds of our limiting beliefs and into the infinite expanse of our highest potential.

So, as you prepare for your next leadership launch, don’t just focus on the destination. Focus on the journey – and the quality of your presence along the way. Make transparency your touchstone, your true north, your guiding light in the darkness of uncertainty.

Be the leader who is unafraid to show their scars, for they are the roadmaps of your resilience. Be the leader who is willing to admit their mistakes, for they are the milestones of your mastery. Be the leader who is brave enough to be seen in all your beautiful, broken humanity – for that is the birthplace of trust.

And as you build that trust, brick by brick and beam by beam, know that you are constructing a launch pad of infinite possibility. A platform from which you and your team can soar to heights unimaginable, powered by the thrust of your shared truth.

A Night That Changed Everything: The Muddy Waters Bombshell

As I reflect on the tumultuous events of that October night in Beijing and the grueling years that followed, one lesson stands out above all others: the absolute, non-negotiable importance of truth and transparency in leadership and life.

When I first joined NQ Mobile, I was drawn to the Company's incredible potential and the visionary leadership of Henry Lin and his team. Here was a scrappy, innovative startup that was taking on the giants of the mobile industry and innovating with a suite of products and services that were genuinely improving people's lives. I believed in the Company's mission, and I believed in the integrity and talent of the people who were working tirelessly to make it a reality.

But as the Muddy Waters report made painfully clear, there were cracks in the foundation of NQ's success story.

Cracks that had been papered over by a culture of obfuscation and half-truths of selective disclosure and plausible deniability. Cracks that, once exposed to the harsh light of public scrutiny, threatened to bring the entire edifice crashing down.

In the days and weeks that followed that first fateful all-hands meeting, I witnessed firsthand the incredible damage that a lack of transparency can inflict on an organization. Employees who had poured their hearts and souls into building NQ suddenly found themselves questioning everything they had been told. Partners and customers who had placed their trust in us began to pull back, unsure of who or what to believe. And investors who had bet big on NQ's future watched helplessly as hundreds of millions of dollars in market value evaporated overnight.

It was a painful, humbling experience – one that forced me to confront some hard truths about the nature of leadership and the fragility of trust in the modern business world. And yet, even in the midst of the chaos and uncertainty, I found myself clinging to a fundamental belief in the power of truth and transparency to light the way forward.

You see, the real tragedy of the Muddy Waters attack was not the short-term damage it inflicted on NQ's stock price or

reputation. It was that it changed the way the Company and its key people ultimately operated. After several years and numerous unimaginable events, the decision-makers began to prioritize expediency over integrity, secrecy over openness, and short-term gains over long-term value creation. The MW attack didn't bring NQ down – it was the long aftermath when the Company ultimately refused to allow truth and transparency to mark its path forward.

In the months that followed, as we worked tirelessly to investigate the allegations and restore confidence in the Company, I came to realize that the only way forward was through a relentless commitment to transparency and truth-telling. We had to be willing to confront our own shortcomings head-on, admit our mistakes and take concrete steps to address them. We had to open ourselves up to scrutiny and feedback, even when it was uncomfortable or unflattering. And we had to rebuild trust with our stakeholders, one difficult conversation at a time.

It wasn't comfortable, and it certainly wasn't fast. There were plenty of moments when the temptation to retreat into defensiveness or obfuscation was almost overwhelming. But every time we chose the path of transparency, every time we

opted for the hard truth over the comforting lie, I could feel the momentum shifting back in our favor.

Slowly but surely, we began to regain the trust and confidence of our employees, our partners, and our investors. We won back customers who had been on the fence and attracted new ones who were drawn to our commitment to openness and accountability. And while the scars of the Muddy Waters incident would never fully heal, we emerged from the crisis a stronger, more resilient organization – one that was better equipped to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the mobile revolution.

Looking back on it now, I can see that our experience at NQ was a powerful case study in the transformative power of truth and transparency in leadership. When leaders prioritize secrecy and self-preservation over openness and accountability, they set the stage for all manner of dysfunction and deceit to take root. They create an environment where problems can fester and grow in the shadows, where critical feedback is suppressed, and where short-term thinking trumps long-term value creation.

But when leaders embrace transparency as a core value and a daily practice, something extraordinary happens. Suddenly,

there is nowhere for problems to hide, no room for egos to run amok. Every decision, every action, every communication is subject to the disinfecting power of sunlight. And while the truth can sometimes be uncomfortable or inconvenient in the moment, it is always preferable to the alternative.

This, to me, is the real key to achieving escape velocity as a leader and launching into a sustainable leadership orbit. It's not about having all the answers or being invulnerable to criticism. It's about creating a culture of radical transparency, where the pursuit of truth is prized above all else. It's about having the courage to confront hard realities head-on and the humility to admit when you've gotten it wrong. And it's about building trust and alignment through open, honest communication – even (and especially) when the news is bad.

Transparency can be messy, uncomfortable, and even painful at times. It requires a level of vulnerability and self-awareness that can be deeply challenging for many leaders. It demands a willingness to prioritize the long-term health and integrity of the organization over short-term expediency or personal gain.

But the alternative – a culture of secrecy, obfuscation, and plausible deniability – is simply not sustainable in the long run.

As the NQ Mobile story so vividly illustrates, companies that prioritize opacity over transparency are building their houses on shifting sands. They may be able to paper over the cracks for a time, but eventually, the truth will come out – and when it does, the fallout can be catastrophic. The interesting part about all of the Muddy Waters allegations was that they largely proved non-material and unimportant in the end. The biggest accusations didn't bear out. But the journey ultimately fatigued an organization, and the Board of Directors eventually relented to an untruthful and secretive collapse that had nothing to do with what Muddy Waters opined about.

So, if you're a leader looking to build something enduring and impactful, something that can weather the storms of adversity and emerge stronger on the other side, I urge you to make transparency your north star. Embrace the discomfort of radical honesty and trust in the power of truth to light the way forward. Build a culture where openness and accountability are prized above all else and where every member of the team feels empowered to speak truth to power.

When you build your leadership on a foundation of transparency and trust, you create something far more valuable than any short-term gain or temporary advantage. You create a legacy that will endure long after you're gone – a shining

example of what's possible when leaders have the courage to lead with integrity and authenticity.

And that is the true measure of success in leadership and in life. Not the size of your bank account or the length of your resume but the depth of your character and the strength of your relationships. Not the accolades you receive or the titles you hold but the positive impact you have on the lives of those you lead and serve.

So, as you set out on your own leadership journey, I challenge you to make transparency your guiding light. Embrace the power of truth to fuel your leadership orbit, and trust in the incredible resilience and creativity of the human spirit to carry you through even the darkest of times.

The road ahead may be long and full of twists and turns. But armed with the clarity of purpose and the courage of your convictions, there is no limit to what you can achieve. So take a deep breath, strap in, and get ready for the ride of your life.

The journey to authentic, impactful leadership starts now. And with truth and transparency as your rocket fuel, there's no telling how high you'll soar.

Action Steps: Igniting Your Leadership Rocket with Truth and Transparency

1. Conduct a “Transparency Audit” on yourself and your leadership: Take an honest, unflinching look at your current self, inner circle of relationships and leadership practices. Are you being fully transparent with yourself, your inner circle, your team, your stakeholders, and others? Identify areas where you may be holding back or obscuring the truth, and commit to shining a light on those shadowy corners. Remember, the first step to launching into a sustainable leadership orbit is ensuring that your rocket is fueled by the pure propellant of truth.
2. Establish a “No Bull” communication policy: Make a public commitment to radical honesty and transparency in all your communications, both internal and external. Encourage your team to speak truth to power and create a safe space for difficult conversations and constructive feedback. When you make truth-telling a non-negotiable part of your culture, you create an environment where trust and alignment can flourish – and where your leadership can truly take flight.

3. Embrace the “Vulnerability Advantage”: Transparency requires a willingness to be vulnerable, to admit when you’ve made a mistake or when you don’t have all the answers. Rather than seeing this as a weakness, recognize it as a strength – a sign of authentic, courageous leadership. When you model vulnerability and humility, you give others permission to do the same, creating a culture of psychological safety and innovation. So don’t be afraid to show your human side – it’s the rocket fuel that will propel you to new heights.
4. Conduct regular “Leaks in the Dam” assessments: Drawing from the catastrophic Teton Dam failure in the 1970s, where minor leaks were ignored until disaster struck, leaders must cultivate a culture of proactive problem-solving. Set up regular opportunities for your team to identify and address potential issues before they escalate. This could be through dedicated meetings, anonymous reporting systems, or open-door policies. Encourage everyone to be on the lookout for “leaks” – small problems that could become major crises if left unchecked. Unlike the Teton Dam scenario, where issues were superficially covered up, emphasize the importance of thoroughly investigating and resolving these concerns. By regularly

practicing this transparent approach to problem-solving, your team will become more adept at identifying issues early, communicating openly, and collaboratively developing solutions. This practice not only prevents potential disasters but also fosters a culture of trust, accountability, and continuous improvement.

5. Celebrate “Transparency Triumphs”: When you or your team members demonstrate exceptional transparency and truthfulness, make sure to celebrate those moments publicly. Highlight the positive impact that honesty and openness have on your organization, and hold them up as examples for others to follow. By making transparency a core part of your leadership culture – and by recognizing and rewarding those who embody it – you’ll create a virtuous cycle of trust and accountability that will keep your leadership orbit spinning smoothly for years to come.

As you implement these action steps, remember that the journey to authentic, transparent leadership is not a destination but a daily practice. There will be times when the gravitational pull of fear or self-preservation threatens to knock you off course. But by staying true to your commitment to truth and openness and by continual course-correcting based on feedback

and reflection, you'll develop the resilience and adaptability needed to achieve escape velocity.

Don't wait for the perfect moment or the ideal circumstances to start your leadership ascent. The time to ignite your truth-fueled rocket is now. With each small step you take toward greater transparency and authenticity, you'll be building the momentum and confidence needed to break free of the lies and limitations that hold so many leaders back.

And as you rise higher and higher into your leadership orbit, propelled by the unstoppable force of truth and powered by the trust and alignment of those around you, you'll discover a sense of purpose and possibility that you never knew existed. You'll become a beacon of integrity and inspiration for others to follow and a catalyst for positive change in your organization and beyond.

Chapter 4: Speed is a Superpower – Accelerating Your Leadership Ascent

In the fast-paced world of modern leadership, there's one quality that separates the good from the great, the dreamers from the doers, the also-rans from the trailblazers. It's not talent, though that certainly helps. It's not resources, though those are always welcome. And it's not even luck, though a little serendipity never hurts.

No, the one thing that truly sets the most successful leaders apart is something far simpler yet infinitely more powerful: speed.

Now, when I talk about speed, I don't just mean the ability to move quickly or make snap decisions (though those are certainly important skills to have). I'm talking about the kind of speed that comes from a deep sense of urgency, a relentless drive to make things happen, and an unwavering commitment to forward momentum. I'm talking about the kind of speed that allows you to seize opportunities before they slip away, to

outpace your competitors and stay ahead of the curve, and to adapt and evolve in the face of changing circumstances.

In a leadership context, speed is multifaceted. It's not just about being fast in the traditional sense but about efficiency, reliability, and follow-through. True speed in business is demonstrated by those who can consistently respond in a timely manner, answer the phone when it rings, and complete projects on or before deadlines. These individuals are considered FAST in the business world, and their efficiency is a form of speed that's highly valued.

This type of speed is about pushing through obstacles, not wasting time, and completing tasks with a sense of urgency. It's about being responsive and dependable, qualities that can set you apart in any professional environment. Leaders who embody this kind of speed create momentum, build trust, and drive progress. They don't let tasks linger or communications go unanswered. Instead, they tackle challenges head-on, make decisions promptly, and ensure that work flows smoothly and continuously. They can not be a bottleneck. They must be the one who identifies and then resolves any such bottlenecks. They empower momentum and activity, not slow it down.

This approach to speed in leadership is less about rushing and more about maintaining a steady, productive pace that eliminates unnecessary delays and keeps projects and teams moving forward. It's a critical skill in today's fast-paced business world, where responsiveness and reliability can make the difference between success and failure. In short, I'm talking about the kind of speed that becomes your ultimate superpower as a leader - the rocket fuel that propels you to new heights of impact and influence.

Speed alone is not enough. As we explored in the last chapter, true leadership speed must be built on a foundation of transparency and trust. Without that bedrock of openness and authenticity, even the fastest leader will quickly find themselves spinning their wheels, unable to gain traction or build momentum.

Think about it: how can you move quickly and decisively if your team doesn't trust you to make the right call? How can you seize opportunities and take bold action if your stakeholders are constantly second-guessing your motives? And how can you maintain the kind of sustained velocity that leadership demands if you're constantly having to stop and explain yourself, or worse, clean up the messes caused by a lack of transparency?

The answer is simple: you can't. Speed without trust is like a rocket without a guidance system – powerful but directionless. It might get you off the ground, but it won't keep you on course or get you where you need to go.

That's why the most effective leaders understand that speed and transparency are not just compatible but deeply intertwined. They know that the key to unlocking their full potential as a leader is to cultivate both qualities in equal measure and to use them to fuel each other in a virtuous cycle of growth and acceleration.

So how do you do that? How do you build the kind of leadership speed that becomes your superpower while still maintaining the trust and transparency that are so essential to your success?

The answer lies in understanding the true nature of speed in a leadership context. You see, leadership speed is not just about moving fast for the sake of moving fast. It's about moving fast with purpose, with intention, and with a clear sense of direction. It's about being able to quickly identify the most important priorities and opportunities and then marshaling the resources and talent needed to pursue them with focus and determination.

To truly excel in leadership, you need to develop a keen sense of what I call “leadership velocity” – the ability to not just move quickly but to do so in a way that builds and maintains powerful momentum. Momentum is a force to be reckoned with, capable of propelling you forward or holding you back. Finding and harnessing positive momentum is one of the greatest achievements a leader can accomplish!

Think of it like the difference between raw speed in athletics and “game speed.” Raw speed is simply running fast, while game speed involves anticipation, quick decision-making, and the ability to move efficiently in any direction. Similarly, leadership velocity isn’t just about rapid action - it’s about setting bold goals, breaking them down into manageable steps, and consistently progressing in a way that builds unstoppable momentum over time.

This approach allows you to swiftly identify and remove obstacles in your path, whether they’re internal bottlenecks, external roadblocks, or limitations in your own thinking. More importantly, it enables you to inspire and motivate others to join your journey. By tapping into their skills, expertise, and enthusiasm, you create a collective force that accelerates progress and amplifies your momentum.

Remember, momentum is a two-way street. Positive momentum can carry you to heights you never thought possible, while negative momentum can be equally powerful in the wrong direction. That's why cultivating and maintaining positive momentum is such a crucial skill for leaders. It's not just about moving fast – it's about moving forward with increasing force and energy, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of success that propels you and your team toward your goals.

To achieve true leadership velocity, you need to be transparent about your goals, your plans, and your progress every step of the way. You need to be open and honest with your team about what you're trying to achieve and enlist their help in figuring out the best way to get there. You need to be willing to share your successes and your failures, your triumphs and your setbacks, so that everyone can learn and grow together. You need to create a culture of trust and psychological safety where people feel empowered to take risks, challenge assumptions, and speak truth to power – even if that power is you.

When you do that — when you combine the raw power of leadership speed with the stabilizing force of transparency and trust — something incredible happens. Suddenly, you're not just moving fast but flying high. You're not just making

progress but breaking barriers. And you're not just leading a team but launching a movement that is sustained, advancing, and garnering momentum from everyone around.

This is the essence of what it means to achieve leadership orbit - to break free of the constraints that hold most leaders back, and to achieve a kind of escape velocity that allows you to soar to new heights of impact and influence continually, regardless of circumstance. And it all starts with understanding that speed is not just a nice-to-have but a must-have – a superpower that can transform your leadership and your life.

The Discovery of Speed: Unleashing My Hidden Superpower

I am passionate about all the things relating to sports. From a very early age, I loved playing catch, hitting, throwing, and pretty much anything that had to do with sports. I was coordinated and had great hands. However, I also possessed something that helped me stand out in my early athletic pursuits. I didn't really understand it at the time, and I'm not sure others could either. Still, I had the ability to combine hustle, effort, and speed with an anticipation advantage for where the ball was going or what another player would do. I

was fast for sure – but it was my “game speed” that really set me apart when combined with outright hustle and effort.

On the baseball diamond - I found that my game speed helped set me apart. Whether in the field and being able to track down fly balls others couldn't, or while pitching and using a combination of velocity and off-speed pitches, or at the plate having quick hands to turn on fastballs, or running the bases and being able to outrun, steal, or out-slide the defense, I found great success. I also found this game speed translated to every sport I tried. In soccer, I felt like I was a blur on the field, weaving through defenders and outpacing even the fleetest of forwards. In basketball, I was a tenacious defender, hounding my opponents and disrupting their every move with my ability to anticipate and use lightning-quick reflexes – even with no special size, ball-handling skills, or shooting prowess.

At first, I didn't really understand the true power of my gift. I just knew that I loved the feeling of pushing myself to the limit, of testing the boundaries of what my body could do. But as I grew older and started to compete at higher levels, I began to realize that my speed wasn't just a neat trick - it was a legitimate competitive advantage that many others didn't know how to harness.

From that moment on, I started to think about speed in a whole new light. I began to see it not just as a physical attribute but as a mindset, a way of approaching challenges and attacking opportunities. I realized that the same principles that made me successful on the field - the relentless drive, the lightning-quick reflexes, the ability to outpace and outmaneuver the competition - could be applied to every area of my life.

And as I began to lean into that realization, something incredible happened. I found that my speed wasn't just an asset in sports - it was a superpower in the classroom, in my relationships, and ultimately, in my career. I learned to think faster, move quicker, and seize opportunities before anyone else even realized they were there.

In a world that often feels like it's moving at a glacial pace, I discovered that speed was the ultimate differentiator – the one thing that could truly set me apart and help me achieve escape velocity in my life and my leadership.

And that is the true power of speed. It's not just about how fast you can run or how quickly you can make a decision (though those things certainly help). It's about having the courage to move before you're ready, to take bold action in the

face of uncertainty, and to trust in your ability to course-correct on the fly.

It's about cultivating a sense of urgency and a bias for intense action, even when the path ahead is murky, and the odds seem stacked against you. It's about being willing to fail fast and learn faster, to iterate and adapt in real time, and to always, always keep pushing forward. It's about out-hustling your competition even when you are tired, are down big, or can't see a reason to keep up the pace.

And most importantly, it's about understanding that speed is not just a talent or a skill - it's a choice. A choice to reject the status quo and embrace the unknown. A choice to take risks and court failure in the pursuit of something greater. A choice to lead from the front, even when the rest of the world is content to sit back and watch.

So, as you embark on your own leadership journey, I challenge you to ask yourself: what could you achieve if you were willing to unleash your own inner speed demon? What kind of impact could you have if you were brave enough to move faster, think quicker, and act more boldly than anyone else in your field?

The answer, I suspect, will surprise and delight you. Because when you harness the power of speed and make it your own, there's no limit to how high and how far you can fly. You'll achieve a kind of escape velocity that most people only dream of – the ability to break free of the forces that hold others back and chart your own course to the stars.

And that is the essence of true leadership. It's not about titles or positions or org charts. It's about having the courage to embrace your own unique superpowers, and to use them in service of something greater than yourself.

The Need for Speed: Decisiveness and Agility in Leadership

As I continued to reflect on the role that speed had played in my own journey, both on and off the field, I began to see its relevance in a whole new light. It wasn't just about being fast for the sake of being fast – it was about harnessing that speed to make better decisions, seize opportunities, and, ultimately, lead with greater impact. It is also a source of energy. I believe movement is a great healer and power. You have to be moving ahead, charging forward, and creating progress. It feeds on

itself. The opposite is also true – laziness and lack of movement and progress weigh us down more and prevent positive energy.

You see, in today's fast-paced, ever-changing business landscape, leaders who can't keep up are quickly left behind. The old model of top-down, command-and-control leadership simply doesn't cut it anymore. To succeed in this new world, you need to be able to think on your feet, adapt to changing circumstances, and make tough calls in real time.

And that's where the power of decisiveness and agility comes in.

Decisiveness is the ability to make clear, confident choices in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity. It's about having the courage to take a stand, even when the path ahead is murky and the outcomes are unknown. Decisive leaders don't get bogged down in analysis paralysis or endless deliberation – they gather the best available information, trust their instincts, and then move forward with conviction.

Agility, on the other hand, is the ability to pivot quickly and gracefully when circumstances change. It's about being able to read the tea leaves, sense shifting winds, and adjust course on the fly. Agile leaders are like great athletes – they

have the balance, coordination, and reflexes to navigate even the most complex and dynamic environments with ease.

Together, decisiveness and agility form a potent one-two punch that gives leaders an incredible edge in today's world. When you can move quickly and confidently in the face of change and uncertainty, you open up a world of possibilities that others can only dream of.

But cultivating these qualities is easier said than done.

Three Obstacles to Speed

In my experience, there are a few key obstacles that often hold leaders back from fully embracing their decisive and agile potential.

The first is fear - fear of making the wrong call, fear of looking foolish, fear of failing. In a world that often punishes mistakes and celebrates perfection, it's easy to get paralyzed by the weight of our own doubts and insecurities. But the truth is, no leader ever made a meaningful impact by playing it safe. The greatest breakthroughs, the most transformative innovations, the most world-changing ideas – they all come from leaders who are willing to take bold, decisive action in the face of fear.

The second obstacle is ego – the need to be right, to have all the answers, to be the smartest person in the room. Or the need to feel like we never make a mistake or never fail. When we get too attached to our own opinions and perspectives, we lose the ability to see things from other angles, to learn from others’ insights, and to course-correct when necessary. Agile leaders, on the other hand, are humble enough to recognize their own limitations and seek out diverse viewpoints. They know that true wisdom comes not from hoarding knowledge but from being open to new ideas and perspectives.

The third and perhaps most insidious obstacle is complacency – the tendency to rest on our laurels, to get comfortable with the status quo, and to assume that what worked yesterday will work today and tomorrow. In a world moving at breakneck speed, complacency is the kiss of death for leaders. The most successful companies, the most impactful organizations, the most transformative movements – they’re all led by people who are relentless in their pursuit of continuous improvement and innovation. The leadership orbit embodies continual movement and momentum. Constant progress and evolution. Complacency is a momentum killer that literally extinguishes the orbital power of constant progress.

So, how do you cultivate the decisiveness and agility that will give you an edge as a leader? It starts with a shift in mindset – a willingness to embrace the discomfort of uncertainty, to lean into the unknown, and to trust in your own ability to navigate the chaos.

It also requires a commitment to continuous learning and growth. The most agile leaders are the ones who are always seeking out new knowledge, new skills, and new perspectives. They read voraciously and attend workshops and conferences, seek out mentors and coaches, tinker with the status quo and work on making it better. They understand that the moment you stop learning is the moment you start falling behind.

But perhaps most importantly, cultivating decisiveness and agility requires a deep sense of purpose and conviction. When you know what you stand for, when you have a clear vision of the impact you want to make, when you're driven by a mission that's bigger than yourself – that's when you find the courage to make tough calls and the resilience to bounce back from setbacks.

This is where the concept of Leadership Orbit comes in. When you're in orbit, you're not just reacting to the forces around you – you're charting your own course, guided by your

own North Star. You have the perspective to see the big picture, the velocity to outpace the competition, and the gravitational pull to bring others along with you.

And when you combine that orbital mindset with the speed and agility that come from decisive action, you become an unstoppable force for change.

That's the power of speed in leadership – not just to move fast, but to move with purpose, with clarity, with conviction. It's about having the courage to lead from the front, even when the path ahead is uncertain. It's about having the humility to course-correct when necessary and the resilience to keep pushing forward no matter what obstacles arise.

And it's about understanding that true speed isn't just about how quickly you can make a decision or execute a plan – it's about how quickly you can learn, grow, and adapt to a rapidly changing world.

So, if you want to achieve escape velocity and break free of the forces that hold most leaders back, embrace the power of speed in all its forms. Cultivate the decisiveness and agility that will allow you to navigate even the most turbulent waters with grace and ease. And never stop learning, growing, and pushing yourself to new heights.

In the end, the race goes not to the swift but to the bold – to those who have the courage to lead with conviction, the humility to learn from their mistakes, and the tenacity to keep reaching for the stars. There is great speed in both the rabbit and the turtle – so long as they both keep moving forward.

Blasting Off at Goldman Sachs

Fresh out of college, I stepped into the bustling hive of Goldman Sachs, ready to prove myself in the dizzying world of high finance. The dot-com boom was in full swing, and investment banks were scooping up talent left and right. As a non-Ivy League grad from BYU, I knew I had my work cut out for me. But I was determined to show that I belonged.

As a first-year analyst on the equity desk in San Francisco, one of our first assignments seemed mundane on the surface – distributing the firm’s daily research reports. Hundreds of pages a day covering countless companies, all to be sorted and delivered to the desks of VPs and managing directors. Yes, we still used a copier machine and stapler to prepare these inch-thick packets of information daily! As I stood before the towering stacks of paper, my mind started racing. This task was also being done around 4 am – since we were in San Francisco, and our “morning call” began at 8 am ET (5 am PT) each day.

“Matt, you’re going to be doing this every single day,” one of my managers said, handing me the hefty pile. “Better get used to it.” He chuckled and walked away.

I could have simply gone through the motions, robotically completing the task as expected. But at that moment, I made a decision. I would find a way to turn this ordinary responsibility into an opportunity.

With focused intensity, I devoured the reports, absorbing the insights like a sponge. Then, I took it a step further. Synthesizing the key points into concise bullet summaries, I curated the most essential information for each recipient. I would go on to create my own version of a “best ideas” email list that I could send around to the various VPs and MDs on the trading desk. This daily “best ideas” list began to be consumed and used by many of my senior leaders and eventually was even used externally with many of our clients. I slowly became known as someone who always had good ideas, well researched and nuanced and could get to the point in a matter of a few bullets or seconds on a call.

As I moved through my early career at breakneck speed, I discovered the magic formula – combining raw velocity with thoughtful synthesis and clear communication. By getting the

right information to the right people at the right time, I was able to punch above my weight class and accelerate my trajectory. This ultimately led me to launch a new research and trading firm and another decade of incredible opportunities and experiences on the sell side and, eventually, the buy side of Wall Street. I fondly remember my cohort of peers, superiors and friends from that initial equity research and trading desk in San Francisco in the early 2000's.

The lesson was clear – speed was a superpower. Not just the ability to move quickly but to swiftly zero in on what mattered most and deliver it with surgical precision. In an era before smartphones and instant information, being able to rapidly process complex data and translate it into actionable intelligence was an incredible differentiator.

From that first unglamorous assignment, I learned that even the most mundane tasks can be transformed by the power of speed married with diligence and foresight. It's not about just checking boxes faster - it's about using velocity as a lever to create outsized value and impact.

That early experience at Goldman set the tone for the rest of my career. By honing my speed superpower, I was able to vault ahead of my peers, earning greater responsibility and

opportunity at every turn. And I discovered that this gift for rapid, purposeful action allowed me to cut through the clutter and noise, identifying the signal and charting the most effective course forward.

Of course, speed without direction or intention is just chaos. The key is to harness the energy and momentum of swift action in service of clear, meaningful objectives. When you're able to move not just fast but with focus and determination, you become an unstoppable force.

So, if you want to accelerate your own leadership ascent, start by embracing speed as your secret weapon. Look for every opportunity to not just do things faster but to swiftly laser in on what matters most. Combine raw velocity with intense focus and a bias for decisive action. And have the courage to blaze your own trail, even when the path ahead is uncertain.

Because in a world that's changing at warp speed, the leaders who will shape the future and leave a lasting mark are those who can harness the awesome power of purposeful, lightning-quick action. And that incredible competitive advantage starts with recognizing and unleashing your own innate gifts for speed in service of your biggest, boldest vision.

The Moment of Turning: Harnessing the Power of Decisive Action

As I reflected on the critical role that decisiveness plays in leadership and life, I couldn't help but think back to the countless moments of indecision and hesitation that had held me back over the years. The job offers I had agonized over, the relationships I had let languish in limbo, the opportunities I had allowed to slip through my fingers – all because I was too afraid to take a stand, to commit to a course of action, to trust in my own judgment.

But then I thought about the moments when I had managed to summon the courage to be decisive – the times when I had taken a deep breath, listened to my gut, and made the call. And I realized that those were the moments that had truly defined my journey, both personally and professionally.

I remember the day I decided to leave my exciting and enviable job at Goldman Sachs and strike out on my own as an entrepreneur. The managing director of my group called me

into the office in San Francisco on a Saturday morning to meet with me in person about this decision. His parting words will always be remembered, “Matt, you will always regret leaving Goldman Sachs when you have such a clear path of growth ahead of you here.” It was a terrifying leap into the unknown, but I knew deep down that it was the right move for me. And as soon as I made the decision, I felt an incredible sense of relief and excitement wash over me. Suddenly, the path ahead seemed clearer, the obstacles less daunting. I had taken control of my own destiny, and that felt incredibly empowering.

I thought about the time I had to make a tough call to let go of an underperforming team member. It was a decision I had agonized over for weeks, knowing the impact it would have on their life and the morale of the team. But I also knew that keeping them on was holding us all back and that the kindest thing I could do was to be honest and decisive. And as soon as I had the conversation, difficult as it was, I felt the weight lift from my shoulders. We were able to move forward with clarity and purpose, and the team member was able to find a role that was a better fit for their skills and passions.

These moments of turning, as I came to call them, were the key to unlocking the power of decisiveness in my life and my leadership. They were the moments when I stopped waiting for

the perfect set of circumstances or the guaranteed outcome and instead trusted in my own ability to navigate the uncertainty and come out stronger on the other side.

Action was a common thread that ran through all of their stories. From Elon Musk's decision to invest his PayPal fortune into SpaceX and Tesla to Phil Knight's bold move to cut ties with his Japanese supplier and manufacture Nike shoes independently to Steve Jobs's return to Apple and subsequent launch of the iPhone – these were all pivotal moments of decisive action that changed the course of business history.

More recently, we've seen similar turning points, with leaders like Reed Hastings pivoting Netflix from a DVD rental service to a streaming powerhouse, and Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia transforming their air mattress rental idea into the global phenomenon of Airbnb. These examples showcase how modern business leaders when faced with crucial decisions, summoned the courage to take bold stands that not only reshaped their companies but entire industries. They exemplify the transformative power of decisive leadership in today's fast-paced, technology-driven business world.

But the power of decisive action isn't just reserved for the great and the famous. It's available to all of us in every moment

and every decision we face. Whether we're leading a team, raising a family, or simply trying to live a life of purpose and meaning - we all have the opportunity to harness the power of decisiveness to create positive momentum and achieve our goals.

Of course, being decisive often means facing our fears, embracing discomfort, and risking failure. It means being willing to make mistakes and course-correct as needed. And it means letting go of the illusion of control and learning to trust in our own judgment and resilience.

But the rewards of decisiveness are immeasurable. When we take decisive action, we tap into a deep well of inner strength and conviction. We find the courage to cut through the noise and the distractions and focus on what really matters. We inspire others to follow our lead and join us in our mission. And we create a sense of momentum and purpose that can carry us through even the toughest challenges. We tap into a sustainable source of energy that is recurring and growing – rather than the opposite, which drains energy and saps movement.

This is the essence of what it means to lead from a place of decisiveness - to have the courage to take bold, purposeful action in the face of uncertainty and adversity. And it's a

critical component of achieving the kind of Leadership Orbit that we've been exploring throughout this book.

You see, when you're in orbit, you're not just reacting to the forces around you – you're actively shaping your trajectory and charting your own course. You have the velocity and the vision to break free of the gravitational pull of fear, doubt, and indecision. And you have the clarity and conviction to inspire others to join you on your journey.

But achieving that kind of orbital velocity requires a willingness to embrace decisive action – to make the tough calls, take the calculated risks, and trust in your own ability to navigate the challenges ahead.

It means being willing to face your fears head-on and lean into the discomfort of the unknown. It means being willing to make mistakes and learn from them rather than getting bogged down in analysis paralysis. It means being willing to let go of the need for perfect information or guaranteed outcomes and instead focus on making the best decision you can with the information you have.

In short, it means embracing the power of speed in all its forms – not just in the sense of moving quickly, but in the sense

of being nimble, adaptable, and decisive in the face of change and uncertainty.

And the beautiful thing is, the more you practice decisiveness, the easier it becomes. Like any muscle, your ability to make tough calls and take purposeful action grows stronger with each repetition. And as you start to see the positive results of your decisive leadership – the momentum you build, the obstacles you overcome, the impact you create – you’ll find yourself more and more empowered to keep pushing forward.

So, if you want to achieve escape velocity and break free of the forces that hold most leaders back, start by cultivating the habit of decisiveness. Embrace the discomfort of making tough calls, and learn to trust in your own judgment and resilience. Surround yourself with people who will challenge you to be your best self and who will support you through the ups and downs of the journey.

And most importantly, remember that every moment of turning – every decision you make, every action you take – is an opportunity to create positive momentum and shape your trajectory. So don’t wait for the perfect set of circumstances or

the guaranteed outcome. Don't let fear or doubt hold you back from taking bold, purposeful action.

Instead, trust in the power of decisiveness to carry you forward. Embrace the uncertainty and the discomfort and lean into the journey ahead. And know that with each decisive step you take, you're building the momentum and the conviction to achieve your biggest goals and make your greatest impact.

In the end, true leadership isn't about having all the answers or being immune to failure. It's about having the courage to take action in the face of uncertainty — to make the tough calls, navigate the challenges, course correct swiftly when wrong, and inspire others to join you on the journey.

And when you lead from that place of decisiveness and conviction, there's no limit to the orbit you can achieve — or the impact you can create.

Accelerating into Orbit: Harnessing Speed for Perpetual Leadership Momentum

As I reflect on the profound impact that speed has had on my own leadership journey, I can't help but feel a sense of

excitement and anticipation for what lies ahead. The ability to move swiftly and decisively, seize opportunities, and navigate challenges with agility and precision is truly a superpower in today's fast-paced and ever-changing world. And it's a superpower that each and every one of us has the potential to cultivate and harness.

But speed alone is not enough. As we've explored throughout this chapter, true leadership velocity is about so much more than just moving quickly. It's about combining raw speed with laser-focused intention, strategic direction, and a relentless commitment to creating value and impact. It's about having the courage to take bold action in the face of uncertainty and the resilience to pick yourself up and keep pushing forward when you inevitably stumble along the way.

And most importantly, it's about recognizing that speed is not just a one-time burst of energy or a fleeting moment of brilliance. To achieve lasting success and make a meaningful difference in the world, we must learn to sustain and build upon our leadership momentum over time. We must develop the habits and practices that allow us to tap into our inner reserves of speed and power, day after day and year after year.

This is where the concept of Leadership Orbit comes in. Just as a rocket must achieve a certain velocity and trajectory to break free from the pull of gravity and enter into a stable orbit, we as leaders must generate enough momentum and direction to escape the forces that would hold us back and keep us stuck in the status quo. We must learn to chart our own course, set our own altitude, and navigate the vast expanse of possibility that lies before us.

The key to achieving this perpetual state of leadership momentum is to fuel ourselves with the right inputs and energy sources consistently. We must cultivate a builder's mindset, always seeking out new opportunities to create value and solve problems. We must foster a culture of transparency and trust, recognizing that openness and authenticity are the foundation of true influence and impact. And we must continually sharpen and refine our skills and habits around speed, agility, and decisive action.

Of course, this is easier said than done. The path to leadership orbit is not always smooth or straightforward, and there will be times when we feel like we're stuck in the mud or spinning our wheels. But it's in these moments of challenge and adversity that our commitment to speed and momentum becomes even more critical.

When we encounter obstacles or setbacks, we must resist the urge to slow down or give up. Instead, we must lean into our speed superpower, using it as a lever to generate fresh energy and momentum. We must look for creative ways to reframe problems as opportunities, pivot and adjust our approach in real time, and keep pushing forward with grit and determination. Crucially, this forward momentum often requires stepping into the unknown. Many times, we don't know what lies ahead or how things will unfold. We can't always predict outcomes or make sense of the path before us. It's in these moments of uncertainty that moving ahead becomes most powerful and important. By continuing to progress, even when we can't see the full picture, we open ourselves up to new possibilities and discoveries. This willingness to advance into uncharted territory, to keep going when the destination isn't clear, is what separates true leaders from the rest. It's about having the courage to take that next step, to maintain velocity even when the road ahead is shrouded in fog, trusting that movement will eventually bring clarity and reveal new opportunities.

As we do this, something incredible starts to happen. We begin to develop a flywheel effect, where each small win or achievement builds upon the last, generating even more speed

and momentum over time. We start to attract like-minded individuals and organizations who share our passion for velocity and impact. And we create a virtuous cycle of growth and success that becomes almost effortless and self-sustaining.

This is the essence of what it means to achieve leadership orbit - to reach a state of perpetual momentum and impact that allows us to make a lasting difference in the world. And it all starts with harnessing the incredible power of speed in service of our deepest values and most audacious goals.

As we close out this chapter and prepare to embark on the next stage of our leadership journey, I want to leave you with a challenge and an invitation. I want to challenge you to take a hard look at your own relationship with speed and identify the areas where you can start to cultivate more velocity and momentum in your life and work. I want to invite you to join me in the pursuit of leadership orbit and commit to the ongoing work of fueling your own perpetual growth and impact.

There will undoubtedly be times when we feel like we're moving at a snail's pace rather than a lightning bolt. But if we can stay focused on our ultimate destination, keep our eyes fixed on the stars, and our hearts full of determination, I have

no doubt that we will achieve heights and velocities that we never dreamed possible.

Action Steps:

1. Implement a daily “Speed Drill” to sharpen your execution skills. Choose one high-priority task each morning and challenge yourself to complete it as quickly as possible, without sacrificing quality. This could be drafting an important email, reviewing a complex document, or preparing for a critical meeting. Over time, these speed drills will train your brain to work more efficiently and effectively under pressure. Just as an athlete uses interval training to build explosive power, a leader can use speed drills to develop lightning-fast execution abilities. Pay special attention to improving your response time to calls, emails, and texts – consistent promptness in communication can give you a significant advantage.
2. Launch a “30-Day Speed Challenge” with your team. Identify a key project or initiative that has been languishing in the slow lane, and challenge your team to complete it in the next 30 days. Break the project down into weekly milestones and daily action steps, and assign clear ownership for each task. Celebrate quick wins along

the way and use any setbacks as opportunities to iterate and improve. By demonstrating the power of focused, speedy execution, you'll help your team develop a new standard of velocity and agility.

3. Embrace the “70% Rule” in your decision-making. In our pursuit of perfection, we often delay making decisions until we have all the information or complete consensus. But in a fast-moving world, waiting for perfect can mean missing the boat entirely. Instead, adopt the mantra of “70% and go” – if you have 70% of the information and you're 70% confident, pull the trigger and adjust course as needed. Trust your instincts and your ability to adapt on the fly. Remember, you can't change trajectory while you're still stationary - sometimes you have to move and correct course mid-action.
4. Cultivate a “Speed Mindset” through mental rehearsal and environmental assessment. Take 10 minutes each day to close your eyes and envision yourself executing at lightning speed. See yourself making snap decisions, delegating with clarity, and zooming through your to-do list with ease. Feel the rush of momentum and the thrill of accomplishment. By training your mind to operate at a faster frequency,

you'll prime your brain and body for swifter action in real life.

5. Address "Organizational Bottlenecks." Recognize that sometimes your circumstances, boss, or company culture can be a significant hindrance to implementing these speed-focused strategies. Take the initiative to transparently discuss these challenges with your reporting managers and team members. If you identify factors holding you back or bottlenecking the organization, actively seek ways to break through these barriers. Propose solutions and be open about the impact on productivity and progress. However, if, after earnest efforts, you find it impossible to effect change, it may be time to consider a more significant career move. Remember, sometimes breaking free from a stagnant environment is necessary to truly unleash your leadership potential and maintain the speed and momentum you're cultivating.

As you practice these speed-enhancing strategies, remember that velocity is not about reckless haste or cutting corners. It's about stripping away the non-essentials, sharpening your focus, and cultivating a bias for bold, decisive action. When you embrace speed as your leadership superpower, you'll be able to seize opportunities that others

miss, outpace your competitors, and adapt to changing circumstances with agility and grace.

But speed is not just about individual performance – it's also about setting the pace for your entire organization. As you model swift decision-making and rapid execution, you'll create a ripple effect that inspires your team to operate at a higher velocity. You'll foster a culture of experimentation, iteration, and continuous improvement, where everyone is empowered to test new ideas and learn from their mistakes.

Ultimately, the true power of speed lies not just in getting things done faster but in unlocking the full potential of your people and your organization. When you lead at the speed of trust, you create the conditions for innovation, collaboration, and breakthrough performance. You give your team the confidence to take risks, the autonomy to make decisions, and the support to fail forward.

Embrace your inner speedster, and let your leadership kick into high gear. The fast track to success is waiting – all you have to do is step on the accelerator and let your superpower take the wheel. Get ready to leave the competition in the dust as you blaze a trail to extraordinary impact and unparalleled growth. The only question is, how fast do you dare to go? The answer

lies in the power of your own belief and the boldness of your dreams. So, strap in, take a deep breath, and prepare to push the pedal to the metal – your leadership legacy is waiting to be written, one lightning-fast decision at a time.

Chapter 5: Focus on Your Trajectory, Not Your Altitude

I'll never forget the night we closed the biggest real estate deal of my career. It was the middle of the COVID pandemic, and the entire world was turned upside down. Businesses were shutting their doors, people were losing their jobs, and the economy was in freefall. But there we were, Treehouse Partners, on the verge of closing a half-billion-dollar acquisition of manufactured housing communities across the Southeast.

As the CEO of Treehouse, I had been working tirelessly with our team for months to make this deal happen. We had partnered with Blackstone, one of the most prestigious private equity firms in the world, to pull off this audacious transaction in the midst of unprecedented chaos. It was a testament to the strength of our team and partnership with Blackstone, the resilience of our business model, and the power of our vision for the future of affordable housing.

But the journey to get there was anything but smooth. We all had to navigate a maze of legal, financial, and logistical hurdles while dealing with the constantly shifting landscape of the pandemic. There were moments when it felt like the entire

deal might fall apart, when the obstacles seemed insurmountable and the risks too great to bear.

Through it all, though, I kept coming back to the same core belief that has guided me throughout my career: that true success and fulfillment come not from reaching some arbitrary destination but from falling in love with the journey itself. It's not about the size of the deal or the zeroes in your bank account - it's about the challenges you overcome, the relationships you build, and the impact you make along the way.

And so, even as the pressure mounted and the stakes grew higher, I tried to stay focused on the process rather than the outcome. I poured my energy into building a strong and cohesive team, fostering a culture of transparency and trust, and staying true to our core values. I knew that if we could get those fundamentals right, the rest would take care of itself.

Finally, after months of tireless effort, we reached the finish line. The papers were signed, the wire transfers were completed, and the deal was done. It was the largest real estate transaction in the manufactured housing industry in 2020, a staggering achievement in the midst of a once-in-a-century crisis.

But as I sat in my hotel room that night, exhausted and alone, I couldn't shake the feeling of emptiness that washed

over me. I had just achieved something that most people only dream of – so why didn't I feel more excited, more fulfilled, more alive?

The answer, I realized, was simple: because I had fallen into the trap of “the destination fallacy.” I had become so fixated on closing the deal, on reaching that arbitrary milestone, that I had lost sight of the real reason I was doing any of this in the first place. It wasn't about the money or the prestige or the accolades - it was about the joy of the journey, the thrill of tackling impossible challenges with a team of incredible people, and because this was part of a mission we all believed in wholeheartedly. I cherish that core Treehouse operating team more than any deal we did. In fact, that core team made up some of the core of what would eventually become the Roots Management Group team – and we continued to journey through incredible highs and lows, deals closed, and deals missed, as well as great financial successes and hard times together.

And so, as I reflected on that moment, I made a promise to myself: to never again lose sight of what truly matters in life and leadership. To always stay focused on the trajectory I'm trying to create, rather than getting caught up in the illusion of some final destination. To find meaning and purpose in the

daily practice of growing, building, and making a difference in the world. It is hard to fully commit to this practice as the next big milestone approaches. In fact, I remember as Treehouse became Roots through a mega-merger in the industry, Treehouse and Vineyards merged to create Roots Management, making it a top 5 platform in the entire sector behind the likes of the big public REITS, ELS and SUI. That deal created a similar setup where I found myself on the closing night alone and on the phone with our general counsel. It felt so anti-climatic for such a triumphant transaction closing. When you lose sight of the journey being the reward and not the destination, it feels really disappointing. It's hard to maintain motivation in those moments.

That, I've come to believe, is the real key to sustaining yourself as a leader. It's not about the destination points – which are always fleeting. It's not about the triumphant successes because those, too, are fleeting. You can not avoid hard times or pretend that everything is always potentially going to be perfect. It's about cultivating the resilience, the adaptability, and the unshakable sense of purpose that will carry you through any storm and coming to enjoy the journey more than the destination.

What Ladder Are You Climbing?

Imagine this: you're at a pivotal moment in your career, poised to make a decision that could change everything. You've spent countless hours, days, and even years preparing for this opportunity. You've honed your skills, expanded your knowledge, and pushed yourself beyond your limits. You're ready to take on the world and make your mark.

But just as you're about to take that leap, a flicker of doubt crosses your mind. What if, despite all your hard work and dedication, you've been chasing the wrong goal all along? What if you've become so fixated on reaching a certain level of success or achieving a specific milestone that you've lost sight of your true purpose? What if, in your relentless pursuit of the next rung on the ladder, you've forgotten to ask yourself the most crucial question of all: what are the simple, consistent steps in the journey that you will find success from – as opposed to an arbitrary end result that may or may not come?

This is the trap that so many of us fall into as leaders. We fixate on reaching a certain level of success, whether it's a revenue target, a job title, or a spot on a prestigious list. We pour all our energy and resources into climbing the ladder, checking off boxes, and racking up accomplishments. And while

there's nothing inherently wrong with setting goals and striving for achievement, the problem arises when we mistake these milestones for the end game. Worse, when we think that we can only find satisfaction, joy or achievement once some milestone is met.

The level you reach is not nearly as important as the trajectory you're on. Just as a rocket's success is measured not by how high it climbs but by whether it reaches its intended destination, your success as a leader will be determined not by the height of your position but by the impact of your journey. Your destination is not an endgame – the game is the journey to reach each new milestone – not the milestone itself.

In a world that often equates success with status and achievement with advancement, it can be all too easy to get caught up in the rat race of leveling up. We see our peers and competitors hitting new milestones and racking up new accolades, and we feel pressure to keep pace. We fall victim to the “destination fallacy,” the belief that we'll finally be happy and fulfilled when we reach that next goal post.

But as I discovered during my own journey, this kind of thinking is a recipe for burnout and disillusionment. When we tie our self-worth and satisfaction to external markers of

success, we set ourselves up for a never-ending cycle of striving and disappointment. We may reach one level only to find that the goalposts have shifted, the bar has been raised, and we're right back where we started.

Breaking Free From The Cycle

The key to breaking free from this cycle is to shift our focus from the external to the internal – from the level we're trying to reach to the trajectory we're trying to create. This means getting crystal clear on our core values, our unique strengths, and the impact we want to have on the world. It means defining success on our own terms, not by someone else's arbitrary metrics. And it means staying true to our chosen path, even when the temptation to chase shiny objects and short-term wins threatens to pull us off course.

That's the real power of living your leadership orbit – it gives you a framework for making decisions and taking actions that are aligned with your deepest priorities and aspirations – that are actually achievable. It's not always possible to reach a milestone or destination for a wide variety of reasons – many of which are out of your control. However, it is always possible to focus on the steps, the process, and the journey of progress and advancement. Overcoming trials and setbacks and continuing

to move forward. When you're clear on your trajectory, you're able to say no to opportunities that don't serve your higher purpose, even if they come with the promise of a quick level-up. You're able to stay focused on the work that truly matters, even when the world around you is in constant flux. And perhaps most importantly, you're able to derive a sense of meaning and fulfillment from the journey itself, not just the destination.

This is the essence of what it means to lead from the inside out – to let your internal compass guide your external actions, to let your trajectory dictate your altitude. And it's a skill that will serve you well no matter what challenges or opportunities come your way. When you lead from a place of alignment and integrity, you're able to weather any storm and adapt to any change with grace and resilience.

As we dive into this chapter on focusing on your trajectory over your level, I invite you to reflect on your own leadership journey thus far. Have you been so fixated on achieving a certain status or hitting a certain metric that you've lost sight of your true north? Have you been chasing someone else's definition of success rather than charting your own unique course? And most importantly, what kind of trajectory do you want to create for yourself moving forward – one that reflects your deepest values and aspirations and allows you to make the

impact you're truly capable of? What is your current destination that you are chasing that seems to either be disappointingly close but never there, like a mirage of frustration and anxiety?

These are the questions that will guide us as we explore the art and science of charting our own leadership orbit. Together, we'll uncover the mindsets and strategies that will help you stay true to your path, even as the world around you shifts and changes. We'll learn how to set goals and milestones that are aligned with your larger vision rather than just arbitrary markers of achievement. And we'll discover how to cultivate the resilience and adaptability you need to thrive in an uncertain and ever-changing landscape.

The journey ahead may be full of twists and turns, but with the right trajectory and the right tools, there's no limit to how far you can soar - one decision, one action, one small win at a time.

The Destination Fallacy

I'll never forget the day I cashed my first half-a-million-dollar check from a business I had helped start and create. I was young and had left a promising career at Goldman Sachs to help start a new independent research and trading business, Wedge

Partners. I remember as I left the surety of high pay and career advancement of Goldman Sachs, I always felt like as soon as I helped Wedge Partners grow to a level that would pay me a total compensation range of a million dollars, I would “be there!” In the second year after leaving Goldman, I had been working around the clock to secure a major new client of Wedge, and we had a very compelling research idea that we believed could really perform well – Palm One – I’ll never forget the ticker PLMO. We had a beat on the upcoming wave of smartphone adoption and were actively following Research in Motion (ticker: RIMM). We believed that the Palm One handheld device could make serious market share gains, and we believed the stock was poised to be a real winner. The new client was digging in on our research and ultimately decided to buy a sizable position in the company. This typically meant that we would get “credit” and some trading activity that would generate commissions for our new firm. Instead, they decided to build their entire position in PLMO through our trading desk – and the millions of shares at a nice commission was a huge win for Wedge. This client later also decided to buy an even bigger position in Alcatel Lucent, and the commissions were enormous. My partner and I decided to mark this huge milestone moment together and hand-delivered a physical

check to our local banking branch to deposit the month's massive commission check. My partner then surprisingly told me that I would be getting \$500K in my next paycheck as a reward for the incredible month! I had done it. I had proven myself in the high-stakes world of Wall Street finance. I was on my way to the top.

Or so I thought.

Looking back on that moment now, I can see that I had fallen victim to what I call the “destination fallacy” – the belief that reaching a certain goal or milestone will bring you lasting happiness and fulfillment. I had bought into the idea that success was a destination to be reached rather than a journey to be savored. And I had convinced myself that once I hit that magic number or landed that big promotion, I would finally feel like I had “made it.”

But the funny thing about destinations is that they have a way of constantly shifting and receding into the distance. No sooner had that check cleared my account, and I was already setting my sights on the next one and the one after that. I was like a hamster on a wheel, running faster and faster but never actually getting anywhere. And with each new achievement, I

found that the satisfaction I felt was fleeting at best and often tinged with a sense of emptiness and disillusionment.

It wasn't until much later in my career after I had launched my own hedge fund and experienced the many ups and downs of that specific entrepreneurial venture, that I finally began to understand the true nature of success and fulfillment. I realized that the joy and meaning I was seeking couldn't be found in any external destination or marker of achievement. It could only be cultivated from within by staying true to my own values and priorities and focusing on the impact I was making along the way. More directly, it was the journey itself that was rewarding and fulfilling – not any one final destination or milestone.

This realization was a game-changer for me, both professionally and personally. It allowed me to break free from the endless cycle of striving and dissatisfaction and to start charting my own unique leadership orbit. Instead of fixating on hitting arbitrary targets or keeping up with my peers, I began to define success on my own terms – by the relationships I was building, the problems I was solving, and the difference I was making in the world.

In a culture that often equates worth with wealth and status with success, it can be incredibly challenging to stay

grounded in your own sense of purpose and values. There were plenty of times when I felt the pull of the destination fallacy, tempting me to chase after the next shiny object or sacrifice my integrity for a quick win. But every time I veered off course, I found that the rewards were hollow and short-lived, and I would ultimately end up feeling more lost and unfulfilled than ever.

What I've come to understand is that true success and happiness come from aligning your actions with your deepest aspirations and staying focused on the trajectory you want to create over the long haul. It's about having the courage to define your own metrics for achievement, even if they don't match up with society's expectations or your industry's benchmarks. And it's about cultivating the resilience and adaptability you need to stay the course, even when the path ahead is uncertain or the obstacles seem insurmountable.

This is the essence of what it means to live your leadership orbit – to let your inner compass guide your outer journey, to let your values dictate your path, and to let the path itself be what satisfies your inner drive. When you're clear on the trajectory you want to create and the impact you want to have, you're able to make decisions and take actions that are aligned with your highest purpose, even in the face of setbacks and

challenges. You're able to stay focused on the work that truly matters, even when the world around you is constantly vying for your attention and energy.

Ultimately, this is what separates the leaders who make a real and lasting difference from those who simply chase after fleeting achievements and accolades. The leaders who leave a legacy are the ones who have the courage to forge their own path, even when it means going against the grain or taking the road less traveled. They're the ones who understand that success is not a destination to be reached but a way of being embodied each and every day.

And that's what I want for you. I want you to experience the joy and fulfillment that comes from living in alignment with your deepest values and aspirations. I want you to break free from the tyranny of the destination fallacy and start charting your own unique leadership orbit. I want you to look back on your journey not just with a sense of pride in what you've accomplished but with a deep knowing that you stayed true to yourself and made the impact you were put on this earth to make.

As we continue to explore the principles and practices of authentic, impactful leadership, I invite you to reflect on your

own relationship with the destination fallacy. Where in your life and work have you been chasing after external markers of success rather than staying true to your own internal compass? What kind of trajectory do you want to create for yourself moving forward – one that reflects your deepest passions and priorities and allows you to leave a legacy you’re truly proud of?

These are the questions that will guide you as you take command of your own leadership journey and start living your orbit. Because when you focus on your trajectory over your level, when you let your values lead the way and your impact be your guide, there’s no limit to the heights you can reach and no end to the difference you can make.

Three Daily Wins

As I scrolled through my feed on the social media platform X, a post caught my eye which stopped me in my tracks. It read, “You need 3 daily wins: A physical win. Walking, running, lifting, swimming... A mental win. Reading, writing, creating, learning... A spiritual win. Praying, meditating, studying, growing... Be a complete winner!”

The simplicity and power of this message struck a deep chord within me. In a world that often defines success in terms

of external achievements and milestones, this post served as a poignant reminder that true fulfillment and growth come from nurturing all aspects of our being - body, mind, and soul.

As leaders, it's all too easy to get caught up in the relentless pursuit of the next goal, the next level, the next big win. We push ourselves to work longer hours, take on more responsibilities, and make countless sacrifices in the name of advancement and success. But in the process, we often neglect the very things that give our lives meaning and purpose - our health, our relationships, our personal development, and our spiritual well-being.

The truth is sustainable leadership and success require more than just hitting targets and climbing ladders. They require a holistic approach to growth and self-mastery, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of our physical, mental, and spiritual selves.

When we prioritize our physical health through regular exercise and self-care, we build the stamina and resilience needed to weather the storms of leadership. We cultivate the energy and vitality that allow us to show up fully and powerfully in all areas of our lives.

When we invest in our mental growth through continuous learning and personal development, we expand our horizons and sharpen our skills. We become more creative, more innovative, and more adaptable in the face of change and uncertainty. We develop the wisdom and discernment needed to make sound decisions and navigate complex challenges.

And when we nurture our spiritual selves through practices like meditation, prayer, and gratitude, we tap into a source of inner strength and guidance that goes beyond the ego and the intellect. We connect with our deepest values and highest purpose, and we gain the clarity and conviction needed to lead with authenticity and integrity.

These three areas of growth are not separate or mutually exclusive. They are intimately interconnected and mutually reinforcing. When we neglect one area, the others inevitably suffer. But when we cultivate all three in harmony, we create a powerful synergy that propels us forward on our leadership journey.

That's why I believe in the concept of setting daily goals, whether it's 3, 1, or 5. It is so crucial for anyone seeking to sustain their leadership orbit. The power lies not in the specific number but in the simple act of consistently working toward

these goals over long periods of time. By setting intentional objectives and taking consistent action, we build the habits and practices that keep us grounded, focused, and energized. This daily commitment, maintained over weeks, months, and years, creates a virtuous cycle of growth and self-mastery. It allows us to lead from a place of wholeness and authenticity, constantly reinforcing our leadership trajectory through small but significant daily actions. The key is not the quantity of goals but the quality of our commitment to them, fostering a sustainable path of continuous improvement and personal development.

My challenge to you is to embrace this philosophy of holistic growth and make it a cornerstone of your leadership practice. Start each day by setting a clear intention for your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Take concrete actions, no matter how small, to nurture each of these areas. And most importantly, approach this work with a spirit of curiosity, compassion, and self-discovery.

Remember, leadership is not just about what you achieve but who you become in the process. By focusing on your own holistic growth and development, you'll not only accelerate your own leadership trajectory, but you'll also inspire others to

do the same. You'll become a beacon of positive change and a catalyst for transformation in your organization and beyond.

Don't wait for permission or perfection to start prioritizing your own growth and well-being. Start today, start small, and trust in the cumulative power of consistent action. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step – and with each daily win, you'll be one step closer to becoming the leader you were truly meant to be.

Eternal Hope and Optimism

When you're living in alignment with your deepest values, when you're continuously learning and evolving and making a positive impact, you tap into a wellspring of hope and optimism that can never run dry. You become a beacon of light for others, inspiring them to rise above their own challenges and limitations. You create a gravitational pull that attracts the resources, the relationships, and the opportunities you need to keep growing and thriving.

That, to me, is the essence of leadership orbit – and it's available to anyone who has the courage to claim it. It's not about your title, your resume or your bank balance. It's about your willingness to embrace the journey, to fall in love with the

process, and to keep reaching for your highest potential, even when the path ahead is uncertain.

As you navigate your own leadership journey, remember this: the true measure of your success will never be found in some arbitrary milestone or fleeting accomplishment. It will be found in the lives you touch, the difference you make, and the legacy you leave behind. It will be found in your ability to stay anchored to your deepest truths, even as the world around you changes and shifts.

Keep your eyes on the horizon, but don't forget to savor the view along the way. Embrace the challenges and the setbacks as opportunities for growth and transformation. And most of all, never lose sight of the profound power you have to shape your own reality, chart your own course, and create a life and a leadership that is truly worth living.

That is the promise and the invitation of leadership orbit – and it's waiting for you to claim it, one brave and purposeful step at a time.

I've experienced my fair share of setbacks and failures over the years. Times when I thought I had it all figured out, only to watch everything I'd built come crashing down around me. It's

a painful and humbling experience, one that can shake even the most resilient leader to their core.

I remember one particularly dark period in my life, not too long ago, when I had achieved what I thought was a massive success. The business I was working for was thriving, my impact in the business was being recognized internally and externally, and the value of my assets tied to this business was reaching heights I never thought was imaginable, and I felt like I was on top of the world. But then, in what seemed like the blink of an eye, it all came crashing down. I was ultimately betrayed by a group of leaders that I trusted and convinced many others to trust, and everything I had worked so hard for felt like it was literally stolen right before my eyes. These were extremely scary and dark days.

During that stretch of my professional journey, it would have been easy to give in to despair and cynicism. I felt like a failure and like all my efforts had been for nothing. I felt ashamed for working so diligently on something and for someone who ultimately faltered. I felt the deep weight of loss for myself and for many others who also trusted my own convictions. These were deeply painful moments, and I had every reason to be full of pessimism, doubt, and fear.

But then I remembered the things that truly sustain me in times of crisis. Not the external trappings of success but the inner resources of hope, optimism, and unshakable belief in my own resilience and the entire point of it all – to learn, to grow, to get better, to overcome, and to keep moving forward. I thought about all the times I had faced adversity before and came out stronger on the other side. I remembered the love and support of my wife and kids, who had been by my side through thick and thin. And most of all, I reconnected with the sense of purpose and mission that had always driven me forward, even in the darkest of times. I have been blessed by a firm belief in a loving God and that all things will work out for your good in the end as long as you keep trying, keep trusting in God, and keep doing your best. Your best is good enough.

You see when you're in the midst of a crisis, it's easy to get knocked out of your leadership orbit or to lose sight of the bigger picture and the trajectory you're trying to create. But if you can find your way back to that inner compass, if you can tap into that wellspring of hope and optimism that lies at the core of your being, you'll find that you have everything you need to weather any storm.

That's the real secret to sustaining yourself as a leader. It's not about avoiding hard times or pretending that everything is

always rosy and perfect. It's about cultivating the inner strength and resilience to keep moving forward, even when the path ahead is uncertain or the obstacles seem insurmountable. It's about staying connected to your deepest values and aspirations, even when the world around you is in chaos.

When you can maintain that positive energy and orbit of hope, even in the face of setbacks and challenges, you become a beacon of light for others. Your attitude and actions have a ripple effect that extends far beyond yourself. You inspire those around you to keep pushing forward, to believe in themselves and their own potential for greatness.

I've seen this firsthand in my own life and work. When I've been able to stay grounded in my own sense of purpose and optimism, even in the midst of crisis, it has a profound impact on my team, my organization and those around me. People start to feel more hopeful and energized, even in the face of daunting challenges. They start to see setbacks not as failures but as opportunities for growth and learning. And they start to rally around a shared vision and trajectory rather than getting bogged down in the day-to-day ups and downs.

That's the real power of living your leadership orbit. It's not just about achieving some arbitrary destination or hitting

some fleeting milestone. It's about staying true to your inner compass and creating a sustainable path of growth and impact, no matter what the external circumstances may be.

In business and life, the external circumstances are rarely going to be perfect. There will always be hard days and scary moments, times when you feel like you're on the brink of disaster. That's just the nature of the game. But if you can learn to find joy and purpose in the journey itself, if you can stay focused on the trajectory you're trying to create rather than getting attached to any one destination, you'll find that you have a never-ending source of fuel to keep you moving forward.

That's what I want for you as you navigate your own leadership path. I want you to know that you have everything you need to create a life and career of meaning and impact, no matter what obstacles or setbacks you may face along the way. I want you to cultivate that inner orbit of hope and optimism that will sustain you through the darkest of times and allow you to be a light for others. And most of all, I want you to fall in love with the journey itself – the daily practice of growing, learning, and making a difference in the world.

Because when you're in your leadership orbit, every day becomes an opportunity to create something extraordinary.

Every interaction becomes a chance to inspire and uplift those around you. And every challenge becomes an invitation to dig deeper, to find new reserves of strength and resilience within yourself.

So, stay the course. Keep your eyes on the prize, but don't get too attached to any one destination. Embrace the ups and downs of the journey, and know that every step is taking you closer to the leader you were born to be. And most of all, never lose sight of the hope and optimism that are your birthright as a conscious, creative being.

With those inner resources as your foundation, there's no limit to the impact you can make or the legacy you can leave.

The Pushup Challenge

The pushup challenge is a perfect example of how small, consistent actions can lead to massive results over time. It's not about making huge leaps overnight but rather about committing to steady, incremental progress day after day. This is the essence of what it means to focus on your trajectory over your current position.

I've seen the power of this principle play out time and time again, both in my own life and in the organizations I've led.

When I was the CEO of Roots Management Group, overseeing one of the largest privately owned portfolios of manufactured housing communities in the country, I decided to introduce the pushup challenge to our entire team of 800 employees. Each year, we would host a Community Managers Summit and bring in our managers from all over the country. Most of our entire company attends for at least part of this summit. In 2023, I decided to roll out this challenge without prior warning or preparation.

It was a simple concept but one that I knew could have a profound impact on our culture and our collective mindset. The idea was this: everyone would start by doing as many pushups as they could, whether that was 50, 10, or even just one. Then, each week, they would add one more pushup to their total, slowly building their strength and endurance over time. Each week we had internal chats and group texts encouraging, reminding, and helping everyone follow through. It was simple. It was seemingly mundane – but it engaged and united everyone around a powerful concept. If you do something simple and consistent over long periods of time, you can really make a huge impact.

The results were nothing short of incredible. People who had never been able to do a single pushup were suddenly

cranking out dozens with ease. Those who started at a higher baseline were pushing themselves to new heights week after week. But more than just the physical gains, I saw a transformation in the way our team approached their work and their lives.

Suddenly, people were talking about the power of consistent effort and the importance of pushing past their perceived limitations. They were cheering each other on, celebrating every small win and milestone along the way. They were starting to see how the principles of the pushup challenge could be applied to every area of their lives, from their health and relationships to their professional development and career growth.

As a leader, it was one of the most gratifying things I've ever experienced. Here was a simple, silly little exercise that had nothing to do with our business on the surface but that was profoundly shaping the way our people thought about themselves and what they were capable of achieving. It was a tangible reminder that leadership isn't just about the big, strategic decisions – it's about the small, daily actions that create a culture of growth and empowerment.

And that's really the heart of what it means to focus on your trajectory over your current position. It's about understanding that success and fulfillment don't come from reaching some arbitrary destination or milestone, but rather from falling in love with the process of continuous improvement. It's about finding joy and meaning in the journey itself, not just the final outcome.

This is a lesson that I had to learn the hard way in my own career. I've had my share of big wins and major achievements, but I've also had plenty of moments where I got caught up in chasing the next shiny object or external marker of success. I've fallen victim to the destination fallacy more times than I care to admit, believing that I would finally be happy and satisfied when I reached a certain revenue target or closed a certain deal.

But every time I've reached one of those arbitrary finish lines, I've found that the feeling of fulfillment and contentment is always fleeting. The high of the achievement fades quickly, and I'm left wondering what's next and why I don't feel as satisfied as I thought I would. It's a vicious cycle that can leave you feeling like you're always chasing something just out of reach.

The antidote, I've found, is to reorient your focus from the destination to the trajectory. Stop obsessing over where you are in the moment and start getting intentional about the direction you're headed and the person you're becoming in the process. When you shift your perspective in this way, everything changes.

Suddenly, every day becomes an opportunity to learn, grow and make meaningful progress. Every challenge becomes a chance to stretch beyond your current capacities and expand your potential. Every setback and disaster becomes a learning experience for growth and resilience. And every interaction becomes an opportunity to lift others up and contribute to something greater than yourself.

This is the real work of leadership – not just reaching the top of the mountain but inspiring and empowering others to climb alongside you. It's about the impact you have on the lives you touch and the legacy you leave behind, not just the titles you hold or the accolades you accumulate along the way.

As you assess and adjust your own leadership trajectory, I invite you to consider: what are the small, daily actions you can take to create momentum and growth in your life and work? How can you shift your focus from arbitrary external markers

of success to the internal qualities and characteristics you want to cultivate? And how can you use your own journey of continuous improvement to lift up and inspire others?

These are the questions that will help you stay true to your path and avoid the trap of the destination fallacy. Because at the end of the day, leadership isn't about where you end up – it's about who you become and how you grow along the way. It's about the lives you touch, the impact you make, and the legacy you leave behind.

And that is a trajectory worth pursuing with all your heart and soul. Keep pushing, keep growing, and keep reaching for the stars – not just for yourself but for all those who are counting on you to light the way. The journey of leadership is a long and winding one, but I promise you this: every step is worth it when you're heading in a direction that matters.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a “Trajectory Inspection”: Take a hard, honest look at your current goals and aspirations. Are they focused on arbitrary external markers of success, or are they aligned with your deepest values and purpose? Make a list of the destinations you've been chasing, and then ask yourself: what would it look like to reorient these goals

around the process you are following to reach those milestones? This simple exercise can help you shift your perspective from the fleeting to the fulfilling.

2. **Embrace the “1% Challenge”:** Commit to making small, incremental improvements in every area of your life, every single day. Just like with the pushup challenge, the power lies in consistency and progress over time. Choose one habit or skill that you want to cultivate, and then show up each day to make a tiny bit of progress. Over weeks, months, and years, these micro-improvements will compound into massive results. The key is to fall in love with the process, not just the outcome.
3. **Find Your “True North” Metrics:** Identify a set of internal metrics that reflect your deepest values and aspirations. These could be things like the quality of your relationships, the impact you’re having on others, or the sense of meaning and fulfillment you feel in your work. Start tracking these metrics regularly, and use them as your compass to stay true to your trajectory. Remember, what gets measured gets managed – so choose your metrics wisely.
4. **Cultivate a “Growth Mindset” in Others:** Look for opportunities to inspire and empower others to embrace

their own leadership trajectories. Share your own journey of continuous improvement, and encourage others to take on challenges that stretch them beyond their current capacities. Celebrate the small wins and milestones along the way, and create a culture that values progress over perfection. Remember, leadership is about the impact you have on others, not just your own achievements.

5. Embrace the “Joy of the Journey”: Make a daily practice of savoring the moments of growth, connection, and meaning that arise along your leadership path. Keep a gratitude journal, and take time each day to reflect on the progress you’ve made and the lessons you’ve learned. Surround yourself with people who inspire and challenge you to be your best self, and cultivate a sense of curiosity and wonder about the unfolding journey. Remember, the true rewards of leadership lie not in the destination but in the richness of the experience along the way.

As you implement these action steps, know that you are embarking on a path of profound transformation – not just for yourself but for all those whose lives you touch. The journey of leadership is not for the faint of heart, but it is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling adventures you will ever undertake.

Stay true to your trajectory, even when the destination is uncertain. Keep growing, even when the path is steep and there are many obstacles. And never forget that your greatest impact will come not from the heights you reach but from the depth of your commitment to the climb.

This is the work of a lifetime, but it is work that will leave a legacy long after you're gone. Embrace the challenge with all your heart and soul, and know that with each step, you are becoming the leader you were always meant to be.

Here's to charting your own course, even when the path is uncertain. Here's to staying true to your north star, even when the world tries to pull you off track. And here's to embracing the never-ending journey of growth, service, and self-discovery that is authentic leadership.

Chapter 6: Small Steps to Massive Momentum

As we've explored in the previous chapter, the key to unlocking your leadership potential is to focus on your trajectory, not just your current position. It's about falling in love with the process of continuous growth and improvement rather than getting attached to any one destination or milestone. But this begs the question: how do you actually create and sustain that kind of momentum in your life and work? How do you turn your aspirations into actions and your actions into enduring impact?

The answer, I've found, lies in a simple but profound principle: the power of small steps. You see, most people wildly overestimate what they can achieve in a day but vastly underestimate what they can accomplish in a year, a decade, or a lifetime. They get caught up in the trap of thinking that massive success requires massive action - that to make a big difference, they need to take big leaps and make radical changes overnight. But the truth is, the most transformative journeys are often the ones that begin with a single, small step in the right direction.

I learned this lesson firsthand during my time as an operator placed in various leadership roles, mostly in turn around or “fix it” type of situations. In most of these circumstances, the task of fixing a business or turning around a company is daunting and overwhelming. There is rarely a quick fix or easy solution. Sometimes, even surviving is highly questionable. However, in every successful turnaround, there are generally a few simple changes that are made right away, and those changes alone do not make much of a macro difference, but in the micro, a newfound energy of restoration begins. This feeling is almost palpable in the culture where dark clouds and gloom lay large. As the saying goes, “The only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time...” A reminder that no matter how big or audacious the goal, the key to achieving it was to break things down into manageable chunks and start making steady, incremental progress daily. It is incredible how much change can come from a simple and small change at an overly distressed business.

You see, leadership isn't about making grand pronouncements or sweeping gestures. It's about the small, daily actions that create momentum and inspire others to follow your lead. It's about showing up with consistency and integrity, even when the path ahead is uncertain, or the obstacles seem

insurmountable. And it's about trusting in the cumulative power of incremental progress to carry you through to your goals.

This is why I'm such a big believer in the concept of "micro-habits" – tiny, almost effortless actions that you can integrate into your daily routine to create big results over time. Things like taking a few minutes each morning to set your intentions for the day, expressing gratitude to a colleague or loved one, or reading just a few pages of a book before bed each night. These may seem like insignificant gestures at the moment, but when compounded over weeks, months, and years, they can utterly transform the trajectory of your life and leadership.

The beauty of this approach is that it's accessible to anyone, regardless of their current circumstances or resources. You don't need a fancy title, a big budget, or a team of superstars to start making meaningful progress. All you need is the willingness to take that first small step and the discipline to keep showing up day after day, week after week, month after month. The momentum will build on itself, and before you know it, you'll be miles down the road from where you started.

There will be days when you feel like you're slogging through quicksand, and the progress seems painfully slow.

There will be setbacks and failures along the way, moments when you're tempted to throw in the towel and give up on your dreams. But this is where the power of a growth mindset comes in – the belief that challenges are opportunities for learning and that failures are simply feedback to help you course-correct and keep moving forward.

As you cultivate this mindset and start to trust in the power of small steps, you'll find that your leadership capacity grows exponentially. You'll become more resilient in the face of adversity, more adaptable to changing circumstances, and more confident in your ability to make a meaningful impact. And perhaps most importantly, you'll inspire others to follow your lead and start taking small steps toward their own goals and aspirations.

My challenge to you, as you embark on this next phase of your leadership journey, is to embrace the power of incremental progress. Start small, but start today. Choose one micro-habit that aligns with your values and your vision, and commit to practicing it each day, no matter what. Celebrate your wins along the way, no matter how small they may seem. And trust in the cumulative impact of your efforts to carry you to heights you never thought possible.

Remember, leadership is not a destination – it's a daily practice of showing up as your best self and lifting up those around you. It's about the small steps you take each day to create meaning, momentum, and impact. And it's about the ripple effects that those steps create in the world around you, inspiring others to take bold action and create change in their own lives and communities.

Keep stepping forward, one small but mighty action at a time. Keep believing in your own potential, even when the path ahead is uncertain. And keep shining your light, knowing that every flicker of progress is illuminating the way for those who will follow in your footsteps.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step – but it's the consistency and commitment of your stride that will carry you to your ultimate destination. Take that first step today, and keep on stepping with all the courage, resilience, and determination that you possess. The world is waiting for your leadership – and it all starts with the power of small steps.

The Compounding Effects of Micro-Habits

Let me tell you a story that perfectly illustrates the power of small steps and micro-habits. During my time as interim CFO at Rix Energy, an oilfield services company that was teetering on the brink of collapse. Now, for those who aren't familiar with the oilfield services industry, let me paint a picture: it's a brutal, unforgiving business where the stakes are high and the margins are razor-thin. These companies have to invest massive amounts of capital into expensive equipment and then pray that the notoriously volatile oil and gas market stays favorable long enough for them to recoup their investment.

When I got the call to help Rix Energy, I knew I was walking into a minefield. The company was in full-blown crisis mode, hemorrhaging cash and barely keeping the lights on. The owners had to inject emergency capital to make payroll, and morale was at an all-time low. It was clear that drastic action was needed and fast.

As I dug into the financials, one thing became obvious: the company had no real visibility into its cash flow. They were so focused on chasing revenue and winning new contracts as a

solution that they had completely lost sight of the lifeblood of any business: the cash coming in and going out. It was like they were driving a car at night with no headlights, hoping they didn't crash into a ditch. Thinking that revenue would solve their problems, they chased new sales, new acquisitions, and growth – forgetting to notice if that growth would make their problems worse.

I knew that if we had any chance of saving this company, we needed to make a fundamental shift in mindset and behavior. We needed to get everyone, from the owners down to the front-line workers, maniacally focused on cash management. But how do you create that kind of cultural transformation overnight, especially in a blue-collar industry where most folks don't have a background in finance?

I realized that the answer was to start small. We couldn't expect everyone to become financial experts right out of the gate, but we could introduce a simple, powerful habit that would get the ball rolling. And that's how the concept of the “blood budget” was born.

Here's how it worked: We created a weekly cash budget that meticulously tracked every dollar in and out of the company. And when I say meticulous, I mean it—we projected

cash inflows and outflows for every single week for an entire year. It was an insanely detailed and rigorous process, all manually built, but I knew that level of granularity was essential if we were going to instill the discipline needed to turn things around.

We didn't just create this budget and file it in a drawer somewhere. No, we made it the centerpiece of our entire turnaround effort. We had each division manager sign their name to it (the Blood version). We printed it out on massive legal-sized papers, folded it up, and reviewed it regularly. And then, in a moment of inspired theatrics, we had every divisional manager review the weekly budget and symbolically sign their name to it – almost as if it were a symbolic “blood oath” to do whatever it took to hit those weekly cash targets and never to miss them.

I still remember the looks on their faces as the team saw the various division managers sign their names on the blood budget. But as each person put their name on the line, you could feel something shift in the room. It was like a collective lightbulb went off, and suddenly, everyone understood the magnitude of the challenge we were facing and the critical role they played in overcoming it. We not only did this internally – but as we brought in external capital to help fund the turnaround – we

wrote in the loan documents a cash covenant tied to the weekly performance of that very cash budget. Now we were serious. An actual capital covenant tied to a weekly performance against something we projected out with only a few weeks of work across a business doing \$30M+ in annual revenues! Internally and externally – we had covenanted with real serious consequences to live by this cash budget for an entire year!

From then on, the weekly cash budget became the organization's drumbeat. Every weekend, we would report on our cash performance for the previous week compared to the blood budget — how much cash we had brought in, how much we had spent, and where we stood relative to our forecast. If we missed our target, there was no hiding from it—we faced it head-on as a team and worked together to figure out how to course-correct.

At first, the meetings were tense and sometimes confrontational. People weren't used to having their performance measured so directly, and there was a lot of finger-pointing and defensiveness. But slowly, as we returned to that blood budget week after week, the tone began to change. People started to take ownership of their budget, and we would come together as an entire team with ideas for how to drive more cash flow or eliminate unnecessary expenses.

It was like watching a flywheel start to turn – each small win, each incremental improvement, added a little more momentum to the machine. And as that momentum built, people started to believe that maybe, just maybe, we could pull this thing off. We were so proud to finish that entire year without missing our weekly cash budget – not even once! We reported our results week after week and never missed a beat. We were able to find so much excess that we continued to squeeze better cash performance than initially anticipated. This was not only noticeable to the internal team and the external capital investors – but also to the banks we were working with. We were able to refinance a loan maturity, put in place an asset-back credit facility, and position the company for much better financing going forward.

Fast forward to today, and Rix Energy is still going strong today. We not only turned the company around but set it up to weather even the most severe downturns – including the COVID-19 pandemic that brought the entire oil and gas industry to its knees. While there were indeed plenty of other factors that contributed to that success and sustainability, the discipline and focus instilled by that weekly cash budget played a major role. I believe that the core RIX team still in place

today felt the real benefits of small and simple steps – and the power they can have over long periods.

Why do I share this story? It perfectly encapsulates the power of small steps to drive massive momentum. By introducing just one simple habit — reviewing the cash budget every single week, without fail — we were able to transform the trajectory of that company completely.

The key is to start small but start with intention. Choose one micro-habit that aligns with your values and vision and commit to practicing it with unrelenting consistency. Maybe it's setting aside 15 minutes every morning to review your top priorities for the day. Maybe it's sending one thank-you note or words of encouragement to a team member or customer each week. Or maybe it's something as simple as taking a walking break every afternoon to recharge your batteries and get the creative juices flowing.

Whatever you choose, the real magic comes from the compounding effect of those small actions over time. Just like compound interest can turn a small initial investment into a fortune given enough time, the compounding effect of your micro-habits can completely transform your trajectory as a

leader and help you create massive momentum toward your goals.

Just like with the “blood budget,” the key is to make your micro-habit a non-negotiable part of your routine. You have to treat it with the same reverence and commitment that we did with those weekly cash meetings – no matter how busy you are, no matter what fires you’re fighting, that habit is sacrosanct.

And when you do that – when you commit to consistently taking those small steps, even when you don’t feel like it – something remarkable happens. You start to build momentum almost effortlessly as each action becomes a little easier and a little more automatic than the one before. And as that momentum grows, so does your confidence, your clarity, and your impact.

My challenge to you is this: take a hard look at your leadership trajectory and identify one micro-habit you can start practicing today to start building massive momentum. It doesn’t have to be huge – in fact, the smaller, the better. But it does have to be consistent, and it does have to be intentional.

And as you take that first step, know that you’re not just changing your own trajectory – you’re inspiring others to do the same. Because when you lead by example and show what’s

possible through the power of small habits, you give others permission to start building their own momentum as well. And that's how real change happens – not through grand pronouncements or sweeping mandates, but through the ripple effect of small actions multiplied across a team or an organization.

So start today, and start small. But most importantly, start with the unwavering belief that those small steps have the power to take you – and those you lead – to heights you never dreamed possible. The journey to leadership orbit is long, but it begins with a single micro-habit – so take that first step and watch as the momentum starts to build. The view from the top will be more than worth it, I promise you that.

The Secret to Mastering Your Minutes: How to Turn Time from a Thief into an Ally

Time. It's the one resource we all share equally, the great equalizer that cuts across all boundaries of status, wealth, or achievement. And yet, for something so precious and finite, it's astounding how little conscious attention most of us give to how we're spending our hours and days. We let time slip through our

fingers like sand, only to look back later and wonder where it all went – and why we don't have more to show for it.

As leaders, we often find ourselves caught in a constant battle against the clock, struggling to balance the demands of our professional and personal lives while making meaningful progress toward our goals. But what if I told you that the key to unlocking your full potential as a leader lies not in trying to do more with less time but in developing a deeper, more intimate relationship with the time you have?

You see, time management isn't just about productivity hacks or efficiency tricks – it's about fundamentally shifting the way you think about and prioritize the moments that make up your life. It's about learning to see time not as an enemy to be conquered but as an ally to be embraced and leveraged in pursuit of your highest aspirations.

One of the most powerful realizations I've had in my leadership journey is that time is a thief. We've all heard this phrase before, usually in the context of our personal lives. "Oh, they grow up so fast," we say of our children, marveling at how quickly the years seem to slip away. In May of 2024, I watched my oldest son graduate from the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas, and I couldn't help but feel a sense

of disbelief at how rapidly time had flown by. It seemed like only yesterday that he was taking his first steps, and now he was a confident young man ready to take on the world.

But time's thievery isn't limited to our family lives – it's just as pervasive and insidious in our professional spheres. How many times have you looked up from your desk at the end of a long day and wondered where all the hours went? How often have you sacrificed your personal well-being or relationships in the name of getting ahead at work, only to look back and question whether it was truly worth it?

The truth is, if we don't take an active, intentional approach to managing our time, it will manage us – and rarely in ways that align with our deepest values and priorities. We'll find ourselves constantly reacting to the urgent at the expense of the important, caught in a vicious cycle of “busyness” that leaves us feeling drained and unfulfilled.

So, how do we break free from this trap and start reclaiming control over our most precious resource? It starts with awareness – with taking an honest, unflinching look at how we're actually spending our time, not just how we think we're spending it. This is where tools like screen time tracking and time audits can be so powerful. By bringing conscious attention

to where our minutes and hours are truly going, we give ourselves the opportunity to make more intentional choices about how we allocate this finite resource.

If we want to achieve true momentum and mastery in any area of our lives, we can't afford to be passive observers of our own time. We have to take an active, intentional approach to managing this most critical of resources, and that starts with developing a keen awareness of where our minutes are really going.

Think about it this way: if you were trying to lose weight or get in shape, what's one of the first things any good coach or trainer would tell you to do? Track your intake and output. Keep a food diary of what you're eating and drinking and a log of your physical activity and exercise. Why? Because you can't make meaningful changes or improvements until you have a clear and honest picture of your starting point.

The same principle applies to how we spend our time. Most of us have a vague sense of our daily routines and responsibilities, but we rarely take the time to actually map out how our hours are being allocated across different activities and priorities. We might feel like we're working hard and doing our

best, but without concrete data to back it up, we're really just guessing.

That's where the power of time tracking comes in. By taking a few minutes each day to log how you're spending your time - whether it's through a simple notebook, a spreadsheet, or a more sophisticated app or tool - you start to build a much more accurate and granular picture of where your precious hours are really going. And that knowledge is the key to unlocking true momentum and change.

When you track your time consistently and honestly, patterns start to emerge. You might discover that you're spending far more time than you realized on low-value activities like social media scrolling or mindless email checking. You might notice that your most productive and focused hours are being interrupted by constant distractions and context-switching. Or you might see that you're neglecting important priorities like exercise, family time, or strategic planning in favor of urgent but less impactful tasks.

Armed with this awareness, you can start to make intentional shifts and optimizations. You can ruthlessly cut out or delegate activities that aren't aligned with your goals and values. You can restructure your days to better match your

natural energy and focus cycles. You can set clear boundaries and create sacred space for the things that truly matter most. In short, you can start to take control of your time, instead of letting it control you. I have used rigorous time auditing before to gain valuable insights into different roles and job junctions that seemingly were problematic only to find out some obvious fixes.

One of the most powerful tools for this kind of intentional time management is something we all carry around in our pockets every day: our smartphones. Most modern devices now come with built-in screen time tracking features that not only show you how many hours you're spending on your phone overall but also break down that usage by specific app and category. It's an incredible wealth of data that can be both eye-opening and empowering.

Imagine if, at the end of each week, you took just a few minutes to review your screen time report with the same level of attention and analysis that you might give to your bank statement or your fitness tracker. What would you learn about your habits and priorities? What changes might you make as a result?

Maybe you'd realize that you're spending hours each day mindlessly scrolling through social media feeds and decide to set strict limits or even delete certain apps altogether. Maybe you'd notice that you're constantly getting sucked into low-value email or messaging threads and create new systems or boundaries to protect your focus. Or maybe you'd discover untapped pockets of time that you could repurpose for learning, creation, or rest.

The point is, by bringing conscious awareness and intention to how you're spending your screen time – and your overall time – you open up a world of possibility for optimization and growth. You start to see time not as a thief to be resisted or resented but as an ally to be leveraged and maximized in service of your deepest goals and values.

Of course, mastering your minutes is easier said than done. It requires consistent effort, honest reflection, and a willingness to confront some uncomfortable truths about our own habits and blind spots. But the payoff is more than worth it. When you become the kind of leader who treats time as the precious gift that it is, you tap into a wellspring of momentum and productivity that can carry you to extraordinary heights.

So start small, but start today. Take a few minutes to jot down how you're spending your hours, or review your latest screen time report with a curious and non-judgmental eye. Look for opportunities to cut out the noise and focus on the signal – the activities and priorities that truly move the needle for you. And most importantly, remember that every moment is a chance to choose anew – to steer your time and your energy toward the things that matter most.

In a world that's constantly competing for our attention and our minutes, the ability to master our own time is nothing short of a superpower. And like any superpower, it takes practice, discipline, and a willingness to embrace our own potential for greatness. But when we do, we unlock a force for momentum and impact that can truly change the game – not just for ourselves, but for all those we serve.

Here's to becoming the heroes of our own time – the leaders who know that every second is a chance to create, to grow, to make a difference. May we have the courage to claim our minutes as the precious resource they are and wield them with wisdom, intention, and boundless possibility. The clock is ticking, but the choice is ours. Let's make it count.

The Power of the Weekly Review: How One Simple Habit Can Unlock Exponential Growth

In the last section, we explored the transformative potential of tracking and optimizing your time – of bringing keen awareness and intention to how you’re investing your most precious resource. But as powerful as that practice can be, it’s only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to building unstoppable momentum in your life and leadership.

To truly harness the compound power of small habits, you need a way to reflect on your progress consistently, recalibrate your priorities, and course-correct when needed. You need a built-in mechanism for zooming out from the day-to-day grind and assessing the bigger picture of your goals, your growth, and your impact. In short, you need a weekly review.

Now, I know what some of you might think – “Really, Matt? Another task to add to my already overflowing plate? How is more navel-gazing supposed to help me gain momentum?” But stick with me here because I promise you this: implementing a weekly review practice has been hands down one of the most game-changing habits I’ve ever adopted

as a leader. It's not an exaggeration to say that this straightforward ritual has transformed not only my productivity and performance but my entire approach to personal and professional growth.

What exactly is a weekly review? At its core, it's a dedicated time each week to reflect on the past seven days and plan for the week ahead. It's a chance to step back from the reactive whirlwind of daily tasks and firefighting and proactively assess what's working, what's not, and what needs to change. While the specific format and components can vary based on your unique goals and circumstances, there are a few key elements that I've found to be especially powerful.

The first, and perhaps most important, is a cash performance review. In every one of my businesses and ventures, my weekly update always starts with a clear-eyed look at our financial health and trajectory from a cash view only. I dive into the numbers from the previous week – revenue, expenses, cash flow, and key metrics – and compare them to our projections and targets. I look for patterns, trends, and anomalies, and I ask myself hard questions about what's driving our performance and what we need to do differently. It also ensures that you and the partners you share the weekly

review with are never a week behind the most important element of business – its cash and cash flow!

Now, you might be wondering why I place so much emphasis on this one aspect of the business. After all, aren't other important factors to consider beyond the cash performance? Absolutely. But here's the thing – in my experience, cash is the ultimate barometer of a company's true health and viability. The lifeblood keeps the engine running, and without a steady and sustainable flow, everything else starts to break down.

By starting each weekly review with an unflinching look at the cash, I'm forced to confront reality head-on. I can't hide behind vanity metrics or wishful thinking because the numbers don't lie. By tracking our cash performance consistently over time, I started to develop a much keener sense of the levers we need to pull to keep the business on track. I can spot opportunities and risks much earlier and make more proactive and informed decisions as a result.

But the cash review is just the beginning. From there, I zoom out to assess our key highlights and lowlights from the week – the wins worth celebrating, the challenges that need tackling, the insights and lessons learned. I look at our progress

against key initiatives and milestones and identify any obstacles or roadblocks that need clearing. Perhaps most importantly, I carve out time for strategic thinking and planning – for asking bigger-picture questions about where we’re headed, what we need to do differently, and how we can accelerate our impact and growth.

Now, you might be thinking, “That all sounds great, Matt, but I barely have time to keep my head above water as it is. How am I supposed to find an extra hour or two each week for this kind of high-level reflection?” And I get it – in the early days of my career, I struggled with the same objection. It felt self-indulgent, even frivolous, to step back from the constant demands of the business and focus on something as intangible as “strategic thinking.”

But here’s what I’ve come to realize – the weekly review isn’t a luxury or a nice-to-have. It’s absolutely essential for anyone who wants to achieve long-term success and fulfillment. It’s the key to breaking out of the reactive cycle of putting out fires, chasing your tail, and proactively designing the life and leadership you truly want.

Think about it this way – if you’re not regularly pausing to reflect on what’s working and what’s not, how can you possibly

hope to make meaningful improvements or course corrections? If you're not carving out sacred time for strategic planning and bigger-picture thinking, how can you develop the clarity and conviction needed to make bold moves and quantum leaps? And suppose you're not consistently tracking your progress and celebrating your wins along the way, how can you build the momentum and resilience to keep pushing through inevitable setbacks and challenges?

The truth is the weekly review, where the magic happens. It's where you get to step out of the trees and survey the forest – to see the patterns and connections that are impossible to spot when you're caught up in the day-to-day grind. It's where you reconnect with your deepest values and aspirations and realign your actions with your true north. And it's where you get to tap into your innate wisdom and creativity – to problem-solve, ideate, and strategize in a way that just isn't possible when you're constantly in reactive mode.

Perhaps most importantly, the weekly review is a profound act of self-leadership — a way of honoring your own growth and potential, even amidst the chaos and demands of the world around you. It's a way of sending a clear signal, both to yourself and others, that your time, energy, and attention are precious

resources and that you're committed to investing them in the things that truly matter most.

So, if you're not already in the habit of conducting a weekly review, I invite you to give it a try. Start small and keep it simple – even just 10 minutes of focused reflection can yield incredible benefits. Use the prompts and categories I've shared as a starting point, but feel free to adapt and customize the format to your own unique needs and goals. The key is consistency and commitment – to showing up for yourself week after week, in good times and bad, and trusting in the cumulative power of small steps to create massive momentum over time.

And if you are already practicing some version of a weekly review, I challenge you to take it to the next level. How can you make this ritual even more impactful and transformative? What new categories or questions could you add to push your thinking and accelerate your growth? How can you use this time not just to reflect and plan but to celebrate your progress and recommit to your highest vision?

Remember, leadership is not a destination – it's a practice. A way of showing up in the world with intention, integrity, and fierce commitment to your own growth and the growth of

others. The weekly review is one of the most powerful tools in your leadership arsenal – a way to stay focused, aligned, and accountable to your true north, no matter what storms may come.

So embrace this habit with all your heart, and watch as your momentum starts to build and compound in ways you never thought possible. Your future self will thank you and so will all those whose lives you touch along the way.

Unstoppable Momentum

As we come to the end of this chapter on the power of small steps to create massive momentum, I hope you're feeling inspired and empowered to start putting these ideas into practice in your own life and leadership. No matter where you are on your journey, no matter what challenges or obstacles you're facing, you have the power within you to start building unstoppable momentum toward your goals and dreams. All it takes is a willingness to start small and a commitment to keep showing up daily.

I know that can be easier said than done, especially when the demands of leadership and life start piling up. But if there's one thing I've learned over my years in the trenches, it's that the most transformative change often comes from seemingly

insignificant actions. It's the daily habits and rituals that shape our trajectory, not the grand gestures or the one-time heroics.

As you start to incorporate these ideas into your leadership practice, remember that it's not about perfection – it's about consistency. It's not about overhauling your entire life overnight but making small, incremental tweaks that compound over time. Most importantly, it's about trusting in the process, even when progress feels slow or the path ahead is unclear.

Action steps:

To help you get started, here are five decisive action steps you can take today to start building massive momentum in your life and leadership:

1. Conduct a “micro-habit review”: Take a few minutes to reflect on your daily routines and habits, both at work and at home. Where are you spending your time and energy? What small tweaks could you make to better align your actions with your values and goals? Choose one micro-habit to focus on this week, whether taking a few deep breaths before each meeting or expressing gratitude to a colleague or loved one each day.
2. Create a “momentum meter”: Find a way to visually track

your progress and celebrate your small wins. This could be as simple as a jar where you add a marble for each day you practice your micro-habit or a journal where you jot down your accomplishments and lessons learned each week. The key is to make your progress tangible and savor the momentum building over time.

3. Find an “accountability ally”: Share your micro-habit commitment with a trusted friend, colleague, or mentor, and ask them to hold you accountable to your goals. This could mean checking in with each other every week, celebrating your wins together, or even practicing your micro-habits in tandem. Having someone in your corner can make all the difference when motivation wanes or obstacles arise. I always share my micro-habits with my entire family so that my wife and kids know what I’m working on.
4. Embrace the “power of yet”: When you encounter setbacks or failures on your journey (and trust me, you will), reframe them as opportunities for growth and learning. Instead of beating yourself up or giving in to self-doubt, adopt a “growth mindset” and remind yourself that you haven’t mastered this skill or habit... yet. Every misstep is a chance to course-correct and come back stronger.

5. Celebrate the “ripple effect”: As you start to build momentum and see the impact of your small actions compounding over time, take a moment to reflect on the ripple effect you’re creating in the world around you. How are your micro-habits influencing your team, your organization, and your community? How are you inspiring others to start building their own momentum and making a difference? Remember, leadership is about the legacy you leave, not just the accolades you accumulate.

As you start to implement these action steps and make micro-habits a core part of your leadership practice, I do not doubt that you’ll start to experience the incredible power of momentum in your life. You’ll find yourself tackling challenges with newfound resilience, seizing opportunities with greater clarity and conviction, and inspiring others with your consistency and dedication.

But more than that, you’ll start to see yourself differently – not just as a leader with a title or a role, but as a force for positive change in the world. Because when you harness the power of small steps to create a big impact, you’re not just transforming your own trajectory – you’re showing others what’s possible when we commit to consistent, purposeful action.

So, as you turn the page on this chapter and embark on the next stage of your leadership journey, remember that every single day is an opportunity to build momentum and make a difference. Every interaction, decision, and micro-habit is a chance to lead with intention and integrity and to leave a legacy that endures.

Keep taking those small steps, keep trusting in the process, and keep believing in your own boundless potential. The best is yet to come — for you, for your team, and for all those you serve. Here's to the next chapter of your journey and to the incredible impact you'll create along the way.

Chapter 7: Victories Leave Footprints

In this chapter, we'll dive deep into what it means to become a student of success – to develop the mindset and skills needed to identify, interpret, and apply the clues left behind by those who have achieved remarkable results in their own lives and careers. We'll explore frameworks and tools for reverse-engineering excellence and uncover the often-overlooked details and nuances that separate the good from the truly great. Along the way, we'll challenge ourselves to question our assumptions, confront our blind spots, and embrace a lifelong commitment to growth and self-discovery.

So, whether you're just starting out on your leadership journey or you're a seasoned pro looking to take your game to the next level, I invite you to approach this chapter with an open mind and a willingness to learn. Set aside any preconceived notions of what success “should” look like and instead focus on uncovering the authentic strategies and principles that resonate most deeply with your own values and aspirations.

Because here's the beautiful truth – success leaves clues, but it's up to each of us to follow those clues back to our own unique path and purpose. To take the hard-won lessons and insights of others and alchemize them into a one-of-a-kind roadmap for impact and fulfillment.

That's why I believe that one of the most powerful tools we have as leaders is the ability to learn from those who have gone before us – to study the clues left behind by individuals and organizations that have achieved remarkable things and made a lasting impact on the world. By examining their journeys, their choices, and their hard-won lessons, we can gain invaluable insight and inspiration for our own leadership trajectories.

Victories leave footprints. Just like a master detective piecing together evidence to solve a complex case, we can uncover the patterns and principles that underlie true leadership greatness by looking closely at those who have achieved it. We can identify the mindsets, habits, and strategies that have allowed them to overcome obstacles, navigate uncertainty, and create extraordinary results. And we can adapt and apply those insights to our own unique circumstances and challenges.

Now, I know what you might be thinking – “But Matt, every leader and every organization is different. How can we possibly learn from others when our situations are so unique?” And you’re right – no two leadership journeys are exactly alike. While the specific tactics and techniques may vary, the fundamental principles of effective leadership are remarkably consistent across contexts and industries.

Take, for example, the principle of servant leadership – the idea that the best leaders are those who prioritize the growth and well-being of their team members above their own self-interest. This concept has been around for centuries, and yet it remains as relevant and powerful today as ever before. From ancient philosophers like Lao Tzu to modern-day business titans, we see countless examples of leaders who have achieved incredible success by putting their people first and creating a culture of empowerment and trust. I believe that focusing on others and serving others is the key to happiness and joy. It is a foundational principle of truth. Many of today’s most significant internal challenges stem from focusing inward on your own needs instead of outward on others’ needs. A leader who serves his team, who serves with his team, and who focuses on his team will ultimately drive greater energy and momentum.

Or consider the principle of adaptability – the ability to pivot and respond to changing circumstances with agility and resilience. In a world that’s moving faster and more unpredictably than ever before, this skill has become absolutely essential for leaders who want to stay ahead of the curve. And yet, it’s not a new concept by any means. From Darwin’s theory of evolution to the lean startup methodology, we see time and time again that the most successful individuals and organizations are those who can adapt and evolve in the face of disruption and uncertainty. One cannot run from change. It is inevitable. It is relentless. Change must be tolerated, and ultimately, for continual progression, it must be integrated into one’s core.

The point is that these principles and patterns of success are all around us, waiting to be discovered and applied. As leaders, we have a tremendous opportunity to accelerate our own growth and impact by seeking them out and learning from them. Whether it’s through reading biographies of great leaders, studying the strategies of top-performing companies, or seeking out mentors and advisors who have achieved the kind of success we aspire to, there are endless ways to tap into the wisdom and experience of others.

Learning from others' success is not about blind imitation or copying their tactics verbatim. It's about understanding the underlying principles and mindsets that have allowed them to achieve greatness and then adapting those insights to our unique context and goals. It's about using their examples as a source of inspiration and guidance while still staying true to our values and vision.

Because, at the end of the day, true leadership is about authenticity. It's about having the courage to forge your own path, even if it looks different from everyone else's. It's about being willing to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. And it's about staying committed to your own growth and development, no matter how challenging the journey may be.

And that's where the power of studying others' success really lies. By examining the clues left behind by great leaders and organizations, we gain not just tactical advice but a deeper understanding of what it takes to lead with purpose, integrity, and impact. We see that success is not about perfection but about perseverance. It's not about having all the answers but about asking the right questions. And it's not about reaching some ultimate destination but about embracing the journey itself.

So, as we dive into this chapter on learning from others' success, I invite you to approach it with an open mind and a willingness to be inspired. Don't just look for specific tactics or techniques to copy, but seek out the more profound wisdom and insight that can help you evolve as a leader. Most importantly, remember that your own journey is unique – so use what you learn as a springboard for your own creativity and innovation, not as a rigid blueprint to follow.

The clues to your own leadership greatness are all around you, waiting to be discovered and put into action. So, let's start exploring them together and see where they might lead you next. Because when you combine the power of your own unique trajectory with the wisdom and experience of those who have gone before you, there's no telling what kind of impact you might be able to make.

The Tie That Binds: How Small Gestures Can Leave a Lasting Impact

There's a saying that people may forget what you said, but they'll always remember how you made them feel. When it

comes to mentorship, sometimes, the smallest, most seemingly insignificant moments leave the deepest impressions.

I experienced this firsthand during my early days at Goldman Sachs, when I had the good fortune of being taken under the wing of Ned Segel, who would later go on to become the CFO of Twitter. Ned was tasked with mentoring the incoming class of analysts when I started at Goldman in the San Francisco office on the public trading desk, and he took his role seriously — but not in the way you might expect.

Sure, he did all the typical mentor things — taking us out to dinner, hosting sessions on the dos and don'ts of our roles on Wall Street, and offering guidance and advice on navigating the competitive landscape of high finance. But it was a moment that happened outside the office that stuck with me all these years later.

One afternoon, after the markets had closed and we were winding down for the day, Ned approached me and asked if I had an hour to spare. Intrigued, I agreed, and we set off walking the streets of San Francisco. Our first stop? Brooks Brothers, the venerable clothier known for outfitting generations of young analysts and associates (good enough to play the part, but affordable enough for even the young ones to buy).

As we walked in, Ned turned to me and said, “You know, when you work at Goldman Sachs, you need to look the part and be the part.” He proceeded to pick out a tie and usher me to the counter, insisting that I buy it then and there. For a young kid fresh out of college, it was a bit of a shock – I wasn’t exactly flush with cash, and the tie wasn’t cheap. But Ned was adamant, and I could tell this was about more than just a piece of silk.

As we left the store, Ned wasn’t done. He steered us down the street to another shop, one I had never heard of before called Hermès. If Brooks Brothers was the uniform of the analysts and associates – aspiring business professionals, Hermès was the stuff of legend – a purveyor of luxuries so fine, they were almost mythical to a kid from my background. In all honesty, before Ned took me to Hermes, I had never even heard of the brand!

We walked in, and Ned began perusing the ties, asking my opinion on different patterns and colors. I played along, offering my thoughts, until he picked up one that I had said I liked best. To my shock, he took it to the counter, and I became worried. Given what had just happened at Brooks Brothers – where he made me buy a tie that I hadn’t budgeted for – I was secretly panicked about buying a Hermes tie that I knew was a lot more expensive. I didn’t know exactly how much more expensive,

but I knew it was a lot more expensive. Then, to my surprise and shock, he pulled out his own personal credit card and bought it for me. I was floored – the price tag on that one tie was about the amount of discretionary spending money I had allocated for a full month at the time!

But as we walked out of the store, Ned’s real lesson began to sink in. This wasn’t about the clothes or the brands – it was about understanding the culture and the expectations of the world I was entering. It was about recognizing that every detail, from the way you dress to the way you carry yourself, sends a message about who you are and what you stand for. And as a representative of a firm like Goldman Sachs, that message mattered.

More than that, though, Ned’s gesture was a profound act of generosity and care. By taking the time to guide me through this rite of passage and investing his own resources into my success, he was showing me that I mattered — that I was worth his time, his energy, and his attention. He was demonstrating the kind of leader and mentor he wanted me to become — one who lifts and empowers those around him, one who surprises the people who are part of a team.

I still have that tie, but the lesson it represents has made an even more significant impact. In the years since, as I've gone on to mentor and guide countless others in their own careers, I've tried to embody that same spirit of generosity and care. I've sought out opportunities to make small gestures that have an outsized impact, to show up for people in ways that let them know they're seen, valued, and supported.

Because that's the thing about mentorship – it's not about grand pronouncements or sweeping promises. It's about being present in the little moments, about extending a hand or a kind word when it's needed most. It's about recognizing the humanity in each other and honoring it through acts of service and support.

And the beautiful thing is that this kind of mentorship doesn't require a fancy title or a corner office. It doesn't depend on your level of seniority or your place in the org chart. Anyone, anywhere, has the power to make a difference in someone else's life simply by showing up with an open heart and a willingness to give. This extends way beyond business mentoring. It happens in communities, schools, church congregations, everywhere there are people interacting and living together.

So, as you think about your own journey as a leader and a mentor, I encourage you to look for those small moments of opportunity. Pay attention to the people around you – not just your direct reports or your high-potential proteges, but everyone who crosses your path. Look for ways to make them feel seen, heard, and valued, even in the most seemingly insignificant interactions.

Maybe it's as simple as remembering someone's birthday or asking about their family. Maybe it's taking a few extra minutes to really listen to their ideas or concerns, even when you're busy or distracted. Maybe it's offering a word of encouragement or appreciation when you can tell they're struggling or celebrating their wins and successes with genuine enthusiasm.

None of these gestures will appear on your resume or win you any awards. But they might change the trajectory of someone's life – or, at the very least, brighten their day and remind them of their own inherent worth and potential.

And isn't that what leadership and mentorship are all about? Isn't that the kind of impact we should all be striving to make in ways big and small?

When I think back on that afternoon with Ned, I'm reminded of the incredible power we all have to shape each other's stories, to weave threads of connection and care that bind us together and lift us up. I'm reminded that leadership isn't about what you achieve but about who you help others become along the way.

So, as you go forward on your own path, remember the tie that binds us all – the fundamental humanity and dignity that we share, regardless of our station or status. Remember that your greatest legacy won't be measured by the titles you hold or the awards you win but by the lives you touch and the difference you make.

And most of all, remember that mentorship and leadership aren't about having all the answers or getting everything right. They're about showing up, again and again, with an open heart and a giving spirit. They're about the small, everyday gestures of care and compassion that let people know they matter – that they're worth investing in, rooting for, and believing in.

That's the kind of leader I strive to be and the kind of mentor I hope to inspire forward. And it all starts with a willingness to show up, pay attention, and extend a hand or, in my case, a tie – when it's needed most.

The Power of Mentorship

When it comes to finding a mentor, I believe the key is to start by embodying the qualities you seek in others. As the old adage goes, if you want to make a friend, be a friend. The same principle applies to mentorship – if you want to attract great mentors into your life, start by being a great mentor yourself.

Now, I know what you might be thinking – “But Matt, I’m not qualified to be a mentor yet! I don’t have enough experience or success under my belt.” Being a mentor isn’t just about having all the answers or a long list of accomplishments. In fact, some of the most impactful mentors I’ve had in my life were simply great listeners – people who showed up with genuine curiosity, empathy, and presence and created a safe space for me to explore my own challenges and opportunities.

You see, we all need different kinds of support at different times in our lives and careers. Sometimes, we need the sage wisdom and battle-tested insights of someone who’s been in the trenches and come out the other side. But just as often, what we really need is simply a sounding board – someone who can hold space for us to process our fears, doubts, and frustrations without judgment or agenda.

In my experience, the most transformative mentoring relationships are built on a foundation of trust, authenticity, and mutual respect. They're not transactional arrangements where one person pays another for their time and advice, but rather genuine connections between two human beings who are committed to each other's growth and success.

That's why I believe that true mentorship cannot be bought or sold – it must be earned through the currency of human connection and generosity. When we approach mentorship from a place of service and contribution rather than self-interest or financial gain, we open ourselves up to a much deeper and more rewarding kind of learning and growth.

Now, this isn't to say that there's no place for paid advisors, consultants, or coaches in our lives and careers. These kinds of professional relationships can be incredibly valuable, especially when we're looking for specific skills, knowledge, or strategies to help us navigate a particular challenge or opportunity. But in my view, these transactional arrangements are distinct from the more holistic and enduring nature of true mentorship.

So, if you're seeking a mentor to help guide you on your leadership journey, my advice is to start by looking within.

Reflect on the qualities and values that you most admire and seek to cultivate in yourself, and start showing up in the world as the kind of person you want to attract into your life. Seek out opportunities to be of service to others, to listen deeply and to offer support and encouragement wherever you can.

As you do this, trust that the right mentors will find their way to you. They may not always look like what you expect — they may be younger or older than you, from different backgrounds or industries, with different styles or personalities. But if you stay open and curious and lead with your own authenticity and generosity, you'll start to notice the mentors and guides all around you, waiting to share their wisdom and support.

Of course, this doesn't mean you should sit back and wait for mentorship to fall into your lap. As with any important relationship, building strong mentoring connections takes effort, intention, and vulnerability. You may need to put yourself out there, ask for help or advice when you need it, and be willing to share your struggles and triumphs along the way.

But when you approach mentorship from a place of mutuality and co-creation rather than passive receivership, something magical happens. You start to realize that

mentorship isn't just about finding someone else to give you all the answers but rather about discovering your inner wisdom and strength through the reflections and insights of others. You start to see that every interaction, every conversation, and every moment of connection holds the potential for learning and growth if you're willing to show up with an open heart and mind.

As you start embodying this way of being in the world, you'll find that your capacity for mentorship and leadership starts to grow and deepen as well. By being the kind of person you want to learn from and be inspired by, you become a powerful force for positive change in your own life and the lives of those around you.

So, as you continue your own leadership journey, remember that success leaves clues — but those clues aren't always found in the obvious places or through conventional channels. Sometimes, the most profound lessons and insights come from quiet moments of connection and reflection with unexpected teachers and guides.

By staying open to these moments and cultivating your own capacity for mentorship and service, you'll start to build a powerful network of support and inspiration that will carry you

through even the toughest challenges and darkest times. You'll discover that leadership isn't just about what you know or what you've achieved but about who you are and how you show up in the world.

Most importantly, you'll come to realize a fundamental truth: helping and serving others is the key to finding true happiness, joy, peace, and lasting motivation. While it may seem counterintuitive, focusing solely on yourself often leads to loneliness, depression, and ultimately, personal and professional decline. The secret to a fulfilling life and impactful leadership lies in giving of yourself and lifting up those around you.

When you shift your focus from self-interest to service, you tap into a wellspring of energy and purpose that can sustain you through any challenge. You'll find that the more you give, the more you receive — not in terms of material rewards, but in the form of deep satisfaction, meaningful connections, and a sense of contribution that far outweighs any fleeting pleasures of self-indulgence.

This approach to leadership and life isn't just about feeling good — it's a practical strategy for long-term success and fulfillment. By consistently seeking ways to add value to others' lives, you create a virtuous cycle of goodwill, opportunity, and

personal growth. You become a magnet for positive relationships and experiences, attracting like-minded individuals who share your commitment to making a difference.

Remember, the greatest gift of mentorship and leadership isn't just what you receive from others but what you can give and share in return. It's through these selfless acts of service and contribution that we find our deepest sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging. This is the true key to life and leadership worth living — one that leaves a lasting positive impact on the world around you.

The Insatiable Appetite of a True Leader: Constantly Consuming and Filtering New Ideas

As someone who spent the entire first 15 years of my career on the frontlines of the fast-paced, information-driven world of public equities Wall Street, I know firsthand the power and importance of constant learning. In the equities business I grew up in, if you're not voraciously consuming every piece of data, every news article, every trend and insight you can get your hands on, you're already behind the curve. The most successful traders and investors are the ones who are always looking

forward, always seeking out the next nugget of wisdom or the next big idea that could move the markets.

This mindset of constant learning and growth isn't just essential for success in finance. It's a fundamental trait of all great leaders, regardless of their industry or background. The most impactful and inspiring leaders I've encountered in my life all share one key characteristic: an insatiable curiosity and a never-ending desire to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

This isn't just about amassing facts and figures or staying on top of the latest trends and best practices. It's about cultivating a deep love of learning for its own sake – a genuine fascination with ideas, different perspectives and ways of thinking, and the richness and complexity of the human experience in all its forms.

When you approach the world with this kind of open and curious mindset, something incredible happens. You start to see opportunities for growth and insight everywhere you look – in the stories and experiences of the people you meet, in the challenges and setbacks you face, and in the books, articles and media you consume. Every interaction, every moment,

becomes a chance to learn and expand your horizons in ways you never thought possible.

As you start to integrate this new knowledge and wisdom into your own life and leadership, you'll find that it doesn't just benefit you personally – it ripples out to everyone around you. When you show up to your team or your organization brimming with new ideas and fresh perspectives, it can't help but ignite a spark of excitement and possibility. When you approach your customers or clients with a deep understanding of their needs and challenges rooted in your own relentless learning and growth, you build trust and credibility in powerful ways.

In fact, I'd argue that this commitment to constant learning is one of the most important forms of mentorship and guidance you can offer to others. By modeling what it looks like to be a lifelong learner, to approach the world with curiosity and humility and a willingness to have your assumptions challenged, you give those around you permission to do the same. You create a culture of growth and innovation where everyone is empowered to seek out new knowledge and perspectives and bring their best thinking to the table.

Of course, in today's information-saturated world, the sheer volume of content and ideas available can be

overwhelming. It's not humanly possible to consume and retain everything that crosses your path, nor should you try. The key is to develop your own filters and systems for curating and processing the most valuable and relevant insights for your own journey.

This might mean setting aside dedicated time each day or week for learning and reflection, whether that's through reading books and articles, watching videos and talks, or engaging in deep discussions with colleagues and mentors. It might mean seeking out diverse perspectives and voices and actively challenging your own assumptions and biases along the way. And it almost certainly means getting comfortable with the idea that your learning and growth will never be "finished" – that there will always be new frontiers to explore and new depths to plumb.

But when you embrace this mindset of constant curiosity and lifelong learning, I truly believe that the possibilities for your own leadership and impact are limitless. You become a conduit for new ideas and insights, a catalyst for positive change and transformation in your own life and the lives of those around you. You tap into a wellspring of resilience and adaptability that can carry you through even the toughest challenges and most uncertain times.

And perhaps most importantly, you model what it looks like to lead not just with your head but with your heart – to approach the world with empathy, humility, and a deep reverence for the incredible diversity of human knowledge and experience. In a world that so often feels divided and disconnected, this kind of curious, compassionate leadership has never been more important or more urgently needed.

So, as you continue on your own journey of growth and discovery, I encourage you to lean into your own love of learning with everything you've got. Seek out new ideas and perspectives wherever you can find them, whether that's through books and articles, conversations and experiences, or the quiet moments of reflection and introspection. Cultivate a mindset of openness and curiosity, and trust that every new insight and understanding will only deepen and enrich your ability to lead with authenticity and impact.

And remember, the greatest leaders and mentors aren't always the ones with the most impressive resumes or the lengthiest list of accolades. They're the ones who never stop growing, never stop seeking out new knowledge and wisdom, and never stop using their own learning to make a real and lasting difference in the world. By following in their footsteps and embracing your own insatiable appetite for growth and

discovery, you'll be well on your way to joining their ranks – and unlocking your own fullest potential as a leader, a learner, and a force for positive change.

The Secret to Spotting True Success: Look for the Systems, Not the Scoreboard

As we've explored throughout this chapter, the key to accelerating your own growth and success is to study those who have achieved great things and look for the clues they've left behind. But here's the crucial caveat: when you're seeking out examples and role models to learn from, it's all too easy to get caught up in the external trappings of their success – the flashy headlines, the impressive awards, the eye-popping exit deals.

But if you really want to uncover the true drivers of their achievement, you've got to look deeper. You've got to peer beneath the surface-level markers of success and examine the underlying systems, processes, and habits that have allowed them to create such remarkable results.

Let me give you an example. Earlier, we talked about my decision to leave Goldman Sachs in 2004 and help launch a new

research firm, Wedge Partners. Now, on the surface, this might have seemed like a risky or even foolhardy move. After all, Goldman was the gold standard of Wall Street, the place where anyone in finance aspired to work. Why would I give up such a prestigious and lucrative position to strike out on my own?

As much as I respected and admired Goldman, I had also come to realize that there were certain key aspects of the bulge bracket research model that I believed were fundamentally flawed – and not really as helpful to investors as they once were. Keep in mind this was back in the early 2000s. It wasn't so obvious back then. I saw an opportunity to create a new kind of research firm that would provide institutional investors with the kind of unique, actionable insights they needed to make better decisions – insights that the traditional Wall Street houses weren't set up to deliver.

Rather than simply emulating Goldman's model or pursuing their brand of success, I opted to construct an entirely different system. My journey began when I was introduced to Kirk Adams during my time at Goldman, a connection facilitated by one of my clients at the time. This introduction came after a persistent effort on my part – I had been leaving daily voicemail messages for Jeff Strauss for nearly two years before he finally acknowledged my determination.

One day, to my surprise, Jeff actually requested that I return his call. When I did, our conversation initially revolved around an upcoming Goldman conference he was interested in attending. However, he then mentioned that he wanted me to meet someone he thought was working on something intriguing.

That someone was Kirk Adams, and we arranged to meet for lunch in San Francisco's Chinatown. I can still vividly recall the noodle dish I ate that day. During our meal, Kirk shared his background with me. He had a rich history in Silicon Valley, having worked in the early days of Apple Computer and other now-legendary companies in the area. Through these experiences, he cultivated an extensive network of relationships and gained deep insights into the supply chain of the core technology sector.

Kirk had been doing some consulting and paid advisory work for mutual funds in the Denver area. He saw potential to expand this into a larger business, but he needed help with distribution and sales. However, he wasn't looking for just any salesperson. He sought someone who thought like an investor, someone who could understand and appreciate what constituted good, actionable research and who could effectively communicate these insights to institutional investors.

After that lunch, I was convinced that this was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. Together, Kirk and I set out to build a team of talented analysts who shared our vision. We developed a research process that was laser-focused on uncovering differentiated, impactful ideas – insights that our clients could actually use to make informed investment decisions.

We leveraged the weekly and monthly summary practice I had honed during my early days as a research analyst at the Goldman desk. With this foundation, we created a product that quickly became highly sought after by technology investors in the public equities arena. Our approach was unique and valuable, filling a gap in the market that traditional Wall Street research often overlooked.

We didn't just rehash the same old reports and recommendations as everyone else — we dug deeper, thought more creatively, and worked harder to find the truly valuable nuggets of information that others were potentially missing or overlooking. Each week, we packaged those insights into a concise, actionable format that cut through the noise and delivered real value to our subscribers.

Now, did this approach lead to the same kind of headline-grabbing successes as some of our better-known competitors? Not necessarily. We didn't make splashy pronouncements on CNBC or grace the covers of Fortune magazine. However, some of our analysts punched way above their weight class and did become regulars on the media beat. But what we did do was build a loyal following of satisfied clients who came to rely on our research as a key input into their own investment processes. We created a growing business that has endured for years and provided unique value to our customers day in and day out. The core of that business and even some of the original analysts and salespeople are still providing these insights as part of Rosenblatt Securities today.

And when I look back on that experience now, I realize that the true key to our success wasn't any one big breakthrough or destination we reached. It was the system we built – the repeatable, scalable process for uncovering and delivering valuable insights that formed the backbone of our business. It was the daily habits and practices of curiosity, rigor and service that allowed us to generate new ideas and perspectives for our clients continuously.

So, when you're looking for examples of success to model in your own life and leadership, I encourage you to look beyond

the shiny objects and dig deeper for real clues. Don't just focus on what someone has achieved, but on how they've built the systems and processes to achieve it. Ask yourself questions like:

- What does their daily routine look like? How do they structure their time and prioritize their activities?
- What kind of team have they built around them, and how do they cultivate a culture of excellence and innovation?
- What methods do they use to continuously learn, grow, and stay ahead of the curve in their field?
- How do they handle setbacks and failures? What kind of mindset and habits allow them to persevere and keep moving forward?

By studying the answers to these questions, you'll uncover the true drivers of success that you can adapt and apply in your unique context. Success is rarely a matter of lucky breaks or one-time achievements but rather the result of consistent, purposeful actions taken over time.

And as you start to implement these lessons in your own leadership practice, something powerful will start to happen. You'll find yourself building your own set of success-generating systems and habits, ones that are tailored to your specific goals,

strengths, and circumstances. You'll start to create your own flywheel of continuous growth and achievement, where each small win builds on the last and propels you to new heights.

But perhaps most importantly, you'll begin to redefine what success really means to you in the first place. You'll see that it's not about reaching some arbitrary destination or milestone but about the kind of leader and person you're becoming along the way. It's about the impact you're having on those around you and the legacy you're leaving through your day-to-day actions and choices.

I want to leave you with a challenge. Think about one leader or role model whose success you admire and commit to studying them more closely in the coming weeks. But don't just focus on their highlight reel – look for the behind-the-scenes clues that have allowed them to achieve such remarkable results. What systems, habits, and processes can you identify that might be worth emulating in your leadership journey?

As you start to put these lessons into practice, remember that success leaves clues – but it's up to you to follow the trail with curiosity, humility, and a willingness to forge your path. The rewards of this approach won't always be immediate or obvious. Still, I promise you this: if you stay committed to the

daily work of building your own leadership systems and habits, brick by brick and day by day, you'll create a foundation of sustainable success that will serve you for a lifetime. And that is a legacy worth pursuing with all you've got.

The Mentorship Flywheel: Unleashing the Power of Continuous Contribution

As I reflect on my own leadership journey and the countless mentors who have guided me along the way, I'm struck by a powerful realization: the true essence of mentorship isn't about finding the perfect guru or securing a coveted spot in someone's inner circle. It's about embracing a mindset of continuous contribution and generosity and trusting that the act of lifting others up will inevitably come back to lift you up in turn.

You see, we've been conditioned to view mentorship as a one-way street – a transaction where one person bestows their wisdom and guidance upon another, often in exchange for some form of payment or prestige. But in my experience, the most transformative mentoring relationships are the ones that transcend this narrow definition and tap into something far

more powerful: the innate human desire to learn, grow, and help others do the same.

Think about it this way: as a leader, you likely have your own set of frustrations and unmet needs. Maybe you're craving more recognition and support from your board or feeling like your vision and ideas aren't being fully heard and valued. It's natural to want to seek out a mentor who can help fill those gaps and propel you to the next level – and there's certainly nothing wrong with that impulse.

But what if, instead of just focusing on your own needs and desires, you flipped the script and started actively looking for ways to be a mentor and source of support for others? What if you took that same energy into searching for the perfect guide and redirected it toward lifting up the people around you – your peers, your team members, even those outside your immediate sphere of influence?

Here's what I've discovered: when you make mentorship a central part of your leadership practice, something remarkable starts to happen. You start to see opportunities for growth and contribution everywhere you look – not just in formal mentoring relationships but in every interaction and conversation you have. You become more attuned to the

challenges and aspirations of those around you and more proactive in offering your own insights and support.

And as you do this, you build a powerful flywheel of mentorship and growth. The people you're investing in start to see you as a trusted advisor and thought partner, and they naturally want to reciprocate by sharing their own knowledge and networks with you. The lessons you're learning through teaching others start to inform and enrich your own leadership approach, creating a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement. And the ripple effects of your contributions start to spread outward, attracting new opportunities and relationships that you never could have anticipated.

I've seen this dynamic play out time and time again in my own life and career. Some of the most valuable mentoring I've received has come not from formal advisors or coaches but from unexpected sources – a direct report that challenged me to rethink my assumptions, a peer who shared a hard-won lesson from their own experience, even a family member who offered a fresh perspective on a thorny problem. In each case, the key to unlocking that wisdom was my own willingness to show up as a mentor and contributor first, without expectation of what I might receive in return.

So, if you're feeling stuck or stagnant in your own leadership journey, if you're hungry for guidance and support but struggling to find it through traditional channels, I invite you to try a different approach. Instead of just seeking out mentorship for yourself, start actively looking for ways to be a mentor and source of insight for others. Embrace the mindset of continuous contribution, and trust that the act of lifting others will inevitably come back to lift you up in turn.

This might mean taking a few extra minutes each day to check in with a team member and offer your guidance and support. It might mean volunteering to lead a workshop or training session in your area of expertise, even if it's outside your formal job description. It might mean reaching out to a peer or colleague who you admire and offering to share your hard-won lessons and insights without expectation of anything in return.

The key is to approach mentorship not as a finite resource to be hoarded or traded but as an abundant well of wisdom and growth that we can all tap into and contribute to. It's about recognizing that success leaves clues – but those clues are often hidden in the small, everyday interactions and contributions we might be tempted to overlook or take for granted.

As you start to embed this mindset into your own leadership practice, I promise you'll start to see the world in a whole new light. You'll find mentors and role models in the most unexpected places, and you'll discover that the path to your own growth and success is paved with the contributions you make to others along the way. You'll build a powerful network of support and inspiration that extends far beyond any one formal relationship, and you'll tap into a deep well of fulfillment and purpose that can sustain you through even the most demanding challenges and setbacks.

I hope you're feeling inspired and energized to take your own growth and development to the next level. Whether you're just starting out on your leadership journey or a seasoned veteran looking to pay it forward, the principles and practices we've explored here have the power to transform your life and your impact in profound ways.

At its core, mentorship is about connection, generosity, and the willingness to invest in each other's success. It's about recognizing that we all have something valuable to offer and that by sharing our knowledge, our experience, and our hard-won lessons, we can help light the way for others and accelerate their own progress. It's about building a culture of continuous learning and growth, where everyone is empowered to seek out

new ideas and perspectives and to use them to create positive change in the world.

But mentorship isn't just about what we can gain from others – it's also about what we can give. When we approach our interactions with a spirit of service and contribution, we open ourselves up to a deeper sense of meaning and fulfillment that goes beyond any external rewards or recognition. We become part of something greater than ourselves, a tapestry of shared wisdom and experience that spans generations and enriches us all.

Action Steps:

Here are 5 actionable steps you can take to start mining the clues of success in your own leadership journey:

1. Conduct a “Success Inventory”: Take some time to reflect on the leaders and organizations you most admire, both within your industry and beyond. List the specific traits, habits, and strategies that you believe have contributed to their success. Look for patterns and themes that emerge across different examples and consider how you might adapt and apply those principles in your own context.
2. Shadow a Leader: Identify someone in your network or community who embodies the kind of leadership you aspire

to and reach out to ask if you can shadow them for a day or even a few hours. Pay close attention to how they structure their time, communicate with others, and navigate challenges. Ask thoughtful questions about their approach and mindset and look for opportunities to learn from their example in real-time.

3. **Create a “Leadership Lab”:** Dedicate a regular block of time each week (aim for at least an hour to start) to intentionally experiment with new leadership strategies and habits. Use this time to test out ideas you’ve gleaned from your successful audit or shadowing experiences and track your results over time. Approach this practice with a spirit of curiosity and playfulness, and don’t be afraid to iterate and adjust as you go.
4. **Teach What You’re Learning:** One of the best ways to deepen your own learning is to share it with others. Look for opportunities to teach or mentor others on the leadership principles and practices you’re exploring, whether that’s through formal presentations, one-on-one coaching, or simply sharing your insights in everyday conversations. Pay attention to the questions and feedback you receive and use them to refine your own understanding and approach.

5. Celebrate Your “Failure Wins”: Reframe setbacks and failures as opportunities for growth and learning. Each time you encounter a challenge or roadblock, take a step back and ask yourself: “What is this experience trying to teach me? What clues might be hidden in this apparent defeat?” Keep a journal of your “failure wins” and the lessons they hold, and make a point of revisiting them regularly to track your progress and insights over time.

As you start to put these action steps into practice, remember that mentorship is a lifelong journey, not a one-time event. The relationships you build and the lessons you learn will continue to shape and guide you throughout your career and your life, providing a constant source of inspiration, challenge, and support. As you grow and evolve as a leader, you’ll have the opportunity to pay that wisdom forward and become a mentor and role model for others in turn.

So, embrace the power of mentorship with open arms and trust in the incredible potential it holds for your own growth and for the impact you can make in the world. Seek out those who have gone before you and be generous in sharing your own hard-won insights with those who come after. Build a network of allies and advisors who will challenge you, support you, and celebrate your successes along the way.

And most of all, remember that your own unique journey is a story worth telling – a story that has the power to inspire, motivate, and guide others on their own paths to leadership and impact. By embracing the lessons of mentorship and weaving them into the fabric of your own life and work, you'll become the kind of leader who leaves a legacy that lasts – not just in the accomplishments you achieve but in the lives you touch and the seeds of greatness you plant along the way.

So, here's to the power of mentorship and to the incredible journey of growth and discovery that awaits us all. May we always be open to the wisdom and guidance of those who have gone before us, and may we always be generous in sharing our own light with those who follow in our footsteps. The world needs more leaders like you – so keep learning, growing, and shining bright. The best is yet to come.

Chapter 8: Change the World, One Leader at a Time

Leadership is the scarcest resource in the world today. I truly love the mission of Fifth Partners: Identify, Develop, and Empower Leaders. When I first met the two original partners at Fifth and was exploring working with them, I was immediately passionate about their stated mission: to identify, develop, and empower leaders. In all my years as an entrepreneur, executive, and investor, working with dozens of companies, thousands of employees, and many more contributors, I've come to a startling realization: authentic leadership – the kind that inspires, uplifts, and transforms is in dangerously short supply. We see evidence of this leadership deficit everywhere we look, from crumbling institutions to rudderless corporations to divided communities. The world is crying out for a new generation of leaders to light the way, but where will they come from? Who will answer the call?

Here's the surprising truth: the leadership we need isn't going to emerge from the usual suspects. It won't be granted by an elite few or conferred by a corner office. It is not a position or office that you are elected to fill. The leadership that changes

everything arises from within - from ordinary people who make an extraordinary decision to look inside themselves, excavate their inborn gifts, and bring them to life in service of others and the greater good. The kind of leadership the future demands can only be claimed and constructed, choice by choice and action by action, by individuals courageous enough to bet on themselves and then inspire those around them.

That's what this book is all about – awakening the leader within and launching yourself into what I call “Leadership Orbit.” When you operate from this inner center of gravity, rooted in your essential values and powered by a commitment to continuous growth, you become an unstoppable force for positive change. People can feel it when someone is in this orbit. Hope and optimism shine a light on an otherwise depressing world. External circumstances and events no longer control you – you begin to shape them. You attract opportunities, resources and allies that rocket you toward your grandest aspirations. You tap into an inexhaustible wellspring of authentic power that replenishes you even in the most challenging of times. And most of all, you bring others with you as you elevate.

But achieving Leadership Orbit isn't a matter of luck or accident – it's the result of intentional daily habits and practices that sculpt your mindsets and skill sets. In the previous

chapter, we explored how to build sustainable cash flow by focusing on value creation and operational excellence. But while financial capital is critical, it's only one form of fuel you'll need for the leadership journey ahead. Even more important is the cultivation of what I call "leadership capital" – the unique combination of inner resources and outer abilities that allows you to inspire trust, influence outcomes, and impact lives in all circumstances – especially those that are less favorable.

Over the coming pages, we'll dive deep into the fundamental traits and techniques of leadership capital and show you how to start building your reserves. You'll discover why true leadership starts with radical responsibility and how to scrap the excuses keeping you stuck on the sidelines of your own life. You'll learn how leadership is more about questions than answers and how adopting a curious, service-oriented posture can make you a magnet for top talent and breakthrough ideas. We'll also unpack the secrets to communicating like a leader, bringing out the best in others, and maintaining poise under pressure.

But perhaps most importantly, we'll explore why real leadership isn't fundamentally about changing the world – it's about changing yourself so that those around you are influenced for good. It's an inside-out process, not an outside-in

destination. As you do the brave work of chiseling yourself into the leader you wish to see, a remarkable thing happens: you can't help but radiate that example outward and invite others to step into their own greatness. By walking the path of self-creation and continuous improvement, you don't just elevate your own trajectory – you raise the bar for what's possible and blaze a trail for others to follow.

If you're ready to take the lead in your own life and leadership, this chapter will be your launch pad and your companion. It won't always be comfortable – growth rarely is. But I promise you this: on the other side of every obstacle and “old self” you transcend is a more powerful, purposeful, and integrated leader waiting to be born. So, take a deep breath, summon your courage, and let's boldly go where your unique brand of leadership is desperately needed. Your time is now.

The Leadership Revolution: How Everyday Heroes Are Reshaping the Future

The idea that leadership is scarce may seem like a harsh indictment of our current situation. But in reality, it's an empowering wake-up call – an invitation to recognize that the

leadership we need won't come from on high but from within each of us. The truth is leadership isn't some finite resource doled out to a lucky few. It's an innate human capacity waiting to be activated by anyone with the courage to claim it. I believe that we are all children of a beautiful, all-powerful, and loving God. And because of that singular identity, we all have immeasurable worth and goodness to share. In a global setting, with such vastly different circumstances and conditions, this can sometimes seem far-fetched and unfair – but greatness, leadership, and miraculous influence happen everywhere – especially nowhere at all. The leadership orbit discussed is something attainable by all – and needed everywhere.

Throughout history, we've seen how even the most entrenched scarcity can evaporate in the face of a determined shift in mindset and action. Time and time again, leaders have emerged from the most unlikely places to challenge the status quo and spearhead transformative change. They didn't wait for permission or position — they simply stepped up and started building the world they wanted to inhabit. This usually occurred by helping others in need, lifting those around them up, or sacrificing their own interests for something grander.

The same potential lies within each of us. We may not feel like we fit the traditional mold of leadership – we may not have

the title, the platform, or the pedigree. But we have something far more valuable: the ability to take responsibility for shaping our corner of the world. When we shift from a scarcity mindset to one of empowered action, we start to see opportunities to lead everywhere we look.

This kind of grassroots, bottom-up leadership is exactly what the world needs right now. We face no shortage of complex challenges, from geo-political pressures to economic instability to inequality of opportunity. But we also have no shortage of ingenuity, creativity and resilience within our communities. The question is not whether we have enough leaders to meet the moment – it's whether enough of us will choose to be part of the solution. The power of one applies to this belief incredibly well. I believe that many of society's greatest challenges can and will be overcome on a local level – 1 x 1, family by family, and community by community. There is no limit to the miracle of this type of leadership movement that begins in the hearts of the individual on a very local level.

That's why I believe the scarcity of leadership is, in fact, an illusion – because the potential for leadership is abundant. It's not a zero-sum game where one person's leadership comes at the expense of another's. On the contrary, the more each of us steps into our own power, the more we create space for others to do

the same. Leadership begets leadership, and as we start to see the results of our collective actions, momentum begins to build.

Of course, this isn't to say that cultivating leadership is easy or instantaneous. Like any muscle, it takes intentional exercise and development over time. We have to be willing to confront our fears, challenge our assumptions, and risk failure in pursuit of growth. We have to cultivate the self-awareness to understand our own strengths and weaknesses and the humility to keep learning and evolving. Most of all, we have to develop the resilience to keep showing up, even when the path is uncertain or the obstacles seem insurmountable.

Every small act of leadership paves the way for more. Every time we choose courage over comfort, conviction over conformity, we send a ripple of inspiration out into the world. We never know whose life we might touch or what chain reaction we might set in motion. That's the power of leading from where you stand – the impact is often invisible at the moment, but it compounds over time in ways we can hardly imagine.

So if you're waiting for someone else to fix what's broken, to heal what's hurting, to build the future you long to inhabit – stop waiting. The invitation is right in front of you, and it's

yours for the taking. The world doesn't need more followers – it needs more leaders. Leaders like you, who are willing to excavate your gifts and put them in service for something bigger than yourself — leaders who understand that your greatest power lies not in your position but in your purpose.

The path of leadership is not for the faint of heart. It will demand everything you've got – your bravery, your sweat, your perseverance in the face of doubt and adversity. But if you're willing to answer the call, claim your birthright as a leader, and start shaping your world, know this: you won't be alone. You'll be part of a rising tide of change-makers and trailblazers who are rewriting the rules of what's possible. You'll be seeding a revolution of the heart and spirit, one humble act of leadership at a time.

So, take the lead. Not tomorrow, not someday, but today. Right here, right now, in this moment. The world is hungry for your unique brand of leadership magic. Stop telling yourself that you're not enough and start showing the world just how much you have to contribute. The future is watching – and it's waiting for you to take a stand.

Igniting Your Leadership Journey: The Power of Intention and Direction

As we've explored throughout this chapter, the path to authentic leadership is ongoing practice and self-discovery. It's not about waiting for the perfect moment or the ideal circumstances to start making a difference – it's about choosing to show up as a leader in the here and now with whatever resources and opportunities you have.

But if you're feeling stuck or unsure where to begin, I want to share a powerful illustrative framework that resonated with me recently. It's a simple yet profound idea I first encountered in a religious context, but it has universal resonance and applicability. I was listening to a speech by Mary Davis at a weekly devotional held at Brigham Young University in the spring of 2024 and she described this concept that really resonated with me.

Imagine that your ultimate goal or aspiration – the person you want to become, the impact you want to have, the life you want to lead – is represented by the peak of a majestic mountain. Every one of us is on our own unique journey toward

that peak, starting from a different point on the mountain and facing our own particular set of obstacles and challenges along the way.

Some of us may have been born on the sunnier side of the slope, with a relatively smooth and easy path ahead. Others may find themselves in the shadow of the mountain, surrounded by steep cliffs and treacherous terrain, unsure of how they'll ever reach the top. Most of us will navigate our way through a mix of both — stretches of open trail punctuated by sudden drop-offs and unexpected detours.

No matter where you find yourself on the mountain, the first and most essential step is always the same – you have to turn toward the peak. You have to make the conscious choice to reorient yourself toward your highest aspirations, even if you can't yet see the full path ahead. That initial act of turning is the catalyst that sets everything else in motion.

This may sound simple, even obvious – but in practice, it can be one of the hardest things to do. It's all too easy to get caught up in the day-to-day demands and distractions of life, lose sight of the bigger picture, and fall into patterns of reactive living. We scroll and swipe, we complain and criticize, we numb and distract ourselves from the whispered longings of our own

hearts. And sometimes circumstances are so difficult that we can't possibly see the top of the peak anymore – let alone the path that will lead to the summit.

But leadership demands more of us. It demands that we get crystal clear on what really matters most to us – not just in terms of our own personal fulfillment but in terms of the mark we want to leave on the world. It demands that we cultivate the courage to turn away from the well-trodden paths of conformity and complacency and strike out in the direction of our deepest values and convictions.

This doesn't mean that we need to have it all figured out from the start or that we'll never stumble or lose our way. Leadership is a messy, iterative process, full of false starts and course corrections. What matters is the commitment to keep turning back toward the peak and reorienting ourselves toward the person and the impact we know we're capable of becoming.

Once you decide to turn toward your mountaintop, you'll start to notice subtle shifts in your perception and experience. Suddenly, opportunities and resources that were always there in the background will begin to come into clearer focus. You'll develop a keener eye for the footholds and guideposts that can help you navigate the trickier parts of your climb. You'll

attract fellow travelers who share your vision and your values, and who can offer support and encouragement along the way.

Most of all, you'll tap into a wellspring of intrinsic motivation and resilience that will carry you through even the toughest parts of the journey. When you're deeply aligned with your own sense of purpose and direction, you'll find reserves of strength and ingenuity you never knew you had. You'll be able to weather setbacks and disappointments with greater equanimity, knowing that they're all just part of the larger story arc of your growth and emergence. Remember, it is the journey, not the mountain top, that creates positive energy, momentum, and strength. Always remember to turn toward the peak – you will ensure that you continue to progress – even if you don't know how in the moment.

So, if you're ready to step into your own leadership potential but aren't sure where to start, begin with this simple yet potent act of turning. Take a few moments to get quiet and reconnect with your deepest aspirations and values. Visualize the impact you want to have, the difference you want to make, and the legacy you want to leave. And then, with all the clarity and conviction you can muster, decide to turn your life in that direction.

Remember, you don't need to have every step of the path mapped out in advance. You don't need to know exactly how you'll overcome every obstacle or achieve every goal. What you need is the willingness to take that first step, and then the next one, and then the next. To keep showing up for your own becoming, day after day and choice after choice.

This is the heart of true leadership. It's not about reaching some final destination or achieving some ultimate victory. It's about falling in love with the journey itself – with the daily practice of growing, learning, and serving something greater than yourself. It's about continually turning toward your highest potential, even when the path ahead is shrouded in fog and uncertainty.

And as you cultivate this habit of intentional turning, an amazing thing will happen. You'll start to discover that the peak you were striving for was inside you all along – that the greatest gift of leadership is not what you achieve but who you become in the process. You'll realize that the real reward is not the summit itself but the strength, wisdom, and profound sense of aliveness you develop on the climb.

So, take a deep breath, turn your face toward the mountain and take that first courageous step. The world is waiting for the

leader you were born to become – and that leader is already stirring within you, ready to be called forth. All you have to do is begin.

As we come to the end of this exploration of what it means to take the lead in your own life and in the lives of those around you, I hope you're feeling a renewed sense of possibility and purpose. We've covered a lot of ground in these pages — from the myth of leadership scarcity to the transformative power of ownership, from the habits of true leaders to the courage required to stand alone in defense of your principles.

But perhaps the most important takeaway is this: leadership is not something you are but something you practice. It's a moment-to-moment choice to show up with integrity, authenticity, and a commitment to serving something greater than yourself. It's a willingness to face the hard truths, make the tough calls, and keep moving forward even when the path ahead is uncertain.

When you make that choice consistently, when you dedicate yourself to the daily practice of leading from within, you set in motion a powerful ripple effect that touches every corner of your life. You become a force for positive change in your relationships, work, community, and beyond. You inspire

others to step into their greatness and join you in the vital work of building a better world.

But this path of leadership is not for the faint of heart. It requires courage, resilience, and a willingness to step outside your comfort zone repeatedly. It demands that you confront your own shadows and limiting beliefs and do the inner work necessary to become the leader you're capable of being.

As you step forward into the next chapter of your own leadership journey, I want to leave you with five powerful invitations - five practices you can start implementing right away to accelerate your growth and amplify your impact:

1. Conduct a “Values Alignment Check”: Take stock of your core values and beliefs – the non-negotiable principles that guide your decisions and actions. Look for areas where you may be out of alignment, where your behaviors or choices aren't fully reflecting what matters most to you. Commit to closing those gaps and living with greater integrity and your deepest convictions.
2. Practice “Radical Ownership”: Take full responsibility for your life and your impact, even (and especially) when things don't go as planned. Resist the temptation to blame, complain, or make excuses, and instead focus on what you

can control and influence. The more you own your experience, the more power you'll have to shape it.

3. Develop a “Service Orientation”: Look for opportunities to add value and make a difference in the lives of others without expectation of reward or recognition. Ask yourself: “How can I be of service in this moment? What unique gifts or perspectives do I have to offer?” The more you contribute your talents and energy in service of something greater than yourself, the more fulfillment and meaning you'll find.
4. Embrace “Courageous Action”: Challenge yourself to take bold, decisive action in the face of fear, uncertainty, or resistance. Start before you feel fully ready, say yes to opportunities that stretch you, and be willing to risk failure in pursuit of growth and impact. Remember, courage isn't the absence of fear – it's the willingness to act in spite of it.
5. Embrace the “Turn Toward the Peak” Principle: Visualize your ultimate goal or aspiration as the summit of a majestic mountain. Regardless of where you currently stand on your journey – whether in a valley, on a rocky slope, or facing a steep cliff – take a moment to turn toward that peak consciously. This simple act of reorientation is

the first crucial step in your leadership ascent. It doesn't require having all the answers or a detailed map of the entire climb. Instead, it's about making a deliberate choice to face your aspirations and begin moving in that direction. By turning toward your personal summit, you're signaling to yourself and the universe your readiness to grow, lead, and make an impact. This perspective shift can reveal previously unseen opportunities and resources to aid your climb. Remember, the journey of leadership begins with this single, powerful turn. Make the choice to face your peak and take that first step upward, no matter how small it may seem.

As you start to incorporate these practices into your daily life, remember that leadership is a lifelong journey of becoming. There will be moments of triumph and moments of struggle, times when you feel like you're soaring, and times when you're stumbling in the dark. But through it all, keep coming back to your core commitment – to lead with authenticity, integrity, and purpose and to leave every person and situation better than you found them.

And know this: the world needs your unique brand of leadership now more than ever. We face challenges and opportunities of unprecedented scale and complexity, and it

will take all of us stepping up and shining our light to navigate the path forward. So don't wait for permission or perfection to start making a difference. Begin where you are, with what you have, and trust that your sincere efforts will ripple out in ways you can't even imagine.

Remember, leadership is not about titles or accolades – it's about the quiet, often unseen acts of service and courage that change lives and shape destinies. It's about the way you show up in the small moments, the choices you make when no one is watching, and the seeds of greatness you plant in others through your example and your belief in their potential.

So, as you turn the page on this chapter and step into the next one, know that you have everything you need to take the lead in your own extraordinary way. Embrace the journey ahead with curiosity, courage, and an open heart, and watch as your life and your leadership take flight. The world is waiting for you to leave your mark – so trust yourself, take a deep breath, and leap into the forever-unfolding adventure of your own becoming. The best is yet to come.

Chapter 9: Your Oxygen Is Your Responsibility

We find ourselves at the threshold of a profound truth that underpins all authentic leadership: “Your Oxygen Is Your Responsibility.” This simple yet powerful statement encapsulates the very essence of what it means to truly lead, not just in title or position but in spirit and action. It also inspires those around you as they look to you for that source that seems to be available to you despite circumstances that seem dampening to others.

Think about oxygen for a moment. It’s essential for life, invisible yet vital, constantly needed yet often taken for granted. In the same way, the qualities that sustain great leadership – optimism, energy, integrity, courage, empathy, vision – are intangible yet crucial, requiring constant renewal yet easily overlooked in the rush of daily demands.

Just as no one else can breathe for you, no one else can provide the inner resources you need to lead effectively. No mentor, no book, no seminar can give you the wellspring of conviction and purpose that must come from your own heart and mind. External inputs can inspire and guide, but the real

work of leadership – the daily choice to show up with authenticity and commitment – is yours alone.

This chapter is an invitation to take full ownership of your leadership journey. It's a call to stop looking outside yourself for validation, motivation, or direction and instead cultivate the inner strength and clarity that will sustain you through any challenge. It's about recognizing that every breath you take as a leader – every decision, every interaction, every moment of perseverance in the face of adversity is powered by the oxygen you choose to breathe in and generate the energy within. And this doesn't have to run out. You can recharge this source regardless of your circumstances – even when things are the bleakest.

But make no mistake – this responsibility is not a burden. It's a liberation. When you fully own your oxygen supply, you free yourself from dependence on external circumstances. You become unshakable in your purpose, unmoved by criticism or praise, because your source of energy and direction comes from a place that no one else can touch.

As we dive into this chapter, we'll explore practical strategies for generating your own leadership oxygen. We'll look at how to clarify your values and vision, how to build

resilience in the face of setbacks, and how to maintain your integrity even when it comes at a personal cost. We'll examine the habits and mindsets that allow great leaders to stay energized and focused, even in the most challenging environments.

Most importantly, we'll confront the excuses and limiting beliefs that often prevent us from taking full responsibility for our leadership impact. We'll challenge the notion that we're at the mercy of our circumstances and instead embrace the power we have to shape our reality through our choices and actions.

Feel the life-giving force of oxygen filling your lungs. And as you exhale, let go of any notion that someone else holds the key to your leadership potential. You are the source of your own power, the generator of your own energy, the author of your own leadership story.

The journey ahead will demand everything you've got – but I promise you, it will be worth it. When you fully embrace that your oxygen is your responsibility, you unlock a level of leadership impact that you never dreamed possible. You become not just a leader in name, but a force of nature, capable of inspiring and elevating everyone you touch.

The Launch of My Hedge Fund – Stay The Course

April 1, 2012

As I stepped into the office on that fateful morning, the energy in the air was palpable. Today was the day I had been dreaming of for years – the launch of my very own hedge fund. I had meticulously planned every detail, from the investment strategy down to the symbolic Hermes ties adorned with snails that I had gifted to my team. The message was clear: slow and steady wins the race.

I sat down at my desk, my heart pounding with anticipation. I had spent over a decade on Wall Street, cutting my teeth at the venerable Goldman Sachs before venturing out to help start a small research and trading firm. Those experiences had prepared me for this moment, and I felt ready to take on the world.

As I logged into my trading terminal, I couldn't help but feel a sense of gratitude. Our fund's largest limited partner had entrusted us with \$10 million right out of the gate, and several other investors were lined up to join in the coming weeks. The pressure was on, but I knew we had what it took to succeed.

I took a deep breath and placed my first trade – a small position of 5,000 shares on Acestory.com. It was a calculated move, in line with our conservative approach to risk management. As the day wore on, the position began to perform well, and I couldn't help but feel a sense of validation. We were off to a good start.

But as any seasoned investor knows, the market is full of surprises. And the unexpected came knocking at our door not many days later.

I had been closely following the Chinese Internet sector, and one company in particular caught my eye – Qihoo 360. Despite its impressive growth and unique positioning, the company was embroiled in controversy, with many well-known short-sellers questioning the legitimacy of its business practices. Some even believed that Qihoo would have trouble filing its annual 20F report, a crucial requirement for foreign companies listed on U.S. exchanges.

But where others saw risk, I saw an opportunity. My trusted Chinese analyst, with whom I had worked closely over the years, shared my bullish outlook on Qihoo. We believed that the company's fundamentals were strong and that the negative sentiment in the market was overblown.

I decided to start building a long position in Qihoo, even as the short interest continued to rise and the stock price struggled. It was a textbook “Layer 1” investment for our fund – a high-conviction, long-term play with the potential for returns of 100% or more.

As I watched the market react to the swirling rumors and speculation around Qihoo, I couldn’t help but reflect on the lessons I had learned over the years. The dot-com bust and the 2008 financial crisis taught me the importance of rigorous risk management and the dangers of getting caught up in market hype.

But I also knew that the greatest rewards often came to those willing to go against the grain and bet on their convictions. And in Qihoo, I saw a company with immense potential that was being unfairly maligned by the market.

As the first week of our fund’s operations drew to a close, I felt a sense of excitement building within me. We had navigated the choppy waters of the market with skill and discipline, and our conservative approach was already starting to pay off. In the long-short equity hedge fund world, new managers and new funds were greatly disadvantaged in the capital-raising game. Scale, big allocations, and trust were something that

performance alone could not produce. However, if you did not get off to a good start and your performance was not stellar from the get-go – the game that was already stacked against you became almost untenable.

But I knew that the real test was yet to come. In the world of hedge funds, reputation is everything, and our performance in these early days would set the tone for the months and years ahead. I was invigorated by the challenge and felt good about our analysis, our process, and our ability to generate great risk-adjusted returns.

The unexpected may have come knocking on day one, but we were ready for it. With a steady hand and a clear-eyed view of the risks and rewards ahead, we set out to prove that slow and steady could indeed win the race - even in the fast-paced world of hedge funds.

The Perils of Short-Term Thinking: A Hedge Fund Manager's Hard- Learned Lesson

As the first week of my newly minted hedge fund drew to a close, I found myself sitting in a sizable position in Qihoo 360,

the controversial Chinese internet company. The stock comprised a hefty 4% of our total assets – a bold bet for any actively managed portfolio. However, I was convinced that the short sellers circling the company were off base. My deep dive into Qihoo’s financials and business model had left me with a bullish outlook, and I was willing to put my money where my mouth was.

Of course, I wasn’t naive. I understood the bear case against Qihoo, particularly the concerns around the company’s ability to file its annual 20F report on time. This Form 20F, a key regulatory requirement for foreign companies listed on U.S. exchanges, was due by the end of April. A failure to submit the filing could be catastrophic, leading to an eventual stock delisting and vindication for the short sellers.

However, my research led me to a different conclusion. By mid-April, I was confident that Qihoo would meet the deadline and prove the naysayers wrong. The company’s aggressive defense against the allegations leveled by Forbes and others only strengthened my conviction. I was ready to ride out the storm and reap the rewards on the other side.

Then came the unexpected phone call that would change everything.

It was Wednesday, April 18, 2012, just before the market close. Another hedge fund manager with a focus on the Chinese internet sector reached out to me with some unsettling news. He had heard from multiple sources that Citron Research and Muddy Waters, two notorious short-selling firms, were convinced that Qihoo was a fraud. They were certain that the company would miss the 20F filing deadline because of concerns of the auditor, leading to a devastating delisting.

I tried to stay calm as I processed this new information. I had done my own extensive due diligence on Qihoo and still believed in the company's prospects. But I couldn't ignore the gravity of the situation. It was my fund's first month of operation, and I knew how critical it was to start off on the right foot. A major loss on a high-conviction bet could be a death sentence for a young fund like ours.

At that moment, I made a decision that would haunt me for years to come. I sold my entire Qihoo position, convincing myself that it was the prudent thing to do. The looming 20F deadline was a binary event – it would either be a massive win or a crushing loss. By exiting the position now, I reasoned, I could protect my fund's early gains and live to fight another day. Qihoo would still be a promising long-term investment once the filing uncertainty was resolved.

Regardless of the outcome of the 20F filing and the near-term performance, I felt very good about my decision to protect my fund's capital this early on and ensure a steady start, even if I did give up tremendous upside.

The very next morning, I woke up to the news that Qihoo had filed its 20F at 6 a.m. Eastern Time. The stock price exploded higher, soaring as much as 40% from the previous day's close. I was devastated. Had I held onto my position for just a few more hours, my fund would have logged an incredible first month. Instead, I had let my fear get the best of me and missed out on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I found myself so upset that I had literally sold this position the day before that I ended up making a truly bad reactive mistake, which was a truly avoidable error.

Panicked, I rushed out of my Upper East Side apartment, leaving my wife and kids bewildered at the breakfast table. I sprinted to the office, determined to rectify my mistake. As soon as I sat down at my desk, I began buying Qihoo shares hand over fist in the pre-market trading period, desperate to catch the wave I had missed. But it was too late. By the time I had regained a full position, the stock had already begun to retreat from its highs.

Ultimately, my frantic buying only served to erase the meager gains I had managed to eke out in my first month. What should have been a triumphant start for my fund had turned into a demoralizing setback. And it was all because of my short-term thinking and bad reaction to the unfortunate timing of selling a position literally hours before it jumped higher.

As the dust settled, I tried to understand what had happened. I had done the research; I had made the right call on Qihoo's fundamentals. But I had let market noise and fear of short-term losses cloud my judgment. Instead of holding firm to my convictions, I had wavered at the first sign of trouble. And it had cost me dearly. More damaging than missing out on the positive move, I tried to make two wrongs equal a right – the first wrong was selling on a high conviction idea too early, and the second wrong was trying to panic buy on a spike after the fact. The latter mistake was the one that I regretted more than the former.

In the coming months and years, Qihoo went on to become one of the great success stories of the Chinese internet boom. The stock soared more than 600%, confirming my original bullish thesis. But I would always wonder what could have been if I had just held on a little longer.

It was a painful lesson but one that would serve me well in the years to come. As a young hedge fund manager, it's easy to get caught up in the market's day-to-day gyrations. But true success requires a long-term perspective and an unwavering commitment to one's convictions.

In the wake of the Qihoo debacle, I vowed never again to let short-term thinking and an emotional reaction derail my investment strategy. I would do my research, make my bets, and have the courage to see them through, come what may. It was a simple principle but one that would prove essential to my fund's success in the cutthroat world of hedge funds.

Looking back, I can see that the Qihoo episode was a turning point in my career. It taught me the importance of discipline, conviction, and long-term thinking in the face of adversity. More important, it taught me that reacting to an unfortunate development is far worse than not. It was a hard lesson to learn but one that would pay dividends for years.

As I sat at my desk that fateful April morning, watching the Qihoo stock price climb higher and higher without me, I couldn't help but feel a sense of despair. But I also knew that this was just the beginning of my journey as a hedge fund manager. There would be many more triumphs and setbacks to

come, many more opportunities to test my mettle and prove my worth.

And so, with a heavy heart and a newfound sense of resolve, I picked myself up and got back to work. The road ahead would be long and full of challenges, but I was ready to face them head-on. Armed with the lessons of Qihoo, I was ready to continue fighting on behalf of my limited partners and investors.

The Qihoo Quandary: A Defining Moment in My Hedge Fund Journey

As I reflect on my tumultuous first month as a hedge fund manager, I can't help but wonder how different things might have been had I stuck to my guns on Qihoo 360. That fateful decision to sell my position on April 18, 2012, based on the swirling rumors and short-seller chatter, and then to reactively buy it back on a spike, would prove to be a defining moment in my career.

Looking back, I'm convinced that the Qihoo episode was the difference between a triumphant start that could have catapulted my fund to early success and the uphill battle I ended up fighting as a new entrant in the cutthroat world of

money management. It's hard not to dwell on what might have been, especially given Qihoo's meteoric rise in the months that followed. In the long run being up 2% in the first month compared to being down marginally is literally the same thing as medaling in the Olympics and not qualifying for the medal heat. It's that dramatic.

When I first bought shares of Qihoo for my fund, the stock was trading in the mid-teens. But just two years later, it had soared to over \$120 per share - a staggering return that would have been a game-changer for a first-time start-up fund like mine. Instead, I was left to watch from the sidelines as the company I had so strongly believed in proved all the doubters wrong.

In hindsight, it's clear that the short sellers' thesis on Qihoo was fundamentally flawed. They had painted the company as just another Chinese fraud, destined to collapse under the weight of its own deceit. But as Qihoo's business continued to thrive and its stock price climbed ever higher, it became obvious that the bears had badly misread the situation, at least at that moment in time and eventually for the next few years.

What's more, the Qihoo story was hardly an isolated incident. In the years since, I've watched as the same baseless

accusations have been leveled at countless other Chinese internet companies, from small-cap names to giants like Alibaba. Even Facebook has found itself in the crosshairs of short sellers using some of the same playbook.

It's a frustrating dynamic but one that I've come to know all too well. Having invested in Chinese companies for years, I've seen firsthand the impact these allegations can have on a stock, even when completely unfounded. I've also seen the incredible rewards that can come from betting on high-quality Chinese businesses unfairly tarred by association.

In fact, I've been involved in multiple research efforts over the years to expose legitimate cases of fraud and malfeasance among Chinese companies. It's important work, and I'm proud to have played a role in shining a light on some of the bad actors in the space. But I've also seen too many instances of great companies being lumped in with the fraudsters simply because they happen to be based in China.

That's why the Qihoo experience stung so badly. Here was a company that I had thoroughly researched and come to believe in, only to see it nearly derailed by the same sort of baseless fearmongering that had taken down so many other promising Chinese stocks. It was a harsh reminder of the

challenges that come with investing in a market that's still so poorly understood by so many in the West.

But it was also a valuable lesson. In the wake of the Qihoo debacle, I made a promise to myself to trust my own research and convictions more fully in the future. I believed that I had the experience and the tools to separate the wheat from the chaff when it came to Chinese companies. I just needed to have the courage to act on that knowledge, even in the face of market noise and short-term volatility.

It wasn't an easy lesson to learn, and there were indeed times in those early months when I doubted myself and my abilities. Starting a hedge fund is never a cakewalk, but doing it as a contrarian investor, in a space as polarizing as China, would always be an uphill climb. There were plenty of days when I felt like Sisyphus, pushing that boulder up the mountain only to watch it roll back to the bottom.

But I never lost sight of the bigger picture. I knew that for every Qihoo that slipped through my grasp, countless other opportunities were waiting to be uncovered in the fast-growing Chinese market. I knew that with hard work, discipline, and a commitment to rigorous research, I could build a successful fund that delivered strong returns for my investors over the

long run. This is what I thought at the time. But what I have come to realize after many years and experiences since is that each time we make a mistake – with all of the good intentions around it – there are immediate reactions that will shape how that mistake impacts our next steps. This trading mistake was not a mistake in isolation – it was how I reacted to it (by immediately trying to buy back the stock even as it was spiking 40% higher) that created a more lasting impact. It is the response and your reaction that ultimately determine how you can learn from or worse from a circumstance.

So I put my head down and got to work. I pored over financial statements and earnings reports, met with management teams and industry experts, and built a robust network of on-the-ground contacts throughout China. Slowly but surely, I assembled a portfolio of high-conviction ideas - companies with strong fundamentals, talented leadership, and the ability to thrive in a rapidly changing market.

It wasn't a smooth road by any means. There were plenty of bumps and setbacks along the way, and there were times when the skeptics seemed to win the day. But I never wavered in my belief that a disciplined, research-driven approach to investing in China would ultimately prevail.

Looking back on it now, I can see that the Qihoo episode was a critical inflection point in my journey as a hedge fund manager and, ultimately, a leader. It taught me valuable lessons about the importance of conviction, the dangers of short-term thinking, and the need to stay true to one's research and analysis in the face of market headwinds. Most importantly, it taught me not to let one mistake lead to another. It taught me the important truth that how you react to an outcome, a circumstance or a decision is far more important than the initial point of the decision.

But more than all of that, it lit a fire under me. It made me more determined than ever to get better, to right a wrong, and to ultimately prevail in my efforts. I would have never believed the journey I would be on – or the twists and turns that would unfold, but I began to go along a path that would ultimately lead to some of the greatest successes and most fulfilling moments of my career. But there was an unimaginable number of crashes and burns that would also come before any of those successes. I can see now how it all helped to lead me to where I am today – but the battles in front of me from this point were simply the kind of things that were so dramatic you couldn't make them up in Hollywood.

So, while I'll always wonder what might have been had I held onto those Qihoo shares, I'm grateful for the lessons that the experience taught me. Without it, I might never have become the investor or operator that I am today. And I might never have had the chance to make the kind of impact on the lives of my clients, colleagues, partners, and community members that I've been so fortunate to witness.

In the end, that's what this journey has been all about. Not just the pursuit of returns or the thrill of the game but the opportunity to build something lasting and meaningful. Something that makes a difference in the world, one investment, push-up, or failure at a time.

And it all started with a single decision, on a single stock, on a single day in April 2012. The day that everything changed, and nothing was ever quite the same again.

The lesson of "staying the course" isn't just about stubbornness or inflexibility. It's about taking full ownership of your decisions and your trajectory. It's about recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for your success or failure lies within you, not in external circumstances or the opinions of others.

As leaders, we must all learn to generate our own oxygen—our own source of conviction, resilience, and direction. We must

be willing to do the deep work of self-reflection and analysis, develop well-founded beliefs, and stand by those beliefs even when the path gets rocky.

This story reminds us that leadership is not a destination but a continuous journey of growth and self-discovery. It challenges us to take full responsibility for our choices, actions, and impact on the world. It inspires us to stay the course, even when the seas get rough, knowing that our ability to weather the storm comes not from external validation but from the strength we cultivate within.

Guiding Light Through Darkness and Difficulties

As I reflect on my journey as a hedge fund manager, I'm continually struck by the profound truth that your oxygen truly is your responsibility. This principle has been the cornerstone of my optimistic attitude and the guiding light through my darkest moments. Let me share with you what this means to me and how it can transform your own leadership journey.

When I say, "Your oxygen is your responsibility," I'm talking about the life force that drives you forward, that keeps

you going when everything seems to be falling apart. It's your resilience, conviction, and ability to make tough decisions and stand by them. In the world of hedge funds, where billions of dollars can be made or lost on a single trade, this oxygen is quite literally the difference between success and failure.

No one can provide this oxygen for you. No mentor, book, or seminar can give you the inner strength and clarity you need to lead effectively. These external sources can inspire and guide, but the real work of leadership – the daily choice to show up with authenticity and commitment – is yours alone.

I learned this lesson the hard way with Qihoo 360. I had done the research, and I had developed the conviction, but when push came to shove, I looked outside myself for validation. I let the noise of the market and the opinions of others override my own judgment. At that moment, I wasn't taking responsibility for my own oxygen. I was letting others breathe for me, and it cost me dearly.

But that failure became the catalyst for my greatest growth. It forced me to confront a hard truth: if I wanted to succeed as a leader and an investor, I needed to own my decisions and my outcomes fully. I needed to generate my own

oxygen, day in and day out, regardless of what was happening around me.

This doesn't mean operating in isolation or ignoring valuable input from others, far from it. It means doing the hard work of synthesizing all available information, forming your own conclusions, and then having the courage to act on those conclusions – even when they go against the grain. We must all learn that no one monopolizes the best ideas or the right business decisions. There will be good calls and horrible ones. There will be sound decisions and erratic ones. Yet, if you keep moving forward and do not allow one bad choice or outcome to turn into the next one, you will find solid footing and course correction. That will eventually lead you to a strong foundation of progress and advancement.

In the years since the Qihoo incident, I've cultivated practices that help me maintain my own oxygen supply. I constantly seek information, data, and analysis. I look for clarity and direction. Ultimately, I have become good at making decisions and going hard. I have found it difficult for others to change course once they make a decision, and doing that has a negative limitation on your ability to progress. Making decisions is incredibly important. We get to practice making decisions dozens of times each day. Most of those daily

decisions have no visible long-term impact, but in fact, they do. If we review our decision-making honestly, we might be surprised by how many choices should be swapped for a better, more sound path. I rigorously challenge my own assumptions, constantly seeking out diverse perspectives and new information. And I've developed a network of trusted advisors who aren't afraid to tell me when I'm off track.

But at the end of the day, the decisions are mine. The responsibility is mine. The oxygen is mine.

This principle extends far beyond the world of investing. In every area of life – whether you're leading a team, building a business, or simply trying to be the best version of yourself – your oxygen is your responsibility.

Think about it. How often do we look to others to motivate us, inspire us, and tell us what to do? How often do we blame our circumstances or environment for our lack of progress? It's a trap that's all too easy to fall into. But true leadership and true growth come from taking full ownership of your journey.

You may sometimes get it right. I certainly haven't. I've made plenty of mistakes along the way, and I'll undoubtedly make more in the future. But by taking responsibility for my

own oxygen, I ensure that each mistake becomes a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block.

When you fully own your oxygen supply, you become unshakable. Market volatility, criticism from others, unexpected setbacks – none of these can rob you of your inner strength and clarity. You become the eye of the storm, calm and focused, while chaos swirls around you.

This kind of self-generated stability is magnetic. It attracts opportunities, resources, and talented people. It inspires confidence in your team and your investors. It allows you to make bold moves and take calculated risks, knowing that your oxygen supply won't run out even if things don't go as planned.

But let me be clear – taking responsibility for your own oxygen isn't easy. It requires constant vigilance and hard work. There will be days when you feel like you're gasping for air when the weight of leadership feels almost unbearable. In those moments, remember this: the very act of taking responsibility, of choosing to generate your own oxygen despite the challenges, is a powerful act of leadership.

I've found that the more I embrace this responsibility, the more natural it becomes. It's like building a muscle – at first, it's painful and awkward, but with consistent practice, it

becomes stronger and more efficient. Today, generating my own oxygen is as natural to me as breathing itself.

So, how can you start taking full responsibility for your own oxygen? Here are a few strategies that have worked for me:

- Clarify your values and vision. Know what you stand for and where you're going. This becomes your true north, guiding your decisions when the path ahead is unclear.
- Develop a rigorous decision-making process. Don't rely on gut instinct alone. Create a systematic approach to analyzing information and making choices.
- Build your resilience. Cultivate practices that help you bounce back from setbacks. For me, this includes physical exercise, keeping my perspective on what I value the most, and continual learning to get better.
- Seek out diverse perspectives, but make your own decisions. Listen to others, but don't let their opinions override your own judgment.
- Embrace discomfort. Growth happens outside your comfort zone. Be willing to make tough choices and stand by them.

Remember, taking responsibility for your own oxygen doesn't mean you have to go it alone. In fact, one of the most powerful aspects of this principle is that it allows you to build genuine, mutually beneficial relationships. When you're not dependent on others for your oxygen, you can collaborate from a place of strength and authenticity.

As you move forward in your leadership journey, I challenge you to ask yourself regularly: Am I taking full responsibility for my own oxygen? Am I generating the inner resources I need to lead effectively? Or am I looking to others to breathe for me?

The path of self-generated leadership isn't always easy, but I promise you it's worth it. When you fully own your oxygen supply, you unlock levels of impact, fulfillment, and success you never thought possible. You become not just a leader in title but a true force for positive change in the world.

So take a deep breath. Feel the life-giving oxygen filling your lungs. And remember – that breath, and every breath that follows, is your responsibility. Embrace it. Own it. And watch as your capacity for leadership expands beyond your wildest dreams.

Your oxygen is your responsibility. It's time to start breathing deeply.

Resist Victimhood and Blaming Others

As we come to the close of this chapter, I want to leave you with some final thoughts on why taking full responsibility for your own oxygen is not just important but absolutely critical for your growth as a leader and as a human being.

Throughout my career, I've seen countless talented individuals falter and fail, not because they lacked skills or opportunities but because they fell into the trap of victimhood and blame. I have done this at times, too. It's an alluring trap, make no mistake. When things go wrong, it's so much easier to point fingers, find external factors to blame, and cast ourselves as the victims of circumstance or other people's actions.

But here's the harsh truth I've learned: victimhood and blame are leadership poison. They rob us of our power, agency, and ability to effect change. They keep us stuck in a cycle of reactivity and stagnation, always waiting for someone else to fix our problems or for circumstances to magically align in our favor.

I've been there. In the aftermath of the Qihoo debacle, it would have been easy to blame the short sellers, the market volatility, or the opaque nature of Chinese companies. I could have cast myself as the victim of forces beyond my control. But where would that have gotten me? Nowhere. It would have left me bitter, disempowered, and no better equipped to handle the next challenge.

Instead, I chose to fully own my decision. Yes, it was painful, yes, it was humbling. But in taking responsibility for my choice and its consequences, I reclaimed my power. I gave myself the opportunity to learn, grow, and do better next time.

This is the fundamental difference between leaders who thrive and those who stagnate. Those who embrace victimhood and blame remain stuck, always at the mercy of external forces. Those who take unconditional responsibility for their lives and their leadership continue to evolve, innovate, and make a real impact.

So, how do we break free from the victimhood trap and embrace a model of unconditional responsibility? Here's what I've learned:

1. Recognize that responsibility is power, not burden. When we take full responsibility for our lives and our leadership,

we're not shouldering a burden. We're claiming our power to shape our reality. Every challenge becomes an opportunity for growth, and every setback is a chance to refine our approach.

2. Embrace radical honesty with yourself. This means being willing to look at your choices and their consequences without flinching. It means acknowledging your mistakes and shortcomings, not to beat yourself up, but to identify areas for growth.
3. Focus on what you can control. In any situation, there are factors beyond our control. Great leaders don't waste energy lamenting these factors. Instead, they focus relentlessly on what they can influence and control.
4. View failure as feedback, not finality. When you take unconditional responsibility, failure loses its sting. It becomes valuable data, showing you what doesn't work so you can refine your approach.
5. Cultivate resilience through self-care. Taking responsibility doesn't mean running yourself into the ground. It means taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional well-being so you have the strength to face challenges head-on.

6. Surround yourself with other ‘responsibility-takers’. The people around us have a profound impact on our mindset. Seek out those who embrace responsibility and avoid those who default to victimhood and blame.
7. Practice forgiveness—of yourself and others. Holding onto resentment, whether toward yourself or others, keeps you stuck in the past. Forgiveness frees you to move forward and take positive action.

By embracing these principles, we can create a model of unconditional responsibility that transforms our leadership and lives. This is about something other than being perfect or never making mistakes. It’s about owning our journey fully, with all its ups and downs.

I’ve seen the power of this approach repeatedly, both in my own life and in the lives of other leaders I admire. When we stop making excuses, stop blaming others, and start taking full responsibility for our choices and their outcomes, we unlock a level of personal power that is truly transformative.

Think about the leaders who have inspired you most. Chances are, they weren’t people who complained about their circumstances or blamed others for their setbacks. They were

people who owned their mistakes, learned from their failures, and kept pushing forward despite the odds.

That's the kind of leader I strive to be every day, and it's the kind of leader I believe you can become. It can be challenging. There will be days when you'll be tempted to fall back into victimhood, to point fingers or make excuses. In those moments, remember this: your oxygen is your responsibility. No one else can breathe for you.

As we move forward, I challenge you to embrace this model of unconditional responsibility in every area of your life. Whether leading a team, building a business, or simply trying to be the best version of yourself, choose to own your journey fully.

Ask yourself: Where am I still playing the victim? Where am I blaming others or circumstances for my lack of progress? How can I take more complete responsibility for my life and my leadership?

The answers to these questions might be uncomfortable. They might require you to confront hard truths about yourself and your choices. But in that discomfort lies the seed of your greatest growth and profound impact.

Remember, leadership isn't about having all the answers or never making mistakes. It's about having the courage to keep showing up, to keep learning, and to keep taking responsibility even when it's hard. It's about generating your oxygen, day after day, choice after choice.

As you step into this model of unconditional responsibility, you'll likely face resistance – from others and even from parts of yourself. Old habits die hard, and the siren song of victimhood can be seductive. But I promise you this: the rewards of taking full responsibility for your life and your leadership are beyond measure.

You'll find a sense of freedom and empowerment that you've never known before. You'll develop a resilience that allows you to weather any storm. Most importantly, you'll become the kind of leader who inspires others not through words but through the example of your own life.

So take a deep breath. Feel the oxygen filling your lungs. And make the choice, right here and now, to take full responsibility for that breath and every breath that follows. Choose to be the author of your own story, the captain of your own ship.

Your oxygen is your responsibility. Your leadership is your responsibility. Your life is your responsibility.

Embrace it fully, and watch as your world transforms.

The journey ahead won't always be easy, but I promise you it will be worth it. I'll be right there with you, taking responsibility for my own oxygen and committed to growing and evolving as a leader every single day.

Here's to the road ahead, the challenges we'll face, and the victories we'll celebrate. Here's to the leaders we're becoming: one breath, one choice, and one moment of responsibility at a time.

The oxygen is yours. Breathe deep, take the lead, and let's change the world together.

Chapter 10: Your Leadership Flight Plan

As we prepare for the final ascent of your leadership journey, let's take a moment to reflect on how far you've come. In the last chapter, we explored the profound truth that your oxygen—your energy, resilience, and capacity to lead—is your responsibility. You've learned that true leadership isn't about waiting for someone else to empower you or provide the fuel for your dreams. It's about taking ownership of your own growth, inspiration, and impact.

You've discovered that the air you breathe - literally and metaphorically - is entirely up to you. No one else can inhale for you, just as no one else can provide the inner resources you need to lead effectively. External inputs can inspire and guide, but the real work of leadership - the daily choice to show up with authenticity and commitment - is yours alone.

This realization is both liberating and challenging. It means that you are no longer at the mercy of external circumstances or the approval of others. But it also means that you must be willing to do the hard work of generating your own

oxygen and cultivating the inner strength and clarity that will sustain you through any challenge.

Now, as we stand on the precipice of your leadership launch, it's time to channel that self-generated power into a clear, actionable flight plan. Just as a pilot wouldn't dream of taking off without a carefully plotted course, you, too, must chart your path to leadership orbit with intention and precision.

Your Leadership Flight Plan is more than just a set of goals or a to-do list. It's a comprehensive strategy for achieving escape velocity from the gravitational pull of mediocrity and self-doubt. It's a roadmap for navigating the turbulent skies of leadership, helping you stay on course even when storm clouds gather and visibility drops to zero.

Think of this chapter as your pre-flight checklist. We'll be going through every system, every control, every aspect of your leadership craft to ensure you're ready for takeoff. We'll fuel your tanks with a high-octane mixture of purpose and passion. We'll set your navigational instruments to track your trajectory, not just your altitude. And we'll prepare you for the g-forces of change and challenge that await you beyond the stratosphere of your comfort zone.

But here's the most exciting part: this flight plan is uniquely yours. Unlike the predetermined routes of commercial flights, your leadership journey is a custom expedition. You are both the pilot and the aircraft designer. You get to decide the destination, the cruising altitude, and the scenic detours along the way.

This personalized approach is crucial because leadership, at its core, is not about conforming to someone else's idea of success. It's about charting your own course, guided by your inner compass of values and vision. Your Leadership Flight Plan should reflect your unique strengths, your personal mission, and the specific impact you want to make in the world.

As we craft this plan together, we'll draw on all the principles we've explored throughout this book. We'll tap into the builder's mindset, ensuring that your plan is not just a wish list but a blueprint for concrete action. We'll infuse it with the transparency that fuels trust, making sure your plan is authentic to who you are and what you stand for.

We'll be turbocharging it with the speed that is your superpower, creating strategies for quick decision-making and agile adaptation. We'll focus on your trajectory, not just your current position, setting ambitious yet achievable milestones

that keep you moving forward despite the oncoming wave of setbacks, disappointments, frustrations, and missteps. And we'll leverage small steps' power to generate massive momentum, breaking down your grandest aspirations into daily, actionable habits.

Remember, this flight plan is not set in stone. Like any good pilot, you must be prepared to make course corrections when encountering unexpected headwinds or discovering more promising routes. Our plan will be flexible and adaptable, designed to evolve as you grow and circumstances change.

While your plan may flex, your commitment must remain rock solid. The journey to leadership orbit demands nothing less than your total dedication. It requires the courage to push beyond your perceived limits, the resilience to bounce back from setbacks, and the discipline to stay the course even when easier paths present themselves.

As we embark on this final preparatory stage, I want you to approach it with the same sense of excitement and anticipation that a seasoned astronaut feels before a launch. Feel the adrenaline coursing through your veins. Embrace the nervous energy that comes with stepping into the unknown. Let your imagination soar as you contemplate the incredible views

and unprecedented opportunities that await you in leadership orbit.

But also, take a moment to ground yourself in gratitude. Appreciate the journey that has brought you to this point. Honor the lessons you've learned, the strengths you've developed, and the inner leader you've begun to unveil. Recognize that by taking responsibility for your own oxygen, you've already accomplished something remarkable. You've broken free from the shackles of external validation and tapped into your own unlimited power source. You matter. You have an important and relevant difference to make in the world. You are someone's miracle that they are currently seeking out and struggling to find. Your actions and influence can profoundly impact the world, one person and one choice at a time.

Now, it's time to transform that power into propulsion. It's time to take all the insights, skills, and self-knowledge you've gained into a cohesive, actionable plan for leadership liftoff.

Are you ready to finalize your pre-flight checklist? Are you prepared to strap in, fire up your engines, and embark on the most thrilling journey of your life? Then, let's begin. Your leadership launch awaits, and the stars are calling your name.

Welcome to Your Leadership Flight Plan - the final frontier in your quest for authentic, impactful leadership.

Charting Your Course to Leadership Orbit

As we dive deeper into crafting Your Leadership Flight Plan, remember this fundamental truth: the most extraordinary journeys begin not with a giant leap but a single, purposeful step. Your ascent to leadership orbit is no different. It's a series of intentional choices, deliberate actions, and consistent habits that, compounded over time, will propel you to heights you once thought impossible.

Let's begin by addressing a common misconception. Many aspiring leaders believe a flight plan is solely about the destination - the big, audacious goal at the rainbow's end. While having a clear vision of your ultimate aim is crucial, true mastery lies in falling in love with the journey itself. Your Leadership Flight Plan isn't just about where you're going; it's about who you're becoming along the way. More importantly, it's about who you are serving, helping, and influencing for good

along the way. Real momentum begins when the power of 1, combined with small and simple acts of love and service, lifts others. Your launch accelerates the more you help others around you.

Think of each day as a microcosm of your entire leadership journey. Each morning, when you wake up, you have a choice. Will you passively drift through the day, buffeted by the winds of circumstance? Or will you take the controls, plot your course, and navigate purposefully? Your Leadership Flight Plan is the tool that empowers you to choose the latter consistently and confidently.

But here's the key: your plan must be both aspirational and actionable. It should stretch you beyond your current capabilities, daring you to dream bigger and reach further. Yet, it must also be grounded in practical, day-to-day steps that you can actually implement. This balance between the visionary and the pragmatic is what separates idle daydreamers from true leadership astronauts.

So, how do we strike this balance? We start by clearly defining your leadership North Star - the guiding purpose that will orient all your efforts. This isn't just about career goals or financial targets. It's about identifying the unique impact you

want to have on the world. What problems do you want to solve? Whose lives do you want to improve? What legacy do you want to leave? Your North Star should ignite a fire in your belly and put a lump in your throat. It should be something so compelling that you're willing to endure any hardship and overcome any obstacle to achieve it. It is important not to fall into the trap of thinking that this purpose needs to be something astronomical, something enormous. My purpose has been to be the best husband, father, son, and brother I can be. My family has been my driving force. This includes both my heavenly family and my family on earth. This drives me and keeps me focused on improving, progressing, and overcoming my shortcomings. It is a foundational rock that can't be shifted with a business win, loss, or some other passing development. Through good times and bad, through tragic loss or triumphant success, my family is my purpose, and everything else spins around. As you really think about your guiding purpose, think about things that will be lasting, steady, and forever. Many things that social media portrays are flighty, short-lived, and not sturdy.

Once you've identified your North Star, we'll work backward to create a series of milestones—key achievements and growth markers that will indicate you're on the right

trajectory. These milestones act as your navigational beacons, helping you stay on course and allowing you to celebrate progress along the way.

But the real magic of your Leadership Flight Plan happens in the daily details. Here, we'll outline the specific habits, practices, and rituals that will form the bedrock of your leadership ascent. Remember, leadership orbit isn't reached through sporadic bursts of inspiration but through consistent, dedicated effort.

We'll design your daily launch sequence—the actions you'll take each morning to prime yourself for leadership. This might include meditation to center your mind, journaling to clarify your thoughts, or exercise to energize your body. The key is to start each day with intention, fueling up your leadership tanks before the world's demands start to drain them.

Next, we'll create your leadership flight checklist—a set of non-negotiable actions you'll commit to completing each day, regardless of how you feel or what unexpected challenges arise. These include reading for continuous learning, having a meaningful conversation with a team member, or spending time on strategic thinking and planning. By committing to these

daily actions, you ensure that you're always moving forward on your leadership journey, even if it's just in small increments.

We'll also build regular maintenance checks—weekly and monthly review processes that allow you to assess your progress, learn from your experiences, and make necessary course corrections. Just as a pilot constantly monitors their instruments and adjusts to changing conditions, you must also stay vigilant and adaptable on your leadership flight.

However, the most crucial element of your Leadership Flight Plan is mindset. We'll work on cultivating the mental and emotional resilience you'll need to weather the inevitable storms of leadership. You'll develop strategies for managing self-doubt, handling criticism, and returning from failures. You'll learn to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth and to view obstacles not as roadblocks but as chances to demonstrate your problem-solving creativity.

Remember, leadership is not a solo flight. Your plan will include strategies for building and nurturing your support network - your ground control team. These mentors, peers, and team members will provide guidance, feedback, and encouragement as you navigate the often lonely skies of leadership.

As we craft your Leadership Flight Plan, we'll also address the crucial balance issue. True leadership orbit isn't about sacrificing everything else to pursue a single goal. It's about creating a sustainable, holistic approach that allows you to excel in your leadership role while nurturing your relationships, maintaining your health, and feeding your soul. Your plan will include strategies for managing your energy, not just your time, ensuring you operate at peak performance without burning out.

Throughout this process, I want you to approach the creation of your Leadership Flight Plan with a sense of boldness and possibility. This is your chance to dream big, challenge your limitations, and commit to becoming the leader you know you can be. Don't let fear or self-doubt constrain your vision. Remember, every great leader throughout history started precisely where you are now—with a dream, a plan, and the courage to take action.

As we put the final touches on your flight plan, I want you to feel a sense of excitement building within you. Feel the anticipation of the incredible journey that lies ahead. Visualize yourself in leadership orbit, looking down at the world from a whole new perspective, making decisions, and taking actions that ripple out to impact countless lives positively.

But also, take a moment to acknowledge the gravity of your commitment. Creating a Leadership Flight Plan is more than just a planning exercise - it's a pledge to yourself and the world. It's a declaration that you're ready to step up, take responsibility, and make your unique contribution to the universe of leadership.

Crafting Your Leadership Orbit: A Day in the Life of Sustainable Success

In our quest to build a Leadership Flight Plan that propels us into orbit, it's crucial to understand that true success is not about sporadic bursts of brilliance but a consistent, sustainable approach to each day. As we've explored throughout this chapter, the power of your leadership lies not just in grand gestures but in the small, intentional choices you make moment by moment. To illustrate this principle, I want to share with you a detailed look at my own daily routine. This isn't about emulating my schedule precisely but rather about understanding how to structure your day to align with your leadership goals and values. By seeing how I've crafted my days to support my leadership orbit, I hope to inspire you to design

your own routine thoughtfully—one that fuels your growth maintains your energy, and keeps you firmly on your leadership trajectory.

As you review my current daily schedule, please note that the specifics are not so important other than there being a routine. It is managed with intention, and it gives me the necessary time to work, work on myself, work on my number one priority – my family- and allows room for growth. I have had many versions of a daily schedule depending on numerous factors. For instance, when I worked in San Francisco at Goldman Sachs, my day would begin at 3:30 am—other seasons of my life, including when we had little children, also mandated different time blocks. When I was working at NQ Mobile, based in Beijing, I had to schedule and allocate work time from 10 pm to 2 am since their day was getting started at that point. So, the specifics don't matter and will most definitely change with your different circumstances and seasons of life. But keeping a routine. Planning and being organized with intention. Ensuring you allocate time to the various areas of emphasis in your life is the most important. There is no one daily routine or schedule that fits everyone. And we are all in different seasons of our life.

Matt's Daily Leadership Orbit:

Morning Routine and Blocked Off Time

This crucial block includes:

30-minute run (3-5 miles)

Workout routine (weights, calisthenics, push-ups)

Walking the dogs

Consuming a green shake for nutrition

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM: Core Work Hours.

This includes:

External meetings and calls

Deep thinking and strategy work

Addressing urgent matters as they arise

Dinnertime: Family time.

Prioritizing availability for:

Family dinner

Carpool to kids' activities

Connecting with my wife

8:00 PM - Midnight: Flexible Evening Hours.

This might include:

Additional work, if needed

Attending kids' events (e.g., soccer games)

Social activities (concerts, dinners out)

Watching a show with my wife

10:30 PM - 11:00 PM: Pre-Bed Routine. Includes Stretching And Push-Ups.

Bedtime. Aiming for at least 6 hours of sleep.

Weekly Rituals:

Traveling frequently, but rarely on weekends

Saturdays dedicated to family time, including workouts and kids' activities

Sundays involve church, family time, and a special family meal

Sunday evenings: 1-2 hours dedicated to weekly planning and email organization

Ongoing Habits:

Running 3-5 days a week consistently

Reading on planes, while running, before bed, and whenever time allows

Continually consuming information

Maintaining a fitness routine even while traveling

This routine demonstrates the intricate balance of professional ambition, personal growth, and family commitment. It's a testament to the fact that leadership isn't just about what you do in the office - it's a 24/7 commitment to living your values and continually pushing yourself to grow. As you craft your own Leadership Flight Plan, consider how each hour of your day can be optimized to fuel your leadership journey and keep you in a sustainable orbit of success.

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As you prepare for your leadership launch, know this: the journey ahead will not always be easy. There will be moments of doubt, periods of turbulence, and times when you'll be tempted to abort the mission. But with your Leadership Flight Plan as your guide, you'll have the clarity, the tools, and the resilience to stay the course.

You are embarking on the most important flight of your life - the journey to becoming the leader you were born to be. Your leadership orbit awaits. Are you ready for takeoff?

Charting Your 90-Day Leadership Orbit Launch Plan

[THIS SECTION WILL BE A VISUAL CHART]

Month 1 “Getting Ready for Launch”

Week 1: Preparation and Vision

1. Craft your Leadership Manifesto
 - Define your core values and leadership principles
 - Articulate your vision for the future
 - Describe the unique impact you want to make

2. Identify your Leadership North Star
 - What is your real motivation?
 - What keeps you going through your ups and downs?

3. What is the value you want to create?
 - What problems do you want to solve?
 - Whose lives do you want to improve?
 - What legacy do you want to leave?

Week 2: Tactical - Building the Foundation

4. Design your Daily Launch Sequence

- Create a morning routine that primes you for leadership
- Choose 3 non-negotiable daily actions (e.g. something physical, emotional, and mental)

5. Set up your Support Squad

- Identify 1 person for your “ground control” team
- Reach out and share your leadership aspirations
- Schedule regular check-ins with them

Week 3: Week 3: Solidifying Your Leadership Routine

6. Establish your leadership flight checklist

- List 3-5 key actions you’ll complete daily
- Include items like strategic thinking, team communication, and personal growth

7. Create your energy management plan

- Identify your peak performance times
- Schedule high-priority tasks during these periods
- Plan for regular renewal and recovery

Week 4: Elevate Your Leadership

8. Develop your learning curriculum

- Choose 1 leadership book to read over the next 90 days
- Select 1 new skill to develop

- Find a leadership course or workshop to attend

Month 2 “Here We Go!”

Week 5: Setting Milestones and Metrics

9. Define your leadership goal
 - Make it specific, measurable, and slightly uncomfortable
 - Break it down into weekly objectives
10. Establish your key performance indicators (KPIs)
 - Choose 3-5 metrics to track your leadership progress
 - Set up a system for regular measurement and review
 - Create a calendar for bi-weekly reviews (the first one scheduled for week 9)

Week 6: Forge Unbreakable Accountability

11. Create your accountability structure
 - Set up weekly and monthly review sessions
 - Prepare a template for tracking progress and insights

Week 7: Launching into Action

12. Review your Daily Launch Sequence – “How’s it working?” – Make adjustments

- Start each day with your chosen rituals
- Reflect on their impact and adjust as needed

13. Review and adjust your leadership flight checklist

- Complete your daily leadership actions
- Note any challenges or resistance you encounter
- Add to it – What’s the next thing you can do to take another step?

Week 8: Lead With Purpose

14. Initiate your first leadership project

- Choose an initiative aligned with your leadership goal
- Involve your team or peers in the implementing process

Month 3 – “How’s It Going?”

Week 9: Building Momentum

15. Conduct your first bi-weekly review

- Assess your progress on your leadership goal
- Celebrate wins and analyze setbacks
- Make necessary adjustments to your plan

16. Expand your leadership influence

- Identify one area where you can take on more responsibility

- Volunteer for a cross-functional project or committee

Week 10: Embrace Radical Transparency

17. Practice radical transparency

- Share your leadership journey with your team
- Ask for feedback on your performance and impact

Week 11: Overcoming Challenges

18. Develop your resilience strategy

- Identify potential obstacles to your leadership goals
- Create contingency plans for each
- Practice reframing challenges as opportunities

19. Enhance your decision-making skills

- Start a decision journal to track important choices
- Analyze the outcomes and learn from each decision

Week 12: Cultivate Resilience – Maintaining a Constructive Positive Attitude

20. Cultivate your emotional intelligence

- Practice active listening in all interactions
- Work on identifying and managing your own emotions

- List out the things that are creating emotional stress and work on reframing them for opportunities for growth

The Leadership ORBIT: “Start Again!”

21. Conduct a comprehensive review of your 90-day journey

- Assess progress on your main goal and KPIs
- Gather feedback from your Support Squad
- Reflect on your personal growth and leadership development

22. Plan your next 90-day cycle

- Set a new ambitious goal
- Refine your daily and weekly practices
- Commit to continuous improvement and lifelong learning

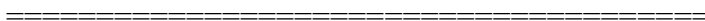
23. Celebrate your launch into leadership orbit (both your failures and your success)

- Acknowledge your hard work and progress
- Reflect on the things you overcame that made you better
- Share your success with your team and mentors
- Recommit to your leadership vision and impact

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Remember, this 90-day plan is your launchpad to leadership orbit. No matter how small, each action propels you

toward your ultimate vision. Embrace the challenges, celebrate the victories, and keep your eyes fixed on your Leadership North Star. You have the power to generate your own oxygen, to chart your own course, and to make a lasting impact. The universe of leadership is waiting for your unique contribution. Now, ignite your engines and prepare for an extraordinary journey. Your leadership orbit awaits!



Remember, you are the architect of your own leadership orbit. No one else can fly this mission for you. But armed with your Leadership Flight Plan, fueled by your own self-generated oxygen and guided by your unwavering commitment to growth, you are unstoppable.

The world is waiting for your unique brand of leadership. It's time to ignite your engines, break free from the gravity of self-doubt, and launch into the limitless expanse of your potential. Your leadership orbit is calling. Answer it with everything you've got.

5 Action Steps to Take Today:

1. **Craft Your Leadership Manifesto:** Take 30 minutes to write a personal leadership manifesto. Define your core values, your vision for the future, and the impact you want to make. This

will serve as the foundation for your Leadership Flight Plan.

2. **Identify Your Daily Launch Sequence:** List three non-negotiable actions you'll commit to doing daily to fuel your leadership growth. These could be things like reading for 20 minutes, meditating, or reaching out to a team member for a meaningful conversation.
3. **Set Your First Milestone:** Choose one significant leadership goal you want to achieve in the next 90 days. Make it specific, measurable, and slightly outside your comfort zone. Write it down and place it somewhere you'll see it every day.
4. **Create Your Support Squad:** Identify three people who can act as your "ground control" team. Reach out to them today and share your leadership aspirations. Ask if they'd be willing to provide support, accountability, and feedback as you embark on this journey.
5. **Schedule Your Flight Check-Ins:** Block out time in your calendar right now for weekly and monthly review sessions. Use these times to assess your progress, celebrate wins, learn from setbacks, and make necessary adjustments to your Leadership Flight Plan.

Remember, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Take these actions today, and you'll be well on your way to leadership orbit. The countdown has begun. It's time for **liftoff!**

To get a downloadable version of The Leadership Orbit 90 Day Flight Plan, click the QR code and enter your email address:

[INSERT QR CODE]

Chapter 11: Building Sustainability: The Bedrock of Your Leadership Legacy

As we transition from crafting Your Leadership Flight Plan to the critical concept of Building Sustainability, imagine yourself at the helm of a mighty spacecraft. You've ignited your engines, broken free from the Earth's atmosphere, and now find yourself suspended in the vast expanse of space. The initial rush of liftoff has subsided, and a profound question emerges: Now that you're here, can you sustain this through what inevitably lies ahead, and what lasting impact will you create?

This is where we bridge the gap between planning and an initial launch – and ultimately sustaining it over every season, every win and loss, every surprising twist and turn, and

ultimately, how people will remember your legacy throughout. Your Leadership Flight Plan has set your course, but building sustainability ensures that your journey lasts and ultimately leaves an indelible mark on the universe long after your mission is complete. It's the difference between a meteor that burns bright but fades quickly and a star that illuminates galaxies for eons.

In the previous chapter, we focused on charting your personal path to leadership orbit. Now, we expand our vision to encompass the broader ecosystem you inhabit. Forging a lasting impact is creating a positive ripple effect beyond your immediate sphere of influence. It's about constructing something that stands the test of time and continues to generate benefits even in your absence. To achieve this, your leadership orbit must be sustainable.

Consider the difference between a single extraordinary performance and a legacy of consistent excellence. Imagine a basketball player who scores 70 points in a single game - an incredible feat that turns heads and makes headlines. Yet, if this player never comes close to replicating that performance again, their moment of glory fades into obscurity.

Now contrast this with a player like Michael Jordan, whose sustained brilliance over the years transformed not just basketball but the entire sports world. Jordan's impact extends far beyond statistics; it inspired countless individuals to pursue their dreams, influenced fashion and popular culture, and continues to shape aspirational thinking decades after his retirement.

Consider the sustained value creation of Howard Schultz and Starbucks. When Schultz joined Starbucks in 1982, it was a small chain of coffee shops in Seattle. Over the next four decades, through consistent innovation and a relentless focus on customer experience, Schultz transformed not just a company but an entire industry. He didn't just sell coffee; he created a "third place" between home and work, revolutionizing how people socialize and work.

Schultz's vision extended beyond profit margins to creating value for employees (offering health insurance to part-time workers and stock options), farmers (through ethical sourcing practices), and communities (through local engagement and sustainability initiatives). This consistent commitment to multiple stakeholders has resulted in a global brand with over 30,000 stores in 80 countries, employing hundreds of thousands of people.

Even after Schultz's retirement, the values and practices he instilled continue to shape the company and influence broader business practices. Starbucks' impact goes far beyond its balance sheet; it has changed consumer behavior, set new standards for employee benefits in the service industry, and demonstrated how large corporations can balance profit with social responsibility. This is the power of sustained value creation in business - a vision consistently executed over decades can reshape industries, influence global culture, and set new paradigms for what it means to be a successful company.

These examples apply perfectly to leadership. It's not about producing a single remarkable result or having one shining moment of influence. True, lasting leadership is about consistently showing up, making a difference, and positively impacting lives over an extended period. Think of a teacher who, day after day, year after year, nurtures young minds, instilling not just knowledge but values and self-belief. Their influence ripples through generations as their students become leaders, innovators, and nurturers in their own right.

This is the level of impact we're aiming for in your leadership journey - not fleeting moments of greatness, but a sustained commitment to creating value that outlives you, continuing to inspire, guide, and empower long after you're

gone. It's about building a legacy of positive change that reverberates through time, touching lives in ways you may never directly see but that profoundly shape the future.

But let's be clear: Creating perpetual prosperity is not about ego or personal glory. It's about recognizing that true leadership transcends the self. It's about asking, "How can I help someone who will help change their trajectory and life, which will last well after I'm gone?" This mindset shift is what separates mere managers from visionary leaders and short-term thinkers from legacy builders.

In business, sustainability is a company culture that has fostered innovation and employee well-being for decades through many different economic cycles and product fads. In community leadership, sustainability could be initiatives that address the root causes of social issues, creating positive change that spans generations. In personal relationships, it's about nurturing connections, imparting wisdom, and providing selfless service that enriches lives far into the future.

The beauty of fostering sustained growth is that it provides an unwavering beacon of purpose for decision-making. This guiding light, much like a lighthouse on a stormy coast, illuminates the path forward even in the most challenging

circumstances. When faced with choices, you need only ask: “Which option creates the most enduring positive impact?” This foundational principle becomes your compass, helping you navigate the complex terrain of leadership with clarity and resolve. It’s not just a decision-making tool but a source of resilience and perspective.

This enduring purpose enables you to approach setbacks and hardships with hope and optimism, recognizing them as integral parts of the growth process rather than insurmountable obstacles. Like a skilled sailor adjusting their course in response to changing winds, you can adapt to challenges while staying true to your ultimate destination of creating lasting value.

Focusing on sustainable value liberates you from the tyranny of short-term metrics. While quarterly results and annual reviews have their place, true leadership orbit is achieved by those who can balance immediate needs with long-term vision. It’s about planting seeds today that will grow into mighty oaks long after you’ve moved on to new horizons. It’s about having a vision of the long-term impact of your daily and current actions and choices.

Engineering enduring success is not an easy path. It requires patience, foresight, and often, the courage to make

unpopular decisions in the short term for long-term benefit. It demands you resist the siren call of quick fixes and flashy but fleeting successes. Instead, you must commit to the sometimes unglamorous work of laying strong foundations and nurturing slow, steady growth. It means taking actions that have no immediate or visible impact and doing it over and over again while having faith in and hope for the long-term benefits to manifest eventually.

This chapter will challenge you to think bigger and further than you ever have before. We'll explore strategies for identifying opportunities to create a lasting impact in your sphere of influence. You'll learn how to build systems and cultures that can thrive and evolve even in your absence. We'll delve into the art of legacy thinking, helping you envision the mark you want to leave on the world and reverse-engineer the steps to get there.

We'll also confront the obstacles that often derail efforts to build sustainability - short-term pressures, resistance to change, and the allure of immediate gratification. You'll develop tools to overcome these challenges, staying true to your vision even when the path gets tough.

Furthermore, we'll explore the profound personal benefits of adopting this mindset. Designing resilient worth isn't just about what you leave behind - it's about who you become in the process. As you shift your focus from immediate gains to long-term impact, you'll find a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment. You'll develop patience, resilience, and a broader perspective that will serve you in all areas of life. You create endearing memories and history that can help serve as a source of great strength for your future influence sphere.

Remember, every great leader throughout history has, in some way, been a builder of sustainable value – and has been able to sustain leadership influence over long periods of time when others could not.

Phil Knight and Nike didn't just build a shoe company, they built an iconic global brand that has endured for decades. From the beginning, Nike focused on creating an aspirational identity around athletic performance and achievement that went far beyond just selling footwear. They cultivated relationships with top athletes, invested heavily in innovative product design and marketing, and tapped into the broader cultural zeitgeist around sports and fitness.

Nike has sustained its brand power by continuously evolving while staying true to its core identity. They've expanded into new product categories, embraced digital technology and e-commerce, and adjusted their marketing to connect with new generations. At the same time, they've maintained consistency in key brand elements like the Swoosh logo and "Just Do It" slogan. Nike has also adapted to changing consumer values by emphasizing sustainability and social responsibility initiatives in recent years. Through strategic brand management and a relentless focus on innovation, Nike has built a sustainable brand that continues to deliver value and resonate with consumers worldwide.

Jeff Bezos started Amazon as an online bookstore in 1994, aiming to revolutionize the way people bought books. Over the years, Amazon has evolved into a global e-commerce giant, touching almost every aspect of daily life by offering a vast array of products and services. Through relentless innovation, customer-centric policies, and strategic expansion, Amazon has built a sustainable brand that consistently delivers value. Its commitment to convenience, speedy delivery, and cutting-edge technology ensures that it remains at the forefront of the retail and technology industries, continuously enhancing the consumer experience.

Warren Buffett, through Berkshire Hathaway, has built a sustainable brand in the investing world by adhering to a value-investing philosophy and focusing on long-term growth. His disciplined approach to selecting investments in well-managed, undervalued companies has earned Berkshire Hathaway a reputation for stability and consistent returns. By acquiring a diverse portfolio of businesses and maintaining a hands-on management style, Buffett has ensured that Berkshire Hathaway continues to expand and deliver significant value to its shareholders. The company's emphasis on quality investments, financial prudence, and ethical business practices has solidified its standing as a leading investment conglomerate.

You, too, have this power within you. Regardless of your field or position, you can create ripples that turn into waves of positive change. Your leadership orbit isn't just about how high you can fly - it's about the lasting impact you create on the world below. You have more capacity than you might believe. Each of us has a well within us that runs deep. We can draw on this well and outlast whatever it is that is preventing us from advancing. I have seen amazing endurance, determination, and leadership sustained for unimaginable periods of time by people in my orbit, and it has motivated me to keep going. We all must

draw on this kind of sustainability. This is the essence of the leadership orbit.

As we embark on this exploration of building sustainability, I want you to feel a sense of excitement and possibility coursing through your veins. Imagine the profound satisfaction of knowing that your efforts today are shaping a better tomorrow, not just for yourself but for countless others. Envision a future where your leadership has catalyzed positive changes that continue to unfold in beautiful and unexpected ways.

This is your invitation to think beyond the boundaries of your own life and career. It's a call to connect with something larger than yourself, to become part of a legacy of positive change that extends far into the future and gets you through today's challenges and tomorrow's, too. Generating long-term significance is your opportunity to ensure that your leadership journey isn't just a fleeting moment in time but a lasting contribution to the tapestry of human progress.

Are you ready to become a master builder of enduring value? Are you prepared to create a leadership legacy that will echo through the ages? Then, let's begin. The future is waiting for your blueprints, and the time to start building is now.

The Art of Consistent Excellence: Mastering Sustainable Value Creation in a World of Shiny Objects

I've learned some hard lessons over the years when it comes to building sustainability. Let me tell you, there are two paths you can take, and I've walked both.

Path one is all about chasing immediate or instant gratification. Sometimes, this can also be described as trying to build a "better mousetrap" - you know, the cooler thing, the new thing, the shiny object that promises to revolutionize everything. I'll admit, I've been seduced by that siren song more times than I care to count. And you know what? That road has been littered with financial challenges, failures, and more stress than I'd wish on my worst enemy.

But then there's path two. It's not glamorous or exciting, rather, it is sometimes downright boring. But here's the kicker—it works. This is the path of consistent execution—grinding on something for a long time while mastering some imperfection or shortcoming and driving forward through seemingly endless headwinds. It's about finding a team that can

take something simple and do it over and over again, getting a little better each time.

I can't tell you how often I've looked at a business and thought, "Wow, that's really boring." But then I see the team behind it, and I'm blown away. These are the folks who don't need fanfare or flashy innovations. They show up, day after day, and execute flawlessly. And let me tell you, that path? It's paved with financial success, ease, and much less burden.

So, when looking at companies or teams to invest in or start something new, I'm searching for something other than the next big thing. I'm looking for the people who can consistently do small, simple, "boring" things well over time. Sure, sometimes a better mousetrap does come along and change the game. But for every one of those, there's a graveyard full of companies that tried and failed.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying innovation isn't important. But in my experience, true innovation often comes from doing the basics better than anyone else, not reinventing the wheel.

This principle doesn't just apply to businesses, either. When hiring, I'm not looking for the one-in-a-million talent with off-the-charts skills. I've been down that road, and often,

it leads to frustration and disappointment. Instead, I'm looking for the steady Eddies, the consistent performers who show up every day ready to learn, grow, and improve with a resilient heart, an unselfish desire to serve and help, and to work hard. I'm looking for something sustainable and lasting.

These are the people who become the backbone of any successful organization. They're not flashy, they're not going to wow you with their resume, but they're going to outperform the "rock stars" nine times out of ten. And here's the irony – these consistent performers often become so good at what they do that they become the real one-percenters.

So, whether you're building a business, investing in one, or just trying to advance your own career, remember this: consistency beats flashiness every time. Focus on doing the small things well, day in and day out. It might not be exciting, but trust me, it's the surest path to sustainable success. Few shortcuts in life actually yield the benefits that the shortcut is attracting you to. Get on the path, and march on down the road, one step in front of the other and keep going – even when it seems impossible. Keep advancing.

Revolutionizing the Digital Landscape: How a Simple Idea Captured Hundreds of Millions of Users

The story of Imagination Unwired (now known as Siprocal), is a testament to the power of identifying and solving a simple yet critical need in the marketplace. And one of sustainability and perseverance. It's a perfect example of how building sustainable value doesn't always mean reinventing the wheel but rather perfecting it. It also requires a long-term focus, and a lot of overcoming, and never giving up.

Our journey began with a straightforward observation: app publishers faced a significant challenge in distributing their products, especially in the rapidly growing Latin American market. This region had leapfrogged traditional computing, embracing smartphones as their primary digital device. It was a goldmine of opportunity but one that was frustratingly out of reach for many app developers.

The existing solutions were painfully inadequate. App publishers spent fortunes on "sat pushes" - essentially, blind

broadcasts to users' phones. Imagine throwing darts in a pitch-black room, hoping to hit a bullseye. That's what these companies were doing, with no way to know if their messages were even reaching smartphones, let alone users who might be interested in their apps.

This inefficiency was more than just a minor inconvenience; it was a massive, industry-wide problem begging for a solution. And that's where we saw our opportunity.

We asked ourselves: What if we could create a product that leveraged relationships with handset makers and carriers to deliver targeted, effective app promotions and downloads? What if we could turn those blind broadcasts into precision strikes? What if we could do all of that for the app publishers while also enabling the handset makers and carriers to participate in the massive mobile advertising market that was escaping their grasp by the powerful Google and Facebook stranglehold?

Now, I'll be the first to admit - I wasn't the technical genius behind this idea. I was surrounded by brilliant minds who could see the intricacies of the problem and the potential of the solution. But what I brought to the table was the ability to recognize a good idea when I saw one and the drive to turn that

idea into reality. I was an insignificant part of this founding team, but I believed it was worth the effort from day one, and I helped by providing sustained hope and energy to find a way to make these ideas a reality.

We set out to build a system that could do what those sat pushes couldn't—deliver the right app promotions to the right users at the right time and to do so in a new way on a different piece of handset real estate—the home and lock screen. We focused on creating partnerships with handset makers and carriers, giving us unprecedented access to user data and prime real estate on people's phones.

This wasn't about creating a flashy new technology. It was about taking an existing concept - app promotion - and executing it infinitely better than anyone else had before. We were doing the “boring” work of building relationships, perfecting our targeting algorithms, and constantly refining our approach based on real-world data. Anyone who has worked in the world of wireless carriers and handset OEMs knows there is nothing fast or efficient in these endeavors. It is painfully slow and inefficient trying to navigate through the politics of these types of behemoth organizations. But if you get through, the results can be staggering.

The result? A platform that now has been installed on hundreds of millions of devices. It's a complete transformation of the app distribution landscape in one of the world's fastest-growing digital markets. As with any journey, it also led to many other opportunities and initiatives that we literally had no idea about when we first set out to build Imagination Unwired. Today, we have a very large and fast-growing connected TV business in North America, as well as a small gaming platform in Brazil.

This success took time to come. It resulted from consistent, patient effort and many moments of despair and uncertainty. We didn't try to boil the ocean; we focused on doing one thing exceptionally well. We listened to our clients, iterated on our product, and slowly but surely built a solution that delivered real, measurable value.

Our story proves you don't need to chase after the next big thing to create a massive impact. Sometimes, the path to extraordinary success is paved with seemingly ordinary steps. It's about identifying a real problem, committing to solving it better than anyone else and having the persistence to see it through.

In the end, that's what building sustainable value is all about. It's not about flashy innovations or revolutionary ideas. It's about consistently delivering solutions that make people's lives easier, businesses more efficient, and industries more effective. And when you do that well enough for long enough, you might find yourself with several hundred million users wondering how you will now monetize this massive reach into the future.

From Vision to Reality: The Evolution of a Digital Powerhouse

In the journey of building sustainable value, sometimes you have to recognize the untapped potential right in front of you. That's exactly what we did with Siprocal, formerly known as Imagination Unwired. Let me take you through our evolution because it's a perfect example of how persistence and adaptability can turn a good idea into a game-changing reality.

We started by identifying the key players in the Latin American mobile market. There were two major carriers, with America Mobile, owned by Carlos Slim, the dominant force. In Mexico, their brand, Telcel, is as ubiquitous as Verizon is here

in the States. In other countries, they operate under the name Claro. But here's the kicker - these carriers, along with handset makers like Samsung, Motorola, and Nokia, were sitting on a goldmine they did not know how to monetize.

You see, the screen of a smartphone isn't just a display - it's the most valuable real estate in the digital world. People interact with their phones hundreds of times a day. It's a captive audience that most companies would kill for that kind of engagement and audience. But these carriers and handset makers? They weren't making a dime from it. All the revenue went to app stores like Google Play or directly to app developers like the conglomerate Facebook.

That's where we came in. We developed technology that allowed these companies to finally monetize their digital real estate. We're talking smart messages, videos, tracking capabilities—the whole nine yards. Suddenly, app publishers, marketers, and game developers had a direct line to consumers that was not controlled by traditional channels. We could put their content right on the home screen or lock screen, places that were previously uncharted.

Now, I won't sugarcoat it - this was initially trying to build a better mousetrap. And as I've said before, building a better

mousetrap isn't always the safest bet. We poured a lot of money into this technology. We're talking years of development and millions in investment. We formed the company in late 2015, but it wasn't until 2017 that we landed our first customer. That's a long time to operate without seeing a return. And in the world of mobile devices and monetization – it takes many more years and significant scale before you can even try to generate revenues. The focus is on technology and obtaining mobile users. It's a long, hard road that requires a special kind of persistence and a lot of capital. We never expected how long it would take or how much capital it would take to get to where we are today.

But here's where the principle of sustainable value really shines through. We didn't give up. We kept refining, pushing, and believing in the fundamental value of what we were creating. And now, nine years in, we're finally turning the corner. We've made some strategic acquisitions and expanded our offerings, and we're now at the point where we can focus on what really matters—driving cash flow from operations.

The potential is enormous. In the U.S., companies like Digital Turbine are doing something similar. They're handling app installs for carriers like Verizon and AT&T. We're going far

beyond that and focusing more in a market hungry for this kind of service.

Advertisers are starting to realize what we've built. We've created a massive inventory of premium advertising space. It's a testament to the power of playing the long game, of building something truly valuable, even if it takes years to monetize. It requires a lot of belief in your thesis and your team. There are enormous amounts of failed expectations, missed deadlines, and setbacks that sometimes seem too crazy to make up. But it's all part of the lengthy process. Sustaining belief, hope, and effort are the crucial components to outlasting and enduring.

This journey underscores a crucial point about building sustainable value. Sometimes, you have to be willing to invest heavily upfront to build something substantial before you see a return. Look at Facebook, Amazon, or any number of tech giants - they operated for years before turning a profit. But when you get it right, when you create something that truly adds value, the payoff can be immense.

We're at that tipping point now with Siprocal. After years of development and refinement, we're poised to reap the rewards of our labor. This is a powerful reminder that in business, as in leadership, the path to success isn't always quick

or straightforward. But if you stay true to your vision and keep pushing to create real, lasting value, the results can be truly transformative.

The Evolution of Innovation: From Simple Needs to Media Revolution

In the world of sustainable value creation, sometimes the most powerful stories are those of constant evolution and adaptation. Our journey with Siprocal is a testament to this principle, showcasing how a simple idea can grow into a media revolution.

After our initial success with Imagination Unwired, we didn't rest on our laurels and had multiple opportunities to call it quits. We recognized that to build lasting value truly, we needed to keep pushing forward. So, we made a series of strategic moves to reshape our company and position us at the forefront of a new media landscape.

We started by making three to four key acquisitions, culminating in creating Digital Reef. This wasn't just a rebranding exercise; it was a deliberate expansion of our capabilities and reach. But we didn't stop there. About two

years ago, we took another bold step by merging with Gamers Club, a new gaming platform out of Brazil. This move marked our evolution into Siprocal, the platform with solid momentum and a much bigger opportunity today.

But perhaps our most exciting venture has been our foray into connected TV. We've acquired a US-based connected TV business that is doing groundbreaking work in this space. Now, you might be wondering why this matters. Well, let me tell you - it's revolutionizing how advertisers engage with TV audiences.

You see, traditional broadcast advertising and connected TV advertising are two entirely different beasts. They use different systems and different 'piping' as we call it in the industry. As more and more viewers shift to watching content through apps like Hulu rather than traditional cable, we're at the forefront of this seismic shift in the advertising world.

What we're creating here is nothing short of a new form of media. We're building a massive ecosystem of supply and demand for advertising on devices from smartphones to smart TVs. It's mind-blowing when you step back and look at the big picture.

But here's the kicker - which is crucial for anyone looking to build sustainable value - we started with a simple need. We

identified a pain point that wasn't being addressed, and we focused on solving it. That's the core of value creation whether you're alleviating pain or enhancing pleasure for your customers, the simpler and more focused your solution, the better.

Now, I'll be the first to admit we've taken the long road. We've invested heavily—and all in Siprocal, combined with its predecessor companies, has needed tens of millions of capital to get to this point today—and it's been a journey that's looked very different from what we initially envisioned. But that's the nature of building something truly transformative. It takes time, resources, and an unwavering commitment to your vision.

For all you visionary entrepreneurs out there, here's my advice: by all means, chase your big ideas. But make sure you've got your fundamentals in place first. Make sure you've got sustainable cash flow generation dialed in. Building a better mousetrap is exciting, but it's also risky and resource-intensive. You don't want to run out of rocket fuel halfway to the stars.

In the end, building sustainable value is all about creating something that can weather the storms, adapt to changing landscapes, and continue to deliver value year after year. It's

not always the easiest path, but in my experience, it's the most rewarding and the most sustainable.

Teaching the Next Generation About Value

Teaching children about how important sticking to something and grinding out through the thick and thin of life is so important. Teaching them about how creating value requires sustained and consistent effort and progress. Teaching them about generating sustainable cash flow is one of the most profound gifts we can offer the next generation. It's not just about financial literacy - it's about instilling a mindset of contribution, progress, and abundance that can shape their entire approach to life.

The most powerful way to impart these lessons is through lived examples and ongoing, open dialogue and communication. In my family, we've woven this ethos into the very fabric of our daily lives through a simple yet profound motto: "Do your best for the Lord." This mantra encapsulates both our spiritual values and the essence of what I call the "leadership orbit" - a constant cycle of growth, refinement, and forward momentum. I believe in a God of love and mercy. A literal Father in Heaven

who wants what is best for us and provided us with a Savior and Redeemer to help us overcome all. This miraculous gift of grace is the way we ultimately return to God, but only after we have done all we can do. Doing your best is something we can control in all circumstances. We do have the ability to try and try our best. And I believe that is truly enough.

We don't just pay lip service to this Family Motto - we live it, breathe it, celebrate it. Every victory, no matter how small, becomes an opportunity to reinforce these principles. Every setback becomes a chance to demonstrate resilience and recommit to our path of continuous improvement. We try not to celebrate outcomes but focus on the process because we can always win the process by doing our best, working hard, and focusing on progress and improvement. We cannot always control or even influence outcomes. Sometimes, life's outcomes, whether in school, athletics, business, or relationships, are not in our control and can be completely unfair and untied to the effort. That's ok – if you are focusing on the process and not the outcome.

At its core, this philosophy is rooted in a fundamental belief: our true worth and meaning in life stem from how much we uplift and empower those around us. It's not about accumulating things or chasing fleeting pleasures. It's about

cultivating the financial independence and stability that allows us to be a force for good in the world.

This mindset shift is transformative. We've raised our children to value experiences over possessions and meaningful connections over material excess. They've witnessed firsthand that true wealth isn't measured by the size of your bank account but by the depth of your impact and the richness of your relationships.

The results of this approach have been nothing short of remarkable. What truly excites me is seeing how this mindset has permeated our family culture. Our dinner table conversations are alive with discussions of new business ideas, market trends, and innovative solutions to global challenges. We've created an environment where curiosity is celebrated, calculated risks are encouraged, and the entrepreneurial spirit thrives. While we celebrate wins and successes in school, athletics, dance, and business, we try and really get excited about effort and fostering a sustainable process.

This didn't happen by chance. It's the result of years spent modeling these values, of countless conversations about the power of value creation, and of a shared commitment to making a meaningful impact on the world. We've lived in San

Francisco, Denver, New York, and Dallas, exposing our children to diverse business ecosystems, cultures, cuisines, traditions, and ups and downs. They've seen firsthand the ups and downs of entrepreneurship, the exhilaration of launching new ventures, and the resilience required to navigate challenges. We have met as a family when a business venture has failed, when a job has ended, and when one turns into a financial success. Through it all, we try to be transparent, communicative, and open about the process being the reward, not the outcome. We also have lived through tragic ends and financial duress as well as excess and success. Our relationships, our faith, our hope, and our optimism are unwavering during these different cycles, which I hope creates a lasting impression in each of their souls that leads them to approach life's twists confidently and turns with courage and hope.

The lesson here is clear: developing a knack for sustainability and value creation is like building a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger it becomes. The more ingrained it is in your daily life, the more naturally you spot opportunities to apply and expand these skills.

By nurturing this capability in ourselves and our children, we're not just setting the stage for financial success. We're cultivating a mindset of abundance, innovation, and service

that has the power to transform lives and shape the future. This is the true legacy of leadership - not just accumulating wealth but inspiring and empowering the next generation to create value, drive progress, and make a lasting, positive impact on the world.

Investing in Long-Term Visions

As we reach the end of our exploration into Building Sustainability, let's take a moment to reflect on the profound insights we've uncovered. This journey has taken us from the fundamentals of creating lasting impact to the cutting edge of media innovation, all while reinforcing a crucial truth: true leadership is about constructing a mindset that outlasts anything and, in the process, legacies that outlast us.

We began by understanding that building sustainable value isn't about chasing the next shiny object or revolutionary idea. Instead, it's about identifying real, often simple, needs and committing to solving them better than anyone else. The story of Siprocal serves as a powerful reminder that sometimes, the most transformative innovations come from perfecting existing concepts rather than reinventing the wheel.

Throughout this chapter, we've seen how the path to creating enduring value is rarely straight or easy. It requires

patience, persistence, and, often, significant investment - both in terms of resources and time. The journey from Imagination Unwired to Siprocal, with its twists and turns, acquisitions, and pivots, exemplifies the adaptability and resilience needed to build something truly lasting in today's rapidly changing business landscape.

However, perhaps the most important lesson is that building sustainable value is not just about financial success or market dominance. It's about creating solutions that genuinely improve people's lives, whether by solving pain points or enhancing pleasures. It's about recognizing the potential in overlooked opportunities, like the untapped digital real estate of smartphone screens in Latin America.

As leaders, our challenge is balancing innovation excitement with the steadiness of sustainable growth. We must be willing to take calculated risks and invest in long-term visions while ensuring we have the fundamentals—like consistent cash flow—in place to fuel our journey.

Remember, building sustainable value is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing commitment. It requires us to constantly evolve, adapt, and push the boundaries of what's possible. But it also demands that we stay grounded in our core

purpose and values, never losing sight of the people we serve and the problems we're solving.

As you move forward in your leadership orbit, I challenge you to approach every decision, every project, and every interaction with this question in mind: "How can I create value that will outlast me?" This mindset shift from short-term gains to long-term impact separates true leaders from mere managers and visionaries from opportunists.

Building sustainable value is your opportunity to leave an indelible mark on the world. It's your chance to create ripples that will spread long after you've moved on to new horizons. Whether you're leading a startup, steering a multinational corporation, or driving change in your community, you have the power to build something that will stand the test of time.

So, dream big, but also dig deep. Be bold in your vision but meticulous in your execution. Embrace innovation, but never at the expense of sustainability. Above all, never forget that the most valuable things we can build are those that continue to serve and inspire others long after we're gone.

As we close this chapter, I urge you to take these lessons to heart and let them guide you in your quest to create lasting, meaningful impact. The world is waiting for leaders who can

build not just for today but for tomorrow and beyond. Are you ready to answer that call? The future you build starts now. Make it a future of sustainable, enduring value.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a “Sustainable Value Examination”: Take a critical look at your current projects, products, or services. Identify which ones are truly creating long-term, sustainable value and which might be more fleeting. For each initiative, ask: “Will this continue to provide value even if I’m not directly involved?” This audit will help you focus your efforts on building truly enduring value.
2. Identify and solve a “Simple Need”: Following the Siprocal example, look for a simple, unmet need in your industry or community. Spend a week observing and asking questions to uncover pain points or unfulfilled pleasures. Then, brainstorm how you could address this need in a way that creates lasting value. Remember, sometimes the most impactful solutions are improvements on existing systems rather than completely new inventions.
3. Develop Your “Long-Term Value Proposition”: Draft a clear statement that articulates the sustainable value you aim to create over the long term. This should go beyond immediate profits or short-term goals. Consider the lasting impact you

want to have on your customers, employees, industry, family, and society at large. Use this as a guiding principle for decision-making and strategy development.

4. Launch a “Future-Proofing Initiative”: Choose one aspect of your business or leadership role and brainstorm how it might need to evolve in the next 5-10 years. This could be related to technology, market trends, or changing consumer needs. Develop a plan to start adapting now, ensuring that the value you’re creating will remain relevant and impactful in the future. This proactive approach will help you stay ahead of the curve and continue building sustainable value over time.

Remember that building sustainable value is not just a business strategy—it’s a profound commitment to leaving the world better than you found it. It’s about creating ripples that become waves, planting seeds that grow into forests, and igniting sparks that illuminate generations. Your leadership journey is not measured in quarters or fiscal years but in the enduring impact you create.

As you step forward, armed with the insights and strategies we’ve explored, know that you can construct legacies that will outlast you. Your choices today are the foundations of tomorrow’s innovations, the cornerstones of future progress. So, dream boldly, build wisely, and lead with the unwavering

conviction that your efforts can and will shape a brighter, more sustainable future. The world doesn't just need leaders—it needs builders of enduring value. And that is precisely what you are becoming. Now, go forth and build something truly remarkable.

Chapter 12: Conclusion

Launching Your Leadership Orbit

As we stand at the threshold of our final chapter, take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've undertaken together. From the foundations of the builder's mindset to the heights of sustainable value creation, you've equipped yourself with the tools, mindsets, and strategies necessary to not just reach leadership orbit but thrive there. You've discovered that true leadership isn't about a destination but a continuous journey of growth, impact, and self-discovery.

In our last chapter, "Building Sustainability," we explored the profound responsibility and opportunity that comes with leadership. We delved into the art of creating enduring impact, of building legacies that outlast us. You've learned that the most valuable things we can construct are those that continue to serve and inspire others long after we're gone. This understanding isn't just a capstone to our exploration—it's the launchpad for your leadership orbit.

Now, as we prepare for liftoff, it's time to expand our vision even further. We're not just aiming for personal success or organizational triumph. We're setting our sights on nothing less

than a global transformation—a world suffused with abundant leadership at every level. Imagine what such a world might look like—picture communities where everyone recognizes their capacity to lead, regardless of title or position. Envision organizations where leadership isn't hoarded at the top but cultivated at every level. Dream of a society where the most pressing challenges are met not with apathy or despair but with the collective energy of millions of empowered leaders, each contributing their unique gifts to the greater good. The problems that seem daunting today can be solved by an orbit of individual leaders that can be found everywhere, even anywhere.

This vision isn't a far-off utopia. It's a very real possibility, and you—yes, you—have a crucial role in bringing it to life. The leadership orbit you will enter isn't just about your personal growth or success. It's about becoming a beacon of possibility for others, a living example of what's achievable when we take responsibility for our own leadership journey.

But let's be clear: the path to leadership orbit can be challenging. Just as cosmic explorers must navigate meteor showers and solar flares, you, too, will encounter turbulence on your leadership flight. There will be moments of doubt, periods of struggle, and times when the gravitational pull of old habits

and limiting beliefs threatens to drag you back to earth. These challenges aren't setbacks—they're opportunities. They're the resistance that strengthens your leadership muscles, the friction that polishes your character into a brilliant shine.

In this final chapter, we'll equip you with strategies not just to weather these storms but to harness their energy for even greater momentum. You'll learn to transmute obstacles into opportunities to find the hidden gifts in every challenge. More than that, you'll discover how to become a source of stability and inspiration for others when turbulence strikes. Because true leadership isn't about avoiding difficulties—it's about navigating through them with grace, determination, and an unwavering commitment to your mission.

Perhaps most importantly, we'll explore how to become a wellspring of hope and optimism in your own life and in the lives of those around you. In a world often clouded by cynicism and negativity, this might be your most powerful leadership contribution. You'll learn to cultivate a deep, unshakable sense of possibility—not based on naïve, wishful thinking but grounded in your capacity to generate solutions, inspire action, and bring out the best in yourself and others.

This optimism isn't about denying reality or glossing over challenges. It's about developing the vision to see beyond current limitations, the creativity to imagine new possibilities, and the courage to take the first step toward making those possibilities real. It's about recognizing that every great advancement in human history started as a spark of hope in someone's mind—and deciding that you will be the source of such sparks in your sphere of influence.

As we embark on this final leg of our journey together, I want you to feel a sense of excitement building within you. You stand at a pivotal moment—not just in your own life but in the grand tapestry of human progress. The world seeks authentic, empowered leaders who navigate complexity, inspire collaboration, and create sustainable value. You have spent the past chapters equipping yourself to be that kind of leader.

Now, it's time to take flight. It's time to break free from the gravitational pull of self-doubt, to escape the atmosphere of limitation, and to soar into the boundless expanse of your leadership potential. But remember, this isn't a solo journey. As you launch into your leadership orbit, you become part of a constellation of change-makers, a network of luminaries illuminating the path forward for humanity.

In the following pages, we'll provide you with the final preparations for your launch. We'll revisit key concepts throughout the book, weaving them into a cohesive flight plan for your leadership journey. We'll anticipate potential challenges and arm you with strategies to overcome them. Most importantly, we'll inspire you to embrace your role not just as a leader but as a catalyst for a new era of abundant leadership.

The countdown has begun. Your leadership launchpad is primed and ready. The stars of possibility are aligning, beckoning you to take your place among them. As you stand on the brink of this monumental leap, feel the weight of all you've learned, all you've become, and all you're destined to achieve. Let it fill you not with pressure but with profound purpose.

You are about to embark on the most important mission of your life—the journey to become the leader you were born to be and make the impact only you can make. The world is waiting not just for your contributions but also for the ripple effect of inspiration you'll create, igniting the leadership potential in countless others.

Are you ready to light your engines? Are you prepared to break free from the bonds of ordinary existence and soar into the extraordinary realms of leadership? Then, let's begin this

final ascent together. Your leadership orbit awaits, and with it, you will have the opportunity to shape the future of leadership itself.

Illuminating the Future: A World Transformed by Abundant Leadership

In the grand tapestry of human progress, there are moments when a single thread can change the entire pattern. As we stand on the precipice of launching your leadership orbit, I want to share with you my vision of a world transformed by abundant leadership. This isn't just a dream—it's a possibility that you and leaders like you have the power to make reality.

Imagine a world where leadership isn't a scarce resource hoarded by a select few at the top of hierarchical structures. Instead, picture a society where leadership flows abundantly at every level, in every sector, in every community. This is a world where the old paradigms of command and control have given way to a new era of empowerment and shared responsibility.

In this world of abundant leadership, organizations thrive on all their members' collective wisdom and initiative. The frontline employee feels as empowered to drive positive change as the CEO. Innovation isn't limited to R&D departments but bubbles up from every corner of the company. Challenges are met not with fear or finger-pointing but with collaborative problem-solving and a shared commitment to finding solutions.

Communities in this leadership-rich world pulsate with energy and possibility. Citizens don't wait for top-down directives to address local issues. Instead, they step up, taking ownership of their neighborhoods' well-being. From organizing local clean-up drives to starting mentorship programs for at-risk youth, leadership manifests in countless acts of service and initiative.

Education in this world isn't about rote memorization or standardized tests. It's about cultivating leadership qualities in every student. Schools become incubators for future change-makers, nurturing critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and the courage to question the status quo. Young people graduate not just with diplomas but with a deep-seated belief in their power to shape the world.

In the political sphere, abundant leadership translates to an engaged, informed citizenry and responsive governance. It's a world where people don't just complain about problems but actively work toward solutions, where political leaders are held to high standards of integrity and vision, and where constructive dialogue replaces partisan bickering.

However, perhaps the most profound transformation in this world of abundant leadership is in how individuals view themselves and their place in the world. Gone is the learned helplessness that plagues so many in our current reality. In its place is a sense of agency, purpose, and responsibility. People no longer see themselves as passive recipients of circumstances but as active creators of their reality.

This vision isn't about creating a utopia free from challenges. Quite the opposite. It's about fostering a global community equipped to tackle challenges head-on with creativity, resilience, and collective effort. It's better prepared to address complex issues like family relationships, cultural divides, drug addiction, mental health, civility and peacemaking, economic inequality, and technological disruption because it can draw on the leadership capacity of billions, not just a select few.

As you prepare to launch into your own leadership orbit, I want you to see yourself as a crucial part of this vision. Every time you choose to lead with authenticity, every time you empower someone else to step into their leadership potential, you're contributing to this abundant leadership future. You're not just changing your life or immediate sphere of influence – you're participating in a global transformation.

Remember, abundant leadership starts with you. It begins with your decision to take responsibility for your own growth, to generate your own oxygen, to chart your own course. As you elevate into your leadership orbit, you create a slipstream that makes it easier for others to follow. You become a beacon of possibility, illuminating the path for others to discover their own leadership potential.

The world of abundant leadership isn't a distant dream – it's an emerging reality that you have the power to accelerate. As you step into the final phase of your launch sequence, carry this vision with you. Let it fuel your journey and inspire your actions. Because in the end, your leadership orbit isn't just about personal success – it's about catalyzing a revolution of empowerment that can change the very fabric of our world.

Navigating the Storm: Turning Turbulence into Triumph on Your Leadership Journey

As you embark on your leadership flight, it's crucial to remember that turbulence isn't just a possibility—it's an inevitability. The path to greatness is rarely smooth, and the journey to your leadership orbit will undoubtedly encounter rough patches. But the truth will set you free: turbulence isn't your enemy. It's your teacher, your refiner, and often, your greatest opportunity for growth.

When you hit those pockets of instability, when the familiar indicators seem to fluctuate wildly, and uncertainty clouds your vision, remember this: you were built for this moment. Every challenge you've overcome, every lesson you've learned, every ounce of resilience you've developed has prepared you for exactly this situation. Turbulence isn't a sign that you're on the wrong path—it's often confirmation that you're pushing boundaries and entering new territory.

So, what do you do when the ride gets rough? First and foremost, don't panic. Take a deep breath and center yourself. Recall your Leadership North Star—the guiding purpose that

propels your journey. In times of turbulence, this core mission becomes your stabilizing force. It reminds you why you started this journey in the first place and reaffirms that the destination is worth the discomfort.

Next, lean into your training. Remember the builder's mindset we cultivated earlier in your journey. Now is the time to put it into action. Break down the turbulence into manageable components. What exactly is causing the instability? Is it external factors beyond your control or internal doubts and fears? Identifying the source allows you to respond strategically rather than react emotionally.

Communication becomes paramount in times of turbulence. As a pilot keeps passengers informed during rough weather, you must maintain clear, honest dialogue with your team, stakeholders, and support network. Be transparent about the challenges you're facing, but couple that honesty with unwavering confidence in your collective ability to navigate through. Your calm, assured presence can be a beacon of stability for those looking to you for leadership.

Remember, turbulence is often a sign that you're disrupting the status quo. It means pushing against resistance, challenging old paradigms, and forging new paths. Embrace it

as a signal that you're making a real impact. Let it energize you rather than deplete you.

This is also the moment to leverage the power of your support squad—your ground control team. Reach out to mentors, peers, and trusted advisors. Their outside perspective can provide clarity when you're in the thick of the storm. Don't view asking for help as a sign of weakness; it's a testament to your wisdom and humility as a leader.

Use turbulence as an opportunity to innovate. Often, our most creative solutions emerge when we're forced out of our comfort zones. Challenge yourself and your team to think differently. What new approaches could turn this turbulence into an advantage? How can you use this disruption to leap ahead rather than fall behind?

Importantly, take care of yourself during these challenging times. Your leadership vessel needs to be in top condition to weather the storm. Double down on your self-care routines. Whether it's meditation, exercise, or time in nature, prioritize the activities that recharge your batteries and clear your mind.

Finally, maintain perspective. Turbulence, no matter how severe, is temporary. Every storm passes eventually. Your job is not to control the weather but to keep your aircraft—your

leadership—steady and on course. Trust in your training, your purpose, and your inherent capacity to rise above the chaos.

Remember, it's often through turbulence that we reach new altitudes. Some of the greatest leaders in history faced seemingly insurmountable odds and periods of intense doubt and difficulty. But they could navigate through these challenges that ultimately defined their legacy.

You are no different. The turbulence you face today is forging the resilient, visionary leader you're destined to become. Embrace it. Learn from it. Let it propel you to heights you never thought possible. On the other side of this turbulence lies clear skies, breathtaking views, and the exhilaration of knowing you have had what it takes all along.

So, future leader, buckle up. Face the turbulence head-on. Your greatest triumphs await on the other side of this storm. Fly on and show the world what true leadership looks like in the face of adversity.

The Roots of Resilience: How Family Legacy Shapes Leadership Orbit

As we prepare for the final ascent into your leadership orbit, it's crucial to understand the foundations that have shaped your journey. Just as a rocket's successful launch depends on the strength of its base, your leadership trajectory is profoundly influenced by the examples set before you. Likewise, your example will influence your family or your circle of peers in the future. In this spirit, let's explore the profound impact of family influence on leadership development, using my own story as a testament to the power of resilience and positive perspective.

The journey to leadership orbit isn't just about personal ambition or individual skill—it's deeply rooted in the lessons we learn from those who came before us. My parents, through their own extraordinary life experiences, unknowingly laid the groundwork for my approach to leadership and life.

Both of my parents faced remarkably challenging childhoods, the kind of adversity that could easily have become an excuse for bitterness or failure. Yet, what stands out most

about their approach to these hardships is not the difficulty itself but the way they chose to frame and respond to it. They never spoke of these experiences as “bad moments” or used them as justifications for shortcomings. Instead, these challenges were simply part of their story, woven into the fabric of their journey with a thread of positivity that has left an indelible mark on my own leadership philosophy.

My father’s story, in particular, is a powerful lesson in resilience and the impact of positive caregiving. When he was just a young toddler, his mother contracted polio, confining her to an iron lung for over two decades. For those unfamiliar, an iron lung is a large metal chamber that quite literally breathes for the patient, leaving them immobile and dependent. My grandmother’s world was reduced to what she could see in a mirror above her.

The profound nature of this situation hit home for me during my father’s 40th birthday. A video presentation included footage from before his mother’s illness, showing her playing with my father and his sisters. My dad, overcome with emotion, later explained that he had no memory of his mother ever being able to hold him. This poignant moment underscores the depth of the challenge my father faced from his earliest years.

Despite this extraordinarily difficult start, my father grew into a man of remarkable compassion and dedication. The care he witnessed his father providing to his mother became a model for his own approach to family and relationships. I've seen this firsthand in how he cares for my mother, approaching his role as a husband with the same zeal and passion that defined his father's caregiving.

This legacy of resilience and positive energy in the face of adversity has been a cornerstone of my own leadership journey. From my father, I learned that true strength isn't about avoiding hardship but about how you respond to it. His ability to transform a challenging childhood into a source of compassion and commitment has deeply influenced my approach to leadership.

The lesson here, as we prepare to launch into our leadership orbits, is clear: our past doesn't define us, but it can empower us if we choose to learn from it. The trials and tribulations we face aren't roadblocks but opportunities for growth and sources of strength. This perspective is crucial as we encounter the inevitable turbulence of leadership.

As you reflect on your own journey and the influences that have shaped you, consider how you can transform even the

most challenging experiences into fuel for your leadership rocket. The ability to maintain positive energy in the face of adversity, to find purpose in caring for others, and to view hardships as part of your story rather than excuses for failure—these are the qualities that will sustain you in your leadership orbit.

Remember, leadership isn't just about personal achievement. It's about the impact we have on others and the legacy we create. As we prepare for liftoff, let's carry forward the lessons of resilience, compassion, and positive perspective passed down to us. These qualities will not only propel us into our own leadership orbits but also inspire and uplift countless others along the way.

From Scarcity to Abundance: A Mother's Journey and Its Impact on Leadership

As we continue exploring the foundational influences that shape our leadership orbits, we turn to another powerful source of inspiration: my mother's story. Just as my father's

experience taught me about resilience and compassion, my mother's journey offers profound lessons in overcoming adversity and transforming scarcity into abundance—key qualities for any leader preparing to launch into their own orbit.

My mother's story begins with her family's immigration from Italy to Denver, a journey filled with hope but fraught with challenges. The American Dream they sought was not easy. My grandfather, someone I never actually met, abruptly abandoned the family, leaving my grandmother alone to care for my mother and her brother. My mother was just a young child, perhaps five or six years old, thrust into a world of uncertainty and want.

The aftermath of this abandonment was brutal. Money gambled away and squandered, vanished like smoke in the night. My mother's childhood memories are etched with the gnawing pain of hunger, the constant worry of not having enough. These were not mere inconveniences, but deep, formative experiences that would shape her worldview for years to come.

Yet, even in this darkness, seeds of resilience were being planted. My grandmother, faced with the daunting task of raising two children alone, summoned incredible strength. She

eventually remarried, bringing a measure of stability back into their lives. But the scars of those early years of hardship remained, manifesting in my mother as a deep-rooted fear of financial insecurity.

It's fascinating to reflect on how these experiences have rippled through generations. My intense focus on cash management and financial stability, cornerstones of my approach to leadership and business, likely finds its roots in my mother's early struggles. Although we've never explicitly discussed this connection, the influence is undeniable.

What's truly remarkable, however, is how my mother transformed these challenges into fuel for growth and success. Together with my father, she built an incredible life and family. My siblings and I have all grown to be thriving, contributing members of society. This transformation - from a childhood of scarcity to creating a legacy of abundance and positive impact - is a testament to the power of resilience and determination.

As we prepare to launch into our leadership orbits, this story offers invaluable insights. It reminds us that our past hardships don't define us; they refine us. The scarcity we may have experienced doesn't limit our potential for creating

abundance. In fact, those very challenges can become the foundation for our greatest strengths.

My parents' approach to their difficult childhoods is perhaps the most powerful lesson of all. They never used these experiences as excuses or allowed them to limit their aspirations. Instead, they channeled them into a fierce determination to create better lives for themselves and their children. They instilled in me a sense of limitless possibility, a belief that I could achieve anything I set my mind to.

This optimism and confidence, planted in me at a young age, has been a guiding light throughout my leadership journey. It's a reminder that true leadership isn't about having an easy path but about how we navigate the challenges we face.

My father's emphasis on effort over outcome is another crucial lesson for aspiring leaders. I still hear his voice, calling out, "Hustle, hustle!" across the field. It wasn't about hitting home runs or making spectacular plays. What mattered was giving your all every single time. This focus on effort over results has been a cornerstone of my leadership philosophy, encouraging a culture of continuous improvement and resilience in the face of setbacks.

As we stand on the launchpad of our leadership journeys, let these stories inspire you. Remember that your past challenges are not weights holding you down but the very fuel that can propel you into orbit. Like my parents, you have the power to transform adversity into advantage, scarcity into abundance.

Your leadership orbit isn't just about personal success - it's about the positive impact you can have on others, the legacy you can create. It's about taking the lessons from your past, the values instilled in you, and using them to light the way for others.

So, as you prepare for liftoff, embrace your whole story - the triumphs and the trials. Let the resilience you've developed, the lessons you've learned, and the values you hold dear be the rocket fuel that propels you into your leadership orbit. The world is waiting for leaders who can turn scarcity into abundance, challenges into opportunities. Are you ready to answer that call?

Igniting Your Legacy: Launching into Perpetual Impact

As we approach the final launch sequence of your leadership orbit, it's crucial to reflect on the transformative journey we've embarked upon together. Throughout this book, we've emphasized the importance of translating these powerful ideas into tangible action. The time has come for you to step into your role as the architect of your own leadership trajectory, the builder of your unique orbit.

What lies ahead is not merely the application of concepts but a profound shift in your very essence as a leader. My deepest hope is that as you close this book and lift your gaze to the horizon, you'll find your mindset irrevocably altered. Where once there may have been hesitation, doubt, or a litany of "can't" and "won't," I trust you'll now see a landscape rich with possibility and potential.

This shift is the spark that ignites the engine of real change. It's the moment when "I can't" transforms into "How can I?" When "I'm not doing" becomes "Where do I start?" The beauty of this metamorphosis is that it naturally leads to action. You'll find yourself instinctively seeking out opportunities to put

these principles into practice, to start building your orbit one small step at a time.

Remember, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. As you embark on this odyssey, embrace every milestone, no matter how small it may seem. Celebrate the inception of movement, the first tremors of change. Revel in the progress, however incremental it may appear. The key is to shift your focus from the distant horizon to the path directly beneath your feet. Find joy and energy not in some far-off destination but in the very act of moving forward, of building momentum.

This is the essence of the leadership orbit we've been cultivating throughout these pages. It's a state of perpetual motion, of continuous growth and impact. As you launch into this orbit, you're tapping into something far greater than yourself. You're connecting with the boundless potential that resides within every individual.

I firmly believe that each person possesses worth beyond measure and capabilities beyond imagination. If this book has played even a small part in helping you recognize and embrace that truth about yourself, then it has fulfilled its highest purpose. For in awakening to your own innate value and potential, you become a catalyst for others to do the same.

This is where the true magic of leadership orbit comes to life. As you step into your power, as you begin to solve problems, overcome crises, fix what's broken, and build what's needed, you'll find that you're not just transforming your own life. You're lifting others. You're showing them their own worth, their own value, their own capacity for greatness.

And here's the beautiful paradox at the heart of it all: in giving of yourself, in serving others, in helping them recognize and reach for their potential, you'll find yourself energized beyond measure. It's counterintuitive to our natural inclinations, yet it's a fundamental truth of authentic leadership. The more you pour out, the more you'll be filled. The more you lift others, the higher you'll rise.

This is the sustainable orbit we've been striving to define and describe. It's a state of being where your passion aligns perfectly with your purpose, where your work becomes indistinguishable from your mission. It's a place where the line between giving and receiving blurs, where serving others and fulfilling your own potential become one and the same.

As you launch into your leadership orbit, carry this truth with you: in moments of doubt, frustration, or despair, the path forward is not found in turning inward but in reaching outward.

It's in lifting others that you'll find the strength to rise. It's in solving others' problems that you'll discover solutions to your own. It's in illuminating the potential in those around you that your own light will shine brightest.

This is the counterintuitive yet undeniable magic of true leadership. It's a perpetual motion machine powered by service, fueled by the recognition of worth in others. As you step into this orbit, as you begin to embody these leadership qualities, you'll find that you're not just improving yourself – you're uplifting your entire sphere of influence.

So, as you prepare for launch, remember this: the energy source you seek, the battery that will power your journey, is not found in some external source. It's generated through your commitment to serving others, to recognizing and nurturing the potential in those around you. This is the wellspring of sustainable, perpetual leadership – an infinite source of power that will keep you in orbit, no matter what challenges you may face.

Your leadership orbit awaits. Embrace it with open arms, an open mind, and an open heart. Trust in the process, believe in your worth and never forget the transformative power you hold within you. The world is waiting for your unique brand of

leadership. It's time to launch, to soar, to shine. Your journey starts now – and it promises to be the adventure of a lifetime.

How Will You Be Remembered?

As we reach the culmination of our journey through Leadership Orbit, I invite you to pause and reflect on the legacy you wish to leave behind. When the final chapter of your life is written, what will it say? How will you be remembered?

For me, the answer is twofold. Within the intimate circle of my family, I hope to be remembered as someone who cared deeply, nurtured tirelessly, loved unconditionally, and supported unfailingly. I aspire to be the one who makes them better every day through selfless acts of devotion. Simply stated, I hope to be remembered as someone who did his very best for the Lord and, in so doing, helped my loved ones do the same. This is the core of my personal orbit, the foundation from which all else emanates.

But beyond the bounds of family, I hope my impact ripples out further still. I want people to feel the energy of my optimism and to be lifted by the unwavering nature of my efforts. In a world often fraught with cynicism and despair, I strive to be a

beacon of hope – constant and unchanging despite the tumultuous circumstances that may surround us. My deepest desire is that others will say, “He helped me come to know my true potential and my worth as a child of a loving God.” Can I become a person who gave my all and tried my best to Love God and Love my neighbor?

Now, let’s broaden our gaze and envision the world we’re creating together through the principles of Leadership Orbit. Imagine a landscape dotted with self-sustaining, organically-powered individuals, each in their own leadership orbit, continuously launching others into their own trajectories of impact. What does this world look like?

In this new reality, we confront an abundance of problems that seem to multiply daily. Yet, we stand armed with everything we need to overcome them. We possess the very source of everything needed to surmount any obstacle. The key lies in tapping into the wellspring of human potential – awakening the desire, willingness, and abilities that lie dormant within each of us.

This awakening doesn’t stem from force or fear. Instead, it ignites from a place of organic, personal drive. It’s a momentum that, once set in motion, becomes an unstoppable force for good.

Throughout history, we've witnessed moments of extraordinary human achievement, periods when our collective drive and abundance seemed to peak. While these moments have often receded, I believe we can recapture and sustain that energy.

By embracing the principles of Leadership Orbit, we can forge solutions to our most pressing problems. We can infuse meaning and purpose into the voids of apathy and despair. We can cultivate joy, happiness, and a peace that transcends mere fleeting pleasure. This isn't about chasing momentary highs; it's about creating a sustained state of meaningful fulfillment.

The beauty of this movement lies in its simplicity and potential for exponential growth. It begins with you—one individual choosing to step into your leadership orbit. From there, it spreads, person to person, orbit to orbit, until it becomes a viral force for good. This isn't just a dream; it's a tangible possibility I believe in with every fiber of my being.

As we conclude this book, I want to leave you with a sense of excitement and purpose. The concepts and strategies we've explored aren't just theories – they're tools for transformation, waiting to be wielded by those bold enough to grasp them. You

have within you the power to not only change your own life but to be a catalyst for change in the lives of countless others.

Your leadership orbit is uniquely yours, but its impact extends far beyond you. As you step into your power, you create a gravitational pull that lifts those around you. You become a living example of what's possible when we choose to lead from a place of authenticity, purpose, and service.

So, what's next? The answer is simple: action. It's time to take the principles we've discussed and bring them to life. Start small if you need to – perhaps with a daily habit that reinforces your commitment to growth and service. Maybe it's a shift in how you approach challenges at work or a new way of engaging with your family and friends. Whatever it is, start today. Start now.

Remember, leadership isn't about perfection – it's about progress. It's about consistently choosing to orbit around your highest values and aspirations, even when it's difficult. It's about lifting others as you rise and finding your own elevation in the process.

As you embark on this journey, know that you're not alone. You're part of a growing movement of individuals committed to positively impacting through authentic leadership.

Together, we can create a world of abundance, purpose, and meaningful peace.

The pages of this book may be coming to a close, but your story – your leadership orbit – is just beginning. Embrace it with all the energy, optimism, and unwavering commitment you can muster. The world is waiting for your unique brand of leadership. It's time to launch.

Your orbit awaits. The future is yours to shape. Let's make it extraordinary.

To get your free gift and join the Leadership Orbit revolution, click this QR code:

[INSERT QR CODE]